

AN INVESTIGATION OF SCHOOL COUNSELOR SELF-EFFICACY WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

This exploratory quantitative study described school counselors' self-efficacy with English language learners. Findings suggest that school counselors with exposure to and experiences with English language learners have higher levels of self-efficacy. Statistically significant and practical differences in self-efficacy were apparent by race, U.S. region, size of English language learner population, and counselor training. This article presents implications for training and practice and recommendations for future research studies.

English language learners (ELLs) represent the fastest growing segment of the school-aged population in the United States (Capps et al., 2005; Kindler, 2002; National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2011). School counselors have been described as essential in the success of these students (McCall-Perez, 2000). As schools become increasingly diverse, advocacy scholars indicate that counselors should be intentional in assuring that they equitably serve all students, including students who are ethnically and culturally diverse and ELLs (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2003; Portman, 2009). Furthermore, the ASCA National Model (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2012) charges school counselors to develop programs that ensure equitable access to opportunities and provide rigorous curriculum for all students. Researchers have discussed school counselors' roles in implementing interventions that focus on the social/emotional, academic, and career needs of ELLs (Cook, Pérusse, & Rojas, 2012; Villalba, Lewis, & Wachter, 2007). However, in other studies, school counselors reported having ineffective interactions with linguistically diverse students, expressed frustration with language differences, and raised concerns about the appropriate use of interpreters (Clemente

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& Collison, 2000; Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004). To gain a better understanding of how school counselors perceive their ability in working with ELLs, the current study explored the self-efficacy of school counselors who work with ELLs and how school counselor self-efficacy differed by contextual factors.

SELF-EFFICACY

Bandura (1994) defined self-efficacy as beliefs about one's own ability to perform a given task. Bandura further explicated that self-efficacy requires possession of skills and beliefs and the ability to use those skills effectively (Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacious beliefs influence how people, think, feel, motivate themselves, and act (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). Individuals with a strong sense of self-efficacy choose to engage in challenging tasks. Further, Bandura (1994) stated that these individuals recover quickly from setbacks and attribute failure to inadequate efforts or limited knowledge and skills, which can be acquired.

School Counselor Self-Efficacy

"Self-efficacy reflects an individual's confidence that he or she can achieve certain results" (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005, p. 15). Findings on school counselor self-efficacy support Bandura's (1994) argument that self-efficacy requires both possession of skills and beliefs in one's ability to use those skills effectively. Scholars found that school counselors with high overall school counselor self-efficacy or self-efficacy in a particular counseling-related area were more likely to engage in school counseling tasks such as incorporating the use of data into school counseling programs or facilitating school-community collaboration (Bodenhorn, Wolfe, & Airen, 2010; Bryan & Griffin, 2010; Holcomb-McCoy, Gonzalez, & Johnston, 2009).

Other studies examined how levels of self-efficacy changed in response to new knowledge or experiences. Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines, and

Johnston (2008) learned that school counselors who completed five to seven multicultural courses reported higher multicultural self-efficacy than counselors who completed one or two multicultural classes. Paredes (2011) found that school counselors who participated in simulation experiences related to ELLs increased their levels of ELL self-efficacy. These findings suggest that counselors are more likely to perform tasks when the needed knowledge and skills are combined with beliefs about the ability to complete the tasks (Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines, & Johnston, 2008).

SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES FOR ELLs

School counselors provide individual counseling, group counseling, collaboration, consultation, and advocacy for ELLs (Cook et al., 2012; Smith-Adcock, Daniels, Lee, Villalba, & Indelicato, 2006; Villalba et al., 2007). When working on behalf of ELLs, school counselors collaborated with teachers, made referrals for medical and mental health services, provided individual and group counseling for social/emotional support, created tutoring to address academic concerns, and secured translators to facilitate learning experiences (Villalba et al., 2007). In summary, school counselors are involved in providing direct and indirect services for ELLs and actively advocate on behalf of ELLs and their families.

