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Just World Beliefs, Identity Development, and Social Justice Advocacy of Counselor Trainees

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JUST WORLD BELIEFS, IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT, AND
SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY OF COUNSELOR TRAINEES

A Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

Mental Health Counseling

by

Sara Elizabeth Rundlett

July 2017

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

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ABSTRACT

JUST WORLD BELIEFS, IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT, AND
SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY OF COUNSELOR TRAINEES

by

Sara Elizabeth Rundlett

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This was the first study exploring the relationship between the belief in a just world, identity development, and social justice advocacy (SJA). A mixed methods design was conducted using a nationwide sample of ninety-seven counselor-in-training participants. Hypotheses included positive correlation between identity development and SJA, negative correlation between belief in a just world and SJA, and negative correlation between belief in a just world and identity development. Results were not significant but provided implications for future research and counselor training programs.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The counseling field recently developed diversity competencies to guide clinicians in carrying out ethical practices when serving and advocating for marginalized populations (Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason, 2009; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Toporek, Lewis, & Crethar, 2009). However, this call to action has remained controversial (Lee & Rodgers, 2009; Pieterse et al, 2009; Steele, 2011; Steele, Bischof, & Craig, 2014). According to research, there are factors that predict social justice advocacy by counselors, such as program elements, a moral imperative, and exposure to injustice (Beer et al., 2011; Bollman, Krings, Maggiori, & Rossier, 2015; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Collins, Arthur, Brown, & Kennedy, 2014; Inman, Luu, Pendse, & Caskie, 2015; Pieterse et al., 2009; Roysircar, 2009; Van Den Bos, 2003). In fact, research regarding social justice advocacy by counselors has surged since the advent of the counseling diversity competencies (Arrendondo & Perez, 2003; Roysircar, 2009). This informs the development of training programs and counseling agencies to better meet the needs of diverse clients and support counselors in meeting the new competency standards surrounding diversity (Ali & Sichel, 2014; Chapman & Schwartz, 2012; Glossoff & Durham, 2010; Toporek & Worthington; 2014). There remains a dearth of research on the opposite, what keeps counselors from participating in social justice advocacy (Nudelman, 2013; Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007; Ramos, Correia, & Alves, 2014; Thompson et al., 2014; Wendler & Nilsson, 2009; Van Den Bos, 2013).

Counseling has traditionally focused on the intra- and inter-personal dynamics to understand the lived experience (Lewis & Lewis, 1977). As the field has progressed, there has been a paradigm shift. This has widened to include external and systemic contexts, whereas the field has come to recognize that circumstances that govern people's lives greatly influence their perceptions and experiences. Counselors and counselor educators have come to realize that practices focused on creating change and empowering clients to advocate for themselves are inherently limited when the external and systemic contexts that govern their lives remain unchanged, problematic, and discriminatory.

Given that advocating on behalf of clients is now an expectation for counselors, as opposed to an implication, discovering what prevents counselors from engaging in social justice advocacy is essential to addressing the controversy (Inman et al., 2015; Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007). Identifying what helps counselors develop an advocacy identity provides direction and support for the majority of counselor trainees (Beer et al., 2010; Caldwell and Vera, 2010; Inman et al., 2015), but does not address the specific needs for those who may be less compelled to engaging in social justice advocacy. While little data is available about what drives this reticence, research indicates that fundamental personality constructs may be involved (Bollman et al., 2015; Inman et al., 2015; Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007; Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014).

Identity development is one factor for the development of an advocacy identity in counselor trainees (Beer et al., 2010, Caldwell & Vera, 2010). Advanced stages of identity development are also associated with recognition of the self as a cultural being, reducing ethnocentrism in the general population (MacDougal & Arthur, 2001; Ronay-

Jinich, 2009). However, there are no data regarding the inverse of this relationship, whether limited identity development prevents counselors from developing social justice interest. Counselor trainees who rate high in a belief in a just world express low levels of social justice interest (Inman et al., 2015), but whether there is a connection between identity development and belief in a just world has yet to be investigated.

Definitions

Diversity

Historically, the terms multiculturalism and diversity were used interchangeably in the counseling and psychological fields. However, there is evidence that the two terms pertain to separate yet overlapping concepts (Pieterse et al., 2016; Smith, Ng, Brinson, & Mityagain, 2008). Multiculturalism historically refers to ethnicity, race, and cultural groups (Pieterse et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2008) whereas diversity is a broader term that encompasses other aspects of identity, such as (dis)ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, social class, spirituality, religion, and other aspects of identity such as health status, and vulnerability (Smith et al., 2008). For the remainder of this text, the term diversity will replace multiculturalism when addressing populations or issues pertaining to diverse or marginalized peoples. The concepts of advocacy and social justice have also become more prominent in counselor vocabulary as diversity issues have gained attention.

Advocacy

The term advocacy has been used in counseling since the early 1900s (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001), but a singular definition has yet to be distinguished. In its broadest

meaning, advocacy in counseling is a form of social action (Toporek et al., 2009). Social justice advocacy specifies that the actions be “aimed at removing the forms of external and institutional barriers to client’s well-being” (Toporek et al., 2009, p.260) that “marginalize and disenfranchise various groups of people” (Pieterse et al., 2016, p. 95) in order to increase a client’s sense of power and facilitate sociopolitical changes that contextualize client’s lives (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). Systems of oppression and discrimination are one framework through which the lived experience of marginalized populations is filtered. Social justice advocacy provides counselors and clients an avenue in which to work collaboratively to re-create that framework to aid in individual and systemic healing. Advocacy in counseling has a long history (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001) and the call for counselors to become social justice activists has historical precedence (Arrendondo & Perez, 2003; Lewis & Lewis, 1977; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Pieterse et al., 2016; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Toporek et al., 2009).

Belief in a Just World

The construct of belief in a just world addresses the degree to which individuals subscribe to the belief that people get what they deserve; that reward and punishment are the result of worth and merit (Bollman et al., 2015; Inman et al., 2015; Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014; Rubin & Peplau, 1975). Belief in a just world has two domains, personal belief in a just world, and general belief in a just world (Inman et al., 2015; Nudelman, 2013). Personal belief in a just world addresses an individual’s perceptions of her/his experiences while general belief in a just world addresses how individuals

perceive the experiences of others (Bollman et al., 2015; Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014).

Believing that the world is a just place provides a sense of control and protects individuals from the threat of life's unpredictability, and both domains of BJW strongly correlate with higher rates of trust in people and social institutions, and greater well-being and life satisfaction (Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014). Individuals that rate high in belief in a just world also rate high in "conservative social attitudes and political views" (Nudelman, 2013, p. 106) and an increased rate of highly internalized attributions, especially when faced with injustice (Ramos et al., 2014). For counselor trainees, higher rates of belief in a just world are associated with reduced interest in and commitment to social justice advocacy (Inman et al., 2015). Because social justice advocacy attends to external processes rather than internal, the present study will focus on general belief in a just world.

Identity Development

Identity development is a multidimensional process, in which individuals evaluate how strongly they identify with the social and demographic groups to which they belong, based on the norms, values, and beliefs attributed to and endorsed by those groups (Motyl, 2009). Information from many domains are involved in this process, including "biological, cultural, social, economic, and political" factors (Motyl, 2009). While identity development is a foundational stage of maturation (Piaget, 1975), the potential for continued development is limited but nonetheless present (Motyl, 2009). Development of an advocacy identity by counselor trainees is noted as a significant and

positive result of a combination of factors including elements of counselor training programs, exposure to injustice, and professional and social supports (Beer et al., 2012; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Inman et al., 2015; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Background and History

Because of social changes in the 1950s and 1960s, counselors began creating professional associations to explore social justice (Arrendondo & Perez, 2003). At the time, social justice advocacy by counselors was a political tactic focused on confronting the history of racism promoted by the dominant scientific and psychological paradigms (belief in ideologies like the “intellectual inferiority of Blacks” or the “cultural deprivation of minorities”) (Arrendondo & Perez, 2003, p. 283), prompting the development of the Association of Black Psychologists and the Association for Non-White Concerns in the late 1960s (Arrendondo & Perez, 2003). Members of the field also used social justice advocacy to address the pathologization of non-heterosexual orientations by pushing for removal of homosexuality from the body of psychological diagnoses (Brown, 2006; Morgan & Nerison, 1993; Robertson, 2004). This continues to provoke controversy regarding gender variant and transgender individuals (Brown, 2006; Moliero & Pinto, 2015). Although competencies regarding LGBT individuals exists, a controversy remains as to whether the needs of this population are consistently met across the counseling field (Brown, 2006). Despite the controversy surrounding social justice advocacy and marginalized populations, this movement continued to gain attention and approval. Lewis and Lewis stated in 1977 that it has “finally become respectable” for counselors to become social and political activists (p. 356), but only

recently has it become widely accepted for counselors to take this position professionally (Toporek et al., 2009).

Pieterse et al. (2001) describe a number of events that contributed to the inclusion of social justice advocacy on behalf of counselors. As early as the 1940s, Carl Rogers, psychologist and catalyst of person-centered therapy, stated that “the principles of psychology should be used to solve the world’s problems” (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001, p. 390). Kiselica and Robinson (2001) describe the many professional journals and associations in the 1970s and 1980s that published works calling counselors to be more active in taking a stand against sexism and racism, such as *Counseling and Social Revolution* in 1971, *Even the Rat was White* in 1976, and the American Association for Counseling and Development’s “position paper on human rights” in 1987 (p. 391). The APA and the ACA worked together in 1999 to publish a booklet titled *Just the Facts about Sexual Orientation and Youth* (Pieterse et al., 2001), which helped educate the counseling community and aid the development of supportive and affirming treatments. In 1999, the Association of Counselors for Social Justice began with a mission of aiding counselors in creating and implementing social justice advocacy (Pieterse, et al., 2001). There were also attempts to create and publish diversity competencies.

Arrendondo and Perez (2003) note that the first attempt was in 1982 by Sue, Bernier, Durran, Feinberg, Pedersen, Smith, and Vasquez-Nuttal with a work titled *Position-paper: Cross-cultural counseling competencies* (Sue, Arrendondo, McDavis, 1992), but it failed to gain approval of the American Psychological Association (APA) Division 17 Committee. Sue, Arrendondo, and McDavis made another attempt in 1992

with a work entitled *Multicultural counseling competencies and standards: A call to the profession*; the paper was presented to the American Psychological Association in 1992 and to the American Counseling Association in 1993 (Arrendondo & Perez, 2003; Pieterse et al., 2016; Toporek et al., 2009). Both attempts to create a set of diversity competencies failed to pass committee approval. It was not until 2002 for the APA and 2003 for the ACA that a modified version of these competencies were adopted (Arrendondo & Perez, 2003; Pieterse et al., 2016; Toporek et al., 2009) and professionally recognized as an essential part of professional counselor identity (Toporek et al., 2009).

The development of diversity competencies has impacted much of the counseling field, but the greatest impacts have been on counselor training programs. Arrendondo and Perez (2016) note that while programs accredited by the APA and CACREP both include diversity competencies, the language used by both organizations differ. The APA program requirements state that students are required to display “substantial understanding and competence with issues of cultural and individual diversity” (p. 96) while CACREP programs require that the programs include an awareness of the “counselor’s role in social justice, advocacy, nature of biases, prejudices... and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression” (Arrendondo & Perez, 2016, p. 96). When compared, the CACREP requirement is more directive and specific than the APA requirement, leading to the implication that the threshold for competence regarding diversity is intentionally high for counseling students in CACREP programs.

