THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SELF-EFFICACY OF SCHOOL

COUNSELORS AND THE USE OF A FAMILY SYSTEMS

APPROACH IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, FAMILY STUDIES, AND

COUNSELING

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

BY

EBONY M. MORROW M.S.

DENTON, TEXAS

DECEMBER 2021

DEDICATION

I dedicate my hard work, commitment, and perseverance to the One who inspires greatness within me and blesses me beyond measure, my Heavenly Father, for it is only through Him this great achievement is possible. In addition, I would like to thank my parents for instilling in me the value of "Sacrifice Now, Play Later." It has taken much sacrifice to get to this point of completion, and without the power of prayer, some tough love, and many late night pillow-pep talks with comforting words of encouragement, I would not have finished this journey. Thank you daddy, Apostle James E. Morrow, for being the example and setting the tone for what greatness looks like. As I aspire to be great, I will remember to first seek wisdom and get an understanding, a life lesson that you have embedded in me. Thanks for helping me understand that I have to have more than book knowledge, but to also be pragmatic and relatable in service of people. To my mother, Dr. Cynthia Morrow, a fascinating woman of God, thank you for teaching me the value of being a strong-educated black woman. You taught me never to be afraid to be set apart because I am uniquely and wonderfully made. You spoke strength into my life at an early age, and taught me how to navigate the winding roads and paths that life would take me on, and for that I am truly grateful.

In Loving Memory of, my grandfather, Otis James Morrow, and my baby brother, Jada Morrow, who has been instrumental in my growth and educational experience. I am inspired still, even in their death, to live a life of Faith Over Fear.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely grateful to my dissertation committee for sticking with me, offering support, and providing feedback from inception to completion. Thank you to my committee chair Dr. Brigitte Vittrup whose expertise was valuable in the formulation of my dissertation topic, research questions, and methodology. Thank you for helping to sharpen my research capabilities while coaching me to the finish line. Thank you to Dr. Linda Brock and Dr. Linda Ladd who have been with me from the very first class of my doctoral journey. I am grateful to have received your guidance and mentorship to the very end. Thank you to Dr. Lisa Grubbs for believing in the work I was doing and joining me in the 9th hour to help improve the quality of my study. Lastly, thank you to Dr. Richard McWhorter and Dr. Eustace Duffus for planting the seed for me to pursue a doctorate degree. You believed in me long before I even thought to embark on this journey.

In addition, I would like to thank my siblings, Quran, James, and Uriah, for your patience, your push, and understanding when I couldn't always show up. Each of you have played a valuable role in helping me to stay the course. Adapting the words of Daddy James, When one of us succeeds, We all succeed. So, here's to our success. We are Making It Happen! Thanks to my extended family, a host of relatives and friends, who have been a shoulder to lean on, my source of laughter and comfort, and at times a much needed positive distraction. Finally, to my MLBC church family, you have always been an extension of my growth and successes in life. Thanks for being my village.

ABSTRACT

EBONY MORROW

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SELF-EFFICACY OF SCHOOL

COUNSELORS AND THE USE OF A FAMILY SYSTEMS APPROACH IN THE

SCHOOL SETTING

DECEMBER 2021

The purpose of this study was to examine if school counselors' level of self-efficacy

could be predicted from the use of family systems approaches in the school setting, and to

determine if self-efficacy could be predicted from perceived importance and preparedness

of using a family systems approach. In addition, this study explored personal and

professional factors of school counselors that could be used to predict school counselors'

self-efficacy. A total of 120 practicing school counselors completed a 53-item online

questionnaire for a response rate of 60%. The results of this study can be beneficial in

determining how to better train and prepare school counselors to be effective advocates.

Results of this study can also be used to inform training, workshops, or professional

development opportunities directly related to the use of family systems approaches in

school counseling. Results of the current study indicate participants generally felt

somewhat competent to deliver school counseling through use of a family systems

approach. Findings resulted in recommendation for training considerations in family

systems approaches for school counselor educators.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School counselors are professional individuals charged with the tasks of providing

collaboration, leadership, and advocacy to promote counseling services, and provide

leadership to the school by assisting in the design and implementation of policies and

programs. School counselors are also given the responsibility of helping to meet the

academic, career, and social/emotional developmental needs of "all students" (ASCA,

2019a). What is equally important is that school counselors have an understanding that

students belong to a larger social system composed of both family and school

(Bodenhorn, 2005; L. Terry, 2002). Overall development of a child depends on the ability

of the family system and the school system to function as an integrative framework.

School counselors are the individuals perfectly positioned to act as agents of change as

well as collaborative leaders capable of building relationships with families and

negotiating what is in the best interests of the child, family, and the school (Christenson,

2004; Stinchfield & Zyromski, 2010).

The role of school counselors has changed over the years, from a one-on-one

counseling approach to that of a comprehensive guidance program model (ASCA, 2019a;

Stinchfield & Zyromski, 2010). School counselors are finding it necessary to adapt to

new roles and responsibilities, as prescribed by ASCA's professional standards and

competencies, in order to meet the needs of today's youth academically, socially, and

emotionally (ASCA, 2019b; Martin, 2002). Coordination of family and school systems is

an important part of the role school counselors play, but it may be impacted by beliefs,

1

training, and overall experience in working using a family systems perspective (Woody & Woody, 1994). L. Terry (2002) identified the need for evidence-based research regarding the impact of training and family counseling in schools. ASCA recognizes the need for a family systems perspective in school counseling and has modified its code of ethics to include the role and responsibility school counselors have in working with families, such as being sensitive to the diversity that exists within families as well as respecting the rights and responsibilities of parents or guardians and forming collaborative relationships with them in order to help facilitate students' maximum development. School counselors are also reminded to practice only within the scope of their competence (ACA, 2018; ASCA, 2019b). Collaboration with families may create an issue of competence if the school counselor has not received proper training or education in family systems perspectives (Bodenhorn, 2005).

According to Bandura (1991), social cognitive theory suggests that people with training and development have increased beliefs about their capabilities and can improve function in a particular task or goal. Bandura found that individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy established higher goals for themselves and showed more resilience, a stronger commitment, motivation, and perseverance in attaining those goals. Self-efficacy is defined as a set of principles individuals have about their abilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives. Larson and Daniels (1998) suggested that although the correlation is minimal, counseling self-efficacy is positively related to performance. In addition, they found that mental health counselors with higher levels of self-efficacy reported more experience and more training.

Research shows that school counselors' training experience does impact their self-efficacy, which in turn impacts their perceptions of their roles as a school counselor. According to Bodenhorn (2001), school counselors with more experience and those who had teaching backgrounds showed higher self-efficacy. School counselors' beliefs regarding their roles and responsibilities to children and their families may be affected by factors such as training, years of experience, and other factors, but with support and components of program mastery being acknowledged, counselor self-efficacy can increase (Daniels & Larson, 2001). The perspective a school counselor holds is based on his or her conceptualization of the student and family, and it essentially affects how and what approach will be used as well as the type of assistance determined to be provided for specific students and families (Paylo, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the changing roles in the educational dimension of school counseling and the direction towards a more systemic comprehensive school counseling program, the reality remains that school counselors lack the necessary training to implement an effective family systems perspective (Perusse et al., 2001). Research shows there has been an influx of literature detailing the need for a family systems approach in school counseling, but no real direction on school counselor preparation in providing this perspective (L. Terry, 2002). Lack of training and inexperience may pose a dilemma in the area of competence for school counselors working with families in an effort to best help meet students' academic and social-emotional needs. In order to be effective and maintain ethical standards, school counselors working directly with families must be willing to seek additional training in the area of family systems or work collaboratively

with professionals who are already trained in this area (Bodenhorn, 2005). Perusse and Goodnough (2005) explored the perceptions of 568 school counselors in regards to graduate training preparation and found that school counselors recognized the importance of having a systems perspective. By helping shift school counselors' thought processes from an individual to a more systemic view, they are able to become better advocates by using family system dialogues. This is essential to being able to experience behaviors interdependently and seeing them as functions of maintaining homeostasis within the system as opposed to extinguishing one behavior just to extinguish another one later on (Paylo, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine if school counselors' level of self-efficacy can be predicted from the use of family systems approaches in the school setting, and to determine if self-efficacy can be predicted from perceived importance and preparedness of family systems. In addition, this study examined personal and professional factors of school counselors that could be used to predict school counselors' self-efficacy. The intent was to determine if a significant relationship exists between self-efficacy, perceived level of competence, perceived level of preparedness and perceived level of importance as it relates to the use of family systems approaches in the school setting.

Significance of the Study

Literature supports the use of family systems approaches to ameliorate the impact of many school problems before they worsen (Bodenhorn, 2005; Collins, 2014). The utilization of a family systems approach helps school counselors become mindful of the

4

family's influences on their student, leading to the counselor being more knowledgeable and effective in his or her work. Being trained in family systems approaches yields increased competence in both counseling and consultation of individuals, families, and groups (Paylo, 2011). Bryan and Holcomb-McCoy (2004) were among the first to empirically study school counselors' views of the significance of using a family systems approach in the school setting. The present study further examined the extent to which school counselors perceive the use of a family systems approach to be important in school counseling. The results of this study are beneficial in determining how to better train and prepare school counselors to be effective advocates for both students and their families through the proper use of family systems approaches in school counseling. This study sought to delineate the methods by which the knowledge of family systems were gained as well as the perceived barriers to using family systems approaches in the school setting. Implications of this study provide more insight to accrediting bodies of the importance of requiring courses in family systems theory as well as conceptualization. Results may also be used to inform training, workshops, or professional development opportunities directly related to the use of family systems approaches in school counseling.