SELF-EFFICACY REQUIRES BOTH POSSESSION OF SKILLS AND BELIEFS IN ONE'S ABILITY TO USE THOSE SKILLS EFFECTIVELY.

School counselors who provided counseling services to ELLs and the students receiving those services report mixed results. Vela-Gude and colleagues (2009) found that ELLs described school counselors as unavailable and only accessible early in

the school year to discuss scheduling. ELLs recounted insufficient advisement, inadequate college preparation, and limited access to counselors for help with personal concerns (Vela-Gude et al., 2009). In contrast, other research identifies counselors as sources of support for ELLs. McCall-Perez (2000) and Smith-Adcock et al. (2006) noted that, when counselors developed cultural trust and used knowledge about language acquisition to inform scheduling, advising, and other academic services, ELLs increased language acquisition and had greater access to college. Cook, Pérusse, and Rojas (2012) concluded that counselor interventions such as encouraging ELLs to enroll in college courses or sharing ELL student achievements with the larger school community were related to increased graduation rates. They also found that facilitating workshops about career and educational opportunities for ELL parents related to increased college attendance rates. Although these types of interventions promote equity and access for ELLs, scholars also observed that school counselors employ interventions for ELLs at different rates.

Clemente and Collison (2000) noted that some school counselors viewed ELL programs as independent parts of the school and interactions with these students were for behavioral or remedial purposes only. Cook et al. (2012) noted that Latino counselors engaged in college-going interventions for ELLs more frequently than their White counterparts. Spanish-speaking counselors

were also more likely to take part in college access interventions than their White peers (Cook et al., 2012). Similarly, Aydin (2011) found that while school-family-community partnerships addressed the developmental, cultural, and educational needs of linguistically

diverse students, non-White counselors were more likely to participate in school–family–community partnerships than their White peers.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS CAN HAVE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON THE ACADEMIC OUTCOMES OF ELLs.

These studies suggest that school counselors can have a positive or negative influence on the academic outcomes of ELLs. Although some information about how school counselors work with ELLs is available, further research pertaining to counselor preparation and training and counselor readiness to work with ELLs is needed. More information is also needed on school counselors' beliefs about working with ELLs. Therefore, the questions guiding the present study included: 1) What is the self-efficacy of school counselors who counsel ELLs? 2) How does school counselor self-efficacy with ELLs differ by contextual factors (i.e., school level, U.S. region, size of the ELL population, school counselor race/ethnicity, and prior training with ELLs)?

METHOD

Participants

School counselors working in schools with ELLs were the target population for this study. Participants were sampled using three methods: oversampling, stratified sampling, and convenience sampling. Oversampling was implemented to yield representation from school counselors throughout the United States (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). To ensure representation from school counselors in each U.S. region, stratified sampling was implemented. Stratified sampling was used to “organize the population into homogenous subsets and then select appropriate numbers from each subset” (Babbie, 1990, p. 86). First, authors sent 1,000 members from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) membership directory an email to solicit

their participation in the study. ASCA is divided into four regions: Southern, Midwestern, North Atlantic and Western. A random number generator

was used to select 250 members from each region, yielding a pool of 1,000 potential participants for the online questionnaire. Data were collected for four weeks and 32 individuals fully completed the Web-based questionnaire.

In an effort to increase sample size, the first author sought permission from ASCA to solicit additional participants at the ASCA annual conference. Many experimental researchers utilize convenience sampling due to “practical constraints” (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 238). Approximately 1,700 individuals attended the conference and 80% of those participants were school counselors. The first author recruited 219 participants from the conference. This convenience sampling yielded 170 additional completed questionnaires, resulting in 202 total participants in this study. Erford, Giguere, Glenn, and Ciarlone (2014) classified large sample sizes for *Professional School Counseling* as 100-500 participants. The researchers found that volumes 11-15 of this journal had median sample sizes of 188. When the different sampling methods were combined, the current study had a response rate of 16.5%.

