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An Examination of Multicultural Competence and Racial Colorblindness Among School Psychologists

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

AN EXAMINATION OF MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE AND
RACIAL COLORBLINDNESS AMONG SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

SANDY D. FLORES

CHICAGO, IL

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ABSTRACT

The field of school psychology has developed a strong commitment to culturally competent practice. However, there is a lack of literature examining multicultural competence among school psychologists. The present study sought to address this need using a two-pronged approach. First, the study expanded the research base for a self-report multicultural competence scale by administering the measure to a sample of practicing school psychologists. Second, the study investigated the relationship between racial colorblindness and self-perceived multicultural competence among school psychologists by administering an additional racial colorblindness measure. Given that similar fields have identified the negative impact of racial colorblindness on multicultural competence, it is important to explore the interrelation between these factors in school psychology. A total of 141 practicing school psychologists completed an online survey. Quantitative analyses highlighted the importance of multicultural education and opportunities for increased interactions with diverse populations in school psychology training programs. Furthermore, the findings emphasized the need to address colorblind attitudes in the field, particularly as they impact service delivery among White and older school psychologists. Implications for school psychology training, practice, and service delivery are discussed.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the field of school psychology has developed a commitment to culturally competent practice (Esquivel, Warren, & Olitzky, 2007; Miranda, 2008). This commitment is essential, for the United States' population is rapidly becoming more diverse. Currently, racial and ethnic minorities¹ encompass more than one-third of the United States population. In fact, demographic projections estimate that more than half of all Americans will belong to a minority group by the year 2044 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). In contrast to the racial and ethnic diversity of the United States' population, a national survey of school psychologists revealed that over 90 percent of school psychologists identified as White (Curtis, Castillo, & Gelley, 2010). Furthermore, 97 percent of the respondents indicated that they served students belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups. This discrepancy between the race and ethnicity of school psychologists and the students and families they serve emphasizes the need for school psychologists to practice multicultural competence in order to provide appropriate supports. Correspondingly, the field of school psychology has increasingly emphasized

¹ The United States Census Bureau currently identifies six racial groups: White, Black or African

culturally competent practice as a continuous and ongoing training need for all school psychologists.

Multicultural Competence

Within school psychology, multicultural competence translates into possessing the knowledge, skills, and sensitivity necessary to work with students and families from diverse backgrounds including but not limited to ethnicity, race, language, sexual orientation, exceptionality, and socioeconomic status (Lopez & Rogers, 2007). Despite the field's commitment to culturally competent practice tracing back to the 1980s, a gap exists between the literature and the development of such skills among school psychologists in training programs (Ortiz, Flanagan, Dynda, 2008). Early studies evaluating multicultural training in school psychology programs indicated relatively few courses addressing diversity issues as well as little integration of multicultural content into core coursework (Brown & Minke, 1986; Rogers, Ponterotto, Conoley, & Wiese, 1992). Although more recent studies have demonstrated an increase in multicultural content integration within school psychology training programs (Rogers, 2006), there is a need for research to further understand multicultural competence in this field as well as how school psychology graduate programs can enhance and build their training of culturally responsive school psychologists.

One way to understand multicultural competence in school psychology is through the administration of scales and questionnaires measuring this construct. Although many scales measuring multicultural competence exist, currently only two focus on multicultural competence in school psychology: the Multicultural School Psychology Counseling Competency Scale (MSPCCS; Rogers & Ponterotto, 1997) and the School Psychology Multicultural Competence

Scale (SPMCS; Malone et al., 2016). The MSPCCS measures trainer's perceptions of multicultural competencies in counseling among school psychology trainees. This scale is limited, however, because it focuses on counseling and is completed by school psychology trainers. Although the perspectives of trainers provide valuable information, it is important for school psychology multicultural measures to include self-awareness of multicultural competencies. Self-awareness is imperative in developing competency in school psychology cross-cultural service delivery (Ortiz 2006; Pedersen, 2004). In this context, self-awareness is having an understanding of one's own values, beliefs, life experiences, and viewpoints (McGoldrick, 1998). School psychologists must understand how their own values, beliefs, and experiences impact their ability to serve students and families from different cultures (Ortiz et al., 2008). The SPMCS addresses this need by measuring school psychologists' self-perceived multicultural competence in the areas of assessment, intervention, and consultation. Given that this scale was recently developed, it would benefit from further reliability and validity data.

Racial Colorblindness

An essential component of self-awareness in multicultural competence is recognizing beliefs and values that reflect biases. Possessing beliefs or values that compete with multicultural competence can serve as barriers to developing skills in culturally appropriate service delivery. One such barrier is the belief that race does not matter, or racial colorblindness (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). Colorblindness emerged during the pre-Civil War era but became the basis of legal doctrine in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which upheld segregation under the "separate but equal" rule. In his dissent, Justice John Marshall Harlan stated, "Our constitution is color-blind, and neither knows or tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all

citizens are equal before the law.” (*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896). During a time when racial segregation was legal and Whites were blatantly deemed superior, colorblindness became an attractive strategy for promoting equality.

Decades later, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) declared separate but equal educational facilities unconstitutional. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s advocated for antidiscrimination policies through a colorblind perspective, arguing that the color of someone’s skin should not dictate the opportunities afforded to him or her. At the same time, race-conscious policies competed with these colorblind policies. For example, President John F. Kennedy’s Executive Order No. 10925 (1961) established affirmative action to benefit members of disadvantaged groups with a history of discrimination. The executive order received backlash, with many dominant group members viewing affirmative action as reverse discrimination against Whites. These events shifted the initial use of colorblindness as a means to deconstruct systemic inequality against minorities to its use as an insidious tool for maintaining White power and privilege (Plaut, 2010). The seemingly paradoxical inequality resulting from colorblind ideologies is further discussed in the following chapter.

The Relationship Between Multicultural Competence and Racial Colorblindness

Race is a social construct; however, it has real and meaningful effects in society (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). These effects manifest in different domains such as education, the criminal justice system, and healthcare. Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, and some Asian American subgroups continue to academically underperform in comparison to Whites (Aud et al., 2010). These educational disparities overlap with socio-economic disparities: of the 14.8% of the nation’s population living in poverty, approximately 65% are racial and/or ethnic minorities

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Despite comprising only 16% of the population, Black youth account for 28% of juvenile arrests (The Sentencing Project, 2013). Moreover, minorities are overrepresented in populations with greater risk factors for mental health disorders but are less likely to have access to quality healthcare (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2016). Ignoring racial and ethnic differences through a colorblind perspective undermines the inequality experienced by people of color in the United States.

Research in social psychology, counseling psychology, clinical psychology, and education has documented the negative effects of racial colorblindness. Namely, colorblindness increases racial bias among Whites, increases negative affect toward minority group members, and reduces sensitivity to race-based differences (Neville et al., 2000; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Vorauer, Gagnon, & Sasaki, 2009; Wolsko, Park, & Judd, 2006). In other studies, colorblind attitudes correlate with decreased empathy and low multicultural competence (Burkard and Knox, 2004; Chao, 2006; Constantine, 2001). By way of its de-emphasis on racial and ethnic differences, racial colorblindness is incongruent with multicultural competence. An individual who ignores racial, ethnic, and cultural differences through a colorblind framework cannot simultaneously focus on understanding these differences; therefore, this individual is not likely to build multicultural competence. As such, it is important to investigate colorblindness as it relates to multicultural competence among school psychologists.

Statement of the Problem

Understanding multicultural competence among school psychologists is important, for the field emphasizes serving cultural diverse students and their families. One way to gather information about multicultural competence among school psychologists is through the

administration of scales and questionnaires using survey research methodology (Babbie, 1990).

Currently, the only self-report school psychology multicultural measure known to this researcher has been validated with a sample of school psychology graduate students. Expanding this research to include practicing school psychologists is an important next step for building validity evidence for this scale. This can provide practitioners insight into their own knowledge and abilities, which is important for culturally competent skill development.

Additionally, no known research study has evaluated the relationship between multicultural competence and racial colorblindness among school psychologists. Such an endeavor is important, for colorblindness likely inhibits the development of multicultural competence due to their competing values. Similar fields such as counseling psychology and clinical psychology have identified the negative impact of racial colorblindness on multicultural competence. Thus, exploring the relationship between racial colorblindness and multicultural competence can provide critical information to inform school psychology training and practice.

Purpose of the Study

The present study sought to address the gaps in the literature using a two-pronged approach. First, the study expanded the research base for the SPMCS by administering the measure to a sample of practicing school psychologists.

Second, the study investigated the relationship between racial colorblindness and self-perceived multicultural competence among school psychologists through the administration of existing colorblindness and multicultural competence measures. These measures included the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Brown, 2000) and the aforementioned SPMCS. Finally, the tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner was

measured using the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS, Reynolds, 1982).

School psychologists must ethically and legally serve *all* students, but they cannot accomplish this without multicultural competence. By measuring multicultural competence and racial colorblindness among school psychologists, the present study hopes to inform training and skill development in the field.

Research Questions

Based on the problems delineated above, the present study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent do school psychologists demonstrate colorblind racial attitudes?
2. To what extent do school psychologists perceive themselves as possessing multicultural competence?
3. What is the relationship between school psychologists' colorblind racial attitudes and self-perceived multicultural competence?
4. Are there significant differences in colorblind racial attitudes among school psychologists when grouped by demographic variables (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, degree type, course background)?
5. Are there significant differences in self-perceived multicultural competence among school psychologists when grouped by demographic variables (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, degree type, course background)?
6. What is the relationship between multicultural competence and social desirability?

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews existing literature in order to provide context for the current study. More specifically, the first section of this chapter reviews the increase in racial-ethnic diversity in the United States as well as current racial-ethnic disparities. The following section examines the development of multicultural competence skills and competencies in school psychology as a means to address the needs of diverse students and families. The final section reviews racial colorblindness, focusing on its impact on multicultural competence in psychology and education.

The Changing Demographics of United States

With each passing decade, the United States is becoming increasingly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. Although non-Hispanic Whites still constitute the largest major race and ethnic group, minority populations are growing at a fast rate. According to a report released by the U.S. Census Bureau (2011), the number of non-Hispanic Whites who reported their race as White alone increased by 1% between 2000 and 2010. In contrast, Hispanic and Asian populations each increased by 43%. Currently, racial and ethnic minorities comprise over one-third of the total United States population. By 2043, no ethnic or racial group will make up a majority in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Nearly half of all children under the age of five are members of a racial or ethnic minority; moreover, it is estimated that children from minority groups will comprise more than half of all children in the United States by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Additionally, the number of students who speak English as a

second language continues to increase, with an estimated 4.4 million students identified as English Learners (ELs) in the 2012-2013 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Given these current and projected demographical changes, educators must ensure their ability to serve culturally diverse students and families.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Income and Wealth Disparities.

These shifting demographic changes coincide with large racial and ethnic disparities across outcomes in wealth, employment, criminal justice, health, and education. Within the United States, the racial and ethnic wealth divide continues to widen. According to the Federal Reserve Board, the median wealth of White households was seven times higher than the median wealth of black households in 2010 (Bricker, Dettling, Henriques, Hsu, Moore, Sabelhaus, Thompson, & Windle, 2014). In 2013, the median wealth of White households increased to 13 times the median wealth of Black households; additionally, the wealth of White households was 10 times the wealth of Hispanic households (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Despite increased education levels and life expectancy rates among racial and ethnic minorities, Blacks and Hispanics continue to demonstrate lower earnings than Whites and Asians across nearly all major occupation groups (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Further, Blacks and Hispanics are nearly three times as likely to live in poverty in comparison to White Americans. In terms of health disparities, racial and ethnic minorities continue to demonstrate higher rates of poor health in comparison to Whites (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013).

Criminal Justice Disparities.

In the criminal justice system, Black and Latino men comprise 50% of the inmate population (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). Incarcerations among Black men were six times higher than those of White men in 2010 (Pew Research Center, 2013). According to a policy brief by The Sentencing Project (2014), American Indian youth are three times more likely to be in a juvenile detention center in comparison to their White counterparts; Black youth are twice as likely to be arrested than White youth. Despite a lack of disparity in drug activity between racial groups, Blacks are disproportionately more likely to be arrested for a drug-related crime than Whites (The Sentencing Project, 2013). In fact, Whites are more likely to use and sell illegal drugs than racial and ethnic minority groups but are less likely to be incarcerated for drug offenses (Alexander, 2010). Regarding judicial sentencing practices, Black men receive harsher sentences than their White counterparts even if the cases are similar (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015).

Educational Disparities.

Similar to the data described above, disparities in educational outcomes continue to exist between Whites and racial and ethnic minorities. This persistent disparity is referred to as the achievement gap, and it manifests itself in outcomes such as standardized test scores, grade point averages, high school completion rates, and college attainment and completion (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Despite the passage of educational initiatives that focus on closing achievement gaps such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Black and Hispanic students continue to perform at considerably lower rates on standardized assessments in comparison to their White counterparts (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

Hispanic students have the highest dropout rate in comparison to Blacks and Whites (14%, 8%, and 5%, respectively; National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). High school completion rates among American Indian and Alaska Native students in the Pacific and Northwestern U.S. fall below 50% (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010). With regard to higher education, 28.9% of Whites earn a college degree, in contrast to 17.2% of Blacks, 14.9% of Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, 12.7% of Native Americans/Alaskan Natives, and 12.6% of Hispanics (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Moreover, large racial and ethnic disparities exist in exclusionary discipline outcomes. Whereas 16% of Blacks and 7% of Hispanics were suspended in the 2011-2012 school year, 5% of Whites were suspended (The Civil Rights Project, 2015). The negative outcomes for racial and ethnic minorities, coupled with their growing population, emphasize the need for culturally competent services and practices.

Multicultural Competence

In order to address the educational disparities between racial and ethnic minorities and Whites, education professionals such as school psychologists must develop skills in multicultural competence. Although many definitions exist, multicultural competence is often conceptualized as “an individual going beyond the mere possession of multicultural sensitivity to also attain an acceptable level of knowledge, a sufficient shift in attitude, and the production of a repertoire of behaviors consistent with successfully interacting with diverse populations in multicultural settings” (Wallace, 2000, p.1101). Thus, an individual practicing multicultural competence should not only recognize the importance of culture but also possess the knowledge and skills necessary for working with people from other cultural groups (Sue, 1998). It is important to note

that multicultural competence is not “achieved”—rather, it is a standard of practice requiring a lifetime of development.

Multicultural Competence in School Psychology.