Research Questions

1. Do practicing school counselors perceive family systems approaches as an important area of pre-service training or professional development?

2. What are the most common issues addressed through school counseling?

3. What are the perceived barriers, if any, to using a family systems approach in school counseling?

4.   What is the perceived self-efficacy of school counselors using family systems approaches within the scope of school counseling?

5.   Are (a) number of years of experience as a school counselor, (b) number of hours of professional development/training related to family systems, (c) number of hours of pre-service training (training prior to becoming a school counselor) related to family systems, predictive factors of self-efficacy of the school counselor?

6.   Is there a significant relationship between self-efficacy, perceived level of preparedness, and perceived level of importance of using a family systems approach in school counseling?

7.   Is there a significant relationship between self-efficacy and perceived barriers to using a family systems approach in school counseling?

Theoretical Framework

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1991, 1997, 2001) emphasizes the importance of self-beliefs in human thought, motivation, and behavior. Bandura argued that people have a self-regulating system that allows them to exercise a level of control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. He believed cognition involves knowledge and the skills for acting on that knowledge (Grusec, 1992; Pajares & Schunk, 2002). Social cognitive theory guides our understanding of people's behaviors and their reasons for behaving in a particular way and when change in those behaviors may be possible. This theory provides insight into the relationships between human behaviors and the factors that determine social norms as a framework for how individuals are most likely to behave under any given circumstance (LaMorte, 2016). Bandura posited that sociocultural

influences function through psychological mechanisms of the self-system to create behavioral outcomes. For example, "economic conditions, socioeconomic status, and educational and family structures affect behavior largely through their impact on peoples' aspirations, sense of efficacy, personal standards, affective states and other self-regulatory influences rather than directly" (Bandura, 2001, p.15). Bandura argued that social structures are created by the activities of humans and the practice of different cultures within the social context that impose "constraints and provide enabling resources and opportunity structures" for personal development (2001). Social cognitive theory provides an integrated view of social processes and can be used to inform teaching, research, and scholarship (Grusec, 1992; Simon & Pajares, 1999). Beyond this, social cognitive theory suggests that training and development help to increase beliefs about one's capabilities and thus improve function in a particular task or goal (Bandura, 1991).

Core assumptions of social cognitive theory are that individuals are purposeful, goal-oriented beings who are motivated by beliefs of self-efficacy and consequences stemming from interactions within their social contexts (Bandura, 1991). Bandura emphasized the role of cognitions in determining behaviors in terms of interactions between one's environment (witnessing others' behaviors), thoughts and feelings (internal stimuli), and one's own behaviors (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). He proposed that behaviors do not have to be acquired through trial and error, but are regulated through one's assessment of internal standards based on experiences and self-evaluation (self-reflection). Individuals are able to judge their capabilities to deal with a variety of situations, something Bandura termed as "self-efficacy" (Bandura, 1977).

Self-efficacy is defined as sets of principles individuals have about their abilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1977, 1991). Perceived self-efficacy is based on context rather than generalizations and refers to a specific area of knowledge and tasks that are necessary to complete the desired outcomes. It is a central component in self-regulation processes. People's beliefs in their efficacy influence their choices, goals, how much effort is put forth to reach a goal, whether or not thought processes are negative or positive, the amount of stress they place on themselves, and their vulnerability to depression. Self-efficacy also influences the perceptions of successes and failures (Bandura, 1991, 2001).

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined:

1. American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model: a framework for school counseling programs developed in response to the education movement. It is based on four components: (1) define, (2) manage, (3) deliver, and (4) assess.

2. Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP): the accrediting body for counselor education programs.

3. Counselor Self-Efficacy: describes a counselor's beliefs regarding his ability to counsel clients (Kozina et al., 2010). For the purposes of this study, counselor's self-efficacy refers to the school counselor's belief regarding his ability to use a family systems approach to counsel students in the school setting.

4. Family Systems Perspective: a comprehensive and substantive understanding and foundation of family dynamics, systems thinking, interactional theories,

traditional and contemporary marriage and family therapy theories, and the cultural context in which they are embedded (AAMFT, III-B).

5. School Counseling: A special area of counseling activities performed in an educational setting by a trained professional in either public or private schools for grades pre-K-12 (ACA, 1997).

6. School Counselor: A state credentialed individual with specialized graduate level training in the activities and interventions needed in an educational setting. School counselors are trained in the fundamentals of counseling practice, including methods, theory, and human development as well as specialized training in the areas of advocacy, consultation, and coordination in order to fully implement a school-counseling program (ASCA, 2003, 2012).

7. Self-efficacy: refers to the belief of an individual about his ability to carry out specific actions necessary to achieve a goal (Bandura, 1997).

Delimitations

1. The sample is based on practicing school counselors working in public schools in the state of Texas, which creates difficulty in generalizing results to all school counselors.

2. The study particularly measures the perceptions of school counselors

3. The analysis is based on self-report.

4. Participation is voluntary and is generated electronically via an online survey.

Assumptions

The following assumptions are made:

1. The instruments used to collect data are valid and accurate in measuring school counselors' self-efficacy, perceptions of preparedness, competency, and perceptions of use of family systems approaches when counseling in a school setting.

2. Participants are honest in their response to survey questions, and responses are based on their individual experiences.

3. The methodology used is logical and utilizes an appropriate design consistent with the research questions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Professional School Counselor

Among the many issues facing modern-day school counselors, attempting to address the various developmental needs of all students from backgrounds that are culturally diverse may be one of the most challenging. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2018b), youths' educational experiences and academic achievement is related to the characteristics of the child's family. Data from 2016 (as cited in NCES, 2018b) showed that 10% of youths under the age of 18 lived in households without a parent who had completed high school. This percentage was higher for Hispanic children (26%), followed by Black children and Native children (10% each), and White children (4%). Among all youth, 27% lived in single parent households with only a mother (53% for Black youth), 8% only a father, and 19% of these families lived in poverty. Poverty results were higher among Black children and Native children (34% each), followed by Hispanic (28%) and Pacific Islander children (23%). Between 2000 and 2015, the percentage of White children, ages 5 to 17, decreased from 62 to 52%, Black students decreased from 15 to 14%, while the percentage of Hispanic students increased from 16 to 24%. In Fall 2015, Spanish was the home language of 3.7 million English Language Learners (ELL). The percentage of students identified as ELL constituted an average of 14% of the total public school enrollment in cities, 9% in suburban areas, 7% in towns, and 4% in rural areas. School enrollment in pre kindergarten through 12th grade is projected to increase by 3% between 2015 and 2027

from 50.4 million students to 52.1 million students. Texas is projected to have the largest

total public school enrollment in fall 2027, constituting a total of 6.1 million students

(NCES, 2018b). Implications of this data suggest public schools have become the melting

pot for diverse psychosocial, emotional, cultural and behavioral systems brought together

to receive an equitable education and become productive citizens of an ever-changing

society.

School counselors have been given the charge of addressing the needs of "all

students" in the areas of academic, career, and social/emotional development (ASCA,

2016). School counselors are skilled individuals charged with the tasks of providing

collaboration, leadership, and advocacy to promote counseling services. They provide

leadership to the school by assisting in the design and implementation of policies and

programs, as well as form collaborative relationships with key stakeholders critical to

student success.

Texas Administrative Code for School Counselor Certification

According to the rules and regulations established by the State Board for Educator

Certification under Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), school counselors

are to work with key stakeholders to ensure that "all students" receive access to equitable

educational resources and opportunities to succeed academically (ASCA, 2019a; SBEC,

2017). With this in mind, it is necessary for school counselors to consider all factors that

impact academic achievement of the students being served, including family and cultural

dynamics. SBEC establishes rules and requirements for school counselor certification,

preparation, standards, and implementation. In June 2017, the following changes were

accepted to Title 19 TAC Chapter 239, Subchapter A: Standard I.b. addresses the broad

knowledge base of the professional school counselor and suggests that within this

knowledge base the professional school counselor understands "how cultural factors and

group membership impact individual students" (SBEC, 2017, I.b.16). The professional

school counselor must also understand systems, from family dynamics to the school

environment (I.b.19). Standard II.c.11 and 12 address the role of the school counselor as

that of facilitator, helping to add to students' ability to reach their full potential by setting

and attaining educational, career, personal, and social goals. School counselors must also

participate in the development, monitoring, revision, and evaluation of a comprehensive

guidance program based on a unified counseling model for school counselors (SBEC,

2017, III.d). Lastly, Standard IV.e emphasizes the need for full inclusion to address the

unique needs of all students, and understand how family values, group membership, and

culture intersect.

American School Counselor Association

The ASCA developed the ASCA National Model: A Framework for School

Counseling Programs (2003) in order to help school counselors identify their roles and

expectations. This framework provides the tools with which school counselors and their

teams will design, coordinate, implement, manage, and evaluate their programs. It also

provides the framework for the program components, the role of the school counselor in

implementation, and underlying philosophies of leadership, advocacy, and systemic

change (ASCA, 2019a; Wilkerson et al., 2013). The national model dictates the role of

the professional school counselor, which is to assist in the academic, career, and

personal/social development of students and to ensure students are both college and

career ready upon graduation. There are four components included in the model for

creating and maintaining effective comprehensive programs: 1) define, 2) manage, 3) deliver, and 4) assess. Define provides the sets of standards that define the school counseling profession. Manage consists of the planning tools that guide the design and implementation of a school counseling program. Deliver is the utilization and organization of program resources and developmentally appropriate activities and services delineated and reflective of student needs. Assess helps to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program using results based data and intervention outcomes. Each of these components provides the tools needed to address the academic, career and personal/social needs of students (ASCA, 2019a).

Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs

Education programs approved by CACREP, leading to the certification of professional school counselors, are based on a shared group of knowledge and skills, which comprise the curricular experiences outlined in the program for school counselors. According to CACREP (2016) standards, students in approved school counseling programs must demonstrate knowledge in the areas of (a) foundations of school counseling, (b) contextual dimensions, and (c) knowledge and skills for the practice of school counseling. Although the CACREP standards are already defined by accreditation requirements, the manner in which programs may choose to meet those standards are up to program faculty and can be met in a variety of ways. There are 34 common core areas representative of the standards required of all entry-level counselor education graduates, and Section 2b is where "family" is first mentioned and then once more in Section 3h where school counselors are called to "critically examine familial problems" (CACREP, 2016).

The publication of a newly proposed standard regarding minimum credit requirements for a school counseling degree was approved, but has been postponed until 2023. (CACREP, 2016). Part of the newly released CACREP standards found in "The Academic Unit," Standard J., will now require 60 semester credit hours for all counseling specializations rather than the previous 48-credit hour requirement. However, CACREP does not specify how programs are to implement the 60 hours. Career counseling, college counseling and student affairs, and school counseling specialty areas currently require a minimum of 48 semester hours or 72-quarter hours (CACREP, 2016). The purpose of this designation by CACREP was to form unanimity among counseling specialties, so that all specialties (addictions counseling, career counseling, clinical mental health counseling, clinical rehabilitation counseling, college counseling, marriage counseling, family counseling, and school counseling) require the same number of credit hours. The CACREP standards function as general guidelines of best practices in instructing future counselors (Merlin et al., 2017). These standards appear to have support in school counseling, as suggested in a study by Holcomb-McCoy et al. (2002) where school counselors, on average, rated the CACREP school counseling standards as "highly" or "very highly" important to school counseling. School counseling makes up about 36% of all CACREP accredited programs, nearly 10% more than clinical mental health counseling programs (CACREP, 2016).

Perusse et al. (2001) conducted a national survey of 186 entry-level school-counseling students regarding credit hours, screening methods, faculty experiences, course content, and fieldwork requirements. The results of this study indicated that more than 90% of programs offered a core curriculum for all counseling students that included

the following courses: career and lifestyle development, theories of counseling, testing, group counseling, helping relationships, research methods, development across the lifespan, and multicultural counseling. The researchers suggested that although CACREP outlines the requirements regarding knowledge and skills for school counselors, the accrediting body does not endorse how curricular experiences are to be structured. Furthermore, the data showed that more than 50% of school counselor programs did not require a course in family counseling or a systems perspective, and only 9% of programs required a specialty course designed specifically for school counseling (Perusse et al., 2001). Perusse and Goodnough (2005) studied school counselor perceptions of graduate preparation programs, and found that elementary and secondary school counselors perceived parent and teacher collaboration to be important. The researchers suggested that school counselors recognize the need to collaborate with families, and concluded that coordination between parents and community members were placed high in rank, suggesting that school counselors may recognize the importance of a family systems perspective when working with school-aged students. These findings indicate the importance of school counseling educators incorporating a wide range of family systems approaches in school counseling programs (Paylo, 2011; Perusse & Goodnough, 2005).

Roles and Responsibilities of the School Counselor

Due to growing diversity in U.S. schools, it has become increasingly necessary to heighten sensitivity and awareness to cultural differences through continued transformations in educational programs, policies and procedures such as TAC, ASCA, CACREP, and numerous other educational reforms established to ensure educational equity and success of "all" students (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). The role of the school

counselor relies heavily on one's ability to connect the school counseling program to the overall mission of the school while considering one's role in the contribution to the educational experience and outcomes for "all" students (ASCA, 2003, 2012, 2016; Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Part of that responsibility includes identifying the unique school climate as perceived by members of the school's community and understanding the existing culture, in order to recognize the overall experience for the students as active participants in the school setting and be able to effectively provide support, hope, optimism, and academic success (Nassar-McMillan et al., 2009). According to ASCA, the role of the school counselor is to conduct both individual and group counseling, provide classroom guidance lessons, and a host of direct and indirect related services including referrals, consultation, and collaboration with teachers, parents, administrators and other educators. School counselors also offer responsive services in the areas of violence prevention, crisis intervention, and advocacy (ASCA, 2012, 2016; Chata & Loesch, 2007; Nassar-McMillan et al., 2009). Since the beginning of school counseling history, guidance and counseling services have continued to grow and evolve in an effort to meet the ever-changing demands of increased and diversifying student populations (Kraus, 1998).

Despite the changes in the ASCA model over the years in response to transforming the role of the school counselor, what is not apparent in the ASCA National model is evidence of the role school counselors play in working with family systems. However, according to ASCA's Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2019b), school counselors have a responsibility to both students and their families. Their primary obligation is to the student (ASCA, 2019, A.1.a), but they must also support the families

17

or guardians in obtaining outside services in the event long-term counseling is needed. School counselors must acknowledge the important role parents, guardians, and families play (ASCA, 2019, A.1.c.) as well as respect family values, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds (ASCA, 2019, A.1.f).

A child's family is the most important system of support. The school system then becomes the next most important system of support in helping to provide the necessary resources important to the student's overall development, and it may be the only contact for mental health assistance. School counselors are expected to consult and collaborate with families and community systems, yet many school counselor education programs do not require a family systems course (ASCA, 2019b; Paylo, 2011).

According to ASCA (2019b), 80% of the school counselor's time should be spent on direct and indirect services, but the counselor is responsible for prioritizing how those services are delivered. Due to role ambiguity and depending on school setting, direct counseling services may be the most underutilized service being provided in the school setting, which includes responsive services, those services designed to meet students' immediate needs and concerns (ASCA, 2019b; Collins, 2014).

School Counselor Competency

Competency is the ability to establish proficiency in a particular area of study, with the goal of assessing applicable knowledge and skill in a practice setting (Miller, et al., 2010). ACA (2014) provides guidance intended to inform the ethical practice of all professional counselors, and it has established that counselors should practice only within the scope of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials and appropriate professional experience

(C.2.a). ACA (2014) also deems it necessary to set forth that counselors practice in specialty areas new to them only after proper training and supervised experience (C.2.b.). For school counselors, ASCA has provided the framework and ethical standards for practice, which now reinforces the importance of family work within the school setting. The school counselor competencies are clear in articulating the understanding of the professional school counselor to be able to effectively collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and other key stakeholders in order to promote success of all students and to define system change and its role in a comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2019b). However, ASCA, like ACA, also reminds school counselors of the necessity to function only within the boundaries of individual professional competence (ASCA Code of Ethics, 2016, E.1.a). Collaboration with families may create an issue of competence if the school counselor has not received proper training or education in family systems perspectives. In order to preserve the standards of ethical practice when working with students and their families, additional training in family counseling must be pursued. School counselors should also seek out collaboration with someone who has a systems background (Bodenhorn, 2005).

School Counselor Self-Efficacy

Principles from Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory are used to determine the effects of self-efficacy on school counselors' beliefs about role success, and help better understand issues related to barriers used in the implementation of family systems perspectives within a comprehensive school-counseling program. Larson and Daniels (1998) suggested that although the correlation is minimal, counseling self-efficacy is positively related to performance.

The ASCA model and National Standards for School Counselors are written in such a way that allows counselors in differing environments to apply diverse strategies to accomplish the same goal (Bodenhorn, 2001). For instance, counselors at all levels may implement a program affecting peer relationships, but due to differences in age, development, and environment, programs need to be adapted to each level and type of environment (e.g., an urban high school, a rural middle school, and a suburban elementary school). Instead of identifying how individual counselors or a group of counselors might achieve outcomes, self-efficacy would reflect the person's confidence that he could achieve positive outcomes (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). Due to the ease of which the ASCA model lends itself to study self-efficacy, Bodenhorn (2001) was able to develop a self-efficacy scale for school counselors. The scale is not a measurement of how results are achieved, but is instead based on the idea that self-efficacy is measured by the confidence a person has in his ability to achieve results. One substantial finding from the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE) was that self-efficacy was determined to be higher among school counselors who were trained in using the ASCA model. School counselors with more experience and those who had teaching backgrounds also showed increased self-efficacy (Bodenhorn, 2001).

Larson and Daniels (1998) conducted an extensive literature review of 32 studies pertaining to counseling self-efficacy, and they found that counselor beliefs were the primary factor in determining effective action in terms of counseling. They also found that counselors reporting to have more experience were found to report higher levels of self-efficacy than those who had less experience. According to Larson (1998), counseling self-efficacy is thought to be primarily determined and modified through the counselor's

cognitive appraisal of four foundations: (1) mastery, (2) modeling, (3) social persuasion, and (4) affective arousal. Mastery is the success of seeing clients, while modeling is the act of seeing others actually perform and master a task as well as observing one's own successful counseling session via videotape. The act of the supervisor supporting, offering encouragement, and structuring learning in a way for the counselor to experience success with clients would be social persuasion, and affective arousal includes anxiety associated with seeing clients, especially for the beginning counselor. Social cognitive theory helps explain how supervisors can train counselors to be efficacious with clients (Larson, 1998). In similar literature related to counselor self-efficacy, the factors that seem to influence a person's efficacy have received general consensus. Those factors include personal perception of skill and ability, vicarious experiences, supervisor or peer persuasion, and level of anxiety (Bandura, 1977; Bodenhorn, 2001; Larson, 1998; Ross & Bruce, 2007). A person's perceived ability in goal attainment or mastery results in high self-efficacy compared to those who believe they are inadequate to achieve such a goal (Ross & Bruce, 2007). Seeing others actually perform and master a task allows one to view failures and successes played out through others in similar positions. Receiving motivation and encouragement from a peer or supervisor, or being able to provide such motivation can also lead to increased self-efficacy (Bryan & Griffin, 2010; Larson, 1998; Ross & Bruce, 2007).

