From Your GSCA President

Maria Grovner

Dear Colleagues,

When I saw the topics for this edition of the GSCA Journal, I began thinking about how timely the articles are for this moment in time. As school counselors, we are looking for opportunities to increase our knowledge on how to incorporate equitable practices and social justice issues into our school counseling programs. In addition to not knowing what school re-entry will look like in the fall, we are looking for ideas to support our scholars upon their return to school. This edition of the GSCA Journal provides an opportunity for us to delve into those areas. The world is listening now and we are the right people to begin the discussions with our stakeholders about what it takes to implement equitable practices within our schools and discuss social justice issues with our scholars and staff.

Special thanks to the 2019-2020 Journal Editor, Dr. Margaux Brown of Augusta State University. I appreciate your leadership as editor of this final edition of the journal and the ideas provided as we begin exploring ideas to improve our journal process. A special thanks to our editorial board as well. I realize that reading manuscripts while also working full-time can pose a challenge, but you welcomed the challenge and for that, I appreciate your determination and willingness to support GSCA. Please get your notepad and pen ready to write down some actionable tasks that you could possibly implement in your program based on your reading of the articles in the journal. Our writers have written about initiatives that are worth replicating in our quest for addressing the needs of our school community and society.

Sincerely,
Maria Grovner
GSCA President, 2020-2021

NOTE: The GSCA Journal will be taking a two-year moratorium as GSCA explores models that will be best suited for the labor of our editorial board and for you the GSCA member from a reader's standpoint. If you have ideas on what we can do to improve the journal, please do not hesitate to reach out to the association.

From Your GSCA Journal Editor

Margaux H. Brown, PhD, LPC

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 27th volume of the GSCA Journal. This will be the final edition of the journal for two years. Resources to produce the journal, including financial and human capital, have increased beyond the current capacity of the organization to operate the GSCA Journal efficiently and effectively for the membership. Therefore, production is pausing while improvements are explored to improve the processes for authors and the experience for readers. It is my hope that readers and future authors will embrace the Beacon as their source for timely and relevant scholarship pertaining to school counseling in Georgia.

It has been an honor to be entrusted by President Maria Grovner to be the GSCA Journal Editor during her presidential year. Her leadership and advocacy during this unprecedented time propelled school counselors in Georgia to be champions for all students. I am grateful for the unique opportunities this year through which I learned from talented Past Presidents, Executive Board members, and fellow Leadership Team members, including Laura Ross, American School Counselor Association's School Counselor of the Year. Thank you to Dr. Karen Rowland, the previous editor of the journal, for her guidance throughout my time at the helm this year. With warmth and fondness, I recall the beginnings of fruitful relationships with passionate advocates and wise counselors who have inspired my work as a school counselor educator.

Thank you to the 2019-2020 Editorial Board Members. These were Dr. Dana Edwards, School Counselor, Gwinnett Online Campus; Dr. Teresa Hadley, School Counselor, Kelly Mill Elementary School; Dr. Kim Jackson-Allen, School Counselor, Savannah-Chatham County Public School System; Dr. Michael Keim, School Counselor, Riverside Military Academy; Dr. Kimberly Nelson, Assistant Professor, Fort Valley State University; and Mr. Jeremy Shain, School Counselor, Bay Springs Middle School. Thank you also to Jessica Atkinson at GSCA for her support in publishing the journal.

During the 2019-2020 academic year while this volume was in production, the U.S. has experienced a pandemic, long-overdue activism to address racism following unjust killings of Black Americans, and an economic recession with record-setting unemployment. In this volume, we are proud to present the following researchers' works that, in part, connect to what is happening. I encourage readers to study the research questions, methods used, and the discussions, and then to consider the implications for future research and practice.

Upon return to school, readers may find it helpful to consider the piece by Katharine S. Adams and Jennifer M. Branscome entitled, "Emotion Dysregulation and Anxiety in Students: Mindfulness Strategies for School Counselors." Adams and Branscome reviewed mindfulness practices in schools and offered breathing and sensory mindfulness techniques that school counselors employ immediately.

Several authors offered timely works related to diversity issues in counseling including social justice advocacy, poverty, and gifted students. Leonis S. Wright composed, "Understanding the Call of Social Justice Advocacy: A Phenomenological Study of High School Counselors," a qualitive inquiry into the knowledge and opinions of high school counselors. He probed their perceptions of their role in social justice advocacy and their belief in their schools to advocate. He found that social justice advocacy is a significant function in their work and they wanted more training.

Sarah Kitchens, Lacey Ricks, and TeShaunda Hannor-Walker wrote, "Self-Efficacy as it Relates to Attributions and Attitudes Towards Poverty Among School Counselors-in-Training." Kitchens, Ricks, and Hannor-Walker surveyed school counselors-in-training from two southeastern schools and found that the participants held generally negative attitudes and attributions about poverty. They discussed implications for training.

Lacey Ricks, Jamie Carney, and Bethany Lanier also examined poverty in "Attributes, Attitudes, and Perceived Self-Efficacy Levels of School Counselors Toward Poverty." Through qualitative inquiry, authors found that school counselors in this sample reported beliefs that poverty is primarily caused by individual deficits and that they felt generally confident being able to counsel children and families living in poverty.

Jill S. Minor and Neil E. Duchac examined experiences of elementary school counselors working with gifted students in "The Experiences of Elementary School Counselors Working with Gifted Students: Utilizing the ASCA National Model." Five themes emerged from their qualitative exploration including commitment, collaboration, experienced-base knowledge, student needs, and small group counseling.

Finally, for school counselor educators, Meredith A. Rausch, Laura L. Gallo, and Margaux H. Brown contributed, "The Group Supervision 360° Case Conceptualization Process: Testing the Process." Rausch, Gallo, and Brown examined the use of a group supervision tool designed to improve case conceptualization among counselors-in-training. Authors analyzed audio transcripts of school counselor interns at the beginning of the semester and then again at the end of the semester and reported how counselors-in-training developed using this model over the term.

I hope that you enjoy this volume and consider reading and contributing to the Beacon for the next few years.

Warm regards,

Margaux H. Brown

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From Your GSCA President by Maria Grovner
From Your GSCA Journal Editor by Margaux H. Brown, PhD, LPC

Journal Editorial Reviewers

Emotion Dysregulation and Anxiety in Students: Mindfulness Strategies for School Counselors

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Abstract
Anxiety is common among students in K-12 schools. Anxious students experience emotion dysregulation as well as cognitive and physical symptoms of anxiety. Such emotional reactivity may cause students to feel overwhelmed and unable to participate effectively in the classroom. Researchers have found positive psychological and physical outcomes linked to the practice of mindfulness in the school setting. We discuss example strategies and exercises that school counselors may use to introduce students to mindfulness practices.

Keywords: anxiety, mindfulness, school counselors

Anxiety is a common experience during childhood and adolescence. During these periods, a person experiences many challenging "firsts," such as starting school or experiencing pubertal changes, which can cause a significant amount of stress. Although experiencing stress during these developmental periods is normal, children may develop unhealthy patterns of anxiety, which can have negative, long-lasting effects in school and beyond (American Psychological Association [APA], 2014; Keating, 2017; Mazzone et al., 2007; Owens, Stevenson, Hadwin, & Norgate, 2012). For example, one study demonstrated that higher adolescent stress led to fewer healthy behaviors like exercising, sleeping well, and eating healthy foods (APA, 2014). Additionally, children with high anxiety are more likely to withdraw from learning and social interaction (Keating, 2017) and overall demonstrate lower academic performance (Mazzone et al., 2007; Owens et. al., 2012). For some, anxiety can become an even more serious issue and develop into an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders are among the most commonly diagnosed mental health disorders in children and adolescents (Beesdo, Knappe, & Pine, 2009; Centers for Disease Control [CDC], 2018; Ghandour et al., 2019). In a recent study examining the prevalence of mental health disorders in children aged 3 – 17 years (n = 43,282), researchers found that 7.1% had a current diagnosis of anxiety (Ghandour et al., 2019). Investigators examining the lifetime prevalence of anxiety disorders suggest that up to

33.7% of people will experience an anxiety disorder at some point in their lives (Bandelow & Michaelis, 2015; Beesdo et al., 2009; Harvard Medical School, 2007).

Feelings of worry, fear, or apprehension are common emotional symptoms of anxiety (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). However, anxiety can also cause a variety of physiological reactions, including rapid heart rate, fast breathing, sweating, shaking, and digestive issues, as well as cognitive disturbance, such as ruminating thoughts and difficulty concentrating (APA, 2013; Barrio Minton, Wachter Morris, & Bruner, 2017). The exact cause of anxiety varies depending on the type of disorder, but symptoms of anxiety become clinically significant when they are excessive, persistent, and damaging to a person's daily functioning (APA, 2013; Barrio Minton et al., 2017). In recent years, researcher have increasingly focused on the role of emotion regulation as it relates to anxiety in children and adolescents. In this paper, we discuss emotion regulation as well as mindfulness techniques that school counselors may use with students experiencing anxiety at school.

Emotion Dysregulation and Anxiety

Emotion regulation is a set of behaviors intended to modulate both the experience and expression of emotions (Gross, 1998, 2002). Effective regulation of emotion is important to navigate successfully through the daily demands of the environment and to overall mental health (Gross & Munoz, 1995). In contrast, difficulty managing one's emotions results in emotion dysregulation. Researchers have linked emotion dysregulation to negative emotional outcomes including its role in the development and maintenance of anxiety disorders (Hofmann, Sawyer, Fang,

& Asnaani, 2012; Suveg, Morelen, Brewer, & Thamassin, 2010). Investigators suggest that one element of emotion dysregulation is high negative emotional reactivity. Individuals with high negative emotional reactivity tend to become easily distressed, to experience emotions intensely, and to have difficulty calming down after being upset (Mennin, Holaway, Fresco, Moore, & Heimberg, 2007). Another element of emotion dysregulation in anxiety is difficulty in identifying and understanding emotions (Cisler & Olantunji, 2012; Hofmann et al., 2012). Finally, emotion dysregulation often results in the use of maladaptive approaches to control the experience and expression of emotions (Hofmann et al., 2012; Suveg & Zeman, 2005).

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is an awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgement (Kabat-Zinn, 1982). Mindfulness involves four key elements: observation, interpretation, awareness, and acceptance. Thus, a person practicing mindfulness observes and interprets external and internal stimuli in the moment without evaluating or passing judgment on the current experience (Furtner, Tutzer, & Sachse, 2018). The function of the non-judgmental stance is to create an internal environment in which emotions and thoughts can occur without interference or suppression.

Researchers suggest that the practice of mindfulness is linked to decreased anxiety (Chambers, Gullone, & Allen, 2009; Hofmann, Sawyer, Witt, & Oh, 2010). More specifically, Subic-Wrana et al. (2014) examined emotion regulation strategies and found that the mindfulness elements of awareness and non-judgement in particular

were helpful to those with anxiety (Subic-Wrana et al., 2014). Participants who recognized and accepted their emotions in a non-judgmental way experience less anxiety. Conversely, participants who suppressed or avoided their emotions were at increased risk of negative outcomes such as anxiety and depression (Subic-Wrana et al., 2014).

Research focusing on the use of mindfulness with children and adolescents has expanded in recent years but is still limited (American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP], 2017; Frank et al., 2013; Greenburg & Harris, 2012; Rempel, 2012; Thompson & Gauntlett-Gilbert, 2008; Ziomek-Daigle & Oliphant, 2017). Research conducted over the last 10 years has explored the impact of mindfulness training on students diagnosed with a variety of mental health conditions including Conduct Disorder, Autism, Asperger syndrome, and those in treatment for chronic pain (Ziomek-Daigle & Oliphant, 2017). Likewise, the available research on the use of mindfulness in a school-based setting shows promise (Semple, Droutman, & Reid, 2017). Initial research has found positive psychological and physical outcomes linked to the practice of mindfulness in the K-12 setting (AAP, 2017; Dimick, Noltemeyer, & Klatt, 2015; Felver, Frank, & McEachern, 2013). It is clear that mindfulness practice can potentially address anxiety, as well as a host of other emotional issues, experienced by students of all ages. In the next section, we discuss mindfulness practices and specific interventions for use by school counselors.

Mindfulness Practices in Schools

School counselors are ideally suited to implement mindfulness into the schools.

Their training and role within the school allows them to identify students in need of support and the appropriate level of intervention delivery. School counselors also have the skills and knowledge needed to adapt mindfulness practice for use with students at all grade levels and across all levels of intervention (Felver, Doerner, Jones, Kaye, & Merrell, 2013; Tadlock-Marlo, 2011). Finally, mindfulness practices are ideally suited for the school setting and contribute in a practical and meaningful way to the school counselor's repertoire of skills and techniques. Lessons are typically brief, require minimal resources, and are relatively simple to implement.

School counselors may incorporate mindfulness in their day-to-day routines with students in a variety of ways. First, school counselors may introduce mindfulness practices to all students as part of an existing school-wide social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. The integration makes conceptual sense given that SEL and mindfulness are complementary of each other in their focus on self-awareness, equanimity, attention training, and promoting empathy, pro-social attitudes and behaviors (Brensilver, 2016). In using this whole school approach, it will be important for school counselors to conduct in-service training for teachers and administrators, describing the positive effects of incorporating mindfulness. Additionally, mindfulness could easily fit into an action-research plan for the year by utilizing data to evaluate the effects of mindfulness activities.

Several colleagues provide online resources for how they are incorporating mindfulness in the classroom as school counselors (see Counselor Keri, Counselor

Chelsea, Jessica Woody, etc.). We discuss selected strategies from each tier or level of intervention to provide examples of how school counselors may begin incorporating mindfulness in their schools. School counselors provide Tier 1 interventions to all students through classroom-wide instruction. One efficient way to teach mindfulness strategies in the classroom is to let students practice mindfulness exercises through centers or stations. Students can rotate through centers, spending 5-10 minutes practicing each exercise and then debrief with small groups to talk about their experiences and impressions (Counselor Keri, 2018). While elementary school classrooms offer more flexibility in scheduling for mindfulness activities throughout the day, middle and high schools may opt to use a weekly flex period to introduce mindfulness strategies. Alternatively, school counselors could lead large groups of students in brief mindfulness exercises on a designated day each week, such as "Mindful Mondays", by visiting individual classrooms, providing classrooms with pre-recorded videos of themselves leading a mindfulness exercise, or reading a mindfulness script over the announcements (Counselor Keri, 2018).

While providing large group lessons or consulting with teachers, school counselors are likely to identify anxious students that could benefit from more intense practice with mindfulness skills. School counselors may then offer Tier 2 small group mindfulness interventions that provide identified students additional opportunities to learn adaptive emotion regulation skills when anxiety is experienced. These small groups may be time limited or on going depending on the school's needs and resources available. Additionally, with time and continued practice, it may

be possible to offer peer led mindfulness groups. Finally, school counselors may identify students that are not able to independently regulation their emotion in the classroom and need Tier 3 individual counseling interventions. As time permits, school counselors provide these types of individualized interventions. However, given the myriad of expectations and responsibilities that school counselors manage on a daily basis, ongoing individualized counseling may not always be possible. Therefore, one alternative may be to create a mindfulness meditation space within the building or in a small section of the counselor's office for individual students who need time alone to calm down by refocusing on the here and now (Counselor Keri, 2018).

Mindfulness lessons are highly adaptable and provide school counselors significant flexibility in their use with students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Adaptability is important for tailoring mindfulness techniques to students' developmental (Thompson & Gauntlett-Gilbert, 2008). When selecting developmentally appropriate mindfulness interventions, school counselors should consider students' cognitive development, attentional capacity, level of interest, and engagement. For instance, younger children will likely benefit most from lessons that focus on the concrete experience of mindfulness, whereas older children may be able to grasp the more abstract meta-cognitive elements of mindfulness (Weare, 2013). Additionally, the time spent practicing mindfulness should vary according to a student's developmental level. Practice sessions with young children are typically short (between 1-5 minutes) or the recommended one minute of mindfulness

practice for every year of age (Greenland, 2010; Thompson & Gauntlett-Gilbert, 2008).

Another consideration when teaching mindfulness skills to children and adolescents is maintaining the interest and engagement of the learner. To do this, school counselors should vary how students practice mindfulness skills and minimize or eliminate extended periods of meditation that are often present in the mindfulness practice of adults. Other ways to maintain interest and engagement include incorporating multiple senses into practice activities (e.g., hearing, tasting) and using metaphors and analogies with older children to illustrate concepts (Thompson & Gauntlett-Gilbert, 2008).

The possibilities and methods for using mindfulness in the schools are numerous. We discuss a few of the most frequently used techniques to provide an understanding of how school counselors may begin incorporating mindfulness-based techniques with their students. School counselors or others can implement or adapt these methods as necessary for use within the schools.

Mindfulness of the Breath

A major area of focus for many mindfulness techniques is focus on one's breath (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011). The ever-present yet fundamentally necessary nature of breathing lends itself well for use in mindfulness practice. When practicing mindfulness, a person can use their breathing as a focus of attention as well as use it to cope with stressful situations. People experiencing anxiety tend to breathe in their upper chest with shallow, rapid breaths, which may contribute to hyperventilation. Mindfulness practices

encourage slow deep breaths, which stimulate the body's natural relaxation response (Harvard Medical School, 2018). In breath-focused mindfulness techniques, a student is encouraged to focus awareness on their breath and practice breathing in a particular way (e.g., take a deep breath for 5 seconds, exhale for 10 seconds).

Take 5 Breathing Exercise. One example of a specific breath-based mindfulness technique is the Take 5 Breathing Exercise (e.g., Burnett, n.d.). In this exercise, ask students to spread the fingers of one hand, stretching the fingers wide. Then, students use the index finger of one hand to trace the outline of the fingers of the other hand beginning with the thumb and ending with the pinky finger. Instruct students to pay attention to how the index finger is moving and to think about how tracing the fingers feels. Students will then repeat the action by tracing the hand again. While doing so, they will breathe out through their nose while the index finger is tracing upward and out through their mouth while the index finger is tracing downward.

Breathing Applications. Alternatively, there are a variety of breathing applications, or apps (e.g., Breathe2Relax, Universal Breathing- Pranayama, Relax Stress and Anxiety Relief, Breathing Zone) available for download onto a mobile phone or tablet. Breathing apps provide instructions and practice exercises to help users learn deep breathing techniques. Integrating technology into the practice of mindfulness techniques may be an appealing alternative for some children and adolescents. Mobile apps may encourage continued practice of mindfulness techniques at home in addition to school. However, the cost of mobile apps varies.

While some breathing apps such as Breath2Relax are free, others have a small purchase price typically ranging from $1.99 to $4.99. The cost of mobile apps may pose a barrier for some students, as does limited or no access to mobile technology. It is important for school counselors to be sensitive to such barriers and provide students with alternatives for home practice such as handouts of mindfulness activities, narrated written scripts, or audio recordings.

Mindfulness of the Body and Senses

Another common focus of mindfulness practice is mindfulness of the body (Kerr, Sacchet, Lazar, Moore, & Jones, 2013). In body-focused mindfulness techniques, students direct their attention to physical sensations experienced within the body (Kerr et al., 2013). School counselors may implement body-focused mindfulness techniques as part of a larger mindfulness approach (e.g., mindfulness based stress reduction) or use them in isolation. Regardless of the method of implementation, body-focused mindfulness practices typically involve two elements: focusing attention on physical sensations and developing an understanding of how emotions affect the body. A common body-focused mindfulness technique is the body scan (e.g., "Body Scan Meditation," n.d.). The body scan can be done in different ways (e.g., Greater Good Science Center, 2020; Kerr et al., 2013), but the process typically involves starting in a comfortable position (seated or lying down), taking several deep breaths, and systematically focusing on the sensations felt in different parts of the body. Students make connection between the body and emotions during the mindfulness activity, after the activity, or both.

An area of practice related to body-focused mindfulness is sensory mindfulness. Sensory mindfulness entails directing awareness to each of the body's sensations and perceptions in the moment (e.g., what sounds are heard, the temperature of the room). Two common sensory-based mindfulness techniques are the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 grounding technique and the raisin exercise.

