

Abstract

Title of Document: AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRACTICING URBAN SCHOOL COUNSELORS' COLORBLIND RACIAL IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FACTORS SUCH AS SUPPORTS, BARRIERS, SELF-EFFICACY AND OUTCOME EXPECTATIONS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INTEREST AND COMMITMENT

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Groups of American students are learning at alarmingly different rates. This disparity in education is seen disproportionately in schools in urban areas, where students of color and low income students are concentrated in highly segregated areas. In urban areas, the effects of poverty, racism, and isolation are compounded by stressful environments that make learning difficult for students as is evidenced by the various educational gaps. The inadequate and under-resourced education provided for children in urban schools results in a dramatic loss of human potential and economic loss to the nation's economy. Professional school counselors, who work in the urban context, are in a unique position to remove systemic barriers and create equitable opportunities for learning for these students. School counselors need multicultural counseling competence in order to provide appropriate services to these diverse urban student populations; however, multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills are not enough if counselors are to create systemic change. School counselors must work as social justice advocates

in order to tackle the pervasive systemic barriers that plague urban students. Through increased social justice self-efficacy, positive social justice outcome expectations, and social justice supports, and minimal barriers to social justice, school counselors may become more interested in and committed to social justice advocacy. The study examines the relationships between colorblind racial ideology, social justice factors, namely social justice self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and social justice supports and barriers, and the social justice interest and commitment of practicing urban school counselors.

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Chapter I

Introduction

About 6.8 million of America's students attend schools in urban areas (Council of Great City Schools, 2011). These urban areas contain large concentrations of students of color and low income students (NCES, 2010). Urban schools face a number of challenges brought on by financial crises, mismanagement, and a substantial number of teacher quality and classroom instruction issues (Education Trust, 2010b; Talbert-Johnson, 2004). For students who live and go to school in urban contexts, spatial, cultural, and economic segregation affect educational achievement, due to limited access to a quality education (Kozol, 2005).

Educational reform initiatives such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) have brought into focus the disparities in academic access, attainment, and achievement between various groups of students. Educational gaps are evident between varying geographic, racial and socioeconomic student groups. In comparing scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) in reading and mathematics, students in urban areas score lower than their suburban and rural counterparts (NCES 2009b; Sandy & Duncan, 2010). National statistics also demonstrate gaps between various racial groups. There are substantial academic achievement gaps between Latino and African American students, and White and Asian students (NCES, 2011; 2009b). African American and Latino students are two to three years behind White students of the same age across the nation, while a more pronounced racial achievement gap exists in most large urban school districts (McKinsey & Company, 2008). African American and

Latino students are also less likely to be enrolled in rigorous courses that will prepare them with the requisite skills needed for postsecondary education (NCES, 2007). A profound gap is also evident between low income and affluent students. Low income students are roughly two years of learning behind the more affluent student of the same age (McKinsey & Company, 2008).

These various gaps in education impact the success and livelihood of students and urban communities, which have further implications for the national economy. The injustice of an underfunded and inadequate education not only results in negative life outcomes for marginalized populations, but also represents a dramatic loss of human potential for the country. Essentially this injustice results in a poorer economy in the United States and a less talented labor force that lacks the knowledge and ability to create and utilize new technologies (McKinsey & Company, 2008). On an individual level, lack of educational attainment has financial repercussions as higher educational attainment is correlated to higher net income (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2010) and lower odds of unemployment (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). In addition to being less likely to rely on social support programs, individuals with higher income pay more federal, state, and local taxes, which contribute to the nation's economic development (Baum, et al., 2010). Educational attainment is also linked to staying out of prison as a high school dropout is five to eight times more likely to be incarcerated than a college graduate (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2006). Numerous health benefits such as reduced rates of smoking and higher rates of exercise are also linked to higher levels of education (Baum, et al., 2010). Additionally, civic engagement is higher for individuals with more education as college graduates are 50 percent more likely to vote than high school graduates

(McKinsey & Company, 2008). Clearly, education is vital to the well being of individuals and communities. Educators are responsible for empowering students to reach their fullest potential in order for cycles of poverty to be eliminated and the quality of life of individual students and communities to be improved.

School Counselors' Role in Closing the Gaps

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 71 percent of public school teachers in urban areas are White, while 69 percent of the student population is African American and Latino (NCES, 2007). Clearly, the education workforce does not mirror the diversity of the students it serves. Teachers may maintain stereotypes about urban children, families, and communities, which can result in low expectations (Schultz, Neyhart, & Reck, 1996). Urban educators need to be prepared to address the substantial cultural diversity and unique experience students bring with them to school if educational gaps are to be eliminated.

Based on their unique skills and role in the school, school counselors are in a prime position to be educational leaders who work to eliminate educational gaps (Adelman & Taylor, 2002). According to the American School Counselor Association, professional school counselors are defined as “highly trained educators in pre K-12 settings who uphold ethical and professional standards to design, implement and manage comprehensive, developmental, results-based school counseling programs that promote and enhance student success” (ASCA, 2008, p.1). Although there are no public statistics showing the racial composition of practicing U.S. school counselors, one can assume based on teacher and school counselor demographics in most research studies that the majority of school counselors are White/European Americans (Bridgeland & Bruce;

NCES, 2004; 2007). This ethnic disconnect between many school counselors and urban students may hinder their ability to address the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, especially if counselors are unaware of systemic barriers that affect students (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). If school counselors are to strategically and systemically reform education by eliminating the various educational gaps, they must be aware of their own racial beliefs before they can effectively widen their scope to recognize broader systems of oppression to correct inequalities (Lee & Hipolito-Delgado, 2007).

In order to affect systemic change that increases academic opportunities and success for urban students, school counselors must work to become culturally competent professionals. The three main tenants of multicultural counseling competence as defined by Sue et al. (1998) are: (a) awareness, also described as beliefs and attitudes (b) knowledge and (c) skills of the counselor in understanding the client's worldview and using appropriate intervention strategies. Furthermore, Sue and Sue (1999) identified six characteristics of which culturally competent counselors should be aware of: (1) sociopolitical forces that impact clients, (2) differences in culture, SES and language which can be barriers to counseling, (3) the impact of worldviews, (4) how clients' receptiveness to counseling can be affected by the expertise and trustworthiness of the counselors, (5) the knowledge and skills necessary for appropriate communication styles to fit different cultural groups, and (6) counselors' own racial biases.

Multicultural counseling has typically focused on the process between two or more individuals who have distinct views of the world (Vera & Speight, 2003). The topic of what constitutes multicultural competence has been widely discussed in the counseling literature as leaders in the field have argued for the need for social justice advocacy as an

extension of multiculturalism and for its place as the fifth force in counseling (Ratts, 2009; Vera & Speight, 2003).

Social Justice Advocacy

As the conceptualization of multicultural counseling competence expands, there has been increased focus on social justice advocacy as an extension of multicultural counseling (Vera & Speight, 2003). A social justice advocacy approach to counseling refers to the method of using counseling skills in order to challenge institutional and social barriers that impede client success and to confront inequalities and injustices in society (Ratts, 2009).

The practice of school counseling, much like other fields within the counseling profession, is transitioning from the traditional focus on individual client concerns to a broader focus on the external forces that adversely affect the educational, emotional, and physical well-being of students (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). The national standards of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 1997; Campbell & Dahir, 1997), the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust, 1997), and the ASCA (2003, 2005) National Model all direct school counselors to embrace the beliefs of social justice advocacy and incorporate them into the manner in which counseling services are conducted in K-12 schools. In 2005, Trusty and Brown published advocacy competencies for professional school counselors that include dispositions, knowledge and skills that a school counselor should possess in order to effectively challenge the status quo in schools.

Despite efforts to encourage school counselors to become a part of the educational reform process, oppressive practices such as discriminatory policies and procedures, low

expectations, and inequitable allocation of resources continue to perpetuate gaps in student achievement in schools, particularly for poor and minority urban children (Steen & Noguera, 2010). If counselors are to move beyond their traditional roles and engage in social justice advocacy strategies, they must first be aware that such inequities exist (Moeschberger, Ordonez, Shankar, & Raney, 2006). Moreover, school counselors must acknowledge that racial discrimination is one of the contributing factors to social inequities.

School counselors who are unaware of or who ignore institutional forms of oppression, are practicing from a lens of colorblind racial ideology. This could be detrimental to changing the status quo in schools and eliminating inequities that limit the education of students of color and low income students. Discussions of beliefs about race/ethnicity may help illuminate the impact that perceived racism has on student achievement not only from an individual standpoint, but an institutional one, but discussing race has become taboo or politically incorrect in schools (Tarca, 2005). Colorblind racial attitudes are defined as an individual's denial of the social significance of race and the dismissal or reduction of the existence of contemporary racism in the United States (Neville, Lilly, Lee, Duran, & Browne, 2000). Colorblind attitudes contain three central components: (a) a denial of White privileges, (b) the rejection of institutional racism, and (c) denial of the continuance of racial discrimination (Neville et al., 2000). Colorblindness infers that race really does not make a difference in the life experiences of an individual living in the United States. A colorblind racial attitude could seriously impair counselors' ability to serve clients of color effectively and in a culturally sensitive manner (Gushue & Constantine, 2007). The American Psychological

Association (APA) Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice and Organizational Change for Psychologists (APA, 2003) warns against the danger of using a colorblind lens and encourages practitioners to critically examine the ways in which race and racism influence themselves and the clients they serve.

The basic principles of colorblindness suggest that every student should be viewed as the same ignoring the systemic nature of oppression, thus, maintaining a colorblind perspective is detrimental to advancing the success of students of color. This colorblind perspective is typically seen in schools through the ideal of equality, or the belief in imposing the same policies and procedures for all students regardless of their different needs or unique circumstances such as their socioeconomic status or disability (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Equality is founded on the belief that schools must remain neutral and every student will acquire the same consequences for the same behaviors, thereby ignoring the effects of oppression and racism. Equity, on the other hand, demands educators treat students on the basis of individual needs. Holcomb-McCoy (2007) urged educators to “strike a balance between equity and equality in their school practices because both are critical to promoting success to all students” (p. 21).

Rationale for Social Justice Advocacy in Urban Schools

The need for school counselors to be social justice advocates seems to be especially important for low-income urban children of color who attend schools that accept the notion that these particular students cannot achieve at a high level (Bemak & Chung, 2005). However, in order to be effective advocates for students of color and to affect systemic change that increases academic opportunities and success for these students, school counselors must move beyond multicultural competence and focus their

efforts on social justice advocacy. School counselors have an ethical and moral responsibility to advocate for and serve as change agents in school reform (Lee, 2007). If professional school counselors are to truly serve as change agents, then they must challenge the inequities in schools, particularly those inequities based on students' racial background (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Professional school counselors who work as social change agents can help eliminate educational gaps, increase academic expectations, and become more proactive in creating safer and more inclusive learning environments for all students (Ratts, DeKruyf, & Chen-Hayes, 2007). These beliefs in social justice assure that all students have the ability to reach their fullest potential, regardless of race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status (Cox & Lee, 2007). When school counselors feel compelled to make changes based upon the principles of social justice, they ensure that all students have access to the highest quality education (Education Trust, 2008).

However, theories explaining how social justice interest and commitment develop are few. Lee & Hipolito-Delgado (2007) state that counselors must have three levels of awareness in order to engage in effective social justice advocacy: (a) awareness of self, (b) interpersonal awareness, and (c) systemic awareness. The third level involves social action that is based on the beliefs that negative environmental factors can affect client functioning and behavior; it is the counselor's responsibility to work to change practices and ideologies within systems that perpetuate discrimination and forms of oppression. Similarly, Moeschberger et al. (2006) have detailed a model of social justice engagement based on self awareness in which the individual has contact with the realities of oppression, develops an increased awareness of the injustice, forms a sense of self-efficacy to challenge the status quo, understands his or her role in relation to the change,

grows a deeper understanding of the issue, and engages in advocacy to bring about the change.

Miller et al. (2009) utilized social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Lent et al. 2001; 2005) to test a conceptual framework for understanding the development of social justice interest and commitment. This cognitive framework examines the effects of domain-specific social justice related self-efficacy beliefs, social justice outcome expectations, social justice interest, choice goals (e.g., commitment to engage in social justice advocacy efforts in the future), and social justice supports and barriers on individuals' social justice interest and commitment.

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) is based on a wealth of research and has established its theoretical and practical benefits by explaining the career development of students and professionals in various fields (Lent et al., 2003; 2005) and counseling and counselor training (Lent, Hackett, & Brown, 1998). More recently, conceptual research in social justice that validates the SCCT model has been published. Self-efficacy and outcome expectations have been linked to social justice advocacy and the intent to engage in social justice advocacy is found to be predictive of actual engagement (Nilsson & Schmidt, 2005; Morrison Van Voorhis & Hostetter, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between urban school counselors' colorblind racial ideology and factors related to social justice interest and commitment through a path analysis to test direct and indirect effects of variables. More specifically, this study addresses the following research question:

How are the colorblind racial ideology and social justice factors (i.e., social justice self-efficacy, social justice outcome expectations, social justice social supports, and social justice barriers) of urban school counselors related to their social justice interest and commitment?

Based on previous research (Miller et al., 2009; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011), the following research hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Social justice self-efficacy will have a direct effect (Path b in Figure 2) and indirect effect (through outcome expectations) on social justice interest (Paths a-c in Figure 2).

Hypothesis 2: Social justice self-efficacy, social justice outcome expectations, and social justice interest will have direct effects on social justice commitment (Paths d-f in Figure 2).

Hypothesis 3: Social justice social supports and barriers will have a direct effect on social justice commitment (Paths g and h in Figure 2).

Hypothesis 4: Social justice supports and barriers will have an indirect effect (through social justice self-efficacy) on social justice commitment. (Path i and j in Figure 2).

Hypothesis 5: Social justice supports and barriers will have a direct effect on social justice outcomes (path k and l in Figure 2).

Hypothesis 6: Colorblind racial ideology will have a direct effect on social justice commitment and will also have an indirect effect (through social justice interest) on social justice commitment (paths m and n in Figure 2).

Need for the Study

Although the counseling literature is filled with conceptual publications focused on social justice advocacy written in the past few years, more research assessing school counselors' social justice beliefs and ways in which social justice is practiced should be explored if the movement is to gain any credibility within the field (Ratts, 2009; Smith et al., 2009). An exploration of school counselors' awareness of social injustice is needed. Furthermore, an assessment of the factors that lead to interests in and commitment to social justice advocacy must be explored if school counselors are to be equipped to engage in social justice advocacy to help lessen the educational gaps and remove institutional barriers for students who are typically underserved in schools.

Although there is a wealth of research on school counselors' multicultural counseling competence (Constantine, 2002; Constantine & Gushue, 2003; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; 2005a; Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines, 2004), there is only one empirical research study to date that explores personal factors such as race, socioeconomic status, political ideology, and religious beliefs in relation to school counselors' beliefs in a just world (Parikh, 2008). No research study exists to date that explores factors related to school counselors' social justice interest and commitment. Furthermore, urban school counselors' interest in and commitment to social justice should be explored considering that educational gaps in access, achievement and attainment are more profound in urban areas where there are higher concentrations of low income students and students of color (Council of Great City Schools, 2011; NCES, 2007; 2009b; 2011).

Definition of Terms

Urban

The Census Bureau defines urban as densely developed territory, encompassing residential, commercial, and other nonresidential urban land uses within which social and economic interactions occur (Census Bureau, 2011). An urbanized area is a statistical geographic entity consisting of a densely settled core created from census tracts or blocks and bordering qualifying area that together have a minimum population of at least 50,000 persons (Census Bureau, 2011).

High-Poverty School

The Education Trust defines high-poverty schools by dividing the student population enrolled in the Free and Reduced Meal Program (FARMS) of a specific state or school district into quintiles, the quintiles with the greatest number of students on the Free and Reduces Meal Program (FARMS) are determined to be high-poverty schools. (B. Mann, personal communication, May 1, 2012). For the purposes of this study, a high-poverty school is defined as 50% or more of the total student enrollment is eligible for the FARMS program.

High-Minority School

The Education Trust defines high-minority schools by dividing the student population of a specific state or school district into quintiles, the quintiles with the greatest number of minority students are determined to be high-minority schools. (B. Mann, personal communication, May 1, 2012). For the purposes of this study, a high-minority school is defined as 50% or more of the total student enrollment consisting of students of color.

Colorblind Racial Ideology

Colorblind racial ideology refers to a set of beliefs that individuals, groups or systems knowingly or unknowingly use to explain the current racial status quo or to justify the racial inequities in the United States today (Neville, Spanierman, & Bao-Tran, 2006). Neville et al. (2000) define colorblind racial attitudes to be an individual's denial of the social significance of race and the dismissal or reduction of the existence of contemporary racism. Bonilla- Silva (2001) argue that colorblindness is a complex set of beliefs "that has emerged to support the new racial structure in the United States" (p. 137). White individuals may employ these beliefs in order to maintain and protect their privilege (Gushue and Constantine, 2007).

Social Justice

Social justice is defined as addressing issues of equity, power relations, and institutionalized oppression. It seeks to establish a more equitable distribution of power and resources so that all individuals can live with dignity, self-determination, and physical and psychological safety. It creates opportunities for people to reach their full potential within a mutually responsible, interdependent society (Goodman, 2001). The principles of social justice target groups of marginalized people in society and provide a framework to assess the impact of policies and practices on these groups (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007).

Social Justice Advocacy Counseling

Social justice advocacy counseling acknowledges issues of unearned power, privilege and oppression and how these link with psychological stress and disorders (Ratts et al., 2007). The purpose of social justice advocacy interventions are to increase a

client's sense of personal power and to foster sociopolitical changes that reflect greater responsiveness to the client's personal needs (Toporek, Lewis, & Ratts, 2010). Direct services to clients are accomplished through indirect forms of helping that involve influencing the individuals and institutions that are directly involved within the client's system (Lee & Hipolito-Delgado, 2007).

Social Justice Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's judgments of their own capabilities to organize and execute a course or courses of action required to reach designated types of performances (Bandura, 1986). An individual's social justice self-efficacy beliefs center around one's supposed ability to engage in social justice behaviors across several domains (Lent et al., 1994). One is intrapersonal domain or the ability to be self aware. This includes the ability to examine one's own worldview, biases, and prejudicial attitudes after learning about social injustice. The interpersonal domain involves the capability to bring others into the belief of social justice such as challenging someone who displays intolerance. The community domain examines the degree to which an individual collaborates with the surrounding area in order to promote social justice through developing and implementing outreach programs or local fundraising to typically underserved clients. The political and institutional domain targets discriminatory policies, practices and procedures.

Social Justice Outcome Expectations

Outcome expectations are defined as personal beliefs about possible response outcomes (Miller et al., 2009). This refers to the imagined consequences of performing a particular behavior. Lent and Brown (2006) define social justice outcome expectations as

the imagined positive results associated with being involved in social justice advocacy and can be conceptualized as social, such as benefiting those populations that are underserved; material, such as monetary gains or privilege or access; and self-evaluative, such as satisfying personal values or ideals.

Social Justice Interest

Miller and Sendrowitz (2011) define social justice interests as the patterns of likes, dislikes and indifferences regarding social justice advocacy type activities.

Social Justice Commitment

Social justice commitment refers to the specific choice goals or intentions that one plans on pursuing related to social justice advocacy in the future. Commitment is important since it compels behavior in order to attain a specified goal (Lent et al., 2003).

Social Justice Supports and Barriers

Social justice supports refer to perceived and predictable proximal supports as in those that will help facilitate goal attainment in relation to social justice. Social justice barriers serve to hinder goal attainment inherent in the quest of social justice engagement.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an introduction to the research proposal by describing the urban context of schools, educational gaps, school counselors' role in closing those gaps, and the need for school counselors to become social justice advocates. The need for the study, purpose for the study, definition of key terms, research question and hypotheses were presented.

Chapter II

Literature Review

In this chapter, the literature pertaining to urban schools is reviewed from the following perspectives: the definition of the urban school context, the differences in geographic, racial and socioeconomic educational gaps, the economic costs of the educational gaps, and the benefits of educational attainment. Next, the roles of urban school counselors are explored, followed by a discussion of the importance of multicultural counseling competence. The need to move beyond multicultural counseling competence to the use of social justice advocacy is discussed. The next section begins with an exploration of the infusion of the social justice movement throughout the general counseling profession, followed by particular changes in the school counseling profession including the need for school counselors to close the educational gaps. Socially just schools are defined and discussed including what is needed in order to tackle systemic barriers. School counselors will need to be aware that systemic inequities exist engaging in social justice advocacy work. Colorblind racial ideology is defined and the related research discussed, including instruments to measure colorblind racial ideology. Finally, an explanation follows of a conceptual framework, based on social cognitive career theory that explores constructs such as social justice self-efficacy, social justice outcome expectations, social justice social supports, social justice barriers and how these factors relate to interest in and commitment to social justice. Research relating to this conceptual framework is discussed followed by the proposal of an expanded model including colorblind racial ideology as a variable.