Professional Development and Training Impact on Self-Efficacy

Kozina et al. (2010) conducted a study where counselors received training through an 8-week practicum course, and the relationship between training and counselor efficacy was measured. Results showed that training was associated with an increase in

counselors' self-efficacy. Likewise, Bryan and Griffin's (2010) multidimensional study of counselors' involvement in a school-family community partnership revealed that school counselors' training experience impacted their self-efficacy, which also impacted their perceptions of their role as a school counselor. The researchers concluded that the frequency of involvement in community partnerships and the amount of training provided in that specific area revealed a positive relationship indicating that intentional training does increase self-efficacy, thereby increasing the degree of participation in specific activities and program implementation.

Similarly, Ross and Bruce (2007) found that professional development training contributed to higher self-efficacy. Specifically, an increase in self-efficacy was seen after individuals attended professional development where opportunities for audience participation was allowed and vicarious experience through open discussion and group sharing may have resulted in reduction of anxiety and stress relief.

Much of the literature related to counselor self-efficacy pertains to the efficacy of counselors in the clinical or career setting. However, there are vast differences among clinical counselors, career counselors, community counselors, and school counselors. Career counselors have a concentration in career development theories with added training in the areas of mental and emotional health, substance abuse, and relationship counseling. Community counselors have also received training in the areas of mental and emotional health, substance abuse, and relationship counseling. School counselors, on the other hand, are expected to have some degree of skill in all of these areas despite a lack of formal training specific to each of these areas, as well as be advocates, educators and school leaders (ASCA, 2019a; CACREP, 2016). Supervision can offer support for

counselor self-efficacy. Although school counselors receive focused supervision during their practicum, many school counselors are not afforded the opportunity for continuing supervision beyond their initial training. Results of Daniels and Larson's (2001) study indicate that counseling self-efficacy can be increased as his or her supervisor acknowledges components of mastery of the counselor's performance.

A Family Systems Perspective in School Counseling

Martin (2017) examined the use of family systems approaches by school counselors to determine frequency of utilization of family systems strategies and to determine how prepared and competent school counselors felt in their use of these strategies. Of the 657 school counselors surveyed, less than half (39%) reported taking a course in family systems, but 87% believed a family systems course should be required. The school counselors in this study reported using family systems approaches daily or at a minimum several times per week. The more frequently the use of family systems was reported, the more important school counselors rated it and the more prepared and competent they felt. Sixty-five percent of counselors in this study were graduates of CACREP- accredited programs. These findings are consistent with Perusse et al. (2001) who found that over half of school counselors were not required to take a course in family counseling or a systems perspective, and only 9% of programs had a couple and family course specifically designed for school counseling students. Martin (2017) also reported that 79% of participants described barriers to using family systems approaches in the following areas: lack of knowledge, lack of parental involvement, and lack of administrative support. In a similar study, school counselors reported that barriers, such as too many counselor responsibilities and lack of time, frequently hindered their

involvement in school-family-community partnerships (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007).

A family systems perspective in the school setting is based on the idea that systems are built of smaller subunits, connected and interrelated, comprising one large system. Primary concepts of family systems theory include the idea that systems (e.g., the family, classroom, community) are made up of interconnected and interdependent parts (individuals) and that each component provides stimuli and is in turn stimulated by the other components in a pattern of recurring transactional sequences (Cox & Van Belsor, 2000).

According to a family systems perspective, problem behaviors in school children could result from challenging family interactions and hierarchical bonds rather than from individual psychopathology in the child (Widerman & Widerman, 1995). In order for school counselors to better understand students as their clients, they must investigate the relationship between students and their family dynamics by utilizing a family-systems approach and include this perspective in the school-counseling curriculum (Caffery et al., 2000; Paylo, 2011). The challenges students encounter in schools, as well as the challenges faced by their families (e.g., divorce, step-families, financial stress) require more inventive and efficient approaches to school counseling than what is currently maintained. One resolve is the collaboration between parents and the counseling program as related to their child's school experience integrated with a family systems element within the school setting (Caffery et al., 2000).

In a longitudinal study conducted by Spoth et al. (2008), parents of sixth grade students from 33 rural area schools in the Midwest were recruited to test a family

competency training intervention and the effects of family related factors on academic success. Spoth et al. hypothesized that an increase in parenting competencies would decrease substance related risky behaviors in youth and increase their school engagement. Participants were required to complete a set of seven sessions provided in weekly increments. Weekly sessions were composed of separate, concurrent training sessions for parents and children, followed by a family session in which parents and children jointly participated. Each of the sessions utilized skill-building activities, modeling, videotape, and other interventions and training specific to strengthening positive interactions among family members and strengthening focus on future goals for individuals in youth sessions. Four indicators used to measure parenting competency were (1) rules—parent explanation and consequences, (2) parental involvement of child in family activities, (3) anger management in parent-child relationship, and (4) parent communication. Skills learned by participants were practiced during the joint family sessions. Results showed that increased parenting competencies acquired through parental intervention decreased risk-taking behaviors in students and increased academic performance by way of positive effects on school engagement. Researchers argued that reinforcing students' engagement before critical developmental changes typically experienced during transition from middle to high school can have a positive impact on later academic success. The results of this research is indicative of the role school counselors may play in collaboration and facilitation of family socialization and competency training as a way to promote academic success of all students. School counselors should consider family and parenting skills training as an important avenue for fostering school-wide support for behavior

interventions and the positive development of students' academic success (ASCA 2019a;

Spoth et al., 2008).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine if school counselors' level of self-efficacy can be predicted from the use of family systems approaches in the school setting, and to determine if self-efficacy can be predicted from perceived importance and preparedness of family systems. In addition, this study examined personal and professional factors of school counselors that could be used to predict school counselors' self-efficacy. Research methods included a school counselor questionnaire consisting of modified questions adapted from the School Counselor Perspectives Questionnaire (SCP-FSPQ; Martin, 2013). Participants were recruited via a listserv provided by an educational service center in Texas. Data were collected via PsychData, an online survey tool. The following research questions were explored:

1. Do practicing school counselors perceive family systems approaches as an important area of pre-service training or professional development?

2. What are the most common issues addressed through school counseling?

3. What are the perceived barriers, if any, to using a family systems approach in school counseling?

4. What is the perceived self-efficacy of school counselors providing family systems interventions within the scope of school counseling?

5. What is the relationship between (a) number of years of experience as a school counselor, (b) number of hours of professional development/training related to family systems, (c) number of hours of pre-service training (training prior to

becoming a school counselor) related to family systems, and (d) self-efficacy of the school counselor?

6. Is there a significant relationship between self-efficacy, perceived level of preparedness, and perceived level of importance of using a family systems approach in school counseling?

7. Is there a significant relationship between self-efficacy and perceived barriers to using a family systems approach in school counseling?

Method

Participants

Participants for this study were recruited from a listserv of school counselors serving grades K-12 from 95 school districts in 17 counties across Texas. Approximately 200 school counselors were contacted directly through email via mass messaging. To meet criteria for participation in the study, participants had to be currently practicing school counselors in a public school setting at the elementary, middle school, junior high, high school, or K-12 campus level. There were no restrictions on age, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender.

A total of 120 practicing school counselors responded to the email requesting their participation in the study for a response rate of 60%. The majority of participants were female ($n = 110$, 92%). The mean age of the school counselors was 43.94 ($SD = 8.78$) years, with a range of 25 to 66 years. One school counselor did not provide their age on the survey. The greatest number of school counselors indicated their race/ethnicity as White ($n = 73$, 61%), with 39 (33%) reporting their race/ethnicity as Black. Eight participants (7%) were Hispanic, and 2 reported American Indian as their race/ethnicity.

Another 2 participants indicated "other" as their race/ethnicity but did not provide an explanation. As the number of responses was greater than the number of participants, it was assumed that some of the participants were multi-ethnic. These demographic characteristics can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

*Personal Characteristics of the Participants (*N *= 120)*

Personal Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	10	8.3
Female	110	91.7
Race/Ethnicity*		
American Indian	2	1.7
Asian	1	0.8
Black	39	32.5
Hispanic	8	6.7
White	73	60.8
Other	2	1.7

**Multiple responses, total number exceeds 120.

The participants reported having been a school counselor from 0 to 33 years ($M = 7.92$, $SD = 6.63$). The number of years as classroom teachers ranged from 0 to 40 years ($M = 16.56$, $SD = 8.41$). Details are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics: Experience in Education (*N *= 120)*

Years as	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Median	Range Min	Max
School Counselor	119	7.92	6.63	7	0	33
Classroom Teacher	120	16.56	8.41	16	0	40

The participants were asked to indicate their present school counseling positions, their degree program, and all professional licenses or certificates. The largest group of

participants indicated they were high school counselors ($n = 48$, 40%), followed by elementary school ($n = 34$, 28%), middle/junior high (n = 25, 21%), schools with kindergarten through 12th grade ($n = 10$, 8%), and intermediate schools ($n = 3$, 3%).

The majority of participants had completed a school counseling degree program ($n = 92$, 82%). A smaller number held degrees in education ($n = 26$, 23%), clinical mental health ($n = 13$, 12%), social work (n = 6, 5%), and marriage and family therapy ($n = 1$, 1%). The total number of responses exceeded the number of participants, indicating they had completed degree programs in more than one area.