School psychologists, who specialize in supporting students’ academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs, are in a position to provide culturally competent services to students and families. Multicultural competence gained traction in the school psychology literature during the 1980s and 1990s (Lopez and Rogers, 2007). Much of this literature focused on the recruitment of diverse students and faculty in school psychology. It also focused on multicultural training strategies through diversity courses and through exposure to CLD populations during fieldwork experiences (Esquivel, Warren, & Orlicy, 2007). The increased emphasis on multicultural competence has also been observed in professional psychological associations, such as the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the American Psychological Association (APA).

NASP is the largest organization of school psychologists. This organization designates a code of ethics for professional conduct and includes principles related to diversity. The *Principles for Professional Ethics* states that school psychologists must take into account language and cultural issues when providing services to children and their families (National Association of School Psychologists, 2010a). Furthermore, *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice III* (Ysseldyke, Burns, Dawson, Kelley, Morrison, Ortiz, Rosenfield, & Telzrow, 2006) serves as an integrated guide for training school psychologists and includes a domain addressing diversity awareness and sensitive service delivery. Additionally, NASP’s Model for Comprehensive and Integrated Services (2010b) and Practice Implementation Model

(2015) both feature detailed guidelines for promoting and respecting diversity through professional practice. In terms of program accreditation, school psychology programs seeking accreditation from NASP must demonstrate adherence to its standards emphasizing understanding and respect for diversity (National Association of School Psychologists, 2010c).

NASP also emphasizes the importance of diversity and multicultural competence through position statements. Recently, NASP published a position statement on the provision of school psychological services to bilingual students (National Association of School Psychologists, 2015) as well as to indigenous children and youth (National Association of School Psychologists, 2012). In order to better serve CLD students, NASP is committed to recruit CLD school psychologists as described in a third position statement (National Association of School Psychologists, 2009). Additionally, NASP released a position statement on racial and ethnic disproportionality in education (National Association of School Psychologists, 2013). NASP continues to affirm its commitment to culturally competent practice through its Multicultural Affairs Committee and through its webpage with resources for best practices when working with diverse populations.

In addition to the NASP guidelines, school psychologists must abide by the ethical principles delineated by the American Psychological Association (APA). The *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* states that psychologists must acknowledge and respect clients' differences across factors including include race, ethnicity, culture, and national origin (American Psychological Association, 2010). In 2002, APA created the *Guidelines for Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists*. These guidelines encourage psychologists to gain knowledge about stigmatized

groups, to apply culturally appropriate skills in clinical practice, and to serve as agents of pro-social change (American Psychological Association, 2002). Despite this advocacy for multicultural competence, APA has not updated these guidelines since they expired in 2009. Most recently, APA revised their Competency Benchmarks in Professional Psychology, which include core competencies that psychology students should develop in their training. One of these core competencies is Individual and Cultural Diversity, comprising of four sub-competencies across varying practicum, internship, and practice levels (American Psychological Association, 2012a). Similar to NASP, APA delineates its own standards for program accreditation. Programs seeking accreditation from APA must demonstrate a commitment to cultural and individual differences and diversity (American Psychological Association, 2015).

In order to enact the established principles and guidelines for culturally competent service delivery, school psychology training programs needed to explicitly prepare practitioners to work with diverse populations. As such, school psychology research sought to identify specific multicultural competencies school-based practitioners must possess in order to provide culturally sensitive services. Lopez and Rogers (2002) were among the first researchers to conceptualize multicultural competencies using the Delphi technique. A group of school psychology panelists provided input on 185 cross-cultural competencies identified after an extensive literature review. Through an iterative process, 102 critical competencies spanning across 14 school psychology domains were identified. Sample competencies include understanding the cultural differences of groups in the United States, having knowledge of the limitations of translation, having knowledge of the first and second language acquisition process, and respecting values that clash with the dominant culture.

A second Delphi study by Rogers and Lopez (2001) extended these results by using a distinct sample of school psychologists with cross-cultural expertise. Whereas in the first study the researchers asked panelists to rate a set of predetermined multicultural competencies, the second study required panelists to identify competencies using an open-ended questionnaire. Using this different procedure, panelists created competencies based on their knowledge and experience. After a series of polling rounds, the panelists identified 89 cross-cultural competencies essential for school psychologists to possess when working with culturally or linguistically diverse populations. Similar to the first study, the 89 competencies expanded across 14 school psychology domains reflecting major areas of service. Differences emerged, however, in the content of the competencies across the two studies. Whereas many competencies extracted in the first study reflected knowledge and skills, the second study contained more competencies at the awareness level. Together, these Delphi studies provided specific and structured cross-cultural competencies for use in school psychology training programs.

Measuring Multicultural Competence Among School Psychologists.

Despite the identification of these competencies, gaps exist between the literature, the development of competencies among school psychologists in training programs, and ensuring that these competencies are demonstrated in practice (Ortiz, Flanagan, Dynda, 2008). Brown and Minke (1986) conducted the first investigation of cross-cultural¹ training in school psychology. Survey information obtained from 95 percent of school psychology programs (N=211) known to exist at that time indicated a difference between non-doctoral and doctoral programs in terms of cross-cultural training. Although doctoral programs were more likely to offer courses focusing

¹ Although the term *cross-cultural* generally refers to comparing populations across different countries, Brown and Minke (1986) conceptualized the term as courses focusing on teaching non-biased assessment. This is consistent with the term *multicultural*; thus, the two terms are used interchangeably.

on cross-cultural topics in comparison to non-doctoral programs, the number of such courses offered by doctoral programs ranged between zero and two. This number is small relative to the total number of courses school psychology trainees take throughout their graduate career. Three years later, Rogers, Ponterotto, Conoley, and Wiese (1992) surveyed a national sample of school psychology program directors and also demonstrated that doctoral programs made greater efforts to integrate multicultural themes into coursework in comparison to their non-doctoral counterparts. Nevertheless, 40 percent of the programs in the sample did not offer individual courses focusing on topics related to diversity or integrate such topics into core coursework. Further, nearly one third of the sample reported students having limited access to children from racial and ethnic minority groups during fieldwork experiences. In 1998, Rogers, Hoffman, and Wade examined the practices of five doctoral school psychology programs and five doctoral counseling psychology programs that emphasized multicultural training. Among the school psychology programs, four offered a multicultural course, three assessed the multicultural competence of their students, and 22 percent of faculty identified as racial-ethnic minorities. This study was limited, however, because it only included doctoral programs in the sample. Although contemporary school psychology training programs may incorporate content related to multiculturalism, challenges still exist in preparing practitioners to work with diverse populations.

In addition to the challenges of translating multicultural competence literature into skill development among school psychologists, little is known about perceptions of multicultural competence among these clinicians. Currently, The Multicultural School Psychology Counseling Competency Scale (MSPCCS) is one of two tools designed to measure multicultural competency

specifically among school psychologists. Rogers and Ponterotto (1997) modified Sue et al.'s (1982) multicultural counseling competencies to make them more applicable to school psychology. This scale is completed by program directors—therefore, self-reported perceptions of multicultural competency are not attainable. Moreover, the scale only measures multicultural competency skills in counseling, making it difficult to assess such skills in other areas of service delivery such as assessment or consultation.

More recently, the School Psychology Multicultural Competence Scale (SPMCS; Malone et al., 2016) was developed to assess self-perceptions of multicultural competence in school psychology assessment, intervention, and consultation. The SPMCS contains a total of 45 items across three domains: cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills. These domains, identified in Sue et al.'s (1992) multicultural counseling competencies, serve as the conceptual framework for the scale. The items themselves were constructed using the cross-cultural school psychology competencies identified by Lopez and Rogers (2001) and Rogers and Lopez (2002). A modified Delphi technique was used to build content validity for the scale. Nine professionals with extensive experience in multicultural school psychology provided ratings on items using a 4-point Likert scale. Higher ratings suggested that the item strongly indicated multicultural competence. At this time, the SPMCS has been validated with a sample of school psychology graduate students (Malone et al., 2016). Although the study provided information regarding multicultural and diversity training of school psychology trainees, the SPMCS would benefit from additional research using a sample of practicing school psychologists.

To date, only one study known to this researcher has measured self-perceptions of multicultural competence exclusively among school psychologists. Using the Multicultural

Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R), Muñoz (2009) investigated self-perceptions of multicultural competence among school psychologists in Wisconsin and Arizona. Overall, the majority of respondents indicated feeling comfortable with providing services to students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Further, the respondents reported feeling the least competent in their awareness of racial identity development. Given that this study used a counseling multicultural competence scale, further research should include school psychology multicultural competence scales such as the SPMCS. The NASP Practice Model Guide delineates 10 domains of school psychology practice encompassing data-based decision making, consultation and collaboration, academic and social-emotional interventions, systems-level services, and research (Skalski, Minke, Rossen, Cowan, Kelly, Armistead, & Smith, 2015). Using a scale specific to school psychology provides a more accurate representation of multicultural competence across all areas of school psychology service delivery.

Self-Report Multicultural Competence Measures and Social Desirability.

Self-report measures allow researchers to obtain information directly from a respondent, often resulting in more efficient data collection than with other methodologies. Nevertheless, these measures have received criticism regarding their validity. One primary concern of using self-report measures is social desirability. Critics of such measures argue that respondents may complete these measures in a manner that presents them in a more favorable light, instead of reporting their actual attitudes or behaviors (Pope-Davis & Dings, 1995; Sue, 1996). In order to mitigate this potential response bias, studies have administered measures of social desirability in conjunction with multicultural competence measures. Early studies investigating the relationship between these two variables did not find significant correlations (Ponterotto et al., 1996;

Sodowsky, Taffe, Gutkin, & Wise, 1994). Other studies, however, found a significant correlation between the Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI) and multicultural social desirability (Sodowsky, Kuo-Jackson, Richardson, & Corey, 1998). A study also examining this relationship found a significant and positive correlation between social desirability and three out of four multicultural measures (Constantine & Ladany, 2000). These mixed results may reflect the varying scales, samples, and methodologies employed across studies. As such, future research should assess the potential influence of social desirability on self-perceived measures of multicultural competence.

Besides identifying and assessing specific skills crucial for developing multicultural competence among school psychologists, the research in this area should also address factors that impede its progress. The next section of this chapter identifies racial colorblindness as one of these factors and conceptualizes this ideology as a barrier to developing multicultural competence.

Racial Colorblindness

Paradoxically, as efforts to advance multicultural competence increased, colorblindness emerged as a dominant ideology for advancing racial equality in the United States (Carbado & Harris, 2008; Plaut 2010; Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009; Tarca, 2005). Colorblindness pushes forth the notion that in order to end discrimination, all individuals must be treated as equal as possible regardless of race, culture, or ethnicity. Such perspective advocates for a focus on commonalities people share, such as one's underlying humanity, rather than focusing on differences such as race (Holoien & Shelton, 2011). Under this ideology, racial equity is advanced because individuals who do not acknowledge race avoid acting in racially biased ways.

Within the United States' educational system, colorblindness has become a prominent strategy for increasing inclusiveness and tolerance among classrooms (Markus, Steele, & Steele, 2000). On a national scale, colorblindness is reflected in educational federal legislation that deemphasizes racial factors in addressing the achievement gap between White and minority children (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). It is reflected in state regulations for managing district-wide diversity, such as overturning school initiatives for racial integration (*Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*, 2007). Further, colorblindness is reflected in standard school curricula and through teachers' strategies for promoting equality. Prevalent colorblind expressions used to promote equality within schools include "race does not matter" and "we are all the same" (Pollock, 2004).

The Effects of Racial Colorblindness on Racial Bias.

Despite its emergence as a strategy for reducing racial prejudice, research has demonstrated the negative effects of a colorblind ideology on racial attitudes. Colorblindness predicts greater racial bias among dominant group members (Neville, et al., 2000; Wolsko et al., 2006). Among Whites, exposure to colorblind (as opposed to multicultural²) messages predicts greater explicit and implicit bias and negative affect toward minority group members (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Vorauer et al., 2009). Similarly, exposure to colorblindness has a negative impact on children in schools. In a study by Apfelbaum, Pauker, Sommers, and Ambady (2010), children exposed to a colorblind storybook (as opposed to a multicultural story book) were less likely to identify racial bias in scenarios where racial discrimination had clearly occurred. Children exposed to the colorblind storybook were also less likely to describe instances of

² In these studies stemming from sociological research, *multiculturalism* was defined as recognizing and valuing differences among people and is a necessary component for multicultural competence.

discrimination in a manner that prompted intervention from teachers. Further, colorblindness impacts teachers and their teaching practices: Schofield's (1986) ethnographic study at a racially integrated school with a colorblind policy found that teachers were hesitant to notice student's self-segregation or racial differences in suspension rates. Moreover, Hachfeld, Hahn, Schroeder, Anders, and Kunter (2015) found that teachers with colorblind beliefs were less likely to report willingness to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of culturally diverse students. Taken together, these studies demonstrate that when it comes to promoting equality through colorblind attitudes, ignoring racial differences inadvertently promotes the opposite outcome.

To date, only one published study has examined racial colorblindness in school psychology. In this study, Johnson and Jackson Williams (2015) explored the relationship between White racial identity attitudes, colorblind racial attitudes, and multicultural counseling competence in a sample of doctoral students in clinical, counseling, and school psychology programs. The results of the study indicated that higher colorblind racial attitudes were significantly correlated with lower multicultural counseling awareness, knowledge, and skills. The researchers noted, however, that racial colorblindness was only a small significant predictor of multicultural competence after accounting for variables such as multicultural training, social desirability and age.

Given the lack of research on colorblind racial attitudes in school psychology, literature from counseling psychology and clinical psychology may serve as important sources of information. Similar to school psychology, counseling psychology and clinical psychology have established standards for multicultural competence in practice. Given the parallels in service

delivery across the three fields, implications for counseling psychology and clinical psychology may provide insight on racial colorblindness in school psychology.

Racial Colorblindness and Mental Health Treatment.

As stated previously, school psychologists support students' social-emotional and mental health needs. One of the ways in which school psychologists support these needs is through the provision of individual and group counseling services. Cross-cultural competencies in counseling psychology (Sue et al., 1982) and school psychology (Rogers and Lopez, 2001) include self-awareness of bias in attitudes and beliefs. Although research in this area is limited, studies in counseling psychology have identified relationships between therapist racial attitudes and multicultural counseling competency. Specifically, counselors with high negative racial attitudes on a self-report measure also indicated lower levels of multicultural competence (Chao, 2006; Constantine, 2002; Constantine, Juby, & Liang, 2001). In addition, counselors who demonstrated higher scores on a measure of colorblind racial attitudes also demonstrated lower scores on a measure of empathy (Burkard and Knox, 2004). Further, self-reported levels of empathy were positively correlated with increased awareness of cultural issues among counselors (Constantine, 2001). These findings suggest that colorblind attitudes are related to counselors' ability to empathize with their clients as well to their sensitivity to cultural issues. Applications to similar studies in the field of school psychology are needed.