5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Grounding Technique. There are numerous variations on this technique, but all involve bringing awareness to each of our five senses in the moment (e.g., "Coping Skills Spotlight," 2016; Ackerman, 2017). Often, practice begins by taking several deep breaths. The second step is to identify five things that can be seen and name those things aloud. In the third step, ask students to focus their attention on four physical sensations experienced in that moment (e.g., how shoes feel on the feet, the feel of the chair) and name those sensations. Fourth, three things that can be heard are identified and named. The fifth step is to identify and name two things that can be smelled and name those two things. Identifying and naming one taste is the sixth and final step. In some variations, this technique will end with taking several final deep breaths.

Raisin Exercise. The raisin exercise is one that can used as an introductory mindfulness technique. Despite its name, school counselors may use any food item to perform this technique, although ones with distinctive attributes are best (Ackerman, 2017). In this exercise, ask students to imagine that they have never seen a raisin. Then, slowly direct them to attend to how the raisin looks, feels, smells, and tastes. The intended purpose of the raisin exercise is to bring students'

attention to the present moment by focusing on one particular item using all of the senses in turn (Ackerman, 2017).

Walking Mindfulness. Many believe you must be still to be mindful, but the goal of mindfulness is to have it generalize to daily activities. For example, you can practice mindfulness while going for a walk by simply paying close attention to all aspects of the process (Thompson & Gauntlett-Gilbert, 2008). While walking, instruct students to first focus on their breath and then focus their attention to their other senses in the moment. Encourage students to walk at a comfortable pace that allows them to focus on the body (e.g., sensations in the feet as they hit the floor) and the events around them (e.g., changes in temperature, light, sound). Instruct students to avoid talking with others and to notice and react mindfully to outside events. With practice, have students try labeling, or using anchor words to help focus attention and stay connected with the sensations of walking (e.g., "stepping" or "right" then "left."). Next, we provide more information about the use of anchor words.

Anchor Words. When practicing mindful breathing or other techniques, students will still experience thoughts, sounds, physical sensations, emotions, and other sensations. Teach students to attend to these external experiences when they enter conscious awareness with the use of anchor words (Mindful Schools, 2011). The use of anchor words may help steady one's attention on something that enters conscious awareness while practicing. Anchor words are mental labels that may be applied to anything, but anchor words should be purely observational and not judgmental (Mindful Schools, 2011). For example, if a student hears a noise, label

it "sound." If they have a body sensation, label it "itch" or "ache." Once a student names something, they may choose to focus their attention on it or focus back on the breath. Students can also use anchor words to label emotions. Then, a quick body scan may be helpful in understanding connections between emotional and physical experiences.

Again, the possibilities and methods for using mindfulness in the schools are numerous. We simply offer this overview of some of the most frequently used techniques to provide a better understanding of how school counselors may begin incorporating mindfulness-based techniques with their students. School counselors can implement and adapt methods as necessary for use within the schools.

Conclusion

In conclusion, mindfulness based techniques show considerable promise in alleviating student anxiety characterized by emotional dysregulation (Semple et al., 2017; Subic-Wrana et al., 2014) and the literature provides a strong rationale for the implementation of mindfulness based techniques by school counselors (AAP, 2017; Frank et al., 2013; Greenburg & Harris, 2012; Rempel, 2012; Tadlock-Marlo, 2011; Thompson & Gauntlett-Gilbert, 2008; Ziomek-Daigle & Oliphant, 2017). School counselors are encouraged to incorporate mindfulness into the schools at all grade levels and across all tiers of intervention by introducing frequently used techniques such as the Take 5 Breathing Exercise, Body Scan, or 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Grounding Technique. Such exercises require minimal resources, are highly adaptable, and are relatively simple to implement. Furthermore,

school counselors are encouraged to seek professional development opportunities related to the practice of mindfulness and explore other methods for using mindfulness in the schools. It is clear that developmentally appropriate mindfulness practice can help alleviate anxiety commonly experienced by students of all ages and help them participate more effectively in the classroom.

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Understanding the Call of Social Justice Advocacy: A Phenomenological Study of High School Counselors

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Abstract

Due to a growing diversified society, and the specific needs of students who are considered marginalized, school counselors are identified as crucial personnel to serve as social justice advocates to promote educational equity for all students. Despite this calling, there is limited research on school counselors' understanding of social justice advocacy and their expected role. Thus, this article highlights research that provided practicing high school counselors the opportunity to share their views on this phenomenon.

Keywords: advocacy, school counselors, knowledge, perceptions, competency

Over the past 30 years, the demographic characteristics of public schools in the United States have shifted. The latest statistics from the U.S. Department of Education reveal that between 2000 and 2017, the percentage of U.S. school-age children who were White decreased from 62 to 51 percent, and the rate who were Black also reduced from 15 to 14 percent (de Brey et al., 2019). In contrast, the percentages of school-age children from other racial/ethnic groups increased: Hispanic children, from 16 to 25 percent; Asian children, from 3 to 5 percent; and children of two or more races, from 2 to 4 percent (de Brey et al., 2019). However, amid this increasingly diverse population within American public schools, there continue to be disparities regarding socioeconomic status, academic achievement, and student behaviors. In 2016, the percentage of children under the age of 18 in families living in poverty was higher for Black children than Hispanic children, and the rates for both of these groups were higher than for White and Asian children (de Brey at el., 2019). Interestingly "the academic achievement of students from diverse backgrounds also reflects "an education system that remains unequal" (Feldwisch & Whiston, 2015, p.167). Asian and White students continue to represent a higher percentage of individuals earning credits in calculus and Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate (AP/IB) courses. In contrast, Black and Hispanic students' rate remains the lowest (de Brey et al., 2019). Likewise, student behavior is another area that still reflects some disparity. Although the percentage of students retained in a grade decreased from 3.1 to 1.9 percent between 2000 and 2016, in 2013–14, a higher rate of Black students than of students from any other racial/ethnic group received an out-of-school suspension (de Brey et al., 2019). Thus, as our schools continue to be "challenged by changing demographics and characterized by blatant inequality and failure" (Walker, 2006), it is evident that social justice advocacy must exist to create a fair and equitable environment for all students.

Social Justice Advocacy and School Counselors

Social justice, as defined by Bell (2007), "is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs" (p.1). The term includes "all people regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, age, language, religion, and region" (Jun 2010, p.324). This notion of social justice advocacy encompasses counselors going beyond the traditional method of providing only direct services to clients to offering auxiliary functions, which include involving outside organizations that influence their individual lives (Kiselica and Robinson, 2001). Thus, Field and Baker (2004) deemed that school counselors must go beyond the four walls of their office and obtain resources and interventions which will allow them to advocate for not only individual students but also student groups and student issues.

For over a decade, the authors researching this topic have provided claims regarding the importance of school counselors serving as social justice advocates.

According to Paisley and Hayes (2003), school counselors are the ideal persons to serve as social justice advocates and eliminate barriers to academic success because of their school-wide perspective. Walker (2006) indicated that school counselors should be considered a necessary asset to the new inclusive team of closing the achievement gap because of their influence on all members of the school community. Ratts, DeKruyf, and Chen-Hayes (2007) postulated that "social justice advocacy is a key task of the 21st-century professional school counselor" (p.90). Correspondingly, Bemak and Chung (2008) indicated that the transformation of a school counselor's role to advocacy is a crucial element in reducing the achievement gap. Bemak and Chung (2008) believe that school counselors "are well-positioned to address this complex problem given their unique position in the schools and the professional training they receive in becoming multicultural/social justice advocates and organizational change agents" (p. 10).

Furthermore, organizations such as the Education Trust's National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC), the Council for Accreditation of Counseling Related Educational Programs (CACREP), and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) all worked extensively on social justice mandates and initiatives. These mandates and initiatives connected school counseling programs to the education reform of addressing equities and closing achievement gaps (Paisley & Hayes, 2003; Wilkerson & Eschbach, 2009). For example, in 1996, the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest, along with the Education Trust, implemented an initiative, the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI). The TSCI was designed

to encourage counselor educators to change their training and create programs to prepare counselors-in-training to serve as advocates and academic advisors. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP, 2009] also revised its standards for the education of all counselors but placed particular emphasis on the school counseling area. The revisions highlighted necessary skills for school counselors such as program development, implementation and evaluation, counseling and guidance, and consultation. The language of these amended standards coincided with the qualifications specified in the TSCI (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Likewise, ASCA designed school counselor competencies to aid school counseling programs in developing curricula that focused on the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for creating a comprehensive school counseling program for meeting the needs of all students (Wilkerson & Eschbach, 2009).

Consequently, the topics of social justice advocacy and school counseling have yielded a plethora of research. Parikh, Post, and Flowers (2011) explored the relationship between school counselors' political and religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, and race of school counselors and their attitudes about social justice advocacy. The above-listed variables were determined to either encourage or impede school counselors' social justice advocacy practice. Hartline and Cobia (2012) took a look at closing the achievement gap summary results' reports of school counselors who received training on the ASCA National Model. The results indicated that school counselors were able to identify gaps and created interventions but required more training in the areas of evaluation and reporting.

Feldwisch and Whiston (2015) investigated school counselors' commitment to social justice advocacy. These authors conducted a quantitative study with a focus on school counselors who self-reported as being social justice advocates. The results revealed that school counselors' validation of their social justice efforts correlated with their scores on the Advocacy Competencies Self-Assessment. The results also indicated that school counselors working in identified comprehensive school counseling programs scored higher than those school counselors who did not. Cook, Brodsky, Gracia, and Morizio (2019) concentrated on the training outcomes of school counselors-in-training self-development as well as the relationship between the school counselors-in-training and the students they worked with during their practicum experience. The findings exposed beneficial results for both the school counselor trainees and their students. The students reported an increase in academic self-efficacy. At the same time, the school counselor-in-training conveyed a better understanding of their own biases and privileges, and an increased comfort level in working with diverse students. Lastly, Boyland et al. (2019), surveyed the current practices of preparation programs of school counselors and principals to allow for a better understanding of each role and to foster collaboration between school counselors and administrators. Although these various authors stressed the need for school counselors to serve as social justice advocates, adhering to this call can be a difficult task. The challenge often is a result of school-based and district leaders' lack of awareness regarding school counselors' ability to assist in schools' effort to improve academic achievement and promote opportunity and equity.

Purpose

There are a number of authors expressing the importance of school counselors serving as social justice advocates to address diversity and societal inequities in schools (Martin, 2002; Paisley & Hayes, 2003; Parikh et al., 2011; Ratts et al., 2007; Trusty & Brown, 2005). Research indicates that because school counselors have a school-wide perspective, they are the ideal school personnel to determine barriers that interfere with academic success for all students. However, despite the emphasis placed on school counselors in this area, challenges also exist. Wilkerson and Eschbach (2009) pointed out that school counselors are deficient in several skills needed to close the achievement gap, such as using data to create programs, effectively monitoring student progress, and promoting school-wide change. While Evans, Zambrano, Cook, Moyer, and Duffey (2011) cited entry-level competencies, the school counselor's role, school climate, and community support and resources as barriers preventing school counselors from adhering to the call of social justice advocacy. Limited research has taken place on obtaining practicing school counselors' understanding of social justice advocacy and their beliefs regarding their skills in carrying out this role. Thus, this qualitative study used a phenomenological methodology to examine the knowledge and opinions of high school counselors. The questions guiding this research were: 1) What are high school counselors' understanding of their role in social justice advocacy? and, 2) Do high school counselors believe they have the necessary skills to serve as social justice advocates? School counselors' discussions about their interpretation of this role and perceptions of their abilities concerning social justice

advocacy will allow their input into this phenomenon. Additionally, this study will provide information on how to equip school counselors-in-training as well as practicing school counselors with the tools they need to create and implement programs to address the needs of all students and to become critical players in closing the achievement gap.

Method
Participants

The participants were practicing high school counselors in a tri-county area of a southeastern state. As the researcher chose to obtain the voices of high school counselors who may have experience with social justice issues, these participants were theoretically (purposefully) selected based on the potential contribution to the development of this research (Heppner & Heppner, 2004). The criteria for the study's population consisted of high school counselors currently employed in a diverse school setting: a) representing all educational levels (i.e., special education and general education), b) comprising of at least three different ethnicities, and c) having at least one-fourth of their students on free and reduced lunch. This criterion of diversity was used based on the stance of the National Education Association (NEA), implying that "full acceptance of diversity is a major principle of social justice"(NEA n.d., para.1).

Before gaining access to the participants, the researcher obtained university IRB approval and made research requests to school district offices within the tri-county area of interest. The selection process of the participants began immediately after receiving authorization by contacting the district offices' counseling coordinators and obtaining the email addresses for all

high school counselors. The total number of high school counselors was 138. These school counselors received email invitations providing an attached consent letter and requesting a reply of interest to participate if they met the criteria. Out of 138 high school counselors who received the email, eight (representing the three districts in the tri-county area) responded regarding their interest. Of these eight participants, all were female, three were African American, one was African American/Asian (Korean), and four were Caucasian. One of the participants had 12 years of experience, six had between one and ten years, and one had less than one year of experience (see Table 1). Each participant received a Visa gift card for $25.00. The demographic characteristics of the participants' schools are included (see Table 2). Participants' school enrollment ranged from 657 to 2239 students. Seven participants worked in suburban schools, and one worked in an urban school. Descriptive statistics on student ethnicity and socio-economic status are reported in Table 2

Measures

The data collection protocol included a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) and semi-structured interviews utilizing an interview guide with open-ended questions (see Appendix B). The demographic questionnaire items were determined based on the demographic descriptions used in the literature that was reviewed for this study and was adapted from Parikh et al. (2011) and Ford and Nelson (2007). The interview questions came from Singh, Urbano, Haston, and McMahon (2010). Their study concentrated on school counselors who already believed they engage in social justice advocacy; however, the researchers concluded that their interview protocol was

relevant and appropriate in answering the questions for this study.

The questions focused on school counselors' current programs, roles, and responsibilities, and their perceptions of social justice advocacy. The researcher's objective was to determine school counselors' understanding of social justice advocacy and therefore asked questions designed to allow for deep probing from the interviewer as well as to provide an appropriate level of freedom, which permitted a conversational style of interviewing. Written participants' consent was received to record the interviews. The sessions were face-to-face and lasted from 45 minutes to an hour. Five of the eight meetings were held in the participants' offices, while the three other participants chose to come to the researcher's office. Some of the interviews took place during the day while others were after work hours.

Data Analysis

The research followed Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) to obtain in-depth construction of knowledge. The researcher recruited two coders, a counselor educator, and a Ph.D. candidate and former school counselor to create the research coding team. Copies of the transcribed interviews were reviewed by the participants for accuracy and then given to both coders to begin Moustakas' (1994) analytical process.

The research team worked independently and held ongoing discussions via phone contact and face-to-face meetings to reach unanimity. Employing additional coders to analyze and interpret the data increased the credibility of the analyses. The coding team first identified all non-repetitive,

non-overlapping statements regarding the phenomenon under examination and kept a coding log of terms and clusters resulted from the data interpretation. After each coder completed their analysis, the team compared and clustered the data into themes to develop textual descriptions--focusing on what the participants experienced. Lastly, multiple meanings of the textual descriptions created structural stories (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas,1994). After examining and revisiting the transcripts' keywords and phrases, the coding alliance gave rise to seven themes, which were substantial to determining high school counselors' understanding of social justice advocacy and identifying necessary factors in adhering to the social justice advocacy calls.

To further establish trustworthiness, the researcher provided detailed descriptions of the entire data collection process, information regarding the participants' demographic background, as well as each of their school's demographic characteristics (Table 2). The researcher also increased the dependability of the study's results by utilizing member checks, which allowed the participants to view transcripts and to provide feedback to ensure their ideas and experiences were displayed accurately. All eight participants felt the transcriptions were precise and did not see a need for any changes. Additionally, the researcher conducted reflective journaling to allow her to ponder thoughts, record initial impressions of the data collected, and to consider possible developmental interpretations (Shenton, 2004).

Results

The findings of this study resulted in seven themes (see Figure 1). These

were personal experiences, competence, exposure, diverse populations, programs, collaboration in the schools, and community collaboration/resources.

Personal Experiences

Regardless of what individuals encounter or undergo, experiences, whether past or current, often manifest their beliefs and actions. Therefore, the participants' own experiences seem to be an appropriate theme in attempting to understand social justice advocacy. Counselor 5 shared, "I haven't been a part of any form of social justice advocacy. I don't know if I have lived a sheltered life, but it's just not something that I truly think about outside of my own life. Since it doesn't affect me like it would other people, maybe I ignore it, I am not sure." Counselor 7 stated, "In my personal life, I have worked in non-profit organizations advocating for social justice for women who have been victims of domestic violence, but as far as the school is concerned, it has been very minimal." Counselor 3 stated, "A lot my awareness honestly comes from social media." In reflecting on the notion of personal experiences, the participants' responses varied; however, each indicated that their skills in social justice was limited and felt that their own experiences were a contributing factor to their current stance on social justice.

Competence

As the participants expounded on their experiences in and understanding of social justice advocacy, the concepts of ability in fulfilling this role emerged. Participants' comments mostly indicated a lack of competency. When asked the question, how prepared do you feel to serve as a social justice advocate in your school, Counselor 2 responded, "Not prepared

at all." Similarly, Counselor 6 stated, "Completely unprepared to help the kids in the way that they need it because I feel like there are such hot button issues like transgender, and the race is still an issue and socioeconomic status." All participants agreed that some form of preparation is needed to assist high school counselors in becoming better social justice advocates for all students. Thus, their comments revealed a common theme of exposure at the preservice and practicing levels.

Exposure

Exposure is a theme because of the numerous responses received from the participants concerning its importance. In this context, the term means "the fact of experiencing something or being affected by it because of being in a particular situation or place" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Its linkage between the research questions is like competency in that the level of exposure in which school counselors have may affect their ability to perform the task of social justice advocacy effectively. The participants' responses related to the need for school counselors to be more exposed. For example, Counselor 6 stated, "I think that the more exposure you have, the more you are prepared for anything." Likewise, Counselor 7 shared, "I think exposure is the number one thing."

Additionally, the participants responded to questions regarding their views of what exposure would entail. For the inquiry, what helps or would help you be a successful social justice advocate in your school, Counselor 4 stated, "We need training on data." While Counselor 5 shared, "I think reading up more on the ACA advocacy competencies and getting more experience on being an advocate is very much needed." In pondering the

question, what recommendations would you suggest for training programs to adequately prepare school counselors-in-training to serve as social justice advocates in their prospective schools? Counselor 5 stated, "I think we need more classes on social justice, and how to be an advocate because it is not a big focus in graduate school programs." Counselor 1 also explained the need for preservice programs to provide courses designed specifically for understanding data as it relates to school counseling. She expounded, "We get data all the time and are expected to know it, but we need to know what does data look like, and how can you show that what you are doing is making a change?"

Moreover, for the question, what suggestions do you have for professional development for practicing school counselors, Counselor 1 commented, "School counselors simply need more training or workshops on cultural diversity." Counselor 2 stated, "Definitely some kind of professional development that it's not just one day. It should be ongoing training each year." Likewise, counselor 8 indicated that more training on understanding and how to work with various populations such as EL (English Learner), special education, and LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex) is much needed. Overall, the majority of the responses related to the need for school counselors to be more exposed to the matters they believe affect their role in social justice advocacy.

Diverse Populations

As the comments regarding various groups of students surfaced in several of the participants' responses, the identification of marginalized students generated the fourth theme of diverse populations. The idea of

different groups of students is prevalent because, as previously indicated, "full acceptance of diversity is a major principle of social justice" (NEA, n.d., para.1). Thus, an understanding of each participants' work setting and their thoughts regarding diversity aided in guiding this research. The participants made repeated comments regarding students with varied social, racial, language, and economic identities. Counselor 4 discussed the students she is most concerned about, "Our Hispanic population, our African American population, especially boys… our transgender population, our at-risk students who may have few credits going into their third year of high school, and our homeless population." However, most of the other comments also focused on the participants' uncertainty of how to reach these students. Overall, the data revealed various levels of diversity in each school environment, despite the disparity of enrollment numbers within the schools.