Additionally, counseling programs are expected to implement techniques that facilitate meeting the high threshold of this requirement for students prior to finishing the program.

There are a range of strategies used by counselor training programs to implement these changes (Pieterse, et al., 2016) and a wide range of applications for counselors. Therefore, there are a wide range of perspectives regarding how to define the counseling role as well as opinions about how that role matches with the values of social justice advocacy (Harrist & Richardson, 2011; Smith, Reynolds, & Rovnak, 2009; Steele, Bischof, & Craig, 2014).

Bias and Objectivity in the Counseling Role

Psychology and counseling are commonly thought of as unbiased, objective, and value-neutral sciences (Harrist & Richardson, 2011). In fact, many training programs explicitly encourage trainees to do the kind of self-exploration that facilitates awareness of personal biases in order to be accountable for them and retain an objective stance toward their clients and the field (Ali & Sichel, 2014; Chapman & Schwartz, 2012; Glossoff & Durham, 2010; Toporek & Worthington; 2014). Unfortunately, this expectation creates an unattainable goal based on paradoxical logic. The values that govern all counseling theories, such as individual self-focused fulfillment, self-awareness, and the goal of increasing autonomy are uniformly valued over the meaning and value that individuals find in adhering to traditions, the power in suffering, and the concept of dependence on others (Harrist & Richardson, 2011).

The psychological and counseling fields' history clearly displays an ethnocentric bias, backed by psychological science, including biases towards people of color, and

sexual and gender minorities. Additionally, counseling and psychological services still remain relatively inaccessible to many low-income populations (Arrendondo & Perez, 2003; Ronay-Jinich, 2009). This history shows that research findings cannot hold meaning without the value laden contextual interpretations that the field and researchers assign to it (Chapman & Schwartz, 2011).

The majority of counseling praxis remains focused on symptom-based treatments, which omit the etiology of contextual forces that may exacerbate client symptomology (Roysincar, 2009). One of the consequences of this approach is that client progress is framed by learning to cope in a potentially oppressive reality (Roysincar, 2009), which directly contrasts the long-term goal of mental health care as preventive rather than crisis focused (Lewis & Lewis, 1977). Lewis and Lewis (1977) noted that this is a double-bind, requiring counselors either “blame the victim or to seek ways to change the environment” (p. 357). Fortunately, post-modern theoretical approaches address the sociopolitical influence on an individual’s mental health but because they are newer theories, have comparably fewer empirical foundations, and are not as commonly endorsed in the counseling field, they are less accepted by managed care providers (Cohen, Marecek, & Gillman, 2006). However, the development and implementation of the ACA’s social justice competencies helps to broaden the focus of care (Arrendondo & Perez, 2003; Lee, 2009; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009, Roysincar, 2009; Toporek et al., 2009). Despite this broadening focus, some people still view social justice advocacy as a liberal political tactic (Smith et al., 2009; Steele et al., 2014).

Smith et al. (2009) describe the move from individualistic psychology to a more contextualized perspective as a “radical change in the theory and practice” of counseling that grows from a misplaced focus on social illness (p. 87). They describe counseling as an unbiased field and state that counseling’s perspective of social justice advocacy should remain relegated to the field of social work rather than counseling because the “development of social illnesses” and social justice advocacy are an extension of a “liberal sociopolitical bias” (p. 87). However, research indicates that social justice advocacy by counselors is not strongly related to political affiliation outside extremely polarized political views (Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Linnemeyer, 2009; Steele et al., 2014).

Steele, Bischof, and Craig (2014) found that while politically conservative ACA members had a less favorable view of social justice advocacy than moderate or liberal members, all three groups (77.57%, n = 166) viewed social justice advocacy as a positive addition to the field. In addition, all three groups viewed social justice action as positive or extremely positive. The exception to this was the extremely liberal participants who viewed social justice advocacy as very important and the extremely conservative participants who viewed social justice advocacy as not at all important. Caldwell & Vera (2010) hypothesized that counselors who self-identified as social justice advocates would attribute political ideology as contributing to their identity development as counselor advocates, but found that participants did not mention political ideology when addressing contributing factors to social justice interest or commitment. Regardless of a counselor’s political affiliation, both political orientations converge on a number of points, first the value placed on clients as individuals, second the client’s rights and freedoms, and third,

the shared goal of counselors and clients working together to reduce the clients' suffering (Harrist & Richardson, 2012).

Data suggest that the expectation for counselors to engage in social justice advocacy remains challenging because it refutes the conceptualization of the counseling role as value-neutral (Harrist & Richardson, 2012). Historically, the message from the counseling profession is that to operate subjectively is unprofessional and unethical (Harrist & Richardson, 2012) yet the field's historical missteps reveal this as a mythical and unrealistic ideal. The development of the ACA's diversity competencies is one step towards recognizing that at certain points in history, the field has perpetuated the status quo in ways that have been harmful or damaging. This ideological shift is also one step towards healing those wounds (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009).

The advocacy competencies aim to transform the field by instilling a greater sense of responsibility in counselors to take action to produce change on a systemic level so that greater change can happen for clients on a personal level (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). However, all clinicians "must decide for themselves whether they are willing to sacrifice objectivity and take sides" (Lewis & Lewis, 1977, p. 358) in effort to reduce suffering. Engaging in social justice advocacy requires counselors to leave behind the idea that they are simply objective helpers; instead, they must recognize they have the power to be proactive or preventive agents for social health and healing (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). In fact, "our attempts to be value-free are unrealistic and we may be engaging in social injustices by assuming that we can be" (Harrist & Richardson, 2012, p. 43).

Cost and Benefits of Social Justice Advocacy

Costs of Social Justice Advocacy

There are costs and benefits for counselors who engage in social justice advocacy. The potential detrimental effects may impact counselors in a variety of personal and professional ways (Beer, Spanierman, Greene, & Todd, 2012; Harrist & Richardson, 2012; Lee & Rodgers, 2009; Leonard, 2011; Lewis, Ratts, Palandino, & Toporek, 2011; Myers, Sweeny, & White, 2002; Smith, 2009; Thompson, Amatea, & Thompson, 2014). Peers and colleagues may view counselors who engage in social justice advocacy as trying to impose their subjective values onto others because this falsely affirms the conceptualization of counselors as a value-neutral parties (Harrist & Richardson, 2012; Smith et al., 2009). They also risk being dismissed if the advocacy is viewed as an extension of a liberal political agenda (Smith et al., 2009). Counselors who engage in social justice advocacy are also vulnerable to being shut-out by colleagues, losing relationships with those of opposing views, and making themselves vulnerable to harassment when speaking out (Lee & Rodgers, 2009).

Professionals and lay persons may also view counselors as engaging in social justice advocacy because of a “hidden agenda” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 487). They may be suspected of using social justice advocacy in ways that are self-serving and self-promoting, and may be assumed to be manipulative and insensitive to those in the dominant culture (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) note that counselors risk being viewed as driven by a need “to capitalize on the power and privilege” associated with repositioning themselves in the social hierarchy, especially for those who take leadership

roles in social justice advocacy work (Smith et al., 2009). Counselors viewed through this lens also risk developing reputations as hyper-vigilant and dichotomous minded troublemakers (Lee & Rogers, 2009). Consequently, counselor advocates put themselves at risk for limiting advancement and promotional opportunities, for disciplinary action, and for a new, unwanted career trajectory (Lee & Rodgers, 2009).

Another risk for counselors is the potential for burnout and compassion fatigue (Lewis et al., 2011; Thompson et al., 2014). Burn out is defined as the “emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of ineffectiveness or lack of personal accomplishment” felt by those the helping fields (Thompson et al., 2014, p. 58). The term compassion fatigue grew out of the counseling field and is similar in nature to burn out, but describes a common response to working with survivors of trauma (Thompson et al., 2014). Thompson et al. (2014) describe counselor burn out using a “transactional model of distress” (p. 62). This model describes counselor burnout as a result of the dynamic relationship between the counselor, the client, and the environments that govern their relationship. More specifically, burn out is most likely to occur when the work environment and tasks of the counselor are stressful, unsupported, and experienced as “taxing and exceeding the personal coping resources” (p. 62).

Leonard (2011) states that especially when advocating for systemic change, long-term commitments are required which subject the counselor to unpredictable and potentially unwanted social alliances and adversaries. The overwhelming nature of many social justice issues may make social justice advocacy off-putting when compared to the level of support available for many counselors (Leonard, 2011). The continued

minimization of social justice advocacy and its goals, combined with a lack of support from peers or supervisors contributes to a sense of defeat that can lead to advocacy burnout (Beer et al., 2012). Fortunately networking with other counselors that conduct social justice advocacy can provide a sense of community and buffer the costs when doing this kind of work for clients or the counseling field (Leonard, 2011; Lewis et al., 2011; Thompson et al., 2014). In fact, to be an advocate for either the client or the field but not both, “undermines the success of either one” (Myers et al., 2002, p. 400).

Benefits of Social Justice Advocacy

While the potential costs are high for counselors, there are benefits as well. Engagement with social justice advocacy allows counselors to network with others who may offer support for the client or help improve the client’s situation (Leonard, 2011; Myers, 2002). This increases the resourcefulness of the counselor, including making referrals or identifying those who may be able to act on the client’s behalf for personal or systemic issues (Leonard, 2011). Networking also allows counselors to identify allies in social justice advocacy when organizing for systemic change (Leonard, 2011; Myers et al., 2002). Myers et al. (2002) notes that this helps diffuse interprofessional tensions with other agencies and helps all organizations involved advance their organizational goals and support the clients they serve. Examples include the organizing of counselors for the development of parity law, developing the American Counseling Association’s Multicultural Competencies (Lewis et al., 2011; Myers et al., 2002), and removing homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual in 1973 (Morgan & Nerison, 1993; Robertson, 2004). This kind of advocacy also enhances interdisciplinary

communication, which helps to ensure comprehensive care for clients. This increases accountability to the populations that counselors serve, thereby advancing the professional identity of the counseling field as well (Myers et al., 2002).

Another benefit to counselors is the personal affirmation of doing social justice advocacy (Beer et al., 2012). While social justice advocacy networking benefits the counselor and client, it also benefits the larger social systems. Counselors have insight regarding the way that external systems influence inter and intrapersonal processes (Lewis & Lewis, 1977). Counselors note social justice advocacy is an affirmation of an inherently optimistic view of humanity and a belief that positive change is possible (Beer et al., 2012). Some counselors recognize this as validation of a spiritual calling or an internal drive to engage in social justice advocacy, even during times of slow and challenging work (Beer et al., 2012; Leonard, 2011). Lee and Rodgers (2009) state that each counselor must weigh the risks and benefits of social justice advocacy for themselves and explore their “personal courage” in order to decide if the “benefit of the common good” is worth the personal and professional risks associated (p. 287).