Other research has explored the relationship between colorblind attitudes and the therapeutic process among counselors and psychologists. In an analogue study examining counselors in simulated therapy sessions, clients with therapists who ignored racial issues demonstrated frustration and discontent (Thompson and Jenal, 1994). More recently, Want,

Parham, Baker, and Sherman's (2004) analogue study demonstrated that African American clients rated counselors with low racial consciousness³ less favorably than counselors with high racial consciousness. Studies conducted with applied psychology trainees have yielded similar results. Namely, applied psychology trainees with low racial consciousness were less likely to consider racial and ethnocultural factors related to clients' presenting concerns (Neville, Spanierman, & Doan, 2006; Gushue, 2004). Altogether, the existing literature suggests that helping professionals who do not acknowledge the importance of race may unknowingly contribute to negative therapeutic outcomes among their clients.

Racial Colorblindness and Microaggressions.

Colorblindness has been conceptualized in counseling psychology literature as a racial microaggression (Sue et al., 2007). Racial microaggressions are subtle insults experienced by racial and ethnic minorities on a daily basis (Solórzano, Cea, & Yosso, 2000). When an individual ignores race through a colorblind ideology, he or she implies that the racial, ethnic, and cultural experiences of persons of color⁴ do not matter. Among persons of color, experiencing microaggressions can lead to feelings anger and mistrust as well as physical and mental health issues such as cardiovascular disease and depression (Hwang & Goto, 2008; Lambert, Herman, Bynum, & Ialongo, 2009; Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014; Thompson & Neville, 1999). Microaggressions such as racial colorblindness often occur unintentionally and unconsciously, making it likely that they will go unnoticed by the

³ Racial consciousness is defined as "the development of personal and social identity and knowledge acquisition of social systems" (Aldana, Rowley, Checkoway, & Richards-Schuster, 2015) and can be conceptualized as the opposite of racial colorblindness.

⁴ "Person(s) of color" denotes individuals from non-White groups and is used interchangeably with "racial and ethnic minorities" throughout this study.

perpetrator. Therefore, fostering self-awareness of personal biases is crucial for reducing prejudice and building cultural competence (Sue et al., 2007).

Implicit Bias

Given that colorblindness seeks to create racial equality, its tendency to increase racial bias is paradoxical. Many studies have explored the underlying mechanisms that might explain why this paradox occurs. Research in social psychology supports the notion that race perception cannot be controlled. From as early six month of age, infants can perceptually distinguish between racial groups (Katz & Kofkin, 1997). By preschool, children can correctly identify the racial category membership of others (Aboud, 2003). Electrocortical measures of attention to race indicate that perceptual differentiation of race occurs in less than one-seventh of a second (Bar-Haim, Ziv, Lamy, & Hodes, 2006; Ito & Urland, 2003). Although it is clear that people do notice race, studies have demonstrated a tendency to avoid acknowledging that they perceive racial differences in an effort to appear unbiased (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Norton, Sommers, Apfelbaum, Pura, & Ariely, 2006).

When race is ignored, the potential to act in biased ways increases. This is due to implicit bias, or feelings and attitudes operating outside of conscious awareness (Casey, Warren, Cheesman, & Elek, 2012). Similar to the perception of racial differences, implicit bias occurs automatically and involuntarily (Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010; Dovidio, Gaertner, Kwakami, & Hudson, 2002). Bias in general is not entirely negative—it is a natural cognitive function that efficiently sorts information using automatic associations. Unfortunately, implicit biases may influence negative behaviors towards others based on characteristics such as race or gender.

The negative effects of implicit bias have been documented across a variety of domains. In law enforcement, implicit bias manifests in the tendency for police officers to shoot Black suspects more often than White suspects (Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2002; Correll, Park, Judd, Wittenbrink, Sadler, & Keesee, 2007; Sadler, Correll, Park, & Judd, 2012). Within the judicial system, Black males are more likely to receive harsher consequences than their White counterparts for similar crimes (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2012). Studies have demonstrated implicit bias in health care, with male doctors more likely to prescribe higher doses of pain medication to White patients than Black patients with the same symptoms (Weisse, Sorum, Sanders, & Syat, 2001). Within education, teachers possess lower expectations for Black and Latino students in comparison to White students (Mckown & Weinstein, 2002; Tenebaum & Ruck, 2007; van den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, & Holland, 2010). Kang et al. (2012) succinctly summarizes the nature of implicit bias: “believing oneself to be objective is a prime threat to objectivity” (Kang, et al., 2012, p. 1184). Similarly, believing that race does not matter through a colorblind ideology allows racial bias to surface—essentially, colorblindness allows for such biases to remain uninhibited.

The Present Study

Despite school psychology’s commitment to culturally competent practice, little research addresses factors that impede the development of these skills. Given that racial colorblindness has been demonstrated to have negative effects on multicultural competence in related fields such as education, counseling psychology, and clinical psychology, it is imperative for research to investigate the effects of racial colorblindness on school psychologists’ service delivery. The present study sought to address this gap in the literature by exploring the relationship between

colorblind racial attitudes and multicultural competence among school psychologists.

Specifically, it measured the level of endorsement of colorblind racial attitudes among school psychologists and compared it with their level of self-perceived multicultural competence using pre-existing measures. A second gap in the literature is the small number of multicultural competence measures specific to school psychology. A new and promising measure by Malone et al. (2016) assesses multicultural competence in the school psychology domains of assessment, intervention, and consultation. The present study expanded the research base for this scale by administering it to a sample of practicing school psychologists. Ultimately, this study contributed to existing literature by addressing racial colorblindness in school psychology and informing multicultural competence training in the field.

Theoretical Framework

The present study used Critical Race Theory (CRT) to contextualize the educational disparities and racial bias that underscore the rationale for this research. CRT emerged in the 1970s and 1980s from legal scholarship as a response to the slow progress of racial reform in the U.S. (Delgado, 1995). Delgado and Stancic (2012) outline the five core tenets of CRT: first, racism is normal and a part of everyday life. It is embedded in U.S. society through institutions and daily social interactions. Second, CRT uses storytelling to recognize the lived experiences racism and oppression of people of color. These stories serve not only to give a voice to oppressed groups but to also counteract the stories of the dominant (White) group. Third, CRT critiques liberalism for its emphasis on incremental change. CRT argues sweeping change is necessary to overcome racism, which is not compatible with liberal legal practices. Fourth, CRT argues Whites primarily benefit from civil rights legislation. That is, equality for people of color

occurs only when it aligns with the interests of Whites. Finally, CRT rejects claims of neutrality, objectivity, meritocracy, and colorblindness by conceptualizing them as the refusal to acknowledge racism. These claims further allow Whites to maintain their power and privilege in society.

Ladson-Billings and Tate IV (1995) applied CRT to education by focusing on three central propositions: 1) race is an important factor in inequity, 2) U.S. society is based on property rights, and 3) race and property intersect to provide insight into social and school inequity. According to Ladson-Billings (1998), CRT views school curricula as designed to distort the stories of people of color in order to maintain power among Whites. Additionally, Ladson-Billings (1998) asserts that instructional and assessment strategies assume students of color are deficient. Perhaps most significantly, school funding disparities highlight the institutional and systemic racism embedded in the U.S. When property taxes determine funding for schools, wealthier areas will typically have better funded schools (Ladson-Billings, 1998). This system perpetuates a cycle of low educational attainment among people of color, which in turn perpetuates inequity in areas such as employment and access to adequate housing.

As applied to the current study, CRT provides context for the inequities that emphasize the need for research on attitudes and practices in education. It is a framework through which colorblindness in particular is deemed problematic, which is supported by the research addressed in this literature review. Given that school psychology emphasizes the need to address racial and ethnic disproportionality, CRT serves as a lens through which to view the salience of race and racial bias in education.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the research methodology used to address the questions posed in previous chapters. Pertinent information regarding participants, measures, procedures, and data analysis is provided.

Participants

Recruitment.

The participants in this study were practicing school psychologists recruited electronically through websites. The target population was school psychology practitioners; therefore, students, interns, and non-practitioner professors were excluded from the study. As stated in chapter one, this study sought to compare outcomes across racial and ethnic groups. In order to obtain a sample with racial and ethnic diversity, this study attempted to oversample for specific subgroups. The researcher contacted the National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP) Multicultural Affairs Committee, a group that works with racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse groups. By the time the researcher completed the formal process to utilize a NASP sample, data were collected through the state school psychology association. Further, the researcher had exhausted other means of recruitment (detailed below). Given that an adequate sample size was obtained through the aforementioned recruitment methods, the researcher did not pursue recruitment through NASP membership.

Although recruitment did not officially occur through NASP, one of the members of the

Multicultural Affairs Committee posted the survey hyperlink on a social media Facebook page with access to over 300 Black/African American school psychologists. Additionally, participants were recruited through “snowball” sampling. This recruitment technique asks participants to assist in identifying other potential participants. The researcher posted the survey hyperlink on Facebook, which was reposted by colleagues and friends. Finally, the survey hyperlink was posted on the Illinois School Psychologists Association (ISPA) Member Resources webpage, which lists online research surveys among other materials. A copy of the scripts used for social media and the ISPA member resources page can be found in Appendix A and Appendix G.

After providing consent, participants indicated if they were practicing as school psychologists, interns, practicum students, trainers/professors, or retired. Only those who indicated they are practicing school psychologists continued through the rest of the survey. Those who did not meet the criteria proceeded to the end of the survey via skip logic.

Demographics.

Due to the recruitment techniques, it is impossible to know the number of potential participants who viewed the social media posts and ISPA Member Resources webpage. A sum of 222 participants accessed the hyperlink to initiate the survey. Of these, 81 participants excessively omitted responses and were eliminated from the dataset. A total of 141 participants completed enough of the survey to allow for statistical analyses. At the minimum, this included completion of the three scales (discussed in detail below). Participants’ demographic data are reported in Table 1. It is important to note that the survey allowed participants to skip any question. Therefore, the percentages on the demographic variables do not add up to 100 due to omitted responses. Female participants comprised of 83.7% ($n = 118$) female and 14.2% ($n = 20$)

male. Most participants identified as White (72.3%; $n = 102$), followed by Hispanic/Latino (11.3%; $n = 16$), Black/African American (9.9%; $n = 14$), Asian/Pacific Islander (2.1%; $n = 3$), and Multiracial (0.7%; $n = 1$). Participants ranged in age from 25 years to 64 years ($M = 38.37$ years, $SD = 10.95$ years). The majority indicated their highest degree was a specialist degree (54.6%; $n = 77$), followed by a master's degree (18.4%; $n = 26$), and a doctoral degree (24.8%; $n = 35$). Only 7.1% ($n = 10$) of participants indicated they were endorsed as bilingual school psychologists. Approximately half of the participants completed their school psychology graduate training in Illinois (48.9%; $n = 69$), whereas 15.5% ($n = 22$) completed their training in other Midwestern states (excluding IL), 14.1% ($n = 20$) completed their training in northeastern states, 9.2% ($n = 13$) completed their training in Western states, 8.4% ($n = 12$) completed their training in Southeastern states, and 1.4% ($n = 2$) completed their training in Southwestern states. When asked about the state in which they currently practice, most participants reported practicing in Illinois (50.0%; $n = 71$). Approximately 16.2% ($n = 32$) reported other Midwestern states (excluding IL), 11.9% ($n = 17$) reported northeastern states, 8.4% ($n = 12$) reported Southeastern states, 7.8% ($n = 11$) reported Western states, and 0.7% ($n = 1$) reported Southwestern states.

Table 1

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Gender				
Male	--	--	20	14.2
Female	--	--	118	83.7
Other	--	--	0	0.0
Age (years)	38.37	10.95	--	--
Race/Ethnicity				

White	--	--	102	72.3
Hispanic/Latino	--	--	16	11.3
Black/African American	--	--	14	9.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	--	--	3	2.1
American Indian/Alaska Native	--	--	0	0.0
Multiracial	--	--	1	0.7
Highest Graduate-Level Degree				
Master's	--	--	26	18.4
Specialist	--	--	77	54.6
Doctoral	--	--	35	24.8
Bilingual Endorsement				
Yes	--	--	10	7.1
No	--	--	129	91.5
State/Region of Graduate Program				
IL	--	--	69	48.9
Midwest (excluding IL)	--	--	22	15.5
Northeastern	--	--	20	14.1
Southeastern	--	--	12	8.4
Western	--	--	13	9.2
Southwestern	--	--	2	1.4
State/Region of Current Practice				
IL	--	--	71	50.0
Midwest (excluding IL)	--	--	32	16.2
Northeastern	--	--	17	11.9
Southeastern	--	--	12	8.4
Western	--	--	11	7.8
Southwestern	--	--	1	0.7

Participants' school district characteristics. Most participants indicated they currently practice in a suburban school district (52.5%; $n = 74$), followed by an urban school district (27.0%; $n = 38$), and a rural school district (18.4%; $n = 26$). Regarding the racial composition of the student population, 36.2% ($n = 51$) indicated working in a district with zero to twenty-five percent minority students, 22.0% ($n = 31$) indicated working in a district with twenty-six to fifty percent minority students, 20.6% ($n = 29$) indicated working in a district with fifty-one to

seventy-five percent minority students, and 19.1% ($n = 27$) indicated working in a district with seventy-six to one hundred percent minority students. Information regarding number of years as a school psychologist and percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch was not collected due to a small number of responses for these write-in questions. Participants' school district demographic data are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Participants' School District Characteristics

Characteristic	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Setting				
Urban	--	--	38	27.0
Suburban	--	--	74	52.5
Rural	--	--	26	18.4
Percent of Racial-ethnic Minority Students				
0% to 25%	--	--	51	36.2
26% to 50%	--	--	31	22.0
51% to 75%	--	--	29	20.6
76% to 100%	--	--	27	19.1

Training experiences. Whereas 80.0% ($n = 114$) indicated taking graduate courses that discussed multicultural/diversity topics, 17.7% ($n = 25$) reported not doing so. When asked about the degree to which participants' training programs emphasized multiculturalism/diversity, 2.1% ($n = 3$) reported it was never emphasized, 14.9% ($n = 21$) reported rarely, 28.4% ($n = 40$) reported sometimes, 31.2% ($n = 44$) reported frequently, and 20.6% ($n = 29$) reported always.

