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# School Counselors' Perceived Multicultural Competence, Adherence to the ASCA National Model, and Students' Performance

Jessica Helene Conroy  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Counselor Education & Supervision

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Jessica Conroy

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2015

Abstract

School Counselors' Perceived Multicultural Competence, Adherence to the ASCA  
National Model, and Students' Performance

by

Jessica H. Conroy

MA, Webster University, 2009

BA, University of Central Florida, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Counselor Education & Supervision

Walden University

July 2015

## Abstract

Multicultural competence (MCC), despite its integral part in school counseling and the school setting, is not applied within the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national model (NM). Rather, the ASCA NM is a guideline that is expected of school counselors with limited opportunity for deviation. Without incorporating multicultural practices in the school setting, student performance may suffer. Student performance affects everyone who is learning, working, or has a child who is or will be at the middle school level. The purpose of this study was to identify if perceived MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R, and/or adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS, could predict student performance and if there was a relationship between the perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM. The school counseling and multicultural counseling theories were used together as a lens for the study. Florida middle school counselors ( $N = 115$ ) were invited to participate electronically. Results were compiled in PsychData anonymously and transferred into SPSS. Multiple linear regression and Pearson correlation statistics revealed that perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM collectively predict students' GPAs. Recommendations for future research include expanding to different educational levels and states. The results indicate that the ASCA NM would benefit from multicultural concepts within the guidelines, implicating positive social change for future learning, school counseling practices, and educational practices.

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## Dedication

I would like to dedicate my work to my daughter, Jazalena. While I have always been driven to continue my education, she has been such a motivation to keep going and to meet my goals. She is amazing and such a gift in my life.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to dedicate my work to my family. They have been so supportive to help me through furthering my education. My daughter, Jazalena, has also been very patient and understanding through many late nights of me working on this. I have sacrificed a lot of my time to gain this success, but I could not have done it without the support of my family and the motivation from my little girl.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Previous research is limited regarding the relationship between school counselors' perceived multicultural competence (MCC), school counselors' adherence to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national model (NM), and student performance. The lack of information about how a school counselor's adherence to the ASCA NM does or does not impact their perceptions about his or her own MCC and his or her student's performance is important to investigate. In this chapter, I will discuss the problem statement, purpose of the study, significance of the study, background, and theoretical framework. The research questions, nature of the study, data sources, and definitions of terms and variables will be introduced. Then, further elaboration regarding the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of this study will be provided.

### **Background of the Problem**

This study of the relationship between school counselors' perceived MCC, adherence to the ASCA NM, and students' performance became of interest out of my own experiences as a school counselor. While this study derived from personal experiences, program evaluation is an essential component of effective school counseling (ASCA, 2008). School systems are data-driven and require program evaluation as well as the evaluation of students. I work with a diverse, rural population, and the multicultural needs are evident within my school setting. Concerns about practicing multicultural school counseling within the ASCA NM led to this research topic. In this section, the background and history of MCC in school counseling will be discussed. The history of

the ASCA NM will be presented, and the school counselor's role in improving student performance will be discussed. An overview of these three areas will highlight the problem.

MCC is an ethical responsibility for a school counselor, as indicated within the ASCA Code of Ethics (ASCA, 2010, Standard E.2). On the other hand, ASCA has also established a NM for school counseling programs that delineates the roles, functions, and standards for counselors. While multicultural expectations are not outlined specifically in the ASCA NM, they are addressed in the ethical standards of ASCA. School counselors are, therefore, charged with incorporating the ethical guidelines into their practice of developing school counseling programs using the ASCA NM guidelines.

The ASCA NM is a guideline for the expectations of a comprehensive school counseling plan (CSCP) and program (ASCA, 2008). The ASCA NM is designed to implement a collaborative approach for counseling programs (ASCA, 2008). The ASCA NM includes several mandates for the development of the counseling program; foundation, delivery, management, and accountability components; and expectations for wide-ranging services (ASCA, 2008).

Very few studies have examined the relationship between the implementation of the ASCA NM and the ASCA ethical standards. Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun (1997) researched the counseling services that are being rendered in schools and found that specific cultural populations, specifically students of low socioeconomic status (SES) and/or of color, are not receiving adequate counseling services. Their research, while dated, was indicative that specific cultural aspects needed to be more thoroughly

addressed by school counselors. They also found that schools with more fully implemented counseling programs more commonly reported higher grades for students (Lapan et al., 1997). The development of the ASCA NM also began in 1997, which was known as the ASCA National Standards for School Counseling (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Unfortunately, there appears to be little progress in this area of MCC and academic achievement since 1997, as evidenced by the lack of research.

One study by Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell (2005) did conclude that further research was needed to examine the MCC of school counselors in urban schools to determine the impact of school counselors' MCC on student performance. In their study, Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell found that teachers of students in an urban school setting perceived that students needed counseling often due to low family functioning and students' low academic achievement. More specifically, "participants perceived low family functioning, academic achievement, and poverty as the most prevalent issues that are facing students in urban schools" (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005, p. 206). In the study, however, school counselors were found to employ only "typical" school counseling practices and interventions such as discussing expectations within the standard school setting and implementing a reward system. Interventions such as behavioral reward systems and classroom guidance, while consistent with school counseling practices and the ASCA NM, seemed ineffective in addressing the issues that teachers believed contributed to students' low academic achievement such as the low family functioning of multicultural urban students (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005).

Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell's (2005) study demonstrated how typical school counseling practices as outlined by professional organizations (ASCA, 2008, 2010) did not address the specific needs of multicultural school students in urban school settings. Teachers identified family factors as contributing causes of students' low academic achievement; however, school counseling guidelines (ASCA, 2010) do not provide counselors with strategies to intervene with students at the family level in the school setting. Failing to intervene with MCC and practices presents a problem as there are a large number of multicultural students in urban, suburban, and rural school settings where specific counseling needs may not be adequately addressed by the typical school counseling interventions. This becomes a large concern in diverse populations, such as Florida, that present with multicultural counseling needs.

Based on the U.S. Census of 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), Florida had a population of 18,801,310. Within this population, 10,884,722 were identified as White (non-Hispanic), 4,223,806 were identified as Hispanic ethnicity, 2,999,862 were identified as African American, 454,821 were identified as Asian, 71,458 were identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, 12,286 were identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 681,144 were identified as Other, and 472,577 were identified as multiracial (Florida Demographics, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Ultimately, Florida population data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) showed that nearly half of the Florida population is of culturally diverse backgrounds. Not addressing the needs of the growing multicultural student population could affect these students' school performance. Further research is needed in this area related to the ability of school counselors to differentiate



school counseling practices based on the individual needs of their school populations (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005). In addition to racial diversity, there are a variety of multicultural differences in school populations; some students are from a low SES, some students are from divorced families, and some students are from different cultures and ethnicities. School counselors have an ethical duty to provide appropriate multicultural interventions to all of the school's population (ASCA, 2010).

While school counseling guidelines, as outlined by the ASCA NM, stress the importance of the school counselor's role in students' educational development, a focus on the differing multicultural counseling needs has often been absent. Students' multicultural counseling needs, in relation to educational development, however, were explored by Schellenberg and Grothaus (2011), who studied the implications of a combined culturally sensitive academic and counseling intervention strategy. Schellenberg and Grothaus used a pre- and post-test design with descriptive statistics, paired samples *t* test, and analysis of academic results in the school setting. Their results indicated that integrating academic and counseling competencies led to more effective outcomes for students. This is valuable information for the school counseling profession, as it also directly implicates the importance of expanding the educational and academic focus of the current ASCA NM to include culturally sensitive counseling interventions.

In addition to considering if counselors implementing the ASCA NM are using culturally sensitive interventions, it is also important to discuss school counselors' adherence and how that impacts their practice and affects student performance. For example, Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, Holcomb-McCoy, and Mitchell (2009)

conducted a longitudinal study of eighth graders in middle school in the United States. They indicated concerns about the application of the ASCA NM reaching all students of need. The study measured students' reading growth compared to whether or not they received school counseling. They found that "significant differences resulted between eighth grade students who had contact with the counselor and those who did not" (Bryan et al., 2009, p. 11). They also found that culturally sensitive groups tended to be at a higher risk and saw counselors more often. This study supports that culturally diverse students are at a higher need of counseling due to at-risk behaviors, such as dropout and failing grades. It also supports the need for culturally sensitive counseling practices and MCC of counselors in working with students who are at-risk to promote higher performance levels. While this study measured whether or not the counselors saw the students, it is important to also consider culturally relevant practices.

One culturally-relevant practice involves working with individuals differently when differences are known, rather than maintaining a color-blind attitude. A color-blind attitude means that a counselor would counsel and intervene with all cultural groups similarly, not considering differences in the counseling setting (Johnson & Jackson Williams, 2014). Lack of understanding of multicultural counseling techniques could result in a color-blind attitude and not address the cultural needs and values of a client. Color-blind attitudes are also associated with lower MCC (Johnson & Jackson Williams, 2014). This is related to a lack of ongoing training in MCC, a belief that MCC has been acquired, and a lack of addressing multicultural needs in the counseling setting. As a result of these concerns, Johnson and Jackson Williams conducted what they indicated as

the second existing study regarding color-blind counseling and its relationship to MCC, and they found that color-blind counseling does indicate a lack of MCC, which would reduce effective counseling with multicultural populations. Vasquez (2007) completed an evidence-based analysis on the negative effects of counseling without multicultural interventions and strategies. The findings indicated that more damage is done to clients who were counseled without multicultural considerations in the counseling setting. Rather, multicultural considerations help clients to work through their struggles within their culture and without shame (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011; Vasquez, 2007).

The need to integrate culturally sensitive interventions in school counseling programming is discussed by Lee (2005) who made the following statement regarding MCC in the urban setting: “They [school counselors] should possess the awareness, knowledge, and skills to intervene in responsive and appropriate ways into the lives of the increasingly culturally diverse student population that characterizes the urban school setting” (p. 184). He outlined the following responsibilities that school counselors have. School counselors have the responsibility (a) to be culturally competent, (b) to be able to promote student empowerment, (c) to be able to have a systemic perspective, (d) be able to advocate for their students, (e) to be able to collaborate with others, and finally (f) to be able to be leaders. These responsibilities align with the ASCA Code of Ethics (2010) and the ASCA NM (2008). In addition, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) expects that all districts and schools implement a CSCP (comparable to the ASCA NM expectations previously discussed; FLDOE, 2013). The CSCP, therefore, as stated by these guidelines, should be culturally sensitive and appropriate to the schools’ population.

However, little research has been found that specifically examines the actual practice or perceptions of school counselors and these guidelines in relation to multicultural practice.

Croninger and Lee (2001), Fusick and Bordeau (2004), and Henderson and Mapp (2002), although dated, brought up concerns related to students from urban schools, students from low SES areas, and students of color in regard to issues related to academics and drop-out risks. These authors found that lack of counseling services were related to the students being at a higher risk socially, emotionally, and behaviorally (Fusick & Bordeau, 2004; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Croninger & Lee, 2001). Fusick and Bordeau (2004) specifically indicated that the achievement gaps continue to grow between K-12 Euro-American students and students of color. LeBeauf (2008) specified that “African-American, Latino, and Native American children arrive at kindergarten or first grade with lower levels of oral language, pre-reading, and pre-mathematical skills, as well as lower levels of general knowledge, than possessed by their Euro-American and Asian-American counterparts” (p. 5). Farkas (2003), Dabady (2003), and Mickelson (2003) also indicated these discrepancies. Studies such as Catty’s (2012) research on shaming in the school setting, relative to cultural norms and society’s expectations to conform, are important to consider. This is a great example of poor counseling skills because it refers to school counselors who are allowing and enacting this shame within the school. Shaming leads to damage, because it shuns cultural views and values by simply expecting students to comply and switch to what is believed to be acceptable by the primary culture in that society (Catty, 2012). These studies above have demonstrated

that culturally sensitive school counseling interventions and programs are needed in order to decrease dropout rates, to increase GPA, and to increase student's well-being.

In order to determine the MCC of school counselors, Holcomb-McCoy and Day-Vines (2004) designed the Multicultural Counseling Training Survey Revised (MCCTS-R). Holcomb-McCoy and Day-Vines determined that there were three categories of MCC: multicultural terminology, multicultural knowledge, and multicultural awareness. The language used in the survey was specific to school counselors, as opposed to mental health counselors. A 4-point Likert-type scale was used for the school counselors to respond to statements. Ultimately, the survey was designed to measure school counselors' perceived MCC. It did not ask questions related to student academic achievement, but it did demonstrate how counselors perceived MCC.