The Urban School Context

Urban Education

A majority of the 100 largest school systems in the United States are located in urban areas (Kozleski & Smith, 2009). According to the Council of Great City Schools (2011), an organization composed of 65 large city school districts, 6.8 million students were enrolled in urban schools for the 2010-2011 academic school year. Seventy-two percent of this population consisted of Latino and African American students (CGCS, 2011). According to the NCES (2005), by the year 2020 half of all school-aged children will be students of color; in many urban school districts this mark was exceeded years ago (Cross, 2007). Increasingly, larger suburban school communities that ring large cities resemble urban schools in the diversity of students they serve (Weiner, 2000).

Urban school systems serve students in densely populated communities that contain high concentrations of individuals of color and vast disparities in wealth (Anyon, 1997). A total of 13.3 million children lived in poverty in the United States as of 2008; over 60% of which were children of color (Children's Defense Fund, 2008). Compared with suburban and rural locales, urban areas tend to have greater percentages of high-poverty schools, defined as schools where 76 to 100 percent of the student enrollment is eligible for free or reduced-price meals (NCES, 2010).

Urban children face a number of challenges brought on by social inequities that students in more affluent areas do not face (Green et al., 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005b; Kozleski & Smith, 2009; Lee, 2005; Nunn, 2011). Kozol (2005) asserts that in sections of large cities, poor urban children experience social, economic, physical and cultural isolation. Because of the unique nature of school finance systems in the United States,

schools in poor neighborhoods tend to have far less funding per pupil than do schools in wealthier districts, a degree of inequity not seen in other advanced countries in the world (McKinsey & Company, 2008). The students in these districts have limited financial resources, resulting in profound barriers to educational opportunities.

The separate and unequal education that students in many urban schools receive is compounded by several factors. The safety and security of urban students is one issue. In 2008, public schools in cities reported higher rates of violent crime than did those in suburbs, towns, and rural areas; gang activity occurred more often in city schools (Lewis, Simon, Uzzel, Horwitz, & Casserly, 2008). Another issue is teacher quality. In the United States, less experienced, less qualified, and less effective teachers often go to high-poverty schools with high concentrations of children of color (Education Trust, 2006). Urban school teachers are more likely to lack certification and advanced degrees and are more likely to be teaching outside of their area of expertise (Education Trust, 2010b). Shortages of qualified teachers lead to large class sizes, a lack of access to high-level courses, poor teaching, and high turnover rates (Talbert-Johnson, 2004).

Urban teachers have fewer resources available to them and less control over their curriculum than those in other locations (Alao, 2011). Urban schools subject poor and African American children to tracking and ability grouping, placing disproportionate numbers of these students in low-ability classes and special education programs (Weiner, 2000). These lower-level classrooms may fail to expose students to important concepts that they will need to know to prosper in the future. Fifty three percent of students in the principal school systems of the country's 50 largest cities complete high school with a diploma, this rate remains well below the national graduation rate of about 71%

(Swanson, 2009). Schools in high poverty areas are also less likely to offer college-preparatory courses (Ferguson & Mehta, 2004). The compounded effects of poverty, racism, segregation, and inadequate school resources may predispose urban children to failure in school. Recent education reforms and accountability measures have highlighted the disparities that urban children face.

The Gaps in Education

The Gaps Defined

According to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all human beings are guaranteed a right to an education (United Nations, 1948). The U.S. education system is facing considerable challenges that are affecting individuals, families, communities and the nation as different groups of students are learning at different rates (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). These educational gaps are examined using various outcome measures such as grades, test scores, course enrollment, and graduation and college completion rates.

In 2002, the sweeping education reform known as No Child Left Behind was signed into law, representing the first mechanism to closely monitor students' and schools' achievement against national and state standards (NCLB, 2002). Through that lens, gaps in achievement between students of varying geographic locations, race, and socioeconomic statuses come in focus. As compared to the rest of the nation, urban schools have significantly more students who test below basic levels in reading, math, science, and writing on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Sandy & Duncan, 2010). In 2002, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Council for Great City Schools approved the selection of urban districts for participation

in the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA). Results from the 2009 TUDA make it possible to compare the performance of students in urban districts to public school students across the rest of the nation. All of the urban districts in the sample had higher combined percentages of African American and Latino students than White students. Compared to the rest of the nation, in 2009 fourth and eighth grade students in urban districts showed little or no gains in math scores (NCES, 2009b). In reading, there was no change since 2007 in the overall average NAEP score for fourth-graders in the nation; scores did increase for students in four participating urban districts. Eighth grade urban students' scores showed no gains, while the rest of the nation's eighth graders improved on NAEP reading tests (NCES, 2009b).

Along with geographic disparities in achievement, statistics demonstrate a substantial gap between African American and Latino, and White students (Education Trust 2010a; Kozol, 2005; NCES 2009b; 2011; Weiner, 2000). On average, African American and Latino students are two to three years behind White students of the same age across the nation, while a more pronounced racial achievement gap exists in most large urban school districts (McKinsey & Company, 2008). The NAEP reveals a racial achievement gap in reading and mathematics. For example in 2009 and 2011, African American and Latino students in fourth and eighth grades scored an average of 20 points lower than their White peers on the NAEP math and reading assessments, a difference of about two grade levels (NCES, 2009a; 2011). Scores in 2011 show that White, Latino and African American students are making gains in reading and mathematics, demonstrating that the achievement gap is narrowing some but still remains significant (NCES, 2011). The racial achievement gap worsens the longer children are in school.

Between fourth and twelfth grade, for example, the disparity in math scores grows: 41 percent for Latinos and 22 percent for African Americans, as compared to White students (McKinsey & Company, 2008).

Gaps are also apparent in the low representation of students of color in rigorous courses (NCES, 2007). A small number of African American students have access to challenging programs like Advanced Placement. Those who do have access to these courses have not excelled: less than four percent of African American students score a 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement test at some point in high school, compared to 15 percent nationwide (McKinsey & Company, 2008). African American and Latino students have lower academic achievement in high school and less access to rigorous courses compared to their White counterparts (Nunn, 2011). As opposed to their more privileged peers, these students are consequently less likely to attain a high school diploma or enter a postsecondary institution with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in college (House & Hayes, 2002). African American and Latino students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds continue to be underprepared for, and underrepresented in, four-year colleges and universities (Holland & Farmer-Hinton, 2009; NCES, 2008)

Data also show that there is a significant achievement gap between affluent and low-income children (Education Trust, 2008). Low-income students are roughly two years of learning behind the more affluent student of the same age (McKinsey & Company, 2008). At the school-wide level, populations comprising mostly low-income students perform much worse than those with fewer low-income students. The U.S. Department of Education (2008) reports that student and school poverty adversely affects

student achievement. In a longitudinal study conducted on third through fifth grade students from 71 high-poverty schools, the U.S. Department of Education (2001) found that students who live in poverty scored below norms in all years and in all grades as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition (SAT-9); schools with the highest percentages of poor students performed significantly worse than other students at the same grade levels. Low-income African American students suffer from the largest achievement gap of any cohort and data suggests that the average low income White student is about three and a half years ahead in learning compared to the average low income African American student (NAEP, 2002). These disparities in achievement affect not only individual student outcomes, but also the success of the nation as a whole (McKinsey & Company, 2008).

The Economic Cost of Educational Gaps

The size and persistence of educational gaps has distinct economic implications. The fact that disadvantaged minorities, a substantial portion of whom live in urban areas, appear to have on average substantially lower academic skills and lower rates of educational attainment than the majority group, raises concerns about inequitable education creating a financial drain on the national economy, equitable distribution of economic opportunity, and social mobility (Swanson, 2009). Across the nation's 50 major metropolitan areas, 13 percent of adults have not completed high school, while about one-quarter have earned a high school diploma as their most advanced level of education (Swanson, 2009). These economically disadvantaged areas contain low-achieving schools that produce populations of Americans with low skills, high unemployment, and high incarceration rates (Baum et al. 2010, Kozol, 2005; Swanson,

2009). These individuals are unable to participate in the national economy, which raises questions about the economic cost of inequitable education and concomitant gaps in education.

These gaps constitute a loss of human potential that translates to actual economic costs. By not fully using the potential of each individual, the economic system of the United States is less rich and its laborers less talented, lacking the knowledge and ability to create and learn new technologies (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). Educational inequities impose on the United States the economic equivalent of a permanent national recession as seen in the gap between the actual and potential output of the economy (McKinsey and Company, 2008). By one estimate, if the United States had in recent years closed the gap in educational achievement levels, then the gross domestic product in 2008 might have increased between \$1.3 to \$2.3 trillion; between \$310 and \$525 billion if the gap between African American and Latino performance and White performance had been similarly narrowed; and between \$400 to \$670 billion if the gap between low-income and more affluent students was eliminated (McKinsey and Company, 2008).

Lack of educational attainment also has costly outcomes for the individual. Students who drop out of school are more likely to be unemployed, live in poverty, or become incarcerated (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2006). In 2010, individuals without a high school diploma had an unemployment rate 6.7 percent higher than the national average (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). The unemployment rate for individuals with at least a bachelor's degree is consistently about half that of those with only a high school diploma (Baum et al., 2010). Higher levels of educational attainment also correlate with higher earning increasing the likelihood that individuals will not live

in poverty. In 2008, the median earnings of an individual without a high school diploma was roughly \$24,300, \$9,500 lower than what the individual would have earned with a high school diploma (Baum et al., 2010). In urban areas, nearly 24% of adult high school dropouts live in households where the income level falls below the poverty line (Swanson, 2009).

Completing high school is also crucial for individuals to stay out of the nation's prison system. A high school dropout is five to eight times more likely to be incarcerated than a college graduate (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2006). Incarceration has serious negative consequences for the individuals imprisoned, for their families, and for society. During 2006 and 2007 in the United States, 1.4 percent of 16- to-24-year-olds were institutionalized in jails, prisons, and juvenile detention centers; rates of incarceration among high school dropouts was more than 63 times higher than among young four year college graduates (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, & Palma, 2005). Over their working lives, the average high school dropout will cost the nation nearly \$292,000 in taxes, while the average high school graduate will produce a positive lifetime net fiscal contribution of \$287,000 (Sum et al., 2005).

Benefits of Educational Attainment

Higher educational attainment raises quality of life through increased earning potential and higher wages, since an individual's level of education emerges as a major predictor of his or her ability to secure steady employment (Swanson, 2009). There is a demonstrable link between early performance in school and subsequent rates of high school graduation, college attendance and completion, and ultimately earnings (McKinsey & Company, 2009; Swanson, 2009). In addition to being less likely to rely on

social support programs, individuals with higher levels of education have higher incomes and pay more federal, state, and local taxes, which contribute to the nation's economic development (Baum et al., 2010; Swanson, 2009).

Postsecondary education is also linked to numerous health benefits. Individuals with a college degree are much more likely to receive employer-provided health insurance than those with only a high school diploma (College Board, 2011). The gap between health care coverage for high school graduates versus four-year college graduates grew from 10 percentage points in 1979 to 18 percentage points in 2008 (Baum et al., 2010). Other health benefits include reduced rates of smoking and higher rates of exercise amongst individuals with more education; the more an individual is educated the less likely they are to be obese and have obese children (Baum et al., 2010; College Board, 2011). Educated mothers are more likely to breast feed their children and are less likely to give birth to babies weighing less than 5.5 pounds (Baum et al., 2010).

Education levels are also linked to civic engagement. Individuals with high school diplomas are twice as likely to vote as people with an eighth-grade education or less; college graduates are 50 percent more likely to vote than high school graduates (McKinsey & Company, 2008). In the 2008 presidential election, the gap between the voting rates of individuals with at least a bachelor's degree and those with a high school education was largest among younger voters (Baum et al., 2010). By increasing the voting power of marginalized individuals, their particular struggles could be highlighted so financial resources and services could be allocated to communities in equitable ways.

Educators who work in the urban context must act as social justice advocates to remove barriers to an equitable education for students and empower students to reach

their fullest potential, so that cycles of poverty are eliminated and the quality of life for these communities are enhanced. A well-educated workforce represents the foundation of the broader economy, with the public schools standing as a key economic pillar (Swanson, 2009). These communities will, in turn, be better able to secure a more prosperous future.

Urban School Counselors

A school counselor is defined as “a highly trained educator in pre K-12 settings who uphold ethical and professional standards to design, implement and manage comprehensive, developmental, results-based school counseling programs that promote and enhance student success” (ASCA, 2008, p.1). Professional school counselors who practice in the urban context promote academic, career, and personal-social development in the midst of environmental and systemic challenges that plague urban areas and schools. Urban school counseling offers services specifically geared towards meeting the complex needs of students living and attending school in culturally diverse environments (Green et al., 2005). Their clients come to school with complex and critical developmental needs that are far different from those students who are raised in less stressful environments (Green & Keys, 2001). These needs are affected by contextual barriers such as violence, chronic absenteeism, high numbers of transience students, low morale, and low parental involvement that are situated within a system that suffers from financial crises, is highly bureaucratic and often mismanaged (Green & Keys, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 1998; 2005b; Lee, 2005; Steen & Noguera, 2010). Urban school counselors must implement their programs amidst great obstacles but without the proper awareness, knowledge, and skills, even well intentioned counselors may unintentionally

perpetuate the current conditions of the urban school context. Because counselors have unique training and can offer specialized academic and nonacademic supports, it is possible that their work may have the highest impact on the students with the greatest need (Bridgeland and Bruce, 2011). Competent urban professional school counselors who are grounded in social justice are needed to eliminate educational gaps and secure the success of the nation's urban students.

Multicultural Counseling Competence

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2007, 71 percent of public school teachers in urban areas were White, while 69 percent of the student population was African American or Latino (NCES, 2007). These teachers may maintain stereotypes about urban children, families and communities that can result in low expectations including beliefs about aptitude (Carter, Thompson, & Warren, 2004) and learning behaviors (Childs & McKay, 2001). Counselors, like teachers, are also prone to stereotyping based on ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2007; Constantine & Gushue, 2003; Harris 2002). This is especially alarming as school counselors' work is correlated with factors such as more productive course selection, higher graduation rates and increased college enrollment rates (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011).

Although there are no public statistics showing the racial composition of practicing U.S. school counselors, a recent survey of middle and high school counselors, the largest national survey of these education professionals, show that 75% of the participants identified as White (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). Such an ethnic disconnect between counselors and their clients may hinder the counselors' ability to address the

needs of an increasingly diverse student population, especially if counselors are unaware of the systemic barriers that affect students.

Numerous researchers list multicultural counseling competency as an essential element for any school counselor practicing in the 21st century (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005a; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2007; Lee, 2005; Ratts et al., 2007; Sue and Sue, 1999). Multicultural counseling competency is assessed to ensure that mental health professionals are proficient to work with a diverse set of clients. To be considered competent, counselors must be aware of their own beliefs and be able to work with students regardless of race, ethnicity, class, gender, languages spoken, etc.

A multiculturally competent counselor is proficient in working with unique cultural groups (Sue et al., 1998). In general, multicultural competency has three domains: awareness, knowledge, and skills (Pedersen, 1999). The first domain includes an understanding of a counselor's own belief system; it requires an individual to examine his/her personal outlook on those who might be culturally different. Part of this domain includes awareness of the sociopolitical relevance of group membership in terms of issues of privilege, discrimination and oppression (Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007). The second domain involves a counselor's knowledge of multicultural counseling theory and of their client's worldview. The final domain involves the skills required to apply appropriate techniques and interventions based on the client's needs.

Sue and Sue (1999) identified six characteristics of which a culturally competent counselor should be aware: (1) sociopolitical forces that impact clients; (2) differences in culture, socioeconomic and language that may be barriers to counseling; (3) the impact of worldviews; (4) how the expertise and trustworthiness of the counselor can affect a

client's receptiveness to counseling; (5) the knowledge and skills necessary to select the appropriate communication styles to fit different cultural groups; and (6) the counselors' own racial biases.

No longer considered just a desirable quality, multicultural counseling competence is a required component for professional school counselors (Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2007). In a position statement adopted in 1998 and recently revised, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2009) has supported and encouraged multicultural awareness as a means of advancing student achievement:

Professional school counselors promote academic, career, and personal/social success for all students. Professional school counselors collaborate with stakeholders to create a school and community climate that embraces cultural diversity and helps to remove barriers that impede student success. (n.p.)

The Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA), has established competencies for counselors and, in 1996, created a document operationalizing those competencies (Arredondo et al., 1996). Additionally, in the 2009 revised standards for counselor education programs, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) listed "Demonstrates multicultural competencies in relation to diversity, equity, and opportunity in student learning and development" as one of the skills and practices school counselors need (CACREP, 2008). Ideally, professional counselors will have taken multicultural counseling courses in their graduate education, but even well educated and well-intentioned practitioners may still not discern the connection between individual client issues and systemic oppression.

From Multicultural Competence to Social Justice Advocacy

There has been debate in the counseling literature as to the extent to which the tenets of multicultural counseling competence and social justice overlap (Vera & Speight, 2003; Ratts, 2009; Trusty & Brown, 2005). According to some scholars, the multicultural counseling competencies (Arredondo et al., 1996) make mention of injustice and oppression, but they do not clearly explain how a counselor is to advocate for social justice (Vera & Speight, 2003). The nature of counseling is based on a remedial model in which a problem develops in an individual and a counselor works to minimize or end the particular problem (Albee, 2000; Ratts, Lewis, & Toporek, 2010). This reactive model of counseling, however, only serves to maintain rather than dismantle social inequality (Prilleltensky, 1994). Vera and Speight (2003) contend that counselors need to be aware of oppressive forces and work to minimize them whenever possible. In the multicultural counseling competencies, oppression is not defined as a core problem that affects the well-being of individuals (Holcomb-McCoy 2005a; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2007; Ratts, 2007; 2009; Vera & Speight, 2003). If increasing one's awareness of these issues is enough and can be done through counseling alone, then working to create social change is for all intents and purposes ignored (Prilleltensky, 1994; Vera & Speight, 2003). Counselor training programs tend to overemphasize the development of individual and group counseling skills (Goodman et al., 2004; Ratts, 2006). This multicultural counseling paradigm encourages counselors to understand their clients only within the multicultural context, rather than engaging with that context itself (Ratts, 2009). This paradigm interferes with counselors' abilities to think in a proactive, system-focused

way. Social justice, on the other hand, offers a theoretical foundation for social action on the part of counselors (Lee & Hipolito-Delgado, 2007).

Social Justice Advocacy

Social justice advocacy is distinguished from multiculturalism by its acknowledgment of the impact of discriminatory oppression on clients' mental health. According to leaders in the field, social justice advocacy counseling is instrumental in guiding counselors' behavior (Lee, 2007), explaining human behavior (Smith, Reynolds, & Rovnak, 2009), and determining counselors' best practices (Ratts, 2009). The social justice counseling paradigm follows the psychodynamic, cognitive behavioral, existential-humanistic, and multicultural counseling movements, key historical movements in the profession (Cox & Lee, 2007). As an outgrowth of the multicultural movement that focused on the individual in context rather than the whole social environment, social justice counseling is termed "fifth force" within the counseling profession (Ratts, 2009).

Goodman (2001) defines social justice as:

Addressing issues of equity, power relations, and institutionalized oppression. It seeks to establish a more equitable distribution of power and resources so that all individuals can live with dignity, self-determination, and physical and psychological safety. It creates opportunities for people to reach their full potential within a mutually responsible, interdependent society (p. 4-5).

According to Ratts et al. (2007), social justice counseling acknowledges issues of unearned power, privilege, and oppression and how these link with psychological stress and disorders. Social justice counseling is a unique and multifaceted approach to mental health care in which counselors strive to promote human development and the common good by addressing issues related to the equitable distribution of resources, profits, and

opportunities to those with the greatest need and the maintenance of equal rights and fundamental liberties for the individual (Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008). The goal of social justice is full and equal participation in society for all groups, particularly those that have been historically marginalized based on skin color, gender, socioeconomic level, ability level, and sexual orientation. Practitioners, therefore, focus their efforts on changing inequitable social, political and economic conditions that contribute to problems. Advocacy involves identifying needs through data and taking actions to transform the conditions that contribute to the problem or inequity (Trusty & Brown, 2005).

Advocacy is accomplished through politically conscious interventions and strategies (Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roysircar, & Israel, 2006). Counselors work as advocates when they act on behalf of a client or some social cause. According to Kiselica and Robinson (2001), advocacy is considered a form of social action; counselors conduct their work in the environments in which client experience problems and take action to reduce or eliminate social ills such as poverty and prejudice that affect clients directly. Advocacy counseling, social action, and social justice interventions raise an individual's sense of personal power and foster sociopolitical movements that respond to a client's needs.

The social justice advocacy movement brings critical shifts in the ways counselors practice. Ratts (2009) asserts that the social justice perspective encourages counselors to: (a) develop a balanced perspective between the individual client and their environment (b) provide counselors with a theoretical framework for understanding the role oppression plays in influencing human behavior, and (c) facilitate a shift in how the

counselors provide services, focusing more attention toward the environment, not just individual client concerns.