Programs

Responses from such questions as what types of social justice-related issues do you see in your school and what are you doing to help your marginalized students proved that the need for specialized programming was evident. Participants again identified various marginalized populations and were able to highlight programs in their schools designed to reach those populations. Still, few were able to discuss plans in which they, as school counselors, implemented and coordinated. Counselor 8 shared, "I haven't implemented, but have seen different programs be put into place to try to get African American students to a higher level whether it is afterschool programs, mentors, extra tutoring…." Collaboration within the Schools Most participants discussed programs

that were school/district-led; however, they also disclosed their lack of partnership and involvement in creating "closing the achievement gap" programs. As a result, the sixth theme of collaboration within the schools emerged. Counselor 3 stressed, "I think a lot of times as educators, we, there is a disconnect because everyone thinks, well this is that person's job and not understanding that this is everyone's job, and this should be a collaborative effort…. " While Counselor 4 explained, "We do have a forum to enact with our teachers and administrators, but the problem is everyone is just so busy and in their worlds." If you attempt to mention a program with teachers, they talk about the 100 other school initiatives that are coming down from the district or state." Despite weakness in this area, to truly serve as a social justice advocate for all students, participants stressed a need for this component.

Community Collaboration/Resources

Lastly, just as it is vital to be in collaboration with significant players involved in students' lives within the school setting, the participants also talked about the need for community connections. However, they mainly focused on resources and referrals. Counselor 1 shared, "I feel like the only community collaboration we have are with mental health counselors and maybe like a financial need for families as well as placement for them." Counselor 2 commented, "We reach out to support groups all the time; for example, we have a church group that we work closely with for our homeless students and families in transition." Counselor 6 stated, "I feel that we probably could collaborate a little more with the community, but other than knowing of community resources and making referrals, there is not much more

we do." The next theme identified was community collaboration and resources because of the importance of school counselors being aware of their community resources to make necessary referrals as well as to utilize community members to serve as participants in their programming for marginalized students. For example, creating a mentoring program involving local Greek fraternities for at-risk African American males or reaching out to college admissions representatives to co-facilitating "going to college" group sessions for first-generation college-going students. Unfortunately, none of the participants made the connection between social justice advocacy and the various initiatives they as school counselors could implement as they discussed collaboration.

Discussion

This author of this study sought to examine the understanding of social justice advocacy among high school counselors and their beliefs regarding their ability to carry out this responsibility. Overall, the research revealed that although the participants had an awareness of social justice issues in their school settings and the need for advocacy programs, there were inconsistencies between the social justice advocacy expectation of school counselors and their actual job duties and skills.

Moreover, the themes which emerged provided validation of other previous findings concerning social justice advocacy. For example, comments participants made regarding their personal experience, exposure, and competency seem to coincide with the discoveries from Parikh and colleagues (2011) exploration of the relationship between school counselors' beliefs and their attitudes about social justice advocacy. The authors determined that variables such as political and religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, and race of school counselors all affect school counselors' social justice advocacy practice. Likewise, with this current research, based on some participants' experiences and their lack of exposure to social justice issues, there is resistance and apathy to create change despite the diversity and equities they see in their schools.

All participants discussed feeling somewhat incompetent in carrying out a social justice agenda and stressed the need for additional preservice and professional development training. Hartline and Cobia's (2012) found that school counselors who received adequate training on the ASCA National Model obtained the skills needed to identify achievement gaps and create intervention programs. The participants in this study, however, pointed out that although they felt more competent with the training, they too believed that additional training was needed to create and evaluate data-driven programs to ensure a fair and equitable education for all students to promote systemic change (ASCA, 2019).

Feldwisch and Whiston (2015) also touched on the theme of competency. Although the focus of their study was on self-reported social justice advocates, they rationalized that school counselors who worked in school counseling comprehensive program setting scored higher on an Advocacy Competencies Self-Assessment than those who did not. The results of the authors' research seem to imply that individuals working in complete counseling program settings received some level of training to help them create the program and to become more confident in their role of social justice advocates.

Quite a few of the participants touched on the need to have more specific and beneficial social justice learning opportunities while in preservice programs. The desire for more training is consistent with several other studies. For example, Cook et al. (2019) introduced the concept of developing multicultural and social justice counseling competencies (MSJCCs) through fieldwork. Their findings proved beneficial for school counselors-in-training as well as for the students with whom they worked. Moreover, in another recent study conducted by Boyland et al. (2019), preservice training was again the topic at hand. However, the authors considered the preservice preparation of not only school counselors, but principals as well. The research resonated with competency and collaboration in that their results yielded a standards-aligned curriculum to assist principals and school counselors in the understanding of each role and adopting the much the collaborative relationship school counselors need to adhere to the call of social justice advocate effectively.

In conclusion, this study explored school counselors' understanding of social justice advocacy and their beliefs in their ability to perform this role effectively. The findings revealed an alignment with other research conclusions affirming that social justice advocacy is a significant function for school counselors. Several themes emerged indicating an acknowledgment of social justice advocacy and the need for collaboration and special programming, however other items stated a lack of personal experiences, exposure, and competency as barriers. Additionally, the participants' comments were consistent with previous research' results regarding the need for more training to effectively address the social justice issues within the school system and assist in ensuring equitable academic outcomes for all students.

Implications

Despite the vast attempts made to include school counselors in the movement of ensuring equity and a high standard of education for all students, school counselors continue to face challenges that prevent efficiency in this role of advocacy. Likewise, there appears to be little or no discussion as to which areas of school counseling (e.g., training, school leadership, self-efficacy) pose the most significant obstacles. The findings of this study are essential because they present first-hand information concerning school counselors' insights about social justice advocacy. Moreover, they provide suggestions for all stakeholders, including counselor educators, school counselors, and school and district leaders, to play a part in helping social justice advocacy to become commonplace for all school counselors.

Counselor Educators

When asked about their graduate school training, most participants indicated an emphasis on social justice advocacy was limited. Thus, the understandings gained from this study is vital in helping counselor educators either develop a new course that focuses solely on social justice advocacy or infuse aspects of this concept in identified classes within their curriculum. The use of the themes in social justice advocacy teaching could look like the following. First, creating multicultural immersion activities to allow students to gain exposure to and obtain their own experiences in being around people of other cultures.

Second, providing full instruction of the ASCA National Model with a strong emphasis on leadership, collaboration, data collection/analysis to highlight the necessary methods and skills to create programs designed to bring about systemic change. Third, offering extensive training on the ACA advocacy competencies to demonstrate what advocacy looks like not only at the individual student level, but also involving school/systems advocacy and social/political advocacy (Ratts et al., 2007). Fourth, exposing students to real-life school/community issues via guest speakers and experiential learning activities. Finally, counselor educators should consider purposeful cross-cultural practicum and internship placements requiring students to research the unfamiliar school settings for their arrangements. This different setting would allow school counselors-in-training an opportunity for a more in-depth understanding of environments that are outside of their reality.

School Counselors

Dixon, Tucker, and Clark (2010) postulate, "school counselors are qualified to move from the traditional one-student-at-a-time reactive model of school counseling to the all-students-all-the time model of preventive and culturally responsive school counseling" (p.108). Therefore, practicing school counselors should consider the findings of the research as a realization of the importance of ongoing professional development to reach more students indirectly vs. directly. The participants appeared to be aware of their role in assisting with the social/emotional, academic, and career development of all students, but did not tie it to social justice advocacy, nor understood how to employ the application of that expectation. School

counselors can use the seven themes to advocate for professional development as relates to their needs. There are action steps that may include but are not limited to identifying barriers of vulnerable students and student groups and to developing an action plan for confronting those barriers. Another is providing and interpreting data to show the urgency for change. An additional action step is preparing written and multi-media materials that provide clear explanations of the roles of specific environmental factors in human development. Finally, school counselors can advocate by seeking out and joining with potential allies (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporeck, 2018). Once school counselors increase their self-efficacy and competencies in these areas, they will likely feel more comfortable in communicating the importance of their advocacy role and their needs with their school and district leaders.

School Leaders/Districts

School and district leaders are responsible for determining the most appropriate and effective utilization of its school faculty (Lieberman, 2004). Therefore, it is essential for those individuals "to be cognizant of the roles and functions of the school counselors to make appropriate and informed decisions" (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012, p.90). Consequently, the information stemming from this study can be used by school and district leaders to gain an awareness of school counselors' roles. This understanding could assist these individuals in identifying applicable tasks that would "move school counselors from an ancillary service-oriented profession to one that becomes a critical player in accomplishing the mission of schools, academic success and high achievement for all students" (Martin, 2002, p. 152).

School leaders and administrators could also draw on the seven emergent themes to establish appropriate professional development for school counselors. Ideally, the workshops/training should be consistent (i.e., revised each year), to allow for ongoing learning.

Furthermore, to ensure the implementation of the implications, all school districts should employ a school counseling coordinator. Such an individual is necessary for the execution of comprehensive school counseling programs and the development of social justice advocacy for all students. Subsequently, school counseling district coordinators should connect with counselor educators and the school counseling representative at the state level to assist in the development of a comprehensive counseling program model that aligns with the current ASCA program model. A state-level steering committee would allow school counseling leaders from various districts, counselor educators, and school counseling state representatives to meet regularly, conduct research, and participate in ongoing professional development as it relates to the role of school counselors. Lastly, more opportunities are needed to form collaborative multidisciplinary relationships and to create opportunities for both future and present school counselors and school administrators to engage in cross-discipline professional development.

Future Research

Based on the discussion of the results of this study, the researcher was able to identify other possible research suggestions. First, it would be beneficial to conduct a qualitative survey of counselor educators to obtain additional information regarding their opinions in social justice

advocacy's incorporation in preservice training. Second, the literature (Evans et al., 2011; Wilkerson & Eschbach, 2009), as well as participants, indicated that lack of knowledge and skills, non-counselor related tasks, lack of support, and more, all impeded school counselors from becoming effective social justice advocates. Therefore, a qualitative study of school and district leaders could also provide additional information and prove to be valuable in understanding social justice advocacy. Third, this study surveyed only high school counselors; however, as the role of the school counselor may vary within different educational settings. Additional research could be considered for elementary and middle school counselors as well. Fourth, a grounded theory approach could also be advantageous to determine how school counselors execute their programs and to see how other stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and parents, perceive school counselors' roles.

Limitations

This study had several limitations, including the generalizability of the results and subjectivity. The bias of information was one limitation that may have caused difficulty in ensuring reliability and validity. However, to contain this subjectivity and safeguard security, the researcher engaged in reflective journaling (Hepper & Hepper, 2004). The findings cannot be generalized to all school counselors for several reasons. First, participants of this research were from the southeast quadrant of an unknown state; therefore, their views may have been based on their region's culture. Second, although the sample size was sufficient for phenomenological research, having only the opinions of eight individuals is limiting. Lastly, since all participants were females, the study does not contain

the perspectives of any other gender. Issues of anonymity and confidentiality may have been an additional limitation; however, randomly assigned for each participant were attached immediately after the interviews. Also, no identifiable information was disclosed in the research. Both of these strategies assisted in reducing this matter of concern. Finally, there was some apprehension of the researcher's presence during data gathering affecting the subjects' responses. Thus, this researcher made an effort to ease participants' minds involving the purpose of the research and to establish a positive rapport before launching into the interview questions (Creswell, 2013).

Conclusion

This study extended the discussion on social justice advocacy and how it relates to school counselors. It provided an opportunity for eight high school counselors to lend their voices to this phenomenon. The findings indicate that although the participants are aware of the social justice issues in their prospective schools and view advocacy as a significant role in their profession, vital elements in fulfilling this task are missing. However, as the nation continues to promote access and equity for all students, all educational stakeholders must assist in the necessary and appropriate teaching of school counselors to prepare them to serve as integral partners in this educational mission of equity and social justice.

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Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Category	Participants
Race	
African American	3
African	1
African American/Asian	4
Caucasian	
Gender	8
Female	0
Male	0
Other	
Level of Education	4
Masters	1
Masters +30	2
Education Specialists	1
Doctorate	
Years of Experience	1
0.50	6
1-10	1
12+	

Table 2

Participants' School Demographic Data

Characteristics	C.1	C.2	C.3	C.4	C.5	C.6	C.7	C.8
School Enrollment	2239	1673	657	1053	2169	2239	2169	1652
Ethnicity (%)								
Caucasian	67	58	3	61	41	67	41	60
African American	26	26	93	24	46	26	46	25
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	2	0.2	3	4	3	4	10
Hispanic/Latino	3	8	4	7	8	3	8	5
Native American	2	0	0	0.4	0.4	2	0.4	0
Other	2	7	1	4	0	2	0	0
Socioeconomic Status								
Free/Reduced Lunch (%)	30	48	64	40	39	30	39	87
Geographic Setting								
Rural (R), Suburban (S), Urban (U)	S	S	U	S	S	S	S	S

Note: C.1-C.8 are Counselors 1-8.

Figure 1

Appendix A
Demographic Questions

1. Please indicate your gender: _____
2. Which of the following best identifies your race?
   a) Caucasian   b) African American   c) Asian/Pacific Islander
   d) Hispanic/Latin   d) Native American   e) Other
3. What is your level of education?
   a) Master   b) Education Specialist   c) Doctorate
4. How many years have you been a school counselor?
5. What is the total number of students in your school?
6. What is the ethnic make-up of your school?
   a) Caucasian _____   b) African American _____
   c) Asian/Pacific Islander _____   d) Hispanic/Latino _____
   d) Native American _____   e) Other_____
7. What is the socioeconomic make-up of your school?
   aFree/Reduced Lunch _____   b) Full pay _____
8. What type of school setting do you work in?
   a) Rural   b) Suburban   c) Urban

Appendix B
Interview Questions

1. Describe your current school counseling program.
2. What is your role and responsibility in this program?
3. What is social justice to you?
4. What is advocacy to you?
5. Where do your definitions of social justice and advocacy stem from?
6. What types of social justice-related issues do you see in your school?
7. What types of students do you identify as marginalized in your school?
8. What are you doing to help your marginalized students?
9. How do you explain your current stance as a social justice advocate?
10. How prepared do you feel to serve as a social justice advocate in your school?
11. What helps or would help you to be a successful social justice advocate in your school?
12. What recommendations would you suggest helping training programs adequately prepare school counselors-in-training to serve as social justice advocates in their prospective schools? What suggestions do you have for professional development for practicing school counselors?
13. Please take a moment to discuss any other information that you would like to add related to your experiences with social justice advocacy as a school counselor.

Self-Efficacy as it Relates to Attributions and Attitudes Towards Poverty Among School Counselors-in-Training
Counselors-in-Training

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Abstract
This study was conducted in order to examine the self-efficacy of school counselors-in-training and their attributions and attitudes towards poverty. The population for this study consisted of master's level school counseling students from two southeastern schools. All data were obtained via self-report measures and were collected using an internet survey and paper surveys. The study utilized a multiple regression analysis in an attempt to explore the relationships between attitudes and self-efficacy and attributions and self-efficacy. Although no significant relationship was found between self-efficacy and attitudes or attributions, the results of the study showed that school counselors-in-training held similar attitudes and attributions as the general American population which are primarily negative. Implications for training are discussed.

Keywords: poverty, attitudes, attributions, self-efficacy, school counselors-in-training

Counselors-in-Training
A child is born into poverty every 41 seconds in the United States of America (Ratcliffe, 2015). Currently, 21 percent of all children, one in five, live below the federal poverty threshold (Koball & Jiang, 2018). According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), about 15 million children in the United States live in poverty (Koball & Jiang, 2018). Of the total population of children living in poverty, 24 million live in urban areas, while 5.7 million children live in rural areas (Addy & Wright, 2012). Caucasian children make up the largest number of children living in poverty; while African American, American Indian, and Hispanic children have a higher proportion of poor children among their entire population (Addy, Engelhardt, & Skinner, 2013).

The poverty threshold, based on a calculation updated by the Census Bureau each year, defines the minimum annual income needed to meet basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing expenses (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], 2019). The 2019 guidelines for the thresholds of annual income ranged from $12,490 for a family of one to just over $43,430 for a family of eight (HHS, 2019). In school systems, the number of students

receiving free or reduced price meals (FRPL) is the primary indicator of a school's poverty level and can impact a student's quality of education (Bray & Schommer-Aikins, 2015). Based on students who attended high-poverty public schools in 2016, McFarland, J., Hussar, B., Zhang, J., Wang, X., Wang, K., Hein, S., Diliberti, M., Forrest Cataldi, E., Bullock Mann, F., & Barmer, A. (2019) reported approximately 75 percent of students who qualified for free or reduced price meals lived in either a city, town, or rural community compared to 18 percent in suburban schools. High-poverty schools are defined as public schools in which more than 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced price meals (McFarland, J., Hussar, B., Zhang, J., et al., 2019).

Consequently, low-income children characteristically live in poor neighborhoods and attend lower quality, underfunded schools with high teacher turnover and low morale (Brooks-Gunn, Linver, & Fauth, 2005; Cappella, Frazier, Atkins, Schoenwald, & Glisson, 2008; Griffin & Steen, 2011). Additionally, children living in poverty are often perceived less positively by their teachers, which results in receiving less positive attention and less reinforcement for good performance (McLoyd, 1998; Sorhagen, 2013). Yet with the appropriate training, school counselors are uniquely positioned to help remove barriers to academic and personal success for students living in poverty (ASCA, 2016;).

Havlik, S., Neason, E., Puckett, J., Rowley, P., & Wilson, G., (2017) found that school counselors believed they were the first line of support, had the desire to help, and felt underprepared to support students living in poverty. While teacher and counseling education programs provide training on working with various diverse populations, it is unknown to what degree the training impacts self-efficacy, stereotypes, assumptions, and attitudes of counselors when working with marginalized groups (Camp, Foxx, & Flowers, 2018). Research has shown self-efficacy related to working with students in poverty may influence the behaviors of school counselors and may also be related to beliefs or attitudes they hold towards individuals living in poverty (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006). Study findings have also indicated teachers and counselors who do not feel adequately trained may prefer to work in a school with similar ethnic and social class backgrounds to their own as oppose to high poverty schools (Bray et al., 2015; Groulx, 2001; Wolffe, 1996; Zeichner, 1996).

With the high number of children living in poverty, teachers and counselors-in-training are likely to work in schools with students who live in poverty. New teachers and counselors need to have attitudes and skills that enable them to work effectively with students and families of diverse backgrounds and of low socioeconomic status (Havlik, et al., 2017). Teachers and counselors who lack knowledge on reaching low-income students may need additional training to meet the needs of children living in poverty (Camp et al., 2018; Havlik, et al., Rowley, Puckett et al., 2017; Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004). This training is important because an individual's belief as to what causes poverty can be linked to their attitude towards individuals living in poverty (Merolla, Hunt, & Serpe, 2011). Therefore, negative attitudes create a bias against individuals living in poverty. This bias adds to an inequality of support for programs designed to help the poor, including reducing the educational achievement gap (Limbert & Bullock, 2005).

In the school counseling field, educators in counselor education preparation programs have concentrated on developing counselor awareness and knowledge in multiple areas and multilayered components including gender, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, and social class (Brinson, Brew, & Denby, 2008; Constantine, 2002; Wakefield, Garner, Tyler, & Pehrsson, 2010). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model (2019) provides a framework to help school counselors develop and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program to address the academic, career, and personal/social developmental needs of all students. To promote student success and the ethical practice for all school counselors, ASCA developed the ASCA Ethical Standards (2016) and the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies (2019). Both sets of standards serve as guides for school counselors, school administrators, and counselor educators to meet the demands of the profession as well as the needs of all students in multiple areas. According to the ASCA Ethical Standards (2016), school counselors are to advocate for the social justice of all students from all backgrounds and circumstances including social class as well as seek training to address personal biases, attitudes and beliefs. The ASCA School Counselor Professional Standard and Competencies (2019) further asks school counselors to demonstrate an awareness of the impact of cultural and environmental influences on student success and opportunities as well as to understand their personal limitations and biases.