Predictive and Preventive Factors for Social Justice Advocacy

Counselor competence surrounding social justice advocacy develops in stages, which Inman et al. (2015) and Caldwell & Vera (2010) explore in detail. First to develop is an awareness of what social justice advocacy is and a belief that counselors need to engage in it, which then develops into the second stage, social justice interest. The third stage, social justice commitment, develops from a moderate to high level of social justice interest, but is mediated by the counselor’s sense of self-efficacy in engaging in social

justice advocacy. During this stage, counselors also undergo identity and behavioral changes that positively correlate to their level of commitment in conducting social justice advocacy. Researchers have identified a number of factors that predict counselor willingness to engage in social justice advocacy (Beer et al., 2011; Bollman, Krings, Maggiori, & Rossier, 2015; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Collins, Arthur, Brown, & Kennedy, 2014; Inman, Luu, Pendse, & Caskie, 2015; Pieterse et al., 2009; Roysircar, 2009; Van Den Bos, 2003), but few studies explore what prevents counselors from progressing through these stages of advocacy development (Nudelman, 2013; Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007; Ramos, Correia, & Alves, 2014; Thompson et al., 2014; Wendler & Nilsson, 2009; Van Den Bos, 2013).

Predictive Factors

There is a sizable body of research discussing predictive factors that may contribute to incorporating social justice advocacy into the counseling role (e.g. Beer et al., 2011; Bollman, 2015; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Collins et al., 2014; Inman et al., 2015; Linnemeyer, 2009; Nudelman, 2013; Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007; Ramos et al., 2014; Wendler & Nilsson, 2009) which are categorized into personality constructs and personal and professional factors.

A number of personality constructs influence a counselor's relationship to social justice advocacy. Research shows mixed results for the influence of demographic factors on social justice advocacy. For example, female gender was predictive of social justice advocacy for both interest and commitment (Inman et al., 2015, Beer et al., 2011). Beer and colleagues (2011) conducted a quantitative analysis, in which they found that a

female gender identity was the only variable predictive of commitment to social justice advocacy, although race and sexual orientation were included in the demographics. However, race was predictive in the qualitative analysis for white and non-white participants (Beer et al., 2011). Specifically, white male counselors who identified as social justice advocates specified using their racial and gender privilege to further the causes of social justice advocacy, and non-white participants specified their experiences with oppression as motivation to engage in social justice advocacy.

Linnemeyer's (2009) investigation found that counselors who identified as people of color or members of the LGBT community were more likely to engage in social justice advocacy but not enough to meet statistical significance. Researchers attribute this to the fact that counselors who are non-white or non-heterosexual are underrepresented in research, reducing the statistical power of this relationship (Beer et al., 2011; Inman et al., 2015; Linnemeyer, 2009).

Exposure to injustice (Beer et al., 2011; Caldwell et al., 2010; Inman et al., 2015; Roysircar, 2009) and exposure to exercises in social justice advocacy aimed to combat injustice (Beer et al., 2011; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Lee & Rodgers, 2009) are other predictive factors for counselors engaging in social justice advocacy. Witnessing injustice is a significant factor for counselors that engage in social justice advocacy, regardless of whether the injustice is experienced firsthand, by a group or community the counselor is associated with, or whether the injustice is impersonal (Beer et al., 2011; Caldwell & Vera, 2010). Service learning placements, a component of many counselor-training programs, are also predict of social justice advocacy. Data shows that exposure

to injustice is common in service learning placements and was identified as a significant step for counselors in developing social justice commitment and competence (Caldwell & Vera, 2011; Collins et al., 2014; Wendler & Nilsson, 2009). Counselors noted that watching mentors and peers *in action* was a significant developmental step in enhancing self-efficacy around social justice advocacy, which participants identified as contributing to their willingness to take risks and engage in social justice advocacy (Beer et al., 2011; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Inman et al., 2015).

Other factors that predict engagement with social justice advocacy include social supports that exist both in and out of academic and work settings (Beer et al., 2011; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Inman et al., 2015). Professional relationships that offer support for social justice advocacy, such as those with professors and supervisors, have the potential to offer counselors professional mentorship, which many counselors recognized as a pivotal factor in the development of their interest in social justice advocacy and their social justice advocacy competence (Beer et al., 2011; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Inman et al., 2015). Researchers note that social relationships outside of professional settings that support social justice advocacy, such as those with family members, friends, and colleagues, provide a source of stability, purpose, and meaning for counselors who conduct social justice advocacy (Caldwell & Vera, 2010).

Data indicate that counselors note the role of certain program elements as significant contributors to their interest in social justice advocacy as well (Beer et al., 2011; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Inman et al., 2015; Pieterse et. al., 2009). This includes a number of factors such as witnessing professors, supervisors, peers and colleagues

engaging in social justice exercises in the classroom and in the field (Beer et al., 2011; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Inman et al., 2015). Engaging in supportive, critical discussion of challenging topics regarding social justice advocacy and diversity was also identified as predictive of social justice advocacy (Collins et al., 2014; Inman et al., 2015; Toporek & Worthington, 2014).

Research shows that courses dedicated to counseling diverse populations were helpful in developing different aspects of competence in social justice advocacy, depending on the focus of the course (Collins et al., 2014; Inman et al., 2015; Pieterse et al., 2009). Courses that focused on focusing on the unique needs of different cultural groups enhance social justice interest, whereas courses that focus on systems of privilege, oppression, and dominance enhance self-efficacy in social justice advocacy (Collins et al., 2014; Pieterse et al., 2009). Counselors also specified that programs that integrate diversity issues into the breadth of the program (fusion model) rather than in a singular course aid in developing social justice interest and commitment (Inman et al., 2015; Pieterse et al., 2009). However, personality factors contribute as well.

Researchers found that specific personality traits are necessary for counselors who conduct social justice advocacy (Lee & Rodgers, 2009; Roysircar, 2009). Among these researchers note a sense of personal responsibility, courage, cognitive flexibility, openness to new ideas, self-discipline, and a sense of steadfastness are central personality elements that facilitate this kind of work (Lee & Rodger, 2009; Roysircar, 2009). Yet Lee and Rodgers (2009) state that this process can only begin when there is a willingness to engage in self-exploration.

Factors with Mixed Effects

Personality, in addition to other factors, can also work to prevent counselors from engaging in social justice advocacy. Data indicate that a spiritual calling or moral imperative is a driving factor for social justice advocacy (Beer et al., 2011). Additionally, extremely liberal political affiliation drives social justice advocacy (Smith et al., 2009, Steele et al., 2014) while extremely conservative political affiliation can limit interest in social justice advocacy (Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Rubin, 1975; Steele et al., 2014). Other factors with mixed results includes counselor's sense of self-efficacy and skills necessary for social justice advocacy (Collins et. al., 2014; Inman et. al., 2015), which are mediated by social justice interest. In addition, research indicates that limited identity development may contribute to counselor's reduced interest in social justice advocacy, although it has yet to be explicitly explored.

Preventive Factors

While limited data is available regarding what keeps counselors from advanced stages of social justice interest, research provides some clues, like conservative political affiliations correlated with reduced social justice interest (Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Rubin, 1975; Smith et al., 2009; Steele et al., 2014). Viewing the counseling role as objective also limits advocacy development because it enables counselors to step back from viewing themselves as subjective individuals, limiting the conceptualization of their values as inherently cultural (Harrist & Richardson, 2011; Ronay-Jinich, 2009). Wendler and Nilsson (2009) explored the effect of cognitive complexity on social justice advocacy in a counseling student sample. Investigators found that while higher cognitive

complexity was not associated with higher rates of social justice advocacy, that counseling students lower in cognitive complexity were more likely to “present themselves in a favorable light with regard to multicultural issues” (p. 36).

Elements of counselor training programs can also limit advocacy development and commitment, such as single courses primarily focused on comparing different ethnic groups reducing advocacy interest and commitment. Additional courses that focus on systems of oppression and privilege, identity development of the counselor, advocacy skill development, and intervention tactics tend to increase advocacy interest and commitment (Collins et al., 2014; Pieterse et al., 2009). Research indicates that other factors may keep counselors from developing an interest in social justice advocacy, such as the belief that the world is a just place. (Bollman et al. 2015; Nudelman, 2013; Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007; Ramos et al., 2014; Van Den Bos, 2003).

Belief in Just World

Research in Personality Psychology

Research confirms that belief in a just world is associated with a number of personality attributes, some of which directly inform how an individual relates and responds to social justice. The construct of belief in a just world (BJW) has two domains, personal belief in a just world, and general belief in a just world; individuals usually rate higher in one domain and lower in the other. Personal belief in a just world addresses how the individual perceives her/his experiences, according to how just or unjust she or he perceives those experiences. General belief in a just world addresses the same

concern, but for others rather than the self (Bollman et al., 2015; Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014).

Believing that the world is a just place provides a sense of control and protects individuals from the threat of life's unpredictability. Both domains of BJW are strongly correlated with higher rates of trust in general, greater well-being and life satisfaction, as well as "conservative social attitudes and political views" (Nudelman, 2013, p. 106). People who believe in a just world also report higher frequency of externalized attributions, especially when faced with injustice (Ramos et al., 2014). In fact, research indicates that the higher the BJW, the greater the threat to an individual's self-esteem when BJW is threatened (Ramos et al., 2014). Therefore, not only is BJW protective against psychological distress, but for individuals that rate high in this belief, it may be a foundational component to their sense of self and the world around them.

Belief in a just world is ubiquitous in Western culture, and is reflected in myths, fairy-tales, and tropes depicting reward and punishment because of *good or bad* behaviors (Rubin & Peplau, 1975; Nudelman, 2013). It is also found in psychoanalytic psychology as it facilitates an individual's transition from the pleasure principle to the reality principle, facilitating delayed gratification (Lerner, 1974), and is also found in developmental psychology as an indicator of cognitive and moral development (Nudelman, 2013; Piaget, 1965).

The two domains of BJW are interrelated but present some independent and opposite effects (Bollman et al., 2015). Nudelman (2013) states that general BJW is strongly correlated with the perception of well-being of others and weakest with

measures of well-being for themselves, opposite that of personal BJW. General BJW is correlated with “authoritarian submissiveness” and “friendly compliance” (Bollman et al., 2015). Bollman et al. (2015) reveal that while personal BJW correlates with agreeableness and extroversion, general BJW relates to neuroticism and emotionality. However, Nudelman’s meta-analysis (2013) produced opposite results.

Personal BJW is associated with reduced rates of depression and stress, higher resiliency, higher self-esteem, as well as greater life goals, ambitions, and life satisfaction (Ramos et al., 2015). Nudelman (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of 12 previous studies exploring BJW and found that personal BJW has consistently strong correlations with psychological wellbeing and weak correlations with the perceptive wellbeing of others (p. 106). Nudelman (2013) also found a positive correlation between BJW, agreeableness, extraversion, and an internal locus of control compared to general BJW.