The social justice advocacy movement reorients counseling practices in four ways (Smith et al., 2009). The first is the method in which counselors conceptualize clients' problems. Instead of focusing on individual developmental difficulties, counselors place more focus on social ills (e.g., racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism). This dramatic shift in awareness helps counselors recognize that individual counseling alone may not be sufficient. The counseling focus now shifts to interventions that target the system in which the client exists. The second is the language and terminology counselors use in their practice. Historically, counselors have used terminology from within the education, human development, and mental health field; however, emerging forces in the profession call for terms such as "social justice," "social action," and "advocacy" that derive from the fields of law or political science. Third, practicing social justice advocacy calls for a new skill set. Counselor education training programs have placed little emphasis on skills needed to advocate for the client on a systemic level (Ratts & Wood, 2011; Toporek et al., 2006). Galassi and Akos (2004) recommend counselors be trained in system-level advocacy skills such as lobbying, policy making, creating community partnerships, and using data to aid in institutional change. Lastly, a significant change has occurred in counselors' professional identity. The identities of counselors are shifting in the nature of their roles and responsibilities (Smith et al., 2009). Professional counselors are progressing from a helper-responder model toward a proactive model rooted in social justice (Ratts, 2009). This shift calls for counselors to step out of the comfort of their offices and into the communities and institutions in which their clients live, work, and

learn. Counselors have historically been referred to as *therapist, counselor, advisor* or *educator*. In the recent counseling literature, however, terms such as *activist, social justice advocate*, and *change agent* are used more frequently (Smith et al., 2009).

Social Justice Advocacy in the Counseling Profession

The counseling profession has aligned itself with the social justice advocacy movement in a number of ways. Counselor for Social Justice (CSJ), a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA), defines its mission as “work to promote social justice in our society through confronting oppressive systems of power and privilege that affect professional counselors and our clients and to assist in the positive change in our society through the professional development of counselors” (CSJ, 2002). Toporek et al. (2009) envision the CSJ as a clearinghouse for the dissemination of scholarship concerning the impact of oppression on human development, as well as a collaborator with other like-minded entities, and a visible and accessible support network for counselors involved in social justice activities.

Additionally, in 2003 the ACA endorsed the Advocacy Competencies (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2002), which supply counselors with a framework for social justice advocacy addressing issues of oppression with and on behalf of clients. Bemak and Chung (2008) assert that these competencies help counselors better understand the types of awareness, knowledge and skills needed to become effective social justice advocates and institutional change agents.

The framework provides counselors the means to address social justice at the microlevel (client/student), mesolevel (school/community), and macrolevel (public arena). Each level comprises two domains that stress advocacy (a) with and (b) on behalf

of the individual. The client/student level involves using direct counseling services to empower individuals. Working with the client individually, counselors use strategies that enhance the personal power and strengths of the client. Counselors also serve as advocates, removing barriers that contribute to psychological stress (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). The school/community level emphasizes community collaboration and systems advocacy. Community collaboration entails being aware of the recurring issues within schools and communities that hinder clients' growth and success. According to Lopez-Baez and Paylo (2009), counselors can engage in systems advocacy by taking the position of an ally to others in the school/community, or by moving into a position of leadership in advocating for the desired change needed within the school or community. The public arena level is concerned with informing the community about systemic barriers that affect human development and ways counselors can shape public policy (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). Institutional forms of oppression are addressed at this intervention level. Counselors must be skilled in using research and media to shed light on social inequities (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001); Ratts (2009) mentions the skills of lobbying and grant writing as examples of macrolevel advocacy strategies as well. All three levels of the Advocacy Competencies must be addressed for counselors to have the greatest impact (Lewis et al., 2002; Ratts et al. 2007). For school counselors, in particular, actively engaging in all three levels of advocacy is crucial in order to eliminate the educational gaps between students.

School Counselors and Social Justice Advocacy

School Counselors' Role in Closing the Gaps

School counselors are highly valuable professionals in the education system who can eliminate barriers that impede students from receiving a high quality education (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). Focusing on individual student concerns alone will not guarantee improved learning outcomes for students; counselors need to focus on the relationship between the academic challenges students face and systemic factors related to racial and cultural background and socioeconomic status (Steen & Noguera, 2010). Based on their special skills and unique role in schools, counselors are in a prime position to eliminate the gaps in school performance that are evident in test scores, grades, course selection, and high school and college attainment (Cox & Lee, 2007). They are no longer ancillary personnel in schools; rather school counselors are central to educational reform by being leaders in the school. They have a unique opportunity in schools to be leaders who can advocate on behalf of students, groups, parents and teachers regarding the issues of equity, oppression and discrimination (Crethar et al., 2008).

Traditionally, the counseling profession has directed more time and energy toward assessing and ending what are seen as individual deficits and problems, rather than engaging in efforts to change the environment (Crethar et al., 2008). Through expanded roles, school counselors can eliminate educational gaps by placing more emphasis on accomplishing systemic outcomes such as advocating for more qualified teachers, using more culturally appropriate curriculum, addressing barriers to learning, collaborating with families and communities and, examining inequitable policies and

procedures (Adelman & Taylor, 2002; Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Bryan, 2005; House & Hayes, 2002; Cox & Lee, 2007).

By advocating for the educational success of all students, school counselors promote the mission of social justice. The national standards of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 1997; Campbell & Dahir, 1997), the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust, 1997), and the ASCA (2003, 2005) National Model have directed school counselors to embrace the beliefs of social justice and incorporate advocacy into the manner in which counseling services are conducted in K-12 schools.

Social Justice and the Relationship to School Counseling

Professional educators advocate for the needs of the entire student population and students receive equitable access to resources and services at schools that have social justice as a focus (Crethar et al., 2008). Without a well-defined program and clear mission and vision, the counselor's role is at the whim of parents or administrators. Gysbers and Henderson (2001) urge counselors to develop and implement counseling programs that enhance student achievement. School counselors are in prime positions to make systemic changes as they have access to critical data about student placements, understand students' academic successes and failures and course taking patterns, know which teachers hold high expectations, and connect with parents and the community (Bemak & Chung, 2008; House & Hayes, 2002; Singh et al., 2010; Stone & Dahir, 2006).

Building on the beliefs of social justice advocacy, the school counseling profession has gained momentum in its efforts to eliminate educational gaps. One example of this is the formation of the National Center for Transforming School

Counseling (NCTSC), a subgroup of the Education Trust created in 1996 to direct school counselors toward the cause of educational equity. In 1997, the Transforming School Counseling Initiative brought forth a new vision of the skills a school counselor must possess. They include leadership, advocacy, the use of data, collaboration and teaming, and a commitment to support high levels of student achievement in order to address the academic achievement gap (Bemak & Chung, 2008). ASCA collaborated with the Education Trust to infuse these new skills into the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005). The result was a framework in which school counselors utilize a combination of direct and systemic services that makes the most of counseling skills to help all students succeed (McMahon, Mason, & Paisley, 2009). This professional mandate directs counselors to serve as social justice advocates to eliminate the achievement gap and to focus their efforts on student success, particularly for underserved and underrepresented students (House & Hayes, 2002). This new vision expands the professional school counselors' skill set and redefines the roles they play in schools (Paisley & Milsom, 2007). The ACA Advocacy Competencies also complement the ASCA National Model in the areas of leadership, advocacy, collaboration and teaming, and systemic change (Ratts et al., 2007).

In 2005, Trusty and Brown published a set of advocacy competencies for professional school counselors which included dispositions, knowledge and skills a school counselor should possess in order to be an effective advocate. School counselors with an advocacy disposition are autonomous in their thinking and behavior in that they take risks to meet the needs of students and parents. They have an awareness of and embrace their professional advocacy roles and empower individuals while maintaining

high value for ethical principles and laws. School counselor advocates also have a wealth of knowledge of resources, policies and procedures, know how to mediate and resolve conflicts, and use a systemic perspective to work for change. School counselor advocates also possess communication, collaboration, problem-assessment, organizational and self-care skills. The most important competency is an advocacy disposition. The authors argue that this is most tied to a counselor's value and belief system, without a disposition toward advocacy, the likelihood that a counselor will develop advocacy skills is low thereby decreasing the chances that a counselor will be interested in social justice advocacy work.

Some school counselors may not be willing to undertake the unique challenges required to redefine their roles, may resist performing organizational change interventions in order to address the academic achievement gap (Bemak & Chung, 2005). Termed the "*nice counselor syndrome*" by Bemak & Chung (2008), these individuals will support the status quo in order to be agreeable and avoid unpleasant realities of injustice and inequity students of color and poor students experience in many public school systems.

The Need for Awareness

If school counselors are to move beyond their traditional roles and engage in social justice advocacy strategies, they must first recognize and acknowledge that such inequities exist. Lee and Hipolito-Delgado (2007) argue that in order to be effective as an advocate, counselors must have three levels of awareness. These include an awareness of self, interpersonal awareness and systemic awareness. The systemic level of awareness forms the foundation for social action. Counselors gain a sense of social responsibility to

remove those ills for the client through awareness of how the environment influences client behavior and by recognizing that those behaviors are merely symptoms of systemic level ills.

Moeschberger et al. (2006) discuss factors that influence an individual to be moved to care about social justice issues. Central to their argument is awareness, a concept tied directly to a person's central identity; defined as having an increased understanding of the self in relation to the world. In their model, Moeschberger et al. (2006) discuss four experiences that interact with and influence one another in a nonlinear format that influence an individual to strive to facilitate change. One component is contact with a conflict or injustice, either firsthand or by learning about the experience of another person. The authors argue that at this point the individual may feel overwhelmed and may not act upon the injustice; other conditions must occur in order to engage in social action. Another component is the ongoing process of awareness. The individual invests in becoming more aware by paying attention to circumstances and choosing not to ignore or turn away from them. The investment is emotional because injustice has an implicitly negative effect on well-being that leads the individual to devote energy to see change occur (Moeschberger et al., 2006). In order to stay motivated, change agents must maintain a sense that transformation is possible and that engagement is worthwhile and complements their personal and cultural beliefs of what is just. The chances of getting involved are further increased if the individual feels socially responsible and that they have the skills needed to make changes (i.e. self-efficacious). An internal conflict develops within the individual as he or she negotiates between the need for action and the desire to avoid possible sacrifices of engaging in social action,

such as alienation, and eroded relationships. It is extremely important that the individual recognizes the small steps he or she can take to avoid being overwhelmed, such as learning more about the situation or consulting with colleagues, friends, or family. Another component the authors discuss is learning about the context and historical factors that relate to the social injustice. Historical, social, and individual contexts are vital to understanding the dynamics of a situation where there is social injustice (Moeschberger et al., 2006). Such a situation can be seen as including a microsystem, the home, which interconnects with a larger exosystem, or community, and macrosystem or society; each with its own set of beliefs and values for its members and the systems with which it interconnects (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For the individual to challenge the injustice, having direct contact with the reality of the client is required. The final component of the model involves identifying and engaging the injustice and participating through activism. The solution, empowerment of the oppressed persons, will not come from the individual alone, but rather through various resources. The result is that members of the oppressed groups have greater power and influence over their current and future circumstances. If social inequities are to be eliminated, it is imperative that counselors are aware of and acknowledge that racial discrimination is one of the contributing factors to the injustices in society.

Colorblind Racial Ideology

If counselors are unaware of inequities and lack interest in social justice, they are unlikely to engage in social justice. Counselors cannot be blind to institutional forms of inequities in order for social justice to take place (Moeschberger et al., 2006). A number of social inequities in American society often affect racially diverse populations.

Colorblind racial ideology is a relatively new concept used to explain contemporary racial beliefs in the United States. Colorblind racial ideology has been defined in numerous ways to describe post-Civil Rights racial socialization in the United States. In professional literature, the word “colorblindness” has been used interchangeably with terms such as “colorblind white dominance” (Haney Lopez, 2006), “blind vision” (Cochran-Smith, 2000), “colorblind racism” (Freeman, 2005), and “laissez-faire racism” (Bobo, Klugel, & Smith, 1997). Regardless of the term used, the underlying concept has become the prevailing form of contemporary racism in American society (Tarca, 2005).

Colorblindness is a complex set of shared beliefs or ideology that has emerged to support the new racial structure in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). There are four types of colorblindness: (a) abstract liberalism, the anti-affirmative action ideal, i.e., race should not play a factor in an institution’s decisions on possible candidates or students; (b) biological culture colorblindness, the belief that racial disparity is due to specific cultural distinctions and not racism; (c) the naturalization of racial matters, i.e., the tendency to believe that one's ethnic or cultural group is centrally important, and that all other groups are measured in relation to one's own; and (d) minimization of racism, and the denial of institutional racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2001).

Colorblind racial attitudes are also defined as an individual’s denial of the social significance of race and the dismissal or reduction of the existence of contemporary racism in the United States (Neville et al., 2000). Colorblind attitudes contain three central components: (a) a denial of White privilege, (b) the rejection of institutional racism, and (c) denial of the continuance of racial discrimination (Neville et al., 2000). The logic of the colorblind approach is circular, i.e., since race no longer shapes life

chances in a colorblind world, there is no need to take race into account when discussing the differences in outcomes between racial groups (Gallagher, 2003). Those who maintain a colorblind racial attitude believe that racial categories are unimportant and should therefore not be considered in decisions of employment or school admissions (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2003).

The Dangers of Maintaining a Colorblind Racial Ideology

Since colorblind viewpoints maintain rather than dismantle the social order of races in the United States, adopting a colorblind racial ideology has a number of implications for both the individual taking on this perspective and the institutions in which the individual operates (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). For educators operating from this belief system, colorblind racial ideology could be detrimental to closing the various educational gaps and to changing the status quo in schools. To the individual functioning from this outlook, conversations about race and race-related inequities would be considered wrong or impolite (Tarca, 2005). Common behaviors include simply ignoring the conversation completely, which can be detrimental to those who serve people of color. Using statistical data and 14 interviews with key school personnel and statistical data in a rural Pennsylvania school district experiencing an increase in its African-American population, Tarca (2005) found that colorblind racial ideology manifested itself through language. This unique qualitative research found that the discussion of race was viewed as impolite and that individuals used various codes as substitutions for conversations about race. Institutional colorblindness manifested in the district when school officials refused to disaggregate state test scores until it became federally mandated in 2001. Tarca (2005) noted that “colorblindness as an ideology gives rise to

difference-blind institutions that shun racially informed decision making” (p. 112).

Thoughts and behaviors such as these are based on the supposition that racism is a matter of distinct prejudice rather than a structural occurrence (Kandaswamy, 2007).

Similar results were found in a multi-year ethnographic study of a 1,200-student middle school in the Northeast United States. Schofield (1986) concluded that the colorblind perspective was widely held by the school community. The school population consisted of 50% African American students and 50% White students. Teachers consistently denied that they noticed a student’s race, and they rarely used words such as “White” or “Black” in conversation. Furthermore, teacher interviews revealed that, although teachers believed that they treated all students equally, clear stereotypes emerged. Schofield (1986) concluded that the colorblind racial ideology predominated because it reduced the potential for overt racial conflict and minimized the discomfort associated with discussions of race. However, this belief system caused several setbacks within the school environment, including increased disciplinary action against students of color and the persistence of the status quo in course materials that did not reflect the accomplishments of African Americans.

Lewis (2001) examined the racial attitudes of individuals living in a middle class suburban all-White school community. Race was trivialized and downplayed by the principal and teachers in the school. Racial slurs said by students were ignored and excused by the adults in the school as regular comments children say to one another. Individuals in the community widely held meritocratic beliefs, i.e., success or failure is based solely according to individual merit.

In another qualitative study, Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) focused on the language used by those who work from a colorblind racial ideology. Through interviews with college students, the researchers found that those who adopted a colorblind racial ideology employed semantic moves such as avoidance or racist language and avoided racial terminology altogether when explaining racially based or racially perceived issues such as affirmative action, school busing or interracial dating; they were “more adept to navigate the dangerous waters of America’s contemporary racial landscape and to know all the stylistic tools available to save face” (p. 50).

Whites often view the experiences of people of color as a tourist experience rather than a place for substantial critical query (Kandaswamy, 2007). Colorblindness replicates existing power relations and perpetuates White privilege (Gordon, 2005). Whites adopting colorblind racial ideology reinforce racism without adopting any responsibility; referred to as the “this is not me” approach (Gordon, 2005). Richeson and Nussbaum (2003) determined that exposure to the colorblind perspective produced greater automatic expressions of racial bias in 52 White undergraduate students. After reading a passage about ethnic relations, the students took an implicit association test that related the terms “white” and “black” to “good” and “bad” concepts. The researchers determined that students who read a one-page statement endorsing multiculturalism had fewer expression of racial bias than those who read a one page statement endorsing a colorblind approach to race relations.

The condition of colorblindness implies that every situation is predictable; in other words, neutrality prevails at the cost of ignoring key information. Hicks (2005) believes colorblind racial ideology has “comfortably conditioned” many individuals to

function from a rhythm of predictability that denies the conditions that students of color and their families bring with them to school (p. 124). The perceived benefit of this rhythm of predictability to the educator is that she/he is not obligated to consider the details of each situation with each student. Similarly, Freeman (2005) believes colorblindness “deliberately masks the systemic nature of racial stratification and serves to neutralize challenges to the existing racial order” (p. 191).

Within schools, colorblind racial ideology can manifest through the ideal of “equality.” This notion, which advocates imposing the same policies and procedures for all students, can hinder a school’s ability to reach students individually. The institutional colorblindness principle is manifested through the belief that schools must remain neutral and every student will acquire the same consequences for the same behaviors, thereby ignoring the effects of oppression and racism. Equity, on the other hand, is the belief that educators treat students on the basis of individual needs. Holcomb-McCoy (2007) urged educators to “strike a balance between equity and equality in their school practices because both are critical to promoting success to all students” (p. 21). In a recent survey of middle and high school counselors, counselors were more likely to demonstrate a commitment to equality when working in schools with larger rates of minority students and with larger percentages of students from lower socioeconomic statuses (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). When education policy is divorced from the reality of racial and social structures, inequities in schools are perpetuated.

Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale

Neville et al. (2000) created the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) to assess an individual’s level of colorblindness. In order to validate the instrument, the

researchers used it to conduct several studies. The instrument assesses three subscales of color-blind racial attitudes: Racial Privilege, Blatant Racial Issues, and Institutional Discrimination. The Racial Privilege subscale measures the level of unawareness of the existence of White privilege. The Blatant Racial Issues subscale measures the level of unawareness of general, pervasive racial discrimination. The Institutional Discrimination subscale measures the awareness of the implications of institutional forms of racial discrimination and exclusion. Using a sample of college students and community members, the results revealed that, overall, participants of color demonstrated fewer colorblind racial attitudes compared to their White counterparts (Neville et al., 2000). Latino participants reported lower Racial Privilege and Blatant Racial Issues than both Black and White participants. White participants reported lower Blatant Racial Issues scores than Black participants. Black participants also scored lower Institutional Discrimination scores than both Latino and White individuals. The CoBRAS demonstrated good concurrent validity with other measures of racial prejudice and Belief in Just World measures (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), which suggests that higher levels of colorblind racial attitudes are associated with both increased racial prejudice and a greater belief in a just world. The CoBRAS instrument was not associated with social desirability as measured by the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, as the CoBRAS only accounted for 4% of the variance.

The notion of colorblind racial attitudes is theoretically consistent with multicultural counseling competence in that it assesses a specific component of multicultural counseling competency (Neville et al., 2000). In 2006, Neville et al. conducted a study with 130 mental health workers and applied psychology students.

Results indicated that participants held low to moderate levels of colorblind racial beliefs and self-reported moderate levels of multicultural counseling competence as measured by the Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale (MCKAS; Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Rieger, & Austin, 2002). The authors specified a negative association between the CoBRAS and multicultural awareness (-.49) and a small association with multicultural knowledge (-.29). Additionally, the authors reported a negative correlation between the CoBRAS and case conceptualization ability for etiology and treatment. Overall, colorblind racial attitudes accounted for a significant amount of variance in the extent to which participants incorporated race and cultural issues in conceptualizing a case. After controlling for participants' race and training, the authors concluded that the relationship between colorblind racial ideology and knowledge was considerably lower than between colorblind racial ideology and multicultural training.

Chao (2005) sampled 338 members of the American Counseling Association (ACA) using the CoBRAS. Hierarchical regression analyses indicated that, after controlling for social desirability, higher levels of ethnic identity and awareness of racial attitudes correlated with items on the Multicultural Knowledge and Awareness Scale (MCKAS). Social desirability was significantly associated with a participant's perceived multicultural counseling competence. In addition, Chao (2005) found higher scores of colorblind racial attitudes were related to lower scores of multicultural competence.

Gushue and Constantine (2007) sent packets of questionnaires containing the CoBRAS to 177 counseling and clinical psychology graduate students to determine the relationship between colorblind racial attitudes and White racial identity. They found that higher levels of beliefs invalidating the existence of modern racism were positively

associated with lower levels of White racial identity. Alternatively, greater levels of awareness of racism were positively associated with higher levels of White racial identity. The authors concluded that individuals holding colorblind beliefs may influence a practitioner's ability to form working alliances with clients of color.