When asked how frequently participants' interacted with minority students throughout their graduate training, 3.5% ($n = 5$) reported never, 14.9% ($n = 21$) reported rarely, 20.6% ($n = 29$) reported sometimes, 36.9% ($n = 52$) reported frequently, and 21.3% ($n = 30$) reported always. Participants' training experiences data are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Participants' Training Experiences

Experience	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Multicultural/Diversity Graduate Courses				
Yes	--	--	114	80.0
No	--	--	25	17.7
Emphasis on Multiculturalism/Diversity				
Never	--	--	3	2.1
Rarely	--	--	21	14.9
Sometimes	--	--	40	28.4
Frequently	--	--	44	31.2
Always	--	--	29	20.6
Interaction with Minority Students				
Never	--	--	5	3.5
Rarely	--	--	21	14.9
Sometimes	--	--	29	20.6
Frequently	--	--	52	36.9
Always	--	--	30	21.3

Professional development/work-related diversity experiences. Approximately 34.0% ($n = 48$) of respondents reported participating in zero professional development sessions related to multiculturalism/diversity per school year, 36.2% ($n = 51$) reported participating in one session, 11.3% ($n = 16$) reported participating in two sessions, and 17.0% ($n = 24$) reported participating in more than two sessions per school year. In their respective school districts, 45.4% ($n = 64$) respondents reported participating in multicultural initiatives zero times per school year, 27.7% ($n = 39$) reported one time per school year, 13.5% ($n = 19$) reported twice per school year, and 12.1% ($n = 17$) reported more than twice per school year. Participants' professional development and work-related diversity experience data are reported in Table 4.

Respondents were asked to briefly describe the professional development in which they participated. Approximately 84.6% ($n = 77$) of respondents who indicated participating in one or

more sessions provided a description. The researcher examined these descriptions and created broad categories. Each response was then placed in a category. Of those who provided a response, the majority of respondents reported participating in professional development sessions related to serving Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students (CLD) and English Learner (EL) students ($n = 45$). These tended to involve assessment, intervention, consultation, counseling, positive behavior supports, ethics, and legal issues. Others reported participating in professional development related to disproportionality in school discipline/implicit bias ($n = 8$). Some respondents indicated participating in sessions dedicated to working with low-income students ($n = 4$), LGBTQ issues ($n = 3$), social justice ($n = 3$), gender in math/science ($n = 1$), and working with refugee students ($n = 1$). Many respondents indicated participating in more general professional development sessions related to diversity and did not provide specific examples ($n = 20$). It is important to note that these numbers overlap due to many participants describing multiple sessions across different categories.

Respondents were asked to briefly describe the work-related multicultural/diversity activities in which they participated. Approximately 86.7% ($n = 65$) of respondents who indicated participating in one or more activities provided a description. The researcher examined these descriptions and created broad categories. Each response was then placed in a category. Of those who provided a response, most participants described multicultural/diversity initiatives related to school-wide multicultural/international festivals involving dance and food ($n = 23$). Others indicated participating in activities related to specific racial-ethnic heritage months, such as assemblies ($n = 14$). Moreover, participants described general diversity initiatives involving culturally sensitive interventions, curricula, and parent workshops ($n = 14$). Some respondents

described involvement in school clubs and committees related to race, ethnicity, language, social justice, and LGBTQ ($n = 9$). Finally, a few participants did not provide enough description to place their responses in a category ($n = 5$).

Table 4

<i>Participants' PD/Work-related Diversity Experiences</i>				
Experience	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Professional Development Related to Multiculturalism/Diversity				
0 x Per School Year	--	--	48	34.0
1 x Per School Year	--	--	51	36.2
2 x Per School Year	--	--	16	11.3
More Than 2 x Per School Year	--	--	24	17.0
Participation in Multicultural Initiatives				
0 x Per School Year	--	--	64	45.4
1 x Per School Year	--	--	39	27.7
2 x Per School Year	--	--	19	13.5
More than 2 x Per School Year	--	--	17	12.1

Instrumentation

The present study utilized a cross-sectional survey design in the form of a self-administered online questionnaire. Survey research methodology allows for the collection of data describing beliefs, attitudes, and characteristics of specific groups of people (Babbie, 1990). Further, this method is useful for determining relationships between variables as well as for generalizing to the population from which a sample is obtained (Babbie, 1990).

Multicultural Competence in School Psychology.

Participants completed the School Psychology Multicultural Competence Scale (SPMCS; Appendix B). The SPMCS is a 46-item self-report questionnaire developed to assess multicultural competencies among school psychology trainees and practitioners (Malone,

Connell, & Fiorello, 2011). Items on the SPMCS evaluate multicultural competencies across the domains of school psychology intervention, assessment, and consultation. The SPMCS was developed using the cross-cultural school psychology competencies identified by Lopez and Rogers (2001) and Rogers and Lopez (2002). Content validity for the SPMCS was established by asking nine professionals with extensive experience in multicultural school psychology to rate the items' relevance to multicultural competence in the field. After two rounds of ratings, the final version of the SPMCS resulted in three subscales (awareness, knowledge, and skills), each with 15 items.

Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (1= "Strongly disagree", 4= "Strongly Agree"). Initial validity data resulted in a four-factor solution (Malone et al., 2016). The fourth factor encompassed cultural appreciation and was related to but separate from the awareness subscale. An alpha coefficient of 0.92 resulted for the overall scale. Subscale alpha coefficients ranged from 0.75 to 0.86. The current study used the SPMCQ overall scale total score for analyses, which resulted in an alpha coefficient of 0.94.

Racial Colorblindness.

Participants completed the Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Appendix C) developed by Neville et al. (2000). The CoBRAS is a 20-item self-report measure designed to assess cognitive dimensions of colorblind racial attitudes, such as the denial of racial dynamics and an unawareness of structural racism. Items on the CoBRAS are rated on a six-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 6=Strongly Agree). Sample items include "racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the U.S." and "race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not." Total scores range between 20 and

120, with higher scores indicating a greater endorsement of colorblind racial attitudes. Three subscales comprise the CoBRAS: Unawareness of Racial Privilege, Institutional Discrimination, and Blatant Racial Issues. Reported total score alpha coefficients ranged from .86 to .91. Subscale alpha coefficients ranged from .76 to .83. The current study used the CoBRAS total score for analyses, which resulted in an alpha coefficient of 0.86.

Social desirability.

Participants completed a short version of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS Form C; Appendix D) created by Reynolds (1982). This 13-item scale measures the tendency for participants to offer responses that portray them more favorably (e.g., “I have never deliberately said something that hurts someone’s feelings”). The MCSDS Form C has substantially fewer items than the original scale with equally strong psychometric properties. Items on the MCSDS Form C are rated as either true or false. Total scores range between 0 and 13, with higher scores indicating a greater desire to respond in socially desirable ways. The reported alpha coefficient for the total score of .76 falls within the acceptable range. The current study resulted in an alpha coefficient of 0.64. Although the generally accepted value for an alpha coefficient is 0.70 or higher, it is important to note that the value depends on the number of items on the scale (Field, 2009). Therefore, a short scale may result in a smaller coefficient simply because there are fewer items.

Procedure

Approval for the study was obtained through the university’s Institutional Review Board and through the ISPA board. Participants were primarily recruited through posts on Facebook, a

social media site. The primary researcher created the original recruitment post, which was shared by friends and colleagues on their own Facebook pages. The social media post (Appendix A) included a short description of the study and a hyperlink to the web-based survey tool SurveyMonkey for completion of the questionnaires. Participants who clicked on the hyperlink were directed to an informed consent page (Appendix E) containing a description of the study, the risks and benefits of participation, and participant rights. Once the participants indicated their consent, they were directed to the series of questionnaires. Participants then indicated if they were practicing as school psychologists, interns, practicum students, faculty/trainers, or retired. Only those who indicated they were practicing school psychologists continued through the rest of the questionnaires. Those who did not pass this screener proceeded to the end of the survey via skip logic. After completing the screener question, participants first completed the racial colorblindness measure (CoBRAS), followed by the School Psychology Multicultural Competence Scale (SPMCS), and lastly the social desirability measure (MCSDS Form C). At the end of the survey, participants completed a short series of demographic questions (Appendix F). No IP addresses were collected by the survey platform in order to protect confidentiality and anonymity.

In addition to the Facebook posts, participants were recruited through a posting on ISPA's member resources webpage that includes a section for research surveys conducted by ISPA members. This post explained the study in more depth than the social media posts and included a hyperlink to access the survey (Appendix G). In order to increase the likelihood of a higher responses rate, the recruitment script was posted on the primary researcher's Facebook page six weeks after the initial post. The survey was open for a total of seven weeks.

An incentive was provided to participants who completed the survey. Participants had the opportunity to receive one of five \$25 Target gift cards through a raffle. The penultimate page of the survey instructed participants wishing to partake in the raffle to send an email to an email account created solely for the raffle. Only the primary researcher had access to this account. Although the email addresses of participants requesting to partake in the raffle was known, asking them to send an email independent of the survey platform allowed for their responses on the questionnaires to remain anonymous. Raffle winners received the gift cards electronically using the provided email addresses. A second incentive for increasing the number of completed and usable surveys occurred through donations the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), a non-profit child advocacy organization. Much of CDF's work focuses on supporting the needs of children living in poverty, children of color, and children with disabilities through programs and policy work. For every completed survey, \$1 was donated (\$141 total).

Hypothesis

Based on the literature discussed in the previous chapter (Chao, 2006; Constantine, 2002; Constantine, Juby, & Liang, 2001), the major hypothesis of this study predicts a significant negative relationship between levels of racial colorblindness (as measured by the CoBRAS) and self-perceived levels of multicultural competence (as measured by the SPMCS). That is, as levels of racial colorblindness increase, self-perceived levels of multicultural competence decrease.

Data Analysis

Upon closing the survey, raw data were downloaded from SurveyMonkey into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. After deleting unnecessary or repetitive rows and columns, the

spreadsheet was analyzed using SPSS Statistics Version 24.0. Data cleaning occurred prior to completing analyses. Variable names were changed to make them more easily identifiable. For variables with no more than 5% missing values, empty cases were replaced with the item mean across the three scales. Additionally, reverse items were recoded so that high values indicated the same type of response on every item, and write-in items were recoded or computed into new variables. Some variables were recoded in order to create more balanced groups. For example, the “rarely” and “never” responses on the item “Please rate the degree to which your school psychology graduate program emphasized multiculturalism/diversity” were combined, resulting in four comparison groups instead of five. Only responses from participants who completed the three rating scales at the minimum were included in the analyses.

Descriptive statistics were computed on a variety of variables depicting demographic information, school district characteristics, and training experiences. Inferential statistics were conducted to answer each of the six research questions. These analyses included Pearson product-moment correlations, independent *t*-tests, and analyses of variance (ANOVAs). Non-parametric tests such as the Mann-Whitney test and Spearman’s correlation were used when data violated normality assumptions. The homogeneity of variance assumption was tested across groups using Levene’s test (Levene, 1960). Cronbach alpha coefficients were computed in order to determine internal consistency for each of the three scales. For ANOVAs yielding significant results, post-hoc tests were conducted to determine the specific variables demonstrating significant differences.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The present study sought to expand the research base for the SPMCS by administering the measure to a sample of practicing school psychologists. Further, it sought to investigate the relationship between racial colorblindness and self-perceived multicultural competence among school psychologists through the administration of existing colorblindness and multicultural competence measures. This chapter details the findings for each of the six research questions.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: To What Extent do School Psychologists Demonstrate Colorblind Racial Attitudes?

This question was addressed by calculating the total scores on the colorblind racial attitudes measure (CoBRAS). Items on the CoBRAS are rated on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*). Total scores range from 20 to 120 with higher scores indicating higher levels of colorblind racial attitudes. To calculate total scores, items 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 15, 17, and 20 were reverse coded. All 20 items were then added together for each participant using the Compute Variable function in SPSS. For the current study, total CoBRAS scores ranged from 33 to 89 ($M_{CoBRAS} = 51.28$, $SD = 10.51$). Means and standard deviations from four samples in a previous validation study are presented in Table 5. The authors of the validation study (Neville et al., 2000) described the total scores as falling within the “moderate levels of colorblind racial attitudes” range but did not offer additional classification information. For the purposes of the

current study, quartiles were used to delineate cut-off scores for categorization. Total scores between 20 and 44 depict “low racial colorblindness”, scores between 45 and 69 depict “moderately low racial colorblindness”, scores between 70 and 94 depict “moderately high racial colorblindness”, and scores between 95 and 120 depict “high racial colorblindness”. On average, the participants in the current study reported moderately low levels of colorblind racial attitudes. See Table 6 for a list of means and standard deviations for the total score and individual items on the CoBRAS.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for CoBRAS Total Scores in Neville et al. (2000)

Sample group	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sample 1 (<i>n</i> = 282)	64.86	15.62
Sample 2 (<i>n</i> = 592)	67.30	11.83
Sample 3 (<i>n</i> = 102)	61.72	14.97
Sample 4 (<i>n</i> = 144)	63.12	15.23

To check if the CoBRAS total scores met the assumption of normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values obtained through the Frequencies function in SPSS were converted to *z*-scores. To calculate a *z*-score for skewness, the skewness value is divided by the standard error of skewness (Field, 2009). The absolute value of the *z*-score is then compared to values expected through chance alone (e.g., 1.96 for significance at $p \leq .05$; 2.57 for significance at $p \leq .01$). For smaller sample sizes (200 or less), if the absolute value of the *z*-score of skewness is greater than 1.96, then the score has significant skewness (Field, 2009). Thus, a *z*-score of skewness below 1.96 is desired because it indicates the distribution of scores falls within the acceptable range for normality. The *z*-score of skewness obtained for the racial colorblindness total score was 2.36, which indicated a significant skew. An examination of a histogram for the

CoBRAS scores in the current sample demonstrated a positive skew, with scores clustered near the low end of the scale. See Table 7 for a list of skewness and kurtosis values for the CoBRAS total scores.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for CoBRAS Items and Total Score

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.	2.59	1.28
2. Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of healthcare or daycare) that people receive in the U.S.	3.89	0.94
3. It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.	2.38	1.24
4. Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.	3.92	0.87
5. Racism is a major problem in the U.S.	4.55	0.58
6. Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.	3.22	1.30
7. Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.	1.46	0.82
8. Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the U.S.	4.14	0.81
9. White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color their skin.	2.04	1.18
10. Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.	2.37	1.24
11. It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.	4.59	0.55
12. White people in the U.S. have certain advantages	4.42	0.76

because of the color of their skin.

13. Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and adopt the values of the U.S.	2.73	1.08
14. English should be the only official language in the U.S.	2.44	1.30
15. White people are more to blame for racial discrimination in the U.S. than racial and ethnic minorities.	3.59	1.11
16. Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.	2.19	1.12
17. It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.	4.84	0.38
18. Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.	2.07	1.02
19. Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.	1.40	0.74
20. Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.	4.03	1.09
CoBRAS Total Score	51.29	10.51

To calculate a *z*-score for kurtosis, the kurtosis value is divided by the standard error of kurtosis (Field, 2009). The absolute value of the *z*-score is then compared to values expected through chance alone (e.g., 1.96 for significance at $p \leq .05$; 2.57 for significance at $p \leq .01$). For smaller sample sizes (200 or less), if the absolute value of the *z*-score of kurtosis is greater than 1.96, then the score has significant kurtosis (Field, 2009). Thus, a *z*-score of kurtosis below 1.96 is desired because it indicates the distribution of scores falls within the acceptable range for normality. The *z*-score of kurtosis obtained for the racial colorblindness total score was 0.63, which indicated distribution of scores within the acceptable limits of normality.

Table 7

Skewness, Kurtosis, and Standard Errors (S.E.) for CoBRAS, SPMCS, and MCSDS Form C Total Scores

Scale	Skew	Skew S.E.	Kurt	Kurt S.E.
CoBRAS	0.48	0.20	0.25	0.41
SPMCS	0.30	0.20	-0.73	0.41
MCSDS Form C	-0.33	0.20	-0.58	0.41

Research Question 2: To What Extent do School Psychologists Perceive Themselves as Possessing Multicultural Competence?

This question was addressed by calculating the total scores on the school psychology multicultural competence measure (SPMCS). Items on the SPMCS are rated on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*). Total scores range from 46 to 184 with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-perceived multicultural competence. No items were reverse coded to calculate the total score. All 46 items were then added together for each participant using the Compute Variable function in SPSS. For the current study, total SPMCS scores ranged from 117 to 184 ($M_{SPMCS} = 149.32$, $SD = 14.72$). Quartiles were used to delineate cut-off scores for categorization. Total scores between 46 and 79 depict “low self-perceived multicultural competence”, scores between 80 and 114 depict “moderately low self-perceived multicultural competence”, scores between 115 and 149 depict “moderately high self-perceived multicultural competence”, and scores between 150 and 184 depict “high self-perceived multicultural competence”. On average, the participants reported moderately high levels of self-perceived multicultural competence. See Table 8 for a list of means and standard deviations for the total score and individual items on the SPMCS.

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for SPMCS Items and Total Score

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. There are basic assessment skills that are applicable to create successful outcomes regardless of the student's cultural background.	3.19	0.65
2. There are basic intervention skills that are applicable to create successful outcomes regardless of the student's cultural background.	3.28	0.66
3. There are basic consultation skills that are applicable to create successful outcomes regardless of the consultee's and client's cultural backgrounds.	3.26	0.67
4. I am aware of the cultural differences that exist among the faculty and staff at my school.	3.45	0.63
5. I can recognize when my beliefs and values are interfering with providing the best services to my students.	3.32	0.54
6. I believe that all school psychologists should engage in ongoing professional development around multiculturalism and diversity issues.	3.65	0.56
7. I can discuss how culture influences parenting practices.	3.18	0.56
8. I am aware of how culture impacts learning and behavior.	3.32	0.53
9. I understand how my cultural background has influenced the way I think and act.	3.56	0.54
10. I am comfortable with racial differences that may exist between me and others.	3.54	0.54
11. I have a sense of the values, strengths, and limitations of my own culture.	3.48	0.57
12. I can accurately compare my own cultural perspective to that of a person from another culture.	3.11	0.58

13. I am accepting and respecting of other's cultures.	3.69	0.51
14. I can identify when my own biases negatively influence my services to my students.	3.17	0.53
15. I understand the need to retain one's cultural identity.	3.52	0.57
16. I am aware of the role that parents play in developing children's culture.	3.73	0.44
17. I am knowledgeable of effective assessment strategies used with culturally and linguistically diverse students.	3.06	0.64
18. I know how to adapt instruments to assess linguistically diverse students.	2.77	0.87
19. I know that cross-cultural variables may affect performance on and interpretation of standardized assessments.	3.55	0.54
20. I know how to use alternate assessment methods such as dynamic assessment and ecological assessment.	2.56	0.86
21. I have knowledge of research on assessing culturally and linguistically diverse children.	2.99	0.74
22. It is important to integrate cultural and language background of a student into a psychoeducational report.	3.56	0.57
23. I am knowledgeable of evidence-based intervention strategies used culturally and linguistically diverse students.	2.73	0.72
24. I understand the process of second language acquisition and its impact on the acquisition of academic skills.	3.18	0.63
25. I am knowledgeable of the most effective consultation strategies used with culturally and linguistically diverse consultees.	2.65	0.64
26. When consulting, I know how culturally related factors may affect accurate assessment of the "problem" in the	3.09	0.52

problem solving process.		
27. I understand my role as a school psychologist in my school and in my school district.	3.60	0.56
28. I am aware that members of cultural groups may have different attitudes towards disabilities or exceptionalities.	3.68	0.49
29. I consider sociocultural variables and perspectives when evaluating research.	3.26	0.57
30. I know how language influences a child's academic performance.	3.51	0.56
31. I have an understanding of cultural differences of the groups that reside in my geographic region.	3.25	0.51
32. I know how to use translators appropriately during the assessment process.	3.20	0.74
33. I can identify the strengths and weaknesses of psychological tests in terms of their use with students from difference cultural, racial, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds.	3.10	0.65
34. I can explain test information culturally diverse parents.	3.24	0.55
35. I can make culturally relevant curriculum and classroom management recommendations.	2.82	0.71
36. I am skilled in terms of being able to provide appropriate intervention services to culturally diverse students.	2.81	0.70
37. I am skilled in implementing home-school collaboration programs and interventions.	2.74	0.69
38. I can recognize prejudice and prevalent obstacles that may affect consultation.	3.28	0.49
39. I am skilled in understanding nonverbal communication.	3.33	0.58

40. I can work with culturally and linguistically diverse children, parents, and school staff.	3.50	0.52
41. I can effectively assess the mental health needs of a student from a cultural background significantly different from my own.	3.08	0.54
42. I can effectively secure information and resources to better serve culturally diverse students and families.	3.04	0.63
43. I can consult with institutions to work towards eliminating biases, prejudice, and discriminatory practices.	3.00	0.67
44. When working with linguistically diverse parents and students, I can interpret information obtained through translators.	3.21	0.58
45. I respect and appreciate the socioeconomic and cultural background of a child and his/her family.	3.67	0.51
46. I engage in ongoing efforts to reduce and eliminate biased beliefs and behaviors.	3.43	0.59
SPMCS Total Score	149.32	14.72

The initial development and examination study of the SPMCS (Malone et al., 2016), which used a sample of school psychology graduate students, did not provide information on total scores. Instead, it provided means for each of the SPMCS subscales. The Malone et al. (2016) sample obtained a mean of 3.27 on the Cultural Awareness subscale, a mean of 2.64 on the Cultural Knowledge subscale, and a mean of 2.54 on the Cultural Skills subscale (Malone et al., 2015). The sample in the current study obtained a mean of 3.40 on the Cultural Awareness subscale, a mean of 3.16 on the Cultural Knowledge subscale, and a mean of 3.16 on the Cultural Skills subscale. See Table 9 for a list of subscale means and standard deviations from the two samples.

Table 9

SPMCS Subscale Means and Standard Deviations Across Samples

SPMCS Subscale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Malone et al. (2016) sample		
Cultural Awareness	3.27	0.40
Cultural Knowledge	2.64	0.49
Cultural Skills	2.54	0.38
Current sample		
Cultural Awareness	3.40	0.31
Cultural Knowledge	3.16	0.40
Cultural Skills	3.16	0.39

To check if the SPMCS total scores met the assumption of normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values obtained through the Frequencies function in SPSS were converted to *z*-scores. See research question one for an explanation of this conversion. The *z*-score of skewness obtained for the school psychology multicultural competence total score was 1.46, which fell within the acceptable limits of normality. The *z*-score of kurtosis obtained for the SPMCS was -1.81, which fell within the limits of normality. An examination of a histogram for the SPMCS total scores indicated a generally normal distribution. See Table 7 for skewness and kurtosis values of the SPMCS total scores.

Research Question 3: What is the Relationship Between School Psychologists' Colorblind Racial Attitudes and Self-Perceived Multicultural Competence?

To address this question, a correlation coefficient was calculated between CoBRAS total scores and SPMCS total scores. Given that the assumption of normality was violated for the CoBRAS total scores, Spearman's correlation coefficient (Spearman, 1910) was calculated. This non-parametric statistic is used when parametric assumptions have been violated (Field, 2009).

No significant relationship was found between school psychologists' level of racial colorblindness and level of self-perceived multicultural competence, $r_s = -.110$, $p = .20$.

Research Question 4: Are There Significant Differences in Colorblind Racial Attitudes Among School Psychologists When Grouped by Demographic Variables?

To address this question, descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the variance and distributions of ten potential independent variables. Mann Whitney tests were conducted using the following independent variables: 1) gender, 2) race, and 3) participation in diversity initiatives (see Table 10). One-way ANOVAs were conducted using the following independent variables: 1) age, 2) graduate training coursework content, 3) the degree to which participants' graduate programs emphasized diversity, 4) the degree to which participants interacted with minority students in school settings during their training, 5) participation in professional development related to diversity 6) type of graduate degree, 7) school district setting, and 8) percent of racial-ethnic minorities in school district (see Table 11). CoBRAS total scores were used for the dependent variable.

As noted previously, the CoBRAS total scores distribution violated the assumption of normality. Skewed distributions may result in biased results when conducting independent t -tests (Wilcox, 2005). The Mann-Whitney test, a non-parametric statistical analysis, was used in place of a t -test when the assumption of normality was violated.

A review of the literature suggests ANOVA's F statistic is relatively unaffected by violations of normality when group sizes are equal (Donaldson, 1968; Field, 2009; Lunney, 1970). When group sizes are unequal, however, a non-normal distribution impacts the power and accuracy of F (Wilcox, 2005). Given that no variables were experimentally manipulated for this

study, many of the independent variables resulted in unequal samples between groups.

Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc tests were run on significant ANOVAs to gain an understanding of specific differences between unequal groups. Hochberg's GT2 is a conservative pairwise test procedure that controls for Type I error rates when group sizes are very different (Field, 2013).

When group sizes were only slightly different, Gabriel's pairwise test procedure was used due to its greater power.

The homogeneity of variance assumption was tested across groups using Levene's test (Levene, 1960). This assumption was not violated on the statistically significant one-way ANOVAs with racial colorblindness as the dependent variable.

Gender. A Mann-Whitney test did not determine statistically significant differences in racial colorblindness between males and females, $U = 1028.50$, $z = -0.92$, $p = .36$, $r = .08$.

Race/Ethnicity. Given the lack of variance across many of the racial and ethnic groups, racial-ethnic minority groups were collapsed to create one level of this variable. This allowed for a comparison between Whites and racial-ethnic minorities as a whole. A Mann-Whitney test found statistically significant differences in racial colorblindness between Whites ($Mdn = 52.00$) and racial-ethnic minorities ($Mdn = 48.00$), $U = 1227.00$, $z = -2.55$, $p < .05$, $r = .22$. The mean ranks of Whites and racial-ethnic minorities were 73.47 and 53.59, respectively.

Age. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore differences in levels of racial colorblindness between age groups, if any. This analysis revealed a statistically significant main effect of age on racial colorblindness, $F(2, 135) = 7.73$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .10$. Specifically, Gabriel's post hoc analyses found two statistically significant pairwise comparisons, $p < .01$, indicating participants in the 41 to 64 age group ($M_{CoBRAS} = 56.06$, $SD = 10.74$) reported higher levels of

racial colorblindness than participants in the 31 to 40 age group ($M_{\text{CoBRAS}} = 48.53$, $SD = 9.53$) and in the 25 to 30 age group ($M_{\text{CoBRAS}} = 49.64$, $SD = 9.68$). Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant, $F(2, 135) = 0.05$, $p = .96$.

Coursework content. A Mann-Whitney test did not determine statistically significant differences in racial colorblindness between participants who took graduate courses with multicultural/diversity content and those who did not, $U = 1101.50$, $z = -1.78$, $p = .08$, $r = .15$.

Training program's emphasis on diversity. A one-way ANOVA did not reveal a statistically significant effect of diversity emphasis in training programs on racial colorblindness, $F(3, 133) = 1.40$, $p = .25$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Levene's test of homogeneity was significant, $F(3, 133) = 2.72$, $p < .05$.

Interaction with minority students in school settings during training. A one-way ANOVA did not reveal a statistically significant effect of participants' interactions with minority students during their training on racial colorblindness, $F(3, 133) = 0.91$, $p = .44$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant, $F(3, 133) = 2.19$, $p = .09$.

Participation in multicultural professional development. A one-way ANOVA did not reveal a statistically significant effect of participation in multicultural/diversity professional development on racial colorblindness, $F(2, 136) = 0.00$, $p = .97$, $\eta^2 = .00$. Levene's test of homogeneity was significant, $F(2, 136) = 4.58$, $p < .05$.

Participation in school district multicultural initiatives. A Mann-Whitney test did not determine statistically significant differences in racial colorblindness between participants who did not participate in multicultural/diversity initiatives in their school districts and those who participated in one or more, $U = 2048.0$, $z = -1.49$, $p = .14$, $r = .13$.

Type of graduate degree. A one-way ANOVA did not reveal a statistically significant effect of graduate degree type on racial colorblindness, $F(2, 135) = 0.48, p = .62, \eta^2 = .00$. Levene's test of homogeneity was significant, $F(2, 135) = 3.10, p < .05$.

School district setting. A one-way ANOVA did not reveal a statistically significant effect of school district setting on racial colorblindness, $F(2, 135) = 2.36, p = .10, \eta^2 = .03$. Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant, $F(2, 135) = 1.97, p = .14$.

Percentage of racial-ethnic minorities in school district. A one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant main effect of school district racial-ethnic minority composition on racial colorblindness, $F(3, 134) = 3.31, p < .05, \eta^2 = .07$. However, Hochberg's GT2 post hoc analyses did not find significant differences between group means. Significant omnibus F -tests with non-significant post hoc results may occur as a result of sampling error (Cardinal & Aitken, 2006). Additionally, these results may have manifested as a result of unequal groups. Hochberg's GT2 post hoc was used due to its ability to control Type I error rates when sample groups are very unequal. Given that Hochberg's GT2 is a conservative post hoc test, it may lack the power to detect differences in individual pairwise comparisons (Field, 2009). Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant, $F(3, 134) = 0.53, p = .66$.