When comparing the body of research exploring BJW to that of the five-factor model of personality (developed by Costa & McCray in 1992), a medium effect size shows that the higher the just world belief, the higher the individual’s emotional stability (Nudelman, 2013). This indicates that threats to BJW produce a negative affect state, including increases in the “experience of distress and perceived vulnerability (Ramos et al., 2014, p. 258). Given that responses to threats of just world beliefs are primarily affective and seek to uphold existing cognitive schemas (Bollman et al., 2015; Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014; Van den bos, 2003), research indicates that affect is positioned as a source of information. These results (Nudelman, 2013) reaffirm the data on self-esteem and high BJW (Ramos et al., 2014), in that because emotional stability is

tied to an individual's view of the world as a stable and predictable place, the effect of that threat is exacerbated when it occurs, juxtaposing her or his sense of reality and consequently sense of self. This response is paralleled even when information about a justice event is uncertain (Van den bos, 2003).

Belief in a Just World and Social Justice Advocacy

Agreeableness manifests in different ways under different circumstances regarding social justice. One aspect of agreeableness for individuals high in personal BJW is that when exposed to the threat of injustice, individuals are likely to respond in one of two ways: by helping the victim of injustice in effort to restore and reaffirm the just world belief, or by blaming the victim for the injustice in effort to restore the just world belief (Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014). Ramos et al. (2014) found that individuals high in personal BJW were more likely to take action to help victims of injustice if the victim and the individual are members of the same social or demographic group. This effect is strongest when the individual with the BJW strongly identifies with their social or demographic group, regardless of whether the group represents the dominant culture or that of marginalized populations (Ramos et al., 2014). Because agreeableness stems from a sense of trust (Nudelemna, 2013), personal BJW is also correlated with strong adherence to authority, which may explain the association with conservative social and political views (Nudelman, 2013).

General belief in a just world influences perceptions based on stereotypes. Individuals high in general BJW are more likely to externalize their errors in judgement (Ramos et al., 2014), "have harsh social attitudes" (Nudelman, 2013, p. 106) and "blame

victims of injustice” (Ramos et al., 2014, p. 258). Oldmeadow and Fiske (2007) found that individuals high in just world beliefs had “more positive attitudes regarding group-based inequalities” than those low in BJW (p. 1146). Participants high in BJW also rated a high-status target as more competent than a low-status target when compared to those low in BJW (Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007).

Research shows that belief in a just world for counseling students has a negative effect on advocacy development (Inman et al., 2016). Inman et al. (2016) conducted a study using a sample of counseling trainees exploring the relationships between social justice advocacy (interest, commitment, and self-efficacy), belief in a just world, and training supports. A path analysis and structural equation modeling revealed that while social justice interest, self-efficacy, and training mediate social justice commitment, the higher a counselor’s just world beliefs, the less interest and commitment they possess for social justice advocacy.

Identity Development

The relationship between identity development and belief in a just world has not yet been researched. However, the two constructs appear to be related. Identity development is a foundational process of maturation that may hold great meaning for individuals (Motyl, 2009; Piaget, 1965). How strongly an individual identifies with the social and demographic groups they belong to, and the norms, values, and beliefs possessed by those groups facilitates this (Motyl, 2009). Motyl (2009) describes identity development as consisting of “biological, cultural, social, economic, and political” factors that while malleable, are limited in their potential for changing one’s sense of identity (p.

69). While someone may change social groups based on their economic status, for example, changing social groups based on race is not possible. It is rare that individuals intentionally seek out identity, making change in identity slow and difficult (MacDougal & Arthur, 2001; Motyl, 2009) because it is inherently bound to external stimuli and filtered through the individual's current understanding of themselves and their worldview (MacDougal & Arthur, 2001).

Identity development contains a hierarchical aspect that is based on the preferences and internal values of the individual (Motyl, 2009). Decision making regarding the development of one's identity is subject to many factors (Motyl, 2009), including how strongly one identifies with certain identities or aspects of identities, how likely one is to act on an aspect of identity given the context surrounding it, and based on an evaluation of the benefits and drawbacks of said identity, regardless of a person's awareness of this process (Motyl, 2009). Group membership also contributes to these decisions (Hohman & Hogg, 2015).

The make-up of one's identity reflects the types of potentially opposing social or demographic groups with which the individual is a member. Group membership results in higher self-esteem and plays a role in how one responds to threats towards that group (Hohman & Hogg, 2015). In fact, the stronger one identifies with a group, the stronger their defense is when that group is criticized (Hohman & Hogg, 2015).

Identity Development and Belief in Just World

This relationship was also found by Ramos and colleagues (2014) when exploring group membership and belief in a just world, where individuals high in in-group

identification experienced low self-esteem because of a threat to their belief in a just world. Hohman and Hogg (2015) provide a potential explanation for this in that group identification is a process that creates depersonalization; a reduction in the perception of the self as unique, and a strengthening of identification with the expected group prototype. This creates a presumption that members of a group, including the individual, will fit the prototype's norms for thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors (Hohman & Hogg, 2015). This is also found in the results of Nudelman (2013) and Bollman's et al. (2015) studies exploring belief in a just world and agreeableness, as noted earlier in this text.

Finally, many people focus on identity development in terms of racial and cultural identity. While research on the relationship between belief in a just world and identity development has yet to be conducted, one stage of racial identity development shares a foundational basis with belief in a just world. Whereas, in the White Racial Identity Statures measure of developing a "non-racist White identity" (MacDougal & Arthur, 2001, p. 124), the third of six stages is distinguished by an underlying "notion that people get what they deserve" (p. 124). This concept is the very foundation of just world beliefs (Bollman et al., 2015; Inman et al., 2015; Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007; Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014; Rubin & Peplau, 1975) and contributes to the presumption that belief in a just world and early stages of identity development may reflect a shared, unexplored construct.

Goals of the Present Study

Belief in a just world is a construct that "tends to decline through a process of maturation and experience" (Nudelman, 2013, p.106; Rubin & Peplau, 1975). While

maturation and experience also greatly inform identity development, the two have yet to be investigated together. Identity development is prevalent in social justice literature, in literature of counselor identity development, and most recently in research regarding counselor advocates (Beer et al., 2011; Inman et al., 2015). However, the relationship between identity development and BJW have yet to be examined; additionally the literature does not address the effects of these two constructs on counselors interest in conducting social justice advocacy. Certain factors may be interpreted as a bridge between identity development and BJW, such as a counselor's "moral imperative" to engaging in social justice advocacy (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011, p. 159) or a counselor's activist orientation (Beer et al., 2011), yet this does not provide the counseling or research communities with data to build upon or decisively interpret.

Because the domains of BJW operate as separate constructs that counselors employ simultaneously, the present study will not explore personal BJW. The nature of social justice advocacy on behalf of counselors is grounded in the concerns for the wellbeing of others and the systems that inform those experiences. The present study will explore counselor BJW by attending to general belief in a just world rather than personal BJW.

Given the profound affect that advanced identity development has in predicting social justice commitment for counselors (Beer et al., 2011; Inman et al., 2015), one purpose of the present study is to explore the impact of identity development level on limiting social justice interest in counselors. Social justice commitment is a developmental consequence of advancing through a high level of social justice interest.

Therefore, because the present study aims to explore the impact of identity development on the counselor advocate process, the scope of the study will be limited to social justice interest rather than social justice commitment.

In conclusion, the present study was designed to better understand the relationship between belief in a just world and identity development, as it relates to counselor trainee's level of social justice interest. More specifically, I hypothesized that social justice interest would be positively correlated with identity development, that social justice interest would be negatively correlated with belief in a just world, and that belief in a just world would be negatively correlated with identity development.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This chapter addresses the research design and methods used for the present study, exploring how identity development and belief in a just world are related, and how they predict social justice interest for counseling graduate students. This chapter includes a detailed report of the scales used as well as the participant characteristics and selection procedures. The design and methods used are described in detail to enable replication.

Design

The present study will use a multiple regression analysis to explore the relationship between identity development, belief in a just world, and how they predict social justice interest in counseling graduate students. Identity development is a multidimensional construct of identifying with one's ethnic and cultural groups and the level of commitment that result from that process. In the present study, identity development was operationalized as the participant's score on the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (MEIM-R; Brown et. al, 2014; Appendix A). Open ended follow-up questions were also used to collect data on how participants define advocacy, how advocacy has been addressed in their program, and what changes they would make if they were designing a program.

Belief in a just world (BJW) is defined as the degree that individuals perceive the world to be a just place, where reward and punishment are always reflective of a person's merit and worth. The participant's scores on the Just World Scale operationalized belief in a just world (JWS; Rubin & Peplau, 1975; Appendix B).

Social justice interest is defined as the pattern of preferences regarding social justice activities. The participant's combined scores on two sections of the Social Issues Questionnaire operationalized social justice interest: the Social Justice Outcome scale and the Social Justice Interest scale (SIQ; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011; Appendix C).

Participants

Participants enrolled in a CACPREP accredited graduate counseling program in the United States, as identified by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational were eligible for participation. A nationwide sample of at least one school per state were contacted for participation resulting in 118 participants.

Participants were predominantly from Masters of Education programs (36%, $n = 35$) in clinical mental health counseling (60%, $n = 58$) from the North Central ACES region (40%, $n = 39$), in programs that include one course for diversity/multicultural counseling (84%, $n = 81$) and use a fusion model (88%, $n = 85$), in which discussions of diverse populations and identities are integrated into the curricula of most courses within the program.

Demographic data included age, racial identity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. All survey items addressing identity were open ended to allow for self-identification and categorized during analysis based on participant responses.

Descriptive analyses revealed that participants predominantly identified as White/Caucasian (75%, $n = 73$), female/cisfemale (78%, $n = 76$), and heterosexual (71%, $n = 69$). Racial identity responses also included Black/African American 8% ($n = 8$); Mixed/Multiracial 7% ($n = 7$); Latinx 5% ($n = 5$); and Asian 3% ($n = 3$). Gender identity

responses also included male/cismale 19% ($n = 18$); and non-binary 2% ($n = 2$). Sexual orientation responses also include non-heterosexual identities 28% ($n = 27$), including 8 bisexual, 6 lesbian, 4 gay, 3 homosexual, 2 pansexual, 2 queer, 1 demisexual, and 1 asexual responses. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 51 years, with a mean age of 29.46 ($SD = 7.56$).

Program types also included school counseling (16%, $n = 15$), counselor education and supervision (16%, $n = 15$), counseling in student affairs (3%, $n = 3$), couples/marriage and family therapy (2%, $n = 2$), rehabilitation counseling (2%, $n = 2$), and counseling psychology (1%, $n = 1$). Degree types also included Masters of Arts (33%, $n = 32$), Masters of Science (17%, $n = 16$), PhD (12%, $n = 12$), and EdD (1%, $n = 1$). Diversity/multicultural courses also included responses of zero courses (6%, $n = 6$), two courses (6%, $n = 6$), four courses (2%, $n = 2$), and three courses (1%, $n = 1$). Over three-quarters of programs used the fusion model (87%, $n = 85$) while 11% ($n = 11$) address diversity/multicultural issues in a single course. Geographic region of ACES was primarily the North Central but also included Southern (37%, $n = 36$), Western (12%, $n = 12$), North Atlantic (6%, $n = 6$), and Rocky Mountain (3%, $n = 3$) regions.

Materials

Participants completed a demographics form (Appendix D), the Social Desirability Response Set – Five (Appendix E), the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (Appendix B), the Just World Scale (Appendix C), the Social Issues Questionnaire (Appendix D), and the follow-up questions (Appendix F). The

demographics form was used to assess the participant's age, gender, race/ethnicity, academic year, program type, and academic focus.

