School Counselors' Multicultural Self-Efficacy: A Preliminary Investigation

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*** TABLES 1, 2, and 3 CAN BE FOUND AT THE END OF THE ARTICLE

Abstract:

This article explores the factor structure of the School Counselor Multicultural Self-Efficacy Scale (SCMES). For this study, a total of 181 usable scales were returned by members of the American School Counselor Association. Exploratory factor analysis on the 90-item scale suggested a six-factor structure. The six factors or subscales that evolved were (a) Knowledge of Multicultural Counseling Concepts, (b) Using Data and Understanding Systemic Change, (c) Developing Cross-Cultural Relationships, (d) Multicultural Awareness, (e) Multicultural Assessment, and (f) Applying Racial Concepts to Practice. Ethnicity and the number of multicultural counseling courses taken were significantly related to several of the SCMES's factors. Implications for future research and practice are delineated.

Article:

Self-efficacy theory is a popular framework for which to examine human motivation (Graham & Weiner, 1996), primarily because of its predictive power and application for practically any behavioral task. For this reason, we have selected self-efficacy theory as the basis for understanding professional school counselors' motivation and capabilities to perform tasks that are relevant and specific to equity and diverse student populations. We believe that school counselor multicultural self-efficacy is an important construct because it could predict professional school counselors' perceptions of their capability to perform specific tasks and their likelihood to overcome obstacles that might prevent them from achieving or completing those tasks in schools. We believe this is a critical aspect of professional school counseling that must be examined, given the increasing student diversity of U.S. schools and the movement to restructure school counseling programs for higher achievement among minority student populations. If professional school counselors do not perceive that they are capable of performing tasks related to equity and diversity, then they will likely avoid those tasks or downplay the importance of such tasks.

The literature widely documents the influence that self-efficacy beliefs have on various domains of functioning and behavior (Bandura, 1997, 2001; Lent & Hackett, 1987; Schwarzer, 1992; Schwarzer & Renner, 2000). According to social cognitive theorists (e.g., Bandura, 2001), self-efficacy beliefs are at the core of human behavior and influence the choices people make and the courses of action they pursue. Social cognitive theorists purport that unless people believe they can produce desired outcomes, they have little motivation to pursue ambitious goals and to persevere in the face of difficulties. As such, people with high levels of self-efficacy in a specific domain select more challenging and ambitious goals in that domain. Thus, high self-efficacy improves goal setting and leads to more persistence in pursuing particular goals. In addition to improved goal setting, people with high self-efficacy levels perceive more positive outcomes of future actions and fewer negative outcomes.

While the terms confidence and self-efficacy are often used interchangeably, they have distinct meanings. Bandura (1997) pointed out that confidence is a term used to describe one's strength of belief but does not

necessarily specify what the certainty is about. Perceived self-efficacy, on the other hand, refers to people's belief in their capabilities that they can produce given levels of attainment. A self-efficacy assessment, therefore, includes both an affirmation of one's capability level and the strength of his or her belief.

Over the past 20 years, self-efficacy beliefs have been proven to be a significant variable in achieving success in school (Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Pajares & Schunk, 2001), work (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), teaching (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998), sports (Lerner & Locke, 1995), career development (Lapan, Adams, Turner, & Hinkelman, 2000), and health (Holden, 1991). And as a result, numerous instruments have been designed to measure domains of self-efficacy. These instruments include teacher self-efficacy scales (Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990), parental self-efficacy scales (Grus et al., 2001), technology self-efficacy scales (Torkzadeh & Van Dyke, 2001), and job-seeking self-efficacy scales (Strauser & Berven, 2006).

In recent years, counselors' perceived self-efficacy has emerged as an important topic in counseling and counselor education research (Barbee, Scherer & Combs, 2003; Lent, Hoffman, & Hill, 2006; Perrone, Perrone, Chan, & Thomas, 2000). Larson and Daniels (1998) coined the term counseling self-efficacy to describe "one's beliefs or judgments about her or his capabilities to effectively counsel a client in the near future" (p. 180). Studies have found that counseling self-efficacy is positively related to counselor training level and supervision, counselor self-concept, counselor development, and expectations of counseling outcomes (Leach, Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Eichenfield, 1997).

In relation to the unique experiences of professional school counselors, very little research on school counselor self-efficacy has been implemented. Bodenhorn and Skaggs (2005) developed the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE), which includes 43 items and includes five factors or subscales: Personal and Social Development, Leadership and Assessment, Career and Academic Development, Collaboration, and Cultural Acceptance. They found that professional school counselors with teaching experience reported significantly higher levels of overall school counseling self-efficacy than those with no teaching experience. Also, gender seemed to play a significant role in school counselor self-efficacy, with female professional school counselors reporting higher levels. The results of Bodenhorn and Skaggs' study provide the first glimpse at the construct of school counselor self-efficacy. Another study by Sutton and Fall (1995) examined the relationship between professional school counselor self-efficacy and school climate, counselor roles, and demographic variables. Unlike the previous study, school counselor self-efficacy was measured with the Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale, a scale modified from a teacher self-efficacy scale by Gibson and Dembo (1984). Their results indicated that supportive staff and administrators were the strongest predictors of high school counselor efficacy.