Airen (2009) used the MCCTS-R to study school counselors identified by ASCA. The results suggested that certain variables of school counselors contribute to higher perceived levels of MCC: participation in a master's level or specialty course in multicultural counseling, being a school counselor of color, and gender are some examples (Airen, 2009). The MCCTS-R has been used in numerous studies that have investigated school counselors' MCC and was used in this study (Airen, 2009; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Paredes, 2008). While the MCCTS-R is an appropriate measure in this study, self-reports of MCC have been found unreliable in comparison to observers' ratings (Constantine, 2001) and clients' ratings (Fuentes et al., 2006). These findings indicate that school counselors' perception of their MCC may not relate to how others perceive their MCC.

As previously indicated, the ASCA NM does not specifically address multicultural needs; rather it is implied. Several background pieces that address the need for MCC in the school setting and have introduced school counseling concepts related to the ASCA NM have been presented. Many school counseling studies exist highlighting the benefits of the ASCA NM, but there are no specific studies that have examined the ASCA NM in relation to MCC and the academic performance of students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Many diverse students are not receiving multiculturally appropriate counseling services in school settings if the school counselor is not multiculturally competent (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005). This is a problem because multiculturally appropriate counseling is both an ethical responsibility and is supported by evidence that suggests that to effectively address individual needs and improve individuals' achievement, limited MCC could potentially hinder academic performance (Airen, 2009; ASCA, 2010; Catty, 2012; Schellenberg & Grothaus, 2011). In addition, it is not yet known if there is a relationship between the counselors' MCC and their adherence to the ASCA NM (ASCA, 2010) and student performance. This poses another problem, because the ASCA NM is not multiculturally sensitive; rather, it focuses on generic expectations (ASCA, 2010; Baker, 2011; Schulz, 2011). The ASCA NM is a guide for school counselors and an expectation towards the development of a CSCP, reducing multicultural practices (ASCA, 2010; Baker, 2011; Schulz, 2011). Consequently, based on the previous statement regarding the relationship between multiculturally appropriate school counseling and its impact on student performance, adherence to the ASCA NM

would reduce multicultural practices, which may affect MCC and/or student achievement (Baker, 2011; Schulz, 2011). At this time, after a review of current literature, there has been no research found that addresses the relationship between these variables. Due to the school counseling practices that are expected in schools through the ASCA NM, this may be a limitation to meeting the needs of students academically and therefore a phenomenon that needs to be examined. Successful school counseling practices are very important in considering the future of students' academics, emotional well-being, and overall success. A gap in research in this area reduces the value of the impact that school counselors have on their students. If students' needs are not appropriately addressed (which may result in poor academic performances), then ethical responsibilities and the duties of school counselors will not be adequately met (ASCA, 2008, 2012).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this nonexperimental quantitative research study was to determine if a relationship exists between school counselors' MCC as measured by the MCCTS-R, school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM as measured by the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey (SCPIS), and student performance as measured by GPA. The purpose was also to determine if school counselors' MCC and/or school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM predicts student performance.

### **Research Questions**

1. Do school counselors' MCC scores, as measured by the MCCTS-R, predict student performance as measured by the GPA of middle school students?

2. Does the school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS, predict student performance as measured by the GPA of middle school students?
3. Does school counselors' MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R, correlate with the degree to which a school counselor adheres to the ASCA NM as measured by the SCPIS (Eisner & Carey, 2005)?
4. Can school counselors' MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R, and the degree to which a school counselor adheres the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS (Eisner & Carey, 2005), predict performance as measured by the GPA of middle school students?

### **Hypotheses**

*H*<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant relationship between GPAs related to school counselors' MCC scores, as measured by the MCCTS-R. Higher scores of MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R, do not predict students' GPAs.

*H*<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant relationship between GPAs related to school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS. Scores of adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS, do not predict GPAs.

*H*<sub>0</sub>3: There is no significant relationship between MCC scores, as measured by the MCCTS-R, related to school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS.



*H*<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant relationship between adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS; MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R; and student performance, as measured by GPA.

### **Nature of the Study**

This was a correlation and multiple linear regression quantitative study. Data were collected through a survey created in PsychData (2014) that gathered data on the three variables: school counselors' perceived MCC, student performance data (cumulative GPA of racial/ethnic groups), and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM. Three correlations were completed addressing relationships between school counselors' perceived MCC, student performance data, and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM.

A multiple linear regression was also performed to determine whether or not the predictor variables of school counselors' MCC (PV), as measured by the MCCTS-R, and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM (PV), as measured by the SCPIS, can predict students' performance, outcome variable (OV), as measured by GPA of middle school students. With permission I obtained from Dr. Holcomb-McCoy (see Appendix D), the MCCTS-R survey was used to develop the survey portion of this study related to MCC. This survey is available electronically on her website (Holcomb-McCoy, n.d.). Descriptive statistics were reported to differentiate essential cultural components specific to the school as well as students' performance (i.e., GPA). Pearson Correlation statistics were used to examine the correlation between the MCCTS-R scores, student performance, and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM using the SCPIS as

well as to determine if the MCCTS-R can predict academic performance of students as measured by GPAs.

Demographic information (background data for the counselors, their students, and their schools) was collected using PsychData (2014). Raw data were compiled from PsychData (2014) surveys that school counselors completed answering questions developed by the MCCTS-R and the SCPIS. School and student performance data (GPA) were also provided by school counselors in the survey and incorporated into the data collection.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this study, two theories were used as theoretical lenses: multicultural counseling theory and school counseling theory. More directly, for the purposes of this study, these theories are a lens for understanding and interpreting how adherence to the ASCA NM, MCC, and student performance relate. School counseling theory has a basis of expectations for school counselors, similar to those of the ASCA NM (Henderson, 2012). Multicultural counseling theory is more individualized and focuses on more in-depth needs to the student rather than the norms of the population (Ponterotto, 2010; Vaughn, Wanzek, Murray, & Roberts, 2012). Understanding these theories and applying them to this study helps to define the system and determine if there is a relationship between the variables.

Henderson (2012) indicated that the ASCA NM presents seven questions that must be answered by a theory, and she described a theory as a guide to policy and practice. The ASCA NM used school counseling theory to develop the model. This

model was developed to ensure that counselors implemented CSCPs (ASCA, 2008). These programs are intended to emphasize student outcomes and competencies while pairing them with counselor competencies (ASCA, 2008). This enhances student standards, aligns counselor expectations, and assists in meeting high case load demands (ASCA, 2008).

Multicultural counseling theory focuses on addressing cultural differences in counseling to ensure that clients are able to make individual choices that are appropriate for them, not the counselor's views or society's views in particular. This is important for making gains as a client and ensuring positive growth. It also reduces possible damage that could otherwise occur from lack of multicultural sensitivity and awareness. Application of multicultural concepts in the school counseling setting continues to be important, and through this research, I intended to identify what relationships exist between the ASCA NM, MCC, and student performance. It is also in question of whether or not a relationship leads to predictions of students' performance. Therefore, the understanding of MCC and its application to the school setting is essential to meeting the needs of students.

### **Definition of Terms**

*American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national model (NM):* The ASCA NM is designed to implement a collaborative approach for counseling programs (ASCA, 2008). This includes several members for the development of the counseling program; foundation, delivery, management, and accountability components; and expectations for wide-ranging services (ASCA, 2008).

*Grade Point Average (GPA)*: It denotes a score that is calculated based on points a student earns dependent on the grades earned. Letter grades denote point levels: A = 4.0, B = 3.0, C = 2.0, D = 1.0, and F = 0. To calculate a GPA, mean scores for the sum of all of the points for a given time period were computed. For the purpose of this study, a cumulative GPA was used to indicate the performance during the duration of the students' time in middle school.

*Multicultural competence (MCC)*: MCC denotes the application of the client's culture into the counseling process (Ahmed, Wilson, Henriksen, Jr., & Windwalker Jones, 2010). For a school counselor, this would also be incorporated into the educational environment (ASCA, 2008).

### **Variables**

Three variables were used in this study: school counselors' perceived MCC, school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, and students' performance data (GPA). School counselors' perceived MCC was a predictor variable. This was measured by the MCCTS-R. Higher scores (means) on this assessment were interpreted as higher perceived MCC. School counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM was another predictor variable. This variable was measured by scores on the SCPIS. Higher scores (sums) on this assessment were interpreted as higher levels of adherence to the ASCA NM. Middle school students' performance data (GPA) was the outcome variable. Cumulative GPA evaluating a student's performance over the entirety of their involvement at that school level, in this case middle school was used. Higher GPA scores were interpreted as higher levels of academic success overall.

### **Assumptions**

Due to the foundations of my research and the expectations within the research that I have conducted, several assumptions can be made. One assumption is that school counseling will continue to be important. School counseling is used to further develop students emotionally, academically, socially, and behaviorally. Lack of school counseling resources, as previously evidenced, has been shown to impact student performance overall. This leads into another assumption: middle school students' performance will continue to be a concern for improvement. Without school-age children being successful, society can be expected to decline. Society's future, naturally, depends on younger generations' success.

In order to ensure that these assumptions occur, several important aspects have been identified related to ethics and legal practices within the research process. To ascertain that middle school counseling continued to be important at the time of the study, continuation of middle school counseling positions was verified prior to completing research. To confirm that the importance of student performance continues to be a concern, further research will be discussed to identify the value placed upon student performance. People who answer the surveys were representative of Florida Middle School counselors for Grades 6, 7, and 8. The reports were assumed to be honest. Ultimately, assumptions relevant to the surveys are that participants would answer truthfully, that they would maintain confidentiality, and that the participants surveyed would be representative of the Florida middle school counselor population identified.

As previously indicated, this study of the relationship between school counselors' perceived MCC, adherence to the ASCA NM, and students' performance became of interest out of my own experiences as a school counselor. In my own experience as a school counselor, I have witnessed the problem with trying to implement the ASCA NM while at the same time attempting to be multiculturally responsive to my students. I become frustrated when trying to maintain the standards within the ASCA NM because I am faced with individual needs and concerns from students. For example, the ASCA NM sets parameters for the amount of time that school counselors need to deliver school-wide programs, coordinate programs with teachers, respond to individual student needs, and consult with stakeholders. These time parameters vary across developmental levels, but at each level, often the individual student needs are not allocated sufficient time. For instance, in one day, I was faced with two suicide risk referrals, a violence risk referral, and a mandated abuse report. Implementing the NM on that day would have been insensitive and nonresponsive to the students' needs. Therefore, I cancelled my scheduled data meeting and responded to the individual needs of the students in my office. Unfortunately, that is not an atypical day for many school counselors. The problems in society that affect their parents affect the student, and the students come to school with these problems. It became clear that the National School Counseling Standards need to be investigated in light of the effect these standards have on the MCC of school counselors and on student academic achievement.

While I have had this experience in the school myself, research helps present a clearer picture about the relationship between these variables in order to raise awareness

and provide ground work for change if change is needed. In addition, other counselors within the state of Florida were surveyed to identify if similar issues related to the ASCA NM occur in their schools in relation to multicultural needs and limitations derived from the structure. While my experience has biased my own thoughts about this issue, I relied on the data collected in this study to further inform and explore this topic.

### **Scope of the Study**

The scope of this quantitative research plan was to determine the relationship between school counselors' MCC as measured by the MCCTS-R, school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM as measured by the SCPIS, and student performance as measured by GPA. The scope also was aimed to determine if school counselors' MCC and/or school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM predicts student performance. Middle school students and counselors are the focus of the study.

### **Delimitations**

In an attempt to eliminate inappropriate data from the survey responses (from elementary and high school grade levels), middle school counselors were asked to only apply their experience and data relative to their middle school students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. They were also asked to only provide the information requested without identifying information for the school, counselor, or students. On the consent form, a separation of role was also noted to reduce pressure of participation from within the county that I am a school counselor.

### **Limitations**

Due to working as a middle school counselor and my affiliation with a particular county within the state of Florida, the responses from the county of which I live and work may be higher. Although this is a consideration, the option of removing my name from the survey could have significantly reduced the number of responses due to perceived credibility. Moreover, some middle schools serve additional levels of students. For example, some middle schools also serve elementary grade levels or high school grade levels (i.e., Grades 4-8 or 6-12).

This study will only be applicable to middle school counselors in Florida, perhaps in the same economic and social situations that this study is drawing for. Therefore, it may not represent other school levels or be applicable nationwide. Hopefully, the study will be able to be generalizable to other parts of the country that have similar populations and school levels.

There are two limitations particular to the use of the MCCTS-R. One limitation is the self-report format. MCC research indicated that there are discrepancies between clients' ratings and self-reports (Fuertes et al., 2006) and between observers' ratings and self-reports (Constantine, 2001). An additional limitation of the MCCTS-R is that it lacks evidence of concurrent validity. This is an important feature to compare among other MCC assessments.