The great majority held a school counselor certification ($n = 104$, 87%). Some were also licensed professional counselors ($n = 22$, 18%), had attained national certified counselor ($n = 10$, 8%) or nationally certified school counselor ($n = 6$, 5%) certification, or held other types of licenses or certificates ($n = 11$, 9%), including educational diagnostician, rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) certification, licensed specialist in school psychology, 6 licensed professional counselor interns, and 5 professional school counselor interns. Some participants had multiple licenses causing the number of responses to exceed the number of participants. Details can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Professional Characteristics of the Participants (N = 120)

Professional Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Present School Counseling Position		
Elementary	34	28.3
Intermediate	3	2.5
Middle/Junior High	25	20.9
High School	48	40.0
K-12th grade	10	8.3
Degree Program**		
Clinical mental health	13	11.6
Marriage and family therapy	1	0.9
School counseling	92	82.1
Social work	6	5.4
Education	26	23.2
Professional Licensure/Certificate**		
Licensed professional counselor	22	18.3
National certified counselor	10	8.3
National certified school counselor	6	5.0
School counselor certification license	104	86.7
No license or certification	5	4.2
Other types of licenses	11	9.2

**Multiple responses, total number exceeds 120.

Protection of Human Subjects

To ensure the protection of the participants in this study, I obtained approval to conduct research from the Texas Woman's University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subjects' research prior to any attempts to collect data. Ethical considerations were enforced through the delivery of informed consent and an acknowledgement of voluntary participation with the understanding participants could withdraw at anytime (see Appendix A). This information was disseminated via email (see Appendix B) along with a detailed explanation about the purpose of the study as well as the link to an anonymous online survey and questionnaire on Psych Data (see Appendix

C). The data collection tools used did not contain questions that could reveal the identity of individual respondents.

Instrumentation

Participants completed a 53-item online questionnaire, which consisted of a demographic survey, questions about training and certifications, perspectives on the use of family systems approaches in school counseling, and items from a previously validated school counselor questionnaire related to perceived preparedness, competence, and importance. The entire questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

Demographics, Training, and Family Systems Perspectives

In Section I of the questionnaire, consisting of 29 items, participants were asked to provide information on age, sex, race, current status of being a school counselor, number of years as a school counselor, school level/setting, type of degree program completed, and professional licensure and certifications. Participants were also asked about the most common student issues resulting in school counseling and their perspectives on the use of a family systems approach.

The School Counselor Questionnaire

Items from the SCP-FSPQ (Martin, 2013) were modified for the purpose of this study to measure the self-efficacy of school counselors' use of a family systems approach in school counseling in regards to (a) perceived level of competence in using a family systems approach in school counseling, (b) how prepared school counselors believe they are to implement a family systems approach in school counseling, (c) perceived level of importance of using a family systems approach in school counseling, and (d) any perceived barriers, if any, of using a family systems approach in school counseling.

Perceptions of Preparedness. Section II of the questionnaire consisted of 7 questions, items 3–36. These questions measured the participants' perceived level of preparedness for using a family systems approach in the school setting. This section was designed to gain perceptions on knowledge of concepts related to family systems and the ability to utilize family systems strategies and techniques. A 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly agree* to 5 = *strongly disagree*, was used. The Perceptions of Preparedness score was calculated for each participant using a mean score of the seven items.

Perceptions of Competence. Section III, items 3–43, measured participants' perceived level of competence, asking them to assess to what degree they think they are able to apply a family systems approach when working with students in the school counseling setting. For the purpose of this study, competence is the measure of self-efficacy. Items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly agree* to 5 = *strongly disagree*. The Perceptions of Competence score was calculated for each participant using a mean score of all seven items.

Perceptions of Importance. Section IV, items 44–50, asked participants to rate their perceived level of importance of using a family systems approach when conducting counseling in the school setting. Items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly agree* to 5 = *strongly disagree*. The Perceptions of Importance score was calculated for each participant using a mean score of these seven items.

Barriers to Implementation

Section V, item 51 was an open-ended response that asked participants to list perceived barriers they faced that could prevent them from using a family systems

approach in their role as school counselor. For item 52, participants were then asked to state which barrier listed was perceived to be the most significant one. Information was described based on themes and then categorized.

Procedures

An email explaining the purpose of the study (see Appendix B) and containing a link to the questionnaire (see Appendix C) was sent to the list of counselors provided on the school counselors' listserv from 95 school districts throughout the Northeast Texas area. Once participants clicked the link they were directed to read the informed consent for participation in the study, a description of the purpose of the study, and a description of voluntary participation (see Appendix A). They then acknowledged they had read the informed consent and understood participation was voluntary by clicking on a "Continue" button, which directed them to the school counselor questionnaire (see Appendix C). The average time to complete the survey was 17 minutes. A follow-up email (see Appendix D) was sent 4 weeks after the initial email, thanking participants for their participation and reminding those who had not yet responded to click on the link to complete the study. A final email (see Appendix E) was sent 2 weeks after the first follow-up email alerting participants of the closing deadline of the study and urging those who had not yet participated to go ahead and do so at that time.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine if school counselors' use of family systems approaches in the school setting impacts the level of self-efficacy, and to determine if self-efficacy can be predicted from perceived importance and preparedness in family systems. In addition, this study determined if personal and professional factors of school counselors could be used to predict school counselor's self-efficacy.

Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated for the participants' perspectives on and use of a family systems approach, the amount of preservice and professional training they had included on the use of family systems approaches, the number of annual trainings provided by their school or district, and the frequency with which they use a family systems approach in their school counseling work. Details can be found in Table 4.

The practicing school counselors were asked how frequently they used a family systems approach. Twenty-four (20.0%) reported daily, three (2.5%) several times a week, nine (7.5%) once a week. The greatest number ($n = 28$, 23.3%) reported they used a family systems approach once in a 6 to 9 week period and six (5.0%) reported they did not use a family systems approach.

When asked if they had a family systems course in their school counseling program, 74 (61.7%) indicated no and 11 (9.2%) reported their degree was not in school

counseling. The participants were asked where they learned about the family systems

approach. Their responses were varied, including research/reading ($n = 40$, 33.3%),

professional development conferences ($n = 40$, 33.3%), workshop/seminars (n = 31,

25.8%), family systems course work ($n = 22$, 18.3%), practicum/internship experience (n

$= 21$, 17.5%), and have not learned of family systems perspective ($n = 30$, 25.0%).

Table 4

*Frequency Distributions: Perspectives on the use of a Family Systems Approach (*N =
120)

Use of Family Systems Approach	Frequency	Percent
Frequency of using a family systems approach		
Daily	24	20.0
Several times a week	3	2.5
Once a week	9	7.5
Less than once a week	13	10.8
Once a month	11	9.2
Once in a 6-9 week period	28	23.3
Once a semester	8	6.7
Once a year	18	15.0
I do not use a family systems approach	6	5.0
Family systems course in school counseling program		
Yes	35	29.2
No	74	61.7
Degree not in school counseling	11	9.2
Where learned about family systems approach*		
Family systems course work	22	18.3
Workshop/Seminar	31	25.8
Practicum/Internship Experience	21	17.5
Post-degree supervision received from a systems	7	5.8
oriented supervisor	40	33.3
Research/reading	40	33.3
Professional development conferences	11	9.2
Professional consultations	30	25.0
Have not learned of family systems perspectives	12	10.0
Other learning opportunities		

* Multiple responses, percentages are more than 100%

The school counselors were asked to indicate the approximate number of hours of

professional development training they had received related to family systems

perspectives. Responses ranged from 0 to 600 hours ($M = 18.96$, $SD = 63.48$). The number of preservice training hours (prior to becoming a school counselor) relating to family systems perspectives in school counseling ranged from 0 to 1,500 hours ($M = 34.65$, $SD = 164.27$; see Table 5).

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics: Hours of Professional Development and Preservice Training for Family Systems Approaches

Hours	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Median	Range Min	Range Max
Professional Development	109	18.96	63.48	5.00	0	600
Preservice Training	108	34.65	164.22	0.50	0	1,500

Only 16 school counselors (13%) indicated that their school or district offered annual training on topics related to families and family systems (see Table 6).

Table 6

Frequency Distributions: School or School District Provides Annual Training on Topics Related to Families and Family Systems (N = 120)

School or School District Provides Annual Training on Topics Related to Families and Family Systems	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	13.3
No	104	68.3
Total	120	100.0

The participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which they used various family systems approaches with their students. Responses were scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Almost Daily*. The approach used most frequently was consulting with school staff about student behavior (M = 4.32, SD = .66), followed by counseling with students regarding personal and family concerns (M = 3.96, SD = .75) and counseling with students regarding family relationships (M = 3.75, SD =

.80). The least common approaches were providing small group counseling sessions on relationships or social skills related to family (M = 2.43, SD = 1.16) and small group sessions addressing family or personal issues (M = 2.49, SD = 1.13). Details can be found in Table 7.

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics: Frequency of use of Family Systems Approach in School (*N = *120)*

How often do you:	*M*	*SD*	Median	Range Min	Range Max
Counsel with students regarding personal/ family concerns	3.96	.75	4.00	1	5
Counsel with students regarding family relationships	3.75	.80	4.00	1	5
Counsel with students regarding crisis/emergency situations related to family	3.45	.82	3.00	1	5
Provide small groups counseling addressing relationship/social skills related to family	2.43	1.16	2.00	1	5
Provide small group counseling addressing family/personal issues	2.49	1.13	2.00	1	5
Consult with school staff concerning student behavior	4.32	.66	4.00	1	5
Consult with parents regarding child/adolescent developmental issues	3.37	.88	3.00	1	5
Coordinate referrals for students and families to community or education professionals	3.42	.75	3.50	1	5

Scale Reliabilities

Descriptive statistics and Cronbach alpha coefficients were obtained for each of the main variables. The ratings for each of the scaled variables—Perceptions of Preparedness, Perceptions of Competence, Perceptions of Importance, and Importance of Family Systems Training—were summed and then divided by the number of items in each scale to obtain mean scores. The rating scale ranged from 1 = *strongly agree* to 5 =

strongly disagree, with higher mean scores reflecting more positive perceptions. All of the scales had good internal consistency (see Table 8).