The 202 school counselors in this study each obtained school counseling state certification and indicated that they were currently practicing in elementary, middle school, high school, or kindergarten-12th grade school settings with ELL populations. The participants included 86.1% females ($n = 174$) and 13.9% males ($n = 28$). The participants racially identified themselves as Asian (3.0%; $n = 6$), Black (26.7%; $n = 54$), Hispanic (6.4%; $n = 13$), Multiracial (0.99%; $n = 2$), Native American (3.0%; $n = 6$),

and White (59.9%; $n = 121$). The participating school counselors had a range of years of experience with the majority having worked as school counselors for 10 years or less. Specifically, 39.6% ($n = 80$) had 1 to 5 years of experience and 22.2% ($n = 45$) had 6 to 10 years of experience as school counselors. The remaining participants indicated that they had been counselors in schools for 11 to 15 years (18.8%; $n = 38$); 16 to 20 years (8.9%; $n = 18$); 21 to 25 years (6.4%; $n = 13$), and 26 or more years (4.0%; $n = 8$).

Participants practiced school counseling in 41 states and the District of Columbia. Each region of the U.S. was represented in this sample including the Midwestern (44.5%; $n = 90$), North Atlantic (4.9%; $n = 10$), Southern (30.2%; $n = 61$) and Western (19.8%; $n = 40$) regions. The majority of the participants (78.2%; $n = 158$) reported ELL populations of 30% or less in their schools. Approximately 10% of participants ($n = 21$) indicated ELL populations of 31-60%, and 10.4% ($n = 21$) had populations of 61-100%. Of the participants, 55 (27.2%) spoke or used a language besides English (i.e., American Sign Language, Arabic, French, German, Hmong, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Mitchif, Tagalog, Thai, Somali, and Spanish). Slightly over half the school counselors in this study (53.5%; $n = 108$) identified themselves as having some prior training or professional development that prepared them to work with ELLs. These preparation experiences encompassed language courses, ESL courses, experiences abroad, school district training, participation in conferences, and workshops.

Participants in this study were similar to school counselors surveyed in other research studies (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011; Harris, 2013; Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008). Like counselors in other national surveys, the majority of participants racially identified as White and reported 1 to 10 years of school counseling experience. The majority of respondents (53%) in other

studies also completed initial multicultural training in their counselor preparation program (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011; Harris, 2013; Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008). Participants in the current study, however, shared their language background, suggesting potential differences from the larger school counselor population. Approximately 27% ($n = 55$) of participants spoke or used a language other than English.

Instruments

School Counselor Self-Efficacy with ELLs. The researchers selected the School Counselor Self-Efficacy with ELLs (SC-SELL) instrument (Paredes, 2009) to obtain information regarding school counselors' self-efficacy with ELLs. Paredes (2011) reviewed the literature and identified eight domains related to school counselors' work with ELLs: communication and interaction at home, assessment, relationship with students, counseling process, school atmosphere, self-awareness, sensitivity to language, and consultation/collaboration. Response items were created or adapted from other instruments. Paredes (2011) met with four experts in the field of school counseling and ELLs to sort and discuss the relevance of each response item for content validity. As a result of this process, three items were deleted and 17 items added to better reflect the activities of counselors in schools (Paredes, 2011). This resulted in an 87-item, unidimensional instrument (Paredes, 2011). The scale includes many domains, but measures overall school counselor self-efficacy with ELLs. A pilot of the SC-SELL was conducted with 601 counselors from across the U.S. In the overall statistics, an alpha reliability coefficient of .98 was calculated. The reliability coefficient for the overall scale was consistent with the results from the item analysis, with a Cronbach's alpha of .98 ($M = 244.05$, $SD = 44.06$) found for this instrument. The first author solicited and received permission to use the SC-SELL for this study. Participants were asked to rate their

level of confidence completing different tasks with ELLs on a Likert-style scale (1 = *not confident at all*, 2 = *somewhat confident*, 3 = *confident*, 4 = *very confident*). Each participant rating was totaled, averaged, and converted to a scaled score between one and four to help make meaning of the results (Neukrug & Fawcett, 2015). Participants rated statements such as "I can effectively address the social needs of ELLs," "I can recognize when language ability impacts student learning," and "I can provide professional development to school staff on addressing needs of ELLs." The reliability coefficient for the current study was similar to Paredes (87 items; $\alpha = .98$).