Unlike school counselor multicultural counseling competence, which has been increasingly discussed and researched in the literature (e.g., Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2006), there has been a scarce amount of research on school counselors' level of multicultural self-efficacy. Although the SCSE includes a factor that addresses cultural acceptance, it does not broadly cover multicultural and equity issues that are relevant to professional school counselors' work in schools. In the only study that examined multicultural counseling self-efficacy, Constantine (2001) found that multicultural-focused supervision enhanced counseling supervisees' self-efficacy for multicultural counseling. That study, however, was based on the responses of counseling psychology graduate students.

Although researchers have used various instruments to measure counselor self-efficacy, no measures of school counselor multicultural self-efficacy have been developed. Assessing professional school counselors' multicultural self-efficacy presents several challenges. First, unlike general counselor self-efficacy focusing on counseling skills, professional school counselors implement many non-counseling-related tasks (e.g., testing, advocacy, consultation). Therefore, it is important to assess the various functions and responsibilities of professional school counselors. Second, professional school counselor functioning is apt to vary considerably from one school context to another. To this end, it is important that assessment strategies reflect multimethod-multisource assessment methodologies of both a direct (e.g., systematic direct observations) and indirect (e.g., self-report scales, interviews) nature. And third, it is difficult to assess a construct that has never been defined.

In one of the few articles that addressed multicultural self-efficacy, Constantine and Ladany (2000) defined it as "counselors' confidence in their ability to perform a set of multicultural counseling skills and behaviors successfully" (p. 491). Others (e.g., Neville & Mobley, 2001) have suggested that there is a need to examine counselor self-efficacy in the context of multicultural counseling.

For the sake of this article, multicultural self-efficacy of school counselors is defined as professional school counselors' perceived abilities (i.e., beliefs) to carry out and perform tasks that are relevant and specific to equity among students in K-12 schools, and the ethnically and culturally diverse needs of K-12 students. Equity, in this article, refers to fairness and justice for all students, taking into account their unique situations and experiences.

In an effort to advance the stud), of school counselor multicultural self-efficacy, the objectives of this study were twofold. First, a major aim was to explore the factor structure or the possible subscales of the School Counseling Multicultural Self-Efficacy Scale (SCMES) using exploratory factor analytic techniques. We hope that the instrument will aid school counseling professionals in the assessment of school counselor multicultural self-efficacy for the purposes of school counseling professional development and research. And secondly, this study was conducted in order to examine the relationships between selected demographic variables (e.g., gender, ethnicity, educational background, years of experience, and number of multicultural courses taken) and professional school counselors' multicultural self-efficacy. Understanding the relationship between selected school counselor characteristics and their level of multicultural self-efficacy will help school counseling supervisors, educators, and trainers better design the appropriate training and supervision for existing and pre-service school counselors. For instance, knowing that multicultural coursework increases multicultural self-efficacy will confirm the need for and importance of ongoing multicultural training for school counselors.

METHOD
Participants
Participants were 181 members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). A majority of the participants were female (n = 127, 70%) and practicing professional school counselors (n = 157, 86.7%). The remaining participants were guidance supervisors (n = 8, 4.4%), 8 (4.4%) were counselor educators, and 8 (4.4%) responded as "other." In terms of ethnicity, 134 participants (74.6%) self-identified as White/European American, 29 (16%) self-identified as Black/African American, 10 (5.5%) self-identified as Hispanic/Latino, 3 (1.7%) self-identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, and the remaining self-identified as either American Indian, multiracial, or other. A majority of the sample were counselors with 1-5 years of school counseling experience (n = 89, 49.2%). Thirty-nine participants (21.5%) had 6-10 years of experience, 37 (20.4%) had more than 16 years of experience, 15 (8.3%) had 11-15 years of experience, and there was 1 participant who did not respond to this item. One hundred and twenty-three participants (68%) had taken one or two multicultural counseling courses, 35 participants (19.3%) indicated that they had taken three or four multicultural courses, 5 (2.8%) had taken between five and seven courses, and 6 (3.3%) indicated that they had taken eight or more multicultural courses. One participant indicated having never taken a multicultural course.

Scale Development
The primary goal of scale development is to create a valid measure of an underlying construct (Clark & Watson, 1995). In order to create an instrument to measure school counselor multicultural self-efficacy, 81 items were initially generated from a review of interdisciplinary scholarly writings, research, and literature on multicultural counseling competence, self-efficacy, counselor self-efficacy, multicultural school counseling, and multicultural education (Bandura, 1995; Constantine, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Lent, Hill, & Hoffman, 2003; Perrone et al., 2000; Sutton & Fall, 1995). We also used Bandura's (2005) guidelines for developing self-efficacy measures. These guidelines include the following: (a) Scale construction must be domain specific and contextualized, (b) the clear and comprehensive operationalization of the self-efficacy domain must be specified, (c) the self-efficacy assessment should target a counselor's perceived ability to perform a function, (d) items should be developed to assess counselors' current perceived ability to perform various tasks rather than their intention or future plans to complete those tasks, and (e) only one task should be assessed in an item.