Table 10

<i>Mann-Whitney Test with CoBRAS as Dependent Variable</i>			
Independent Variable	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
Gender	1028.50	.359	.08
Race	1227.00	.011*	.22
Graduate coursework content	1101.50	.076	.15
Participation in school district multicultural initiatives	2048.00	.137	.13

Note. * denotes $p < .05$

Table 11

One-Way ANOVA with CoBRAS as Dependent Variable

Independent Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i> ²
Age		7.73	.001**	.10
Between	2			
Within	135			
Training program's emphasis on diversity		1.40	.245	.03
Between	3			
Within	133			
Interaction with minority students in school settings		0.91	.438	.02
Between	3			
Within	133			
Participation in multicultural professional development		0.00	.996	.00
Between	2			
Within	136			
Type of gradate degree		0.48	.621	.00
Between	2			
Within	135			
School district setting		2.36	.098	.03
Between	2			
Within	135			
Percentage of racial-ethnic minorities in school district		3.31	.022*	.07
Between	3			
Within	134			

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

Research Question 5. Are There Significant Differences in Self-Perceived Multicultural Competence Among School Psychologists When Grouped by Demographic Variables?

To address this question, descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the variance and distributions of ten potential independent variables. Independent *t*-tests were conducted using the following independent variables: 1) gender, 2) race, 3) graduate training coursework content, and 4) participation in diversity initiatives (see Table 12). One-way ANOVAs were conducted using

the following independent variables: 1) age, 2) the degree to which participants' graduate programs emphasized diversity, 3) the degree to which participants interacted with minority students in school settings during their training, 4) participation in professional development related to diversity 5) type of graduate degree, 6) school district setting, and 7) percent of racial-ethnic minorities in school district (see Table 13). SPMCS total scores were used for the dependent variable.

As noted previously, the SPMCS total scores distribution fell within the acceptable limits of normality. Given that no variables were experimentally manipulated for this study, many of the independent variables resulted in unequal samples between groups. Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc tests were run on significant ANOVAs to gain an understanding of specific differences between unequal groups. Hochberg's GT2 is a conservative pairwise test procedure that controls for Type I error rates when group sizes are very different (Field, 2013). When group sizes were only slightly different, Gabriel's pairwise test procedure was used due to its greater power.

The homogeneity of variance assumption was tested across groups using Levene's test (Levene, 1960). When this assumption was violated, the Games-Howell post hoc test was used because it does not assume normality, equal variances, or equal sample sizes (Field, 2013).

Gender. An independent t-test did not determine statistically significant differences in self-perceived multicultural competence between males and females, $t(136) = 0.28, p = .78, d = .07$. Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant, $F(136) = 0.45, p = .50$.

Race/Ethnicity. Given the lack of variance across many of the racial and ethnic groups, racial-ethnic minority groups were collapsed to create one level of this variable. This allowed for a comparison between Whites and racial-ethnic minorities as a whole. An independent t-test did

not determine statistically significant differences in self-perceived multicultural competence between Whites and racial-ethnic minorities, $t(134) = -1.14, p = .26, d = .22$. Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant, $F(134) = 3.16, p = .08$.

Age. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore differences in levels of self-perceived multicultural competence between age groups, if any. This analysis did not reveal a statistically significant main effect of age on self-perceived multicultural competence, $F(2, 135) = 0.32, p = .73, \eta^2 = .00$. Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant, $F(2, 135) = 0.28, p = .75$.

Coursework content. An independent t -test revealed statistically significant differences in self-perceived multicultural competence between participants who took graduate courses with multicultural/diversity content ($M_{SPMCS} = 150.92$) and those who did not ($M_{SPMCS} = 142.88$), $t(137) = 3.04, p < .01, d = .61$. Levene's test of homogeneity was significant, $F(137) = 6.31, p < .05$.

Training program's emphasis on diversity. A one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant main effect of diversity emphasis in training programs on self-perceived multicultural competence, $F(3, 133) = 2.89, p < .05, \eta^2 = .06$. Specifically, Hochberg's post hoc analyses found one statistically significant pairwise comparison, $p < .05$, indicating participants in the "always emphasized diversity" group ($M_{SPMCS} = 156.09, SD = 14.13$) reported higher levels of self-perceived multicultural competence than participants in the "never/rarely emphasized diversity" group ($M_{SPMCS} = 145.20, SD = 12.30$). Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant, $F(3, 133) = 2.12, p = .10$.

Interaction with minority students in school settings during training. A one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant main effect of participants' interactions with minority students during their training on self-perceived multicultural competence, $F(3, 133) = 8.96, p < .01, \eta^2 = .17$. Specifically, Hochberg's post hoc analyses found three statistically significant pairwise comparisons, $p < .01$, indicating participants in the "always interacted with minority students" group ($M_{SPMCS} = 160.22, SD = 14.32$) reported higher levels of self-perceived multicultural competence than participants in the "frequently interacted with minority students" group ($M_{SPMCS} = 148.77, SD = 12.61$), the "sometimes interacted with minority students" group ($M_{SPMCS} = 144.45, SD = 12.60$), and the "never/rarely interacted with minority students" group ($M_{SPMCS} = 143.93, SD = 15.93$). Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant, $F(3, 133) = 0.87, p = .46$

Participation in multicultural professional development. A one-way ANOVA did not reveal a statistically significant effect of participation in multicultural/diversity professional development on self-perceived multicultural competence, $F(2, 136) = 2.77, p = .06, \eta^2 = .04$. Levene's test of homogeneity was significant, $F(2, 136) = 0.79, p = .46$.

Participation in school district multicultural initiatives. An independent *t*-test did not determine statistically significant differences in self-perceived multicultural competence between participants who did not participate in multicultural/diversity initiatives in their school districts and those who participated in one or more, $t(137) = -0.21, p = .84, d = .04$. Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant, $F(137) = 3.33, p = .07$.

Type of graduate degree. A one-way ANOVA did not reveal a statistically significant effect of graduate degree type on self-perceived multicultural competence, $F(2, 135) = 1.10, p = .33, \eta^2 = .02$. Levene's test of homogeneity was significant, $F(2, 135) = 0.99, p = .38$.

School district setting. A one-way ANOVA did not reveal a statistically significant effect of school district setting on self-perceived multicultural competence, $F(2, 135) = 2.75, p = .07, \eta^2 = .04$. Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant, $F(2, 135) = 1.42, p = .25$.

Percentage of racial-ethnic minority students in school district. A one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant main effect of school district racial-ethnic minority composition on self-perceived multicultural competence, $F(3, 134) = 5.01, p < .01, \eta^2 = .10$. Given that Levene's test was significant, $F(3, 134) = 4.94, p < .01$, Games-Howell post hoc analyses were conducted. These analyses found two statistically significant pairwise comparisons, $p < .05$, indicating participants in school districts with 76% to 100% racial-ethnic minority students ($M_{SPMCS} = 158.62, SD = 16.63$) reported higher levels of self-perceived multicultural competence than those with 51% to 75% racial-ethnic minority students ($M_{SPMCS} = 143.30, SD = 9.66$), those with 26 to 50% racial-ethnic minority students ($M_{SPMCS} = 149.06, SD = 16.67$), and those with zero to 25% racial-ethnic minority students ($M_{SPMCS} = 147.24, SD = 13.29$). Levene's test of homogeneity was significant, $F(3, 134) = 4.94, p < .01$.

Table 12

Independent t-tests with SPMCS as Dependent Variable

Independent Variable	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Gender	0.28	.778	.07
Race	-1.14	.256	.22
Graduate coursework content	3.04	.004**	.61

Participation in school district multicultural initiatives	-0.21	.838	.04
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Note. ** denotes $p < .01$

Table 13

One-Way ANOVA with SPMCS as Dependent Variable

Independent Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i> ²
Age		0.32	.729	.00
Between	2			
Within	135			
Training program's emphasis on diversity		2.89	.038*	.06
Between	3			
Within	133			
Interaction with minority students in school settings		8.96	.000**	.17
Between	3			
Within	133			
Participation in multicultural professional development		2.77	.066	.04
Between	2			
Within	126			
Type of graduate degree		1.10	.334	.02
Between	2			
Within	135			
School district setting		2.75	.067	.04
Between	2			
Within	135			
Percentage of racial-ethnic minorities in school district		5.01	.003**	.10
Between	3			
Within	134			

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

Research Question 6: What is the Relationship Between Multicultural Competence and Social Desirability?

This question was addressed by first calculating the total scores on the social desirability measure (MCSDS Form C). Items on the MCSDS Form C are

rated as either true or false. Prior to analysis, each MCSDS Form C item was dummy coded (0= *False*, 1= *True*). Total scores range between 0 and 13, with higher scores indicating a greater desire to respond in socially desirable ways. To calculate total scores, items 5, 7, 9, and 10 were reverse coded. All 13 items were then added together for each participant using the Compute Variable function in SPSS. For the current study, total MCSDS Form C scores ranged from 1 to 12 ($M_{MCSDS} = 7.07$, $SD = 2.62$). On average, the participants reported moderate levels of socially desirable responses.

To check if the MCSDS Form C total scores met the assumption of normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values obtained through the Frequencies function in SPSS were converted to z -scores. Please refer to research question 1 for an explanation of this conversion. The z -score of skewness obtained for the MCSDS Form C total score was -1.61, which fell within the limits of normality. The z -score of kurtosis obtained for the MCSDS Form C was -1.42, which also fell within the limits of normality. An examination of a histogram for the SPMCS total scores indicated a generally normal distribution See Table 7 for skewness and kurtosis values of the MCSDS Form C total scores.

Next, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated between the MCSDS Form C total scores and the SPMCS total scores. A statistically significant relationship was found between school psychologists' level of self-perceived multicultural competence and level of social desirability, $r = .14$, $p < .05$. This indicates a positive, albeit weak association between the two variables.

To further explore the significant relationship between self-perceived multicultural competence and social desirability, a partial correlation was conducted between CoBRAS total

scores and SPMCS total scores while keeping the effects of social desirability constant. The results of this analysis did not find a statistically significant relationship between colorblind racial attitudes and self-perceived multicultural competence when controlling for the effects of social desirability, $r = -.10, p = .24$.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate self-perceived multicultural competence among school psychologists using the School Psychology Multicultural Competence Scale (SPMCS). Additionally, this study investigated the relationship between colorblind racial attitudes and self-perceived multicultural competence among school psychologists. The findings of each research question are discussed within the context of existing literature. Implications for school psychology training and practice, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Participant Characteristics

Demographics.

The current study obtained demographics similar to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)'s most recent national membership study in terms of gender, age, highest earned school psychologist degree, and provision of bilingual school psychology services (Walcott, Charvat, McNamara, & Hyson, 2016). In terms of race and ethnicity, approximately 72% of participants in the current study identified as White, whereas nearly 90% identified as White in the aforementioned NASP membership study. Although the current study did not obtain the level of diversity necessary to compare results across racial and ethnic groups, it did demonstrate slightly greater diversity than the most recent NASP membership study.

The results indicated that most participants work in school districts with a high percentage of students who identify as racial-ethnic minority students. Given the racial and ethnic demographics of participants, a racial-ethnic gap exists between the mostly-White sample of school psychologists and the students to which they provide services. This finding is consistent with an earlier 2010 NASP membership study in which more than 90% of school psychologists identified as White and 97% of respondents indicated serving students belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups (Curtis et al., 2010).

Training Experiences.

Most participants (80%) indicated taking courses that discussed multicultural/diversity topics during their graduate training. Nevertheless, this percentage seems rather low considering most school psychologists serve racially and ethnically diverse students (Curtis et al., 2010). The statistic indicating 17% of participants never took graduate courses focusing on multicultural topics is surprising, given the increasing numbers of children from racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States. These findings are consistent with those reported in Newell's (2010) study, which surveyed school psychology program directors and found that whereas 78% of the programs incorporated multicultural content into courses, 22% did not provide multicultural training. In the early 1990s, Rogers et al. (1992) surveyed a national sample of school psychology program directors and found that 40% of the programs did not offer courses on topics related to diversity or integrate such topics into core coursework. Nearly 25 years later, the respondents within this study report a relatively high percentage of training programs that do not incorporate multiculturalism or diversity into their courses.

Additionally, more than half of participants (58%) reported they frequently or always interacted with minority students throughout their graduate training. Approximately half (52%) of participants indicated that their program frequently or always emphasized multiculturalism/diversity. In the Rogers et al. (1992) study, nearly one third of the sample reported students having limited access to children from racial and ethnic minority groups during fieldwork experiences. Although the results of the current study suggest an increase in trainees' interactions with students from racial and ethnic minority groups, the lack of emphasis on multiculturalism/diversity among training programs suggests a need for a more explicit focus on such topics.

The lack of emphasis on multiculturalism and diversity in school psychology training programs is surprising given NASP's and APA's increased promotion of culturally sensitive service delivery (American Psychological Association, 2012a; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010a) and graduate training in diversity being a requirement for graduate programs seeking NASP program approval (NASP, 2010c). Similarly, Grunewald et al. (2010) examined diversity-related scholarship in a sample of major school psychology journals and found a decrease in diversity-focused publications when compared to a previous study. Although speculative, this lack of focus on diversity may be explained by the lack of representation of racial and ethnic minorities in the field and/or a lack of universal emphasis on multicultural training and scholarship within school psychology. Perhaps increasing the number of school psychologists and school psychology trainers from diverse backgrounds could bridge the gap between professional guidelines and multicultural training implementation.

Professional Development/Work-Related Diversity Experiences.

The findings indicated that only two thirds of respondents participate in professional development related to multiculturalism and only half participate in multicultural initiatives in their school districts per school year once in the field. Evidently, there is a need for increased professional development targeting multicultural and diversity topics as well a need for increased involvement in multicultural initiatives among practicing school psychologists. Understandably, workload demands may make it difficult for school psychologists to participate in district or school-wide multicultural initiatives. NASP's Practice Model Implementation Guide emphasizes the need for school psychologists to participate in school-wide services to promote learning and to promote diversity in all aspects of service delivery (Skalski et al., 2015). Moreover, APA developed core competencies for individual and cultural diversity (American Psychological Association, 2012a). Increased participation in multicultural initiatives in their school districts can help school psychologists uphold NASP's and APA's standards and principles. In particular, school psychologists are in unique positions to lead efforts such as implementing culturally responsive tiered interventions. Other initiatives can involve participation in school-wide celebrations of different cultures.

Research Questions

Research question 1: To what extent do school psychologists demonstrate colorblind racial attitudes?