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (MEIM-R). Participant identity development was assessed using the 6-item scale that measures an individual's relationship to her/his ethnic identity. The measure includes two subscales that address exploration with (items 1, 4, and 5) and commitment to (items 2, 3, and 6) their ethnic identity. Responses are provided on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from one (*strongly disagree*) to five (*strongly agree*). The participant's total score determines the level of identity development. Higher numbers indicate a higher level of identity development (Brown et. al, 2014). The measure shows good reliability overall with college student and general population samples across ethnic and racial identities, with an internal consistency (Cronbach's α) range from .76 to .91 for the subscales and from .81 to .89 for the measure overall (Brown et. al, 2014).

Just World Scale (JWS). The participant's belief in a just world was assessed using the 20-item Just World Scale. While there are no subscales, items address general belief in a just/unjust world, and perspectives on reward, punishment, and injustice across multiple domains including family, education, health, politics, and criminal justice. Items are rated using a 6-point Likert type scale indicating level of agreement ranging from one (*strongly disagree*) to six (*strongly agree*). Half of the items reflect strong beliefs that the world is unjust and are inversely scored, including items 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17, and 20. Scores are totaled, then divided by total items for participant's overall score. Higher mean scores indicate a stronger belief in a just world. Rubin and Peplau (1975) report

internal consistency coefficient of .80 and .81 for college student and general population samples.

Social Issues Questionnaire (SIQ). Participant social justice interest level was assessed using the 19-item scale. Two subscales explore a participant's social justice outcome expectations and interest in social justice activities. Items span the domains of material, social, self-evaluation, activities, and expectations. Responses are given using a 10-point Likert-type scale with a range from zero (*strongly disagree*) to nine (*strongly agree*). Scores on both subscales are totaled, then divided by total items, for a single overall score. Higher scores indicate more positive expectations from social justice involvement as well as higher interest in engaging in social justice activities. Miller and Sendrowitz (2011) report the coefficient alpha for the subscale of social justice outcome expectations ranging from .81 to .92, and at .81 to .90 for the social justice interest subscale on counselor-trainee samples. The alpha scores were the same or higher for repeated studies.

Socially Desirable Response Set Measure (SDRS-5). Participant responses were evaluated for social desirability using the 5-item scale measuring an individual's likelihood to give false responses in effort to uphold a more socially desirable image. The items are rated using a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from one (*definitely true*) to five (*definitely false*). All responses are scored zero except for the extreme response: for items 2 – 4, the extreme response is item 5 (definitely false) which is scored one, for items one and five, the extreme response is item 1 (definitely true) which is scored one. The resulting number after totaling a participant's score indicates the level of social

desirability the participant may be using in responses throughout the study, with higher scores indicating higher social desirability. Hays, Hayashi, and Stewart (1989) report Cronbach's alpha at .66 and .68 for two samples of the general population. Upon replication, reliability improved to .77 (Hays, Hayashi, & Stewart, 1989; Rand Corporation).

Follow-up Questions. Additional follow-up questions were included to collect data on how participants relate to and experience advocacy in their training program. A total of five questions were used with three questions in essay format and two in forced choice format, including a personal definition of advocacy, how advocacy has been addressed in their program, and what changes they would make if they were designing a program. This provided an opportunity to collect additional data not explicitly addressed by the structured assessments used in this study. Given the nature of qualitative research, additional investigative supervision was conducted by the chair of this thesis to ensure the integrity of the data and minimize the influence of researcher bias in the categorization process. Reflexive subjectivity was used in regular weekly meetings to monitor responses to the data for all three open-ended questions.

Researcher Biases.

My biases reflects my academic and professional experiences, ranging from engaging in antiracist feminist community building during my undergraduate education to feeling threatened and powerless at times in my counselor-training program. My intersecting identities of being an able bodied, multiracial White, cisgender, queer, working class graduate student also greatly inform my approach to this research and

deepen my passion for diversity, social justice advocacy, and ally development. These are the factors that have pushed me to conduct this study and helped create the lens through which I interpret the world, my work, and the results of this research.

As such, I expected the results would confirm my experiences as an outlier to the body of research used to make the predictions in this study. More specifically, I expected that counselors-in-training would be more likely than the general population to have higher identity development and higher interest in social justice advocacy as time since the development of the ACA multicultural competencies increases, and that would also help to lay the framework for the hypotheses proposed.

Procedures

The research proposal was submitted to the Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC) through Central Washington University for approval before the recruitment of participants began. Upon approval, emails were sent to program directors at CACREP accredited counseling programs in each of the regions of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. The emails provided a brief overview of the purpose and procedure for the study and asked program directors to forward the email to their graduate students. A link to the study was also provided, leading participants to the informed consent page (Appendix G). Additionally an email was sent to CESNET, a counselor education LISTSERV to recruit additional participants. Matriculation into the study required that participants click “I agree” to having read and understood the information on that page. All participants completed the demographics questionnaire and the SDRS-5. Then they completed the MEIM-R, the JWB scale, and the SIQ in

randomized order. Finally, participants completed the follow-up questions before advancing to a debriefing page (Appendix H) and closing out of the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The researcher conducted data analysis on the data collected from volunteer counselor-in-training participants from CACREP accredited programs, exploring identity development, belief in a just world, and interest in social justice advocacy. Data were downloaded from Qualtrics into SPSS before scores were analyzed for the MEIM-R, JWS, SIQ, and the SDRS-5. This chapter also includes analyses of demographic and qualitative data.

A simultaneous regression analysis was used to predict interest in social justice advocacy for counselors-in-training. Scores on the SDRS-5 indicated minimal social desirability (one or below) so no participants were removed from the sample. Sample size was reduced from 118 participants to 97 after the removal of 21 participants for incomplete data or for not currently being enrolled in a CACREP accredited counseling program at the time of participation. Assumptions were tested using scatterplots and residuals, showing normality of variance, shape, and linearity. Examination of the coefficients revealed no collinearity, meeting the assumption for multicollinearity.

The mean and standard deviations for this sample were compared to normed samples for the MEIM-R, JWS, and the SIQ. The MEIM-R data was taken from Brown et al., (2014) which used a general population sample, data from the JWS was taken from Rubin and Peplau (1975) which used an undergraduate student sample, and lastly the SIQ data was taken from Miller and Sendrowitz (2011) which used a counselors-in-training sample. Differences in scores are present with the exception of the Multigroup Ethnic

Identity Measure – Revised (Table 1). It was anticipated that the MEIM –R for the present sample would be higher than normed scores as counselors-in-training are expected to have higher levels of identity development than the general population, since counselor education encourages trainees to process the context of their experiences and internalize the meaning that follows (Harrist & Richardson 2012; Motyl, 2009; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). However, this was not confirmed.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics

	Present Study		Normed Data	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure	3.37	0.95	3.41	0.83
Just World Belief Scale	3.31*	0.51	3.44	0.53
Social Interest Questionnaire	6.98*	1.05	7.93	1.17

* $p < 0.0001$

Because both samples of the SIQ used counselors-in-training, the researcher expected results on the SIQ to be similar, but instead the present sample scored lower for social justice interest, $t(324) = 6.90, p < 0.0001, CI_{95} = .68, 1.22$. Sample size for the SIQ ($n = 229$) was over twice as large as the sample size for the present study ($n = 97$), which may contribute to the reduced score. Reduced SIQ scores may also reflect the heavy representation of Midwestern counselors-in training because the Midwest tends to be a socially conservative region. The researcher also expected that scores would be

lower on the JWS than the general population, which was confirmed, $t(216) = 8.58, p < 0.0001, CI_{95} = 2.24, 3.58$.

The correlations among the variables did not meet statistical significance, indicating an orthogonal relationship among predictor variables, which means each variable uniquely contributed to the regression. However, the direction of the data parallels two of the three predictions made in this study. The results indicate that identity development and social justice interest are positively correlated ($r = .155, p = .06$) and that belief in a just world and social justice interest are negatively correlated ($r = -.146, p = .07$). Interestingly, identity development and belief in a just world were positively correlated despite the prediction that these two would have a negative relationship ($r = .101, p = .16$) (Table 2).

Table 2

Correlations

Measure	1	2	3
1. Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure	-----		
2. Just World Belief Scale	0.101	-----	
3. Social Interest Questionnaire	0.155	- 0.146	-----

A multiple linear regression explored the predictive power of identity development and belief in a just world on the interest in social justice advocacy. The regression equation had an adjusted R^2 of .03 and did not produce significant results [$(F(2, 95) = 2.46, p > .05)$]. The beta coefficients also lack significance (Table 3). When

standardized, identity development ($\beta = .171$) and belief in a just world ($\beta = -.163$) had nearly equal weights in the equation yet when unstandardized, identity development ($B = .60$) attributed for nearly double of the variance of belief in a just world ($B = -.32$). This may be the result of the focus on identity development in counselor-training programs (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Toporek et al, 2009), strengthening counselor identity. It may also be due to the reduced scores in just world beliefs among this sample.

Table 3

Multiple Regression Data

	B	β	t	Sig
Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure	0.598	0.171	1.686	0.095
Just World Belief Scale	-0.322	-0.163	-1.1604	0.112

Chi-Square

Chi-Square analyses resulted in differences based on sexual orientation, racial identity, and geographic region. The North Central region contains largest number of states and was the most strongly represented region in the study ($n = 39$), including 30.8% non-heterosexual ($n = 12$) and 20.5% ($n = 8$) non-Caucasian responses. The Southern region is the next largest ($n = 36$) including 30.6% ($n = 11$) non-heterosexual and 25% ($n = 9$) non-Caucasian identities. The Western region is the third largest participant region ($n = 12$) with 33.4% ($n = 4$) of the non-heterosexual and 33.3% ($n = 4$) of non-Caucasian identities.

The least diverse participant regions are the North Atlantic and the Rocky Mountain regions, whereas the North Atlantic region had no non-heterosexual responses and 16.7% ($n = 1$) non-Caucasian responses. The Rocky Mountain region had no non-heterosexual or non-Caucasian identities to report, however, this may be accounted for by the fact that the Rocky Mountain region has the fewest states and only accounted for 3% of total participants. Additionally, while 28.1% of all participants identified as non-heterosexual, examination of the intersection of racial identity and sexual orientation reveals that this sample of non-heterosexual identities is predominantly a White/Caucasian sample (14.8% non-Caucasian).

The Western region is the third largest region yet represented the greatest diversity, perhaps attributable to the laid-back, liberal reputation this region has on social issues. The North Central region (the most states) and the Southern region (second greatest number of states) had lower rates of diversity in this study, potentially because they are predominantly more socially conservative areas, giving way to the nickname the Bible Belt.

Chi-Square analyses also examined how scores on measures were affected by participant identity. Sexual orientation and racial identity were analyzed with scores on the MEIM-R, JWS, and the SIQ, resulting in few differences. Scores for the MEIM-R were significantly higher, $t(94) = 2.98, p = 0.0036, CI_{.95} = -6.50, -1.30$, for non-White participants ($M = 23.35, SD = 5.02$) compared to White participants ($M = 19.45, SD = 5.60$), as anticipated. Differences in scores were present on the SIQ, $t(94) = 1.82, p = 0.07$, for heterosexual ($M = 6.83, SD = 1.01$) and non-heterosexual participants ($M =$

7.26, $SD = 1.11$), but did not reach statistical value as anticipated. This indicates that racial identity development may not be a catalyst for interest in social justice advocacy for counselors-in-training, even while the strength of racial identity varies between White and non-White students. The other indication is that sexual orientation may contribute to interest in social justice advocacy, but the degree of that effect cannot be determined from this study. Additionally, belief in a just world does not appear to be affected by sexual orientation or racial identity.