RESULTS

Overall School Counselor Self-Efficacy

The first research question, "What is the self-efficacy of school counselors who counsel English Language Learners?" was examined by conducting a frequency distribution. Frequency distributions illustrate how often scores occur (Salkind, 2007). The following Likert ratings were used for analysis: 1.0 = *not at all confident*, 2.0 = *somewhat confident*, 3.0 = *confident*, and 4.0 = *very confident*. Respondents rated each SC-SELL score with a Likert rating. The researchers calculated an average score for each participant such

THE MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANTS . . . [INDICATED] THAT THEY WERE "CONFIDENT" OR "VERY CONFIDENT" IN THEIR ABILITY TO WORK WITH ELLS.

Demographic questionnaire. In addition to rating the SC-SELL statements, participants answered 15 demographic questions regarding counselor race/ethnicity, gender, language, training, years of experience, and school environment, such as "Which state do you work in?" "What grade levels do you serve?" and "What percentage of these students are English Language Learners?" These questions solicited information about the context in which participants counsel ELLs.

Procedure

To investigate school counselor self-efficacy with ELLs and to measure differences based on contextual factors, the authors administered the SC-SELL. For the first round of data collection, a self-administered, Web-based questionnaire was used to generate responses for this study. For the second round, where convenience sampling was used to increase the sample size, participants completed a paper version of the questionnaire. The authors conducted a frequency distribution, t tests, and analysis of variance to complete the study.

as 3.xx. Scores that fell between Likert ratings were categorized as the lower or higher rating based on general rounding rules for statistics (Bluman, 2014). For example, ratings that were $0 \geq 1.4$ were rated as 1; $1.5 \geq 2.4$ were rated as 2; $2.5 \geq 3.4$ were scored as 3 and $3.5 \geq 4$ were rated as 4. Scores were then entered into a frequency distribution. The participants' average SC-SELL score was 2.81 ($SD = 0.48$). The majority of participants, 67.2% ($n = 135$), received SC-SELL scores of three, indicating that they were confident in their ability to engage in school counseling tasks with ELLs. Twenty-three school counselors, 11.4%, received scores of four, signifying that more than 10% of participants were very confident in their work with ELLs. No participants received a score of 1, suggesting that none of the school counselors in this study indicated they were not at all confident in their work with ELLs. Last, 21.4% ($n = 43$) received scores of two, indicating that overall a small percentage of school counselors were somewhat confident in their ability to engage in activities with ELLs.

TABLE 1

DIFFERENCES IN SCHOOL COUNSELOR SC-SELL SCORES

Environmental Factor	<i>d</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
School Level	3	.85	.01	.47
School Counselor Race	5	6.97	.15	.00
U.S. Region	3	4.38	.06	.01
Size of English Language Learner Population	2	15.06	.13	.00

Note. Significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

Differences in Self-Efficacy: Analysis of Variance

To determine how school counselor self-efficacy differed by contextual factors, the researchers computed four one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) to measure differences in SC-SELL scores. A one-way ANOVA calculated differences in SC-SELL scores between unrelated groups of participants. The research team measured differences between school level, school counselor race/ethnicity, U.S. region, and size of ELL population. The team completed a Tukey post-hoc test to determine the differences among the statistically significant scores. Table 1 provides an overview of these results.

School level. Participants categorized their school level as elementary, middle, high, or kindergarten-12th grade. There was not a significant effect by school level.