On average, the participants in the current study reported moderately low levels of colorblind racial attitudes. The mean CoBRAS score among school psychologists in this sample was lower than those obtained by the four samples in the Neville et al.'s (2010) initial validation

study. Of importance are differences between the current sample and the samples in the validation study. Whereas the majority of participants in the current sample were female school psychologists, the samples in the initial validation study comprised of college students and community members with a more balanced gender composition. Women demonstrated significantly lower levels of colorblind racial attitudes than men in three of the four samples, which was explained by the authors as consistent with previous research demonstrating women on average are more sensitive to recognizing discrimination (Ponterotto et al., 1995; Sidanius, Pratto, & Brief, 1995).

While largely exploratory, two potential hypotheses are offered for the results of the study with respect to colorblind racial attitudes. Either school psychologists in this particular sample, who are largely White and female, reported lower levels of colorblind racial attitudes, or the self-report survey methodology in which colorblind racial attitudes were evaluated does not accurately measure such attitudes. Relying on self-reported levels of racial colorblindness may not offer an accurate measure of the construct—respondents may perceive themselves to possess lower colorblind racial attitudes than they actually do. To address this potential methodological issue, future research could invoke broader multi-modal methods of measuring colorblind racial attitudes, such as the use of vignettes and experimental designs. Another possible explanation for the moderately low levels of racial colorblindness among the sample relates to sampling bias. Perhaps participants with higher colorblind racial attitudes selected not to complete a survey focused on multiculturalism and diversity.

Research question 2: To what extent do school psychologists perceive themselves as possessing multicultural competence?

On average, the participants in the current study reported moderately high levels of self-perceived multicultural competence. Although total scores were not reported in the initial validation study for the SPMCS, subscale mean scores were provided. Despite the inability to statistically compare the means across the studies, the results suggest participants in the current study consistently rated themselves higher across the three multicultural competence scales. Given that participants in the Malone et al. (2016) study were school psychology graduate students, perhaps the current sample of practicing school psychologists rated themselves higher simply because their confidence has increased after working in the field. Similar to research question one, obtaining self-reported levels of multicultural competence may not accurately capture actual levels of competence. Future research would benefit from using different methodology to measure multicultural competence, such as having participants respond to scenarios.

Johnson and Jackson Williams (2015) compared levels of self-perceived multicultural competence among graduate students in school psychology, clinical psychology, and counseling psychology programs. Participants in clinical and counseling psychology programs reported significantly higher levels of self-perceived multicultural skills than those in school psychology programs. This contrasts with the findings of the current study, which found moderately high levels of self-perceived multicultural competence among a sample of practicing school psychologists. A limitation of the Johnson and Jackson Williams (2015) study is that the multicultural competence scale only targeted multicultural competence in counseling. It is

possible that school psychologists perceive themselves as less competent in this area of multicultural competence because counseling is only one of the different roles they serve within a school setting. Additionally, it may be that practicing school psychologists generally perceive themselves as more competent than school psychology graduate students who are still in training. Future studies should compare differences among school psychologists between the SPMCS and multicultural competence scales focused on counseling. Further research should also compare differences in self-perceived multicultural competences between school psychology trainees and practicing school psychologists.

Research question 3: What is the relationship between school psychologists' level of colorblind racial attitudes and level of self-perceived multicultural competence?

No significant relationship was found between school psychologists' colorblind racial attitudes and self-perceived multicultural competence. There is no known research to date on the topic of examining the relationship between colorblind racial attitudes and self-perceived multicultural competence among school psychologists. The aforementioned Johnson and Jackson Williams (2015) study found that higher colorblind racial attitudes were significantly correlated with lower multicultural competence among applied psychology trainees. However, after controlling for training, social desirability, age, and program type, colorblind racial attitudes accounted for only a small amount of multicultural competence (Johnson & Jackson Williams, 2015). Other studies using samples of applied psychology students, counselors, and mental health workers have found a relationship between increased racial colorblind attitudes and decreased self-reported multicultural competence (Burkhard & Knox, 2004; Chao 2006; Chao et al., 2011; Constantine, 2002; Constantine et al., 2001; Neville et al., 2006; Spanierman et al.,

2008). It is possible that the current study captured a sample of school psychologists with colorblind racial attitudes and self-perceived multicultural competence that do not demonstrate the same relationships found in previous studies. Perhaps this relationship is more complex among practicing school psychologists, with additional factors unaccounted for in the current study influencing the results. It is also possible that other factors not accounted for in the current study impacted the relationship between multicultural competence and colorblind racial attitudes. Examples of these factors include program type (counseling, clinical, or school psychology), and White racial identity.

Additionally, future studies should further explore the relationship between colorblind racial attitudes and self-perceived multicultural competence by focusing on specific subscales. Perhaps there are relationships between subscales on the CoBRAS and SPMCS that were not captured in the current study. Moreover, future research could use more sophisticated analytic techniques to investigate whether colorblind racial attitudes predict multicultural competence among practicing school psychologists.

Research question 4: Are there significant differences in levels of colorblind racial attitudes among school psychologists' when grouped by demographic variables?

Significant differences in CoBRAS total scores did not emerge between males and females. However, significant differences emerged when CoBRAS total scores were compared between Whites and racial-ethnic minorities as a whole (Latino/Hispanic, Black/African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Multiracial). Specifically, Whites demonstrated significantly higher CoBRAS scores than racial-ethnic minorities. This finding was consistent with previous research suggesting Whites, on average, possess greater levels of colorblind racial attitudes than

racial-ethnic minorities (Awad, Cokley, & Ravitch, 2005; Neville, 2000; Oh, Choi, Neville, Anderson, & Landrum-Brown, 2010; Worthington, Navarro, Loewy, & Hart, 2008). For Whites, racial colorblindness provides legitimacy to racism and maintains status, power, and privilege (Neville, Awad, Brooks, Flores, & Bluemel, 2013; Neville, Coleman, Woody Falconer, & Holmes, 2005). Thus, Whites are more likely to maintain colorblind racial attitudes to avoid losing societal benefits (Neville et al., 2005). Denying the role of race in systemic prejudice and inequality allows for those with power to attribute the disparities experienced by racial and ethnic minorities to characteristics such as a lack of effort. Further, denying the privilege afforded to Whites through racism implies that individuals of all races and ethnicities have equal access to resources. Though more implicit than overt racism, colorblind racial attitudes serve to perpetuate White privilege.

Significant differences in CoBRAS total scores also emerged when comparing across age groups. On average, indicating participants in the oldest age group (41 to 64 years) reported higher levels of racial colorblindness than participants in the younger age groups (25 to 40 years). This finding was not surprising given that older adults express greater prejudice and racial bias than their younger counterparts (Radvansky, Copeland, & von Hippel, 2010; Stewart, von Hippel, & Radvansky, 2009; von Hippel, Silver, & Lynch, 2000). Considering older and/or more experienced school psychologists are more likely to have supervisory roles, an important implication is the impact of colorblind racial attitudes on school psychology trainees. Future studies could explore whether trainees tend to adopt similar racial attitudes as their field supervisors and the degree to which this impacts supervision.

Further analyses did not reveal significant differences in CoBRAS total scores when comparing training program characteristics among participants. For instance, training programs' emphasis on diversity did not significantly impact colorblind racial attitudes. Additionally, participants' interaction with minority students in school settings during training did not impact colorblind racial attitudes. Finally, degree type did not reveal significant differences in colorblind racial attitudes. Perhaps it is the case that training programs do not adequately address colorblind racial attitudes. Alternatively, other factors not accounted for in the current study potentially influence colorblind racial attitudes. There is a need for research to investigate whether training programs address colorblind racial attitudes, as well as explore other variables that influence such attitudes.

Similarly, the results did not reveal significant differences in CoBRAS total scores when comparing school district characteristics among participants. Namely, participation in multicultural professional development and initiatives did not significantly impact colorblind racial attitudes. Additionally, the setting of the school district did not reveal significant differences in colorblind racial attitudes. Future research would benefit from exploring the extent to which colorblind racial attitudes are addressed in professional development for school psychologists. Of particular interest would be research investigating whether racial colorblindness is present in school climates.

Research question 5. Are there significant differences in self-perceived multicultural competence among school psychologists when grouped by demographic variables?

Significant differences in SPMCS total scores did not emerge among participants when grouped by demographic variables such as gender, race, and age. However, significant

differences emerged when comparing training program characteristics. Specifically, participants who took graduate coursework with diversity-related content reported significantly higher levels of multicultural competence than those who did not. Moreover, the degree of emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism among participants' training programs impacted self-perceived multicultural competence. Participants whose training programs were rated as *always* emphasizing diversity reported significantly higher levels of multicultural competence than participants whose programs rarely or never emphasized diversity. Similarly, participants who *always* reported interacting with minority students in school settings throughout their training reported significantly higher levels of multicultural competence than those who frequently, sometimes, rarely, or never did so. These findings were commensurate with Malone et al.'s (2016) study, which found that school psychology graduate trainees who completed at least one multicultural/diversity course reported greater multicultural competence than those without such coursework. In the same vein, the aforementioned study also found a relationship between practicum experience with CLD clients and higher self-perceived multicultural competence. Taken together, these results emphasize the importance of both multicultural/diversity coursework and physical experiences with students from diverse backgrounds in school psychology training. Discussed in conjunction with the current study's results suggesting a lack of multicultural emphasis and training in school psychology programs, it appears such training impacts self-perceived multicultural competence when provided.

When comparing school district characteristics among respondents, participation in multicultural professional development and initiatives did not significantly impact self-perceived multicultural competence. Additionally, the setting of the school district did not reveal

significant differences in self-perceived multicultural competence. School district racial-ethnic minority composition, however, did have a significant impact. Specifically, participants in school districts with a racial-ethnic minority composition of two thirds or more reported the highest levels of multicultural competence. These results are expected, for school psychologists in school districts with a high percentage of racial-ethnic minority students may perceive themselves as having more developed skills in working with culturally diverse youth and families.

Research question 6: What is the relationship between multicultural competence and social desirability?

The results revealed a significant, albeit weak relationship between school psychologists' self-perceived multicultural competence and social desirability. Namely, as self-perceived multicultural competence increased, social desirability also increased. This finding was consistent with previous research demonstrating similar relationships between self-perceived multicultural competence and social desirability among counselors and therapists (Constantine, 2000; Constantine & Ladany, 2000). Similar studies have found that social desirability is a significant predictor of self-perceived multicultural counseling competence among psychology trainees (including school psychology) and mental health workers (Johnson & Jackson Williams, 2015; Neville et al., 2006). However, other studies have not found significant relationships between the two variables (Chao et al., 2011; Neville et al., 2000; Ponterotto et al., 1996; Sadowsky et al., 1994).

Further analyses in the current study did not reveal a significant relationship between self-perceived multicultural competence and colorblind racial attitudes when controlling for social desirability. These findings, as well as the mixed results in similar studies, may reflect the

varying scales, samples, and methodologies employed across studies. Future research should continue to assess the relationships between colorblind racial attitudes, self-perceived multicultural competence, and social desirability particularly among school psychologists.

Implications for School Psychology Training and Practice

The sample in the current study was largely White and female, with most participants working in school districts with students from racial-ethnic minority groups. As evidenced by these findings, the racial-ethnic gap between students in schools and the school psychologists serving them continues to exist (Walcott et al., 2016). Although most school psychologists provide services to CLD student populations, the results suggested there is still a considerable amount of school psychologists whose graduate training courses do not address multiculturalism and diversity. Further, more than half of participants reported frequent interactions with minority students throughout their graduate training, and only half indicated that their program frequently emphasized multiculturalism/diversity.

Participants who frequently interacted with minority students and those whose graduate programs constantly focused on diversity reported the highest levels of self-perceived multicultural competence. Moreover, participants who took graduate coursework with diversity-related content reported significantly higher levels of multicultural competence than those who did not. Consequently, it is vital for school psychology training programs to explicitly incorporate multiculturalism/diversity topics into coursework while simultaneously exposing trainees to students from diverse backgrounds. Training programs can do this by integrating multicultural skills into assessment, intervention, consultation, practicum, and internship courses (Rogers, 2006). Additionally, programs can offer stand-alone courses focused on developing an

understanding of diverse cultures as well as developing awareness of one's own attitudes and beliefs. Further, training programs can work with school districts and organizations in the surrounding area to coordinate practicums and internships that expose trainees to diverse populations. In theory, applied experiences can help trainees develop skills enhanced by the knowledge gained in coursework.

Although race did not impact self-perceived multicultural competence, it did impact colorblind racial attitudes. In general, Whites reported higher colorblind racial attitudes than racial-ethnic minorities as a whole. This finding has important implications given the majority of school psychologists are White. The interactions between colorblind racial attitudes, a lack of focus on multiculturalism emphasis in training programs, a lack of exposure to diverse populations throughout training, and a lack of diversity-related professional development can have detrimental effects on the provision of services to diverse students (Chao, 2011; Gushue, 2004; Neville, 2006). Equally important, older school psychologists demonstrated the highest levels of colorblind racial attitudes. Perhaps older school psychologists, with likely more years away from graduate training, are less likely to have training specific to multiculturalism particularly when in school districts that do not offer continuing education, or perhaps they are more likely hold prejudiced attitudes. Provided that older school psychologists are more likely to have supervisory roles, it is imperative to consider the impact of colorblind racial attitudes on school psychology trainees. If these trainees are learning to provide services to diverse students from supervisors with colorblind attitudes, then the needs of these students will not be appropriately met. Considering these findings, efforts should focus on countering colorblind racial attitudes among older school psychologists.

The current study was the first known study of its kind to examine the relationship between colorblind racial attitudes and self-perceived multicultural competence in a sample of practicing school psychologists. The results did not demonstrate a significant relationship between racial colorblind attitudes and self-perceived multicultural competence. Research that has found a significant relationship between the two variables further determined colorblind racial attitudes accounted for only a small amount of multicultural competence (Johnson and Jackson Williams, 2015). Other studies have found relationships between colorblind racial attitudes, the just-world hypothesis, and social dominance orientation (Neville 2000; Worthington, Navarro, Loewy, & Hart, 2008). Efforts in future research should investigate whether some of these factors serve as moderators or mediators of multicultural competence among school psychologists using more sophisticated modeling techniques.

Finally, the relationship between social desirability and self-perceived multicultural competence provides an overarching context with which to conceptualize the results. If the desire to provide socially desirable responses is influencing participants' self-perceptions of their multicultural competence, there is a possibility that they are overestimating their actual abilities. Interestingly, participants in the current study reported higher levels of multicultural competence than school psychology trainees in Malone et al.'s (2016) SPMCS validation study (although it is unknown if these differences are statistically significant). Perhaps these results are due to the impact of social desirability rather than actual increased levels of multicultural competence.