### **Significance of the Study**

Understanding the relationship between school counselors' perceived MCC, the counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, and student performance is necessary in order



to better understand and serve the multicultural populations in urban public schools and to respond to individual student needs (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005). It is important to determine the relationship between MCC, adherence to the ASCA NM, and students' GPA. If GPA can be predicted by a school counselor's MCC and their level of adherence to the ASCA NM, results would inform school counselors on needs through Pearson's correlation statistics. A relationship could indicate a need for social change in the area of school counselor preparation and training, specifically concerning the ASCA NM.

Furthermore, I investigated if the school counselors' MCC (PV) and/or the school counselor's adherence to the ASCA NM (PV) can predict, through multiple linear regression statistics, the GPA (outcome variable) of middle school students. Moreover, higher scores of adherence to the ASCA NM may be indicative of lower scores of MCC due to the structure of the model. This could, as a result, also lower the outcomes of student GPAs if MCC is a predictor of higher GPAs. Findings from the study may indicate the need for more progressive and nontraditional school counseling practices currently outside the scope and practice of the ASCA NM. If MCC of the school counselor is related to student performance in a positive manner, then interventions to increase the MCC of the school counselor would benefit individual student performance (ASCA, 2010). By investigating this relationship, school counselor educators and supervisors can better meet the needs of society (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005).

## Summary

In this quantitative research study, the relationship between school counselors' perceived MCC and their adherence to the ASCA NM was explored. Research has shown that there are concerns regarding limited application of multicultural concepts in the counseling setting, schools may not fully comply with the ASCA NM, and even with application of the ASCA NM, additional restrictions from compliance with the structure may limit the school counselors' ability to address multicultural needs more effectively. I explored how these concerns may relate to students' performance in Florida public middle schools.

In Chapter 2, the literature that exists regarding the ASCA NM and how it is applied through a CSCP, the ASCA ethical guidelines, and school counseling effects will be discussed. The foundation of the systems theory and an outline of the variables of research will be further explored. Ethical concerns and barriers to effective school counseling will be discussed.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

As school counselors, it is an ethical responsibility to consider the implications of different actions and approaches to education. These interventions and strategies are designed to improve education, so the relationship and prediction considerations must be evaluated consistently to ensure that they are efficient and lead to efficacy.

Understanding the relationship between school counselors' perceived MCC, the counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, and student performance is necessary in order to better understand and serve the multicultural populations in urban public schools and to respond to individual student needs (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005).

In Chapter 2, the literature search strategies used to locate various informational pieces presented are identified. The literature that exists regarding the theoretical foundation, the ASCA NM, and the relationship between multicultural diversity and school counseling will be expounded.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

To find literature for this study, multiple searches were conducted using the following databases: PsycINFO, Academic Search Alumni Edition, Academic Search Complete, Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects, Dissertations and Theses, Dissertations and Theses at Walden University, eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), Education Research Complete, ERIC, Health and Psychosocial Instruments, Library, Mental Measurements Yearbook, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycCRITIQUES, PsycEXTRA, SocINDEX with Full Text, PsycTESTS, and Google Scholar. The key

words used for the literature review included *systems theory, family dynamics, family systems, counseling, school counseling, counseling theory, ASCA, ASCA national model, ASCA model, school counseling ethics, ASCA ethical guidelines, MCCTS-R, SCPIS, multicultural diversity, diversity, multiculturalism, and diverse populations.*

### **Section Overview**

I focused on studies published within the last 10 years. However, earlier research was included to establish foundation as well as to show the limit of ongoing research for this content area. Peer-reviewed journals, doctoral dissertations (published and original unpublished), and textbooks were used to provide background data and details regarding the variables as well as to provide clarity regarding important relationships to the variables. There is limited research identifying or dispelling the relationship between the ASCA NM, multicultural diversity, and student performance. All relevant and applicable research found has been included.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

This study is grounded in various theoretical foundations which include: school counseling theories and multicultural counseling theory. Each of these theories provides important concepts that will be discussed in relation to the present study. After a review of the important theories that inform this study, a detailed description of the ASCA NM and multicultural school counseling will be presented. In addition, a review of emerging effective school counseling practice will be discussed that include multiculturally sensitive interventions and approaches. Various instruments that are used in school counseling research will be presented in relation to the constructs of the present study.

## **School Counseling Theory**

Wright (2012) provided an overview of several different models and approaches in school counseling, such as child-centered, behavioral, or Adlerian. School counseling theory is driven by the counselor's applications of different theories and may depend on the client and his/her issues; however, the underlying assumptions of school counseling are that "new and experienced school counselors are equipped to establish, maintain and enhance a CSCP addressing academic achievement, career planning and personal/social development" (ASCA, 2012, p. 1). It is also expected that these programs align with the ASCA NM (ASCA, 2012).

Lemberger (2010) developed a humanistic theory for school counseling, advocating student-within-environment, to better meet needs in a culturally sensitive manner. The advocating student-within-environment theory allows school counselors to consider their environment, but to use their individuality within the concepts of the environment. This differs from the ASCA NM because it encourages the use of multiple facets to address student needs, such as academics, whereas the ASCA NM expects norms.

In addition, ASCA (2012) also provides counselor competence expectations, which are consistent with the ASCA NM. These competencies address several expectations of counselors: school counseling programs, foundations, management, delivery, and accountability (ASCA, 2012). School counseling theories, again, are based on the school counselor and client needs. School counselors are guided by ethical

expectations, counselor competencies, and the ASCA NM (ASCA, 2008, 2010, 2012), which are based on a primary prevention model of helping.

**Primary prevention models of helping.** Caplan (1964) identified the primary, secondary, and tertiary models of prevention. The primary focus is to reduce mental health issues (Klingman, 1986). The ASCA NM provides five aspects for primary prevention in school counseling: establishing a school counseling program as part of the academic mission, providing equal access of school counseling to students, focusing on the important components of school counseling, identification of skills and knowledge all students need, and systematic delivery of counseling programs (Baker, 2011). Within CSCPs in Florida, there are several areas that are focused on prevention, that is, suicide prevention, dropout prevention, crisis prevention, bullying prevention, and sexual abuse prevention (FLDOE, 2010). One of the goals for these preventions' foci is academic achievement (FLDOE, 2010). However, the programs are clearly specific to particular issues rather than multicultural concepts.

**Secondary and tertiary models of helping.** The secondary prevention model addresses early identification and treatment of mental illnesses (Klingman, 1986). This is when a group has already been identified as at-risk (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012). The prevention strategies implemented may be the same as the identified primary prevention strategies or more focused, and they would be specific to the identified at-risk group. For example, if students are having bullying issues starting in sixth grade, the bullying prevention program may be delivered to fifth graders prior to entering sixth grade.

The tertiary prevention model aims to reduce long term effects of mental illnesses (Klingman, 1986). This involves identifying students who are at high risk or already presenting issues associated with an identified concern (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012). Therefore, if middle school students are currently having high rates of sexual involvement, the school may present regarding health, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy.

**School counselor roles and functions.** ASCA (2012) indicated that school counselors must maintain competencies within the following areas: school counseling programs, foundations, management, delivery, and accountability. Within these areas, counselors must be able to represent their knowledge, abilities, and skills, and attitudes (ASCA, 2012). They may accomplish these tasks through roles of counseling, administration, and program development/leadership (ASCA, 2012).

### **Multicultural Counseling Theory**

Sue (1978) researched the application of multicultural concepts in the counseling setting. Initially, it was developed as a move away from oppression. According to Ponterotto (2010), there are 12 pioneers of the multicultural counseling theory: Duran, Barcus, Phillips Bingham, White, Arredondo, Padilla, Suinn, Fukuyama, Morrow, Olkin, Ivey, and Fine. These pioneers addressed different areas of multiculturalism. Not all multicultural differences lead to the same need. Multicultural counseling theory focuses on addressing cultural differences in counseling to ensure that clients are able to make individual choices that are appropriate for them, not the counselor's views or society's views in particular. This is important for making gains as a client and ensuring positive

growth. It also reduces possible damage that could otherwise occur from lack of multicultural sensitivity and awareness. An individualized approach in understanding and intervening with clients in a multiculturally sensitive manner has been a hallmark of the multicultural theory. This individualized approach will now be discussed in relation to schools and student's academic needs.

Understanding the application of differentiated instruction and individualized instruction is important to the study of the ASCA NM, school counselor multicultural competencies, and student achievement. Different educational strategies and approaches already exist for specific learning needs, such as differentiated instruction and individualized instruction, which somewhat address the variation in student learning (FLDOE, 2010). However, these services are not typically in place for all students. Rather, the standard is for them to be identified through educational testing after a student is believed to be above or below the average range (FLDOE, 2010). This includes students in Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and gifted programs (FLDOE, 2010). Teachers have the freedom to incorporate these strategies with any students, but ESE and gifted students have plans in place that are individualized for educational needs supported by psychoeducational testing. ESE plans are known as Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and typically include strategies, such as oral presentation of directions, extended time, frequent breaks, redirection, and other learning accommodations that level the learning atmosphere for lower performing students with average-level peers (FLDOE, 2010; Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports, n.d.). Gifted plans are also known as



Education Plans (EPs) and increase the intensity of the learning environment for higher performing peers to keep them engaged (FLDOE, 2010).

Differentiated instruction was developed as a result of requirements from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 to provide educational opportunities for students with educational needs in their least restrictive environment (De Jesus, 2012). Gregory and Chapman (2007) characterized differentiation as a philosophy involving strategy to meet the needs of diverse learners. De Jesus recommended several strategies for differentiated instruction: cooperative learning, project-based learning, and multiple intelligences. De Jesus also identified the needs of considering different learning styles through differentiated instruction: visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, and logical-mathematical.

Individualized instruction further breaks down the needs of students by identifying their personal education levels rather than simply teaching them at their current grade level, such as a fifth grader reading at the third grade reading level (Vaughn et al., 2012). Individualizing their educational strategies based on target areas will improve the overall performance and help them increase reading skills (Vaughn et al., 2012). Referring back to the reading example, the student may be receiving individualized interventions for reading comprehension at the third grade reading level rather than reading materials on the fifth grade reading level. As that student's skills increase, so would the intervention strategies (Vaughn et al., 2012). Within the ASCA NM, however, emphasis is placed on meeting the needs of the total school population and not on individual student needs (ASCA, 2008, 2012). Focusing on the total population,

and therefore the norm, goes against the needs of multicultural populations. It also furthers the achievement gap of minority populations, as was discussed in Chapter 1.

Strategies such as those above have been routinely used in schools to help the diverse student population. The incorporation of individualized instruction, differentiated teaching, and these other concepts that respond to individual student needs are important to the MCC of school counselors but are often neglected by the ASCA NM (ASCA, 2012). Application of multicultural concepts in the school counseling setting is very important. Thus, this research was intended to identify what relationships exist between the ASCA NM, MCC, and student performance. It was also in question of whether or not a relationship leads to predictions of students' performance. Therefore, understanding of MCC and its application to the school setting is essential.

### **ASCA National Model**

#### **History**

The ASCA NM has been a development that began in 1997, which was known as the ASCA National Standards for School Counseling (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). In 2002, the ASCA NM was further developed by Hatch and Bowers (2002) as a framework for counselors to use as a CSCP. This guideline was created to identify and apply effective school counseling strategies (ASCA, 2008). The goal is for counseling programs to be comprehensive rather than narrow to ensure that various needs are being met within the school counseling setting. While the ASCA NM is not required directly, it is designed to provide a background and guideline for counseling programs and can be compared to CSCPs (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). This can be interpreted to meet the needs in a

particular area, as Florida has done with the required implementation of a CSCP in the school setting (FLDOE, 2013).

The goals of the ASCA NM are valid and important because there needs to be ethical guidelines, competencies, program development and evaluation, and structure. These needs drove the development of the ASCA NM. However, the introduction of the ASCA NM and a CSCP can also be limiting due to specific requirements that inhibit flexibility, do not address the needs of at-risk youth, have descriptions that are too narrow, and do not include fully encompass multicultural needs (Baker, 2011).

### **Studies**

Carey, Harrington, Martin, and Stevenson (2012) conducted a quantitative study in Utah, and Carey, Harrington, Martin, and Hoffman (2012) conducted a quantitative study in Nebraska identifying which components of the ASCA NM correlated with students' educational outcomes. They used the SCPIS to survey school counselors regarding the use of programs within their respective schools. Seven items identified use of the ASCA NM. When comparing student outcomes on standardized tests with ASCA NM delivery in the schools, higher scores were indicated with higher presence of delivery.

Studer, Diambra, Breckner, and Heidel (2011) conducted a mixed-methods study combining demographic information, Likert scale surveys, and open-ended response questions. Their study was designed to measure the extent to which the counselors use different CSCPs in their school, comparable to the ASCA NM, and to determine what the obstacles and successes are within those programs. The results indicated that the

difference in school level (elementary, middle, or high) was not significant. However, the elementary/primary school counselors had a higher likelihood to implement programs and collect data, again as representative of the ASCA NM, than middle and high school counselors. This is significant when considering the application of studying middle school counselors' application of the ASCA NM and its effect on students' GPAs.