The impact of multicultural biases in counseling has been widely researched (Burkard, Ponterotto, Reynolds, & Alfonso, 1999; Gelso, Fassinger, Gomez, & Latts, 1995; Gushue, 2004; Sue & Sue, 2008). Specific research that addresses counselors' and school counselors' in training attitudes towards poverty is limited but has revealed negative attitudes and attributions exist towards poverty and individuals living in poverty (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2003; Camp, Foxx, & Flowers, 2018; Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Manstead 2018). To better prepare school counselors to work in high-poverty schools, more research is needed to understand school counselors'-in-training self-efficacy, attitudes, and preconceptions regarding working in this type of environment (Camp, et al., 2018).

The purpose of this study was to discover school counselors'-in-training attitudes and attributes towards students living in poverty as well as examine the relationship between these variables and counselor self-efficacy. The researchers accessed 1) the attitudes school counselors-in-training held regarding poverty; 2) the attributions school counselors-in-training held regarding poverty; 3) the relationship between the level of perceived school counselor self-efficacy and attitudes toward poverty among school counselors-in-training; and 4) the relationship between the level of perceived school counselor self-efficacy and attributions toward poverty among school counselors-in-training.

Method
The researchers examined the attitudes and attributes that school counselors-in-training held toward working with students living in poverty. Additionally, the self-efficacy level of school counselors-in-training when working with students living in poverty were examined. Analyses were preformed to access how the variable related to each other, with specific considerations of how school counselors-in-training self-efficacy is related to attributions and attitudes towards individuals living in poverty. Lastly, data

about respondents' ages, gender, ethnicity, and family of origin socio-economic status were collected.

Procedures
The data collected for this research study was facilitated through the use of previously collected data. This study included two urban institutions in the Southeast; one sample was at a large online and campus-based private institution, and another was at a large public campus-based institution. The participant population used for recruitment in this study was gathered from graduate-level school counselors-in-training at both institutions after institutional research approval was received from both universities. Faculty permission to recruit from counselor education courses was obtained prior to dissemination of research material.

Paper surveys were distributed and collected at the large public based institution, and online surveys were collected at the private institution through email using an online survey. At the online and campus-based university, the first researcher spoke to school counseling students to inform possible participants about the study. The students surveyed were enrolled in a variety of school counseling courses, including theories and techniques, group counseling, child and adolescent counseling in schools, career development, and school counseling program development. At the online university, the survey was emailed to individual professors in the school counseling department, and each professor emailed the surveys to their students in their school counseling courses. At the campus-based university, the first researcher gave a brief introduction to the survey and then handed out the assessment. Potential participants were

asked to review the informational letter, and if they chose to participate, they complete the provided survey. All responses received were anonymous, as identifiable information was not collected during this study. At the large public based institution, the first researcher told potential participants that they were being asked to participate in a study that would take 15-20 minutes, that participation was not linked to their current class, and it was voluntary. The instructors at the public institution who had participating classes were asked to leave the room during data collection. Survey packets were distributed, and potential participants were asked to review the informational letter, complete the provided surveys, and return the surveys in the provided envelope. Those who chose not to participate were asked to return the surveys, not completed, in the provided envelope.

The survey for this study consisted of four measures which included a demographics questionnaire, the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005), Attitudes About Poverty Scale (Yun & Weaver, 2010) and the Attributions of Poverty Scale (Bullock, 1999). After collection of surveys, all data were analyzed. Surveys were initially distributed to approximately 130 graduate level students. Based on the power analysis, the ideal sample size for this study was 88 participants with 90% confidence level and $p < 0.05$.

Participants
Ninety-one students completed distributed survey packets. Eighty-seven percent (n = 79) of respondents were female and 13% (n = 12) were male. All participants recruited were 19 years of age or older. Participants reported ages ranging from 21 to 53, with a mean of 33. Participant

demographic characteristics included: African American (n = 19, 19%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (n = 1, 1.1%), Asian (n = 2, 2.2%), Hispanic/Latino (n = 5, 5.5%), White/Caucasian (n = 60, 65%), and other (n = 4, 4.4%). There were a total of 15.4% (n = 14) of participants who reported their family of origin at or below poverty level, 9.9% (n = 9) at just above poverty, 19.8% (n = 18) at lower middle class, 37% (n = 34) at middle class, 15.4% (n = 14) at upper middle class, and 2.2% (n = 2) at upper class. While examining the three categories which make up the middle class (lower middle class, middle class, and upper middle class) a total of 72.6% (n = 66) reported their family of origin socioeconomic status to be in the middle-class range. Participants in this study were master's level school counseling students. The students' courses ranged from introductory counseling courses to advanced counseling courses; students were not selected based upon credit completion but based on entry into the school counseling graduate program. See Table 1 for participant demographic information.

Measures
Demographic questionnaire. The
demographic questionnaire was designed to collect specific and relevant participant information. The questionnaire consisted of five questions focused on demographic data relevant to the participants. This included data regarding gender, age, ethnicity, current state/location, and socio-economic status of family of origin. The self-reported family-of-origin socio-economic status item was a scale previously used by Haydon (2010) with six categories: poverty level or below, just above poverty, lower middle class, middle class, upper middle class, and upper class.

Attributions of Poverty Scale. The Attributions of Poverty Scale (Bullock, 1999) is a 45-item, self-report instrument designed to measure three dimensions of attributions held towards poverty: individualistic explanations, structural explanations, and fatalistic explanations. The scale assessed a broad range of explanations for poverty across individualistic (e.g., laziness, anti-work mentality, and breakdown of traditional families), structuralistic (e.g., lack of transportation), and fatalistic (e.g., sickness, bad luck) attributions. For the purposes of this study, beliefs about the causes of poverty were assessed using a modified, 36-item version of the Attributions of Poverty Scale. The alpha coefficients for the three constructs were reported as 0.91 (individualistic), 0.91 (structuralistic), and 0.72 (fatalistic). The survey is a 5-point Likert scale with 1 indicating "not at all important as a cause of poverty" and 5 indicating "extremely important as a cause of poverty."

Attitudes about Poverty Scale. The Attitudes about Poverty Scale (Yun & Weaver, 2010) is a 21- item, self-report instrument designed to measure a range of diverse attitudes about poverty and individuals living in poverty: personal deficiency (7 items), stigma (8 items), and structural perspective (6 items). Participants respond to each statement by using a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = "Strong Agreement (SA)" and 5 = "Strong Disagreement (SD)." Scoring of the Attitudes about Poverty Scale show the higher the score, the more favorable the respondents' attitude toward individuals living in poverty. Yun and Weaver (2010) report internal consistency of the total scale to be established with an alpha coefficient of 0.87. The overall total alpha for the current

study is 0.65. The alpha coefficients of the subscales of the Attitudes about Poverty Short Form ranged from 0.50 to 0.70.

The School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale. The School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005) is a 43-item, self-report instrument designed to measure school counselor self-efficacy. The School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale uses a 5-point Likert Scale to measure responses and consists of five subscales: personal and social development; leadership and assessment; career and academic development; collaboration and consultation; and cultural acceptance. Correlations of the subscale ranged from 0.27 to 0.43. On the Likert Scale, a rating of 1 indicated "not confident" and a rating of 5 indicated "highly confident." A composite mean is calculated to demonstrate the overall level of self-efficacy. The alpha coefficient for the scale score was found to be 0.95 (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005).

Analyses

The first researcher collected data and analyzed school counselors-in-training attitudes about poverty, attributions of causes of poverty, perceived self-efficacy when working with students in poverty, and demographic factors. The first researcher used the Statistical Product for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 computer software to enter and analyze data in an aggregate manner. A correlation analysis was used to assess 1) the relationship between school counselors' in training attitudes about poverty and 2) the relationship between school counselors' in training attributions of causes of poverty. A within subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test difference among subscales. Next, a multiple regression was used to assess the predictability of

relationships across variables. Furthermore, a backwards elimination regression was used to determine the strongest predictors of counselor self-efficacy.

Results

The first research question addressed in this study was, "What is the nature of the attitudes school counselors-in-training hold regarding low SES?" The Attitudes about Poverty Scale results indicated school counselors-in-training were most likely to identify personal deficiency factors (highest level of agreement) as related to the causes of poverty (e.g., laziness anti-work mentality) (M = 4.14). The results indicated that school counselors-in-training identified personal deficiency factors as the primary contributing factor for poverty and were more likely to adhere to attitudinal statements about poverty that focused on individual deficits. Similarly, Toporek and Pope-Davis (2005) found these attitudes about poverty point towards individual choices and behaviors as being the primary cause of poverty. The mean scores of the other subscales were M = 2.83 (Stigma) and M = 2.64 (Structural). Subscale difference were examined using a within-subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Results of the analysis found significant differences between personal deficiency and stigma (p<.001) as well as personal deficiency and structural (p<.001); however, there was not a significant difference between stigma and structural (p>.001). See Table 2 for descriptive statistics of these scales.

The second research question addressed in this study was, "What is the nature of the attributions toward poverty held by school counselors-in-training?" On the Attributions of Poverty Scale, school counselors-in-training indicated they were most likely to attribute the causes

of poverty to individualistic factors (M= 3.52). Individualistic factors deal specifically with laziness and an anti-work mentality. The mean scores of the other subscales were M = 3.30 (Structural) and M = 3.32 (Fatalistic). When using an ANOVA with repeated measures with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction, the mean scores for attributions were not statistically significantly different $F(1.46, 139.75) = 1.46$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, there were no statistically significant differences among the three-scale means. Given the non-significant F test, no post-hoc tests were performed.

The third research question addressed in this study was, "What is the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attitudes toward low SES among school counselors-in-training?" To specifically address the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attitudes towards low SES among school counselors-in-training, a backwards elimination regression was used to determine the best predictors of counselor self-efficacy. Using three predictors, an overall R^2 of 0.04 was reached. Through backward elimination, a simpler model retaining just one predictor emerged. The final restricted model contained the Structural Attitude Scale and achieved an R^2 of 0.04 ($F = 3.16$, $p = 0.08$). The difference of .006 between these two models was not statistically significant ($F = 0.25$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, the more restricted model was preferred. Structural factors accounted for 3.7% of the variance of attitudes about poverty ($R^2 = 0.04$). This indicates there was no significant relationship between self-efficacy and attitudes about poverty.

The fourth research question addressed in this study was, "What is the relationship

between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attributions toward low SES among school counselors-in-training?" Finally, to specifically address the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attributions of poverty, a backwards elimination regression was used to determine the best predictors of counselor self-efficacy. Using three predictors, an overall R^2 of 0.07 was reached. Through backward elimination, a simpler model retaining just one predictor emerged. The final restricted model contained the Structural Attribution Scale and achieved an R^2 of 0.06 ($F = 4.87$, $p = 0.03$). The R^2 difference of .009 between these two models was not statistically significant ($F = 0.38$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, the more restricted model was preferred. Structural attribution factors accounted for 5.6% of the variance of attributions towards poverty ($R^2 = 0.06$). This indicated there was no significant relationship between self-efficacy and attributions towards poverty.

Discussion

In the first research question, the researcher accessed the attitudes school counselors-in-training held regarding poverty. The researcher found an individual's belief as to what causes poverty can be linked to their attitude towards individuals living in poverty (Merolla et al., 2011). School counselors-in-training indicated they were most likely to identify personal deficiency factors when discussing persons living in poverty (e.g., laziness). Individuals who identify personal deficiency factors as the primary contributing factor for poverty are more likely to adhere to attitudinal statements about poverty that focus on individual deficits. Example statements included, "If poor people worked harder, they could escape poverty," and "Most poor

people are satisfied with their standard of living" (Atherton & Gemmel, 1993). These attitudes about poverty point towards individual choices and behaviors as being the primary cause of poverty (Bray et al., 2015). The results are very similar to prior research which has shown Americans favor individualistic causes over structuralistic and fatalistic causes (Bray et al., 2015; Bullock et al., 2003; Cozzarelli et al., 2001). Bray & Schommer (2015) specifically found that school counselors believe poverty was attributed to either internal, personal characteristics such as laziness and loose morals or external forces such as structural causes and bad luck. These findings are reflective of the negative bias toward poverty, primarily suggesting that poverty is largely the result of limitations, deficiencies, and problems associated with the individual (Bray et al., 2015; Cozzarelli et al., 2001, Payne, 2005).

In the second research question, the researcher accessed the attributions school counselors-in-training held regarding poverty. While taking the survey, school counselors-in-training indicated they were most likely to attribute the causes of poverty to individualistic factors. Individualistic factors deal specifically with laziness and an anti-work mentality. Individuals who attribute poverty to individualistic factors place the blame on the individual, believing individuals living in poverty have caused their own conditions and also lack motivation (Bray et al., 2015; Bullock et al., 2003; Merolla et al., 2011). These findings are disconcerting because they suggest that school counselors-in-training may conceptualize the causes of poverty as being only based on individualized deficits, in essence solely focusing on blaming the individual (Bullock et al., 2003). This may lead to bias in how they see and

work with children and adolescents living in poverty as well as their parents. It also may limit their ability to identify societal or economic barriers that could be addressed in counseling. Attitudes and attributes related to poverty have been infrequently considered in the counseling arena and are potentially of great importance. A counselor's impressions of a client help set the foundation for the working relationship (Smith, Mao, Perkins, & Ampuero, 2011).

The findings of the current study have parallels to other studies findings that have indicated that counselors and those in related fields may hold negative assumptions or beliefs about persons living in poverty. Earlier researchers have found within studies that school counselors-in-training held a bias against individuals living in poverty (Bray et al., 2015; Neynaber, 1992) and stereotypes towards individuals living in poverty were reinforced (Schnitzer, 1996). Similarly, Shapiro (2004) found counselors have negative attitudes towards individuals living in poverty including a resistance of working with individuals living in poverty and their belief psychotherapy could help low-income individuals.

The results of this study indicated that participants assigned more structural attitudes and individualistic attributes toward individuals living in poverty. Examples of structural attitudes held by individuals include believing external and economic forces are at fault such as society lacks social justice, or individuals living in poverty are exploited. Examples of individualistic attributions towards individuals living in poverty include the belief that poverty is caused by the individuals themselves, a lack of effort to find employment, and money spent on inappropriate things.

In the third research question, the researchers accessed the relationship between the level of perceived school counselor self-efficacy and attitudes toward poverty among school counselors-in-training. Overall, the results of this study showed that the best predictor of counselor self-efficacy was the Structural Attitude Subscale. Structural attitudes hold the social system at fault while looking at a variety of factors including economic, societal, and government barriers (Merolla et al., 2011). However, once the relationship between the structural factors and self-efficacy was examined, it was determined there was no significant relationship between self-efficacy and attitudes about poverty. One point of concern may be that this group of school counselors-in-training held a relatively high level of self-efficacy with limited actual counseling experience or experience with individuals living in poverty.

In the fourth research question, the researchers accessed the relationship between the level of perceived school counselor self-efficacy and attributions toward poverty among school counselors-in-training. Similar to the previous discussion of attitudes, results of this study suggested that the best predictor of counselor self-efficacy was the Structural Attribution Subscale. Merolla, et al. (2011) found individuals attribute economic, societal and government barriers towards reasons individuals are living in poverty. However, once the relationship between the structural factors and self-efficacy were examined, it was determined there was no significant relationship between self-efficacy and attitudes about poverty. Again, one point of concern may be this group of school

counselors-in-training held a relatively high level of self-efficacy, with limited actual counseling experience and experience with individuals living in poverty.

Implications
Although no significant relationship was found between self-efficacy and attitudes or attributions, the results from the study revealed that the participants demonstrated relatively negative attitudes and attributions related to poverty. The researchers hope the implication for future research from this study could bring about intentional dialogue regarding the root causes of poverty and its perceived associated biases. The researchers suggest a comparison of programs that include cultural diversity training verse those without. This would speak to the idea that institutions may reevaluate their programs of study to ensure that cultural diversity and sensitivity is addressed by making it a core component of their curriculum. Thus, suggesting the need for counseling education programs to consider how to address this issue in training.

Bray and Schommer (2015) suggested students who desire to work as helping professions should be informed of social justice issues. This is an important aspect of training because it determines how they will empower or harm individuals in poverty (Krumer-Nevo, Weiss-Gal, & Monnickendam, 2009; Mullaly, 2007). Past research has shown counselors hold negative bias towards individuals living in poverty (Neynabar, 1992; Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005). In addition, recent studies have found counselors hold negative attitudes towards individuals living in poverty and more positive attitudes towards the working-class population (Smith et al., 2011, Bray et al., 2015). This current study also supports the argument

that school counselors-in-training hold negative attitudes and stereotypes towards individuals living in poverty. With this in mind, it is imperative that counselor education programs seek innovative approaches to help counselors-in-training debunk the negative attitudes. Innovative approaches may include incorporating appropriate socioeconomic training, adding advocacy and service-learning projects into counseling programs, as well as encouraging students to work specifically with marginalized and high-poverty school populations during practicum and internship courses.

Bray and Schommer (2015) suggested school counseling programs look at more strength-based approaches such the CARE model as an approach for professionals working with marginalized students (Foss, Generali, & Kress, 2011). In the CARE model, the counselor cultivates relationships with individuals living in poverty, acknowledges the realities of poverty, removes barriers, and expands clients' strengths (Foss et al., 2011). By understanding the attitudes and attributions held by school counselors-in-training, counselor educators can make necessary adjustments to courses and programs to ensure the appropriate implementation of humanistic and social justice frameworks.

It is our belief that the results of the study are a step forward in providing a foundation for understanding the attitudes and attributions school counselors-in-training hold towards individuals living in poverty. This study and the implications for the counselor education field can help provide information for addressing the impact of the issues and steps forward in implementing a social justice framework into school counseling programs.

Limitations
One of the first limitations to be considered in this study is the possibility of differences that may exist between counseling programs. Responses for this study were limited to two universities in the southeast region of the United States. Results cannot be generalized to all counseling programs. Additionally, the small sample size and geographical area that was surveyed in this study may limit the generalization to other counselors-in-training. Self-reporting measures also limit the ability to draw direct reference to actual behavior; participants may under-report or exaggerate to minimize or intensify the results.

Caution should also be taken when generalizing the results to counselors in practice or individuals in other areas of the helping profession. A parallel concern is the relatively high level of school counseling self-efficacy among the sample. The sample population had a limited opportunity to have developed counseling experience while in their programs and training. Their self-reported level of self-efficacy may be falsely elevated and not a realistic demonstration of their actual competence. This may limit discussion of this variable in relation to attitudes and attributions toward poverty.

There was found to be a low alpha on the Attitudes about Poverty Scale. These findings have to be viewed with caution when considering the low reliability reported for the subscale personal deficiency in this study. The low reliability score could be due to a small sample size or only a small correlation among the variables. Additional testing is needing to ensure application of these findings to other school counselors.

Recommendations
Future research should be completed assessing the attitudes and attributions of school counselors-in-training, taking into account several of the methods, findings, and limitations of this study. First, this study looked closely at school counselors-in-training in the southeast region of the United States. Future research should be expanded to include school counselors-in-training from different regions as well as school counselors who are already in practice. In addition, a comparison study of school counselors-in-training and school counselors may bring forth information as to similarities and differences and how best to serve this population. A qualitative study which examines in depth attitudes, attributions, and self-efficacy of school counselors-in-training can also offer additional insight into this phenomenon. Future research done in a qualitative manner may help determine a deeper understanding of attitudes and attributions towards individuals living in poverty. Specifically, researchers could look at various counselors' backgrounds to determine if their background may impact perceptions and self-efficacy.

School counselor training programs should review their curriculum to determine the level of training school counselors-in-training are being provided on working with students in poverty. By increasing school counselors'-in-training knowledge of the "macrosystemic influences impacting poor families" via readings, video/films, guest speakers, reflective techniques and experiential activities, they can move beyond the common stereotypes held by some educators (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007, p. 86). Moreover, counselor education programs can facilitate the development of counselors-in-training by increasing their knowledge of class bias and privilege (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007).