Future Research Directions

Given that the majority of participants in the present study were from the Midwest, future efforts in research should replicate this study using a national sample of school psychologists.

Additional research should examine multicultural competence among school psychologists using alternate methods such as having them respond to multicultural vignettes, using observer ratings, or implementing focus groups. Assessing multicultural competence using alternate methodology is especially important considering the inconsistent research on social desirability and self-perceived multicultural competence. Using more direct and observable measures of multicultural competence would address the limitations present in self-report measures. Furthermore, additional research should explore racial colorblindness and its impact on service delivery among school psychologists. Given the positive relationship found between racial colorblindness and age, it may be worthwhile to explore how colorblind racial attitudes relate to when participants earned their school psychology degrees. Lastly, future research should use more sophisticated statistical procedures such as moderated regression or structural equation modeling to investigate relationships between colorblind racial attitudes and multicultural competence in samples of school psychologists. Such efforts can continue to develop an understanding of multicultural competence in school psychology in order to provide appropriate services to the ever-growing number of culturally diverse students and families.

Limitations

The findings in this study are bound by several limitations. First, sampling bias may have emerged due to the methodology employed in the study. It is possible that school psychologists with colorblind racial attitudes chose to not participate in the study provided that they are less likely to be invested in multicultural topics. If an individual does not believe race matters, there is a chance he or she would dismiss a survey focused on race and diversity. As such, the study may not have captured a normative sample of school psychologists with colorblind racial

attitudes, which could explain the non-normal distribution of CoBRAS scores. Furthermore, participants in the study reported moderately high levels of multicultural competence. Similar to sampling issues with racial colorblindness, the study may have captured a biased sample of school psychologists with greater interests, knowledge, and skills in multicultural and diversity topics.

A second limitation concerns the method with which the study assessed multicultural competence among school psychologists. The present study used self-rated measures due to the importance of self-awareness when developing competency in cross-cultural service delivery. However, the desire to provide responses that are viewed favorably by others may impact self-rated multicultural competence. Other methodologies may provide levels of multicultural competence that are less influenced by social desirability bias, such as direct observation, vignettes, or simulated case studies. For example, Newell, Newell, & Looser (2013) used a computer simulation platform to examine consultation competencies among school psychologists. The simulation program allowed participants to interact with teacher and student avatars to conduct interviews and collect information for the consultation case. Perhaps a similar method may provide insight into school psychology multicultural competencies that is less impacted by social desirability.

Third, the study did not compare colorblind racial attitudes and multicultural competence using CoBRAS and SPMCS subscales. Previous studies have examined relationships across subscales measuring different dimensions of colorblind and multicultural competence constructs. Although the current study did not compare across subscales to prevent data overanalyzes, such

comparisons may provide important relationships between multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills and dimensions of racial colorblindness.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings of the current study highlight the importance of multicultural education and opportunities for increased interactions with CLD populations in school psychology training programs. Both multicultural education and exposure to diverse clients impact self-perceived multicultural competence among practicing school psychologists. Additionally, the results provide validity information for a new multicultural competence measure specific to school psychology. Finally, the findings emphasized the need to address colorblind attitudes in the field, particularly as they impact service delivery among White and older school psychologists.

The field of school psychology recognizes the harmful effects of prejudiced attitudes and implicit bias on school achievement, self-efficacy, and social-emotional growth among students, particularly among students from marginalized groups (National Association of School Psychologists, 2012). In a position paper on racism, prejudice, and discrimination, NASP urged school psychologists to engage in critical reflection regarding one's own biases (National Association of School Psychologists, 2012). Moreover, NASP compelled school psychologists to advocate for and engage in culturally competent practices to address the needs of students impacted by systemic inequality. School psychologists cannot serve all students if they do not work to dismantle the inequities present in the education system to promote fairness and justice. As the United States continues to witness increased racial and ethnic diversity in the schools, it is imperative for the field of school psychology to continue developing its understanding of

multicultural competence and implicit bias in order to avoid perpetuating inequalities in education.

APPENDIX A
SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Hello!

I am a doctoral student at Loyola University Chicago seeking participants for my dissertation. I invite practicing school psychologists to complete an on-line survey looking at multicultural competence and racial attitudes. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes and is entirely anonymous.

In order to thank you for your participation, you will have the opportunity to enter a raffle for one of five \$25 Target gift cards. Additionally, for every completed survey \$1 will be donated to the Children's Defense Fund. Further information will be provided to you once you have clicked on the survey link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XBWYK2H>

Thank you!

APPENDIX B

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE SCALE (SPMCS)

(MALONE ET AL., 2016)

Below is a list of statements related to a variety of issues related to multicultural issues in school psychology. Please read each statement carefully. On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), please indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
There are basic assessment skills that are applicable to create successful outcomes regardless of the student's cultural background.	1	2	3	4
There are basic intervention skills that are applicable to create successful outcomes regardless of the student's cultural background.	1	2	3	4
There are basic consultation skills that are applicable to create successful outcomes regardless of the consultee's and client's cultural backgrounds.	1	2	3	4
I am aware of the cultural differences that exist among the faculty and staff at my school.	1	2	3	4
I can recognize when my beliefs and values are interfering with providing the best services to my students.	1	2	3	4
I believe that all school psychologists should engage in ongoing professional development around multiculturalism and diversity issues.	1	2	3	4
I can discuss how culture influences parenting practices.	1	2	3	4
I am aware of how culture impacts learning and behavior.	1	2	3	4
I understand how my cultural background has influenced the way I think and act.	1	2	3	4
I am comfortable with racial differences that may exist between me and others.	1	2	3	4
I have a sense of the values, strengths, and limitations of my own culture.	1	2	3	4
I can accurately compare my own cultural perspective to that of a person from another culture.	1	2	3	4
I am accepting and respecting of other's cultures.	1	2	3	4
I can identify when my own biases negatively influence my services to my students.	1	2	3	4
I understand the need to retain one's cultural identity.	1	2	3	4
I am aware of the role that parents play in developing children's culture.	1	2	3	4

I am knowledgeable of effective assessment strategies used with culturally and linguistically diverse students.	1	2	3	4
I know how to adapt instruments to assess linguistically diverse students.	1	2	3	4
I know that cross-cultural variables may affect performance on and interpretation of standardized assessments.	1	2	3	4
I know how to use alternate assessment methods such as dynamic assessment and ecological assessment.	1	2	3	4
I have knowledge of research on assessing culturally and linguistically diverse children.	1	2	3	4
It is important to integrate cultural and language background of a student into a psychoeducational report.	1	2	3	4

I am knowledgeable of evidence-based intervention strategies used culturally and linguistically diverse students.	1	2	3	4
I understand the process of second language acquisition and its impact on the acquisition of academic skills.	1	2	3	4
I am knowledgeable of the most effective consultation strategies used with culturally and linguistically diverse consultees.	1	2	3	4
When consulting, I know how culturally related factors may affect accurate assessment of the “problem” in the problem solving process.	1	2	3	4
I understand my role as a school psychologist in my school and in my school district.	1	2	3	4
I am aware that members of cultural groups may have different attitudes towards disabilities or exceptionalities.	1	2	3	4
I consider sociocultural variables and perspectives when evaluating research.	1	2	3	4
I know how language influences a child’s academic performance.	1	2	3	4
I have an understanding of cultural differences of the groups that reside in my geographic region.	1	2	3	4

I know how to use translators appropriately during the assessment process.	1	2	3	4
I can identify the strengths and weaknesses of psychological tests in terms of their use with students from difference cultural, racial, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds.	1	2	3	4
I can explain test information culturally diverse parents.	1	2	3	4
I can make culturally relevant curriculum and classroom management recommendations.	1	2	3	4
I am skilled in terms of being able to provide appropriate intervention services to culturally diverse students.	1	2	3	4
I am skilled in implementing home-school collaboration programs and interventions.	1	2	3	4
I can recognize prejudice and prevalent obstacles that may affect consultation.	1	2	3	4
I am skilled in understanding nonverbal communication.	1	2	3	4
I can work with culturally and linguistically diverse children, parents, and school staff.	1	2	3	4
I can effectively assess the mental health needs of a student from a cultural background significantly different from my own.	1	2	3	4
I can effectively secure information and resources to better serve culturally diverse students and families.	1	2	3	4
I can consult with institutions to work towards eliminating biases, prejudice, and discriminatory practices.	1	2	3	4
When working with linguistically diverse parents and students, I can interpret information obtained through translators.	1	2	3	4
I respect and appreciate the socioeconomic and cultural background of a child and his/her family.	1	2	3	4
I engage in ongoing efforts to reduce and eliminate biased beliefs and behaviors.	1	2	3	4

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APPENDIX C

COLOR-BLIND RACIAL ATTITUDES SCALE (CoBRAS)

(NEVILLE, ET AL., 2000)

APPENDIX D

MARLOWE-CROWNE SOCIAL DESIRABILITY SCALE FORM C

(REYNOLDS, 1982)

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is True or False as it pertains to you personally.

1. _____ It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
2. _____ I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
3. _____ On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
4. _____ There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
5. _____ No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.
6. _____ There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.
7. _____ I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.
8. _____ I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
9. _____ I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
10. _____ I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
11. _____ There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
12. _____ I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.
13. _____ I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

APPENDIX E
CONSENT PAGE

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Sandy Flores for her dissertation under the supervision of Pamela Fenning, Ph.D. at Loyola University Chicago. This survey is intended for school psychologists currently in practice. You received this email because your contact information is available through national and local school psychology associations.

Please read this page carefully before deciding whether to participate in this study. You may contact Sandy Flores at sflores1@luc.edu or Pamela Fenning, Ph.D. at pfennin@luc.edu if you have any questions regarding the study. For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Loyola University Chicago Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Purpose

The field of school psychology places great emphasis on multicultural competence, yet little to no research has examined this topic in practice. This study seeks to gain a better understanding of multicultural competence among school psychologists.

Procedure

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey with questions regarding social issues, multicultural topics, and your training experiences. If you do not want to answer some questions, you may skip them. You may exit the survey at any time. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Risks/Benefits

There are no anticipated risks beyond normal activities of daily living. There are no direct benefits to you from participation, but your participation may provide a better understanding of multicultural competence among school psychologists and potentially inform future training practices.

Compensation

In order to demonstrate gratitude for your participation, you will be offered the opportunity to enter into a raffle for one of five \$25 Target gift cards following your completion of the survey. More information on this opportunity is provided at the end of the survey. For every completed survey, \$1 will be donated to the Children's Defense Fund.

Confidentiality

Your responses on this survey will be securely stored electronically and will remain anonymous. No IP addresses will be collected. If you decide to participate in the raffle, at no time will your name be linked to the survey or survey responses.

By indicating yes to the item below, you indicate that you have read the information provided, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study.

Do you agree to voluntary participate in this study by completing the following survey? You may withdraw your participation at any time by exiting the survey. You may also skip any question you do not wish to answer.

Yes, I agree to participate.

No, I decline to participate.

APPENDIX F
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

1) Please rate the degree to which your school psychology graduate program emphasized multiculturalism/diversity:

- a. 1= Not at all
- b. 2= Rarely
- c. 3= Sometimes
- d. 4 = Frequently
- e. 5 = Always

2) Did you take courses in your graduate program that discussed multiculturalism/diversity topics?

Yes/no [SKIP LOGIC] If yes, go to 2a

2a) Please provide a rough estimate of the number of courses in your graduate program that covered multiculturalism/diversity topics: [write-in]

3) During your graduate training, how often did you interact with **minority students** in a school setting?

(**Minority students** are African American, Black, Latino(a), Asian, Pacific Islander/Alaskan Native, Multiple races)

- a. 1= Never
- b. 2= Rarely
- c. 3= Sometimes
- d. 4 = Frequently
- e. 5 = Always

4) In which state did you complete your school psychology degree? [write-in]

5) In which state do you currently practice as a school psychologist? [write-in]

6) How many years have you practiced as a school psychologist? [write-in]

7) Are you currently certified/endorsed as a bilingual school psychologist? Y/N

8a) How often do you participate in professional development (e.g., meetings, workshops, trainings) related to multicultural/diversity topics at your district?

- a. 0 x per school year
- b. 1 x per school year
- c. 2 x per school year
- d. More than 2 x per school year

8b) [SKIP LOGIC] if b, c, or d: Please describe the multicultural/diversity professional development:

9a) How often do you participate in multicultural initiatives in your school district? Multicultural initiatives can include events such as multicultural celebrations (e.g., food tasting, dances) or programs/interventions specifically targeting students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

- a. 0 x per school year
- b. 1 x per school year
- c. 2 x per school year
- d. More than 2 x per school year

9b) [SKIP LOGIC] if b, c, or d: Please describe the multicultural initiatives:

10) What is your age?

11) What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Other (please specify): _____

12) What is your race/ethnicity?

- a. White
- b. Hispanic/Latino
- c. Black or African American
- d. Native American or American Indian
- e. Asian/Pacific Islander
- f. Other (please specify): _____

13) Please indicate the highest graduate-level degree you have completed:

- a. Master's degree (M.A., M.S., M.Ed.)
- b. Specialist degree (Ed.S., SSP, CAS/CAGS)
- c. Doctoral degree (Ph.D., Ed.D, Psy.D.)
- d. Other (please specify): _____

14) Where is your school district located?

- a. Urban
- b. Suburban
- c. Rural

15) Approximately what **PERCENTAGE** of students in your school district receives free or reduced-price lunch? Please do not use a percentage sign. [write-in]

16) Please provide an estimate of the **racial and ethnic minority population** of your school district:

MINORITY students are African American, Black, Latino(a), Asian, Pacific Islander/Alaskan Native, Multiple races.

- a. 0% to 25% **MINORITY** students
- b. 26% to 50% **MINORITY** students
- c. 51% to 75% **MINORITY** students
- d. 75% to 100% **MINORITY** students

APPENDIX G

ISPA MEMBER RESOURCES WEBPAGE SCRIPT

Dear School Psychologist,

As an education professional, you are in a unique position to interact with and serve students from diverse backgrounds. I seek to understand the ways in which school psychologists perceive their ability to serve diverse populations as well as their experiences and training related to multicultural competence. I ask that you please complete an anonymous survey of your perceptions regarding diversity and multicultural issues. Participants of all cultural backgrounds are encouraged to take part in this survey! The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete and is completely voluntary. Your participation will provide insight that could help inform future multicultural training in school psychology.

Upon completion of the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter a raffle for one of five \$25 Target Gift cards! To further demonstrate appreciation for your time, \$1 will be donated to the Children's Defense Fund for every completed survey.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Please click the link below to complete the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XBWYK2H>

Warm regards,

Sandy Flores, M.Ed.
Sflores1@luc.edu

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