Hatch and Chen-Hayes (2008) conducted a quantitative study on school counselors' beliefs about the importance of the ASCA NM. They first established reliability and validity of the assessment they chose, The School Counseling Program Component Scale, and measured the beliefs of school counselors. They found that even though the ASCA NM had already been established for over 5 years, the views about the importance of the ASCA NM, in relation to the value of data for program planning, accountability, and student outcomes, was lower than their goal. They considered this a limitation due to lack of acceptance of change and also attributed it to limited supervisor support.

Carey, Harrity, and Dimmitt (2005) developed a self-assessment instrument that can be used to assess the readiness of a school district to implement the ASCA NM. Carey et al. reviewed several curricula, assessments, and additional resources in the development of this assessment. Ultimately, the final development of this survey has been linked to its ability to be used with a district in determining its readiness to adopt the ASCA NM. It is a quantitative assessment and helps to determine areas of needed development and action planning (Carey et al., 2005).

Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) conducted a quantitative study to measure the actual versus preferred practices of school counselors in relation to comprehensive, developmental school counseling programs. They used four instruments including the School Counselors Activity Rating Scale, the Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale, the School Climate Scale, and a demographic survey (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). They (2008) found that counselors would like to spend more time engaging in interventions and counseling practices that lead to student outcomes. However, they currently spend more time in “non-guidance-related activities” (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008, p. 455). This supports the value of the use of comprehensive, developmental guidance plans, such as the ASCA NM, but poses a boundary for the ability to consistently apply the model (ASCA, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

### **ASCA Ethical Standards**

The ASCA (2010) Ethical Standards identify ethical expectations for school counselors. There are several categories identified in the standards that are particular to students: responsibilities to students; confidentiality; academic, career/college/post-secondary access and personal/social counseling plans; dual relationships; appropriate referrals; group work; danger to self or others; student records; evaluation, assessment, and interpretation; technology; and student peer support program (ASCA, 2010). A.1.c. within Responsibilities to Students, E.1.d. Within Professional Competence, and E.2. Multicultural and Social Justice Advocacy and Leadership each identify the importance and expectations of multicultural needs (ASCA, 2010). These outline the expectations for counselors’ respect students’ values and beliefs without imposing counselors’ own values

and beliefs, for counselors to maintain professional development for cultural diversity competence, and for applying social justice advocacy and leadership skills to multicultural needs of individuals as well as populations (ASCA, 2010).

### **Multicultural Diversity and School Counseling**

As previously discussed, the ASCA NM has largely influenced school counseling. However, the lack of data and support, outdated material, and lack of flexibility has led to challenges in the incorporation of the ASCA NM (Baker, 2011). New research suggests that multicultural needs have evolved and need further consideration. Now, we will review more recent literature that discusses different multicultural aspects for school counseling.

Chao (2013) conducted a quantitative study measuring the relationship between race/ethnicity and multicultural training, racial/ethnic identity, and the attitude of color-blindness. Chao found that school counselors of minority groups have limited growth from multicultural training, but White school counselors have vast growth related to training (Chao, 2013). She also found that school counselors of minority groups without training report higher MCC than White (Caucasian) school counselors without training (Chao, 2013). When White school counselors have a low level of color-blind racial attitudes, their MCC is higher than school counselors in minority groups (Chao, 2013). This is valuable, because this would imply different levels of competence based on different levels of training as well as within different cultural groups, which is in particular relation to school counselors.

Guzman, Calfa, Van Horn Kerne, and McCarthy (2013) conducted a quantitative study to determine the relationship between self-reports of MCC and actual performance of multicultural competence through vignettes. They found that self-reports were not a good predictor of true performance. In addition, they found that while people of color self-report higher than Whites with MCC, their performance on the vignettes was not significantly different, and Whites even performed better on a particular vignette. These findings indicate that perception, as is the case with self-reports, is not proving to be the reality, and questions the validity of self-reports. This is an important consideration due to the use of the MCCTS-R in this research and how perception plays a part.

Zeng (2014) identified multiple counseling methods that can be applied to different school counseling groups based on school level (elementary, middle, or high). Within the middle school approach, as is applicable to my study, is the discussion of the importance of several key factors for this age group: bullying, self-identity, developmental and physiological changes, and peer influences (Zeng, 2014). Multicultural counseling becomes a necessity due to the many aspects of needs within this age group, such as social skills. It is a sensitive and challenging age, and multicultural counseling helps students build tolerance and improve learning opportunities (Zeng, 2014). Furthermore, it can resolve “motivation, self-efficacy, and social problem solving” issues which encourage more application to school work, thus improving academic learning (Zeng, 2014).

Smith, Davis, and Bhowmik (2010) created and studied a youth participatory action research (YPAR) project. This allowed public school students to have an

opportunity to incorporate their cultural values into learning through an elective course led by counseling students in a Master's level graduate program that had been trained to implement the cultural program. It was a qualitative study that allowed the students to create profession-like work at school with their cultural influence, such as PowerPoint presentations (Smith et al., 2010). The students were allowed to choose several topics, talk about their personal influences, show the counseling students their neighborhood, learn about the counseling students' cultural experiences, and complete academic/professional work. The results indicated that the students found the activities very useful for their education and inspired them to continue with higher education, as well as to consider what they would like professionally (Smith et al., 2010). This is valuable to my research, because it supports the need for cultural aspects in the educational setting, and much of this relies on the cultural diversity awareness of the school counselor.

Dodson (2013) studied school counselors' self-perceived MCC in Virginia through a quantitative study. They compared their data to previous studies and found consistencies in most areas. However, they did find contradictions in ethical differences in counselors and their responses regarding MCC. In previous studies that they compared to, there had not been significance. However, in their study, Caucasian/white participants scored themselves higher than African-American/black participants (Dodson, 2013). Otherwise, the data were consistent with previous studies in that there was no significance separating gender, work setting, and years of counseling experience (Dodson, 2013). This is important research for my study, because it compares data from



previous years in a similar capacity and provides new support. It also contradicts some findings from previous years and supports the need to conduct more research at a larger scale.

Packer-Williams, Jay, and Evans (2010) conducted a qualitative study using the Integrating Multicultural Diversity Questionnaire (IMDQ) and a demographic questionnaire. The IMDQ uses open-ended questions that were analyzed by the researchers using suggested analysis procedures. Their findings indicate that school counselors do not integrate multicultural diversity into their counseling practices regularly due to limited skills, support, and training. This is important to my research, because it supports that there may be limitations in school counselors' MCC as well as limitations related to use of particular CSCPs.

Schulz (2011) researched the factors that influence student alienation related to their academic experiences. She found several areas that school counselors can target to reduce alienation and increase achievement. Areas that she addressed include powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social estrangement, and the achievement gap. These areas all identify multicultural needs that should be identified by teachers and counselors. By school counselors advocating for students' needs by addressing culturally insensitive curriculum and teaching methods, students' needs can be more appropriately met, and they can become more successful. This information supports that limited MCC may be impacting students' GPAs and that CSCPs, such as the ASCA NM, may not include enough cultural aspects that target student needs fully.

Tadlock-Marlo (2011) researched mindfulness counseling and developed a rationale for use in the school counseling setting. Through her research, she describes the value of its use to “help students increase academic performance, develop social skills, and learn coping mechanisms” (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011, p. 220). Mindfulness counseling aims to empower clients, which is a valuable tool with students (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011). Due to the foundation of this counseling practice and its applicability to multicultural diversity, it would be a valuable option in the school setting. As a multicultural consideration, school counselors could employ this intervention in the school setting, but they currently do not typically use it (Tadlock-Marlo, 2011). Use of mindfulness could break cultural barriers in schools that do not have highly multiculturally competent school counselors.

Green, Conley, and Barnett (2005) present two case scenarios of urban school settings and how to work with the students with cultural diversity, such as low socioeconomic status (SES). Through their presentation, they discuss the implications for academic achievement through the incorporation of professional development in regards to student needs of special populations (i.e., multicultural diversity awareness). This directly applies to the association between MCC of school counselors and student achievement, and the study indicates an ongoing need of studies and professional development in this area.

Sanchez (1995) presented a model of training students, staff, and the community about being culturally sensitive. Further discussion indicates that the needs of diverse populations are challenging and need particular educational strategies and involvement

for students to continue to be successful. Without regarding these needs, Sanchez (2008) implies that students will not thrive. Therefore, multiculturally competent school counselors and staff need to be involved with students and the community to assure student academic success.

### **Emerging Effective School Counseling Practices**

Militello, Carey, Dimmitt, Lee, and Schweid (2009) conducted a study on high school counselors that had high academic achieving students. Their goal was to identify distinguishing characteristics and practices that led to the students' high achievement (Militello et al., 2009). They used a phone questionnaire to gather demographic information and answers to open-ended and closed-ended questions (Militello et al., 2009). None of the counselors reported the school's use of the ASCA NM or a CSCP; however, they all had characteristics associated with the recommendations of these plans (Militello et al., 2009). The student-to-counselor ratio was low for all schools except one, which in turn had additional staff members in similar roles; all schools had effective management plans that allowed them to more effectively use their resources; all schools had partnerships with higher education opportunities for students; in most of the schools, school counselors were in leadership roles; and each of the schools had intensive programs that identified at-risk groups, such as low-income (Militello et al., 2009). These are important considerations due to the flexibility of the programs without being bound by the ASCA NM, the enhanced ability to identify multicultural groups, and the increased opportunities for more effectively applying resources.

Gruman, Marston, and Koon (2013) conducted a study based on student and staff surveys, student performance data, and research of effective school counseling programs. They ultimately revamped their school counseling program through data-based decisions, a school-wide advisory program, and comparison of student data and research strategies that were relevant (Gruman et al., 2013). They implemented five research-based strategies to work through the issues within their school: “teacher-led small-group advisory periods, planning portfolios, student-led parent conferences, student-driven scheduling, and data collection and analysis” (Gruman et al., 2013, p. 336). In addition, they added a computerized system that tracked at-risk areas in one screen.

Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell (2005) completed a descriptive study on urban school counselors ( $N = 102$ ) using the Urban School Counselor Questionnaire. This study directly applies to be MCC and practices and following of the ASCA NM. They found that the school counselors participated in standard counseling activities, such as counseling and consultation, but the perceptions of the school counselors were that student needs were tied to low family functioning/parenting, academic achievement, and poverty which were not addressed using standard counseling activities. While it is understood that there are classroom interventions to close the achievement gap such as teaching study skill, Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell (2005) urged school counselors to consider family interventions. Interventions that school counselors identified in the survey included family intervention, strategies for empowering students, and working with underachievers.

To further examine school counselor's perceptions of multicultural training Na (2012) completed a demographic study of school counselors ( $N = 381$ ). This study is important to the present study in that it describes the actual state of school counselors' perceptions of multiculturalism. A random sample of participants were surveyed from the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and three instruments were administered: the Multicultural Counseling Training Survey Revised (MCCTS-R), the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE), and demographic questionnaires. Na (2012) found that school counselors believed that their training experiences in a graduate program, the schools' urbanicity, and their age would be related to their own levels of MCC; however, the actual factors related to MCC were the counselors' years of experience and the counselors' own race/ethnicity. Therefore, in relation to my study, this implies that the perceptions of counselors were inaccurate, which can directly impact the MCC of counselors due to their perceptions. For example, the participants would believe that more graduate training experience, working with a more urban population, and their age contributed to more efficacies in counseling multicultural populations. This is very different from the results which indicate that their actual experience in years and their own race/ethnicity were more indicative of competence. This misconception suggests that school counselors could be unaware of what leads to MCC and how to further develop that competence.

### **Instruments**

Multiple instruments were necessary for this research. No existing literature has been found that incorporates the research questions for this study. However, the

instruments have been used consistently for the variables identified. These instruments will be further discussed regarding their relativity to this study. The MCCTS-R, the SCPIS, and GPA are essential to each of the individual variables and measuring the outcomes.

### **MCCTS-R**

The MCCTS-R is appropriate for measuring the PV of school counselors' MCC. Holcomb-McCoy and Day-Vines (2004) studied 209 school counselors using the MCCTS-R to conduct a factor analysis. While there are four scales used, three are acknowledged within this study: knowledge, terminology, and awareness. This study suggested a repeat study with a larger sample, a qualitative study to attain more background regarding school counselors' perceptions, further research to compare perceptions to actual practices, and more extensive research on the reliability and validity of the MCCTS-R. While several studies were found reviewing the nature of the MCCTS-R, no additional studies were found using the instrument for further research purposes. This survey can be found on Dr. Holcomb-McCoy's public website (Holcomb-McCoy, n.d.). She gave me permission to use the free survey for the purposes of this study (see Appendix D).