In conclusion, higher levels of colorblind racial attitudes are associated with: (a) increased racial prejudice and a greater belief in a just world (Neville et al., 2000); (b) the extent to which counselors incorporate race in conceptualizing a case (Neville et al., 2006); (c) lower scores on instruments that measure multicultural counseling competence (Chao, 2005; Neville, et al., 2006); and (d) a denial of the existence of modern racism and lower levels of White racial identity (Gushue & Constantine, 2007). Clearly maintaining high levels of colorblind racial ideology is detrimental in effectively working with clients of color, particularly clients that have been historically marginalized and oppressed. Having an awareness of social injustices is an important first step, but not enough to become a social justice advocate. This is particularly crucial for urban school counselors who work with marginalized student populations. Although this research is useful, additional variables need to be explored in order to investigate how a counselor's awareness of injustices translates into social action. Social justice self-efficacy, social justice outcome expectations, and social justice support and barriers may also influence counselors' social justice interest and commitment.

A Social-Cognitive Perspective to Social Justice Interest and Commitment

Intent to engage in social justice advocacy is predictive of actual behavior (Nilsson and Schmidt, 2005). Multiple factors must be examined in order to understand how individuals develop interest and commitment to social justice advocacy work. Miller

et al. (2009) utilized social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994; Lent et al. 2001; 2005) as a conceptual framework for understanding the development of social justice interest and commitment. SCCT delineates how an individual's self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations form interest and choice goals (i.e., commitment). The cognitive framework for social justice interest and commitment includes domain-specific social justice related self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, interests, choice goals (e.g., commitment to engage in social justice advocacy efforts in the future) and social supports and barriers (See Figure 1).

The SCCT model is employed as a framework in this study for a number of reasons. First, research specific to SCCT has produced a myriad of empirical support (Lent et al., 2003; 2005). Secondly, the SCCT model has established theoretical and practical benefits by explaining the career development of students and professionals in various fields (Lent et al., 2003; 2005) and counseling and counselor training (Lent, Hackett, & Brown, 1998). Thirdly, current research in social justice has shown the SCCT model as a useful model in examining social justice. Self-efficacy and outcome expectations have been linked to social justice advocacy and the intent to engage in social justice advocacy was found to be predictive of actual engagement (Nilsson & Schmidt, 2005; Morrison Van Voorhis & Hostetter, 2006). This is consistent with the theory of SCCT as choice goals (i.e., intent) are predictive of actual behavior (Miller et al., 2009).

Social Justice Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1986). It is a dynamic set of beliefs that is particular to performance domains

that interact with other person, behavior and contextual factors (Lent et al., 1994).

Personal accomplishments have the potential to exercise the greatest influence on self-efficacy (Lent & Brown, 2006). In other words, successful experiences tend to raise self-efficacy and failure experiences tend to lower self-efficacy in relation to any given task. People with higher levels of self-efficacy in a particular area of their behavior set higher goals; exhibit stronger commitment, motivation, resilience, and perseverance; and are therefore more likely to meet their goals (Bandura, 1986).

Social justice self-efficacy is defined as an individual's perceived ability to engage in social justice advocacy behaviors (Miller et al., 2009). Tasks are performed along four domains: (a) intrapersonal (e.g., self-awareness and monitoring); (b) interpersonal (e.g., educating others about social inequities and encouraging others to become involved in advocacy work); (c) community (e.g., performing advocacy work for community-specific needs); (d) political or institutional (e.g., challenging oppressive policies and practices) (Miller et al., 2009). Social justice self-efficacy impacts the decisions an individual makes regarding engaging in advocacy work, the level of effort a person puts forward in advocacy, the degree to which an individual stays committed to social justice in the face of obstacles, and individual feelings about social justice advocacy.

Social Justice Outcome Expectations

Personal beliefs about outcome expectations are another factor relating to social justice advocacy. While self-efficacy beliefs are about perceived abilities, outcome expectations relate to imagined consequences of performing specific behaviors (Lent et

al., 1994). Individuals are prone to attempt behaviors they see as likely to gain them high valued outcomes and to avoid behaviors that may result in consequences.

Social justice outcome expectations are the perceived positive outcome that might result from engaging in social justice advocacy. Miller et al. (2009) distinguished between several classes of outcome expectations including social (e.g., benefiting underserved populations, material (e.g., monetary gains and/or privilege or access), and self-evaluative (e.g., fulfilling personal ideals or values) that affect social justice engagement. Outcome expectations also differ in evaluative direction and strength in that one can expect positive, negative or neutral outcomes as a consequence of taking on a social justice activity (Lent and Brown, 2006).

Social Justice Interest

Social justice interests are patterns of likes, dislikes and indifference regarding different advocacy activities (Lent & Brown, 2006). According to SCCT, individual's interests are formed over the course of childhood when one is exposed to a range of activities that could potentially have application in a future career. This environmental exposure could be through observation or by hearing about other individuals performing a number of different tasks. As they are exposed, the individual is reinforced for pursuing certain activities from among those that are possible and for achieving satisfactory performance in those activities. Through repeated engagement, modeling and feedback from important persons in the child's life, individuals refine their skills and form a sense of efficacy in particular tasks and obtain certain expectations about the outcomes of their performance. These perceptions of self-efficacy and outcomes form interests, in that individuals form interests in activities in which they view themselves to be efficacious

and in which they can anticipate positive outcomes (Lent et al., 1994). When neutral or negative outcomes are foreseen and when self-efficacy is low, it could be difficult for interests to develop.

Social Justice Commitment

Social justice commitment refers to the type of activity one wishes to pursue or the domain-specific activities related to social justice advocacy that an individual intends to pursue (Miller et al., 2009). Referred to as choice-content goals, commitment can be defined as the intention to engage in a particular activity or to produce a particular outcome (Bandura, 1986). These goals motivate and drive behaviors to achieve an articulated goal or commitment (Miller et al., 2009).

Social Justice Supports and Barriers

Social justice supports and barriers are contextual factors that refer to perceived anticipated proximal supports, which serve to facilitate goal attainment, such as access to a role model, and barriers, such as not having support from family, which serve to obstruct goal attainment as part of the pursuit of social justice engagement (Miller et al., 2009). The existence of high supports and low barriers are assumed to reinforce goals and their likelihood of being performed (Lent & Brown, 2006). Lent et al. (1994) argue that supports and barriers are based on personal perceptions of the environment, in other words, the individual interprets the contextual inputs as positive (i.e., supportive) or negative (i.e., barriers).

Testing the Social Cognitive Model of Social Justice Interest and Commitment

Miller et al. (2009) used this framework to explain a number of SCCT hypotheses regarding the development of social justice interest and commitment in a sample of 274

undergraduate students in a large northeastern university. Confirmatory factor analysis and latent variable path modeling were used to test the fit of the model and the direct and indirect effects hypothesized. The model exhibited adequate fit to the data, Satorra-Bentler $X^2(215, N=274) = 413.954$, RMSEA = .058, SRMR = .051, CFI = .94. All of the factor loadings were significant. The relationships between social barriers and self efficacy ($r = -.123, t = -1.678, p > .05$), social barriers and outcome expectations ($r = .033, t = .473, p > .05$), social barriers and interests ($r = -.077, t = .990, p > .05$) and social barriers and commitment ($r = -.076, t = -.985, p > .05$) were not significant.

Miller et al.'s (2009) first hypothesis stated that social justice self-efficacy beliefs would impact the development of social justice interests directly and indirectly through outcome expectations. In other words, the higher an individual's social justice self-efficacy and the more positive his or her outcome expectations are specific to social justice activities, the more interested the individual will be in social justice advocacy work (paths a-c in Figure 1). Consistent with prior research (Lent et al. 2001; 2003), self-efficacy and outcome expectations had a direct effect on social justice interest and self-efficacy had an indirect effect (through outcome expectations) on social justice interest.

Their second hypothesis explored the relationship between social justice self-efficacy, outcome expectations and interest, and social justice commitment. The authors hypothesized social justice self-efficacy, outcome expectations and social justice interest would each have a direct effect on social justice commitment (paths d-f in Figure 1). The data analyses confirmed that self-efficacy and outcome expectations had a direct effect on social justice interest, although self-efficacy had a more of an impact on social justice

interest than did outcome expectations. The findings also confirmed that social justice interest had a direct effect on social justice commitment.

Their third hypothesis examined the relationship between social justice supports and barriers, and social justice commitment. The researchers hypothesized that social justice supports and barriers would have a direct effect on social justice commitment, such that higher levels of support and lower levels of barriers to social justice result in a higher likelihood of an individual committing to social justice work (paths g and h in Figure 1). This hypothesis was not supported by the data analyses.

For the fourth hypothesis, the authors stated that social justice support and barriers would indirectly affect social justice commitment through social justice self-efficacy. In other words increased levels of support and decreased levels of barriers may increase self-efficacy which effects social justice commitment (paths i and j in Figure 1). This hypothesis was confirmed, social justice specific social supports impact social justice commitment by enhancing social justice self-efficacy beliefs. Miller, Sendrowitz, Connacher, Blanco, & Muniz-De La Peña (2007) further explain that if an individual comes into contact with people who are successfully engaged in social justice advocacy work (i.e., a social justice social support), it is possible that the individual will experience an increase in self-efficacy beliefs.

Since the researchers were the first to use SCCT theory to explain social justice interest and commitment, a post hoc analysis was conducted to explore whether the relationships among the variables may differ in the social justice domain. Social justice supports and barriers had an indirect effect on social justice commitment through social justice outcome expectations. Social justice supports also impact social justice

commitment by enhancing social justice self-efficacy beliefs and producing more positive social justice outcome expectations. Social barriers did not show any effects on social justice commitment, but did demonstrate an indirect effect on social justice commitment through social justice outcome expectations. In other words, lower perceived barriers resulted in positive outcome expectations, which impact social justice interest and commitment.

Although this research study contributes significantly to the social justice literature, there are limitations. Since the sample included all college undergraduate students that consisted of mostly middle-class, female, White participants, generalizability to other populations is limited.

Miller and Sendrowitz (2011) extended research using the SCCT approach to understanding social justice interest and commitment. For this study, the authors recruited 229 doctoral counseling psychology trainees. In this model, the social justice supports and barriers variables were collapsed into one variable and were renamed training environment supports and barriers, since the sample consisted of counseling psychology students. The authors contend that training environments that provide opportunities, supervision, time, and resources for social justice advocacy efforts could potentially develop pre-professional counselors' growth; by contrast, the absence of these training environment factors could potentially delay trainees' social justice development (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011). The researchers also sought to explore personal moral imperative as an additional variable in the path analysis model. Personal moral imperative refers to the process by which individuals discern injustices that compel them to take action (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). The individual must examine a social justice

situation in regards to personal values and beliefs and the situational context and make a decision as to the specific course of action (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011). The authors hypothesized that personal moral imperative impacts social justice commitment indirectly by raising levels of self-efficacy and outcome expectations.

Participants completed the SIQ, the Social Justice Training Environment Supports and Barriers scale (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011) which was developed for the particular study and the Personal Moral Imperative Scale (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2008).

Confirmatory factor analysis and latent path variable path modeling were used to test measurement and structural models. Social justice interest exhibited a direct effect on social justice commitment, this suggests that counseling psychology trainees with higher levels of interest in social justice advocacy will more likely commit to it in the future. As opposed to the previous study (Miller et al., 2009), self-efficacy did have a direct effect on participants' social justice commitment. Social justice training environment supports and barriers impacted social justice commitment indirectly by raising social justice self-efficacy. Personal moral imperative for social justice lead to higher social justice commitment directly and indirectly by increasing self-efficacy beliefs and generating more positive outcome expectations, confirming the hypothesis. Social justice training environment and personal moral imperative were significant predictors of social justice commitment. However, training environment supports and barriers did not have an effect on social justice commitment directly or indirectly through outcome expectations.

This research study had a number of limitations. Although social justice training environment was a significant predictor of social justice commitment, knowing what aspects of the training program led to commitment is unknown. The sample consisted of

majority White, female, middle class participants; therefore, generalizability to other counseling student trainees is limited. Additionally, use of author developed training environment and personal moral imperative scales limited the degree of construct validity in the study.

Exploring Urban School Counselors' Social Justice Interest and Commitment

The school counseling literature is filled with publications that make the argument for incorporating social justice advocacy in practice, encourage training and skill development for social action, and outline standards and competencies that school counselors need to be effective advocates (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Cox & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; House & Hayes, 2002; Mitcham, Portman, & Dean, 2009; Singh et al., 2010; Trusty and Brown, 2005). Although the belief in social justice advocacy has been a force in the school counseling literature for a number of years, more research assessing counselors' social justice beliefs and ways in which social justice is practiced should be explored if the movement is to gain any credibility within the field (Ratts, 2009; Smith et al., 2009). A review of the school counseling literature shows little quantitative research investigating counselors' belief in social justice advocacy and strategies and practices counselors are using in schools to create equitable environments for their students. If the field of school counseling is to claim social justice advocacy as a central value, it is critical to explore and understand school counselors' awareness of injustices, and factors relating to an interest in and a lasting commitment to social justice, particularly in the urban context, where the need to narrow educational gaps are most prevalent.

The present study aims to explore the relationship between urban school counselors' level of colorblind racial ideology and factors related to their social justice interest and commitment, using the SCCT social justice model as a conceptual framework. This study expands previous research (Miller et al., 2009) by adding colorblind racial ideology as a variable into the model (See Figure 2) as the need for awareness of injustices have been discussed as an important factor to school counselors engaging in social justice work (Lee & Hipolito-Delgado, 2007; Moeschberger et al., 2006). Based on Miller et al.'s (2009) research, the following six hypotheses are proposed: (1) social justice self-efficacy will have a direct effect (Path b in Figure 2) and indirect effect (through outcome expectations) on social justice interest (Paths a and c in Figure 2); (2) social justice self-efficacy, social justice outcome expectations and social justice interest will have direct effects on social justice commitment (Paths d-f in Figure 2); (3) social justice social supports and barriers will have a direct effect on social justice commitment (Paths g and h in Figure 2); (4) social justice supports and barriers will have an indirect effect (through social justice self-efficacy) on social justice commitment (Path i and j in Figure 2); (5) social justice supports and barriers will have a direct effect on social justice outcomes (path k and l in Figure 2); (6) colorblind racial ideology will have a direct effect on social justice commitment and will also have indirect effect (through social justice interest) on social justice commitment (paths m and n in Figure 2).

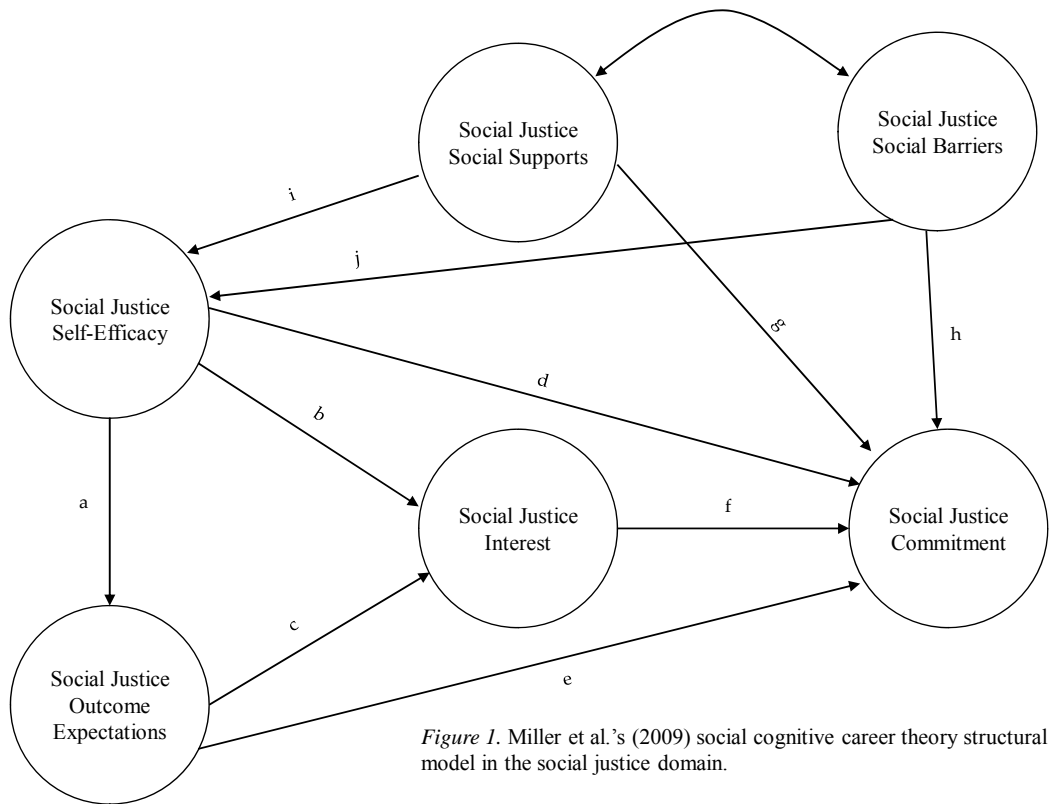


Figure 1. Miller et al.'s (2009) social cognitive career theory structural model in the social justice domain.

In the current study, social justice self-efficacy is predicted to have a direct effect and indirect effect (through outcome expectations) on social justice interest. Social justice self-efficacy is also predicted to have a direct effect on social justice commitment. Self-efficacy theory is important in understanding school counselors' motivation and ability to perform tasks specific to social justice advocacy. Multicultural self-efficacy is defined as counselors' perceived abilities (i.e., beliefs) to carry out and perform tasks that are relevant and specific to equity among students in K-12 schools (Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines & Johnston, 2008). Holcomb-McCoy et al. (2008) argued that if

professional school counselors do not perceive that they are capable of performing tasks related to equity, then they will likely avoid those tasks or think of such tasks as insignificant.

Bodenhorn, Wolfe, and Aren (2010) reported that school counselors with higher self-efficacy were more aware of achievement gap data, and were more likely to report narrowing achievement gaps. The authors suggested that all school counselors might start out with a similar goal of narrowing the achievement gap in their schools, but those with stronger self-efficacy might be more likely to retain and meet that goal (i.e., have positive outcome expectations) and those with lower self-efficacy who could be more likely to give up on the goal or revert to the status quo of practice (Bodenhorn et al., 2010). Therefore, this research implies that a higher level of self-efficacy will lead to more positive outcome expectations that lead a school counselor to be interested in and committed to engaging in social justice advocacy work. For this study however, the researchers recruited ASCA members for the sample, which is a limitation given that ASCA members may be more aware of current issues and practices than nonmembers. Thus, the results may not be generalizable to the entire population of school counselors.

In the current study, outcome expectations are predicted to have a direct effect on social justice commitment. School counselors who can envision positive outcomes from their work will more likely be committed to social justice advocacy. Positive outcome expectancy for certain behaviors may serve as a regulator of those behaviors. Sutton and Fall (1995) argue that a school counselor who is requested to perform certain nonrelated school counseling tasks may do so willingly, knowing that the action will be appreciated; the positive outcome expectancy of being appreciated serves as the regulator. Similarly, a

negative outcome expectancy for behaviors may serve as an extinguisher of those behaviors. Therefore the school counselor who receives negative feedback from colleagues and administrators may suspend systemic level interventions, even though they seem to be beneficial to students.

Social justice supports are predicted to have a direct effect on social justice self-efficacy and social justice outcome expectations. In a school environment, support from administrators, faculty, parents and community is key to engaging in social justice advocacy work (Adelman & Taylor, 2002). Sutton and Fall (1995) examined the relationship between school counselor self-efficacy and school climate. School counselor self-efficacy was measured with the Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale, a scale modified from a teacher self-efficacy scale (Gibson and Dembo, 1984). Their results indicated that supportive staff and administrators were the strongest predictors of high school counselor self-efficacy. In addition, outcome expectations for school counselor behavior were predicted by both a high degree of support from staff and administrators and fewer nonrelated counseling activities performed by school counselors. Therefore, counselors who perform services outside their general roles and training have lower outcome expectations for their school-counselor-related behaviors. This research has a few limitations. First, the sample included counselors from the state of Maine, which is predominantly rural. Therefore results are not generalizable to all school counselors, particularly urban school counselors. Secondly, the instrument used to measure self-efficacy was adapted from a teacher self-efficacy scale, teacher and counselor roles in the school are different, therefore, this instrument may not accurately assess school counselor self-efficacy. However, this research has major implications since without support from

administrators, teachers and the community, school counselors may not likely be interested in or committed to social justice advocacy work.