Qualitative Analysis

The first open-ended question regarding the definition of social justice advocacy resulted in two main themes: working towards equality for individuals and groups, and challenging society's systems for equity and systemic change. The majority of definitions focused on increasing equality, including responses of "Fighting for equal treatment and empowerment for all people" and "Advocating for those who might not be able to speak, like women and minorities." Responses categorized as equity focused include focusing on "equity not equality." Another participant reflected that social justice advocacy is about

seeing the larger context of social problems and recognizing where there is a need or injustice. It is understanding the difference between equity and equality and working to achieve the latter. In practice this looks like a variety of different things.

These responses indicate one of the common challenges of social justice, that it means many different things, a theme that occurs below.

Participants were next asked to comment on their perception of their program's commitment to advocacy. Responses spanned the spectrum from wholehearted gratitude to distaste, but the most common responses focused on two themes: appreciation for the way advocacy is addressed and criticism that programs are not doing enough. Perception of program commitment were evenly balanced between the two themes. One response of strong appreciation was "I have been blessed to participate in a program that not only teaches social justice but models it as well." Overall responses of appreciation reflected that "they generally let students form and discuss their own opinions but focus on intense introspection with exposure to factual information"; indicating a balance between introspection and didactic learning. Another respondent indicated that the program provides "[a] terrific example of how to advocate for those less fortunate." Finally, another appreciative statement indicated that "the program is committed to advocating around social justice issues, and I think it is continuing to improve every year."

Although there were many positive reflections on commitment to social justice, the critical responses focused on programmatic limitations including "I believe that the program is committed to advocacy in spirit but that it lacks the diversity in the faculty to appreciate the application of the principles without becoming defensive and protective of it's own interests," a common criticism in many academic fields, including counselor education, and an issue that will be discussed below. Another challenge participants identified is "[that] there aren't any clear instructions on how to go about doing that [social justice advocacy]." This is another common issue as the field of counseling continues to struggle with how to identify and develop specific skills for the new role as

social justice advocates. Another issue related to the nature of advocacy work is the amorphous definition of social justice, which complicates the development of specific advocacy strategies, reflected by one participant this way: “faculty often try to emphasize the importance of advocacy, but fail to communicate specifically how to do it and/or put it into practice outside of the classroom” and “it exists in theory but when it is directly engaged, it is not respected.” Other responses address a desire for more attention on how to advocate for the counseling field and one response expressed how the program pushed advocacy onto students too strongly.

The third and fourth questions, in forced choice format, asked participants to rate their program’s relationship to advocacy as authentic and whether they have role models in the program. Results indicated that 70.27% perceive the program’s advocacy efforts as authentic ($n = 52$) and 70.1% stated role models were present ($n = 68$). This indicates most participants recognize their program overall as a positive foundation to build from.

The last question invited participants to share feedback on what they would include in diversity/multicultural courses if they were to design one. Responses were broken down into themes, with many responses possessing more than one theme. The five most frequent themes were: applied learning, awareness of diverse groups, skills, social systems, and diversity of gatekeepers.

Applied learning was the most frequently identified theme, including advocacy projects and research/conference requirements, and service learning opportunities. One respondent indicated that a desire for “direct, active

participation in an advocacy immersion experience; learning about power/privilege and [learning] the difference between equity and equality.”

Another participant suggested “actually going out and engaging in social justice activities. Seeking out underserved populations other than just serving those that are most accessible” would have helped solidify learning.

Increasing awareness of diverse groups and their needs was the second most common topic. One participant indicated that a discussion that “include[s] many different kinds of diversity, not just racial diversity” would be beneficial. Another respondent indicated a desire for greater discussions about “multicultural awareness and awareness of privilege.” Finally, one participant reflected on some of the groups missing from discussion about multiculturalism suggested discussions about “issues related to new populations in the U.S. (i.e. transgender, new Americans, refugees, immigrants).”

The third most common theme regarding suggested additions to diversity/multicultural courses was the inclusion of skill development, such as communication skills for difficult conversations and discussion, advocacy approaches, resources for conducting advocacy, and antiracist trainings. One respondent reported “racial bias training” and “preparation [for] having difficult and uncomfortable conversations in regard to the topic” would have been beneficial, and that an “overview of appropriate counseling approaches with diverse populations and community resources” would add to the multicultural coursework.

The fourth most common topics tied between a focus on systemic issues and more diversity among counselor educators. The system focused topic addressed the use of politics as a context for learning about diverse populations, the systemic nature of privilege and oppression, and a desire for system specific intervention skills such as working with human service or judicial departments. One respondent indicated that “current issues, history of privileged and oppressed groups, current laws and policies that impact certain groups” would aid in a broader and contextual understanding of social justice. Another reflected on the politicized nature of social justice work indicating that

it is easy to discuss social justice and advocacy as a lofty idea, but many find implementation difficult to discuss due to the fact that many issues are politicized. I think the conversation needs to include social justice in politics, even if that is uncomfortable for some.

Another suggested that “learning how to work the system with oppressed populations, whether that be benefits, criminal justice, etc.” would aid in the practice of social justice advocacy.

Diversifying counselor education discussions indicated that inclusion of role models, professors, authors, and guest speakers from broad sociodemographic groups with specific emphasis on marginalized populations would add depth to the conversations about social justice advocacy. One participant indicated that “if possible an instructor [should be] part of a multicultural or diverse group. Most of the course[s] I have taken in this area are

ironically [taught by] white and cisgender [instructors]”. Another participant suggested that “diverse guest lecturers” might improve student learning, especially when diverse instructors are not available. Another participant indicated that,

speaking with people from marginalized communities to find out what role we can play in helping them, not just assuming we can step in and do something, but finding out from them what is going to be best for their community

would have increase social justice advocacy education in counselor training programs. Finally one participant indicated a desire “hearing from the source” reflecting that, “reading about diversity is one thing but seeing it is another.”

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This is the first study examining the relationship between identity development, belief in a just world, and social justice interest for counselors-in-training. Results indicated that for this sample, belief in a just world and identity development did not predict interest in social justice advocacy. Results also indicated that belief in a just world did not influence the relationship between identity development and social justice interest, given the low contribution to the regression model. However, a relationship between constructs is present even with small effect sizes. The data reveals a negative correlation between just world beliefs and social justice advocacy, a positive correlation between identity development and social justice interest, and a positive correlation between just world beliefs and identity development. While the results of this study are non-significant, the small effect sizes warrant meaningful findings when the constructs are abstract and complex, when results are reliant upon participant introspection, and the study is the first of its kind, especially given the social tone of issues explored is controversial.

Just World Scale

The counselors-in-training sample scored lower on the JWS than the general population, reflecting the growing awareness of the world as unjust, particularly for diverse populations. This may be due to the development and implementation of the ACA Multicultural competencies into CACPREP programs (Pieterse et al., 2009; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Toporeket al., 2009). While this may reflect greater awareness of the

needs of diverse populations by counselors-in-training, belief in a just world may have had more weight in the regression model had the sample size been larger.

Just world beliefs can encourage or prevent interest in social justice advocacy: beliefs that the world is already just reduces the perceived need for social justice advocacy, but just world beliefs can also encourage interest by proposing that justice will prevail because of advocacy efforts (Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014). Individuals high in personal BJW are more likely to be advocates for victims of injustice, but this effect is strongest when advocate and victim are of the same social or demographic group (Ramos et al., 2014). This sample's low rate of identity development combined with the dual nature of just world beliefs may contribute to the results of this study but further research is advised, including mixed methods designs, to explore how racial identity or sexual orientation interact with just world beliefs.

Identity Discussion

Demographic analyses support previous studies noting limited diversity in the counseling field (Beer et al., 2011; Collins et al., 2014; Inman et al., 2015; Kiselica & Robins, 2001; Pieterse et al., 2009; Ronay-Jinich, 2009; Smith et al., 2008; Steele et al., 2014; Toporeket al., 2009; Wedler & Nillson, 2009) with the exception of the rate of non-heterosexual respondents among this sample. Speculation remains whether non-heterosexual counselors-in-training were more likely to seek out participation in a study about counselors and advocacy or whether there may be an unexamined reason for the unusually high number of non-heterosexual participants. One reason may be the use of open-ended questions regarding sexual identity, which enabled the participants to self-

identify and be counted among the often narrow and limited categories of sexual orientation. Another reason may be the reduction of all non-heterosexual identities to a singular category, thereby inflating the category and emphasizing the dichotomy between the dominant culture and the marginalization experienced by members of the LGBTQIA community (Brown, 2006; Moliero & Pinto, 2015). The same rationale was used for the self-identification and categorization of racial and gender identity.

Results indicate that identity development is stronger for counselors-in training that are people of color than it is for White/Caucasian trainees. This may be a reflection of the dearth with which individuals seek out identity development, (MacDougal & Arthur, 2001; Motyl, 2009) because it is inherently bound to external stimuli and filtered through their current worldview (MacDougal & Arthur, 2001). Therefore in this case, because trainees of color do not meet dominant culture norms for race, results indicate that identity development may be occurring higher frequency and/or intensity than White/Caucasian trainees. However, this does not contribute to increased interest in social justice advocacy or affect just world beliefs for trainees-of-color. Chi-Square also indicated that sexual orientation does not affect just world beliefs, but was a greater predictor for social justice advocacy than racial identity development.

Speculation remains whether this is influenced by recent sociopolitical events (i.e. increasing LGBTQIA presence in pop-culture, legalization of marriage equality, transgender awareness, and rise in legislative actions) (Lambda Legal, 2017; SAMSA, 2014) or whether there is something inherent in non-heterosexual identity and social positionality that promotes engagement in social justice advocacy compared to those who

identify as non-White. Wendler and Nilsson (2009) also found similar results. Non-heterosexual counselor trainees scored higher for desired social justice advocacy, and for actual social justice advocacy conducted than heterosexual trainees (Wendler & Nilsson, 2009), but etiology of this relationship in either study remains unknown.

Reflections on programs

Qualitative data indicated that counselors-in-training have positive experiences with their programs regarding multicultural issues and advocacy overall, but that there is room for growth. Responses define advocacy as working for equality more than focusing on equity, and that program commitment to advocacy is split between participants who reported either a satisfactory experience or unsatisfactory, although participants predominantly viewed the commitment as authentic.