Additionally, related to the ASCA National Model Professional Standards and School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies, it is imperative that school counselors engage in "continual professional development to inform and guide ethical and legal work" (ASCA, 2019, p.3). School counselors-in-training and practicing school counselors should adhere to this standard and engage in professional development opportunities targeted at working with individuals living in poverty. It is essential for student achievement that counselors-in-training and other school staff understand poverty and its impact on learning.

Conclusion
While ASCA's ethical standards serve as a guide for the school counseling profession, it alone cannot address the attitudes and beliefs an individual hold towards another. School counselors are on the front lines of support and can play a pivotal role in combating the academic, social, and emotional barriers that students living in poverty experience (Havlik, et al., S., Neason, E., Puckett, J., Rowley, P., & Wilson, G., 2017). With the appropriate culturally specific training, current school counselors, as well as school counselors-in-training, can become better skilled to work with this population. It is our belief that counselor education programs can facilitate the development of counselors-in-training by increasing their knowledge and understanding of individuals living in poverty (Bray et al., 2015).

The purpose of this study was to explore relationships among counselors'-in-training self-efficacy and their attributions and attitudes towards students living in poverty. School counselors-in-training were surveyed to explore each area. Though no significant relationship was found between

self-efficacy and attitudes or attributions, this study did reveal that school counselors-in-training tend to hold negative attitudes towards individuals living in poverty. While these results align to past research looking at the general population or other groups, it is one of few studies looking specifically at school counselors-in-training. Researchers believe results may assist counselor education programs and current school counselors by shedding light on an area that needs further examination in order to support students living in poverty.

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Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants (N = 91)

Characteristic		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%) of N
Gender			
	Female	79	87
	Male	12	13
Race/Ethnicity			
	White		65
	Black or African American		19
	Indian or Alaskan Native		1.1
	Asian		2.2
	Hispanic or Latino		5.5
	Other Race/Ethnicity		4.4
Family of Origin SES			
	At or below poverty level	14	15.5
	Just above poverty level	9	9.9
	Lower middle class	18	19.8
	Middle class	34	37.4
	Upper middle class	14	15.4
	Upper class	2	2.2

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Scales

Scale	# of items	Cronbach's	Mean (SD)	F
Attitudes About Poverty				76.60*
Personal Deficiency	7	.37	4.15 (.53)	
Stigma	8	.83	2.84 (.72)	
Attributions of Poverty				1.46
Individualistic	15	.63	3.52 (.63)	
Fatalistic	8	.97	3.32 (.56)	
Structural	13	.86	3.31 (.64)	

Attributes, Attitudes, and Perceived Self-Efficacy Levels of School Counselors Toward Poverty

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Abstract
School counselors' attitudes, attributes, and self-efficacy levels while working with individuals living in poverty were examined using quantitative measures. Qualitative measures were used to assess challenges and recommendations of participants working with students impacted by poverty. Findings indicate school counselors' rate personal deficiencies higher regarding their attitudes toward individuals living in poverty and rated fatalistic causes higher for explaining causes of poverty.

Keywords: poverty, school counseling, self-efficacy, adolescents, children

Introduction

Childhood poverty is associated with a range of negative developmental, behavioral and emotional consequences (Haft & Hoeft, 2017). For students living in poverty, one of the greatest challenges is academic failure (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Ferguson, Bovaird, & Mueller, 2007; Hopson & Lee, 2011). Past research has indicated that students living in poverty are 10 times more likely to drop out of school than students from higher income families (Hopson & Lee, 2011) and living in poverty during early childhood is associated with lower than average rates of school completion (Kena et al., 2015). In fact, the academic achievement gap of students living in poverty has been well documented against the achievement levels of middle and upper socioeconomic students (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Yettick & Lloyd, 2015). This disparity is seen across all aspects of education. Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) found that children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to have an elevated school failure rate, developmental difficulties and delays, lower standardized test scores and graduation rates, and higher rates of school tardiness, absenteeism, and school dropout.

The educational disparities are even more concerning when considered in relation to the growing numbers of children and adolescents living in poverty. Estimates are that over 30 million children in the United States live in low-income families and over 14 million children in the United States live in poor families (Jiang, Ezkono, & Skinner, 2015; Macartney, 2011). Currently,

children represent 23% of the population, but comprise 33% of all people living in poverty (Jiang et al., 2015).

The detrimental effects of poverty on children can be multifaceted and long lasting (Children's Defense Fund, 2014; Macartney, 2011; Ozkan, Purutcuoglu, & Hablemitoglu, 2010). Poverty can impact a child's academic success, health, and emotional and behavioral outcomes (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Haft & Hoeft, 2017). Children living in poverty report higher levels of anxiety, depression, behavioral challenges, and lower levels of positive school engagement (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Caughy, O'Campo, & Muntaner, 2003; Hodgkinson, Godoy, Beers, & Lewin, 2017; Samaan, 2000). Concerns continue into academic arenas where children living in poverty perform more poorly in math and reading and are 10 more times likely to drop out of high school than children from higher income families (Hopson & Lee, 2011).

Researcher have also found that the school environment can also impact student success (Cappella, Frazier, Atkins, Schoenwald, & Glisson, 2008; Engler & Black, 2008; Evans, 2004; Zhang & Han, 2017). Particularly, schools in economically disadvantaged communities struggle to provide interventions and support systems to foster the development of a strong school climate (Banerjee, 2016; Cappella et al., 2008; Evans, 2004). Due to poor funding, restricted resources, and limited support for students and teachers, low income schools often have highly stressed teachers resulting in high turnover rates and institutionalizing low academic expectations for students (Banerjee, 2016; Cappella et al., 2008; Evans, 2004; Griffin & Steen, 2011). These challenges may follow high poverty students throughout

their education, with these students most likely experiencing low quality instruction and support throughout their elementary school years and into high school (Cappella et al., 2008; Engler & Black, 2008; Zhang & Han, 2017).

Addressing the possible attitudes school personnel may have towards persons living in poverty can be another challenge related to high poverty schools. There is evidence that societal beliefs about poverty often support or promote discrimination, bias, and negative attitudes (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008; Bray & Schommer-Aikins, 2015; Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Crumley, 2013; Sturm, 2008). School counselors may hold similar ideologies; therefore, their attitudes and beliefs should also be evaluated. Preliminary research has suggested that many factors impact the ability of counselors to provide services to people living in poverty, including counselors' attitudes about persons living in poverty, their beliefs about the factors contributing to poverty, and their own family of origin's socioeconomic status (Parikh, Ceballas, & Post, 2013; Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011; Sturm, 2008). Counselors may make false assumptions about clients living in poverty when the counselor infers the causes of the clients' problems (Sturm, 2008). Research among counselors has suggested that counselors may even perceive students from low socioeconomic backgrounds as having a less promising futures than other students (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008).

The foundation for school counselors as well as other individuals' attitudes is best reflected in societal outlooks. Within society indications show there are negative attitudes toward persons living in poverty (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008; Bray & Schommer-Aikins, 2015;

Cozzarelli et al., 2001). Research findings have demonstrated that these negative attitudes often reflect a belief that poverty is caused by personal factors such as laziness (Bray & Schommer-Aikins, 2015; Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2003; Crumley, 2013). Cozzarelli et al. (2001) found that attitudes toward poor individuals were significantly more negative than attitudes toward middle class individuals and that poor individuals were most likely to be blamed for their poverty status. The presence of such negative attitudes among school counselors may potentially affect their relationship with students, students' families, and services provided.

According to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) School Counselor Competencies, school counselors should have a mindset that "every student can learn, and every student can succeed" (ASCA, 2019, p. 2). Additionally, the American Counselor Association (ACA) Code of Ethics asserts that counselors should respect the diversity of their clients, not impose their values onto clients, and should seek training in areas where they feel like they may impose their values (ACA, 2014). In order to adhere to ethical codes, counselors must examine their attitudes and attributes toward individuals living in poverty. It is critical to understand the dynamic of school counselors' beliefs and attitudes toward poverty, since these beliefs and attitudes can directly impact their ability to advocate for students living in poverty (Ratts, Butler, & Singh, 2016). Nonetheless, attitudes are only one component of this issue, it is also imperative to examine how well prepared and effective school counselors believe they are when working with high poverty students. A critical component of this may be the self-efficacy school counselors

possess related to working with students in these situations (Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines, & Johnston, 2008).

According to Larson and Daniels (1998), counselor self-efficacy beliefs are the main factor contributing to effective counseling action. Specifically, counselors' self-efficacy can influence their behaviors, counseling practices and even their decisions to persist in challenging circumstances; and therefore, it is an essential component to understanding school counselors' work with students (Bodenhorn, Wolfe, & Airen, 2010; Gunduz, 2012; Holcomb-McCoy, Gonzalez, & Johnston, 2009; Mullen & Lambie, 2016). Thus, self-efficacy related to working with students living in poverty may influence school counselors' behaviors when working with these students and may correspond to beliefs or attitudes they hold towards persons living in poverty (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Sink & Stroh, 2003).

The purpose of this study was to 1) assess school counselors' attitudes and attributes toward working with students living in poverty; 2) examine the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attitudes toward low SES among school counselors; 3) assess relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attributions toward low SES among school counselors; 4) assess challenges experienced by school counselors working with children and adolescents impacted by poverty; and 5) assess recommendation for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents impacted by poverty.

This study defined attitudes and attributes, among school counselors, parallel to

Strum's (2008) definitions. Specifically, attitudes were defined as the positive and negative beliefs school counselors may hold towards students, primarily those students living in poverty. In addition, attributes were defined as the beliefs the school counselors may hold about the causes of poverty and the perception of a student or their family's individual responsibility for living in poverty. Furthermore, within the study, schools with high poverty levels were assessed related to the percentage of students participating in the school's free or reduced lunch program. Students qualifying for this program had families with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017; Ralston, Newman, Clauson, Guthrie, & Buzby, 2008); whereas, "low-income" referred to families with income levels below 185% of the poverty line for their household size (Crosnoe, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

Method

In this study, the attitudes and attributes of school counselors toward working with students living in poverty were examined using quantitative measures. Additionally, the self-efficacy levels of school counselors working with students living in poverty were examined. This included how these variables relate to each other, with specific consideration of school counselor self-efficacy as it related to attributions and attitudes towards persons living in poverty. In addition, data about respondents' ages, school setting, years of experience and current working grade level was collected. Lastly, respondents' challenges and recommendations for working with individuals in poverty were assessed using qualitative measures.

Procedures

Previously collected data were used for completion of this study. School counselors were recruited through the ASCA membership list. After institutional research approval, emails were sent to ASCA members asking for participation in a study assessing their attitudes and attributes toward working with students living in poverty and their self-efficacy level. Within the email, school counselors were provided a link to the survey and informed that completion of the survey would indicate informed consent to participate in the survey. The survey email included the information letter, demographic measure, Attitudes toward Poverty Scale Short Form (Yun & Weaver, 2010), Attributions of Poverty Scale (Strum, 2008), and School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). After collection of surveys, all data were analyzed. Due to overall sample size parameters, the sampling was limited to those in the Southeastern United States (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia). Based on the power analysis, the ideal sample size for this study was 267 participants with 90% confidence level and p < .05.

Participants

Four hundred and twenty-eight (428) respondents submitted survey packets. Of that number, 271 respondents indicated that they were currently practicing school counselors; these participants were included in the study. Participants were excluded from the survey for failure to complete all survey items or for not being current practicing school counselors. Participant demographics characteristics included: African American (n = 36, 13.3%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (n

= 1, 0.4%), Asian (n = 1, 0.4%), Hispanic/Latino (n = 12, 4.4%), White/Caucasian (n = 217, 80.1%), and other (n = 4, 1.5%). The number of respondents by gender included: female (n = 241, 88.9%), male (n = 29, 10.7%), and unknown (n = 1, 0.4%). The number of respondents by current practicing grade level included: elementary (K-5) (n = 135, 49.8%), middle (6-8) (n = 93, 34.3%), and high (9-12) (n = 84, 31%). Additionally, the school's reported socioeconomic category indicated low poverty (n = 38, 14%), mid-low poverty (n = 58, 21.4%), mid-high poverty (n = 77, 28.4%), high poverty (n = 89, 32.8%), and unknown (n = 9, 3.3%), as indicated by student participation in the free or reduced lunch program. The average age of respondents was 40.7 years. The average time of service respondents worked was 7.5 years. The ideal sample size for this study was 267 participants with 90% confidence level and p < .05. Descriptive measures of participants are shown in Table 1.

Measures

Demographic Measures

In addition to the demographic categories listed above, the demographic questionnaire asked participants two open ended questions about their perceptions of poverty. Specifically, these questions assessed: "What were the challenges school counselors experienced when working with children and adolescents impacted by poverty," and "What recommendations the school counselors had for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents impacted by poverty." The two open-ended questions were listed as the final two questions in the survey packet.

Attribution of Poverty Scale

The Attributes for Poverty Questionnaire (Bullock et al., 2003) was designed to assess a broad range of explanations for poverty including individualistic, structural, and fatalistic attributions. In the current study, beliefs about the attributes of poverty were assessed using this 36-item questionnaire (Strum, 2008). Using this questionnaire, participants rated their perceptions of the causes of poverty on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 indicating "not at all important as a cause of poverty" and 5 indicating "extremely important as a cause of poverty." The alpha coefficients for the three constructs in this scale were reported as 0.91 (individualistic), 0.91 (structuralistic), and 0.72 (fatalistic). These findings were parallel to what was found in the current study for which the overall Cronbach Alpha was calculated for all measures and compared against established reliabilities for each scale and subscale. Results showed the reliability estimates for subscale measures ranged from 0.757 to 0.907 with a mean of 0.843. In addition, the overall reliability estimates for measures ranged from 0.702 to 0.962 with a mean of 0.832. These results were comparable to the reliabilities scores from the original measures. The subscale scores for these measures ranged from 0.67 to 0.95 with a mean of 0.803. The overall reliability scores of the original measures ranged from 0.87 to 0.96 with a mean of 0.913.

Attitudes toward Poverty Scale Short Form

The Attitudes toward Poverty Scale was developed by Atherton and Gemmel (1993) to measure attitudes toward poverty and the poor population. A short form of this scale was formed in 2010 by Yun and Weaver that consisted of 21 scale items; the shortened form of the Attitudes Toward

Poverty Scale was used in this study. Using this scale, participants rated their agreement with the provided statements on a 5-point Likert scale with SA (1) indicating "Strong Agreement" and SD (5) indicating "Strong Disagreement." Higher scores on the Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale indicate more favorable attitudes toward the poor. The alpha coefficient for the total 21 items was 0.87. Three subscales of individualistic, fatalistic, and structuralistic attitudes were used in this measure. The alpha coefficients of the subscales ranged from 0.50 to 0.70.

School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE)

The School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE) was developed by Bodenhorn and Skagg (2005) to link personal attributes with school counselor career performance. The SCSE was designed to help track the adoption of professional transition, increase literature about school counseling and career self-efficacy theory, assess the effectiveness of the education process in school counseling programs, and provide insight into the success of practicing school counselors. The SCSE consists of 43 scale items. Using a Likert Scale, respondents rated their confidence performing school counseling tasks. A rating of 1 indicated "not confident" and a rating of 5 indicated "highly confident." The coefficient alpha for the scale score was found to be 0.95 (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). Subscales of the measure included 5 domains of Personal and Social Development (12 items); Leadership and Assessment (9 items); Career and Academic Development (7 items); Collaboration and Consultation (11 items); and Cultural Acceptance (4 items). Correlations of the subscale ranged from 0.27 to 0.43.

Analysis

Data were collected in this study to assess the perceptions of school counselors' attitudes and attributes towards working with poor students. The study also examined the self-efficacy levels of school counselors working with poor students. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Product for Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical analyses system. A correlation analysis was used to assess school counselors' attitudes, attributes and self-efficacy levels toward working with students living in poverty. Next, a multiple regression was used to assess the relationship across variables. Furthermore, a backwards elimination regression was used to assess the relationship between school counselors' self-efficacy levels and attitudes and attributes toward poverty. Lastly, a thematic analysis was used to assess quantitative findings.

A thematic analysis was conducted on the two qualitative questions to assess the challenges faced by school counselors when working with students impacted by poverty and to assess school counselors' recommendations for preparing a school counselor to work with individuals impacted by poverty. Thematic analysis is a six-phases process in which research researchers define and identify themes (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). A second researcher was recruited to assist in identification of themes within the qualitative responses. Both researchers worked to identify potential biases before beginning data analysis. Themes were identified and agreed upon by both researchers before proceeding with the analysis. Additionally, the researcher met to discuss their coding methods and rationale. Once coding agreement was met, the authors identified the emerging themes for each of the open-ended questions.

Results

The first research question assessed school counselors' attitudes and attributes toward working with students living in poverty. Results indicated that on the Attributions of Poverty Scale, active school counselors rated fatalistic causes higher for explaining why individuals live in poverty (M = 3.3141, SD = 0.662). The mean scores of the other subscales were 3.24 (Individualistic) and 2.99 (Structural). Subscale difference were examined using a Within Subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), $F_{(1.353, 365.401)}$ = 13.807, p < 0.05). Results of the analysis found significant differences between structural and individualistic subscales as well as structural and fatalistic subscales. However, the analysis showed no significant difference between individualistic and fatalistic subscales.

On the Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale, active school counselors rated personal deficiencies higher regarding their attitudes toward individuals living in poverty (M = 4.016, SD = 0.595). The mean scores of the other subscales were 3.06 (Stigma) and 2.64 (Structural). Subscale difference were examined using a Within Subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Results of the analysis found significant differences between all subscales of personal deficiency, stigma, and structural domains, $F_{(1.299, 350.777)}$ = 194.579, p < 0.05).

Lastly, on the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale, active school counselors were found to rate collaboration as the task they felt most confident performing (M = 4.369, SD = 0.600). Overall, the descriptive statistics for the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale indicated that active school counselors rated themselves as "generally confident" (M = 4.22, SD = 0.491) in their confidence to perform tasks and activities related to school counseling. The mean scores of the other subscales were 4.34 (Personal & Social), 4.25 (Cultural Acceptance), 4.15 (Career & Academic), and 3.92 (Leadership & Assessment).

The second research questions examined the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attitudes toward low SES among school counselors. A backwards elimination regression was performed to assess the best predictor of active school counselors' self-efficacy levels when correlated with school counselors' attitudes toward individuals living in poverty. Using three subscales, an overall R^2 of 0.042 (F = 3.921, p > 0.009) was obtained. Correlation scores for the three subscales were shown to be non-significant with Personal Deficiency achieving a r of .201, Stigma Attitudes with a r of .084, and Structural Attitudes with a r of -.070. Results of the backwards elimination regression showed a higher correlation using one subscale. The final restricted model contained the Personal Deficiency Scale and achieved a R^2 of 0.040 (F = 11.288, p = 0.001). The R^2 difference of 0.002 between these models was not statistically significant (F = 0.270, p > 0.05). Therefore, no significant difference was found between the models. The original model containing all three subscales accounted for 4.2% of the variance of attitudes about poverty (R^2 = 0.042). This indicated that there was not a significant relationship between self-efficacy and attitudes about poverty. See Table 2 for result of the backwards elimination regression.

The third research question assessed the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attributions toward low SES among school counselors. A backwards elimination regression analysis was performed to assess the relationship between active school counselors' attributes toward individuals living in poverty and their self-efficacy level. Using three subscales, an overall R2 of 0.011 was found (F = 0.998, p = 0.394). Analysis of the backwards elimination regression showed that removal of contributing variables did not contribute to the overall prediction of school counselors' self-efficacy levels. No variables could be removed from the full model to increase the prediction accuracy of the model. Correlation scores of the subscales were Individualistic with a r of -.037, Fatalistic with a r score of .03, and Structuralistic with a r score of .097. The original model containing all three subscales accounted for 1.1% of the variance of attributes about poverty (R2 = 0.011). This indicated that there was not a significant relationship between self-efficacy and attributes about poverty.

The forth research question assessed the challenges experienced by school counselors working with children and adolescents impacted by poverty. School counselors were asked in the demographic section of the survey, "What are the challenges you have experienced as a school counselor working with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?" Four themes were identified and agreed upon by both researchers. The four themes identified were: "Parental or Student Involvement," "Limited Resources or Services," "Inadequate Services," and "Lack of Training and Preparation." These themes varied in response rate. Thirty-

seven school counselors failed to answer the question or it was not applicable to their school setting.