### **SCPIS**

The SCPIS is appropriate for measuring the PV of adherence to the ASCA NM. In an attempt to measure the outcomes of the ASCA NM and further explore the use of the SCPIS, Carey and Dimmitt (2012) summarized the results of six statewide studies conducted using the SCPIS. Through their studies within the six states, they were able to

determine that the use of the ASCA NM in schools does improve student performance. However, their measures of student performance varied from state to state, and the specificity of particular aspects of the ASCA NM that contributed to its successes, such as MCC, were not identified. Their primary focus was in their research was to ascertain whether or not CSCPs contributed to higher achievement levels. This is excellent research that outlines the value of further comparing state requirements, the ASCA NM, and student performance. This is a great preface to my research and confirms the value of the use of the assessment tool within this research. This survey can be found on the University of Massachusetts's, Amherst, public website (University of Massachusetts Amherst, n.d.). They gave me permission to use the free survey for the purposes of this study (see Appendix F).

### **GPA**

GPA is a narrow version of measuring the OV of student performance. While GPA is a calculation, rather than an instrument, it is consistently used in the school setting to measure students' performance levels (Florida House of Representatives, 2010). This calculation ranges students on a scale from 0.0-4.0 based on class grades. It is used in middle and high schools statewide to measure academia as a peer comparison and to measure minimum requirements for specific standards, such as graduation, athletic participation, or college entrance (Florida House of Representatives, 2010).

### **Summary and Conclusions**

In Chapter 2, the theoretical foundation was further discussed; the history of school counseling theory was described, particular studies were identified, and the ethical

standards related to the ASCA NM were discussed. The chapter also explained the connection between multicultural diversity and school counseling; and introduced emerging effective school counseling practices and reviewed various instruments to measure counselor adherence to the ASCA NM and MCC. Ultimately, this study encompasses the concepts of multicultural diversity, the ASCA NM, and the academic achievement. The problems and solutions found within the literature help to further set the foundation for this research.



## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this quantitative research plan was to determine if a relationship exists between school counselors' MCC as measured by the MCCTS-R, school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM as measured by the SCPIS, and student performance as measured by GPA. The purpose was also to determine if school counselors' MCC and/or school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM predicts student performance, as measured by GPA.

Considering the research method is important when determining what data are needed. In this section, the research method will be described and rationalized. The following methodology aspects will be conferred: restatement of the research questions, research design, researcher's role, design rationale, instrumentation, participants, data collection procedures, data analysis, validity, reliability, and ethical considerations.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

As previously stated, this was a correlation and multiple linear regression study. Three Pearson correlations were completed measuring relationships between school counselors' perceived MCC, student performance data, and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM. A multiple linear regression was also performed to determine whether or not the predictor variables of school counselors' MCC (PV), as measured by the MCCTS-R, and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM (PV), as measured by the SCPIS, predict students' performance (OV), as measured by a school composite of the GPA of the middle school students (broken down by race/ethnicity).

The design was developed through considerations of the value of statistical data, the existing surveys available measuring school counselors' MCC, the existing surveys available measuring application of the ASCA NM, important demographic details for school counselors and statistical groups, and the availability of the largest number of Florida middle school counselors to reach with a fast turnaround of data and with limited effect from presentation of material.

### **Setting and Sample**

#### **Researcher's Role**

My role as the researcher was to collect existing research related to this study, analyze the information, and disseminate the relevant material within this paper. After ensuring that no existing research was conducted to address the problem and purpose of this study, to my knowledge, I prepared the survey for Florida middle school counselors. The survey, its delivery, and the returned consent were conducted with ethical and legal considerations and approved by the University IRB (01-23-15-0269608). The data from the returned surveys were compiled and analyzed with SPSS. Then, the data results and analysis were presented. Finally, conclusions were drawn and recommendations for future research were made.

#### **Participants**

**Target population.** Information from all school counselors nationwide is valuable. However, to lead a more focused study, the population surveyed was narrowed down to middle school counselors within the state of Florida. Due to a G Power of 0.95 and an effect size of 0.3, a minimum sample size of 111 was required. All Florida school

counselors who were identified by the FLDOE's district school counselor contacts and/or a public source ( $N = 1,050$ ) were asked via email to voluntarily participate virtually in the study. Data analysis was only to be attempted if at least 111 middle school counselors responded, and 118 responded. All responses were included that were submitted within the time allotted in the invitation; however, three surveys were removed prior to data analysis due to incomplete data that excluded essential variables. This resulted in 115 surveys being included in the data analysis.

**Setting.** The setting was virtual through middle school counselors.

**Sample.** Participants voluntarily completed a survey that was created using PsychData (2014) and delivered via email, which included a link to the survey to all Florida school counselors that FLDOE's district school counselor contacts and/or a public source identified. Once the survey was completed, it was sent back anonymously for data collection via PsychData (2014).

## **Instrumentation**

### **Demographic Survey**

Demographic questions were used to gather background data for the school counselors, their students, and their schools. Questions included information regarding students' grades and free or reduced lunch status; school counselors' years of experience and racial/ethnic background; and schools' participation in the Title I program, gender population (male/female), and racial/ethnic population.

These factors relate to further comparisons of additional possible comparisons and assumptions that may apply to future research as well as narrowed the research for

specific groups. Grade information is relevant to GPA. Free or reduced lunch status applies to culture concepts and the overall make-up of the student population for comparisons between schools. The school counselors' background information gives important information for possible assumptions that may be relative to MCC or student performance. Specific school information is helpful for ascertaining the relevant populations culturally so that future research can expand upon the topic.

### **MCCTS-R**

The MCCTS-R was used to measure the school counselors' perceived MCC, which the middle school counselors self-reported (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005). This survey can be found on Dr. Holcomb-McCoy's public website. She gave me permission to use the free survey for the purposes of this study (see Appendix D). Some examples of Holcomb-McCoy's (2005) MCCTS-R items are the following: "I can discuss my own ethnic/cultural heritage," "I verbally communicate my acceptance of culturally different students," and "I can define discrimination." The assessment was developed by Holcomb-McCoy, has 32 questions, and has four factors: knowledge, terminology, awareness, and skills. It is scored by finding the sum of the items for each factor and computing the average score for each factor. Higher scores denote higher perceived MCC (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005). Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999) designed the original MCCTS, and Holcomb-McCoy merely revised the terms within the MCCTS for use with school counselors and named that version the MCCTS-R. This revision involved the change in terms that were more appropriate for school counselors, that is, students rather than clients (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005).

**Reliability.** The original MCCTS has internal consistency reliability coefficients ranging from .66 to .92 among the five scales (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999). Knowledge, awareness, terminology, and skills are the four identified scales through the MCCTS-R, and their alpha coefficients are .95, .83, .97, and .74 respectively (Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines, 2004).

**Validity.** As previously identified, counselors often perceive a higher level of counselor MCC than they perform (Dodson, 2013; Guzman et al., 2013). This factor limits the validity of the results from a self-report survey, such as the MCCTS-R. However, prior to the MCCTS-R, there were no developed measures to school counselors' MCC (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005). The MCCTS-R (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005) was developed using multicultural competencies identified by the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD). This leads to the validity of the assessment for use with measuring school counselors' perception of their MCC. Holcomb-McCoy and Day-Vines (2004) demonstrated content and construct validity through the three-factor solution.

### **SCPIS**

The SCPIS was used to measure the middle school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM in their schools. Eisner and Carey (2005) developed the survey to measure implementation levels of the ASCA NM. This survey can be found on the University of Massachusetts's, Amherst, public website (University of Massachusetts Amherst, n.d.). They gave me permission to use the free survey for the purposes of this study (see Appendix F). Some examples of Eisner and Carey's survey items are the following:

“Services are organized so that all students are well served and have access to them,” “The program has an effective referral and follow-up system for following student crises,” and “School counselor job descriptions match actual duties.” The survey now has 18 questions that are divided into the following categories: programmatic orientation, school counselor use of computer software, and school counseling services (Clemens, Carey, & Harrington, 2010; University of Massachusetts Amherst, n.d.). It is scored by finding the sum of the items within each category. Higher scores denote higher application of the ASCA NM (Clemens et al., 2010). Several studies have taken place using the SCPIS.

**Reliability.** The SCPIS has alpha numeric reliability ranging from .79 to .87 based on Cronbach’s alpha reliability estimates (Clemens et al., 2010). The two-factor model accounted for 47% of the variance, and the three-factor model accounted for 54% of the variance of the intercorrelation matrix (Clemens et al., 2010).

**Validity.** The SCPIS has been designed based on the ASCA NM’s characteristics (Clemens et al., 2010). Its use was intended to measure the extent of which this occurs in a school and has been found a valid measure based on its factor-analysis. The three-factor model, however, is recommended to more accurately represent the ASCA NM. It is not only valid for measuring the level of implementation of the ASCA NM but also the relationship between this implementation and student outcomes.

## Data Collection

### Procedures

A survey was constructed using PsychData (2014). The survey included demographic questions, the MCCTS-R, and the SCPIS. A middle school counselor contact list was compiled from FLDOE's district school counselor contacts and/or a public source. This final list contained names and email addresses of 1,050 middle school counselors in Florida who FLDOE's district school counselor contacts and/or a public source identified. I sent the web link for participation with the letter of invitation (see Appendix A) and informed consent (see Appendix B) to all middle school counselors who were identified by FLDOE's district school counselor contacts and/or a public source. The survey was anonymous and voluntary. If the school counselor chose to participate, he/she selected the link, completed the survey, and submitted it. Informed consent and agreement to the terms was assumed through participation in the survey. All completed surveys were retrieved through PsychData (2014) and the data were inputted into SPSS. The time span allotted for completion of the surveys to be included in the data were 2 weeks from the time that they were emailed to the middle school counselors.

Three correlations were completed addressing relationships between school counselors' perceived MCC, student performance data, and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM. A multiple linear regression was also performed to determine whether or not the predictor variables of school counselors' MCC (PV), as measured by the MCCTS-R, and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM (PV), as measured by the

SCPIS, can predict students' performance (OV), as measured by Grade Point Average (GPA) of middle school students.

### **Data Analysis**

This was a quantitative study. Data were collected through PsychData (2014). Correlation and multiple linear regression analyses were used to analyze the data. In this section, I will describe the uses of both of these statistical analyses as well as their application to this study. The transition of data from PsychData (2014) to SPSS required some cleanup of numerical portions to appropriately represent the data collected via scores versus use in SPSS.

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) can be used to study the relationships between two variables, among three or more variables, or when comparing sets of variables (Green & Salkind, 2011). It aims to determine the extent to which a relationship exists through statistical values (Green & Salkind, 2011). The significance test for  $r$  determines whether or not the relationship exists (Green & Salkind, 2011).

Two assumptions are made for  $r$ : “the variables are bivariately normally distributed” and “the cases represent a random sample from the population and the scores on variables for one case are independent of scores on these variables for other cases” (Green & Salkind, 2011, p. 258). The values range from -1 to +1 and result in a negative, a positive, or no correlation (Green & Salkind, 2011).

Multiple linear regression analyzes data with experimental or nonexperimental designs (Green & Salkind, 2011). In this case, it is a nonexperimental design, which is referred to as predictors and criterion rather than independent and dependent variables



(Green & Salkind, 2011). A multiple linear regression can have one set of predictors, unordered sets of predictors, or ordered sets of predictors (Green & Salkind, 2011); in this study, I used an ordered set of predictors.

Multiple linear regression was used to determine whether or not the predictor variables of school counselors' MCC (PV), as measured by the MCCTS-R, and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM (PV), as measured by the SCPIS, can predict students' performance (OV), as measured by GPA of middle school students.

### **Research Questions**

1. Do school counselors' MCC scores, as measured by the MCCTS-R, predict student performance as measured by the GPA of middle school students?
2. Does the school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS, predict student performance as measured by the GPA of middle school students?
3. Does school counselors' MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R, correlate with the degree to which a school counselor adheres to the ASCA NM as measured by the SCPIS (Eisner & Carey, 2005)?
4. Can school counselors' MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R, and the degree to which a school counselor adheres the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS (Eisner & Carey, 2005), predict performance as measured by the GPA of middle school students?

## **Hypotheses**

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant relationship between GPAs related to school counselors' MCC scores, as measured by the MCCTS-R. Higher scores of MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R, do not predict students' GPAs.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant relationship between GPAs related to school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS. Scores of adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS, do not predict GPAs.

H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no significant relationship between MCC scores, as measured by the MCCTS-R, related to school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS.