In the current study, social justice barriers are predicted to have a direct effect on social justice self-efficacy and social justice outcome expectations. Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) describe a number of institutional barriers school counselors may have to contend with in engaging in social justice advocacy work such as school policy and the expectations of other educators. The authors discuss self-efficacy as a barrier in that school counselors may feel inadequately trained and may underestimate the skills they possess. Another barrier is the expectations that other staff members, administration and parents may have about the roles of the school counselor. Additionally, a lack of time for engaging in social justice activities can be a barrier. Through focus group interviews with nine school counselors, Field and Baker (2004) explored how the school environment created barriers and inhibited school counselors' ability to be advocates. School counselors mentioned a vague job description, amount of paperwork, and lack of time as potential barriers. Additionally one counselor discussed how communication among staff members was low about issues in which the counselor could and should intervene. Communication may not be taking place because teachers or staff members do not conceptualize a counselor's duties in the same way in which a counselor view their roles and responsibilities (Field & Baker, 2004).

Colorblind racial ideology is predicted to have a direct effect on social justice interest and commitment. Since social justice issues typically involve historically marginalized racial groups, the more one espouses colorblind racial attitudes, the less one would be interested in social justice (Miller et al., 2009). Similarly, higher degrees of

colorblind racial attitudes would be negatively related to social justice commitment (Miller et al., 2009).

Relatedly, Parikh (2008) examined how belief in a just world, political ideology, religious ideology, socioeconomic status of origin, and race related to social justice advocacy attitudes among school counseling professionals using survey data from 298 ASCA members. Belief in a just world was negatively correlated with social justice advocacy attitudes. Therefore, school counselors who believe that people deserve what they get (i.e., colorblindness) may be less likely to take part in social justice advocacy. Conversely, if school counselors believe that the world is not fair and individuals do not always deserve what they get (i.e., less colorblind), they are more likely to engage in advocacy behaviors. Although results of this study added a valuable contribution to the research literature by examining how personal constructs relate to social justice advocacy attitudes of practicing school counselors, the results are not generalizable to all school counselors since members of ASCA may be more aware of social justice advocacy related issues in the school counseling profession due to professional membership.

Conclusion

The nation is facing an education crisis that will profoundly affect the social and economic fabric of urban communities for generations to come. In the face of this threat, school counselors are more vital than ever. With their unique and potentially influential positions within schools, counselors can influence and reform education, improving the quality of life of communities and individual students thus guaranteeing them a more prosperous future. To accomplish this, school counselors need to align their services with the mission and vision of social justice advocacy. Becoming more aware of the social

injustices that impede students' progress is an important first step. Beyond that, school counselors must develop a strong sense of social justice self-efficacy, envision positive outcomes, and have strong support systems and a minimal number of barriers. Only then can their interest in and commitment to social justice advocacy be realized.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a summary of the issues pertaining to the urban school context, particularly the educational gaps found between various groups of students, and explored the role of school counselors in closing these gaps. This included addressing the need for school counselors to be multiculturally competent, and expanding the vision of multicultural competence to embrace social justice advocacy. This chapter defined key terms and summarized the counseling literature pertaining to social justice advocacy as well as the relevant literature on the theoretical dimensions of colorblind racial ideology and colorblind research. A social cognitive career development model was proposed in order to investigate factors relating to urban school counselors' interest in and commitment to social justice. Finally, relevant literature supporting the proposed hypotheses was presented.

Chapter III

Method

This chapter will provide a description of the methodology, including the hypotheses, participants, procedures, instrumentation, and statistical analyses that was employed to investigate the following research question:

How are the colorblind racial ideology and social justice factors (i.e., social justice social supports, social justice barriers, social justice self efficacy and social justice outcome expectations) of urban school counselors related to social justice interest and commitment?

Based on previous research (Miller et al., 2009; 2011), the following research hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Social justice self-efficacy will have a direct effect (Path b in Figure 2) and indirect effect (through outcome expectations) on social justice interest (Paths a-c in Figure 2).

Hypothesis 2: Social justice self-efficacy, social justice outcome expectations, and social justice interest will have direct effects on social justice commitment (Paths d-f in Figure 2).

Hypothesis 3: Social justice social supports and barriers will have a direct effect on social justice commitment (Paths g and h in Figure 2).

Hypothesis 4: Social justice supports and barriers have an indirect effect (through social justice self-efficacy) on social justice commitment (Path i and j in Figure 2).

Hypothesis 5: Social justice supports and barriers will have a direct effect on social justice outcomes (path k and l in Figure 2).

Hypothesis 6: Colorblind racial ideology will have a direct effect on social justice commitment and will also have indirect effect (through social justice interest) on social justice commitment (paths m and n in Figure 2).

Participants

Participants were recruited from urban school districts via snowball sample in order to gather data from a specific population. Through personal contacts, the researcher was able to purposefully target urban school counselors, who, in turn, forwarded the recruitment email and electronic link to the survey instrument to other professional school counselor colleagues. A total of 367 school counselors were initially contacted via email and sent a link to the electronic questionnaire on the Survey Monkey website. The number of total participants recruited to complete the survey is unknown as this sample was collected via snowball. One hundred and forty eight respondents agreed to participate and began the survey. However, only 129 respondents completed the survey.

A majority of the participants were female (81.3%). The predominant racial/ethnic background of the counselors was White (58.9%) followed by African American (27.7%), Hispanic/Latino (9.8%), Asian (2.7%), and Other (.9%). Of all the respondents, 44.6% reported having less than 5 years of counseling experience, 24% have 5-10 years of counseling experience, 13% have 10-15 years, 9% have 15-20 years, and 9% reported having more than 20 years of counseling experience. The highest percentage of participants (37%) listed “public high school” as their current school setting, followed

by “public elementary school” (32%), and “public middle school” (18%). The remaining participants listed either “private/charter school” (9.8%) or “public elementary/middle school combination” (3.6%). Ninety-three percent of counselors described their school location as “urban,” while 7% of respondents indicated they worked in a “suburban” location; no counselors surveyed indicated they practiced in a “rural” location.

In describing the racial demographics of the student population at their schools, about half of the school counselors (53.6%) estimated that 50-75% of students enrolled at their current school are students of color, while 46.4% estimated their student populations comprised 75% or more students of color. No respondent surveyed reported having less than 50% of students of color in their school population. Therefore, all school counselors in the sample practice at high-minority schools. In describing the population of students eligible for Free and Reduces Meals (FARMS), 43% of respondents estimated 50-75% eligibility and 33.9% estimated over 75% eligibility for the FARMS program. No respondents indicated that less than 50% of their student populations are eligible for FARMS; therefore, all participants in the sample practice at high-poverty schools.

Procedures

School counselors were sent an email that informed them that they have been selected to participate in a study that examines social issues. The initial email explained the purpose of the study, the voluntary and confidential nature of the study, the University of Maryland Institutional Review Board statements, and a link to the online questionnaire with guidelines for completing the online survey (see Appendix A). Additionally, the body of the email encouraged school counselors to forward the electronic link to the survey to any practicing urban school counselors they knew. Each

participant's email address was located in the blind carbon copy portion of the email to maintain confidentiality. A follow-up reminder email was sent to participants seven and ten days after the initial email.

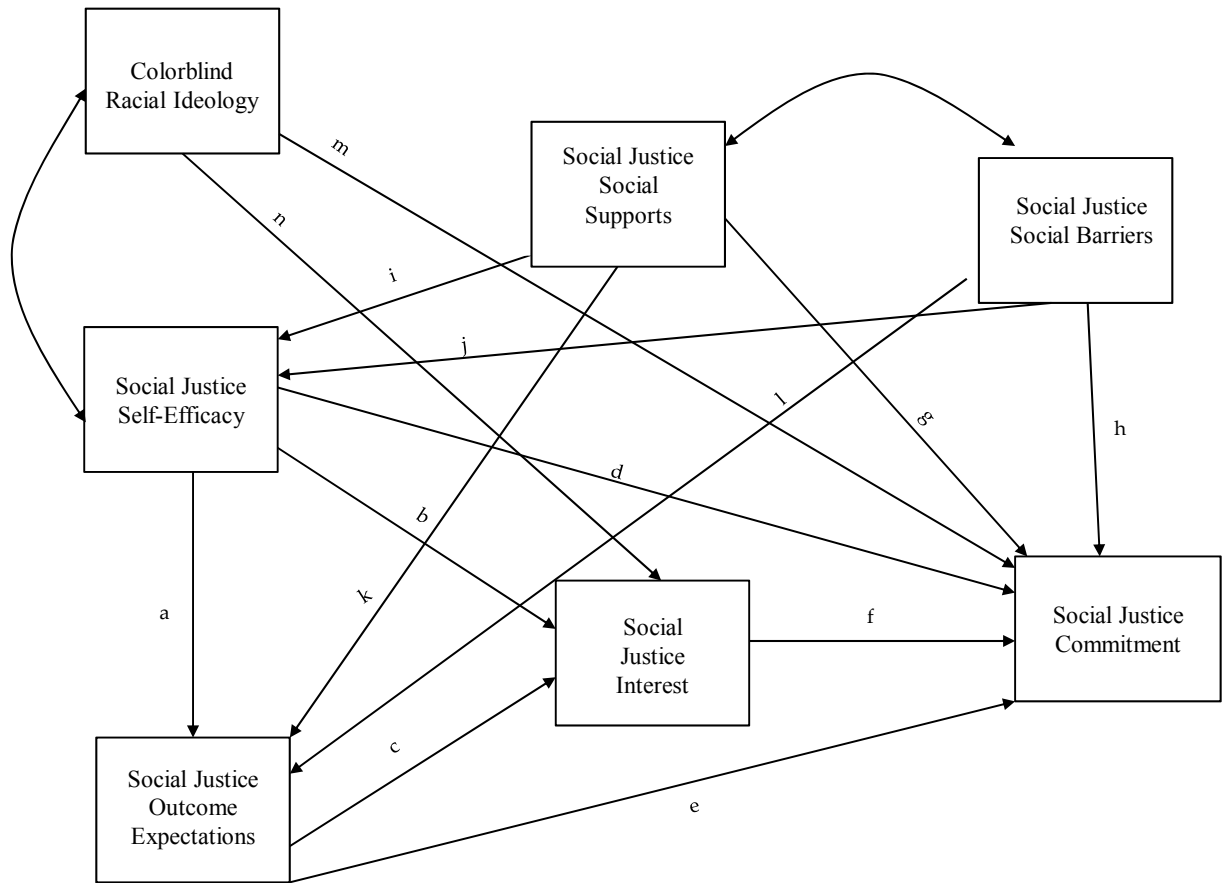


Figure 2. Proposed Model.

Instrumentation

Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville, Lily, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). The CoBRAS (see Appendix B; items 7-26) is a 20-item measure that assesses current racial beliefs, but specifically it seeks to “assess the cognitive dimensions of color-blind racial attitudes” (Neville et al., 2000, p. 61). Using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*), items are measured to attain a score ranging from 20 to 120, with greater scores indicating higher levels of racial blindness or denial of racism in the United States. The alpha coefficient for the total score was .91 according to Neville et al. (2000). The CoBRAS has three subscales: Racial Privilege, Institutional Discrimination, and Blatant Racial Issues.

The Racial Privilege subscale contains seven items that assess an individual’s unawareness of White privilege (e.g., “white people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin”). This subscale has scores ranging from 7 to 42, with higher scores demonstrating greater levels of denial of racial privilege. Neville et al. (2000) reported the coefficient alpha for Racial Privilege is .83. The Institutional Discrimination scale has seven items that measure an individual’s limited awareness of the implications of institutional forms of racial discrimination (e.g., “social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people”). This subscale has scores ranging from 7 to 42, with higher scores indicating a greater unawareness of institutional forms of racism. Neville et al. (2000) reported the coefficient alpha for Institutional Discrimination scale as .81. The Blatant Racial Issues scale consists of six items that measure that denial of the pervasive nature of racism (e.g., “racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today”). Scores on this

scale range from 6 to 36, with higher scores indicating higher levels of unawareness of blatant racial issues. The authors reported the coefficient alpha for the Blatant Racial Issues scale as .76.

Social Issues Questionnaire (SIQ; Miller, M. J., Sendrowitz, K., Connacher, C., Blanco, S., Muniz de la Peña, C., Morere, L., & Bernardi, S., 2007) The SIQ (See Appendix B; items 28-32) is a 52-item scale adapted from Lent et al.'s (2001; 2005; 2008) instrument of academic behavior. The adaptation of the SIQ instrument consisted of creating the domain-specific self-efficacy items and changing the major references of outcome expectations, interest, commitment, and social support and barriers to social justice related issues. SIQ items were revised by the authors' review of relevant social justice research literature. Additionally, items were reviewed by experts in the field of social justice and social cognitive career theory. SIQ scale scores are calculated by summation of item responses and then dividing the number of items on each scale. For the purposes of this study, items in the social supports and barriers subscale sections were changed to be domain-specific for school counselors.

Social justice self-efficacy. (See Appendix B; item 28) Social justice self-efficacy is defined as an individual's perceived ability to perform social justice advocacy behaviors across intrapersonal, interpersonal, community and institutional/political domains. The scale consists of 20 items in which participants are asked to rate their confidence in their ability to complete a particular task on a 10-point scale, with 0 indicating no confidence at all and 9 indicating complete confidence in performing social justice advocacy behaviors. Higher scores represent increased confidence in performing the behaviors. Miller et al. (2007) reported internal consistency ranging from .94 to .96

for the social justice self-efficacy score. Miller et al. (2009) reported an internal consistency estimate of .94 for the total scale. The Intrapersonal subscale (e.g., “how much confidence do you have in your ability to examine your own worldview, biases, and prejudicial attitudes after hearing about social injustice”) was reported to have a .80 internal consistency estimate. The Intrapersonal subscale (e.g., “how much confidence do you have in your ability to challenge an individual who displays racial, ethnic, and/or religious intolerance”) was reported to have a .88 internal consistency estimate. The Community subscale (e.g., “how much confidence do you have in your ability to reduce social injustice through your own local fundraising efforts”) was reported to have a .86 internal consistency estimate. The Institutional/Political subscale (e.g., “how much confidence do you have in your ability to lead a group of coworkers in an effort to eliminate workplace discrimination in your place of employment”) was reported to have a .92 internal consistency estimate. Miller et al. (2009) reported social justice self-efficacy subscale intercorrelations ranged from .58 to .75. Criterion-related evidence for construct validity was demonstrated by the theory-consistent relationship between social justice self-efficacy scores and social justice outcome expectations ($r = .56, p < .01$), social justice interests ($r = .63, p < .01$), and social justice commitment scores ($r = .67, p < .01$).

Social justice outcome expectations. (See Appendix B; item 29) Social justice outcome expectations are defined as the perceived outcomes from engaging in social justice advocacy. Social justice outcome expectations scale contains ten items that reflect social (e.g., “help provide equal opportunities for all groups and individuals”), material (e.g., “be more competitive in applying for school or work”), and self-evaluative (e.g., “fulfill a sense of social responsibility”) outcome expectations. Participants are asked to

indicate their level of agreement with each item on a 10-point scale (0= *strongly disagree*; 9= *strongly agree*). Higher scores are indicative of higher levels of expected positive outcomes associated with engaging in social justice advocacy. Miller et al. (2007) reported internal consistency estimates for social justice outcome expectations ranging from .88 to .92 and found that social justice outcome expectations produced theory consistent relations with self-efficacy, interest ($r = .53, p < .01$), and commitment ($r = .50, p < .01$).

Social justice interest. (See Appendix B; item 30) Social justice interest is defined as a pattern of likes, dislikes, and indifferences regarding social justice advocacy activities. Nine social justice items represent activities (e.g., “talking to others about social issues,” “reading about social issues”) in which participants are asked to rate on a 10-point scale (0= *very low interest*; 9= *very high interest*). Higher scores indicate a higher degree of interest in social justice. Miller et al. (2007) reported social justice interest total score to have an internal consistency estimates ranging from .81 to .87. Social justice interest also demonstrated theory-consistent relations with social justice self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and commitment ($r = .68, p < .01$). Social justice interest showed theory consistent relationships with colorblind racial attitudes, since social justice issues typically include racially diverse populations, the higher one’s colorblind racial attitudes, the less likely one would be interested in social justice. This construct validity was supported as a significant negative relationship appeared between social justice interest scores and scores on the CoBRAS (Neville et al., 2000; $r = -.60, p < .01$)

Social justice commitment. (See Appendix B; item 31) Social justice commitment refers to an individual's goals or intentions to engage in social justice advocacy in the future (e.g., "I have a plan of action for ways in which I will remain or become involved in social justice activities over the next year"). Participants are asked to rate four social justice commitment items on a 10-point scale (0 = *strongly disagree*; 9 = *strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate a stronger commitment to social justice engagement in the future. Miller et al. (2007) reported internal consistency estimates ranging from .92 to .94. Furthermore Miller et al. (2007) reported social justice commitment produced theory-consistent relations with social justice self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and interest. Social justice commitment validity was measured with the CoBRAS (Neville et al., 2000) through the hypothesis that the more colorblind an individual is, the less likely that individual would be committed to social justice. Conversely, the more open one is to racial differences and awareness of injustices, the more likely one would be committed to social justice (Miller et al., 2007). This hypothesis was supported as social justice commitment scores were negatively related to scores on the CoBRAS (Neville et al., 2000; $r = -.62, p < .01$).

Social justice supports and barriers. (See Appendix B; item 32) Social justice supports are defined as the perceived social support an individual would expect to receive if he or she was to engage in social justice advocacy. Social justice barriers are defined as perceived social barriers one would likely encounter when engaging in social justice advocacy. Participants are asked to rate five support (e.g. "have access to a role model," "feel support for this decision from important people in your life.") and four barrier items (e.g., "receive negative comments or discouragement from your friends and family

members about your engagement in social justice activities.”) on a 10-point scale (0= *not at all likely*; 9 = *extremely likely*). Higher scores on each scale represent greater perceived social supports and barriers to social justice engagement. Miller et al. (2007) reported internal consistency estimates ranging from .75 to .89 for social justice support and from .63 to .76 for social justice barriers. Miller et al. (2009) reported theory-consistent relations between social justice supports and social justice barriers ($r = -.19, p < .01$) and social justice commitment ($r = .40, p < .01$).

For the purposes of this study, items in this section were altered to reflect domain-specific supports and barriers for school counselors. For example the word “principal” was used instead of the word “parents” when respondents were asked, “If you were engaged in social justice activities, how likely would you be to feel pressure from parents or other important people to change your mind regarding your decision to engage in social justice activities.”

Demographic Questionnaire. The Demographic Questionnaire contains seven items that asks participants’ years of experience as a professional school counselor, race, gender, description of current school setting (elementary, middle, high school or private school), and location of current school (urban, suburban or rural). Participants were also asked to select the percentage of students of color (African-American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Native American or other) enrolled at their current school and percentage of the number of students eligible for the Free and Reduced Meal Program (FARMS) at their current school location. See Appendix B, items 1-7 for a sample of the Demographic Questionnaire items.

Data Analyses

Data was collected through Survey Monkey (<http://surveymonkey.com>). Data from Survey Monkey was downloaded and transferred into an SPSS file for preliminary analyses where descriptive statistics were calculated. Data was then downloaded into AMOS 19.0. In order to answer the research question, path analyses were conducted to explore the fit and direct and indirect effects of the proposed hypothesized path model (See Figure 2) describing the causal effects of the following variables: Colorblind racial ideology (CoBRAS); social justice interest; social justice commitment; social justice supports; social justice barriers; social justice self-efficacy; and social justice outcome expectations.

Path analysis is a way to examine the causal patterns among a set of variables (Stage, Carter, & Nora, 2004). Path analysis tests the hypothetical relationships between the variables, thereby testing individual hypotheses represented in graphical form as a path diagram (Klem, 1995). This statistical method uses a series of regressions to analyze influences on dependent variables in the model; the goal is to provide estimates of the extent and significance of hypothesized casual connections among sets of variables displayed in a path diagram and to offer an opportunity to test the model's reliability with the observed data in order to accept or reject the model's plausibility (Klem, 1995; Stage et al., 2004). A path diagram illustrates the link between variables using arrows to show the causal relationships, a single-headed arrow points cause to effect and a double-headed curved arrow indicates that the two variables are merely correlated, in other words, no causal relationships are assumed (Stage et al., 2004). In path modeling, the independent variables are called exogenous, while the dependent variables are called endogenous. In

the path diagram, endogenous variables would have one or more arrows pointing to them from the other influencing variables (Klem, 1995). Two-headed, curved arrows indicate links from one exogenous variable to another, while straight arrows are used to indicate links from an exogenous variable to an endogenous variable it affects (Klem, 1995).

The path model has two types of effects. The first is the direct effect, and the second is the indirect effect. When the exogenous variable has an arrow directed towards the dependent variable, then it is said to be the direct effect. When an exogenous variable has an effect on the dependent variable, through the other exogenous variable, then it is said to be an indirect effect. To see the total effect of the exogenous variable, the direct and indirect effects are added (Loehlin, 1986). Table 1 provides a list of study variables accompanied by descriptions for the hypothesized path model (See Figure 2). Self-report measures provide observed values for all study variables.

Fit indices evaluate model fit for the data to be examined by showing how well the parameter estimates account for the observed covariances (Smith & McMillan, 2001). Assessing the model's fit to the data involves estimation of parameters or the Beta coefficients that describe the relationships among the study variables. For the current study, a chi-square, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI) and root-mean-squared error of approximation (RMSEA) were used to assess model fit to the data.