The SCMES items require that respondents assess their ability to perform tasks related to equity and diversity issues in schools. Respondents are asked to rate how well they can perform the tasks by circling the appropriate number of a scale from 1 (not well at all) to 7 (very well). Sample items included "I can identify when a counseling approach is culturally inappropriate for a specific student" and "I can develop positive relationships with parents who are culturally different." Items of the SCMES are positively stated.

Haynes, Richard, and Kubany (1995) suggested that r7esearchers could increase their chance of including representative and relevant items in a scale by using people from the population of interest to develop the scale. As such, an additional nine items were generated by a group of doctoral students in school counselor education who had experience as professional school counselors. These doctoral students were asked to generate a list of items that described either knowledge or skills that they believe are important for culturally aware or culturally conscious professional school counselors. In this process, items such as the following were developed: "I can live comfortably with culturally diverse people" and " I can use data to advocate for students." These two item-generation procedures produced 90 items. After the items for redundancy, representativeness of the construct, and grammatical accuracy were carefully reviewed, the SCMES was administered on a pilot basis to a small group (n = 3) of school counselor educators. Small modifications to the 90 items were made as a result of this procedure. After more psychometric analyses, we hope that the SCMES will be able to provide a total multicultural self-efficacy score as well as separate scores on the resulting factors or subscales.

Demographic Information
Participants were asked to provide the following demographic information: gender, ethnicity, years of experience as a professional school counselor, number of multicultural counseling courses taken, highest degree completed, and professional identity (e.g., professional school counselor, guidance supervisor, or counselor educator). The item pertaining to the number of multicultural courses was operationalized by asking participants to select the category that represents the number of graduate-level multicultural counseling or diversity courses that they have completed.

Procedures
The SCMES, along with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and instructions for completion of the instrument, was mailed to 500 randomly drawn ASCA members (> 20,000 members). From this first mailing, 96 surveys were returned (19%). Because of the low return rate, the authors decided to distribute the SCMES electronically via Survey Monkey to ASCA members who attended the 2005 ASCA national conference (n = 251). From this second distribution, 85 surveys were completed and submitted by ASCA members who attended the national conference (34%). Overall, this study includes 181 participants.

RESULTS
To explore psychometric properties of the SCMES, items were factor analyzed and internal consistency estimates and intercorrelations among the resulting scales were calculated. Finally, a series of multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted in order to investigate the relationships between the SCMES and several criterion variables, such as demographic information and multicultural training background (i.e., number of multicultural courses taken). Next, we discuss the results of the factor analysis and the analyses conducted to determine the relationships between multicultural self-efficacy and selected demographic variables of professional school counselors.

Factor Analysis
Factor analysis is a procedure used to reduce the number of variables and to detect structure in the relationships between variables. It is common for factor analysis to be utilized as a means to develop instruments or measures of constructs, such as school counselor multicultural self-efficacy. For this study, a factor analysis was implemented in order to illuminate a preliminary structure to the concept of school counselor multicultural self-efficacy via the SCMES.

We submitted the 90 items of the SCMES to a principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Guttman rule (i.e., eigenvalue > 1) was applied to determine the number of factors extracted (Loehlin, 1998). The following criteria were used to select and anchor items in each factor. First, items that loaded most highly and beyond .50 on a given factor were retained (Gorsuch, 2003). Second, where cross-loadings occurred, items with loadings above .50 were anchored in the factor on which they loaded most highly if their loadings showed a difference of > .10 between the factor and the next highest factor. And third, we determined whether the factors were interpretable (i.e., made conceptual sense). This procedure led to the retention of six factors, with eigenvalues of 41.95, 4.03, 3.19, 2.52, 2.31, and 1.92, respectively. The six factors accounted for 59.49% of the total variance. Thirty-eight items were omitted because they did not have factor loadings greater than .50.

On the basis of these results, 52 items were utilized. We labeled the resultant factors as follows: (a) Knowledge of Multicultural Concepts (14 items), (b) Using Data and Understanding Systemic Change (9 items), (c) Developing Cross-Cultural Relationships (7 items), (d) Multicultural Counseling Awareness (9 items), (e) Multicultural Assessment (7 items), and (f) Application of Racial and Cultural Knowledge to Practice (6 items). See Table 1 for a list of the 52 items and factor loadings from the principal axis factor analysis.

The resulting 52-item SCMES yielded a coefficient alpha of .93. Examination of each factor yielded a coefficient alpha of .95 for factor 1, .91 for factor 2, .89 for factor 3, .93 for factor 4, .89 for factor 5, and .88 for factor 6. As expected, the six factors correlated with each other highly and significantly, ranging from .50 to .84. The participants tended to have lower self-efficacy in using data and understanding systemic change (factor 2, M = 4.97) and higher self-efficacy in developing cross-cultural relationships (factor 3, M = 6.13). This finding suggests that participants have lower perceptions of their capabilities in the area of using and analyzing data for systemic change than in the other areas. See Table 2 for factor means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and correlations.