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach Alpha Coefficients: Perceptions of Family Systems Approach

Perceptions of Family Systems Approach	*N* of Items	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Range Min	Max	Alpha Coefficient
Perceptions of preparedness	7	95	3.59	.78	1.57	5.00	.91
Perceptions of competence	7	95	3.97	.58	2.00	5.00	.88
Perceptions of importance	7	95	3.93	.50	2.43	5.00	.80
Importance of family systems training	4	120	3.38	.57	1.00	4.00	.83

Main Analyses

Inferential statistics were used to analyze the data in relation to the main research questions, and the results are presented below.

Perceived Importance of Training on Family Systems Approaches

Research Question 1 asked if practicing school counselors perceive family systems approaches as an important area of pre-service training or professional development. Responses to items 15, 17, and 18 were summed and averaged to obtain a mean score for each participant. The school counselors were asked to rate the importance of using a family systems approach with their students. The questions were rated using a 4-point scale ranging from 1 not at all important to 4 very important. The mean score for the importance of using a family systems approach was 3.47 ($SD = .61$), with a range from 1 to 4 and a median of 4. The mean score for importance of using a family systems approach was 3.50 ($SD = .62$). The median score was 4, with a range from 1 to 4. The use of family systems approach in school settings had a mean of 3.16 ($SD = .75$), with a

median of 3 and a range from 1 to 4. The mean score for the importance of requiring family systems approach training for school counseling tracks ($M = 3.32$, $SD = .72$). The range of scores for this question was 3, with a range from 1 to 4. The importance of offering family systems approach in pre-service training had a mean of 3.31 ($SD = .68$), with a median of 3 and a range from 1 to 4. The school counselors had a mean of 3.47 ($SD = .67$) with a median of 4 and a range from 1 to 4 for the importance of offering a family systems approach in professional development. Results of these analyses are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics: Importance of Using Family Systems Approach

				Range	
How important is it to:	*M*	*SD*	Median	Min	Max
Use family systems approach	3.47	.61	4	1	4
Work with child and family	3.50	.62	4	1	4
Use family systems approach in school setting	3.16	.75	3	1	4
Require family systems approach training for school counseling track	3.32	.72	3	1	4
Be offered in pre-service trainings	3.31	.68	3	1	4
Be offered as professional development opportunities	3.47	.67	4	1	4

Common Issues Addressed Through School Counseling

Research Question 2 asked what are the most common issues addressed through school counseling. Participants were asked to list common issues with which they dealt as part of their responsibilities in their schools. Their responses were open-ended and they were asked to indicate as many as were relevant to answer the question.

Many of the student issues that school counselors addressed were related to mental health and relationships. The issues reported most frequently were conflict resolution ($n = 69$, 58%), followed by anxiety/depression ($n = 54$, 45%). Other common issues were suicidality, self-harm, crisis intervention, and trauma ($n = 53$, 44%), family support or loss ($n = 52$, 43%), academics and attendance issues ($n = 45$, 38%), college, career, and course planning ($n = 38$, 32%), bullying ($n = 34$, 28%), peer relationships and breakups ($n = 27$, 23%). A smaller number of school counselors reported seeing students for anger and aggression ($n = 12$, 10%), and mental health disorders ($n = 12$, 10%). Finally, a host of other issues that were reported by less than 10% of the participants included accountability, motivation, and teacher-student relationships. These results can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10

Frequency Distributions: Common Issues with Students

Common Issues with Students	Frequency*	%
Conflict Resolution/Socioemotional Support	69	57.5
Anxiety/Depression	54	45.0
Suicidality/Self-Harm/Crisis Intervention/Trauma	53	44.17
Family Support/Loss	52	43.3
Academics/Attendance	45	37.5
College and Career/Course Planning	38	31.7
Bullying/Behavior	34	28.3
Peer Relationships/Breakups	27	22.5
Anger/Aggression	12	10.0
Mental Health Disorders	12	10.0
Other (Accountability/Motivation/Teacher-Student Relationships)	34	28.3

*Multiple responses, number of responses exceeds the number of participants.

Perceived Barriers to Using a Family Systems Approach

Research Question 3 asked about the perceived barriers, if any, to using a family

systems approach in school counseling. Participants listed barriers to using a family

systems approach in their school counseling programs. Their open-ended responses were

coded to determine the most frequently selected barrier. The most frequently encountered

barrier or obstacle reported by school counselors was parent involvement or availability

($n = 31$, 26%), followed by parent/student willingness to participate in counseling ($n = $

23, 19%), and time constraint ($n = 15$, 13%). Less frequently reported barriers included

district and administration support, roles and responsibilities, training/experience,

language or cultural barriers, fear or lack of trust, limited resources and overall caseload

(see Table 11).

Table 11

Frequency Distributions: Barriers and Obstacles to Family Systems Approach

Barrier to Family Systems Approach	Frequency*	%
Parent Involvement/Availability	31	25.8
Parent/Student Willingness	23	19.2
Time Constraints	15	12.5
District/Administration Support	10	8.3
Roles & Responsibilities/Assigned Duties	9	7.5
Training/Experience	9	7.5
Language/Cultural Barriers	8	6.7
Fear/Lack Of Trust	7	5.8
Limited Resources/Caseload	6	5.0
Other	21	17.5

*Teachers provided multiple answers; therefore, the number of responses exceeded the

number of participants

School Counselor Self-Efficacy

Research Question 4 assessed the perceived self-efficacy of school counselors providing family systems interventions within the scope of school counseling.

Perceived self-efficacy was measured as the mean score for perceptions of competence. The mean score for self-efficacy was 3.97 (SD = .58, Range = 2.00 to 5.00), indicating that participants felt somewhat competent to deliver school counseling through a family systems approach. The items in this subscale are measured using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly agree* to 5 = *strongly disagree*, with higher scores indicating greater perceived competence.

Impact of Experience and Training on School Counselor Self-Efficacy

Research Question 5 assessed the relationship between number of years of experience as a school counselor, number of hours of professional development training related to family systems, number of hours of preservice/training (prior to becoming a school counselor) related to using family systems perspectives in school counseling, and self-efficacy of the school counselor? A multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine if self-efficacy can be predicted from the number of years of experience, number of hours of professional development/training related to family systems, and the number of hours of professional development/training related to using family systems approaches in school counseling. The model was not significant, $F(4, 80) = 2.05$, $p = .21$, $R2 = .02$, and none of the individual predictors were significant (ps > .05). Details can be found Table 12.

Table 12

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: Self-Efficacy

Independent Variables	Constant	b-Weight	SE_b	Beta	t-value	*p*
Hours of Professional Development for Family Systems	4.00	<.01	<.01	.19	1.62	.109
Hours of Preservice Training for Family Systems		<.01	<.01	.01	.12	.903
Years Certified School Counselor		.02	.01	.20	1.39	.167
Years Classroom Teacher		<-.01	.01	-.18	-1.32	.190
Multiple *R*	.26					
Adj. Multiple R^2	.02					
F Ratio	2.05					
DF	4, 80					
P	.213					

Impact of Preparedness and Perceived Importance of Family Systems Approaches on School Counselor Self-Efficacy

Research question 6 assessed the impact of perceived preparedness and perceived importance of using a family systems perspective in school counseling on school counselors' self-efficacy in using such an approach. A multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine if school counselors' perceptions of preparedness to use family systems approaches and their perceptions of the importance of family systems approaches could be used to predict perceived self-efficacy.

The model was significant, $F(4, 80) = 34.55$, $p < .001$, $R2 = .42$. Perceptions of preparedness was a significant predictor of self-efficacy, $\beta = .55$, $t(92) = 6.37$, $p < .001$), with higher levels of perceived preparedness predicting higher self-efficacy scores. Perceptions of importance was also a significant predictor, $\beta = .19$, $t(92) = 2.18$, $p = .03$),

with higher levels of perceived importance predicting higher self-efficacy scores. Details can be found in Table 13.

Table 13

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: Self-efficacy

Independent Variables	Constant	b-Weight	SE_b	Beta	*t*-value	*p*
Perceptions of Preparedness	1.63	.41	.06	.55	6.37	<.001
Perceptions of Importance		.22	.10	.19	2.18	.032

Multiple *R*	.66
Adj. Multiple R^2	.42
F Ratio	34.55
DF	4, 80
P	<.001

Impact of Perceived Barriers on School Counselor Self-Efficacy

Research Question 7 asked whether self-efficacy is related to perceived barriers to using a family systems approach in school counseling. The school counselors were asked to list all of the barriers or obstacles related to family systems approach that they had encountered in their work. The number of barriers or obstacles ranged from 0 to 6 with a mean of 1.25 ($SD = 1.37$). The number of barriers was used as the independent variable, with school counselors' scores for self-efficacy used as dependent variable in a simple linear regression analysis. The results of the simple linear regression analysis was not statistically significant, $R2adj = .02$, $F(1,92) = 2.98$, $p = .09$. Table 14 presents results of this analysis.