A chi-square test for goodness-of-fit requires obtaining a significant χ^2 value ($p < .05$). A statistically nonsignificant chi-squared result is considered optimal, which indicates no statistical difference between the sample and model covariance matrices (Smith & McMillan, 2001). Goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and comparative fit index (CFI) are more specific indices of fit than the chi-squared statistic. GFI takes degrees of

freedom into account and eliminates some of the weaknesses found in using chi-squared statistic (Stage et al., 2004). For the GFI and CFI, values above .950 indicate a good fit (Smith & McMillan, 2001). Root-mean-squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is less affected by sample size than is chi-squared statistic and has more descriptive value (Smith & McMillan, 2001). Interpretation of RMSEA values is considered a 0= perfect fit, < .05 = close fit, .05-.08 = fair fit, .08-.10= mediocre fit, > .10 = poor fit (Smith & McMillan, 2001). The greatest strength of using RMSEA is the ability to outline a confidence interval around its calculated value (Smith & McMillan, 2001).

Chapter Summary

This chapter explored the methodology that was used to explore relationships between variables in a proposed path analysis model. The research question and hypotheses were presented along with an explanation of participants, procedures, instruments, data analyses and limitations of the study.

Table 1

Description of Variables

Variables	Description (measured via self-report)
Social justice self-efficacy*	Twenty items in which participants are asked to rate their confidence in their ability to complete a particular task on a 10-point scale (e.g., “how much confidence do you have in your ability to challenge an individual who displays racial, ethnic, and/or religious intolerance”) (item 28 in Appendix B)
Social justice outcome expectations*	Ten items in which participants are asked to rate their level of agreement with a social (e.g., “help provide equal opportunities for all groups and individuals”), material (e.g., “be more competitive in applying for school or work”), and self-evaluative (e.g., “fulfill a sense of social responsibility”) outcome expectation (item 29 in Appendix B)
Social justice supports *	Five items representing possible supports (e.g. “have access to a role model,” “feel support for this decision from important people in your life.”) in which participants are asked to rate the likelihood of on a 10-point scale (item 32 in Appendix B)
Social justice barriers*	Four items representing possible barriers (e.g., “receive negative comments or discouragement from your friends and family members

	about your engagement in social justice activities.”) in which participants are asked to rate the likelihood of on a 10-point scale (item 32 in Appendix B)
Social justice interest**	Nine social justice items representing specific social justice activities (e.g., “talking to others about social issues,” “reading about social issues”) in which participants are asked to rate their level of interest on a 10-point scale (item 30 in Appendix B)
Social justice commitment**	Four social justice commitment items representing social justice activities (e.g., “I have a plan of action for ways in which I will remain or become involved in social justice activities over the next year”) in which participants are asked to rate their level of agreement on a 10-point scale (item 31 in Appendix B)
Colorblind racial ideology*	Twenty items in which participants are asked to rate their level of agreement with on a 6-point scale that assesses current beliefs about race (e.g., “white people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin”) (items 8-27 in Appendix B)

*Indicates exogenous variables.

**Indicates endogenous variables.

CHAPTER IV

Results

This chapter will provide a description of results for the following research question:

How are the colorblind racial ideology and social justice factors (i.e., social justice social supports, social justice barriers, social justice self efficacy and social justice outcome expectations) of urban school counselors related to social justice interest and commitment?

Preliminary Analyses

CoBRAS items are rated on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree), with a higher score indicating higher levels of colorblindness, denial, or unawareness. To calculate the Unawareness of Racial Privilege, Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination, and Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues subscales, the corresponding item numbers (items 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 15, 17, and 20) were reverse scored. Subscale 1, Unawareness of Racial Privilege, consists of 7 items: 1, 2, 6, 8, 12, 15, and 20. Subscale 2, Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination, also consists of 7 items: 3, 4, 9, 13, 14, 16, and 18. Subscale 3, the Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues, consists of 6 items: 5, 7, 10, 11, 17, and 19.

Adding together all the items in a CoBRAS instrument produces a total score, which can range from 20 to 120. For the current study, the total CoBRAS score ranged from 20 to 90. A CoBRAS mean score and subscale mean scores were also calculated. The means for the Unawareness of Racial Privilege, Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination, and Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues subscales for all participants

are 3.22 ($SD = .88$), 2.93 ($SD = .82$), 2.07 ($SD = .65$) respectively. The means for the total CoBRAS score is 2.77 ($SD = .63$). See Table 2 for a list of CoBRAS subscale means and standard deviations.

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for CoBRAS Subscales and Total Score

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	M score range
Unawareness of racial privilege	3.22	.88	1.0-5.6
Unawareness of institutional discrimination	2.93	.82	1.0-5.4
Unawareness to blatant racial issues	2.07	.65	1.0-4.0
CoBRAS total	2.77	.63	1.0-4.5

In addition to subscale scores, means and standard deviations were computed for each item in the CoBRAS instrument. Participants were asked to rate, on a six-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree) their level of disagreement or agreement with twenty statements. The item “it is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities” produced the highest mean ($M = 5.64$, $SD = .77$), followed by “it is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society’s problems” ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 1.21$). The item “racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations” produced the lowest mean ($M = 1.83$, $SD = .98$), followed by “racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today” ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 1.11$). See Table 3 for a complete list of means and standard deviations for CoBRAS items.

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations for CoBRAS Items

Item	Mean	SD
1. Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.	3.71	1.62

2. Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care or day care) that people receive in the U.S.	4.07	1.53
3. It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.	2.70	1.66
4. Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.	4.41	1.44
5. Racism is a major problem in the U.S.	4.69	1.13
6. Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.	3.03	1.54
7. Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.	1.99	1.11
8. Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the U.S.	4.21	1.32
9. White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.	2.58	1.32
10. Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.	2.70	1.56
11. It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.	4.76	1.22
12. White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.	4.70	1.33
13. Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and adopt the values of the U.S.	3.26	1.21
14. English should be the only official language in the U.S.	3.53	1.71
15. White people are more to blame for racial discrimination in the U.S. than racial and ethnic minorities.	3.39	1.41
16. Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.	2.73	1.25
17. It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.	5.64	.77

18. Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.	3.09	1.31
19. Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.	1.83	.98
20. Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.	3.92	1.52

For the SIQ, to compute the social justice self-efficacy, social justice outcome expectations, social justice supports, social justice barriers, social justice interest, and social justice commitment subscales, item ratings were summed and divided by the number of items in each subscale. For the social justice self-efficacy scale, participants were asked to rate, on a ten-point Likert scale their level of confidence with twenty statements (1 = no confidence at all; 10 = complete confidence). For the social justice outcome expectations subscale, participants were asked to rate, on a nine-point Likert scale, their level of agreement with ten statements (1 = strongly disagree; 9 = strongly agree). For the social justice interest subscale, participants were asked to rate, on a ten-point Likert scale, their level of interest in response to ten statements about social justice activities (1 = very low interest; 10 = very high interest). For the social justice commitment subscale, participants were asked to rate, on a ten-point Likert scale, their level of agreement with four statements (1 = strongly disagree; 10 = strongly agree). For both the social justice supports and social justice barriers subscales, participants were asked to rate, on a ten-point Likert scale, the level of likelihood of encountering certain barriers or supports (1 = not at all likely; 10 = extremely likely). The subscale mean scores are 7.76 (*SD* = 1.34) for the social justice self-efficacy subscale, 6.94 (*SD* = 1.48) for the social justice outcome expectation subscale, 7.38 (*SD* = 1.54) for social justice interest subscale, 6.68 (*SD* = 2.29) for social justice commitment subscale, 6.96 (*SD* =

1.78) for social justice social supports subscale, and 3.98 ($SD = 1.48$) for social justice social barriers subscale. See Table 4 for a list of SIQ subscale means and standard deviations.

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations for SIQ Subscales and Total Score

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	M score range
Social justice self-efficacy	7.76	1.34	2.65-10.0
Social justice outcome expectations	6.94	1.48	1.0-9.0
Social justice interest	7.38	1.54	3.38-10.0
Social justice commitment	6.68	2.29	1.0-10.0
Social justice social supports	6.96	1.78	2.2-10.0
Social justice social barriers	3.98	1.48	1.0-7.75
SIQ total	7.08	1.05	3.55-9.39

In addition to scale scores, means and standard deviations were computed for each of the items on the SIQ. For the overall instrument, the item “how much confidence do you have in your ability to volunteer as a tutor or mentor with youth from an underserved and underprivileged group” produced the highest mean ($M = 9.08$, $SD = 1.31$), followed by “how much interest do you have in selecting a career or job that deals with social issues” ($M = 8.36$, $SD = 1.51$). The item “if you were likely to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be to feel pressure from your principal to change your mind regarding your decision to engage in social justice activities” yielded the lowest mean for the overall SIQ instrument ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 2.12$), followed by “if you were to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be to feel that you didn’t fit in socially with other people involved in the same activities” ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 2.26$).

In the social justice self-efficacy subscale, participants were asked to rate, on a ten-point Likert scale, their level of confidence with twenty statements (1 = no confidence at all; 10 = complete confidence). The item “how much confidence do you have in your ability to volunteer as a tutor or mentor with youth from an underserved and underprivileged group” produced the highest mean ($M = 9.08$, $SD = 1.31$). The item “how much confidence do you have in your ability to address structural inequalities and barriers facing racial and ethnic minorities by becoming politically active (e.g., helping to create government policy)” received the lowest mean ($M = 6.41$, $SD = 2.55$). See Table 5 for a complete list of social justice self-efficacy scale items, means, and standard deviations.

Table 5
Means and Standard Deviations for Social Justice Self-Efficacy Items

Item	Mean	SD
How much confidence do you have in your ability to:		
respond to social injustices (e.g., discrimination, racism, religious intolerance) with non violent actions.	8.51	1.36
examine your own worldview, biases, and prejudicial attitudes after witnessing or hearing about social injustice.	8.78	1.14
actively support needs of marginalized groups.	8.19	1.54
help members from marginalized groups create more opportunities for success (e.g., educational, career) by developing relevant skills.	8.29	1.72
raise others’ awareness of the oppression and marginalization of minority groups.	8.08	1.63
confront others who speak disparagingly about members of underprivileged groups.	8.27	1.56
challenge an individual who displays racial, ethnic, and/or religious intolerance.	8.37	1.53

convince others as to the importance of social justice.	8.24	1.34
discuss issues related to racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism with your friends.	8.86	1.35
volunteer as a tutor or mentor with youth from an underserved and underprivileged group.	9.08	1.31
support efforts to reduce social injustice through your own local fundraising efforts.	7.03	1.26
identify the unique social, economic, political, and/or cultural needs of a marginalized group in your own community.	7.56	2.32
encourage and convince others to participate in community-specific social issues.	7.75	2.11
develop and implement a solution to a community social issue such as unemployment, homelessness, or racial tension.	6.90	1.81
challenge or address institutional policies that are covertly or overtly discriminatory.	7.20	2.27
lead a group of coworkers in an effort to eliminate workplace discrimination in your place of employment.	7.15	2.22
serve as a consultant for an institutional committee aimed at providing equal opportunities for underrepresented groups.	7.38	2.12
advocate for social justice issues by becoming involved in local government.	6.56	2.62
address structural inequalities and barriers facing racial and ethnic minorities by becoming politically active (e.g., helping to create government policy).	6.41	2.55
raise awareness of social issues (e.g., inequality, discrimination) by engaging in political discourses or debates.	6.61	2.64

In the social justice outcome expectations subscale, participants were asked to rate, on a ten-point Likert scale, their level of agreement with ten statements (1 = strongly disagree; 10 = strongly agree). The item “engaging in social justice activities would likely allow me to make a difference in peoples’ lives” yielded the highest mean, ($M = 7.71$, $SD = 1.61$). The item “engaging in social justice activities would likely allow me to get respect from others” produced the lowest mean ($M = 6.22$, $SD = 1.87$). See Table 6 for a complete list of social justice outcome expectations scale items, means, and standard deviations.

Table 6
Means and Standard Deviations for Social Justice Outcome Expectations Items

Item	Mean	SD
Engaging in social justice activities would likely allow me to: reduce the oppression of certain groups.	6.55	1.72
help provide equal opportunities for all groups and individuals.	6.93	1.64
fulfill a sense of personal obligation.	6.91	2.01
fulfill a sense of moral responsibility.	7.31	1.71
fulfill a sense of social responsibility.	7.29	1.87
make a difference in peoples’ lives.	7.71	1.61
do work or activities that are personally satisfying.	7.35	1.76
get respect from others.	6.22	1.97
be more competitive in applying for school or work.	6.27	2.11
increase my own sense of self-worth.	6.88	2.26

In the social justice interest subscale, participants were asked to rate, on a ten-point Likert scale, their level of interest in eight statements (1 = very low interest; 10 = very high interest). The item “how much interest do you have in talking to others about social issues” produced the highest mean, ($M = 8.36$, $SD = 1.51$). The item “how much interest do you have in going on a weeklong service or work project” yielded the lowest mean ($M = 6.64$, $SD = 2.81$). See Table 7 for a complete list of social justice interest subscale items, means, and standard deviations.

Table 7
Means and Standard Deviations for Social Justice Interest Subscale Items

Item	Mean	SD
How much interest do you have in:		
volunteering your time at a community agency (e.g., Big Brother/Big Sister, volunteering at a homeless shelter).	7.30	2.41
reading about social issues (e.g., racism, oppression, inequality).	7.59	1.93
going on a weeklong service project.	6.64	2.81
enrolling in a course on social issues.	7.25	2.48
watching television programs that cover social issues (e.g., history of a marginalized group).	7.96	2.15
supporting a political candidate on the basis of her or his stance on social issues.	7.21	2.63
donating money to an organization committed to social issues.	6.71	2.43
talking to others about social issues.	8.36	1.51

In the social justice commitment subscale, participants were asked to rate, on a ten-point Likert scale, their level of agreement with four statements (1 = strongly disagree; 10 = strongly agree). The item “in the future, I intend to engage in social justice activities” produced the highest mean ($M = 7.43$, $SD = 2.23$). The item “I think engaging in social justice activities is a realistic goal for me” received the lowest mean ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 2.91$). See Table 8 for a complete list of social justice commitment subscale items, means and standard deviations.

Table 8
Means and Standard Deviations for Social Justice Commitment Subscale Items

Item	Mean	SD
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:		
In the future, I intend to engage in social justice activities.	7.43	2.23
I have a plan of action for ways I will remain or become involved in social justice activities over the next year.	5.83	2.92
I think engaging in social justice activities is a realistic goal for me.	6.84	2.41
I am fully committed to engaging in social justice activities.	6.64	2.54

In the social justice social supports subscale, participants were asked to rate, on a ten-point Likert scale, the level of likelihood encountering certain supports (1 = not at all likely; 10 = extremely likely) for five items. The item “if you were to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be to feel support for this decision from important people in your life,” produced the highest mean ($M = 7.48$, $SD = 2.1$). The item “if you were to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be to have access to a role model at school (i.e. someone you can look up to and learn from by observing”

yielded the lowest mean ($M = 6.06$, $SD = 2.7$). See Table 9 for a complete list of social justice social supports subscale items, means, and standard deviations.

Table 9
Means and Standard Deviations for Social Justice Social Supports Subscale Items

Item	Mean	SD
If you were to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be to:		
have access to a role model at your school (i.e. someone you can look up to and learn from observing).	6.06	2.63
feel support for this decision from important people in your life.	7.48	2.11
feel that there are educators “like you” engaged in the same activities.	7.23	2.12
feel that your colleagues support this decision.	7.28	2.05
have access to a mentor who could offer you advice and encouragement.	6.79	2.44

In the social justice social barriers subscale, participants were asked to rate, on a ten-point Likert scale, the level of likelihood of encountering certain barriers (1 = not at all likely; 10 = extremely likely) for four items. The item “if you were to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be to worry that getting involved would require too much time or energy” produced the highest mean ($M = 5.65$, $SD = 2.64$). The item “if you were to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be feel pressure from your principal or other important people to change your mind regarding your decision to engage in social justice activities” yielded the lowest mean ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 2.12$). See Table 10 for a complete list of social justice social barriers subscale items, means, and standard deviations.

Table 10
Means and Standard Deviations for Social Justice Social Barriers Subscale Items

Item	Mean	SD
If you were to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be to:		
receive negative comments or discouragement from colleagues and family members about your engagement in social justice activities.	3.79	2.51
worry that getting involved would require too much time or energy.	5.65	2.64
feel that you didn't fit in socially with other people involved in the same activities.	3.39	2.26
feel pressure from your principal or other important people to change your mind regarding your decision to engage in social justice activities.	2.80	2.12
have access to a mentor who could offer you advice and encouragement.	4.79	2.45

Scale reliability for the total and subscales of the instruments was assessed by calculating the coefficient alpha. The coefficient alpha for the total CoBRAS score was .81. The subscale alphas for the Unawareness of Racial Privilege, Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination, and Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues were .73, .67, and .59 respectively. These figures are different than those reported by Neville et al. (2000). For the same total and subscales the authors reported .91, .83, .81, and .76 respectively.

The coefficient alpha of the total SIQ score was .94. The subscale coefficient alpha for the social justice self-efficacy, social justice outcome expectations, social justice interest, social justice commitment, social justice social supports and social justice social barriers were .95, .94, .82, .94, .85, and .48 respectively. Miller et al. (2009) reported the total SIQ score alpha was .94, while the subscale reliability coefficients were

.94 for social justice self-efficacy, .81 for social justice outcome expectations, .90 for social justice interest, .93 for social justice commitment, .90 for social justice social supports and .79 for social justice social barriers.

A correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the relationship between the CoBRAS and the SIQ. There is a significant negative relationship between the total CoBRAS and SIQ scores, $r = -.357$. This relationship is significant at the $p < .01$ level. There are also significant relationships between the subscales of the CoBRAS. The Unawareness of Racial Privilege and Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .42$, $p < .01$ level, and the Unawareness of Racial Privilege and Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .41$, $p < .01$; the correlation coefficient between the Unawareness to Institutional Discrimination and the Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues subscale is $r = .56$, $p < .01$. See Table 10 for a listing of CoBRAS subscale bivariate correlations.

Similarly, there are significant correlations between subscales of the SIQ. The social justice self-efficacy and social justice outcome expectation subscale have a correlation coefficient of $r = .35$, $p < .01$. The social justice self-efficacy and social justice interest subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .54$, $p < .01$. The social justice self-efficacy and social justice commitment subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .63$, $p < .01$. The social justice self-efficacy and social justice interest subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .54$, $p < .01$. The social justice self-efficacy and social justice social supports subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .4$, $p < .01$. The social justice self-efficacy and social justice social barriers subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = -.19$, $p < .01$. The social justice self-efficacy and social

justice social barriers subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = -.19, p < .05$. The social justice outcome expectation and social justice interest subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .45, p < .01$. The social justice outcome expectation and social justice commitment subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .42, p < .01$. The social justice outcome expectation and social justice social supports subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .13, p < .01$. The social justice outcome expectation and social justice social barriers subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = -.12, p < .01$. The social justice interest and social justice commitment subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .61, p < .01$. The social justice interest and social justice social supports subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .32, p < .01$. The social justice interest and social justice social barriers subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = -.01, p < .01$. The social justice commitment and social justice social supports subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = .37, p < .01$. The social justice commitment and social justice social barriers subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = -.27, p < .01$. The social justice social supports and social justice social barriers subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = -.21, p < .05$. See Table 10 for bivariate correlations of SIQ subscales.

Significant correlation coefficients also exist between the subscales of the CoBRAS and SIQ. The social justice self-efficacy and Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = -.22, p < .05$. The social justice outcome expectations and Unawareness of Racial Privilege subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = -.31, p < .01$. The social justice outcome expectations and Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = -.41, p < .01$. The social justice outcome expectations and Unawareness to Blatant

Racial Issues subscales have a correlation coefficient of $r = -.25, p < .01$. The social justice interest subscale has a significant negative relationship with the Unawareness of Racial Privilege, Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination, and Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues subscales. Correlation coefficients are $r = -.26, p < .01$, $r = -.38, p < .01$, and $r = -.33, p < .01$ respectively. Similarly, the social justice commitment subscale has a significant negative correlation with the Unawareness of Racial Privilege subscale, $r = -.27, p < .01$, Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination subscale, $r = -.39, p < .01$, and Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues subscale, $r = -.34, p < .01$. Finally, there is a significant correlation between the social justice barriers and Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination subscale, $r = .22, p < .05$. See Table 11 for a complete list of CoBRAS and SIQ subscale bivariate correlations.