Approximately 60% of school counselors cited "Parental or Student Involvement" as a challenge they encountered when working with students. Example quotes by respondents of this theme were "Encouraging and motivating them to care about their performance (albeit behavior or academic) at school;" "One of the biggest challenges is the lack of importance placed on education by the families of students;" and, "Getting parents to accept responsibility and support their children with academics." Next, the "Limited Resources or Services" themes emerged in approximately 15% of school counselor responses. Example quotes of the this theme included, "Lack of resources that would help the student be a more effective learner, e.g., access to computers, tutoring, transportation and money;" "Not enough community resources available;" and, "My challenges in working with students impacted by poverty are that we don't have access to appropriate resources, district formulas for distributing resources and/or determining the number of student support services staff are inequitable or do not take into consideration the free or reduced lunch percentage." Thirdly, the "Inadequate Services" themed responses were prevalent in approximately 15% of school counselors' responses. Example quotes of this theme included, "Children who are hungry cannot learn anything effectively;" "Lack of mental health resources in the community and lack of low skill jobs in the community;" and "Students coming to school hungry or dirty because they did not have food or running water." Lastly, approximately 10% of school counselors cited "Lack of Training and Preparation" as

a challenge school counselors faced when working with students in poverty. Example quotes of this theme included, "How to connect to them while showing empathy but not feeling sorry for them;" "Lack of awareness on the part of school staff;" and "Unintended bias by educators who prefer to advise lowest academic course work to low socio-economic students as a means of assuring students' on-time progression through school."

The last research question assessed recommendation for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents impacted by poverty. School counselors were asked in the demographic section of the survey, "What are your recommendations for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?" Three themes were identified and agreed upon by both researchers. The three themes identified were "Advocacy and Experiential Preparation," "Multicultural Training," and "Collaboration." These themes varied in response rate. Forty-four school counselors failed to answer the question or it was not applicable to their school setting.

Of the respondents, approximately 65% of school counselors cited "Advocacy and Experiential Preparation" as recommendations for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents. Example quotes of this theme included, "Part of the preparation program should include an internship in a high needs, high poverty/low income school;" "Have school counselors volunteer in food banks, shelters, low income schools/churches to expose them to situations they may encounter;" and, "One recommendation is to always be prepared to focus on the students' strengths when counseling, and be

part of culture change (if necessary) when it comes to identifying students' strengths." Next, the "Multicultural Training" themed recommendations were cited by approximately 15% of school counselors. Examples of this theme were "Help counselors to know what these families' lives are like on a daily basis; what their priorities are;" "They need to be able to separate their middle-class mindset from the atypical poverty mindset and then be able to work with children and families who are poor;" and, "Therefore all children should be treated equally and with respect for their heritage regardless how different it may be from what the educator knows." The last themed identified within school counselors' recommendations was "Collaboration." Approximately 20% of school counselors responded in ways consistent with this theme. Examples of this theme included, "Collaborate with other community agencies to support the children's needs;" "Information on services to provide to students, parents, and the community to help students get where they need to be;" and, "Collaborations with community resources is crucial."

Discussion

Results of the analysis indicated that school counselors identified personal deficient attitudes to explain poverty more often than stigma attitudes or structural attitudes. When a person exhibits a personal deficient attitude, they are emphasizing a person's individual deficit as the primary cause of poverty (Yun & Weaver, 2010). This indicated, that among this sample of practicing school counselors there was a perception that the reason someone is living in poverty corresponds more to limitations or deficits in the individual versus consideration of how stigma and structural factors in our

society may contribute to poverty. This was parallel to the participating school counselors' attributions related to the perceived reasons persons are living in poverty. In the current sample, school counselors attributed fatalistic and individualistic attributions as important reasons why people live in poverty. These attributions, especially the individualistic attribution for poverty focuses more on the perception that poverty is primarily caused by individual deficits versus societal barriers (Davidson, 2009).

When considered if there is a relationship between self-efficacy and these attitudes and attributions there are differences that are substantial. Specifically, while these attitudes and attributions may impact how school counselors interact with students and their families, they may also influence their beliefs or self-efficacy related to working with these students. Overall, there were indications that school counselors may generally be confident in their ability to perform personal and social, career and academic, collaboration, and cultural acceptance activities with students living in poverty and their families. Despite this identification, respondents showed only being moderately confident in their ability to perform leadership and assessment activities. Lower scores on this subscale may also be due to the push in today's education system for increased accountability measures (Barnes, Scofield, Hof, & Vrbka, 2005). When considered in relation to attitudes and attributions for persons living in poverty, there is the suggestion that school counselors' attitudes toward individuals in poverty corresponded more clearly to self-efficacy than their attributions about reasons people live in poverty. In fact, in this study, attributions failed to effectively

predict school counselors' self-efficacy levels. Attributes in this study measured counselors' general beliefs about why a student is living in poverty, whereas, attitudes measured the degree to which the counselor viewed the student in a positive or negative light. The correlation between self-efficacy and attitudes is consistent with past studies which have shown that both attitudes and self-efficacy levels are related to behavior (Bandura, 1977; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Cozzarelli et al., 2001). Attributions help shape attitudes toward the poor (Davidson, 2009), but may have less of an impact on behavior. These finding also highlight the challenge of understanding how counselors' beliefs and attitudes influence or impact their practice.

Several central themes were identified in the open-ended responses. These themes were, "Parental or Student Involvement," "Limited Resources or Services," "Inadequate Services," and "Lack of Training and Preparation." "Parental or Student Involvement" was found to be the most occurring theme. The parental and student involvement theme illustrated concerns school counselors had about engaging or involving parents of students living in poverty, this was identified by the school counselors as the most challenging issue. A central idea across these responses was the idea that these parents might not wish to participate in these activities. This included suggesting that these parents may not focus on or emphasize academic success. These findings suggest the need to help practicing and future school counselors identify methods to assist these families in participating. According to the ASCA National Model, school counselors work "with parents, teachers, administrators,

school staff and community stakeholders to promote achievement for a specific student or to promote systemic change to address the needs of groups of students such as underachieving or underrepresented groups of students in the school" (ASCA, 2019, p. 81).

It was not surprising, when considering current research (Cappella et al., 2008; Evans, 2004; Murnane, 2007) that many practicing school counselors working with students living in poverty are working in schools where there are significantly limited resources. The theme of limited resources and services parallels these research findings and was found to be the second most common concern raised by practicing school counselors in this study. This theme included the challenges of trying to assist students academically when there are limited resources (books, tutoring, transportation, computers, and large class sizes) for teachers and students. This corresponded with the identification of limited resources in the community to help support students and schools. These findings continued to mirror the next identified theme that focused on limited and inadequate services. School Counselors identified that when working in schools with high poverty means, academic services and the school counseling program itself are limited. This included limited mental health and social support networks in the community. This only further challenged already overwhelmed school counselors to find resources and help students and their families.

Lack of training was also identified as a significant hurdle for school counselors. This included the challenges of balancing empathy while empowering students, and not simply "feeling sorry for them". Challenges of dealing with teachers or

school personnel beliefs or attitudes about students who were dealing with poverty were also discussed. Some school counselors suggested that if these attitudes were negative that they might influence teachers' behavior towards students, influencing their expectations of student outcomes.

School counselors provided recommendations for addressing and dealing with these challenges. Three themes were identified and these focused on training and preparation, multicultural training, and emphasizing building collaborations. The most common of these was providing training for practicing school counselors and school counselors in-training on the development of skills that help prepare them to serve as advocates for their students. This was linked to providing training that was experiential, giving counselors the opportunity to learn about the experiences of their students living in poverty and what programs and services would be needed to assist them. Included in these recommendations were poverty simulation experiences, volunteering, and identifying social programs. Participants also suggested it would be highly beneficial to establish experiences, including practicums and internships, in high need schools to develop skills and awareness of these issues. Similarly, school counselors emphasized that multicultural and diversity training should include the cultural and social experiences of living in poverty. This included awareness of and understanding of societal attitudes and beliefs that are associated with poverty and economic class. The findings highlight the need to include consideration of these aspects and bias towards persons living in poverty. When considered with the finding that

school counselors in the current study were more likely to focus on individual and personal deficit variables for the reasons for poverty, this supports the need to integrate multicultural training that considers economic class (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Hutchison, 2011). The final theme was focused on collaboration and emphasized training needed to help school counselors develop skills necessary to build collaborations with those in the community and school who can assist students living in poverty.

Limitations

Overall these findings need to be considered in light of some specific limitations. The sample was limited to school counselors in the Southeastern region. In addition, a reliance on self-report measures limits the ability to draw direct reference to actual behavior. Specifically, attitudinal and attribution research is limited in the ability to directly predict or determine actual behavior (Ajzen, 2001; Glasman & Albarracin, 2006). It can be challenging to determine how participants' attitudes and attributions influence their mental health practice.

Recommendations

Overall the studies finding provide a foundation for examining recommendations to better prepare school counselors to address the needs of students living in poverty. School counselors in this study recommended advocacy and experiential preparation for preparing school counselors to work with individuals in poverty. Advocacy and experiential training experiences may provide practicing and in-training school counselors with the ability to develop their skills directly, including methods to enhance collaborations within the community and school, and may

address some of their personal attitudes and attributes. By receiving more advocacy and experiential experience, school counselors may feel more prepared to work with this high-risk population (Thomas & Quinlan, 2014). The study also highlights the continued need to integrate economic class into training on multicultural and diversity training. Training on these issues can provide a foundation for developing awareness of attitudes and beliefs about poverty; this includes the impact of poverty on students and their families. School counselor training may also address how societal attitudes influence perceptions and beliefs about poverty.

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Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Characteristics		Frequency (n)	Percentage
Gender (N = 271)			
	Female	241	89
	Male	29	11
	Unknown	1	<1
Race/Ethnicity (N = 271)			
	White	217	80
	Black or African American	36	13
	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1	<1
	Asian	1	<1
	Hispanic or Latino	12	4
	Other	4	2
School SES Category (N = 271)			
	Low Poverty	38	14
	Mid-Low Poverty	58	21
	Mid-High Poverty	77	28
	High Poverty	89	33
	Unknown	9	3
Grade Level * (N = 271)			
	K – 5th	135	43
	6th – 8th	93	30
	9th – 12th	84	27

* Participants were able to select multiple grade level categories to describe their work setting

Table 2
Regression Findings – Attitudes & Self-Efficacy

	R^2	S.E			
		Estimate			
Full Model	.042 a	.483			
Personal Deficiency			.201	.187	.221
Stigma Attitudes			.084	-.044	-.067
Structural Attitudes			-.070	-.036	-.049
Restricted Model	.040c	.482			
Personal Deficiency			.201	.201	.201
Factor			r	Semi-partial	Beta

*p<.05

[a]$F_{(3, 270)} = 3.921$, p = 0.009

[c]$F_{(1, 270)} = 11.285$, p = 0.001

The Experiences of Elementary School Counselors Working with Gifted Students: Utilizing the ASCA National Model

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Abstract
An element of a comprehensive school counseling model is to support students identified as gifted and their unique social, emotional, and behavioral issues that they may face. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of elementary school counselors working with gifted students within the framework of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model. Researchers conducted a thematic analysis of participants' responses in semi-structured interviews and identified themes related to the participants' counseling practices with gifted students.

Keywords: gifted students, ASCA Model, school counseling, qualitative research

Professional school counselors are called upon to provide counseling services to an extremely diverse population of students with a range of social, emotional, and behavioral needs that individually or collectively may interfere with their ability to learn (Davis, 2015). Ghandour et al. (2019) reported that feelings of anxiety, stress, and aggression are on the rise among children in the U.S. Therefore, today's students experience a myriad of internal and external influences that seem to play a direct role in affecting their academic performance, peer relationships, and general mental health.

In response to addressing the mental health needs of students, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) adopted a position statement encouraging professional school counselors to identify and respond to the need for mental health and behavioral interventions that promote wellness for all students (ASCA, 2015). The mental health needs of students are often unmet in schools around the country (DeKruyf, Auger, & Trice-Black, 2013; Maag & Katsiyannis, 2010). Furthermore, students from diverse cultural groups are even less likely to receive appropriate services (Panigua, 2014).

One cultural subgroup of students within schools who have higher academic abilities, termed gifted, is not immune from needing mental and emotional support from the professional school counselor (Levy & Plucker, 2008). However, these students are regularly overlooked as not needing counseling services in schools (Gibbons & Hughes, 2016). Professional school counselors are leaders and

advocates in creating safe and positive academic learning environments for all students, including gifted students (Stambaugh & Wood, 2018).

Literature Review

As our nation becomes more diverse, our educational institutions are reflecting more diverse student bodies as well. Students, who could be identified gifted, are present in schools in all grades, races, genders, and from all socioeconomic levels (National Association of Gifted Children [NAGC], 2011). Gifted children are usually identified in elementary school when teachers, professional school counselors or parents, refer the student for a formal educational evaluation (Silverman, 1993; Stambaugh & Wood, 2018). Early identification is important so that they can participate in differentiated educational opportunities and pathways that tap into their ability and potential (Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Worrell, 2012). This is the optimal time for gifted children should be recognized so that educators can plan to provide differentiated educational opportunities to maximize a gifted child's ability and potential. While the identification process varies across school districts and amongst states, the outcome should be centered on the child receiving necessary differentiation and modifications to a school's curriculum so that the child can be challenged in school (NAGC, 2009; Rotigel, 2003). Most districts have a screening and selection process that include aptitude or achievement assessments so that students are not subjectively placed in special programs (ASCA, 2019). Regardless of a child's academic achievement or performance, and regardless of the identification cutoff score in a particular school or in any particular state, a child who is intellectually gifted is consistently at the higher end of the academic bell curve (NAGC, 2009).

Training of Elementary School Counselors and the Gifted

Early recognition and appropriate counseling interventions of gifted students within a school setting increases the probability of future extraordinary achievement over the life span and reduces the risk for later social, behavioral, emotional, and/or educational problems (Harrison, 2005). These youth are at risk for underachievement, dropping out of school, poor peer relationships, high stress levels, and depression (Colangelo, 2003; Colangelo & Davis, 2002; Robinson, 2008; Wood, 2010). The social, emotional, and behavioral development of gifted children has received some attention within gifted education journals (Wood, 2010). However, not as much information has been published in journals specific to school counseling (Wood, 2018) though school counselors are usually the first line of defense in supporting students affective and behavioral needs in schools (Adams, 2014). Professional school counselors could greatly benefit not only from research that incorporates a systemic approach but also from practical applications as well (Myers & Pace, 1986).

Building upon this assertion, Van Tassel-Baska (2009) suggested that in order for human external influences to be productive in children's lives, adults must be trained in relevant skills, select interventions, and ensure that the systems within which they function are attuned to the need for flexibility in implementation. Thus, it is critical that professional school counselors have some foundational knowledge about the affective and behavioral needs of gifted students. Walker (1982) contended that "the counselor with knowledge of the characteristics of the gifted and talented student will be invaluable service as programs and curricula are developed" (p 364). Carlson (2004) stated that school counselors who have a gifted program and/or a gifted intervention specialist in their school building are more knowledgeable about students who are gifted and therefore more likely to advocate for them. Simply put, the social, emotional, and behavioral contexts of children's lives influence their ability to learn (Santrock, 2018), and elementary school counselors should focus their efforts on collaborating with educators in schools to establish the conditions for optimal growth and development in their students identified as gifted (Howard & Solberg, 2006). Therefore, we investigated how elementary school counselors utilizing a comprehensive school counseling program described their professional experiences and practices working with gifted students.

Method

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of elementary school counselors working with gifted students within their comprehensive school counseling program. We considered two fundamental concepts when developing a research design: the nature of the research questions and the desired end product. We selected a basic qualitative study as the research design framework. A basic qualitative study research design is used when trying to uncover strategies, techniques, and practices of the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017).

The basic qualitative inquiry format would allow participants to share openly about their professional practices as elementary school counselors working with gifted students within their comprehensive school counseling programs.

Participants and Data Collection Procedures

The University of Cincinnati Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the research study that also involved approval and collaboration with the Director of Special Services of the school district. First, we sent a recruitment letter through email to all elementary school counselors in one school district in the state of Ohio. The purposeful sampling criteria for selecting participants included (a) an earned master's degree in a counseling discipline and valid school counseling license in the state of Ohio with at least one year of experience as a professional school counselor; (b) self-identified alignment with the ASCA National Model within their comprehensive school counseling program; (c) employed in an elementary school that identifies and serves gifted students; and (d) work experience in the same elementary building that has a gifted intervention specialist or teacher of the gifted. Six school counselors responded and met the inclusionary self-identified as meeting the inclusionary criteria; however, one participant decided not to participate in the study. Therefore, the sample for this qualitative research was five elementary school counselors from one school district in Ohio.

Giorgi (2009) proposed that five to eight participants as an optimal number of subjects for this type of qualitative research. Based on the scope of the research, the nature of the research question, and the usefulness of the information collected through interviewing, it was believed that five would be suitable for the study. The five participants identified themselves as Caucasian ranging in age from 25 to 57 years old. The

participants ranged in professional school counseling experience from 3 to 23 years. Lastly, all participants identified as female.

Before data collection, each participant received information about the study, including a consent form to review and sign indicating their willingness to participate in this study. Participants were encouraged to ask questions before, during, and after the interviews. Data collection included a demographic questionnaire and relied on interviews as the primary source of data collection for this study. Each face-to-face interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was audio recorded utilizing a digital recorder. The lead author transcribed the interviews and assigned each of the participants a pseudonym to avoid any possibility of recognizing any of the participants. After the transcriptions were completed, the researcher sent the transcript via email to the participants for member checking to review for edits, accuracy and/or elaboration. After the edits were corrected on the transcription, the researcher sent back the new transcripts for the members to check their responses

Trustworthiness and Positionality

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that trustworthiness can be best described as the soundness of a research study. For a study to be deemed trustworthy, the concepts of credibility, transferability, and confirmability should be examined (Rolfe, 2006). To enhance the trustworthiness of the data in this study, several verification standards were employed to enhance credibility, transferability, and confirmability. The credibility of the study was enhanced because I, the first author, knew the setting and the participants in advance, and had developed a trusting relationship. I also consulted and debriefed after the interviews with a peer who was an

assistant professor at a local university who had experience in qualitative research. The transferability of the study was demonstrated through the description of sample and participant characteristics. The confirmability was demonstrated in this study in the following ways: (1) thorough description of the researcher's positionality, (2) description of the role of researcher in relation to this study, (3) description of the role of the researcher as experienced practitioner in relation to this study, (4) a disclosure of affiliation statement, and (5) through ethical considerations.

Qualitative researchers involve themselves in every aspect of their research (Farber, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The researcher is critical in all forms of qualitative research (Lichtman, 2010). Merriam (1998) described the qualitative researcher as "the primary instrument for data collection and analysis who relies on his or her skills to receive information in natural contexts and who uncovers its meaning by descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory procedure" (p. 345). In a basic qualitative study, the researcher has some knowledge or understanding about the topic of study that they want to be able to more fully describe from the participant's perspective (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015).

This research study bears personal meaning and stems from my, the first author's academic, professional, and personal experiences. As a tenured and licensed professional school counselor in the state of Ohio, I worked with a diverse population of students in an elementary school setting at the time that I collected data. I developed a passion for and commitment to school counselor advocacy for and with all students, particularly those who were identified as gifted and those

underachieving and unidentified gifted students. This research was conducted as part of my dissertation process, and I consulted with my dissertation chair throughout the process in order to guide through the university process. The second author has been a practitioner and faculty member for over twenty years with a diverse background to include working with a small number of gifted children in a high school setting.