H<sub>0</sub>4: There is no significant relationship between adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS; MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R; and student performance, as measured by GPA.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Surveys were sent individually to counselors via my Walden University student email. Informed consent and limits to confidentiality were provided to all participants. The limits to confidentiality are specific to the data being presented and recognition that the data is representative of reports from middle school counselors in Florida. Middle school counselors participated anonymously. Surveys and data were submitted electronically through PsychData (2014). That data were not tied to any specific school or counselor that participated. No data or records that were directly linked to a student, counselor, or school (submitted by the participant within the survey); therefore, de-

identifying information did not need to be removed from the writing of the results.

Following submission, SPSS was used to record and analyze the data that pertained to this study.

### **Summary**

In summation, the research questions have guided the research design. Three correlations were completed addressing relationships between school counselors' perceived MCC, student performance data, and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM. A multiple linear regression was also performed to determine whether or not the predictor variables of school counselors' MCC (PV), as measured by the MCCTS-R, and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM (PV), as measured by the SCPIS, can predict students' performance (OV), as measured by GPA of middle school students. The research design and instruments were appropriate and relevant to this study. The instruments are designed for use with school's counselors and for the intention of the proposed research findings. Using these instruments, with their relative reliability and validity, also advances existing research based on most recent studies that were found. Ethics were considered, and all measures were taken to ascertain the most ethical practices for this study.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between MCC, adherence to the ASCA NM, and student performance. There were four research questions aiming to identify whether or not there was a relationship between MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM, whether or not levels of adherence to the ASCA NM could predict student performance, whether or not levels of perceived MCC could predict student performance, or whether or not the combination of MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM could predict student performance. The null hypotheses indicated that there is no significant relationship between perceived MCC and student performance, no significant relationship between adherence to the ASCA NM and student performance, no significant relationship between perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM, and no significant relationship between perceived MCC, adherence to the ASCA NM, and student performance. In this chapter, the data collection process will be described, the research questions and hypotheses will be reviewed, and the results of the study will be discussed.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected from Florida middle school counselors for 2 weeks virtually, from February 4, 2015 to February 18, 2015. Their email addresses were compiled from FLDOE's district school counselor contacts and/or a public source. All middle school counselors who were identified by these sources were sent an email invitation from my Walden University student email account. The Letter of Invite (Appendix A) included a

link for them to select if they were interested in participating. They were automatically directed to the PsychData link for the survey. The first page was the Consent Form (Appendix B) and they would select “continue” if they consented to completing the anonymous survey. After 1 week, all initial recipients received a Reminder Letter (Appendix C). After the 2-week survey period ended, the survey was closed in PsychData so no additional participants could access the survey. While 1,050 middle school counselors were emailed, 118 (11%) responded. Of those 118 participants, 115 (still 11%) were included in the study, and I aimed to collect a minimum of 111. Three surveys were removed due to incomplete data that excluded essential variables. Overall, this is an 11% response rate.

Of the 115 participants included in the study, the ethnic categories the participants are representative of, per their self-report, are the following: 2% Asian (two participants), 17% Black (19 participants), 12% Hispanic (14 participants), 0% American Indian (zero participants), 5% Multiracial (six participants), and 64% White (74 participants). These demographics compare to the state demographics previously reported as follows: 2% Asian, 16% Black, 22% Hispanic, <1% American Indian, 3% Multiracial, and 58% White (Florida Demographics, 2014). The largest percentage of discrepancies in participant demographics compared to the state demographics are within the ethnic categories of Hispanic, Multicultural, and White. The representation of ethnic categories that practice as school counselors in Florida is unknown to me, nor is there a known database that would have this information available.

Table 1

*Florida Demographics Compared to Participant Demographics*

Race	Florida demographics	Participant demographics
Asian	2	2
Black	16	17
Hispanic	22	12
American Indian	<1	0
Multiracial	3	5
White	58	64

*Note.* This table represents Florida's demographics in comparison to the school counselors' demographics whose surveys were included in the data analysis.

After data collection, GPA scores were manually calculated and both the MCCTS-R and the SCPIS were manually scored. Individual items were replaced by the variables/scores. In addition to the standard three-factor model that the MCCTS-R and the SCPIS use, overall scores were also calculated.

In addition to general demographic information (i.e., student population ethnicity counts) school counselors provided grades (A, B, C, D, F scale or percentage scale) for the average grade of students in their school for particular subject areas: sixth grade Language Arts, sixth grade Math, sixth grade Science, sixth grade Social Studies, seventh grade Language Arts, seventh grade Math, seventh grade Science, seventh grade Social Studies, eighth grade Language Arts, eighth grade Math, eighth grade Science, and eighth grade Social Studies. For calculating GPAs, A = 90 to 100% = 4.0 points, B = 80 to 89%

= 3.0 points, C = 70 to 79% = 2.0 points, D = 60 to 69% = 1.0 points, and F = 59% or below = 0.0 points, was the scale used. To calculate a school's GPA, the letters and/or percentages provided by the school counselor were converted to the point scale. Then, the sum was calculated. That new total was calculated into an average score (GPA).

The MCCTS-R, approved for use by Dr. Holcomb-McCoy (Appendix E), has a total of 32 questions using a Likert Scale numbered 1 to 4 (Appendix E). These questions embody three factors: multicultural terminology, multicultural knowledge, and multicultural awareness. For scoring, Questions 9 to 12 represent multicultural terminology; Questions 8, 13, and 16 to 32 represent multicultural knowledge; and Questions 1 to 7 and 14 to 15 represent multicultural awareness. All questions are included in the scoring process. To determine the scores for perceived MCC, a participant's responses are divided into the three factors. Those responses are summed, and the sum is averaged. For the purposes of the data analysis in this study, the three-factor model was used and an overall mean of all questions was used. This separate, overall mean was provided to represent an overall score to more fully represent the individual variable of the perceived MCC of each school counselor in this study.

The SCPIS has a total of 20 questions using a Likert Scale numbered 1 to 4 (Appendix G). These questions characterize three factors: programmatic orientation, use of computer software, and school counseling services. For scoring, Questions 1, 3 to 5, 9 to 10, and 14 represent programmatic orientation; Questions 15 to 17 represent use of computer software; and Questions 2, 11 to 13, and 18 to 20 represent school counseling services. Questions 6 to 8 are not included in the scoring process due to lack of support as

a factor during the factor analysis of this instrument. To determine the scores for adherence to the ASCA NM, a participant's responses are divided into the three factors. Those responses are summed, providing a sum for the score. For the purposes of the data analysis in this study, the three-factor model, which excluded the participants' scores on Questions 6 to 8, was used and an overall sum of all questions (excluding Questions 6-8) was used. This additional, overall sum was provided to represent an overall score to more fully represent the individual variable of adherence to the ASCA NM for a school counselor in this study.

### **Research Questions**

1. Do school counselors' MCC scores, as measured by the MCCTS-R, predict student performance as measured by the GPA of middle school students?
2. Does the school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS, predict student performance as measured by the GPA of middle school students?
3. Does school counselors' MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R, correlate with the degree to which a school counselor adheres to the ASCA NM as measured by the SCPIS (Eisner & Carey, 2005)?
4. Can school counselors' MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R, and the degree to which a school counselor adheres the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS (Eisner & Carey, 2005), predict performance as measured by the GPA of middle school students?



## Hypotheses

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant relationship between GPAs related to school counselors' MCC scores, as measured by the MCCTS-R. Higher scores of MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R, do not predict students' GPAs.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant relationship between GPAs related to school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS. Scores of adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS, do not predict GPAs.

H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no significant relationship between MCC scores, as measured by the MCCTS-R, related to school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS.

H<sub>0</sub>4: There is no significant relationship between adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS; MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R; and student performance, as measured by GPA.

## Statistical Assumptions

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) can be used to study the relationships between two variables, among three or more variables, or when comparing sets of variables (Green & Salkind, 2011). It aims to determine the extent to which a relationship exists through statistical values (Green & Salkind, 2011). The significance test for  $r$  determines whether or not the relationship exists (Green & Salkind, 2011).

Two assumptions are made for  $r$ : “the variables are bivariately normally distributed” and “the cases represent a random sample from the population and the scores on variables for one case are independent of scores on these variables for other cases”

(Green & Salkind, 2011, p. 258). The values range from -1 to +1 and result in a negative, a positive, or no correlation (Green & Salkind, 2011).

Multiple linear regression analyzes data with experimental or nonexperimental designs (Green & Salkind, 2011). In this case, it is a nonexperimental design, which is referred to as predictors and criterion rather than independent and dependent variables (Green & Salkind, 2011). A multiple linear regression can have one set of predictors, unordered sets of predictors, or ordered sets of predictors (Green & Salkind, 2011); in this study, I used an ordered set of predictors.

Multiple linear regression was used to determine whether or not the predictor variables of school counselors' MCC (PV), as measured by the MCCTS-R, and school counselors' adherence to the ASCA NM (PV), as measured by the SCPIS, can predict students' performance (OV), as measured by GPA of middle school students.

### **Results**

Four analyses were completed for this study. The alpha level was set at .05 for significance. Three multiple linear regressions were performed to represent research Questions 1, 2, and 4. The first research question aimed to determine whether or not perceived MCC could predict student performance. The analysis showed that perceived MCC levels did not significantly predict student performance levels through GPA ( $\beta = .15$ ,  $t(114) = .37$ ,  $p = .710$ ) and failed to reject  $H_0$ . The second research question aimed to determine whether or not adherence to the ASCA NM could predict student performance. The analysis showed that levels of adherence to the ASCA NM did not significantly predict student performance levels through GPA ( $\beta = .31$ ,  $t(114) = .45$ ,  $p =$

.653) and failed to reject  $H_02$ . The fourth research question aimed to determine whether or not the combination of perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM could predict student performance. Using the enter method, it was found that perceived MCC levels and levels of adherence to the ASCA NM, together, did significantly predict student performance levels through GPA ( $F(8, 106) = 7.31, p < .001, R^2 = .36, R^2_{\text{Adjusted}} = .31$ ) and rejected  $H_04$  (See Table 2). A Pearson Correlation was used to analyze whether or not a relationship exists between perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM. The analysis showed that the correlation between perceived MCC and levels of adherence to the ASCA NM was not significant,  $r(113) = -.14$ , and failed to reject  $H_03$ .

Table 2

*ANOVA*

Model	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Regression	23.496	8	2.937	7.312	.000
Residual	42.578	106	.402		
Total	66.074	114			

*Note.* This table represents the statistical significance ( $p < .05$ ) of perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM, together, as a prediction of student performance, and rejection of  $H_04$ . The predictor variables are perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM, and the outcome variable is student performance.

### Summary

To review, surveys were sent electronically via email to 1,050 Florida middle school counselors identified by FLDOE's district school counselor contacts and/or a public source. The goal for sample size was a minimum of 111. One-hundred eighteen

participated, and 115 surveys were completed for use in the data analysis. Four analyses were completed: three multiple linear regressions and one Pearson correlation. Three of the four null hypotheses failed to be rejected ( $H_01$ ,  $H_02$ , and  $H_03$ ) due to lack of statistical significance, and one was rejected ( $H_04$ ) due to statistical significance,  $p < .05$ . These results show that the prediction of student performance from perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM, holistically, is statistically significant. However, student performance cannot be predicted by perceived MCC or adherence to the ASCA NM individually. In addition, the relationship between perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM was not statistically significant.

These results provide questions, answers, and more direction based on the data and the data collection procedure. In Chapter 5, the interpretations of the findings will be described. Limitations of the study will be explored. Recommendations for future research will be presented. Implications for social change will be discussed.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between perceived MCC, adherence to the ASCA NM, and student performance. Three research questions aimed to identify predictors of student performance through MCC, adherence to the ASCA NM, or both. The fourth question sought to determine if there was a relationship between perceived MCC and the ASCA NM. Three of the four null hypotheses failed to be rejected due to lack of statistical significance: prediction of student performance by perceived MCC, prediction of student performance by adherence to the ASCA NM, and a relationship between perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM. The null hypothesis was rejected, due to statistical significance, for MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM, holistically, as predictors of student performance.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

This study extends knowledge in the school counseling profession. The finding that perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM, holistically, can predict student performance, as measured by GPA, is paramount. The ASCA NM is translated as CSCPs for Florida schools and is a requirement for Florida public schools to implement. MCC is an ethical expectation for school counselors. These requirements can contradict each other because the ASCA NM is not multiculturally focused. Rather, it is focused on norms, which neglects differences. This is significant since it neglects the needs of individuals and expects all students to conform to a norm.

The research presented in Chapter 2 was an integral foundation for this study. Findings were confirmed, and knowledge was extended in the school setting, for student performance, and for the school counseling field that will be further explored. School counselors were appropriate participants to gather information for the variables and to complete the instruments for this research. To narrow the research group, the participants were limited to Florida middle schools. More importantly, school counselors have access, in most Florida schools, to relevant data being collected for this study, understand MCC, as it is an ethical expectation for school counselors, and have awareness of the procedures that are in place relevant to the ASCA NM. Florida requires CSCPs, which are of the foundation of the ASCA NM (FLDOE, 2010).