SCMES Scores and Demographic Variables
Because of unequal cell sample sizes, the relationships between the SCMES and demographic variables were examined by conducting a series of MANOVAs using Bonferonni and Dunnett's C methods. There were no significant differences on the factor scores based on gender and years of experience. However, as shown in Table 3, ethnic differences were statistically significant across all of the subscales/factors. After we recoded the data so that all non-White/ethnic minority participants were in the same group, the data indicated that ethnic minority participants had significantly higher perceived capabilities than their White counterparts in five of the six areas. There was no significant difference between the means of ethnic minority and White school counselors on factor 3 (developing cross-cultural relationships). The significant ethnic differences represented small effect sizes (.021 to .048).

In terms of the relationships between participants' multicultural counseling self-efficacy and the number of multicultural counseling courses taken, there were significant differences on factors 1, 2, 4, and 5. For factor 1, school counselors who had taken five to seven multicultural counseling courses rated themselves higher than counselors who had taken one or two courses. And, counselors who had taken five to seven courses also rated themselves significantly higher than counselors who checked "other" oil factor 1. On factor 2, counselors who had taken five to seven courses had significantly higher perceived self-efficacy in using data than counselors who responded "other." And on factor 4, counselors who had taken five to seven multicultural counseling courses had significantly higher perceived self-efficacy in their multicultural awareness and skills than counselors who have "other" multicultural experiences. Regarding factor 5, counselors who had taken three or four multicultural counseling courses and counselors who had taken five to seven courses reported significantly higher perceived self-efficacy in their ability to implement multicultural assessment than counselors who reported "other" types of multicultural courses (see Table 3). Although these results indicate a significant relationship between the number of multicultural counseling courses taken and school counselor multicultural self-efficacy, the results should be interpreted with caution based on the substantial differences in the number of participants in each category.

DISCUSSION

As public schools in the United States become more racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse, it becomes even more important that professional school counselors be able to address equity and to effectively work with diverse students and parents. Using self-efficacy theory as a framework, we believe that if school counselors believe that they are capable of working for equity and with diverse populations of students, then they will act accordingly. The school counseling literature and the general counseling literature have increased the general awareness of the need for practitioners to be culturally competent and aware of equitable practices. However, there is still much to be done regarding how professional school counselors perceive their abilities to intervene effectively with culturally diverse students and to perform tasks that promote equity in schools.

Factors of SCMES

The findings of this study provide initial support for the validity and internal consistency of the SCMES. The first factor, Knowledge of Multicultural Concepts, included items related to professional school counselors' ability to discuss multicultural concepts such as the influence of racism on counseling, societal issues that affect students' development, students' interaction patterns, and culturally appropriate and inappropriate counseling interventions. This factor is similar to the multicultural knowledge dimension mentioned in Sue's (2001) three-dimensional conceptualization of multicultural competence. The second factor, Using Data and Understanding Systemic Change, includes items related to school counselors' perceived capabilities to address equity and to use data as an advocacy and equity tool. These types of skills are not measured in most multicultural competence, counselor self-efficacy, or general school counseling effectiveness scales. However, given the persistent gaps in education based on race and income, school reformists expect school counselors to have these skills to address student inequities in achievement, attainment, and access. The third factor, Developing Cross-Cultural Relationships, consists of items that address the counselor's perceived capabilities to develop relationships (i.e., friendships) with culturally diverse people. This is another unique aspect of the scale because school counselor multicultural counseling competence instruments (e.g., Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005) do not include items pertaining to the counselor's comfort with people of other groups and his or her ability to develop relationships with diverse people.

The fourth factor, Multicultural Counseling Awareness, includes items addressing counselors' multicultural self-awareness and capability to understand oneself and how one's culture may affect his or her interactions and interventions with students. Similar to factor 1, this factor is consistent with the multicultural awareness dimension of Sue's (2001) three-dimensional framework of multicultural counseling competence. The fifth factor, Multicultural Assessment, included those items that cover culturally appropriate and fair testing in schools. And lastly, the sixth factor, Application of Racial and Cultural Knowledge to Practice, includes items that address professional school counselors' capability to integrate and apply racial concepts (e.g., racism, discrimination) into their actual practice. This dimension is representative of Sue's multicultural skills dimension in which counselors are expected to have the skills in order to provide culturally relevant and appropriate counseling interventions. Overall, the SCMES seems to be internally reliable and its construct validity was initially supported by clear factor structures and average-to-high factor loadings.

Finally, both the single higher-order factor derived from exploratory factor analysis using the six subscale scores of the SCMES and the high internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$) of the total score suggested that all items of the SCMES are related closely to one another and reflect a single overarching construct. Because of the SCMES's domain specificity and encouraging psychometric properties, the SCMES may effectively assess school counselors' perceived capabilities to perform tasks in schools that are related to increasing minority student achievement, increasing parental involvement of minority parents, and advocating for students from culturally and racially diverse backgrounds. However, these possibilities require additional empirical confirmation.