Data Analysis

Our goal was to explore how professional school counselors who practice within an ASCA-model aligned school counseling framework describe their experiences and practices with students who were identified as gifted. After transcribing the five interviews, the first author coded the data, and discussed together the coded data to ultimately find themes to answer the research question through an inductive process known as thematic analysis (TA) as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that TA is best suited for explaining the specific nature of the participants' conceptualizations of the phenomenon under investigation and that it can be flexible and adaptable to many qualitative methodologies, including basic qualitative research. TA is useful for researchers conducting more practitioner or applied research approaches (Braun & Clark, 2014). The second author performed the role of a peer reviewer by providing an external check of the research process as described in (Merriam, 2009). The codes produced by the colleague peer debriefer were compared with the researcher's initial codes and differences were reviewed and discussed. Researchers identify repeated patterns of meaning by searching, coding, and interpreting the entire data set (Braun

& Clarke, 2014). Therefore, we used Braun and Clarke (2006) as a guide to conduct the following six phases of data collection and analysis: (1) review and familiarize yourself with the data; (2) generate initial codes; (3) search for themes; (4) review generated themes; (5) define and name themes; and (6) produce the report.

Findings

The findings from this research were generated in response to the research question: How do elementary school counselors, utilizing a comprehensive school counseling program, describe their professional experiences and practices when working with gifted students? The order of themes were based on the number codes that emerged from the data. Utilizing a qualitative design, we determined that five themes were represented in the data. These themes were (1) commitment to intentional counseling practice, (2) collaborative effort, (3) knowledge through professional experience over graduate training, (4) student needs and addressing nonacademic barriers, and (5) direct service through small group counseling.

Theme 1: Commitment to Intentional Counseling Practice

The first theme that emerged with the greatest prevalence from the data involved the participant's commitment to intentional counseling practice. Abigail, Barbara, Emma, and Charlotte explained how they intentionally planned and prepared their counseling services within their comprehensive school counseling program in a variety of ways. These participants discussed their intentional counseling initiatives through the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework. Professionals in the school district, including the professional school counselors in this study, used the multi-tiered supports

and services in the RtI framework to strategically monitor students' strengths and needs with appropriate interventions and services. RtI is defined as an "integration of assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavioral problems" (Center on Response to Intervention [NCRTI], 2010, p. 2). Abigail spoke specifically to the intentionality of her work with students who were gifted through a multi-tiered approach: "I have tried to be intentional and doing Tier 1 when they [students identified as gifted] are not being pulled out…so they do not miss it." Barbara explained intentionality in her counseling practice as using a variety of services to suit the different needs of the student. She explained how she purposefully teaches specific skills that may be needed to support gifted students successful functioning within the school.

Lastly, Emma used the RtI framework, coupled with components of the ASCA National Model, when she designed and implemented school counseling interventions within her comprehensive school counseling program. She stated, "RtI is part of ASCA. We have definitely started that."

Theme 2: Collaborative Effort
Collaboration was the second most prevalent finding and was mentioned by all participants. Participants reported working with a gifted intervention specialist at various levels ranging from little interaction to working together regularly. Despite the range in collaborative efforts, all participants expressed the importance of collaboration with other educators as an essential role of the professional school counselor. Charlotte shared:
She and I have worked 4 or 5 years on this curriculum that the two of us have

developed ourselves with resources and it is very collaborative relationship. Also, when we have new students who I usually meet the new students if there is anything that I feel that she needs to be responsive to or if they mention they were in a program similar to that in their old school that she is very easy to collaborate with.

Theme 3: Knowledge Through Professional Experience
The third theme was the role of training in the profession as opposed to preparation in counselor education. None of the participants in this study had any coursework or informational trainings within their graduate school counseling program about the gifted population. However, Barbara noted, "I did have a college class [in undergraduate school] called "The Exceptional Child," and that is where I connected with the professor of that class about gifted students." Abigail and Barbara described a training regarding working with gifted students they both participated. Barbara stated, "I participated in a training that described the unique characteristics of gifted students. I found that extremely beneficial for my counseling work with my students." All five participants described their knowledge of the gifted population and the students' distinct needs, which they learned from direct professional experiences on the job.

Theme 4: Student Needs and Nonacademic Barriers
All participants shared a wide variety of student needs and non-academic barriers to learning that they witnessed among their gifted students, as well as, their experience addressing those needs. Non-academic barriers to learning are conditions that negatively impact a students' ability to learn such as social and emotional factors or cultural concerns (Muñoz, Owens, &

Bartlett, 2015). The participants reported that gifted youth experience skewed self-concept, lack of empathy, poor rapport-building skills, poor peer relationships, and anxiety and stress as barriers to their learning. Four out of the five participants implemented some type of counseling services to improve behavior and enhance social and emotional competence based on the unique needs of their students. Barbara stated: …6th grade girls…have a tougher time fitting in more than the average student because they do not have the same sense of belonging because they don't think people understand them as much. I think it is harder for them to connect.

Theme 5: Direct Service Through Small Group Counseling
The participants discussed the benefits of small group counseling for all students, including those students who are identified as gifted. Four participants discussed how they implement small groups and the topics that they discussed. Participants reported that small groups were beneficial because it gives a sense of universality and cohesiveness amongst members Charlotte stated:

Ok, in the small group classroom guidance – I call that both because they are a pull out-group – but then I teach it as lessons with the gifted teacher. Um, kids are identified here in 4th grade during 4th, 5th, and 6th grade she and I co-teach lessons specifically designed for those identified as gifted. We do a total of 6-9 lessons every year for 4, 5, and 6th grade. So, some of the lessons include bullying, perfectionism, future planning, trash and treasure habits, developing habits worth hiring, some career learning specific for them.

In sum, we identified five themes in

the participants' explanations of their experiences providing counseling services within an ASCA framework to youth who are identified as gifted. These themes were (1) a commitment to intentional counseling practice, (2) collaborative effort, (3) knowledge through professional experience, (4) student needs and nonacademic barriers, and (5) direct service through small group counseling.

Discussion
The findings of this study offer an examination of five elementary school counselors' professional experiences and practices working with students who are gifted within their comprehensive school counseling program. Among the elementary counselors who participated, all of them utilized the ASCA National Model as a framework through which individualization and differentiation of student and counselor interaction could be maximized. The ASCA National Model provides a framework for intentional practice.

The participants in this study were already implementing comprehensive school counseling programs which allowed them to regularly engage in accountability practices. They reported that the ASCA National Model provided a framework through which they could be intentional in their practice. The participants described using a multitiered system to differentiate their counseling services to their gifted students within the RtI framework. Professional school counselors' use of the RtI framework within their comprehensive school counseling has been described in the literature (Ockerman, Mason, & Hollenbeck, 2012) along with how to use RtI in partnership with other professionals school psychologists, gifted intervention specialists and the like (Zambrano, Castro-

Villareal, & Sullivan, 2012).

These elementary counselors described their collaborative work with teachers of the gifted. Gifted students would benefit from a professional school counselor who is leading a comprehensive school counseling program to collaborate with the gifted intervention specialist in order to address students' needs as a team. Collaboration among the school counselor and gifted specialist has been present in the literature for some time (i.e., Wiener, 1968) and among current researchers (ASCA, 2012; NAGC, n.d.; VanTassel-Baska, 1990; Wood, 2012). Wood (2012) argued, "By working together, school counselors and gifted educators could find themselves in a powerful partnership, a deep professional relationship, and as persuasive advocates in the service to gifted students and their families" (p. 273).

An increasing demand facing professional school counselors today is their ability to effectively meet the personal/social, academic, and career needs of diverse populations within their school (DeKruyf et al., 2013). Despite the school counselor scholars citing the unique nature of and specific counseling needs of diverse populations (e.g., Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines, & Johnston, 2018; Levy & Plucker, 2008; Studer, 2015), many professional school counselors are not required to take specialized courses pertaining to the gifted population in order to enhance their knowledge and clinical skills (Peterson, 2006). Upon completion of their master's programs, many professional school counselors feel inadequately trained to effectively address the unique and diverse needs of gifted students (Peterson, 2006. These participants developed their knowledge and skills in supporting gifted students through their own professional practice.

The findings of the current study align with existing literature regarding the benefits of incorporating classroom guidance responsive services, including group counseling, for serving gifted students. Peterson (2013) found that school counselors working with high-potential children from low-income families described group work as particularly powerful when working with the gifted population. Similarly, participants in this study reported an increase in sense of universality and cohesiveness.

Implications

This study highlights five themes aligning with previous literature. These themes represent areas of potential focus for school counselors working with gifted children. The demands being placed on school counselors have been increasing and this study represents a small step in the direction of further recognizing those needs. A larger sample size, more geographical variability, and diversity should be addressed by future studies.

School Counseling Students

School counseling students would benefit from increasing their foundational knowledge in characteristics, developmental trajectories, and identification processes of/for gifted students. Based on the participants' experiences in this study, reading professional journals on the various topics related to gifted students, working with this population during practicum and internship, and familiarizing oneself in asynchronous development all appear to help enhance the awareness and the professional practices for working with this population. Seeking mentoring from practitioners and scholars within the field of gifted education would also be recommended.

Elementary School Counselors

The available information for school counselors is mostly conceptual in nature from gifted education, describing best practices professional school counselors use when working with gifted students (Wood, 2018). Within a differentiated counseling approach, the elementary school counselor may want to examine the ecological considerations of the students' person-environmental interactions as having significance in developing psychological traits conducive to talent development. Utilizing an ecological framework as described by Bronfenbrenner (1979) would help systematically organize the multiple levels of influence on the students' talent development (i.e. parent-gifted student, teacher-gifted student, peers-gifted student, community-gifted student, educational policy-gifted student). Additionally, an ecological approach to counseling as described Conyne and Cook (2004) would aid in formulating a thorough case/student conceptualization and assist in designing effective, differentiated interventions while simultaneously recognizing the people, places, and things that directly or indirectly enhance or limit the student.

Limitations

There are limitations of this study that warrant attention including sample size, lack of diversity in the sample, a limited geographic area, and focus on elementary school counselors. First, while small number of participants aided the researcher in investigating the research problem in a contextualized, qualitative approach, such as in a basic qualitative study, this small sample size of five practitioners are not representative of the general population of school counselors..

This study was designed as a descriptive study examining perceptions of school counselors in one school district, and we caution against drawing inferences from experiences of these five participants. The third limitation is the sampling strategy and strict inclusion criteria, which reduced the pool of possible participants to six elementary school counselors. Future research should aim for a larger and more culturally diverse sample to include middle and high school counselors from a larger geographic region. In sum, there is a lack of transferability of the study findings.

Future Research

We investigated the experiences of elementary school counselors who were working with gifted students. This study of five elementary school counselors raised several questions appropriate for further research. Though this study was exploratory, efforts should be made to identify and explore experiences of more school counselors who are implementing an ASCA-aligned comprehensive school counseling program and who are providing counseling services to elementary-aged gifted students. We also recommend providing and assessing the effectiveness of counseling services tailored to address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of gifted students in an elementary school setting. We recommend that future researcher investigate middle and high school counselors' experiences, solicit a more diverse sample of school counselors, and seek experiences of school counselors in other geographic areas of the county.

Conclusion

This study provided a description and a deeper understanding of the experiences and practices of five elementary school counselors in one district as they provided counseling services with their gifted

students within their comprehensive school counseling program. We intended to help close the gap that exists in the literature about school counseling services for gifted youth. We explored elementary school counselors' work with students whom were identified as gifted with the intention to inform counseling practice for the betterment of a subgroup of students. Utilizing a qualitative design, we identified five themes in these data. Themes pertained to providing counseling services in collaboration with other professional, gaining knowledge of giftedness as a professional, specific needs of gifted youth, and group counseling as an intervention. These findings align with previously published research.

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The Group Supervision 360° Case Conceptualization Process: Testing the Process

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Abstract

This article presents action research conducted on a newly proposed method for school counseling supervision, the 360° Case Conceptualization Process. Grounded in the Integrated Developmental Model for Supervision, we examine the use of this visual tool with school counselors-in-training during practicum and internship group supervision. Results from the initial round of research were positive, with discussions regarding student strengths demonstrating the most growth between group conceptualizations (83%), followed by counselor areas for improvement (80%). Student counselors-in-training reported higher levels of confidence in the supervision process. Results showed a need to increase discussions of diversity and the core conditions of counseling. We include pedagogical suggestions, student and professor feedback, and implications for future research.

The Group Supervision 360° Case Conceptualization Process: Testing the Process Counselor supervisors are responsible for providing opportunities for school counselors-in-training to develop and refine their knowledge and skills during their practicum and internship placements based on recommendations set forth by professional governing bodies (Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), 2011; The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), 2016). Finding a comprehensive supervision format can be a valuable tool for supervisors as they aim to structure the group supervision experience with the most current and effective methods. Practicum and internship experiences are a critical piece to counselor development, providing opportunities for supervisees to increase understanding of students and construct treatment plans (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013).

The importance of helping school counselors-in-training grow and develop their counseling skills within group supervision is not a new topic within the counseling field (Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Lambie & Sias, 2009). Falender et al. (2004) designed a consensus statement identifying the importance of standards in counseling supervision for supervisors. Similarly, a framework was created for supervision competencies in order to reflect the specific knowledge, skills, and values relevant to supervising counselors (Flander et al., 2004). Under the area of knowledge, Flander et al. (2004) listed knowledge of supervisee development as one of the competencies necessary for supervision. Within the skill area, the ability to assess the learning needs and developmental level of the supervisee was an additional listed competency. In order to assist counseling supervisors with the group supervision process, the utilization of a developmental model like the Integrated Developmental Model for Supervision (IDM) (Stoltenberg, McNeil, & Delworth, 1998) provides a framework for practice.

The Integrated Developmental Model for Supervision (IDM) provides a framework for the supervisor to utilize when evaluating at the overall progress of a school counselor-in-training, and it also has foci within specific areas (Stoltenberg et al., 1998). Though the predominant discussion of this model is in connection with individual supervision, supervisors can also consider developmental levels while working in the group supervision environment. According to this model, counseling trainees progress through three developmental levels, experiencing changes in three distinct areas within each level—self and other awareness, motivation, and dependency-autonomy (McNeill, Stoltenberg, & Romans, 1992). For example, the supervisee moves from a level of high dependence on the supervisor to more of a conditional dependence with higher levels of autonomy as they develop confidence (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). Demonstrated empirical evidence for this model in many studies (Bang, 2006; Leach, Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Eichenfield, 1997; Perera-Diltz, & Yeager, 2009). A supervisor who has an awareness and understanding of developmental levels can better promote confidence amongst the group by providing the appropriate structure necessary at each specific point in supervisee development. During the practicum and internship experiences of a school counselor-in-training, providing this structure will potentially increase confidence, lower anxiety, and increase the ability for a school counselor-in-training to fully conceptualize students seeking counseling once they are in the field as a professional school counselor. This groundwork begins with group supervision during their graduate experience.

Fostering growth in a group supervision environment also involves an analysis of the feedback offered to school counselors-in-training. Supervisors are encouraged to provide feedback which should be both challenging and supportive, as appropriate to their trainees' developmental levels, experience, and student needs (ACES Standards for Counseling Supervisors 4.8, 6.1, 6.5, & 6.7, 2011; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). Feedback should be accurate, well-thought-out, and relevant. Nevertheless, learning and growth are not always sequential; supervisees in a group setting may be operating at distinct levels

of development and require different types of feedback.

Focusing on creating a classroom environment where peers provide effective feedback congruent with the IDM may assist counselor educators with the group supervision process. One area, in particular, involves an issue faced by many counseling trainees in their early development—anxiety. The experience of school counselors-in-training experiencing anxiety—sometimes considerable—during practicum or the Level 1 designation by the IDM, has been a focus of supervision work with the IDM and in research due to the impact on student performance (Al-Darmaki, 2004; Fitch & Marshall, 2002; Mansor & Yusoff, 2013; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). Encouraging an environment which also focuses on a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) is one way to reduce this issue among those school counselors-in-training who are within the early developmental stages of the IDM.

The fixed versus growth mindset paradigm was developed by Dweck (2006) within the field of psychology. A fixed mindset follows the premise that intelligence is static and unchangeable (Dweck, 2006). Individuals in a fixed mindset strive to appear smart and make few mistakes; this may be observed as not taking risks, giving up easily when encountering obstacles, ignoring feedback, and feeling threatened by others' success. Conversely, a growth mindset follows the belief that intelligence can be developed (Dweck, 2006). A student demonstrating this mindset learns from and embraces challenges as opportunities, persists in the face of obstacles, incorporates feedback, and gains inspiration from others' success (Dweck, 2006).

Group supervision sessions can use growth mindsets through direct teaching and framing of the growth mindset philosophy. A supervision goal which incorporates a growth mindset philosophy may help school counselors-in-training thrive despite challenges and respond positively to setbacks (Dweck, 2015). Supervisors who embrace a developmental perspective within a growth mindset supervision environment may find supervisees will advance more quickly through the developmental levels of the IDM than in previous practicum and internship experiences.

The Importance of Case Conceptualization

An important focus in supervision includes the use of goal setting related to case conceptualization (ACES, 2011). According to Kuyken, Padesky, and Dudley (2008), individuals can understand increasingly complex case conceptualizations as they make new connections regarding student issues. The group case conceptualization process is an integral part of school counselor training and is one of the most effective methods to understanding theoretical perspectives (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Needleman, 1999; Sperry, 2006). Conceptualizing students and their issues require higher levels of thinking, including application, analysis, and evaluation (Murdock, 1991; Welfare & Borders, 2010). Novice school counselors may struggle within the group supervision setting to understand the complexity of their students and how to put all of the pieces together. Group members may provide multiple perspectives during the supervision process which can contribute to a new school counselor's skill development and enhance their understanding of the student (Stoltenberg

& McNeill, 2010).

Supervisors have options when deciding upon the format for presentations of case conceptualizations within group supervision. Counselor educators and supervisors may choose different theoretical approaches to meet the needs of their school counselors-in-training. One such approach is reflective teaming. Reflective teaming is a teaching method developed by Tom Andersen for marriage and family counselors (Andersen, 1987). Reflective teaming allows the supervisee to hear the team's thoughts and reactions to the student while providing the supervisee an opportunity to present their initial conceptualization of the student. Other conceptualization processes may involve school counselors-in-training focusing on developmental levels, core beliefs, and compensatory strategies using a worksheet (Beck, 1995), and Pearson (2000) proposed a model which focuses on obvious problems and the underlying mechanisms which allow these problems to continue. Though there are a variety of strategies one can use with the case conceptualization process, there was an absence of a model with a visual aid, grounded in the IDM, and integrating a growth mindset.

Research on the case conceptualization process shows benefits to emphasizing student strengths (Passmore & Oades, 2015; Welfare, Farmer, & Lile, 2013), focusing and expanding the use of multicultural conceptualization (Lee, Sheridan, Rosen, & Jones, 2013; Schomburg & Prieto, 2011), and using a visual case processing method (Ishiyama, 1988; Shiflett & Remley, 2014). The 360˚ Case Conceptualization Process, developed by Rausch and Gallo (2018) uses this empirical evidence to create the

foundational goals for its use in a group supervision setting while correcting for the absence of a visual tool.

The 360° Case Conceptualization Process

While one may locate models related to conducting group supervision, it is difficult to find a holistic framework which incorporates a growth mindset while also considering the differing IDM developmental levels related explicitly to presenting case conceptualizations. Understanding that each supervisor has a specific style for case conceptualization, the 360° Case Conceptualization Process, or the 360° Process, allows for flexibility of presentation style while incorporating a growth mindset and utilizing the IDM.

Counselor educators and supervisors aim to meet the varied needs of school counselors-in-training who have differing theoretical orientations, levels of experience, cognitive styles, and cultural identities. As Bernard and Goodyear (2013) stated, group supervision, used in the traditional sense, may lack the structure necessary to provide valuable and adequate feedback. Supervisors may struggle to identify the development levels of individual school counselors-in-training while in a group format; yet, the environment created by the supervisor lays the foundation for learning which occurs during the group supervision sessions. Providing a format for school counselors-in-training which builds on the strengths of each supervisee and teaches them to embrace feedback may contribute to higher levels of motivation. Cognitive processing and motivation affect learning (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010), and the opportunity to openly make mistakes, provided by the growth mindset structure, may also enhance student learning.