U.S. region. There was significant effect of U.S. region with a moderate practical significance. Six percent of the variance in SC-SELL scores may be explained by the region in which participants worked. Participants worked in the Midwestern, North Atlantic, Southern, and Western regions. The Tukey post-hoc test resulted in statistically significant differences in mean scores between school counselors in the Midwestern ($M = 2.68, SD = 0.44$)

counselors with small ELL populations ($M = 2.72, SD = 0.43$), school counselors with medium ($M = 3.07, SD = 0.50$), and school counselors with large ELL populations ($M = 3.21, SD = 0.53$). School counselors with medium and large ELL populations had higher self-efficacy scores than counselors with smaller ELL populations.

Differences in Self-Efficacy: *T* Test

Participants were asked to disclose information about their linguistic background and training with ELLs in order to assess differences in school counselor self-efficacy. The researchers conducted an independent samples *t* test to compare differences in school counselor self-efficacy between school counselors who spoke only one language and those who spoke two or more languages. A *t* test was also conducted to measure significance between school counselors who pursued personal training with ELLs and those who did not. The researchers found a statistically significant difference in SC-SELL scores between participants who spoke two or more languages ($M = 2.98, SD = 0.57$) and participants who spoke only one language ($M = 2.75, SD = 0.42$); $t(194) = 2.75, p = .007$. Cohen's effect size value ($d = .46$) suggested only a small practical significance of language on school counselor self-efficacy. There also was a significant effect for personal training with ELLs ($192 = 4.54, p < .05$; counselors with personal training received higher self-efficacy scores ($M = 2.94, SD = 0.47$) than counselors without personal training with ELLs ($M = 2.64, SD = 0.45$). Cohen's effect size value

SOME COUNSELORS CITED THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES, EITHER ON THE JOB OR AS ELLs THEMSELVES, AS PROVIDING KNOWLEDGE THAT HELPED THEM IN THEIR WORK.

School counselor race/ethnicity.

School counselor race/ethnicity had statistically significant results at the $p < .05$ level, and effect size value suggested large practical significance; however, the small number of Asian ($n = 6$), Hispanic ($n = 13$), Multiracial ($n = 2$) and Native American ($n = 6$) participants made it difficult to make meaningful comparisons. Therefore, an additional ANOVA was conducted to compare differences between Black ($n = 54$) and White ($n = 121$) participants due to their larger cell sizes. School counselor race/ethnicity had statistically significant results at the $p < .05, F(1, 172) = 8.78, p = .003$. The ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences in scores between Black school counselors ($M = 2.92, SD = 0.50$) and White school counselors ($M = 2.70, SD = 0.42$). Black school counselors yielded higher SC-SELL scores than their White counterparts. The effect size value ($\eta^2 = .05$) suggested small practical significance.

and Southern ($M = 2.93, SD = 0.47$) regions. The authors also found statistically significant differences in mean scores between school counselors in the Midwestern ($M = 2.68, SD = 0.44$) and Western ($M = 2.93, SD = 0.48$) regions. School counselors in the Southern and Western regions had higher self-efficacy scores than counselors in the Midwest. There were no significant differences in self-efficacy scores between counselors in the North Atlantic region ($M = 2.76, SD = 0.56$) and counselors in the Midwestern, Southern, or Western regions.

Size of ELL population. The size of ELL population also was statistically significant with moderate practical significance. Thirteen percent of the difference in SC-SELL scores may be explained by the number of ELLs enrolled at a participant's school. The Tukey post-hoc test resulted in statistically significant differences in mean scores between school

($d = .65$) suggested a medium practical significance.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the self-efficacy of school counselors who counsel ELLs. The majority of participants' SC-SELL scores indicated that they were "confident" or "very confident" in their ability to work with this population. However, the authors found statistically significant and practical differences in self-efficacy scores by race/ethnicity, U.S. region, size of ELL population, and counselor training. The race/ethnicity, U.S. region, and size of ELL population findings should be considered cautiously due to substantial differences in cell size (number of participants representing the different groups). The authors found statistically significant results between Black and White school counselors. Variations in cell size may increase chances of Type I or Type II error (Salkind, 2007). Although the cell size differences should be taken into account when reviewing findings, the statistically significant results are informative.