Results indicate that multicultural courses would also benefit from including a service learning component. Service learning is defined as “integrating meaningful community work experiences with instruction and reflection to enrich learning” (Caldwell et al., 2010). This provides trainees the opportunity to participate in sociopolitical actions, connecting class-based learning with advanced development of the knowledge, attitudes, and practical skills required to implement social justice advocacy on behalf of diverse client populations (Collins et al., 2014; Inman et al., 2015; Steele et al., 2014; Wendler, 2009). Not only does this give rise to understanding the impact of intersecting aspects of privilege and oppression, within and across systems for clients, but prompts trainees to explore how they may be similar or different from those they encounter (Steele et al., 2014). Service learning works as the catalyst for trainee

introspection of beliefs, worldviews, and reflection of their own social positionality that is required for identity development and for the development of a counselor-advocate orientation. In fact, when trainees choose the service learning projects, it has shown to increase “a sense of civic duty and social responsibility, key aspects of social justice advocacy” (Inman et al., 2015, p. 462). Additionally, service learning components offer opportunities for reflection and growth for counselor-trainees regardless of their level of identity development or level of exposure to diversity issues (Caldwell et al., 2010).

Participants also requested a greater focus on diverse groups, privilege, and oppression. This contrasts with research that shows curricula focusing on group differences is less conducive in promoting social justice advocacy than curricula that focuses more heavily on systems of oppression and privilege (Collins et al., 2014; Pieterse et al., 2009). Single courses primarily focused on comparing different ethnic groups tend to reduce advocacy interest and commitment while one or more courses that focuses on systems of oppression and privilege, development of counselor’s cultural identity, and development of advocacy skills and intervention tactics tend to increase advocacy interest (Collins, 2014; Pieterse et al., 2009). A desire for more concrete advocacy skills was also expressed in the study, as was skills for systemic interventions.

Previous studies identified that witnessing professors, supervisors, peers and colleagues engaging in social justice exercises in the classroom and in the field was predictive of advocacy identity for counselors in training (Beer et al., 2011; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Inman et al., 2015). Having more advocacy role models and greater diversity among lecturers, professors, and authors also stood out among responses, but contrasted

with the forced choice results of program authenticity and presence of role models. Research indicates that watching mentors and peers in action was a significant developmental step in enhancing self-efficacy around social justice advocacy, which participants identified as contributing to their willingness to take risks and engage in social justice advocacy (Beer et al., 2011; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Inman et al., 2015). Engaging in supportive, critical discussion of challenging topics regarding social justice advocacy and diversity was also identified as predictive of social justice advocacy and is advised (Collins et al., 2014; Inman et al., 2015; Toporek & Worthington, 2014). In fact, research indicates that service learning and watching peers/mentors in action “is not enough, difficult dialogues must be paired alongside and throughout” for the meaning of these experiences to resonate with trainees (Toporek & Worthington, 2014, p. 939).

This brings up the debate regarding who is best fit to conduct diversity/multicultural education and/or serve as an advocacy role model. Concerns are present on both sides of the argument. One view is that it is inappropriate to speak/advocate for others regardless of the relationship between the speaker and the group because no one individual can speak for all members of any group, regardless of whether the speaker is (a) a member of the group, (b) a member of another marginalized population but not of the specific group, or (c) a member of the dominant culture (Alcoff, 1992). Therefore, the hierarchy of worthiness to speak about or advocate for diverse populations is neutralized and it becomes acceptable to speak/advocate *on behalf of* marginalized populations (Alcoff, 1992). The other view is that while it is inappropriate to speak for others for the reasons listed above, a person who is not of the dominant

culture is better equipped to conduct those discussions/acts because of their positionality related to oppression and marginalization (Alcoff, 1992; Grillo, 1995).

The problem is that both approaches essentialize the speaker (Grillo, 1995) rather than focusing on the content and insight the approach seeks to deliver. Being a member of one marginalized group does not ensure that the speaker will have a better understanding of the struggles of other marginalized groups (Alcoff, 1992; Grillo, 1995). Additionally, being a member of the dominant culture does not eliminate a speaker's efficacy in working against the systems that privilege some and oppress others (Grillo, 1995). The issue that connects both sides is an acknowledgement that we cannot speak/advocate for others (Alcoff, 1992; Grillo, 1995), and that the system itself is primarily what has created this division (Ali & Sichel, 2014; MacKinnon, 1987; Toporek & Worthington, 2014). Counselor education programs would benefit from use of the dominance approach (MacKinnon, 1987), which focuses on the distribution of power in society (Ali & Sichel, 2014; MacKinnon, 1987; Toporek & Worthington, 2014), as described above, to help professors better prepare counselor trainees to recognize how intersectionality can bridge and synthesize topics of identity, diversity, privilege, and oppression in their own lives and the lives and of clients.

Limitations

The sample make up and size may be limiting the results of this study. This sample used a predominantly White, heterosexual, female sample, extending generalizability to a large segment of the counseling field. However, because of this sample, this study offers little to further the understanding of how these constructs are

experienced by others in the counseling field, such as people of color, male counselors, and other intersecting identities and demographics. Sample size may also contribute to the regression model not reaching statistical significance and limiting statistical power. A larger sample size may have increased power enough to reach statistical significance given that probability values were .07 for social justice advocacy and belief in a just world, and .06 for social justice advocacy and identity development.

Certain data was not explored in this study such as the participant's year in the program. By not including this, no data is available for comparing how trainees experience in the program changes from matriculation to approaching graduation. This information may have informed the interpretation of the dichotomous nature of qualitative responses and the assessment of just world beliefs, identity development, and social justice interest.

Additionally, the MEIM-R used to assess identity development only addresses racial identity, leaving out many identity domains including but not limited to ability, health status, sexual orientation, class, religion etc. This limited scope of the MEIM-R may be particularly detrimental to the present study given the unusually high rate of non-heterosexual identities represented. Therefore, more identity data may be present in this sample that simply was unavailable due to the limitations of the measure used to assess identity development.

Like other studies (Beer et al., 2011; Collins et al., 2014; Inman et al., 2015; Wendler & Nilsson, 2009), non-White identities are underrepresented in this study, leaving a gap in the data on how these constructs affect people of color. Speculation

remains how results may be different if people of color were more equally represented in the study, given the qualitative responses regarding diversity and advocacy.

The controversial nature of social justice advocacy may be a limitation in this study as well, with the racial tensions of the post-Obama political climate and the growing rise in liberal social movements (Occupy, Black Lives Matter, university safe spaces). Scores on the SIQ were lower than the counselor-in-training sample used by Miller & Sendrowitz (2011), but approached significance for non-heterosexual participants. Counselors-in-training may be reluctant to report an interest in social justice advocacy given the volatile state of the social and political climate. Yet the reduced scores may be due to simply a reduced interest in social justice advocacy due to the perception of these very sociopolitical issues/movements. Additionally, there may even be an attempt by counselor trainees to create distance from the diversity competencies that are now part of the expected counselor praxis based on identity constructs that are not included in this study, such as political affiliation (Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Rubin, 1975; Smith et al., 2009; Steele et al., 2014), religiosity (Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014) and certain aspects of personality (Bollman et al., 2015; Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014).

Future Research

Using assessments that explore identity from an intersectional lens would enable researchers to collect more identity data from smaller numbers of participants. Because the counseling field is predominantly representative of dominant culture (Beer et al., 2011; Collins et al., 2014; Inman et al., 2015; Kiselica & Robins, 2001; Pieterse et al.,

2009; Ronay-Jinich, 2009; Smith et al., 2008; Steele et al., 2014; Toporek et al., 2009; Wedler & Nillson, 2009), developing and using measures that incorporate broader domains of identity would allow the field to have a more accurate picture of the diversity that is present within it, which may have the potential to reconfigure the relationship between counseling and diversity, and in turn create a more informed and inclusive approach to advocating for clients.

Qualitative responses also indicate that research on the identity development and perceptions of social justice advocacy for lecturers or trainers who teach in diversity and advocacy courses, as well as just world beliefs, may provide a better understanding of how the ACA competencies are being carried out in CACREP training programs. This may help create a more complete picture of how courses are experienced by trainees, but also how identity development, just world beliefs, and social justice advocacy may converge once counselors become responsible for carrying out the diversity competencies in their respective programs.

Implications for Counselor Training

Development of an advocacy identity by counselor trainees is noted as a significant and positive result of a combination of factors including elements of counselor training programs, exposure to injustice, and professional and social supports (Beer et al., 2012; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Inman et al., 2015; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011).

Qualitative data indicates a broad range of exposure to diversity issues and a broad range of perspectives on what the goals of addressing diversity should be (i.e. “making injustice visible”, “equal opportunities for all”, “equity not equality” and “working on behalf of a

client on the micro, meso, and macro levels, to support their issue or cause”). CACREP does not require previous courses as prerequisite to enrollment in accredited counselor-training programs. That means that for many counselor-trainees, their first exposure to diversity issues occurs in their counselor-training program. This creates a wide range of identity development levels from which to engage students and insurmountable pressure on those who teach in CACREP accredited programs.

One consequence of this is the expectation is that all counselor trainees will not only get *up to speed* on diversity issues, but also know how to handle the inter-and intra-personal dynamics of the difficult, and sometimes very personal, conversations during the course/program. Another is that counselor trainees are expected to leave the program with a skill set that prepares them to intervene on behalf of a diverse client population (CACREP, 2016). Results of this study support previous research that while most CACREP accredited programs use a fusion model, they commonly have one course to cover the bulk of these expectations (Pieterse et al., 2009) in addition to (a) instilling an awareness of diverse groups, privilege and oppression, (b) encouraging identity development, (c) promoting advocacy interventions for counselors, and (d) instilling a sense of responsibility of advocacy as essential to counseling praxis, per the multicultural competencies and CACREP requirements (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Roysircar 2009; Toporek et al., 2009).

This has the potential to be particularly challenging for lecturers given that the course must cater to students with the lowest level of exposure to diversity issues as it is not a requirement for matriculation but for trainees, may also act as a continuation of the

marginalization for those who are not part of the dominant culture (Brown, 2006; Moliero & Pinto, 2015). CACREP accredited programs would benefit by requiring previous diversity/multicultural courses prior to matriculation, multiple courses dedicated to diversity/advocacy, or the option for students to test-out of entry level diversity classes if their competence and awareness can be demonstrated.

Until then, counselor education programs would also benefit by creating objective guidelines to assist students in handling difficult conversations inside and outside the classroom. Rupani (2013) notes that because looking at our own social positionality and engaging in social justice advocacy “may take us away from our comfort zone” this will “indeed take us into uncharted waters where structured and bounded relationships are the exception rather than the rule” (p. 36). Counselor educators and program directors may need to engage in challenging co-construction to help find a balance between the policing of conversation done in safe spaces and the hands-off approach that assumes that counselor-trainees will abide by the structured dynamics of the classroom when outside that setting. This may help build a shared definition of what all parties can expect from these difficult discourses and complex relationships, and provide some assurance that appropriate behaviors will take place between trainees in order to aid learning and counselor development. This may take pressure off trainees when discussions are particularly challenging and help guide all parties in how best to handle those discourses, regardless of the trainees exposure to diversity issues (i.e. low to high). Program supports and protocols are essential in effectively handling conflict, particularly when

topics include such personal facets such as racial identity, sexual orientation, privilege, and oppression (Ali & Sichel, 2014; Rupani, 2013; Toporek & Worthington, 2014).

Service learning modalities are also advised. As noted previously, service learning fosters identity development and skill building in order to carry out advocacy interventions (Caldwell et al., 2010, Collins et al., 2014; Inman et al., 2015; Steele et al., 2014; Wendler, 2009).