SCPIS scores may have also been inflated, due to Florida's requirement for CSCPs and the wording of the Likert Scale (i.e., 4 = *Fully Implemented*). In Florida, it is likely that most schools would choose *Fully Implemented*; however, they may or may not adhere to the CSCPs (ASCA NM) strictly. This could be due to wanting to be seen in a good light, the perception factor, or poor wording of the selections for this research (Chao, 2013; Guzman et al., 2013). All items in the SCPIS had mean scores 3.4 to 3.6 with three exceptions: Questions 6 ( $M = 3.2$ ), 11 ( $M = 2.8$ ), and 12 ( $M = 2.9$ ). Question 6: "All students receive classroom guidance lessons designed to promote academic, social/personal, and career development." Question 11: "School counselor job descriptions match actual duties." Question 12: "School counselors spend at least 80% of their time in activities that directly benefit students." Questions 11 and 12 are part of the school counseling services factor of the SCPIS, which was approaching significance ( $p =$

.09). School counselors have increasing responsibilities outside of the counseling realm. This may also impact multiculturally appropriate services that may relate back to the significance of the pairing of MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM as predictors of student performance. This may lead, ultimately, to inaccurate scores of “adherence” as well as inaccurate results. However, the data for this research indicated that adherence to the ASCA NM, as measured by the SCPIS, does not predict students’ performance, as measured by GPA ( $H_02$ ).

MCC scores may also be inflated due to the perception factor, as previously discussed by research (Chao, 2013; Guzman et al., 2013). This has been shown to lead to higher perceived than actual MCC overall and especially by particular ethnic groups. However, the data for this research indicated that perceived MCC, as measured by the MCCTS-R, does not predict students’ performance, as measured by GPA ( $H_01$ ).

In addition, the Pearson correlation indicated that MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM do not have a statistically significant relationship ( $H_03$ ). In contrast, the multiple linear regression showed that perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM contribute, together, as predictors of student performance, as measured by GPA.

The school counseling and multicultural theories, as presented in Chapter 2, were valuable for this research and created an appropriate theoretical lens for the research. The findings of this research extended the existing research for both theories by confirming existing expectations and values of the theories and also expanding the known importance of using a consistent model as well as multicultural components in school counseling. Most importantly, through this research, I identified that the two must work

together to predict student performance. ASCA competencies and school counseling ethical codes require MCC from school counselors (ASCA, 2010, 2012). The school counseling theory is flexible, as well as the multicultural counseling theory (Caplan, 1964; Lemberger, 2010; Sue, 1978; Wright, 2012); however, the ASCA NM is less flexible and does not incorporate multicultural concepts (ASCA, 2008). Since adherence to the ASCA NM and perceived MCC were predictors when used together, that becomes an important concept to maintain in the educational environment with goals of improving student performance (Lemberger, 2010; Ponterotto, 2010). The FLDOE (2010) has already adopted a valuable system through differentiated instruction, interventions, and accommodations for students. However, these options are limited to students with disabilities or exceptionalities in most cases and need the application of differentiation through multicultural concepts within the existing framework to be more effective. Individualizing instruction further identifies the needs of students to help them progress at their level (Vaughn et al., 2012). This research further identified the need for MCC and program structure in the school counseling setting to be effective with student performance. This confirms information presented by Baker (2011) regarding the need for flexibility in the ASCA NM.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were a few final limitations of the study. Only 11% of middle school counselors who were sent the survey participated. It would be very useful to have a higher representation of participants for higher generalizability; however, this appears to be common for online surveys and may be common for school counselors. According to



SuperSurvey (2009), “half of all surveys receive at least a 26% response rate.” Research was not found that indicates the average response rate online for school counselors specifically. There are many additional reasons that could account for the low response rate: additional requirements by districts for school counselors to be allowed to participate, limited time to participate at this busy time during the school year, and the electronic format of the study. Related to the electronic format, the survey may be overwhelming to look at due to the number of questions, despite the expected survey time of 30 minutes. Some districts may not have the data reporting access to retrieve the demographic data represented. Some counselors who received the Letter of Invite may not have been at the correct grade levels for participation.

In addition to possible issues with the number of participants, the study is also limited by grade level applicability since only school counselors of Grades 6 to 8 were asked to participate. The study was also only within the scope of Florida schools, which excludes other states’ application, and only includes public schools, which may exclude specific populations of students and school counselors. Schools in the district in which I work may have a higher participation than other counties due to my affiliation, and some districts may have had a higher support of the participation, possibly resulting in more representation from some counties than others.

The self-report format, with little to no district assistance, may have provided issues for school counselors in reporting demographic survey information, and the self-report format can lead to higher error, including for GPA. A school counselor may rate students based on perceptive assumptions rather than actual data. The MCCTS-R also has

room for error due to self-reporting. These limitations lead to several recommendations for future research.

### **Recommendations**

Partnership with districts to gather these data and present at school counselor meetings would be very useful in presenting the topic to school counselors in a large group, distributing surveys, and collecting accurate data. It would also be useful to include students for their perceptions of their school counselors' MCC and its relation to their performance, as this may reduce the social desirability as well as provide a more objective viewpoint and perception based on students' experiences (Dodson, 2013; Packer-Williams, 2010). Qualitative data may be a useful addition to the SCPIS to ensure that the data are relevant to the variables indicated, and/or modifications to the SCPIS can be considered to measure adherence or compliance, rather than implementation. A social desirability scale, such as the Marlowe-Crown Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) would be useful in conjunction with the MCCTS-R to control for inflated scores.

### **Implications**

Three of the most important areas where change is needed, based on this research, are changes to the requirements for a CSCP, changes in the training that school counselors receive, and changes in the practices in the school setting. The social change impact is also very important because this research encompasses such a large population in various aspects.

### **Implications for the CSCP**

The plan is not truly comprehensive if it is missing such an essential piece. MCC is something that is highly researched and highly supported, because it is an integral piece to the counseling component. This research indicates that it is not only important but essential for improving student performance. This research also shows that the two aspects (ASCA NM and MCC) do not separately produce significance, whereas together, they can predict student performance.

This analysis implied that MCC and use of the ASCA NM cannot individually enhance student performance, but together, they can improve student performance in the classroom, as measured by GPA. Ultimately, this is a proactive acknowledgement in that it encourages structure for school counselors through the ASCA NM, but also highlights the importance of incorporating multicultural services within the ASCA NM. This could largely improve student performance, not only as measured by state assessments, as previously researched, but also on a daily basis in the classroom through variation in instruction, counseling, and school-wide diversification.

There is a separation in education of different components, but MCC needs to become more of a foundation than an enhancement. It needs to be integrated within the ASCA NM. It needs to be a basis of education for school counseling. Most importantly, it needs to be the expectation within the school setting for multicultural practices to be integrated within the educational aspects as well as the school counseling opportunities. School counselors need to have and take more opportunities to work with staff to identify the needs of students, learn/teach the tools to serve multicultural needs, and differentiate

instruction to meet those needs. Not all students learn the same way, and not all students have the same needs. Improved awareness and understanding through increased MCC and practices, through support and guidance from the CSCP, would better serve students and improve student performance. This directly impacts the future for learning, for business, and for the world. If students cannot be properly educated, society cannot achieve its highest potential. For example, teachers who work with students daily have limited understanding of multicultural differences and needs. However, they are taught different learning styles and teaching strategies.

### **Implications for Training**

While there has been a push in regular academic curriculum in the past year to differentiate instruction, school counseling training often lacks this important concept. School counselors who have not taught in a classroom may approach teaching classroom guidance sessions with little or no thought to the varying learning styles of students in their classes. In addition, teachers may not make the connection to differentiate among cultural differences as well as the data differences that they are taught to compare, that is, lowest quartile students. The concept in school counseling in the education setting needs to involve more advocacy, more training, and more application of multicultural concepts.

If teachers had more training from school counselors regarding how to relate those styles and strategies to multicultural needs, students would be better served. This study represents the power through significance that both components can have together, but this also needs to be applied through various levels within the school to achieve the

highest impact. It cannot only be with students who are sent for counseling. MCC and implementation ultimately need to become the culture of the school setting.

School counselors need additional training to meet the individual needs of students in order to increase student performance. School counselors also need to work in partnership with school administrators and leaders to train teachers and school staff members to gain additional strategies for differentiated instruction and interventions as well as to learn the differences within and outside of their populations (FLDOE, 2010; Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports, n.d.; Green et al., 2005; Schulz, 2011; Smith et al., 2010; Tadlock-Marlo, 2011; Zeng, 2014).

### **Implications for Practice**

In addition to the classroom, several additional features need to be considered: cultural items within offices and how students and families are addressed with differing cultural needs. While there are often programs for families of migrant status, students who have a non-English primary language, and students identified for exceptional education, programs are missing for the other families who do not fall into those categories as well as families who do. Those programs are not all-encompassing and miss important cultural features. For example, the ESOL program intends to teach students the English language through immersion while supplying language support. However, various cultural change aspects are missing: legal expectations, societal expectations, and academic expectations and requirements. Having a special orientation for new students would be useful in identifying cultural needs for the families.

This supported the use of both theoretical frameworks. School counseling theory allows school counselors to use various modalities in the counseling profession while maintaining structure. Multicultural counseling theory further identifies individuation, even among groups. It is essential to have structure and guidance in the school counseling Profession, but it is also a necessary factor for school counselors to incorporate multicultural concepts in the educational setting for student performance. Based on this research, and the theoretical bases, it would be recommended that school counselors use specific strategies and training programs in the school setting. Gruman et al.'s (2013) research suggested data-based decisions, a school-wide advisory program, and comparison of student data and research strategies. These factors are very important for informing decisions and are vital to student growth. It is also important to continue to use CSCPs as a guiding factor, but not to be so rigid that it does not address individual needs. Furthermore, the addition of multicultural practices is paramount. This is not evident in the ASCA NM, but is in the ASCA code of ethics (ASCA, 2008, 2010, 2012). Ensuring that MCC is being translated to teachers, students, and staff bridges the gap from understanding to performance.

### **Implications for Social Change**

This research has a social change impact. It confirms the importance of structure in the school setting, but it also informs the importance of MCC within that structure to better serve students and lead to higher performance levels. For example, a school counselor is expected to meet the needs of larger populations through classroom guidance. Considering that this is not a daily task, but teachers are with students daily, it

would also be important to teach staff how to more effectively work with diverse populations and meet various needs within their daily lessons. Without the holistic effort of a CSCP with multicultural components, students' performance is setup to suffer. This research informs Florida Middle School leaders, and potentially other school levels and states, regarding the importance of meeting needs of individuals rather than having a one-size-fits-all attitude. It would be imperative to present these findings to school counselors, district leaders, and state leaders, as well as to further the research among additional populations.

It is already understood that students learn differently. Research has demonstrated that cultural differences, societal differences, learning deficits, giftedness, and systems largely impact students' learning and have offered opportunities (FLDOE, 2010; Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports, n.d.; Green et al., 2005; Schulz, 2011; Smith et al., 2010; Tadlock-Marlo, 2011; Zeng, 2014); however, if school counselors are not being used properly, as is indicated through the descriptive statistics of the SCPIS items, it's difficult for students to wholly reap the benefits of school counseling. Therefore, school counselors need to be able to not only meet their job descriptions, but also have flexibility for multicultural services and arrangements within the schools. For example, school counselors would also need to differentiate their classroom guidance lessons, be responsive to students' different learning styles and include culturally appropriate material and items in their offices.

Described above are the implications from the research study. These implications include changes to the requirements for a CSCP, changes in the training that school

counselors receive, and changes in the practices in the school setting. They also describe the social impact that these changes would have. The professional culture within the school system could be more appropriately addressed, which ultimately affects students. With these changes in training, practice, and theory, marginalized students' academic success may be improved.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study intended to determine what relationships, if any, existed between perceived MCC, adherence to the ASCA NM, and student performance. While individual relationships and predictions could not be made, it was found that perceived MCC and adherence to the ASCA NM, jointly, could predict students' performance (GPA). This supports the need for various aspects that are already in place for school counselors, but emphasizes a need to add multicultural services in the ASCA NM to ensure that students' needs are more fully met in the classroom. Options, such as differentiated instruction, offer different learning opportunities for different learners. For a small group of students, IEPs and 504 plans mandate that teachers respond to a students' learning-related or behavior-related disabilities in an individual and unique way; however, without enhanced application of multicultural concepts, a large percentage of the a school's population is being left out. This population may include many students who are marginalized due to SES, ethnicity, gender or other cultural factors. School counselors and staff need to have additional training to meet the individual needs of students in order to increase student performance. The ASCA NM provides counselors with a blueprint for the implementation of a CSCP, but lacks some of the important



concepts that school counselors need to know in order to be culturally responsive. This study has shown the importance of the combination of the ASCA NM and perceived MCC in relation to student performance.