Table 11
Bivariate Correlations for CoBRAS and SIQ Subscales

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Unawareness of racial privilege	-								
2. Unawareness of inst. discrimination	.42**	-							
3. Unawareness of blatant racial issues	.41**	.56**	-						
4. Social justice self-efficacy	-.07	-.22*	-.08	-					
5. Social justice outcome expectations	-.31**	-.41**	-.25**	.35**	-				
6. Social justice interest	-.26**	-.38**	-.33**	.54**	.45**	-			
7. Social justice commitment	-.27**	-.39**	-.34**	.63**	.42**	.61**	-		
8. Social justice supports	.05	-.12	-.14	.40**	.13	.32**	.37**	-	
9. Social justice barriers	-.02	.22*	.09	-.19*	-.12	-.01	-.27*	-.21*	-

* $p < .05$., ** $p < .01$.

Research Question

The research question “How are the colorblind racial ideology and social justice factors (i.e., social justice social supports, social justice barriers, social justice self efficacy and social justice outcome expectations) of urban school counselors related to social justice interest and commitment?” was addressed through a path analysis model (see Figure 3) used to test the hypotheses. The chi-square test, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), standardized root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the comparative fit index (CFI) were used to assess model fit. A chi-square test for goodness-of-fit requires obtaining a significant χ^2 value ($p < .05$). A statistically nonsignificant chi-squared result is considered optimal. The path model chi-square is $\chi^2 = 24.27, p < .001$, therefore model-implied data is significantly different from the actual data observed. The RMSEA measurement model exhibited a fair fit with the data, RMSEA = .072. Interpretation of RMSEA values is considered 0 = perfect fit, $< .05$ = close fit, .05-.08 = fair fit, .08-.10 = mediocre fit, $> .10$ = poor fit (Smith & McMillan, 2001). For the GFI and CFI, values above 0.95 indicate a good fit (Smith & McMillan, 2001). In the present study, GFI = 0.92 and CFI= 0.94.

To test the causal relationships between the variables in the model, a series of four regression analyses were conducted to test the direct and indirect effects of variables. In the following equations, the variables are abbreviated: social justice commitment (SJC), social justice interest (SJI), social justice self-efficacy (SJSE), social justice outcome expectations (SJOE), social justice barriers (SJB), social justice supports (SJB), and colorblind racial ideology (CoBRAS). To test the causal relations on social justice commitment (SJC), paths d, e, f, g, h, and m were analyzed using the following equation:

$$SJC = \beta_0 + \beta_1(SJSE) + \beta_2(SJOE) + \beta_3(SJI) + \beta_4(SJS) + \beta_5(SJB) + \beta_6(CoBRAS) + E_1$$

To test the causal relations on social justice interest (SJI), paths b, c, and n were analyzed using the following equation:

$$SJI = \beta_0 + \beta_1(SJSE) + \beta_2(SJOE) + \beta_3(CoBRAS) + E_2$$

To test the causal relations on social justice outcome expectations (SJOE), paths a, k, and l were analyzed using the following equation:

$$SJOE = \beta_0 + \beta_1(SJSE) + \beta_2(SJS) + \beta_3(SJB) + E_3$$

To test the causal relations on social justice self-efficacy (SJSE), paths i and j were analyzed using the following equation:

$$SJSE = \beta_0 + \beta_1(SJS) + \beta_2(SJB) + E_4$$

Additionally, correlation coefficients were calculated to test the relationships between the CoBRAS and the social justice self-efficacy subscale and between the social justice supports and social justice barriers subscales. There was a nonsignificant correlation of $r = .16$ ($p = \text{n.s.}$) between the CoBRAS and social justice self-efficacy. However, the social justice supports and social justice barriers subscales were significantly correlated, $r = -.21$, $p < .05$. See Figure 3 for all standardized path coefficients in the model.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that social justice self-efficacy will have both a direct effect and an indirect effect (through outcome expectations) on social justice interest (paths a-c in Figure 2). Hypothesis 1 was confirmed, as all paths were significant at the $p < .05$ level. The total effect for social justice interest is .495.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that social justice self-efficacy, social justice outcome expectations, and social justice interest will each have direct effects on social justice commitment (paths d-f in Figure 2). Hypothesis 2 was partially confirmed. Social justice interest and social justice self-efficacy had a direct effect on social justice commitment, as both of these paths were significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that social justice social supports and barriers will have a direct effect on social justice commitment (paths g and h in Figure 2). Hypothesis 3 was partially confirmed. Social justice barriers had a direct effect on social justice commitment. This path was significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that social justice supports and barriers will have an indirect effect (through social justice self-efficacy) on social justice commitment (paths i and j in Figure 2). Hypothesis 4 was partially confirmed. Social justice supports had an indirect effect (through social justice self-efficacy) on social justice commitment. These indirect paths were significant at the $p < .05$ level. Social justice barriers had no indirect effect (through social justice self-efficacy) on social justice commitment.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that social justice supports and barriers will have a direct effect on social justice outcomes (paths k and l in Figure 2). Hypothesis 5 was not confirmed. Neither variable had a significant path coefficient.

Hypothesis 6 proposed that colorblind racial ideology will have a direct effect on social justice commitment and an indirect effect (through social justice interest) on social justice commitment (paths m and n in Figure 2). Hypothesis 6 was confirmed. Both the direct path and indirect path to social justice commitment was significant at the $p < .05$

level. The total effect for social justice commitment is -0.272. See Table 12 for a list of unstandardized direct effects for the path model.

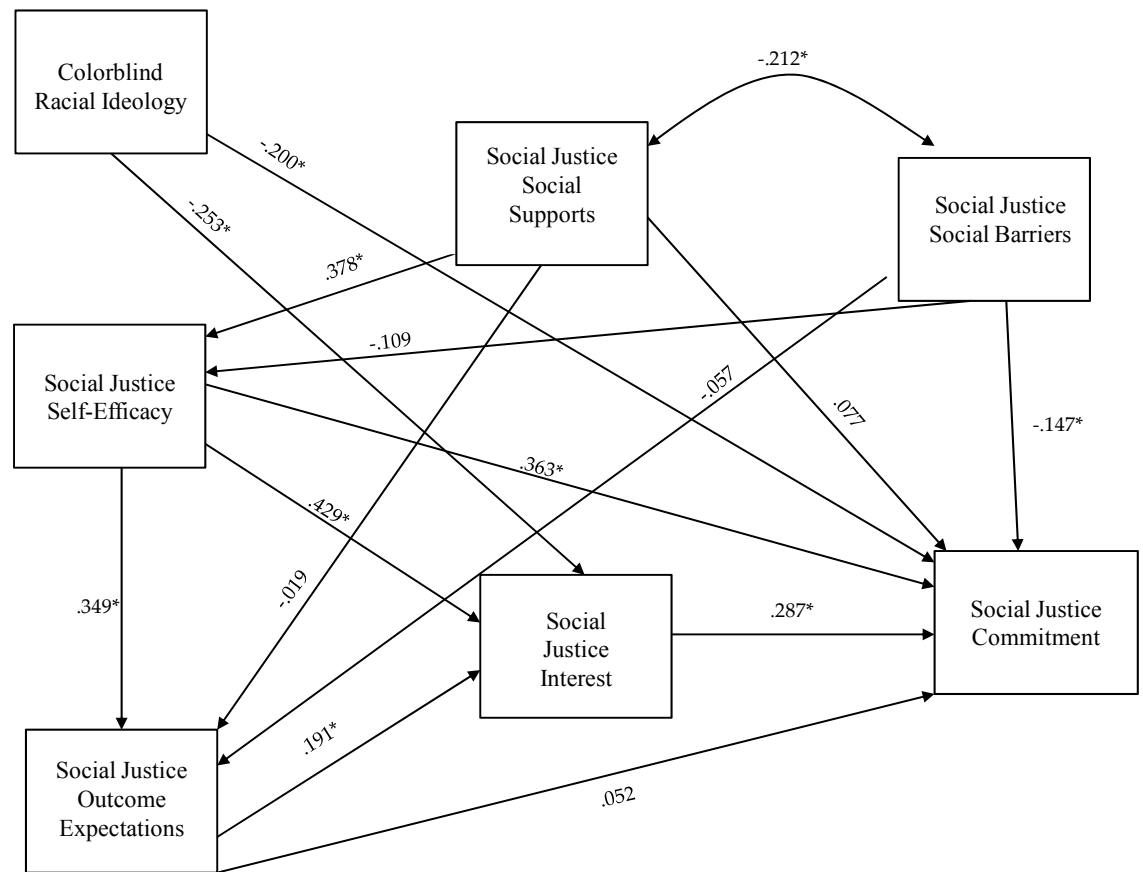


Figure 3. Standardized Path Coefficients
* $p < .05$

Table 12
Unstandardized Direct Effects for the Path Model

Path	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI
a	SJSE→	SJOE	.389*	.110	[.171, .607]
b	SJSE→	SJI	.494*	.091	[.314, .673]
c	SJOE→	SJI	.198*	.088	[.023, .372]
d	SJSE→	SJC	.623*	.139	[.347, .90]
e	SJOE→	SJC	.081	.117	[-.151, .312]
f	SJI→	SJC	.428*	.128	[.174, .682]
g	SJS→	SJC	.099	.092	[-.084, .281]
h	SJB→	SJC	-.227*	.103	[-.432, -.021]
i	SJS→	SJSE	.283*	.067	[.150, .416]
j	SJB→	SJSE	-.098	.081	[-.257, .061]
k	SJS→	SJOE	-.016	.083	[-.180, .149]
l	SJB→	SJOE	-.057	.093	[-.240, .126]
m	CoBRAS→	SJC	-.725*	.266	[-1.25, -.197]
n	CoBRAS→	SJI	-.613*	.196	[-1.002, -.225]

Note. SJSE = social justice self-efficacy; SJOE = social justice outcome expectations; SJI = social justice interest; SJC = social justice commitment; SJS = social justice supports; SJB = social justice barriers; CoBRAS = colorblind racial ideology.

* $p < .05$.

Post Hoc Analysis

Based on previous research, where participants of color demonstrated fewer colorblind racial attitudes compared to their White counterparts (Neville et al., 2000), post hoc analysis was conducted to explore how school counselor race affects colorblind racial ideology. An independent-samples t-test was used to examine the total CoBRAS and subscale means of White versus non-White counselors. Participants who identified as “White (non-Hispanic)” were coded as 1; those who identified as “Latino/Hispanic”, “African American”, “Asian”, “Multiracial”, or “Other” were coded as 2. Non-White participants demonstrated significantly lower levels ($M = 2.5$, $SD = .50$) of colorblind racial ideology compared to White participants ($M = 2.96$, $SD = .66$), $t(127) = 3.88$, $p = .03$. Additionally, non-White participants demonstrated significantly lower levels ($M =$

2.57, $SD = .60$) on the Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination subscale than White participants ($M = 3.17, SD = .86$), $t(127) = 4.08, p = .034$. On the Unawareness of Racial Privilege subscale, there was also a significant difference in means between non-Whites ($M = 2.95, SD = .84$) and Whites ($M = 3.38, SD = .87$), $t(127) = 2.6, p = .011$. Finally, there was a significant difference in means between non-Whites ($M = 1.92, SD = .57$) and Whites ($M = 2.18, SD = .68$) on the Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues subscale, $t(127) = 2.08, p = .039$.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a description of the results of the following research question:

How are the colorblind racial ideology and social justice factors (i.e., social justice social supports, social justice barriers, social justice self efficacy and social justice outcome expectations) of urban school counselors related to social justice interest and commitment?

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Summary of Major Findings

This study examined the relationship between colorblind racial ideology and social justice factors among practicing urban school counselors. Specifically, the study explored how factors such as colorblind racial ideology, social justice self-efficacy, social justice outcome expectations, social justice social supports, and social justice social barriers relate to social justice interest and commitment.

Hypothesis 1: *Social justice self-efficacy will have a direct effect (Path b in Figure 2) and indirect effect (through outcome expectations) on social justice interest (Paths a-c in Figure 2).*

School counselors' social justice self-efficacy had both a direct and an indirect effect (through social justice outcome expectations) on social justice interest. Specifically, the higher a participant's social justice self-efficacy, the higher his or her outcome expectations are regarding social justice activities and, in turn, the higher his or her interest in social justice activities. This result highlights the importance of developing urban school counselors' social justice self-efficacy. This finding is consistent with prior research relating to social cognitive career theory and social justice research (Lent et al. 2001; 2003; Miller et al. 2009; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011).

Perceptions of self-efficacy and outcome expectations form interests in activities, in that individuals form interests in activities in which they view themselves to be efficacious and in which they can anticipate positive outcomes (Lent et al., 1994). Social justice outcome expectations can be categorized as social (e.g., benefiting underserved populations), material (e.g., monetary gains and/or privilege or access), and self-

evaluative (e.g., fulfilling personal values or ideals); (Bandura, 1986; Lent & Brown, 2006). In the social justice outcome expectations subscale, the item “engaging in social justice activities would likely allow me to make a difference in peoples’ lives” yielded the highest mean. The item “engaging in social justice activities would likely allow me to get respect from others” produced the lowest mean. For these participants, more positive outcome expectations are imagined in the social arena versus the self-evaluative arena. These results suggest that school counselors can envision outcomes from engaging in social justice work that benefit others more positively than engaging in social justice activities for the purposes of fulfilling personal values. However, Sutton and Fall (1995) argue that a school counselor who is requested to perform certain nonrelated school counseling tasks may do so willingly, knowing that the action will be appreciated and that he or she will be valued. The authors reported that colleague approval was the strongest predictor of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Alternately, school counselors in the present study may want to appear altruistic.

Hypothesis 2: Social justice self-efficacy, social justice outcome expectations, and social justice interest will have direct effects on social justice commitment (Paths d-f in Figure 2).

The path analysis confirmed that self-efficacy had a direct effect on social justice commitment. The analysis also confirmed that social justice interest had a direct effect on social justice commitment. This is somewhat consistent with Miller et al. (2009), as they reported social justice self-efficacy and social justice outcome expectations had direct effects on social justice commitment. In contrast, in the present study, social justice outcome expectations did not have a direct effect on social justice commitment.

These results suggest that school counselors with high social justice self-efficacy will more likely be committed to social justice. Additionally, school counselors with high interest in social justice may be more likely committed to social justice. According to SCCT, these choice-content goals are important because they motivate and drive behavior to achieve an articulated goal or commitment even in the face of obstacles (Lent et al., 2003). However, having positive outcome expectations about performing social justice activities may not necessarily lead to school counselors' commitment to performing those activities. Outcome expectations in the present study do have a direct effect on social justice interest (as evidenced by Hypothesis 1).

The respondents reported feeling competent on all of the behaviors indicated on the social justice self-efficacy scale, with behaviors such as “volunteer as a tutor or mentor with youth from an underserved and underprivileged group” “discuss issues related to racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism with your friends” and “examine your own worldview, biases, and prejudicial attitudes after witnessing or hearing about social injustice” having the highest mean scores. However, scores on the CoBRAS indicate that participants were most colorblind in the area of racial power and privilege. Behaviors such as “address structural inequalities and barriers facing racial and ethnic minorities by becoming politically active (e.g., helping to create government policy)” and “advocate for social justice issues by becoming involved in local government” yielded the lowest means. Overall respondents perceived themselves as more competent in the areas of intrapersonal (e.g., self-awareness and monitoring) and interpersonal (e.g., educating others about social inequity and encouraging others to become involved in advocacy) domains and least confident in the community (e.g.,

conducting a community-specific needs assessment and establishing an outreach program), and political/institutional (e.g., challenging discriminatory policies and practices) domains. Since social justice self-efficacy has a direct effect on social justice commitment, results suggest that these participants would more likely commit to the types of behaviors in the intrapersonal and interpersonal domains and less likely to engage in social justice activities at the community or political/institutional level. This is disturbing, as school counselors are being asked to move beyond their historically traditional roles of one-on-one counseling to work at a more macro level to help bring on systemic change (Education Trust, 2008). When taken together with school counselors' performance on Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination scale on the COBRAS, this would suggest that counselors may be unaware of how to enact systemic level interventions. Furthermore, if counselors are unaware that these macro level types of discrimination exist, they may not have had the opportunity to use their skills or may feel inadequately trained and underestimate the skills they have to offer in implementing these systemic level interventions, thusly avoiding interventions on behalf of students altogether (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007).

Hypothesis 3: *Social justice social supports and barriers will have a direct effect on social justice commitment (Paths g and h in Figure 2).*

The hypothesis was partially, confirmed as social justice barriers had a direct negative effect on social justice commitment, such that less barriers to social justice activities result in a higher likelihood of school counselors committing to social justice work. In other words, when school counselors have minimal barriers to engaging in social justice activities, they are more likely to be committed to social justice efforts. This

finding is not supported by previous research, as Miller et al. (2009) did not find any significant direct relationships between supports and barriers and social justice commitment. This result may differ due to the nature of school counselor work and roles, since the sample in this study included practicing urban school counselors. These participants may be able to perceive their supports and barriers more overtly.

In the social justice barriers subscale, the item “if you were to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be to worry that getting involved would require too much time or energy” produced the highest mean. Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) have reported that a lack of time for engaging in social justice activities can be a barrier. These urban school counselors may see engaging in social justice work as adding more responsibility and time commitment to a role that may already be overwhelming (Bemak & Chung, 2008). This is consistent with findings in Bryan and Griffin’s (2010) study that suggests time constraints present a barrier to being involved in partnership activities. Furthermore, Bemak and Chung (2008) argue that school policies and institutionalized routines may prevent counselors from committing time to engaging in social justice activities. These authors also warn of counselors’ personal fears of social and professional rejection acting as a barrier to becoming a social justice advocate.

Interestingly, in the present study, results suggest that engaging in social justice activities is not potentially influenced by principal expectations. The item “if you were to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be to feel pressure from your principal or other important people to change your mind regarding your decision to engage in social justice activities” yielded the lowest mean of all social justice barrier items and all SIQ items. This is an interesting result, as Sutton and Fall (1995) reported

that school counselors who receive negative feedback from colleagues and administrators may suspend systemic level interventions, even though they seem to be beneficial to students. In support, Bryan and Griffin (2010) found that principal expectations were the strongest predictor of school counselor partnership involvement. Similarly, Amatea & Clark (2005) report that the daily roles that school counselors carry out is most heavily affected by principal expectations. In the present study, however, results suggest that engaging in social justice activities is not potentially influenced by principal expectations. It is possible that school counselors' responses on this item may capture social desirability.

Hypothesis 4: *Social justice supports and barriers will have an indirect effect (through social justice self-efficacy) on social justice commitment. (Path i and j in Figure 2).*

Social justice supports indirectly influenced social justice commitment through social justice self-efficacy. Social justice barriers, however, did not have an indirect effect on social justice commitment through social justice self-efficacy. This is consistent with previous research, as Miller et al. (2007) report that if an individual comes into contact with people who are successfully engaged in social justice advocacy work (i.e., a social justice social support), it is possible that the individual will experience an increase in self-efficacy beliefs. Similarly, Sutton and Fall (1995) reported that lack of collegial and administrative support has been shown to negatively influence school counselor self-efficacy. In the present study, social justice barriers, however, did not have any significant effect on social justice self-efficacy. In other words, having minimal barriers to involvement in social justice work will not necessarily increase an individual's social

justice self-efficacy. This finding highlights the important role social justice supports may play in fostering social justice commitment (through social justice self-efficacy).

For the social justice commitment subscale, the item “in the future, I intend to engage in social justice activities” produced the highest mean. The item “I think engaging in social justice activities is a realistic goal for me” yielded the lowest mean. This suggests that urban school counselors have good intentions when wanting to engage in social justice work, however, for many of the participants, engaging in social justice activities is not practical; this could be due to the presence of too many barriers (as evidenced in Hypothesis 3). One barrier may be principal expectations of school counselor role (Sutton & Fall, 1995). In order for social justice interventions to be implemented in schools, principals must be committed as well and work in conjunction with school counselor efforts.

In the social justice supports scale, the item “if you were to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be to feel support for this decision from important people in your life” produced the highest mean. The item “if you were to engage in social justice activities, how likely would you be to have access to a role model at school (i.e. someone you can look up to and learn from by observing)” yielded the lowest mean. This is alarming as, Sutton and Fall (1995) indicate that supportive staff and administrators were the strongest predictors of school counselor self-efficacy and outcome expectations for school counselor behavior.

Hypothesis 5: *Social justice supports and barriers will have a direct effect on social justice outcomes (path k and l in Figure 2).*

Related to the fifth hypothesis, no significant direct effects of social justice supports and barriers on social justice outcome expectations were found. This is consistent with (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2008) as no significant direct effects were reported in their research. This suggests that social justice supports and social justice barriers may not influence practicing urban school counselors' perceived outcomes of engaging in social justice activities. As found in Hypothesis 1, social justice self-efficacy may be the only factor that influences social justice outcome expectations.

Hypothesis 6: *Colorblind racial ideology will have a direct effect on social justice commitment and will also have an indirect effect (through social justice interest) on social justice commitment (paths m and n in Figure 2).*

Finally, regarding the sixth hypothesis, colorblind racial ideology had a direct effect and an indirect effect (through social justice interest) on social justice commitment. The significant negative relationship suggests that the higher the levels of colorblind racial ideology, the less likely an urban school counselor would be interested in engaging in social justice activities and committed to performing social justice activities in the future. This finding is consistent with Miller et al. (2009), who found a robust negative relationship between social justice interest scores and scores on the CoBRAS since social justice issues often include racially diverse populations. This finding suggests that school counselors' awareness of blatant racial issues, White racial privilege, and institutional discrimination is central to their interest and commitment to social justice.