The majority of participants in this study received scores between three and four on the SC-SELL, indicating that they were "confident" or "very confident" in their ability to work with ELLs. This finding conflicts with earlier reports suggesting that school counselors were not as confident working with ELLs (Clemente & Collison, 2000; Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004). The professional backgrounds of participants may have led to higher SC-SELL scores. School counselors in this study and in Paredes' (2011) SC-SELL pilot were identified based on membership or participation in professional school counseling organizations. Professional association members may have more knowledge and interest in ELLs than school counselors in general. Furthermore, a large number of participants in the current study had experience with

ELL populations, and this may have led to higher self-efficacy beliefs.

This study found statistically significant and practical differences in self-efficacy between school counselors when examining contextual factors such as race/ethnicity, language, U.S. region, size of ELL population, and personal training. Black participants achieved higher SC-SELL scores than White school counselors. Holcomb-McCoy et al. (2008) obtained similar results when measuring school counselor multicultural self-efficacy. The authors of that study discussed that culturally diverse school counselors may rate themselves higher due to in vivo or real life experiences that make them more aware of and willing to address issues of diversity. Holcomb-McCoy et al. (2008) also explained that diverse school counselors tend to serve more diverse student caseloads. The findings of the present study are consistent with multicultural research, which indicates that counselors and teachers of color are more culturally competent in part because of their counseling interactions with ELLs, their racial identity, and their own personal experiences with discrimination and racism (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Ortiz, 2009). Moreover, these findings parallel K-12 teacher experiences with ELL populations (Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006). Multicultural scholars indicate that, through varied experiences, counselors and educators can enhance their cross-cultural competence and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Smith & Trimble, 2016).

SCHOOL COUNSELORS MAY ENSURE THAT BOTH THE VISION AND MISSION HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY AND COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT.

U.S. region also influenced school counselor self-efficacy with ELLs. School counselors in the Southern and Western U.S. attained higher SC-SELL scores than their Midwestern counterparts. States in the Southern and Western regions tend to have

higher populations of ELLs (Migration Policy Institute, 2010); consequently, participants with medium and large ELL populations in their schools had higher SC-SELL scores than school counselors with small ELL populations. School counselors in regions or schools with larger ELL populations may have more exposure to linguistically diverse students than counselors with smaller populations, creating more opportunities for cross-cultural and culturally responsive interactions (Callahan, Wilkinson, & Muller, 2008). A larger ELL population may also allow counselors to engage in vicarious learning or peer supervision processes. School counselors in schools and regions with large ELL populations may observe their colleagues using culturally sensitive and responsive approaches while working successfully with linguistically diverse students and their families. Furthermore, peer supervision may provide school counselors with the opportunity to strengthen their counseling skills and address the cultural and contextual needs related to counseling and interacting with ELLs (Estrada, Frame, & Williams, 2004). Researchers suggest that discussions of cultural variables in peer supervision can foster a culturally sensitive and responsive environment while also facilitating an open dialogue among counselors and educators (Ancis & Marshall, 2010; Inman, 2006). These observations may also influence the school counselor's multicultural competence in the areas of skills, awareness, and knowledge.

School counselors in the present study who pursued personal and professional development on their own had higher self-efficacy scores than those who did not pursue training. Personal and professional development was identified by participants as

language courses, English as a Second Language courses, experiences abroad, and participation at conferences and workshops. Some counselors cited their own experiences, either on the job or as ELLs themselves, as providing knowledge that helped them in their work with ELLs. Scholars have suggested that teacher, counselor, and counselor trainees' cross-cultural experiences with ELL training resulted in increased educator confidence and a better understanding of student needs (Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008; Jimenez-Silva, Olson, & Hernandez, 2012; Roysircar, Gard, Hubbell, & Ortega, 2005; Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004). The results of the current study support the prior literature. School counselors who pursued ELL related training were more confident in their ability to engage in specific behaviors related to these students.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS CAN SEEK OUT SCHOOL STAKEHOLDERS THAT REPRESENT THE NEEDS OF THE ELL POPULATION.