The 360° Process was designed to utilize the empirically supported supervision processes, encouraging a growth mindset and utilizing strengths-based counseling, while addressing developmental needs based on the levels created by the IDM (Rausch & Gallo, 2018). The tool not only creates a concrete visual aid for school counselors-in-training, which provides enough structure for those supervisees struggling with the anxiety of how to proceed with case conceptualization, but also there is flexibility which encourages autonomy and feedback. The visual aid is a circle, guiding school counselors-in-training through various areas for discussion. A portion of the circle focuses on peer feedback regarding the student and the counselor. The school counselor-in-training presenting the case then has an opportunity to reflect on the conversation and work through areas for future work as a school counselor and with the specific student [see Figure 1].

Supervisors who understand the importance of structure during various developmental levels will be more likely to recognize where and when certain levels of support are necessary. As school counselors-in-training present their case conceptualizations, the supervisor can build on the various components of the 360° Process to highlight strengths and help the student develop self-efficacy in their abilities. Encouraging a growth mindset is also essential because counseling self-efficacy is vital to the supervision process, precisely because it moderates the supervisory alliance when related to supervisee adaptive perfectionism (Ganske, Gnilka, Ashby, & Rice, 2015). A supervisor's primary goal is to help supervisees feel confident in their abilities (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013).

This confidence can then contribute to supervisees' growth and development (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010).

The 360° Process also addresses a need to infuse diversity discussions within group supervision sessions (Rausch & Gallo, 2018. Previous research describes how integrating intentional discussions of racial issues within supervision sessions leads to an increase in supervisee's awareness of multiculturalism (Ancis & Ladany, 2010). In a qualitative study, Neufeldt et al. (2006) found that investigating students' multicultural competence resulted in the suggestion of increased incorporation of multicultural competence training and assessment on case conceptualization. Berkel, Constantine, and Olson (2007) recommended including religion and spirituality discussions with supervisees to increase multicultural competence. The creation of this process was inspired by empirical evidence which suggests strengths-based conceptualization (Kuyken, et al., 2008), increased multicultural awareness (Constantine, 2001), and decreased anxiety regarding the process (Moskovitch, 2009) are beneficial to developmental growth for counseling supervisees. The goals for the process build upon this evidence.

The goals for the 360° Process include: (a) increasing the holistic perspective when conceptualizing counseling students; (b) increasing self-efficacy for school counselors-in-training in a group supervision setting; (c) creating an environment for reflective practice; (d) increasing the use of multicultural competencies in practice; (e) integrating multiple perspectives when considering the needs of a student coming to the office for counseling; and, (f) balancing challenge with support.

We aimed to contribute to the counseling and supervision literature through the examination of outcome data from a training site which utilized the 360° Process format with school counselors-in-training. Specifically, our goals were to evaluate the effectiveness of this new case conceptualization tool with school counselors-in-training at meeting the goals set forth by the 360° Process' creators: increasing depth of discussion, reducing fear of making mistakes, and meeting the developmental needs of supervisees, according to designation through Stoltenberg and McNeill's (2010) IDM.

Method

We used an exploratory action research design in order to examine how school counselors-in-training construct the reality of a student in need of counseling--their perceptions, "truths," beliefs, and worldview. Additionally, we were interested in understanding whether the use of a provided conceptualization tool would reduce anxiety associated with presenting a student case in supervision and whether it would encourage risk-taking in the areas of student tape choice and discussion in class. We acquired approval through the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before engaging in research. School counseling internship students participated with the awareness that the only addition to their standard requirement was the use of the 360° Process rather than a separate case conceptualization method and the audio taping of two or three of the conceptualizations. The first author served as the principal investigator and had previously developed the 360° Process with the second author. First and second authors gave the third author, the participating counselor educator who was teaching the internship course, an

in-depth explanation and assessed for understanding of the process. The third author discussed the 360° Process with the internship course students using a manuscript that described the model. Also, the principal investigator provided insight into ways to increase adherence to the process via email to the counselor educator after transcribing the first audio tape.

Participants

Participants included nine (N = 9) school and clinical mental health counseling internship students at a CACREP accredited institution in the southeast United States. Three males (n = 3) and six females (n = 6) of varying cultural backgrounds (African American, n = 1; Bi-Racial, n = 2; Hispanic, n = 1; Caucasian, n = 5) entered the informed consent process and agreed to participate in the first phase of this study. The internship class included nine students total: School Counseling Internship I (n = 2), Clinical Mental Health Counseling Internship I (n = 2), School Counseling Internship I and II combined (n = 1), and Clinical Mental Health Counseling Internship II (n = 4). Each intern engaged in an internship at a different sites from one another. All nine students were given an informed consent process by the first author after which they provided written consent; consents were kept separate from the third author.

Assessment Tool

The data collection form used in this study included areas to denote the time period of the audio taping process, number of participants in the discussion, and the length of case conceptualization discussion, which followed the time when the trainees listened to or watched a counseling tape involving a school counselor-in-training and a student at their site. The first and second authors

reviewed the recorded group supervision sessions tallied the areas from the 360° Process (See Table 1) according to the number of times a particular topic was discussed. They also recorded the number of times that the third author engaged in conversation, used open-ended questions, or worked to create insight into the needs of a student.

Procedures

Inclusionary criteria involved enrollment in an internship during this semester. Participants were provided informed consent by the first author only. The first author informed the students that there was no penalty for non-participation, and their choice to not participate would remain confidential. Participants were informed that they were able to drop out of the study at any time without penalty. All nine consented to participate, completed the semester, and remained in the study.

The first author advised participants that the case conceptualization process would be audio-taped a minimum of two times and a maximum of three times. The first author chose the dates for recording and emailed the counselor educator one week ahead of the recording. The first author was unaware which school counselors-in-training would be presenting. These dates were selected to obtain the first conceptualization of the semester, and the second to last conceptualization of the semester; if the audio taping did not work, there would have been one more opportunity to record and capture data. Participants were unaware when the audio taping occurred to prevent additional anxiety. The third author was aware of the audio taping process because she recorded these group supervision sessions. The students met for 3 hours every other week throughout the 16-week semester.

Once students agreed to participate, the first and second authors provided the students with a video to introduce them to the growth mindsets (i.e., Mistakes-To Get Better You Have to Get Ugly) and encouraged them to take risks in the safe environment provided through the internship experience. The first and second authors gave students a copy of the 360° Process and then taught the terminology and goals of the new process. Time was provided to ask questions, and trainees were asked to provide examples of developmental theories, supports, or other areas represented in the tool to help them gain familiarity and comfort with the process.

The counselor educator initially monitored the time during the case presentation and subsequent discussion of the case in order to keep the group on track, and she also participated in the discussion of the case. As the group progressed, the time-keeping responsibility was assigned to a student volunteer each week as the school counselors-in-training gained confidence and familiarity with the process.

Data Analysis

The first and second authors developed a coding tool to measure the frequency each of the thirteen areas that were mentioned during the case presentation. They transcribed the recorded sessions then independently coded transcripts of the first recorded case conceptualization using codes that corresponded to the coding tool. Then they compared their coding and discussed any variation among them until they reached 100% inter-rater reliability. If there were questions, the third author was consulted to provide both clarification and triangulation of data. Lastly, they tallied the number of times that each one of the areas in the model was mentioned.

The second case conceptualization data were derived from a recording of the second to last class meeting of the semester. Again, the first and third authors transcribed then coded using the tool they had created. They reached the inter-rater agreement. After the semester ended, the authors examined the differences between the results of the data collection forms from tapes one and two. We discussed the changes in frequency counts across the thirteen areas on the instrument and also discussed implications for future work among the team.

Results

Review and analysis of the coding process resulted in an observed growth in nine of the thirteen areas, a decrease in three areas, and a decrease in professor-led prompts. These results are in Table 1. The process area that experienced the most significant amount of growth was Client (Student) Strengths (83%). Rausch and Gallo (2018) situated the discussion of student strengths at the beginning of the process purposely to encourage a strengths-based conceptualization. Counselor Areas for Improvement was the second highest in terms of growth (80%), though the number of comments surrounding the topic of Goals/Diagnosis rated the highest of all the areas studied (30). As anticipated, the length of the conceptualization process increased by 69%, from 13 minutes during the first case of the semester to 22 minutes by the end of the semester.

Not all frequency counts in content areas of the model increased, including the use of core conditions and discussion surrounding multicultural considerations. There was a lack of attention paid to counselor core conditions. Specifically, there were no mentions of terms such as empathy,

instillation of hope, or unconditional positive regard in the final transcript. Additionally, the low mention of multicultural considerations and next directions for the counselor deserves further attention.

During the coding process, the first and second authors noticed that the school counselors-in-training increased their advocacy efforts for their students. The first conceptualization involved a school counselor-in-training responding to a question regarding the relationship between the homeroom teacher and the student. The counselor in training remarked, "From what I've heard she doesn't believe in that. She doesn't believe in consequences per se." In this instance, the counselor-in-training had received information regarding her student, though the information was through a third party, and the counselor-in-training seemed to remain distant from the issue. However, in the final conceptualization with a separate school counselor-in-training and student, the school counselor-in-training mentioned in various ways that she impacted her student. For example, she said, "I haven't really observed him a lot and I've asked his teacher….she said he's been doing fine...I said, 'I'm asking to help him work.'" Later, she remarked, "...the teacher is helpful now that I made that comment to her." In this latter session, the counselor-in-training advocated for herself and the student by promoting what she was doing to help the student be successful, and as a result, the teacher was more responsive to the student.

Professor-led prompting changed from the original conceptualization to the final process, indicating a scaffolding technique. In the first conceptualization, the professor used opportunities to help her school counselors-in-training think about any

relevant, existing diagnoses which a student may bring from previous treatment into the counseling office (e.g., depression, social anxiety, autism spectrum) and then goals for the student. The professor provided concrete and direct help, stating, "...if we are talking about a diagnostic problem of why she's acting at home, from that need of permissive parenting, what would you say from class...is the reason she is acting out?" In the final conceptualization for a different counselor-in-training and student, she provides less structure, leaving the counselors-in-training to more fully discuss the layers of a student's diagnosis amongst themselves, stating, "That does make me wonder about the spectrum. I mean, he seems…". The professor employed more silence in the second conceptualization.

Additionally, trainee suggestions for future intervention went from general to more specific. In the first conceptualization, the school counselors-in-training suggested playing games like, SORRY!® or playing with Play-doh® while having a conversation with the student. Later in the semester and rather than playing games with students members of the group supervision process expanded their knowledge regarding specific counseling ideas for interventions. This expanded knowledge was demonstrated in the final case conceptualization when a student mentioned, "What about...Rory's story cues? It's like a set of 5...cue cards, and they just have pictures on them, and you can make up stories about them. Create some adjectives that could probably help you go into places with him and create information for you…". Counselors-in-training increased the specificity of suggested interventions from the first to the second conceptualization.

In addition to more specific intervention suggestions, the school counselors-in-training presenting their student tapes were able to articulate their strengths as a school counselor in a more detailed manner later in the semester. At the beginning of the semester, the first recorded school counselor-in-training described her strengths as a counselor, "...building rapport. I do think I'm doing pretty well with that even with the other children I see. All of the feedback with my students." The school counselor-in-training at the end of the semester remarked,

I've increased my confidence. I'm less nervous and anxious. Especially in front of the camera. I see the need to have that. And I feel like I'm better since we've done all of this interpersonal process model, I'm really trying to be present. Like, that they're right there, and make it less about an intervention. I mean, it's good to have structure, yes, but, also using the teachable moments.

This counselor-in-training went on to describe her increased comfort with ambiguity, particularly in a group supervision environment. She stated, "It's kind of reassuring...we can all just sit here and even if everything flops, you can still use what's happening and have the conversation."

Developmentally, it appears as if the first counselor-in-training who presented in the initial case conceptualization was a Level 1 supervisee, and the second trainee presented in the final case conceptualization as Level 2. This growth is a goal for the case conceptualization process; however, examining the audio tapes of the same school counselor-in-training at the beginning and end of the semester would provide insight into the

growth for one specific school counselor-in-training.

Limitations
While we aimed to addresses a gap in the literature pertaining to investigating the use of a developmental model of supervision that incorporates the growth mindset, certain limitations were evident. We examined nine Master's degree students and one professor throughout one semester. While we used only two students' specific case conceptualizations for research purposes, all nine participants used the process throughout the semester and engaged in the discussion of data points for the 360° Case Conceptualization Process. However, not all nine were recorded initially or at the end of the semester. Follow-up studies should be conducted with more participants as this study's sample size was small. Future research should also include counselors-in-training from another CACREP-accredited institutions with a different professor to compare results. The internship class which participated in the research project was taught by a professor who was new to the process design and may gain greater confidence in the use of the tool with each passing semester.

Additionally, the class was a mix of both school and clinical mental health counseling internship students; therefore, not all classmates viewing and contributing to the discussion had experience counseling children in a school setting, perhaps contributing to the low frequency of mentions of developmental factors. Creating a more homogeneous make-up of counselors-in-training, meaning either all school counselors-in-training or all clinical mental health counselors-in-training, may generate richer discussions during the case conceptualization process. In

sum, we recommend that future research involve a control group to measure the effect of one conceptualization process versus a different case conceptualization process, having the class consisting of all school counseling internship students, and transcribing tapes from all case conceptualizations throughout the semester to check for growth in all areas across all counselors-in-training. Additionally, analyses should focus on growth within one school counselor-in-training at both the beginning and end of the semester. These additions would add insight into the efficacy of the 360° Process.

Discussion
Anecdotally, it is important to note that all nine college students in the course reported to the professor that they enjoyed using the 360° Process. They liked the collaborative nature of the 360° Process in comparison to the Structured Peer Group Supervision (Borders, 1991) employed in the previous semester. The counselors-in-training also reported feeling inspired by the challenge of integrating feedback and reflecting in the moment about themselves and the case in a more substantial way.

Teaching and reinforcing the growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) helped the students realize they learn the most from their falls. The counselors-in-training processed their feelings and insecurities about what they were about to show with greater acceptance of the value of being vulnerable in the learning process, and they often recalled the mantra (i.e., "Train Ugly") used when introduced to a growth mindset at the beginning of the semester. The trainees commented throughout the semester how refreshing it was to be encouraged to show their "tough" counseling videos, rather than videos which showed them demonstrating their skills at

their best. The reduction of anxiety and increase in confidence was apparent in other aspects as well.

One of the goals of the process based on the IDM was to decrease dependence on both the structured tool and on professor-led discussion points. Achieving this goal would reflect higher levels of autonomy which rise with confidence levels and may reflect in the amount of time students felt comfortable discussing the student. Initially, the school counselors-in-training spent 13 minutes discussing the case. In the final conceptualization, this increased to 22 minutes. The researchers recognize growth is inevitable in the practicum and internship experiences and further examination regarding expected growth versus results from this study may provide greater insight towards that end. The goals for the group supervisor are to understand developmental levels present within the student group, reduce structure, and use challenging yet supportive feedback. The transcripts revealed a decrease in the number of professor prompts, but also in the depth of the prompts themselves. Again, researching the 360° Process using a control group will provide a comparison between the use of the tool and those who used a different method for case conceptualization.

Implications for Practice
Counselor educators may find that the use of the 360° Process allows for creativity and flexibility according to school counselor-in-training and student needs. Incorporating the growth mindset created a positive atmosphere for appropriate risk-taking. Counselors-in-training appreciated the opportunity to present counseling sessions in which they struggled and desired helpful feedback. Creating this type of environment allows counselor

educators an opportunity to work through areas which may not otherwise arise in group supervision and which could create ethical issues once these students become professionals in the field. Another area of flexibility with this process involves the IDM level of the school counselors-in-training.

For Level 1 IDM practicing school counselors-in-training, the directive nature of the process seems to reduce levels of anxiety usually present with practicum trainees (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). A counselor educator may recognize areas in which school counselors-in-training struggle, making necessary adjustments to increase learning and perspective in these areas. Supervisors can tailor handouts and discussions which increase trainee use of the theories, techniques, interventions, and resources provided throughout the school counseling Master's program to each developmental level. Future research may include a self-report anxiety scale to measure to what extent anxiety is impacted over the course of a semester.

A counselor educator can challenge level 2 IDM practicing school counselors-in-training with multicultural considerations, counseling insights, or their use of empirically based interventions. The results of this study showed a lack of use of multicultural considerations and counselor core conditions on the data forms. The lack of multicultural considerations may be an expression of discomfort in initiating discussion surrounding these areas. Using the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies to increase the multicultural developmental domains can increase client worldview and counselor self-awareness (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015).

Conclusion
The addition of a new case conceptualization to the field of counseling supervision is essential to remaining effective as counseling educators. Working within a developmental model, such as the Integrative Developmental Model, is important for helping school counselors-in-training grow as practitioners. By focusing on the growth mindset, counselor educators help reduce the anxiety which is typical for Level 1 IDM supervisees. The reduction in anxiety and encouragement for appropriate risk-taking may be more helpful for supervisee growth. We examined the use of a visual tool, grounded in the IDM and focused on a growth mindset in this study and areas for improvement were recognized and considered. Further research and practice with the 360° Process are warranted.

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Figure 1
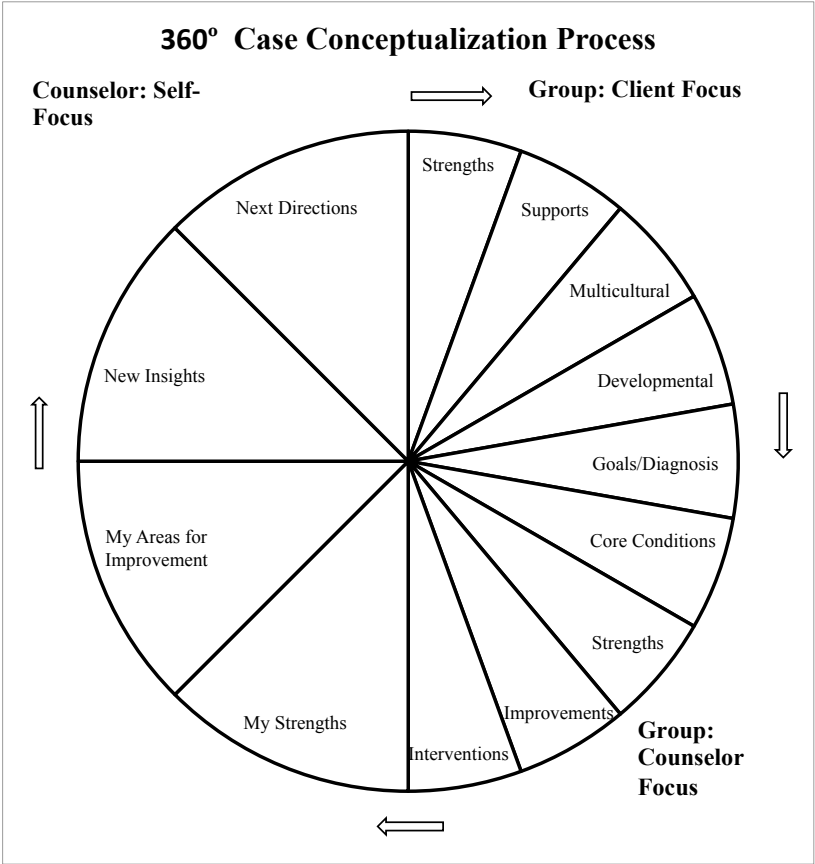360° Case Conceptualization Process Tool

Table
Student Conceptualization Results

Process Area	Initial Amount	Final Amount	Growth
Client Strengths	3	18	83%
Client Supports	8	11	27%
Multicultural Considerations	1	2	50%
Developmental Level	1	5	80%
Goals/Diagnosis	8	30	73%
Core Conditions	2	0	-100%
Counselor Strengths	23	11	-52%
Areas for Improvement	5	9	80%
Counselor Interventions	20	8	-60%
Counselor Described Strengths	6	8	33%
Recognized Areas for Improvement	5	7	40%
Counselor Insights	3	5	66%
Counselor Next Directions	5	2	-60%
Teacher Led Directives	23	19	-17%

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