SCMES and Demographic Variables

Ethnicity and years of experience were the only demographic variables that were significantly related to the SCMES scores in this study. The fact that gender was not significant is consistent with some of the past research that examined gender and multicultural counseling competence. For instance, Pope-Davis, Reynolds,

Dings, and Nielson (1995) found no gender differences among the scores of counseling and clinical psychology students on the Multicultural Counseling Inventory. Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999) found similar results when examining the multicultural competence of members of the American Counseling Association on the Multicultural Counseling and Training Survey. It is worth noting, however, that Bodenhorn and Skaggs (2005) found that gender was significantly related to overall school counseling self-efficacy, where female counselors reported significantly higher levels of perceived school counselor self-efficacy. Based on these findings, it is possible that there is not a significant relationship between school counselor multicultural self-efficacy and general school counselor self-efficacy. Or, in other words, a school counselor's ability to perform typical school counseling tasks and functions might not be indicative of his or her ability to perform tasks and functions related to equity and diverse student populations. This relationship between school counselor general self-efficacy and multicultural self-efficacy is important for school counseling professionals to understand because it leads researchers to investigate different aspects of effective school counseling practice.

Ethnic minority school counselors reported higher levels of multicultural counseling self-efficacy than White American counselors on five SCMES factors--Knowledge of Multicultural Concepts, Using Data and Understanding Systemic Change, Multicultural Counseling Awareness, Multicultural Assessment, and Application of Racial and Cultural Knowledge to Practice. These findings are consistent with past research related to multicultural counseling competence (e.g., Vinson & Neimeyer, 2003), in which racial and ethnic minority counselors rated themselves significantly higher on multicultural counseling competence. This ethnic difference in multicultural counseling self-efficacy may be due to several factors. First, ethnic minority professional school counselors' "in vivo" (in life) experiences may contribute to their heightened sensitivity, awareness, and willingness to address issues related to cultural and racial differences. Second, several authors (e.g., Pope-Davis et al., 1995) have suggested that ethnic minority counselors tend to have a higher proportion of minority clients/students, which in turn may lead to higher perceived abilities to perform multicultural-related tasks in schools. And third, it is possible that ethnic minority professional school counselors may have different multicultural training in their graduate programs. Past research (e.g., Bellini, 2002) has indicated that ethnic minority graduate students and professionals tend to receive or opt for more multicultural counseling training.

In terms of multicultural courses and their effect on multicultural self-efficacy, the results of this study suggest that more multicultural counseling training is significantly related to higher scores on the SCMES, particularly on the multicultural knowledge and using data and understanding systemic change factors. Although these findings should be interpreted with caution because of the small and unequal cell sizes as well as the fact that it is unknown how counselors interpreted "training" for this study, it is quite clear that the more multicultural training and experiences that counselors have, the higher they rate their capabilities to work on multicultural tasks in schools. This area of multicultural counseling training and its relationship to school counselor performance and multicultural self-efficacy merits further investigation.

The "non-effect" of taking multicultural coursework on two of the factors (factor 3, developing cross-cultural relationships, and factor 6, application of racial knowledge to practice) is an important aspect of this study. Because both of these factors cover topics related to counselors' behaviors (in and out of school) and skills, it is noteworthy that coursework was not related to participants' perceptions in these areas. It is possible that multicultural counseling courses do not cover multicultural skills and, therefore, perceived efficacy in multicultural skills is being influenced by other variables. Also, the ability to develop cross-cultural relationships might be more of a reflection of one's personality and personal experiences rather than an academic or learned type of skill that is taught in a course.

Limitations
Although the results provide some preliminary validity evidence for the SCMES and the relationship of multicultural self-efficacy of professional school counselors, the results must be tempered in light of the limitations of the design. Because the six factors accounted for only 59% of the variance, the construct of multicultural self-efficacy may not have been comprehensively conceptualized. It is possible that either the

dimensions need to be further defined or there may be other potential factors not accounted for in the scale (e.g., social desirability). Also, future item analysis should be conducted in order to decrease the number of items and to fine-tune the language of the items. Another limitation is related to selection bias (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999). The participants in this study were chosen from a convenience sample of primarily White, English-speaking professional school counselors who chose to join ASCA and attend an ASCA conference. Thus, the results may not be reflective of the diversity within the professional school counselor population and hence not generalizable to all school counselors in the United States.

Another limitation relates to the relatively small participants-to-item ratio in the exploratory factor analysis. The results of the factor analysis are based on 181 participants, which yields a ratio of 2.0 participants to one item. These figures are less than the popular guidelines in the literature, which suggests a minimum of 5 participants for each item (Stevens, 1996), or at least 300 participants (Nunnally, 1978). However, Arrindell and Van der Ende (1985) examined the factor stability of participant-to-item ratios that ranged from 1.3:1 to 19.8:1 and found that the participant-to-item ratio did not have any influences on factor stability. Guadagnoli and Velicer (1988), based on the Monte Carlo procedure, also found that ratio of sample size to number of variables was not an important factor in determining stability.