Table 14

Simple Linear Regression Analysis: Self-efficacy and Number of Barriers or Obstacles

Independent Variables	Constant	b-Weight	SE_b	Beta	t-value	p
Number of Barriers/Obstacles	3.84	.08	.04	.18	1.73	.088

Multiple *R*	.18
Adj. Multiple R^2	.02
F Ratio	2.98
DF	1, 92
P	.088

Participants were asked to identify the most significant barrier or obstacle to using family systems approach in their schools. Thirty-nine counselors did not provide a response to this question and were eliminated from this analysis. The participants were then divided into four groups based on their responses: (1) Barriers with parents and family, (2) Time constraints, (3) School-related barriers, and (4) Other barriers. Group status was used as the independent variable in a one-way ANOVA, with self-efficacy as the dependent variable. The results were not significant, $F(3, 77) = 1.04$, $p = .38$. Table 15 presents results of the one-way ANOVA, with descriptive statistics of the self-efficacy by most significant barrier included in Table 16.

Table 15

One-way Analysis of Variance: Self-efficacy by Most Significant Barrier to Family Systems Approach

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig	η^2
Between	1.07	3	.36	1.04	.380	.04
Within	26.47	77	.34			
Total	27.54	80				

Table 16

Descriptive Statistics: Self-efficacy by Most Significant Barrier to Family Systems Approach

Barrier	N	M	SD
Parent and Family	34	4.03	.64
Time Constraint	10	3.77	.32
School-Related	28	4.06	.61
Other	9	3.78	.47

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine if school counselors' use of family systems approaches in the school setting impacts the level of self-efficacy, and to determine if self-efficacy can be predicted from perceived importance and preparedness of family systems. In addition, this study determined if personal and professional factors of school counselors could be used to predict school counselor's self-efficacy. The predictor variables in this study were (a) number of years of experience as a school counselor, (b) number of hours of professional development training related to family systems, (c) number of hours of pre-service/training (prior to becoming a school counselor) related to using family systems approaches in school counseling. The outcome variable was school counselor self-efficacy. The results of this study can be beneficial in determining how to better train and prepare school counselors to be effective advocates. Results of this study can also be used to inform training, workshops, or professional development opportunities directly related to the use of family systems approaches in school counseling.

Demographics and Training

Although the type of education program participants attended were not collected in this study, it is necessary to note that education programs approved by CACREP, leading to the certification of professional school counselors, are based on a shared group of knowledge and skills, which comprise the curricular experiences outlined in the program for school counselors, and this would be an area of expansion for future studies.

The largest group of participants (40%) for this study indicated they were high school counselors, 82% of participants indicated they had completed school counseling degree programs, and 86% reported they had school counselor certifications. When asked if they had a family systems course in their school counseling program, 61% said no. When asked how important it was to require a family systems approach for a school counseling degree, 47% perceived it as somewhat important, and 44% indicated it was very important. Nonetheless, the actual number of hours of professional development and pre-service training varied widely among the participants. In an earlier study, Perusse and Goodnough (2005) explored perceptions of 568 school counselors in regards to graduate training preparation and found that school counselors recognized the importance of having a systems perspective. Participants from that study ranked consultation with parents and teachers within the top three of important graduate level content. Although this study does not break down the types of course offerings in programs attended by participants in the current study, 61% reveal they did not have a course in family systems, but did indicate they thought it was important to require a family systems approach as a part of obtaining a school counseling degree.

Professional development training hours ranged from 0 to 600, and pre-service training hours ranged from 0 to 1,500. The significance of these results is implicit in understanding the need for school counseling programs to design curriculum related specifically to the use of family systems approaches in school counseling, as well as including coursework in relational dynamics within the scope of family and school partnerships. Pre-service training hours appear to be vast based on this study, but more clearly defined hours in family coursework would be more useful. The same applies for

49

professional development, school districts as well as school conferences geared towards

school counselors need to ensure multiple pathways and training opportunities specific to

family systems approaches and school counselors' working with families in the school

setting.

Only 16 school counselors in the current study indicated that their school or

district provided annual training on topics related to families and family systems. These

findings align with Bodenhorn's (2005) summation, suggesting the need for school

counselors to be willing to seek additional training in the area of family systems or work

collaboratively with professionals who are already trained in this area. However, entities

responsible for providing the ethics, standards and framework guiding the practice of

school counselors recognize the importance of school counselors' ability to collaborate

with families, yet school counselors are not receiving sufficient training in order to foster

collaborative partnerships with families, thereby calling for a change in the way school

districts and school counseling programs assist in helping school counselors become

proficient in this area.

Perceived Importance of Training on Family Systems Approaches

Generally, the participants thought that pre-service training or professional

development for a family systems approach was important. Interestingly, more

participants (55%) perceived it as very important for family systems approaches to be

offered as professional development opportunities, and slightly less than half (49%)

elected that it was very important as a pre-service training offering. Less than half (44%)

thought it was important for a family systems approach to be required for a school

counseling degree track, and it was not a significant predictor of self-efficacy of school

counselor use of a family systems approach. Because pre-service training was not a

significant predictor of self-efficacy in this study, further research is needed to determine

the perceived benefit of school counselors who completed course work in family systems

approaches.

Common Issues Addressed Through School Counseling

School counselors have been given the charge of addressing the needs of "all

students" in the areas of academic, career and social/emotional development (ASCA,

2019a). Results indicated the most common issues school counselors dealt with were

related to mental health and relationships. According to the rules and regulations

established by the SBEC under Title 19 of TAC, school counselors are to complete 200

hours of continuing professional education for certificate renewal. Of those hours 25%

must be specific in the areas of mental health and substance abuse training. TAC does not

specify a particular standard for obtaining hours directly related to family systems or

collaboration with families. In this study, family dynamics were indicated in 43% of the

issues listed in the form of family support or family loss. This study did not provide an

opportunity to describe what family support being provided at the school counseling level

looked like, but themes provided were either loss of loved one, family grief, or separation

from family. School counselors are finding it necessary to adapt to new roles and

responsibilities (ASCA, 2019a; Martin, 2002), but coordination of family and school

systems may be impacted by beliefs, training, and overall experience in working to use a

family systems approach, according to research by Woody and Woody (1994). Perhaps

this is why family related issues are not listed as the main concern for the school

counselors who participated in this study. According to Bodenhorn (2005), collaboration

with families may create an issue of competence if the school counselor has not received proper training or education in family systems approaches. In order to preserve the standards of ethical practice when working with students and their families, additional training in family counseling is necessary. The results of this research question indicate school counselors are seeing issues relating to family dynamics and this data can help support the need for school districts and counselor educators or CEU providers to offer training relating to family dynamics.

Perceived Barriers to Using a Family Systems Approach

The biggest barrier for school counselors to using a family systems approach was parent involvement and availability (25%), with one fifth of school counselors indicating that actual willingness of the student and the parent was also a barrier. It is unclear whether they were referring to willingness of the student and parent to work together in the school counseling setting or willingness of the student and/or parent to work directly with the school counselor. Since this study did not determine the definition or specifics of "parent involvement" further research is needed in this area.

According to ASCA (2003, 2012, 2016, 2019a), school counselors are charged with providing collaboration, leadership, and advocacy to promote counseling services as well as assist in forming collaborative relationships with key stakeholders critical to student success. Professionals such as teachers and school counselors must have a thorough understanding of the various barriers to parental involvement. They must also have a good knowledge of how to improve parental involvement in schools (Hornby, 2011). Such knowledge and skills are gained through adequate training accessed through certification/licensure programs and provided through in-service opportunities provided

52

by school districts. Although not a main barrier, 8% of the participants indicated district

and administrative support as a barrier, in addition to roles/responsibilities and other

assigned duties. In the current study, school counselors were not asked about job

performance, but Larson and Daniels (1998) suggested that counseling self-efficacy is

positively related to performance. If this is so, an expansion of this study to include

perceived ability to do their job as it relates to these barriers will add to a better

understanding of school counselor self-efficacy.

School Counselor Self-Efficacy

Bodenhorn (2001) developed a self-efficacy scale for school counselors and found

that self-efficacy was determined to be higher among school counselors who were trained

and had more experience. The scale is not a measurement of how results are achieved,

but is instead based on the idea that self-efficacy is measured by the confidence a person

has in his or her ability to achieve results. Results of the current study indicate

participants generally felt somewhat competent to deliver school counseling through use

of a family systems approach. So, despite the lack of coursework and pre-service training,

counselor beliefs about the importance of using a family systems approach may be the

contributing factor for higher perceived self-efficacy in the current study, which aligns

with research conducted by Larson and Daniels (1998) where findings showed that

counselor beliefs were the primary factor in determining effective action in terms of

counseling. In other words, if school counselors believe that their work with families is

important, as indicated in this current study, they are more likely to enlist approaches that

aid in forming collaborative relationships and partnerships with families. School

counselors have been provided a framework as a guideline for roles and responsibilities,

as well as a guide for maintaining good ethical practices within the field of school counseling, which reinforces the importance of family work within the school setting (ASCA, 2019a).

Impact of Experience and Training on School Counselor Self-Efficacy

Research shows that school counselors' training experience does impact their self-efficacy, which in turn impacts their perceptions of their roles as a school counselor. According to Bodenhorn (2001), school counselors with more experience and those who had teaching backgrounds showed higher self-efficacy. However, in the current study, neither years of experience, amount of professional development training, or amount of pre-service training related to using a family systems approach were statistically significant predictors of perceptions of self-efficacy. This study does not lend itself to helping understand where school counselors' perspectives may fall regarding how they choose to engage students and their families, but could contribute to the misalignment of the findings in this research compared to previous research that suggest training is a predictive factor in determining self-efficacy.