The participants appear, overall, more colorblind on the subscales of Unawareness of Racial Privilege and Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination, than Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues. Therefore, urban school counselors sampled in this study may be better able to identify overt forms of racism, but less aware of covert forms of racism such as White privilege and systemic discrimination. Unawareness of institutional forms of discrimination may perhaps drive counselors to perpetuate rather than eliminate systemic inequities (Bemak & Chung, 2008).

The statements that received the highest mean scores on the CoBRAS included “race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not” and “everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.” Both of these items correspond to the Unawareness of Racial Privilege subscale. This finding suggests that urban school counselors sampled in this study are most unaware of racial privilege when compared to Unawareness to Blatant Issues and Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination subscales. Statements with the lowest mean scores on the CoBRAS, included, “it is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities” and “racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.” Both of these items correspond to the Unawareness to Blatant Racial issues subscale. This further suggests that respondents are more conscious of overt racial issues. Awareness of blatant racial issues is a cognitive process, whereas identifying racial privilege and power an emotional and personal process (Hicks, 2005). Respondents may find it easier to recognize obvious forms of racism, but they appear more colorblind to their own power and privilege.

Post Hoc Analysis: Colorblind Racial Ideology and School Counselors'

Race/Ethnicity

When examining colorblind racial ideology in relation to the race/ethnicity of the respondents, findings indicate that school counselors of color have significantly lower scores on the CoBRAS, including all three subscales. This supports previous research in which participants of color demonstrated fewer colorblind racial attitudes compared to their White counterparts (Gonzalez, 2010; Neville et al., 2000). These findings reveal that respondents of color are more aware of systemic discrimination, White racial privilege and overt forms of racism than their White counterparts. This could be because counselors of color may have experienced institutional discrimination or been victims of racism themselves. Although these participants of color are less colorblind than their White counterparts, the results do not indicate whether these school counselors are behaving differently through social justice efforts. Findings also indicate White counselors are more blind to White racial privilege; this suggests White counselors may need more training in multicultural competency and social justice advocacy skills in order to help them examine their own power and privilege (Constantine, 2002).

Higher levels of colorblind racial ideology have been noted as a significant factor in seriously impairing counselors' ability to serve clients of color effectively and in a culturally sensitive manner (Chao, 2005; Constantine and Gushue, 2003; Gushue and Constantine, 2007; Neville et al., 2006). Furthermore, colorblindness may hinder a school counselor's ability to address the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, specifically in the urban context where higher concentrations of students of color are enrolled (CGCS, 2011). Providing counseling services and systemic level interventions

may be an obstacle when school counselors are blind to or avoid institutional forms of racism, power and privilege, and overt forms of racism. Perhaps these school counselors are experiencing “nice counselor syndrome” by supporting the status quo and avoiding unpleasant truths that many students of color and poor students face in public school systems (Bemak & Chung, 2008), which may further limit their interest in social justice work.

Implications for Theory

These findings support theory of how social justice engagement occurs. Trusty and Brown (2005) argue that a disposition toward advocacy is one of the most important competencies for a school counselor to possess. The authors suggest this disposition toward is mostly tied to a counselor’s value and belief system. Without a disposition toward advocacy, the likelihood that a counselor will develop advocacy skills is low thereby decreasing the chances that a counselor will be interested in social justice advocacy work. Based on the results of this present study, counselors’ social justice self-efficacy appears more important than a mere disposition toward advocacy. Indeed, in order for any interest in and commitment to social justice work to occur, counselors must feel confident (self-efficacious) in their ability to enact social justice activities.

Lee & Hipolito-Delgado (2007) state that socially just counselors must have three levels of awareness in order to be effective, these include (a) awareness of self, (b) interpersonal awareness, and (c) systemic awareness. The current study supports the notion that without self-awareness and understanding of systemic inequities, an individual is not likely to be interested in engaging in social justice activities, or even commit to performing these activities in the future. In addition to awareness, findings in this study indicate that other factors such as social justice self-efficacy, barriers, supports,

and interest are central to developing urban school counselors' commitment to social justice.

Findings in the current study support Moeschberger et al.'s (2006) theorizing about how social justice engagement occurs. Moeschberger et al. (2006) discuss factors that influence an individual to be moved to care about social justice issues. Central to their argument is awareness, a concept tied directly to a person's central identity; defined as having an increased understanding of the self in relation to the world. In their model, Moeschberger et al. (2006) discuss four experiences that interact with and influence one another in a nonlinear format that pressure an individual to strive to facilitate change. One component is contact with a conflict or injustice, either firsthand or by learning about the experience of another person. The authors argue that at this point the individual may feel overwhelmed and may not act upon the injustice; other conditions must occur in order to engage in social action. Another component is the ongoing process of awareness. The individual invests in becoming more aware by paying attention to circumstances and choosing not to ignore or turn away from them. The investment is emotional because injustice has an implicitly negative effect on well-being that leads the individual to devote energy to see change occur (Moeschberger et al., 2006). In order to stay motivated, change agents must maintain a sense that transformation is possible (i.e., positive outcome expectations) and that engagement is worthwhile and complements their personal and cultural beliefs of what is just. The chances of getting involved are further increased if the individual feels socially responsible and that they have the skills needed to make changes (i.e. self-efficacious). An internal conflict develops within the individual as he or she negotiates between the need for action and the desire to avoid

possible sacrifices of engaging in social action, such as alienation, and eroded relationships (i.e., barriers). It is extremely important that the individual recognizes the small steps he or she can take to avoid being overwhelmed, such as learning more about the situation or consulting with colleagues, friends, or family (i.e., supports). According to Moeschberger et al. (2006), for the individual to challenge the injustice, having direct contact with the reality of the client is required. The final component of the model involves identifying and engaging the injustice and participating through activism.

While urban school counselors may come in direct contact with students who face daily injustices on some level, unawareness of the systemic nature of injustices, a lack of self-efficacy in their ability to enact social justice, the presence of barriers, and absence of supports make it unlikely that they will engage in social justice.

Implications for School Counselor Preparation

This study's findings have several implications for school counselor training. Although there has been discussion in the school counseling literature about methods of training pre-service school counselors who intend to work at urban schools (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Green et al., 2005; Green & Keys, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010) there is a dearth of research which assesses how training in social justice advocacy is taking or should take place in training programs (Ratts, 2006). Furthermore, there is little research that demonstrates how this training is applied once counselors are in practice (Kircher, 2007). While the profession has moved toward social justice advocacy work, it is clear from the results of this study that in order to effectively prepare school counselors who are committed to engaging in social justice advocacy work, a training model that encompasses strategies for addressing colorblind

racial ideology, social justice self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and supports and barriers is necessary.

One of the first factors to urban school counselor training is to identify the type of student who has a disposition towards working within the urban context. Graduate programs must recruit strong candidates who have had experiences working in urban areas and have a strong understanding of the urban context (Martin, 2009). Holcomb-McCoy et al. (2011) describe activities that a selection committee could use to provide some insight into candidates' awareness of themselves and the urban context. These include responding to an article about urban education, examining different case studies, and having candidates look at data to explain educational gaps.

Counselor educators must prepare school counselors to not only work with all students, but also increase counselor awareness of systemic forces that perpetuate gaps in education. Therefore, counselor educators should provide comprehensive training for school counselors to be able to understand and navigate systems of oppression that exist within and around their school setting. Multicultural counseling training that emphasizes the sociopolitical context that influences students' participation in schools is a key area of development for pre service school counselors (Amatea and West-Olatunji, 2007). From this perspective, the counselor considers systemic influences and class privilege.

Green and Keys (2001) argue that traditional models of school counseling (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Myrick, 1997) which emphasized the need for an organized, goal oriented sequential program of service do not offer learners the opportunity to develop cultural awareness. The authors recommend that counselors develop an awareness of self-in-context as a programmatic priority when it comes to

training pre-service school counselors. The authors further suggest that developmental stage models alone are insufficient in describing the multidimensional factors that play in the lives of urban youth. Awareness of students' self-identity from a cultural and gender perspective and in relation to the ecological context should be explored throughout training.

To begin the training process, counselor educators might ask students to define the term "change agent," to journal about their own experiences with injustices, and to respond to several social justice based dilemmas (Ratts & Wood, 2011). Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) recommend that pre-professional school counselors gain exposure to systemic injustice through immersion experiences, community events, and dialogue with community representatives. The direct experience in schools will further expose future school counselors to the daily lives of students, families, teachers, administrators and communities and will raise awareness of injustices that these populations face. Furthermore, supervision and learning opportunities will expose school counselor trainees through modeling. To achieve this, counselor education programs must develop relationships with surrounding community and school districts that will assist in working towards social change and decrease the achievement gap for poor and minority youth (Bemak & Chung, 2005). As a culminating experience, counseling students can be required to develop an advocacy based project at their internship site. Through advocacy projects, school counselor trainees can gain leadership skills and knowledge about organizational change, how school systems work, and the politics of change in education (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Jackson et al., 2002).

In order to increase social justice self-efficacy, research indicates that mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social/verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal are integral to building self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). In the social justice context, this means school counseling trainees must have a number of mastery opportunities during their field experiences. This can be highlighted through the ability to meet specified, measurable goals at their internship site (i.e., decrease suspension rates by 15%). When individuals witness someone succeeding at something, their self-efficacy will increase (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, intentional field experience placement in environments where successful systemic-level interventions are taking place is crucial for increased social justice self-efficacy. Counselor educators will need to place school counseling trainees with practicum and internship supervisors who are aligned with social justice principles (Bemak & Chung, 2007). In order to facilitate social/verbal persuasion, clear expectations from faculty supervisors are important. Constant reinforcement and encouragement that can help raise social justice self-efficacy is needed. Emotional arousal is another key to raising self-efficacy; this can be difficult for many school counselor trainees, as they may have come from a privileged background and been unaware of the social injustices that are taking place in schools. Privilege exercises exploring race and class of students can increase awareness and arousal. These exercises will allow students to confront the feelings associated with privilege in a safe space where instructors must provide an opportunity for reflection and offer support. Lastly, counselor educators might consider using different assessment instruments to measure levels of social justice self-efficacy throughout the training process.

Since individuals are prone to attempt behaviors they see as likely to yield highly valued highly valued outcomes (Lent & Brown, 2006), counselor educators need to identify what are positive social, material, and self-evaluative anticipated outcomes for their students. School counselor training programs may consider rewarding students for successful social justice advocacy efforts by offering incentives or recognition. Furthermore, trainees may benefit from hearing firsthand how students and communities benefited from interventions. By identifying what school counseling students value, counselor educators can increase outcome expectations.

Training future school counselors in ways to find support networks and identify and lessen possible barriers beyond their graduate program training is crucial for their social justice interest and commitment efforts. One method in creating support networks is through membership in national counseling organizations that promote social justice advocacy. Encouraging school counselor trainees to attend conferences and network with social justice leaders in the field will give students a sense of community. In order to navigate barriers, pre-professional school counselors must be taught how to manage principal expectations, time and roles.

Miller & Sendrowitz (2011) contend that training environments that provide opportunities, supervision, time, and resources for social justice advocacy efforts could potentially develop pre-professional counselors' growth, while the absence of these types of training environment factors could potentially delay trainees' social justice development. Therefore, counselor educators must strive to provide the best possible social justice training for pre-professional school counselors.

Implications for Practice

A social justice framework must be utilized in order to close the various educational gaps that evident in today's schools. This can include collaboration with teachers to examine classroom practices, using various forms of data to examine discipline, attendance and achievement rate, examining policies and procedures to certify that students are being treated equitably, establishing community partnerships to bring in outside resources for students. The professional school counselor is in an ideal position to advocate for social justice (Education Trust, 2003). However, this does not necessarily mean that the school counselor is ideally trained or equipped for that work. The results of this study support the need for continued professional development training, supervision, and dialogue beyond graduate school. Furthermore, these results suggest that a lack of awareness of injustices, insufficient self-efficacy, and other significant barriers such as limited time and a lack of skill may prevent urban school counselors from engaging in social justice work.

Constantine et al. (2007) recommend that counselors increase their knowledge about the many ways social injustices are manifested at various levels by various groups. The authors suggest that personal reflection on issues such as race, class, power, and privilege are necessary in order to maintain awareness. Furthermore, they encourage counselors to reflect upon their own positions of power and privilege and how these forces may continue to perpetuate the status quo. Practicing school counselors must engage in continuous dialogue with students, families, community leaders, teachers, and administrators to challenge their own assumptions and understand how injustices are affecting stakeholders.

School counselors increase their self-efficacy by implementing successful interventions or by observing or reading about others who have done so (Bodenhorn et al., 2010). Success can be determined through measurement. Therefore, school counselors must tie all of their interventions to data. Data can be used to highlight how current policies and procedures are not meeting the needs of low-income students and students of color (Bemak & Chung; Griffin & Steen, 2011), and to confirm the success of their interventions and emphasize the benefits of pursuing additional social justice activities. School counselors must also be in contact with other educators that are making system level changes at their schools.

School counselors need to feel supported when engaging in social justice interventions. Bryan and Griffin (2010) reported that a collaborative climate is a vital component in the process of supporting school counselor efforts to build partnerships. Therefore, it is important that school counselors engaging in systemic level interventions find both personal and professional allies such as like minded teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders (Bemak & Chung, 2008). Singh et al. (2010) suggest that counselors build intentional relationships with individuals in the school who have the power in order to facilitate change.

In order to minimize the barriers to social justice efforts, school counselors need to protect their roles within the school. To achieve this, school must do their best to be mindful of and manage principals' expectations. Bemak & Chung (2008) encourage counselors to take calculated risks when implementing social justice strategies and to recognize that interpersonal conflict is part of the process.

Implications for Future Research

As this is the first study, to date, that explores the relationship between colorblind racial ideology and school counselors' interest in and commitment to social justice, its findings suggest that further research be conducted in this area. This study must be replicated in specific metropolitan areas with a larger sample size. A majority of participants sampled in this study were female (81.3%) and predominantly White (58.9%); further research with larger samples of counselors of color and White counselors need to be conducted in order to examine the effect of racial identity development in relation to colorblind racial ideology and social justice interest and commitment. Research has been conducted exploring identity development and multicultural counseling competence (Constantine, 2002), but research on the relationship of colorblind racial ideology, social justice and racial identity development has not been explored. This research could lead to information on how to expand school counselor training for the urban context. Exploring these relationships will help understand if racial identity development plays a role in social justice advocacy. It is possible that it may, given its relationship to multicultural competency (Constantine, 2002).

Research must also be conducted exploring how social justice work translates into practice by specifically investigating the behavioral indicators or artifacts that school counselors can provide to show that social justice activities are taking place. Behavioral indicators may be measured by examining rates of college acceptances or shifts in advance placement course enrollment.

Additionally qualitative research that explores internal and external factors of school counselors that are successfully engaging in social justice work must be explored.

Questions relating to these school counselor's self-efficacy, outcome expectations, principal expectations, racial identity, and personal and moral imperative could be examined. This research can not only inform methods of school counselor training, but can also be used inform professional development activities for practicing school counselors.

Research exploring student, parent, and principal perceptions of school counselor social justice activities should also be investigated. By examining the expectations of these individuals, school counselors may have a clearer notion of their role in the school. Moreover, this research could protect counselors' roles and support counselors in their efforts to evade noncounseling related tasks (i.e., bus duty, testing coordination, master scheduling).

Additionally, research exploring whether the training school counselors are receiving is producing positive outcomes at schools in the urban context over time is needed. The majority of participants in this study have less than 5 years of counseling experience (44.6%). Longitudinal research exploring social justice self-efficacy, interest and commitment to social justice must be investigated to examine how these variables change over time for school counselors who have worked in the urban context for several years. Researchers might also use longitudinal methods to examine the degree to which these variables predict actual social justice advocacy behavior.

Limitations

This study is not without limitations. Although a targeted urban sample was solicited, 7% of participants identified "suburban" as their school's location, this caveat is important as this study examined urban school counselors social justice interest and

commitment, therefore results of this study should be interpreted with caution. The survey instrument did not ask participants to name their school district, therefore there is no way to identify which urban areas these school counselors practice in. Since participants are from varying metropolitan school districts, results of this study will not be generalizable to all practicing school counselors.

Another potential limitation involves the self-report nature of this study. This study does not take the social desirability of participants into account. Social justice and multiculturalism, as topics, have earned much attention in popular media and in the counseling literature (Vera & Speight, 2003). Therefore, one can assume that participants would respond to the CoBRAS and SIQ in a manner that is more favorable and not indicative of their true feelings. Although participants were informed that the survey was anonymous and participants were never asked to include their name or their school's name on the survey, it is unclear as to the degree to which social desirability impacted the results, thus limiting the research.

Interpretability of the survey may have also been a factor limiting research as well. The SIQ survey instrument did not include a definition of "social justice activities" for participants. Practicing school counselors may not have been clear about what constitutes social justice actions and behaviors. School counselors may not have been trained in or aware of what represents social justice activities, therefore the degree to which participants are interested or committed to social justice may be inaccurate. Future studies should incorporate definitions of social justice activities in the SIQ.

The instrumentation and data analyses that were employed in this study are also a limitation. The SIQ instrument has only been used in two research studies (Miller et al.,

2009; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011) thus its construct validity needs further exploration. In addition, another limitation is the inconsistent reliability rating on the social barriers subscale in this study when compared to that found in Miller et al.'s (2009) study. For the SIQ instrument in the present study, the coefficient alpha for the total score was .94, which is equal to the alpha score Miller et al. (2009) reported. Four items in the social barriers subscale of the SIQ were adapted in the present study to be domain-specific for practicing school counselors. However, the social justice social barriers subscale alpha was .48, which is significantly different than what Miller et al. (2009) reported (.79). Although the author was consulted for SIQ instrument adaptation, a significant difference exists in social barriers subscale reliability. Additionally, the subscale alphas for the CoBRAS: Unawareness of Racial Privilege, Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination, and Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues were .73, .67, and .58 respectively, which are significantly lower than those reported by Neville et al. (2000). The lower reliability may be due to a smaller sample size.

With regards to statistical analyses, it is important to have an adequate sample size to assess the significance of the path model (Stage et al., 2004). The recommended ratio is 20 cases per variable measured in the model. For the path analysis conducted in the present study, seven variables were measured, thusly indicating the sample size should have been at least 140 participants. The actual sample size was 129 participants thus limiting the statistical significance of the path coefficients. This may have resulted in poor model fit for the chi-square statistic, goodness-of-fit (GFI) and comparative fit index (CFI) statistics. However, the root-mean-squared error of approximation (RMSEA) exhibited a fair fit to the data, as RMSEA is less affected by sample size (Smith &

McMillan, 2001). However, research replicating this study with larger and more diverse sample size is recommended.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between colorblind racial ideology and social justice variables. The school counseling literature is filled with publications that make the argument for incorporating social justice advocacy in practice, encourage training and skill development for social action, and outline standards and competencies that school counselors need to be effective advocates (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Cox & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; House & Hayes, 2002; Mitcham, Portman, & Dean, 2009; Singh et al., 2010; Trusty and Brown, 2005). Although the belief in social justice advocacy has been a force in the school counseling literature for a number of years, more research assessing counselors' social justice beliefs and ways in which social justice is practiced should be explored if the movement is to gain any credibility within the field (Ratts, 2009; Smith et al., 2009). If the field of school counseling is to claim social justice advocacy as a central value, it is critical to explore and understand school counselors' awareness of injustices, and factors relating to an interest in and lasting commitment to social justice, particularly in the urban context, where the need to narrow educational gaps are most prevalent.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a discussion of the findings was presented followed by implications for practitioners and counselor training. Limitations of this study, as well as, recommendations for future research were explored.

Appendix A: Participant Consent Form

Dear School Counselor,

Greetings! I am inviting you to participate in this research project because you are a practicing school counselor. The purpose of this research project is to investigate school counselors' beliefs about social issues. The procedures of this study require that you take about 25 minutes to respond to a set of items that will ask you questions about your beliefs pertaining to social issues. For example, you will be asked to what degree you agree or disagree with statements such as "Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations" and "Engaging in social justice activities will likely allow me to make a difference in peoples' lives."

I will do my best to keep your responses confidential and anonymous. This online survey does not contain information that may personally identify you or your school. To protect your confidentiality, your name and your school's name are not required on the survey. A code will be used to identify your survey but there will be no names attached to the codes. The codes will be used for tracking data only. Also, I will not track or collect your IP or email address when you respond.

There are no known risks associated with participating in this research. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you choose not to participate, simply click "no." If you decide to begin the survey but stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized. If you would like to participate, please click "yes" below.

This is your informed consent to be a study participant. If you have your questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research related injury, please contact: Instructional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, 20740; email: irb@umd.edu; telephone: 301.405.0678.

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

I appreciate your time and thank you !

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