Implications for Future Research and Practice
Despite the preceding limitations, the findings of the current study offer several important implications for research and practice. First, the SCMES presents the first tool to exclusively assess professional school counselors' perceived skills and capabilities in relation to equity and multicultural school counseling tasks. It allows school counseling researchers to more closely examine what school counselors believe they can do, as opposed to what they know, when working with culturally diverse students. Because of its domain specificity in relation to the school setting, the SCMES has the potential to add to school counseling outcome research by focusing on what counselors believe they bring to counseling in diverse school settings at the behavioral level.

Although the present results provide evidence of discriminant validity, other forms of validity need to be obtained before the SCMES can be confidently used. Future studies on the SCMES should include an examination of its test-retest reliability as well as an examination of the convergent and construct validity of the SCMES scores with instruments that measure social desirability, multicultural counseling competence, general counseling self-efficacy, and general school counseling self-efficacy. Future research also should include larger samples of professional school counselors, particularly school counselors from diverse school settings and communities. With larger diverse samples, comparisons can be made among counselors with different experiences and who work in different school settings (e.g., high school vs. elementary, urban vs. suburban, public vs. private). To address the self-report limitation of the SCMES, a future study might compare professional school counselors' SCMES scores with observers' or students' assessments of school counselors' multicultural skills and behaviors. This multimethod type of assessment would be advantageous because of the possible overestimation and underestimation of self-efficacy scores reported by professional school counselors.

In addition to future research on the SCMES's psychometric properties, it would be advantageous for future research to examine the relationships between selected professional school counselor characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, gender, teaching experience, type of school setting) and school counselor multicultural self-efficacy. More important, future studies that examine the relationship between general school counselor self-efficacy and school counselor multicultural self-efficacy are greatly needed. Do school counselors with high levels of general school counselor self-efficacy have high levels of multicultural self-efficacy? Are the two constructs positively related? These are important questions for the future of school counseling because the results will inform our views on the reasons why some of the most experienced and effective school counselors have difficulty addressing the achievement gap and other issues related to diverse student populations.

Future research also should look more closely at the effect of multicultural counseling coursework, professional development, and diversity experiences on the multicultural self-efficacy of professional school counselors. Given the amount of time and money spent on in-services and professional development in public schools,

school counseling supervisors would benefit from more data on the most effective professional development formats that lead to higher levels of school counselor multicultural self-efficacy. And finally, future research is warranted on the impact of higher levels of school counselor multicultural self-efficacy on student outcomes (e.g., increased college-going among culturally diverse students, increased Advanced Placement course-taking among minority students, increased student attendance at guidance-related events).

In relation to school counseling practice, the SCMES may assist in the assessment of school counselors' perceived capabilities to perform tasks in schools that are related to increasing minority student achievement, increasing parental involvement of minority parents, and advocating for students from culturally and racially diverse backgrounds. More important, the SCMES has the potential to help school counseling supervisors determine future training or professional development needs of existing and future professional school counselors. Directors of school counseling services or guidance might even use the SCMES as a yearly assessment tool of practicing school counselors and then use the results as a basis for professional development options. Similarly, the SCMES might be used in some districts as a data source for school counselor evaluations and improvement plans.

Based on the results of this study using the SCMES, it appears that two topics should be covered in future school counselor professional development and training experiences: (a) using data and (b) understanding systemic change. Recent work by the Education Trust and scholars in school counseling (Dahir & Stone, 2003; Isaacs, 2003; Poynton & Carey, 2006) have focused on the need for school counselors to use data to uncover student inequities and inequitable access to academic opportunities. Despite this recent surge of literature on data usage and systemic problems in education, school counselors seem to still need further training and understanding of these concepts. Therefore, directors or supervisors of guidance services and school counselor educators should consider more extensive training opportunities for professional school counselors related to these topics. Over a decade ago, McRae and Johnson (1991) pointed out that most multicultural counseling courses focused on multicultural awareness and knowledge, with little attention to multicultural skill development. The SCMES, with its multidimensional structure including multicultural skills and behaviors, can assist counselor educators and professional development specialists in specifying the multiple areas in which professional school counselors need additional training. The lack of a significant relationship between the number of multicultural courses taken and the skill factors of the SCMES provides further evidence that multicultural counseling coursework and training should include more emphasis on skill development.

CONCLUSION

According to Bandura (2001), the belief that one is able to master specific tasks enables people to perceive difficulties as challenges, prevents preoccupations, and helps one focus on how to make the best use of one's capacities and available resources. In other words, the more people believe in their self-efficacy in a particular context, the greater will be their satisfaction in that context. In terms of school counselor multicultural self-efficacy and based on the results of this study, we believe that professional school counselors with high levels of multicultural self-efficacy are more likely to believe that they have the capacity to understand multicultural and diversity concepts, are more likely to use their resources to assist all students to achieve, are more likely to identify student inequities, are more likely to challenge barriers to student achievement, and are more likely to be satisfied with their work with culturally diverse students and families. Notwithstanding the need for additional research on professional school counselor multicultural self-efficacy and the SCMES's psychometric properties, we hope that school counseling professionals will view the SCMES as a useful and practical tool. If professional school counselors are to provide effective and appropriate services to the rapidly changing student populations, ongoing discussions about professional school counselors' multicultural self-efficacy and cultural competence are a necessity.