Based on the current and previous research findings, counselors and educators from dominant culture or counselors from particular regions with small ELL populations may experience less self-efficacy, which can impede their ability to be culturally responsive and address the cultural needs of ELLs efficiently (Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008; Jimenez-Silva et al., 2012). These findings highlight the need for school counselors to seek out professional development and school-based programs that intentionally address the gaps in multicultural skills and self-efficacy with ELLs.

LIMITATIONS

Among this study's limitations, the researchers sought to recruit a representative sample of school counselors; however, only members of ASCA were solicited. ASCA members may have more knowledge and interest in ELLs than non-members and in their profes-

sional development, in general.

Sample representation was further influenced by the attempt to increase the size of the sample. In an effort to generate a larger sample, the first author attended the ASCA annual conference in the Midwestern region of the United States. The overall response rate was 16.5%. This convenience sampling may have influenced the composition of the sample (Johnson & Christensen, 2008) because the conference took place within the Midwestern region and the majority of conference attendees were from this region. Consequently, nearly half of participation included school counselors from Midwestern states ($n = 90$). This sample, therefore, may not reflect the diversity of the overall school counseling population and findings may not be generalizable to all practicing school counselors (Johnson &

Christensen, 2008). Stratified sampling methods might have ensured that both regions with large and small ELL populations were equally represented. Further, variations in cell size may have increased the chances of Type I or Type II error (Salkind, 2007).

The majority of school counselors who participated in this study reported small ELL populations. These counselors' SC-SELL scores were compared with those of a smaller number of school counselors who reported larger ELL populations. These comparisons produced statistically significant results but must be viewed with caution due to the differences in the number of participants. Furthermore, the data collected in this study occurred via a self-report questionnaire. Johnson and Christensen (2008) noted that self-reported measures are always subject to contamination, as self-reported information may not reflect how participants actually behave. Counselors may have altered their responses in efforts to demonstrate favorable activities

with ELLs. One final limitation is that several participants spoke a second language and/or had prior training or professional development working with ELLs. The experience of speaking a second language and obtaining professional development related to ELLs may have attributed to higher self-efficacy beliefs and may not be representative of all school counselors.

IMPLICATIONS

School Counseling Practice

Although a number of school counselors with high self-efficacy are integrating selected multicultural skills and counseling strategies with ELLs, limited literature is available that specifies how school counselors would address the needs of ELLs and increase their own self-efficacy. As such, it is imperative that school counselors expand beyond basic cultural responsive interactions (e.g., teach empowerment skills or provide individual advocacy consultations with students) and address ELL needs from a programmatic perspective, to leverage systemic change.

Several findings from this study pointedly align with the four ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2012) components: foundation, management, accountability, and delivery. Operationalizing these findings within the model can help school counselors enhance their self-efficacy and address the unique needs of ELLs and their families. The foundation component addresses the creation of the vision and mission statements (ASCA, 2012). School counselors can identify ways the vision of the school counseling department can be inclusive to ensure that the needs of ELLs are included. For example, school counselors may ensure that both the vision and mission highlight the importance of family and collaborative support. In addition, the foundation is the first step for comprehensive programs to develop plans of action to confront barriers for ELLs (ASCA, 2012).

The management system ensures that school counselors have the sup-

port needed to address the needs of ELLs. Through the development of the annual agreements and an advisory council, school counselors can seek out school stakeholders that represent the needs of the ELL population. Furthermore, using data such as school profile data, program results reports, and closing-the-gap action plans allows school counselors to ascertain the achievement challenges for ELLs and identify current deficits in their counseling and engagement efforts as reflected by student success.

According to this study's findings, the delivery system component can be central to helping school counselors improve their self-efficacy, as experiences with ELLs can have a significant impact on multicultural self-efficacy. For example, school counselors can use individual and group counseling, core curriculum lessons, consultation, and collaboration to purposefully address achievement gaps and barriers with ELLs. Specifically, collaborating with allies in the school and the community, such as ESOL teachers, to identify oppressions and inequities in the current curriculum can help school counselors address systematic issues and develop action plans to meet the needs of ELLs.