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## Appendix A: Letter of Invite

**Data Collection Coordination Request**

February 4, 2015

Dear School Counselor,

I have received your name from the Florida Department of Education and/or a public source to collect data for my research project entitled The Relationship Between School Counselors' Perceived Multicultural Competence, Adherence to the ASCA National Model, and Students' Performance in Florida Public Schools.

I am requesting your cooperation in the data collection process. I propose to collect data on February 4, 2015-February 18, 2015. You may choose to participate in the survey for data collection at your convenience in order to minimize disruption to your duties/activities. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes of your time.

If you agree to be part of this research project, I would ask that you complete the survey through the provided link ( <https://www.psychdata.com/s.asp?SID=164499> ). You will only participate in the survey one time, and completion of the survey will take approximately 30 minutes.

If you prefer not to be involved in this study, that is not a problem at all.

If circumstances change, please contact me via \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be pleased to share the results of this study with you if you are interested.

By returning a completed survey, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Sincerely,

Jessica Conroy

## Appendix B: Informed Consent

**CONSENT FORM**

You are invited to take part in a research study of the relationship between perceived school counselor multicultural competence, adherence to the ASCA National Model, and student performance. The researcher is inviting Florida School Counselors at the middle school level to be in the study. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Jessica Conroy, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as a School Counselor, but this study is separate from that role.

**Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to determine if a relationship exists between school counselors’ multicultural competence, school counselors’ adherence to the ASCA National Model, and student performance. The purpose is also to determine if school counselors’ multicultural competence and/or school counselors’ adherence to the ASCA National Model predicts student performance.

**Procedures:**

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete the survey through the provided link. You will only participate in the survey one time, and completion of the survey will take approximately 30 minutes.

Here are some sample questions:

\_\_\_\_ I can discuss my own ethnic/cultural heritage.

\_\_\_\_ Services are organized so that all students are well served and have access to them.

\_\_\_\_ What is the average grade for students in grades 6-8 at your school?

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the Florida School Counseling Association, the American Counseling Association, the American School Counseling Association, or Walden University will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

**Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Understanding the relationship between school counselors' perceived multicultural competence, the counselors' adherence to the ASCA National Model, and student performance is necessary in order to better understand and serve the multicultural



populations in urban public schools and to respond to individual student needs (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005). It is important to determine the relationship between multicultural competence, adherence to the ASCA model, and students' GPA. A relationship could indicate a need for social change in the area of school counselor preparation and training, specifically concerning the ASCA National Model.

**Payment:**

There is no payment for participating in this study.

**Privacy:**

Any information you provide will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by removal of any identifying information and keeping survey data password protected. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

**Contacts and Questions:**

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email at \_\_\_\_\_. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210.

Walden University's approval number for this study is **01-23-15-0269608** and it expires on **January 22, 2016.**

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By returning a completed survey, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

-

## Appendix C: Reminder Letter

**Data Collection Coordination Request**

February 11, 2015

Dear School Counselor,

I have received your name from the Florida Department of Education and/or a public source to collect data for my research project entitled The Relationship Between School Counselors' Perceived Multicultural Competence, Adherence to the ASCA National Model, and Students' Performance in Florida Public Schools.

This letter is serving as a reminder if you have not already participated. I am requesting your cooperation in the data collection process. I propose to collect data on February 4, 2015-February 18, 2015. You may choose to participate in the survey for data collection at your convenience in order to minimize disruption to your duties/activities. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes of your time.

If you agree to be part of this research project, I would ask that you complete the survey through the provided link ( <https://www.psychdata.com/s.asp?SID=164499> ). You will only participate in the survey one time, and completion of the survey will take approximately 30 minutes.

If you prefer not to be involved in this study, that is not a problem at all.

If circumstances change, please contact me via

Thank you for your consideration. I would be pleased to share the results of this study with you if you are interested.

By returning a completed survey, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Sincerely,

Jessica Conroy

## Appendix D: MCCTS-R Permission

Subject : RE: MCCTS-R

Date : Sat, Jan 04, 2014 10:33 AM CST

From :

To :

Sure Jessica! You have my permission to use the MCCTS-R.

Best wishes,  
Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy



**From:** Jessica Conroy

**Sent:** Friday, January 03, 2014 1:12 PM

**To:** Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy

**Subject:** MCCTS-R

Hi! I am a student in the Counselor Education and Supervision PhD program at Walden University and am working on my dissertation. I am focusing on multicultural competence of school counselors in the urban setting and would love to use the MCCTS-R in my study. May I have permission to use this instrument? Thank you for your time!

Jessica Conroy

## Appendix E: MCCTS-R

**Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised**  
**Multicultural Counseling Competence Component**  
 (School Counselor Version)

Developed by Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy, Ph.D.  
 University of Maryland at College Park

Directions: Listed below are competency statements based on AMCD's Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Explanatory Statements. Please read each competency statement and evaluate your multicultural competence using the following 4-point scale.

- 1** - **Not competent (Not able to perform at this time)**  
**2** - **Somewhat competent (More training needed)**  
**3** - **Competent (Able to perform competently)**  
**4** - **Extremely competent (Able to perform at a high level)**

---

1.	I can discuss my own ethnic/cultural heritage.	1	2	3
4				
2.	I am aware of how my cultural background and	1	2	3
4	experiences have influenced my attitudes about psychological processes.			
3.	I am able to discuss how my culture has influenced the	1	2	3
4	way I think.			
4.	I can recognize when my attitudes, beliefs, and values are	1	2	3
4	interfering with providing the best services to my students.			
5.	I verbally communicate my acceptance of culturally different	1	2	3
4	students.			
6.	I nonverbally communicate my acceptance of culturally	1	2	3
4	different students.			
7.	I can discuss my family's perspective regarding	1	2	3
4	acceptable and non-acceptable codes-of-conduct.			
8.	I can discuss models of White Racial Identity Development.	1	2	3
4				

9.	I can define racism.	1	2	3
4				
10.	I can define prejudice.	1	2	3
4				
11.	I can define discrimination.	1	2	3
4				
12.	I can define stereotype.	1	2	3
4				
13.	I can identify the cultural bases of my communication style.	1	2	3
4				
14.	I can identify my negative and positive emotional reactions	1	2	3
4	toward persons of other racial and ethnic groups.			
<b>1</b>	- <b>Not competent (Not able to perform at this time)</b>			
<b>2</b>	- <b>Somewhat competent (More training needed)</b>			
<b>3</b>	- <b>Competent (Able to perform competently)</b>			
<b>4</b>	- <b>Extremely competent (Able to perform at a high level)</b>			
<hr/>				
15.	I can identify my reactions that are based on stereotypical beliefs	1	2	3
4	about different ethnic groups.			
16.	I can give examples of how stereotypical	1	2	3
4	beliefs about culturally different persons impact the counseling relationship.			
17.	I can articulate the possible differences between the	1	2	3
4	nonverbal behavior of the five major ethnic groups (i.e., African/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native American, European/White).			
18.	I can articulate the possible differences between the	1	2	3
4	verbal behavior of the five major ethnic groups.			
19.	I can discuss the counseling implications for at least	1	2	3
4	two models of racial/ethnic identity development.			
20.	I can discuss within-group differences among ethnic	1	2	3
4	groups (e.g., low SES Puerto Rican student vs. high SES Puerto Rican student).			

21. 4	I can discuss how culture affects a student's vocational choices.	1	2	3
22. 4	I can discuss how culture affects the help-seeking behaviors of students.	1	2	3
23. 4	I can discuss how culture affects the manifestations of psychological disorders.	1	2	3
24. 4	I can describe the degree to which a counseling approach is appropriate for a specific group of people.	1	2	3
25. 4	I can explain how factors such as poverty, and powerlessness have influenced the current conditions of at least two ethnic groups.	1	2	3
26. 4	I can discuss research regarding mental health issues among culturally/ethnically different populations.	1	2	3
27. 4	I can discuss how the counseling process may conflict with the cultural values of at least two ethnic groups.	1	2	3

- 1** - **Not competent (Not able to perform at this time)**  
**2** - **Somewhat competent (More training needed)**  
**3** - **Competent (Able to perform competently)**  
**4** - **Extremely competent (Able to perform at a high level)**

---

28. 4	I can list at least three barriers that prevent ethnic minority students from using counseling services.	1	2	3
29. 4	I can discuss the potential bias of two assessment instruments frequently used in the schools.	1	2	3



- |          |   |   |   |   |
|----------|---|---|---|---|
| 30.<br>4 | I can discuss family counseling from a cultural/ethnic perspective.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 31.<br>4 | I can anticipate when my helping style is inappropriate for a culturally different student. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 32.<br>4 | I can help students determine whether a problem stems from racism or biases in others.      | 1 | 2 | 3 |

## Appendix F: SCPIS Permission

**Jessica Conroy**

To:

[Redacted]

Tue, Jul 15, 2014 at 12:03 PM

Hi! I would love to use this survey for my dissertation. Is it okay to use and public domain? Thank you very much for your time!

Jessica Conroy

---

**CSCORE AMHERST**

To: Jessica Conroy <

[Redacted]

Tue, Sep 2, 2014 at 12:50 PM

Yes, please feel free to use for your dissertation.

Best of luck ~

On Tue, Jul 15, 2014 at 12:03 PM, Jessica Conroy <jessica.conroy8@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi! I would love to use this survey for my dissertation. Is it okay to use and public domain? Thank you very much for your time!

Jessica Conroy

## Appendix G: SCPIS

## School Counseling Program Implementation Survey

Please rate each statement below in terms of the degree to which it is currently implemented in your School's School Counseling program. Circle your response using the following Rating Scale:

*1 = Not Present; 2 = Development in Progress; 3 = Partly Implemented; 4 = Fully Implemented*

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. A written mission statement exists and is used as a foundation by all counselors.  | 1 | 2 |
| 3 4   |   |   |
| 2. Services are organized so that all students are well served and have access to them.   | 1 | 2 |
| 3 4   |   |   |
| 3. The program operates from a plan for closing the achievement gap for minority and lower income students.   | 1 | 2 |
| 3 4   |   |   |
| 4. The program has a set of clear measurable student learning objectives and goals are established for academics, social/personal skills, and career development. | 1 | 2 |
| 3 4   |   |   |
| 5. Needs Assessment's are completed regularly and guide program planning.   | 1 | 2 |
| 3 4   |   |   |
| 6. All students receive classroom guidance lessons designed to promote academic, social/personal, and career development.   | 1 | 2 |
| 3 4   |   |   |
| 7. The program ensures that all students have academic plans that include testing, individual advisement, long-term planning, and placement.                      | 1 | 2 |
| 3 4   |   |   |
| 8. The program has an effective referral and follow-up system for handling student crises.  | 1 | 2 |
| 3 4   |   |   |
| 9. School counselors use student performance data to decide how to meet student needs.  | 1 | 2 |
| 3 4   |   |   |
| 10. School counselors analyze student data by ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic level to identify interventions to close achievement gaps.                     | 1 | 2 |
| 3 4   |   |   |
| 11. School counselor job descriptions match actual duties.  | 1 | 2 |
| 3 4   |   |   |

12. School counselors spend at least 80% of their time in activities that directly benefit students. 1 2  
3 4
13. The school counseling program includes interventions designed to improve the school's ability to educate all students to high standards. 1 2  
3 4
14. An annual review is conducted to get information for improving next year's programs. 1 2  
3 4
15. School counselors use computer software to:
- access student data 1 2  
3 4
  - analyze student data 1 2  
3 4
  - use data for school improvement 1 2  
3 4
16. The school counseling program has the resources to allow counselors to complete appropriate professional development activities. 1 2  
3 4
17. School counseling priorities are represented on curriculum and education committees. 1 2 3  
4
18. School counselors communicate with parents to coordinate student achievement and gain feedback for program improvement. 1 2  
3 4

## Appendix H: Demographic Survey

Directions: Listed below are demographic tables asking for information related to your school, students, and your background. Complete each area to provide background information to compare for the purposes of this research. Please do not provide information other than what is asked below.

**School and Student Demographics**

Grade Level	Number of students	Number of Female Students	Number of Male Students
6			
7			
8			

Ethnic Category	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Asian			
Black			
Hispanic			
American Indian			
Multiracial			
White			

Ethnic Category	Male	Female
Asian		
Black		
Hispanic		
American Indian		

Multiracial		
White		

Number of students on Free/Reduced Lunch Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Is your school a Title I school? (Circle one): Yes or No

What is the average grade for:

Subject Area	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	8 <sup>th</sup> grade
Language Arts			
Math			
Science			
Social Studies			

### **School Counselor Demographics**

What is your ethnic background? (Circle one):

Asian   Black   Hispanic   American Indian   Multiracial   White

How many years have you been a School Counselor? \_\_\_\_\_