Just World Beliefs in Training

The ethics of just world beliefs also have implications for programs. This study did not find a definitive relationship between just world beliefs and social justice interest for counselors. However, if it had, the question would remain, what is the responsibility of counselor education programs to support or challenge just world beliefs?

The field recognizes that social positionality results in varying levels of privilege and marginalization for individuals despite merit or effort (Ali & Sichel, 2014; Harrist, 2012; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Ronay-Jinich, 2009; Roysircar, 2009; Toporek & Worthington, 2014). Considering that high belief in a just world also serves as a source of stability and support, and produces anxiety and fear when challenged (Bollman et al., 2015; Nudelman, 2013; Ramos et al., 2014), how do counselor educators move forward in instilling trainees with an awareness of the unjust nature of systemic oppression and the effects it produces on the mental health of clients? All the while providing the supports that trainees may need in grappling with that shift? Is it ethically responsible to challenge just world beliefs of counselor trainees given the stability they provide?

As gatekeepers, counselor educators and counselor trainees have the power to make meaningful and prolific change for clients and in the systems that govern their lives. Some researchers have argued that the power and values of the systems that oppress and privilege people based on various factors are embedded within the counseling profession because of that inherent power (Lemberger & Lemberger-Truelove, 2016). Toporek and Worthington (2014, p. 941) note that the counseling field has the potential to influence “future practitioners, researchers, and educators so that they contribute to social justice” and are “cognizant of how our professions and institutions can confront rather than perpetuate oppression”. Therefore, training programs might benefit from a focus on the ability of trainees to “oscillate between the multiple truths that exist simultaneously for clients and trainees” when attempting to explore just world beliefs and shape their diversity and advocacy competence (Lemberger & Lemberger-Truelove, 2016, p. 574).

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Model – Revised

The following questions ask you questions about your Ethnic Identity. Remember there are no right or wrong answers; just answer as accurately as possible. Use the scale below to answer the questions. If you strongly agree with the statement write down 5; if you strongly disagree then select 1. If the statement is more or less true of you, find the number between 1 and 5 that best describes you.

Strongly Disagree**Strongly Agree****1****2****3****4****5**

_____1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.

_____2. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.

_____3. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.

_____4. I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.

_____5. I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.

_____6. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.

APPENDIX B

Just World Belief Scale

Please read each statement carefully and rate the items using the scale below. Select the rating that best reflects how much you agree or disagree with each sentence.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Mildly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

- _____ 1. I've found that a person rarely deserves the reputation he has.
- _____ 2. Basically, the world is a just place.
- _____ 3. People who get "lucky breaks" have usually earned their good fortune.
- _____ 4. Careful drivers are just as likely to get hurt in traffic accidents as careless ones.
- _____ 5. It is a common occurrence for a guilty person to get off free in American courts.
- _____ 6. Students almost always deserve the good grades they receive in school.
- _____ 7. People who keep in shape have little chance of suffering a heart attack.
- _____ 8. The political candidate who sticks up for his/her principals rarely get elected.
- _____ 9. It is rare for an innocent person to be wrongly sent to jail.
- _____ 10. In professional sports, many fouls and infractions never get called by the referee.
- _____ 11. By and large, people deserve what they get.
- _____ 12. When parents punish their children, it is almost always for good reason.
- _____ 13. Good deeds often go unnoticed and unrewarded.
- _____ 14. Although evil men may hold political power for a while, in the general course of history good wins out.

- _____15. In almost any business or profession, people who do their jobs well rise to the top.
- _____16. American parents tend to overlook the things most to be admired in their children.
- _____17. It is often impossible for a person to receive a fair trial in the USA.
- _____18. People who meet with misfortune have often brought it on themselves.
- _____19. Crime doesn't pay.
- _____20. Many people suffer through absolutely no fault of their own.

APPENDIX C

Social Issues Questionnaire

Using the scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Engaging in social justice activities would likely allow me to:

Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

- ____ 1. Reduce the oppression of certain groups.
- ____ 2. Help provide equal opportunities for all groups and individuals.
- ____ 3. Fulfill a sense of personal obligation.
- ____ 4. Fulfill a sense of moral responsibility.
- ____ 5. Fulfill a sense of social responsibility.
- ____ 6. Make a difference in people's lives.
- ____ 7. Do work or activities that are personally satisfying.
- ____ 8. Get respect from others.
- ____ 9. Be more competitive in applying for school or work.
- ____ 10. Increase my sense of self-worth.

Please indicate your degree of interest in doing each of the following activities. Use the 0-9 scale to select how much interest you have in each activity.

Very Low Interest		Low Interest		Medium Interest		High Interest		Very High Interest	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

_____ 1. Volunteering your time at a community agency (such as Big Brother/Sister; volunteering at a homeless shelter).

_____ 2. Reading about social issues (e.g., racism, oppression, inequality).

_____ 3. Going on a week long service or work project.

_____ 4. Enrolling in a course on social issues.

_____ 5. Watching television programs that cover a social issue (e.g., history of marginalized group).

_____ 6. Supporting a political candidate based on his/her stance on social issues.

_____ 7. Donating money to an organization committed to social issues.

_____ 8. Talking to others about social issues.

_____ 9. Selecting a career or job that deals with social issues.

APPENDIX D

Demographics form

Please complete the following questions as best fits your responses.

How old are you? _____

Are you enrolled in a CACREP accredited counseling program? Yes_____ No_____

What type of program is it?

(e.g. clinical mental health counseling, mental health counseling, marriage & family therapy, career counseling, school counseling, addiction counseling, student affairs and college counseling, counselor education and supervision)

What degree will you earn at the end of your program?

M. A. _____ M. Ed. _____ M. S. _____ Ph.D. _____ Ed. D. _____

How many separate multicultural or diversity focused courses does your program require? _____

Some programs use a fusion model where multicultural and diversity issues are woven into the content of classes throughout the program. From your experience, does your program use the fusion model?

Yes_____ No_____

Please select the region your program is in from the drop down menu.

(Dropdown choices: North Central, North Atlantic, Southern, Rocky Mountain, and Western)

North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

North Atlantic: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Southern: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Rocky Mountain: Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

Western: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, and
Washington

What is your gender identity? _____

What is your sexual orientation? _____

What is your primary racial identity? _____

APPENDIX E

Socially Desirable Response Set Measure (SDRS-5)

Listed below are a few statements about your relationship with others. How much is each statement TRUE or FALSE for you? Please use the scale below to make your selection.

Definitely Untrue	Mostly Untrue	Don't Know	Mostly True	Definitely True
1	2	3	4	5

_____ 1. I am always courteous even to people who are disagreeable.

_____ 2. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.

_____ 3. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.

_____ 4. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.

_____ 5. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.

APPENDIX F

Follow-up Questions

Please reflect on your experiences in your counselor training program to answer the following questions.

How would you describe social justice advocacy?

How would you describe your program's commitment to advocacy?

If your program has a strong commitment to advocacy, do you experience it as an authentic commitment or primarily a program requirement?

Authentic commitment _____ Program requirement _____ NA _____

Do you have advocacy role models in the program, at practicum training sites, or at internship sites? Yes _____ No _____

If you were to develop a course to promote multicultural/diversity competence and counselor advocacy, what would be the most important things to include?

APPENDIX G

Consent Page

1. What you should know about this study

You are being asked to participate in a research study.

- This consent form explains the research study and your part in the study.
- Please read it carefully and take as much time as you need.
- You are a volunteer. If you do join the study and change your mind later, you may quit at any time without fear of penalty.

2. What is the purpose of this study?

This study is being done to look at counseling trainees' perspectives on advocacy.

3. Who can take part in the study?

Anyone who is a counseling graduate student enrolled in a CACREP accredited training program and who is 18 years of age or older may participate. You must also be able to read and write in English.

4. What will you do in the study?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Fill out 4 surveys
- Respond to a demographic form

All answers are anonymous. The study should take you about 15 minutes to complete in total.

5. What are the risks or discomforts of the study?

There are no known risks or discomforts from this study.

6. What are the benefits of the study?

There are no direct benefits to participating in this study but your participation may help others benefit from the results of this research. For example, this study may help university professionals and clinicians to better understand counselor trainees beliefs about advocacy, which may help inform program development in counselor training programs and clinical organizations.

7. What are your options if you chose not to participate?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you chose not to join the study, it will not affect you, or your involvement in your program, in any way.

8. Can you leave the study early?

You can agree to be in the study now and change your mind at any time. If you wish to stop, close the survey window and exit out of the browser. However, if you decide to

leave the study after you have answered some of the questions, the responses you have already provided may still be collected for this study.

9. Confidentiality

The researchers have gone to great lengths to protect confidentiality and all of the information you provide in this study will remain confidential at all steps of the research process. Only members of the research team will have access to data from this survey and all identifying information will be labeled with a code number. Reasonable and appropriate safeguards have been used in the creation of the web-based surveys to maximize the confidentiality and security of your responses; however, when using information technology, it is never possible to guarantee complete privacy.

What other things should you know about this research study?

a. What is the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and how does it protect you?

This study has been reviewed by the CWU Human Subject Review Council. HSRC is made up of faculty from many different departments, ethicists, nurses, scientists, non-scientists and people from the local community. The HSRC's purpose is to review human research studies and to protect the rights and welfare of the people participating in those studies. You may contact the HSRC if you have questions about your rights as a participant or if you think you have not been treated fairly. The HSRC office number is (509) 963-3115.

b. What do you do if you have questions about the study?

If you have any questions, please contact the principal investigator, Sara Rundlett at Sara.rundlett@cwu.edu, or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Meghan Nolte at Meghan.nolte@cwu.edu. You may also contact the Human Subjects Review Counsel (HSRC) of Central Washington University at (509) 963-3115 if you have questions about your rights as a participant.

Entering the study

By clicking "I agree", you are affirming that you have read and understand all of the information provided above. Please click "I agree" to enter the study.

APPENDIX H

Debriefing Page

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the level of identity development and belief in a just world influence a counselor's relationship to social justice advocacy.

Research indicates that advanced identity development contributes to counselor interest in advocacy while belief in a just world reduces counselor interest in advocacy. Research also indicates that identity development and belief in a just world may stem from a similar construct but this has not been explored directly, prior to this study. Therefore, goal of this study was to better understand the relationship between identity development and belief in a just world, as it relates to counselor interest in social justice advocacy.

In this study, you were asked to complete a number of surveys to measure your level of identity development, level of interest in social justice advocacy, and level of which you perceive the world to be a just place. Demographic information was also collected to better understand the population this sample represents. **However, this study does not collect any information related to your identity and there is no way to identify you from your answers.**

We ask that you please do not share the purpose of this study with others. If you do so, it could bias the results of this study. If you have any questions or concerns about this study or are interested in learning about the results of this study, please contact the principle investigator, Sara Rundlett at Sara.rundlett@cwu.edu, or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Meaghan Nolte at Meaghan.nolte@cwu.edu. You may also contact the Human Subjects Review Counsel (HSRC) of Central Washington University at (509) 963-3115 if you have questions about your rights as a participant.

Thank you for your participating in this research. We appreciate your time to participate; your contribution is very helpful.

To protect your privacy, please close your web browser and clear the cache (history) before leaving your computer.