Using the accountability component, school counselors can analyze the school data profile and closing-the-gap data quarterly. In particular, using responsive service outcome data, such as core curriculum results data and small group data, can allow counselors to identify ELL sub-populations (e.g., living with one parent, teen parents, 504 or IDEA qualified, gifted) who may need additional services. Specifically, documenting these efforts and providing results reports to stakeholders would not only help school counselors address the needs of ELLs and their families, but also allow school counselors and stakeholders to see how effective school counselors are in their interactions with ELLs.

School Counselor Training

School counselors with relevant or meaningful experiences with ELLs had

higher self-efficacy scores than school counselors without those experiences. While preparing school counselors in training to work with ELLs, opportunities for meaningful experiences with these students should be included. Jimenez-Silva, Olson, and Hernandez (2012) argued that effective training boosts educator self-efficacy with ELLs. They contended that the most effective training includes exposure to relevant literature about theoretical principles and policies impacting ELLs, relevant classroom discussion, modeling effective ELL strategies within course lectures, student opportunities to participate in those strategies, and meaningful interaction with ELLs. These measures suggest that relevant information in conjunction with meaningful experiences yield higher levels

EXPERIENCES WITH ELLs CAN HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON MULTICULTURAL SELF-EFFICACY.

of self-efficacy. This literature corresponds with the findings in this study.

School counselor training experiences should occur in conjunction with analysis, reflection (Ziomek-Daigle, 2016), and discussion of relevant literature and policy information. Counseling programs may need to consider offering additional coursework or experiential learning opportunities that provide experiences with ELLs, especially in geographic areas where these student populations are increasing. Creating service-learning opportunities for counselors-in-training at schools or agencies with ELL populations may provide students with in vivo experiences to increase self-efficacy and reflection (Ziomek-Daigle, 2016). Counseling programs can also include the experiences of ELLs as multicultural content. Counselors-in-training may explore the backgrounds and journeys of ELLs within their locale. Students may also examine linguisticism and its impact on society. These steps will equip school counselors with the tools they need to understand the experiences of ELLs and their families,

policies that influence their schooling, and the strategies that are most effective for this student population.

Future Research

The authors offer several recommendations for future research. First, additional instruments that measure school counselor self-efficacy or knowledge of ELL needs may provide more information on areas of decreased cultural competence. This study did not utilize a social desirability scale, but doing so may prove beneficial in future research. Comparative or correlational studies that include instruments that measure factors such as advocacy, social justice, or multicultural competence may also provide further insights about school counselor self-efficacy with ELLs.

Additional research on differences by contextual groups would also be helpful. Studies that measure counselor self-efficacy should be conducted in different U.S. regions and states. These studies may yield more diverse participation and inform counselor educators and supervisors about the types of training most needed by school counselors in their geographic areas. Further research about counselor educator and counselor supervisor self-efficacy and training needs with ELLs also is essential. Counseling training programs also should be examined to understand how counselors are being prepared to work with ELLs. Last, qualitative methods may be beneficial in understanding the unique strategies school counselors implement when engaging ELLs. Phenomenological, heuristic, or grounded theory studies may allow researchers to describe school counselors' experiences with ELLs and their models of engagement when interacting with these students.

This exploratory quantitative study investigated school counselors' self-efficacy with ELLs. The study also

considered how school counselor self-efficacy with ELLs differed based on contextual factors (i.e., school level, school counselor race/ethnicity, U.S. region, size of the ELL population, language, and training with ELLs). Findings suggest that school counselors with exposure to and experiences with ELLs and their families have higher levels of self-efficacy. This research also indicates that opportunities for relevant engagement with this student population and targeted professional development about ELLs are necessary to address the discrepancies among school counselors from various backgrounds and regions. ■

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