Table 1. Items and Factor Loadings of the School Counseling Multicultural Self-Efficacy Scale

Legend for Chart:

A - Item
B - Factor 1
C - Factor 2
D - Factor 3
E - Factor 4
F - Factor 5
G - Factor 6

| A | B | C | D |
	E	F	G
Factor 1: Knowledge of Multicultural Concepts			
When counseling, I can address societal issues that affect the development of students.	.71	.27	.21
	.22	.12	.17
I can discuss the influence of racism on the counseling process.	.65	.26	.12
	.24	.20	.36
I can discuss how culture affects the help-seeking behaviors of students.	.64	.13	.21
	.29	.20	.12
I can assess my own racial/ethnic identity development in order to enhance my counseling.	.61	.05	.24
	.21	.01	.22
I can discuss how interaction patterns might influence ethnic minority students' perceptions of the school community.	.61	.09	.34
	.31	.09	.01
I can discuss how school-family-community partnerships influence minority student achievement.	.59	.30	.37
	.08	.25	.15
I can give examples of how stereotypical beliefs impact the counseling process.	.57	.14	.16
	.42	.20	.23

I can discuss how environmental
factors such as poverty can influence
the academic achievement of students.   .56   .29   .21
                                          .25   .28   .08

I can use culturally appropriate
counseling interventions.   .55   .24   .24
                                          .26   .32   .19

I can discuss the influence of
self-efficacy on ethnic minority
students' achievement.   .54   .25   .09
                                          .21   .35   .19

I can identify when a counseling
approach is culturally inappropriate
for a specific student.   .54   .13   .16
                                          .50   .27   .07

I can assess how my speech and tone
influence my relationship with
culturally different students.   .51   .20   .25
                                          .39   .08   .35

I can discuss the relationship between
student resistance and racism.   .51   .08   .15
                                          .30   .09   .39

I can discuss how school-family-community
partnerships are linked to student
achievement.   .50   .29   .39
                                          .15   .08   .18

Factor 2: Using Data and Understanding
Systemic Change

I can identify when to use data as
an advocacy tool.   .03   .68   .12
                                          .08   .22   .30

I can develop interventions that are
focused on "systemic change" rather
than "individual student change."   .12   .65   .20
                                          .15   .19   .34

I can use data to advocate for
students.   .26   .64   .01
                                          .10   .09   .09

I can analyze and present data that
highlight inequities in course
enrollment patterns and postsecondary

decisions among student groups.	.26	.62	.03
	.03	.20	.02

I am able to integrate family and religious issues in the career counseling process.	.11	.62	.17
	.23	.16	.18

I can develop culturally sensitive interventions that promote postsecondary planning for minority students.	.44	.55	.17
	.21	.13	.03

I can discuss what it means to take an activist approach to counseling.	.12	.55	.13
	.20	.26	.24

I can evaluate assessment instruments for bias against culturally different students.	.31	.54	.05
	.11	.50	.18

I can utilize career assessment instruments that are sensitive to students' cultural differences.	.11	.54	.29
	.37	.30	.10

Factor 3: Developing Cross-Cultural Relationships

I can develop friendships with people from other ethnic groups.	.19	.11	.73
	.20	.07	.22

I can develop a close, personal relationship with someone of another race.	.30	.04	.70
	.28	.02	.15

I can verbally communicate culturally different students.	.38	.06	.68
	.27	.10	.21

I can live comfortably with culturally diverse people.	.19	.16	.68
	.13	.16	.23

I can develop positive relationships with parents who are culturally different.	.01	.21	.65
	.32	.18	.14

I can nonverbally communicate my
acceptance of culturally different
students.   .42   .05   .52
                                       .27   .28   .16

I can work with community leaders
and other community members to
assist with student and family
concerns.   .24   .18   .52
                                       .10   .21   .17

Factor 4: Multicultural Counseling
Awareness

I can identify when nay helping style
is inappropriate for a culturally
different parent or guardian.   .27   .17   .24
                                       .68   .19   .19

I can identify when nay helping style
is inappropriate for a culturally
different student.   .46   .11   .25
                                       .59   .26   .15

I can identify when my own biases
negatively influence my services
to students.   .26   .17   .23
                                       .55   .09   .39

I can recognize when my beliefs and
values are interfering with providing
the best services to nay students.   .36   .16   .35
                                       .54   .13   .15

I can identify when specific cultural
beliefs influence students' response
to counseling.   .34   .27   .25
                                       .54   .27   .12

I can identify when a teacher is
biased based on the race and/or
culture of a student.   .33   .17   .24
                                       .54   .09   .38

I can identify when my helping style
is appropriate for a for a culturally
different student.   .40   .23   .38
                                       .52   .28   .21

I can discuss how culture influences
parents' discipline and parenting
practices.   .40   .26   .28

| | .52 | .02 | .14 |

I can adjust my helping style when it is inappropriate for a culturally different student.

| | .31 | .21 | .37 |
| | .50 | .21 | .20 |

Factor 5: Multicultural Assessment

I can identify whether or not the assessment process is culturally sensitive.

| | .37 | .28 | .04 |
| | .20 | .64 | .10 |

I can discuss how assessment can lead to inequitable opportunities for students.

| | .16 | .29 | .31 |
| | .02 | .63 | .17 |

I can advocate for fair testing and the appropriate use of testing of children from diverse backgrounds.

| | .01 | .22 | .29 |
| | .18 | .61 | .25 |

I can explain test information to culturally different parents.

| | .33 | .24 | .19 |
| | .19 | .54 | .04 |

I can use culturally appropriate instruments when I assess students.

| | .07 | .50 | .15 |
| | .17 | .53 | .15 |

I can identify racist and/or biased practices in schools.

| | .21 | .08 | .33 |
| | .27 | .51 | .41 |

I can identify unfair policies that discriminate against students of culturally different backgrounds.

| | .21 | .24 | .32 |
| | .22 | .50 | .45 |

Factor 6: Application of Racial and Cultural Knowledge to Practice

When implementing small group counseling, I can challenge students' biased and prejudiced beliefs.

| | .26 | .28 | .24 |
| | .15 | .10 | .73 |

I can challenge my colleagues when they discriminate against students.

| | .03 | .16 | .15 |
| | .30 | .22 | .54 |

| I can define and discuss racism. | .20 | .23 | .44 |
| | .19 | .17 | .50 |

| I can help students determine whether a problem stems from biases in others. | .46 | .31 | .22 |
| | .26 | .18 | .50 |

| I can identify when a teacher's cultural background is influencing his or her perceptions of students. | .19 | .26 | .27 |
| | .32 | .30 | .50 |

| I can challenge others' racist and/or prejudiced beliefs and behaviors. | .29 | .05 | .24 |
| | .13 | .17 | .50 |

Note. N = 181. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index = .91.

Table 2. Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal Consistency Coefficients for the School Counseling Multicultural Serf-Efficacy Scale

Legend for Chart:

A - Factor
B - 1
C - 2
D - 3
E - 4
F - 5
G - 6
H - M
I - SD
J - α

A					
B	C	D	E	F	
	G	H	I	J	

1. Multicultural knowledge

| -- | | | | | |
| | | 5.45 | .95 | .85 | |

2. Using data

| .66 | -- | | | | |
| | | 4.97 | .91 | 1.05 | |

3. Developing cross-cultural relationships

.67	.50	--
	6.13	.70	.89

4. Multicultural awareness

.84	.64	.73	--
	5.51	.82	.93

5. Multicultural assessment

.69	.74	.60	.69	--
	5.16	.92	.89

6. Application of racial knowledge

.75	.67	.68	.79	.75
	--	5.55	.85	.85

Note. N = 181. All correlations were significant (p < .01).

Table 3. Multivariate Analyses of School Counseling Multicultural Self-Efficacy Scale and Demographic Variables

Legend for Chart:

A - SCMES Factor Means and SDs 1
B - SCMES Factor Means and SDs 2
C - SCMES Factor Means and SDs 3
D - SCMES Factor Means and SDs 4
E - SCMES Factor Means and SDs 5
F - SCMES Factor Means and SDs 6

A	B	C
D	E	F

Ethnicity

White/European
(n = 135)

5.38 (.76)	4.88 (.98)	6.10 (.65)
5.43 (.96)	5.04 (.85)	5.43 (.79)

Non-White
(n = 46)

5.68 (1.06)	5.23 (1.19)	6.22 (.81)
5.74 (.96)	5.48 (1.02)	5.86 (.94)

F

4.34(*)	3.86(*)	.932
4.85(*)	8.04(**)	9.00(**)

η^2

.024	.021	.005
.026	.043	.048

Number of multicultural courses taken

a: 1-2 courses
(n = 123)

5.37 (.76)	4.91 (.97)	6.12 (.68)
5.48 (.77)	5.11 (.82)	5.51 (.79)

b: 3-4 courses
(n = 35)

5.72 (.86)	5.23 (1.69)	6.14 (.81)
5.67 (.86)	5.43 (.92)	5.67 (1.02)

c: 5-7 courses
(n = 5)

6.59 (.41)	6.04 (.65)	6.77 (.33)
6.47 (.54)	6.00 (.76)	6.37 (.52)

d: 8+ courses
(n = 6)

5.61 (.80)	5.09 (.62)	5.77 (.52)
5.12 (.53)	5.07 (.65)	5.44 (.40)

e: "other"
(n = 11)

4.94 (1.29)	4.29 (1.36)	6.09 (.64)
5.51 (.82)	4.52 (1.52)	5.27 (1.01)

F

4.74(**)	3.29(*)	1.48
c > a, e	c > a, e	

2.92(*)	3.46(**)	1.77
c > e	b, c > e	

η²

.097	.07	.033
.062	.073	.039

Note. Factor 1--multicultural knowledge; factor 2—using data, systemic change; factor 3--developing cross-cultural relationships; factor 4--multicultural awareness and skills; factor 5--multicultural assessment; factor 6--application of racial knowledge to practice.

(*) $p < .05$. (**) $p < .01$.

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