Although findings in the current study do not align with previous research suggesting that the more years of experience and hours of training yield better self-efficacy results (Bodenhorn, 2005, 2001; Collins, 2014), it does predicate the fact that other factors do contribute to self-efficacy. In similar literature related to counselor self-efficacy, the factors that seem to influence a person's efficacy include personal perception of skill and ability, vicarious experiences, supervisor or peer persuasion, and level of anxiety (Bandura, 1977; Bodenhorn, 2001; Larson, 1998; Ross & Bruce, 2007). This warrants further research in the areas of school counselors' experiences in working

with families as a system in the school counseling setting. ASCA (2019a) proposes that school, family, and community partnerships have increased the access of students, and research supports that school counselors view their involvement in these partnerships to be important (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). It might be inferred that the more knowledgeable school counselors' are in the use of family systems approaches, the more they may ascribe to the importance of using such approaches, thus becoming more efficacious.

Impact of Preparedness and Perceived Importance of Family Systems Approaches on School Counselor Self-Efficacy

In this study, both perceptions of preparedness and importance of family systems approaches significantly impacted school counselors' self-efficacy. The more prepared school counselors felt, and the more important they perceived the family systems approach to be, the higher their level of self-efficacy in relation to delivering school counseling using a family systems approach. Here, participants indicated they learned about family systems approaches through research and reading (33%) and professional development conferences (33%). Since the current research also indicates the majority of school counselors say these trainings were not provided through their school district and many did not take courses specific to family systems approaches, it still appears school counselors do understand the value of preparing themselves to do the work outlined in the ASCA guidelines by seeking out trainings on their own as suggested by Bodenhorn (2005). Bodenhorn suggests that in order to preserve the standards of ethical practice when working with students and their families, additional training in family counseling must be pursued. School counselors should also seek out collaboration with someone

who has a systems background (Bodenhorn, 2005). The current study does not depict whether or not these practicing school counselors are indeed collaborating with professionals with family systems backgrounds, but a push to incorporate such collaborations would increase perceptions of preparedness, thus increasing school counselors' self-efficacy in using family systems approaches to engage families at various levels. According to Ross and Bruce (2007), a person's perceived ability in goal attainment or mastery results in high self-efficacy compared to those who believe they are inadequate to achieve such a goal.

Impact of Perceived Barriers on School Counselor Self-Efficacy

School counselors listed between 0 and 6 barriers to using a family systems approach, with the average number of barriers being fairly low ($M = 1.25$). The number of barriers did not significantly impact the counselors' self-efficacy. Similarly, the type of barrier listed also did not predict self-efficacy. However, 39 participants did not respond to the question, and the low variability in the number of barriers listed likely reduced the statistical power of the analysis.

<div align="center">

Implications for School Counselors

</div>

The school counselor competencies are clear in articulating the understanding of the professional school counselor to be able to effectively collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and other key stakeholders in order to promote success of all students and to define system change and its role in a comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2003, 2012, 2016, 2019a). However, little guidance is provided on how to be collaborative or how to form appropriate partnerships with families. The SBEC under Title 19 of the TAC provides specific guidelines for obtaining continuing

professional education hours in various areas for school counselors, a total of 11 areas for 50 hours of specified training. There is not one area of clear designation for obtaining CPE hours directly related to family systems approaches or family collaboration and partnerships. The significance of the results in this study is implicit in understanding the need for school counseling programs to design not only curriculum and pre-service training related specifically to the use of family systems approaches in school counseling, but to include post-service training specific to family relational dynamics within the scope of forging collaboration and partnerships between school and families. Results can be used to inform the type of curriculum, coursework and training needed to help school counselors achieve a level of preparedness necessary to feel more capable to work with families in the school setting.

In this study, family dynamics were indicated in 43% of the issues listed but themes provided were either loss of loved one, family grief, or separation from family. According to TAC, the professional school counselor must also understand systems, from family dynamics to the school environment (SBEC, 2017, I.b.19). Further research is needed where family dynamics or family systems are clearly defined. By understanding family systems and being informed in family systems approaches, school counselors will be better able to address the unique needs of all students, and understand how family values, group membership, and culture intersect (SBEC, 2017, IV.e) by providing more effective interventions.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Data for the current study were collected via an online survey, which may have resulted in a reduction of responses and selection bias. In addition, participants were

recruited through a listserv, and it is unknown how often the listserv is updated with new and active emails and whether or not all emails were working emails. Only 120 participant surveys were completed, which could have impacted the statistical power of the analyses.

Future research into whether the variation in methods of learning family systems approaches impacts perceptions of preparedness and competence is recommended. Further research should also explore perceptions of preparedness from school counselors who have taken courses specific to a family systems approach versus those who have not as well as looking at perceptions of preparedness and competence of practicing school counselors who only hold a school counselor certification without an additional license or certification, as this impacts the type of training and number of training hours reported. Results of such study might provide a better understanding of the perceived benefits of having pre-service training related to family systems, and thus inform the types of coursework or post-service training to be offered. Lastly, a qualitative study investigating school counselor application of family systems approaches to collaborate and form partnerships with family would help highlight areas of need as well as impact. While much of the research already supports the usefulness of family collaboration and family-school partnerships, it is unclear how to practically implement these approaches at the school counseling level.

Conclusion

The findings in this study can be used to expand the work of previous literature in the area of school counselor self-efficacy in using a family systems approach in the school setting. This investigation revealed that school counselors' perceptions of

preparedness and perceived importance of using a family systems approach significantly impacted their self-efficacy in using such an approach, while number of years of experience, number of hours of professional development/training related to family systems approaches and barriers were not predictors of self-efficacy in this study.

As research shows, the roles of the school counselors are ever changing, and literature reveals that those changes are in the direction of a more systems oriented program. However, the reality remains that the lack of knowledge or training in family systems approaches could be the crux holding school counselors back from being effective change agents as systems thinkers (Perusse et al., 2001). Preparation for establishing effective and progressive relationships with families should be a top priority for school counselors, especially since they have been deemed necessary change agents within the school system. However, school counselors may lack knowledge of family systems and functioning in performing necessary duties in establishing effective and efficient collaboration regarding family dynamics. For this reason there is a need for a call to action for counselor educators to broaden their scope of course offerings and training related to family counseling, family systems, family dynamics and collaboration in an effort to better prepare school counselors to heed the call of their ever-changing roles and responsibilities.

REFERENCES

American Counseling Association. (1997). *ACA governing council minutes*.

    https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/governing-council-minutes/1997-

    june-3.pdf

American Counseling Association. (2014). *2014 ACA code of ethics*.

    https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2014-

    code-of-ethics-finaladdress.pdf

American School Counselor Association. (2003). The ASCA national model: A

    framework for school counseling programs (executive summary). *Professional*

    School Counseling, 6(*3*), 165–168.

American School Counselor Association. (2012). *ASCA national model*.

    https://www.schoolcounselor.org/About-School-Counseling/ASCA-National-

    Model-for-School-Counseling-Programs

American School Counselor Association. (2016). *ASCA national model: A framework for*

    school counseling programs (3rd ed).

American School Counselor Association. (2016). *ASCA Ethical Standards for School*

    Counselors. Retrieved September 8, 2021,

    https://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/f041cbd0-7004-47a5-ba01-

    3a5d657c6743/Ethical-Standards.pdf

American School Counselor Association. (2016). *ASCA national model*.

    https://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/ee8b2e1b-d021-4575-982c-

    c84402cb2cd2/Role-Statement.pdf

American School Counselor Association. (2016). *2016 ASCA code of ethics for school counselors*. https://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/f041cbd0-7004-47a5-ba01-3a5d657c6743/Ethical-Standards.pdf

American School Counselor Association. (2019a). *ASCA national model*. http://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/ee8b2e1b-d021-4575-982c-c84402cb2cd2/Role-Statement.pdf

American School Counselor Association. (2019b). *ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies*. https://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/a8d59c2c-51de-4ec3-a565-a3235f3b93c3/SC-Competencies.pdf

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84(*2*), 191–215.

Bandura, A. (1991). Social cognitive theory of self-regulation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *50*, 248–287.

Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy. *Harvard Mental Health Letter*, *13*(9), 4–6.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Reviews Psychology*, *52*, 1–26.

Bodenhorn, N. (2001). *Development of the school counselor self-efficacy scale* (3009089) [Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. https://ezp.twu.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.

Bodenhorn, N. (2005). American School Counselor Association ethical code changes relevant to family work. *The Family Journal*, *13*, 316–320.

Bodenhorn, N., & Skaggs, G. (2005). Development of the school counselor self-efficacy scale. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, *38*, 14–28.

Bryan, J. A., & Griffin, D. (2010). A multidimensional study of school-family-community partnership involvement: School, school counselor, and training factors. *Professional School Counseling*, *14*, 75–86.

Bryan, J., & Holcomb-McCoy, C. (2004). School counselors' perceptions of their involvement on school-family-community partnerships. *Professional School Counseling*, *7*, 162–171.

Bussey, K., & Badura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation. *Psychological Review*, 106(*4*), 676–713.

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs. (2016). *2016 CACREP*. https://www.cacrep.org

Caffery, T., Erdman, P., & Cook, D. (2000). Two systems/one client: Bringing families and schools together. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, *8*(2), 154–160.

Chata, C., & Loesch, L. (2007). Future school principals' views of the roles of professional school counselors. *Professional School Counseling*, *11*(1), 35–41.

Christenson, S. L. (2004). The family-school partnership: An opportunity to promote the learning competence of all students. *The School Psychology Review*, *33*, 83–104.

Collins, T. P. (2014). Addressing mental health needs in our schools: Supporting the role of school counselors. *The Professional School Counselor*, *4*(5), 413–416.

Cox, L., & Van Belsor, R. (2000). Use of the collaborative drawing technique in school

    counseling practicum: An illustration of family systems. *Counselor Education*

    and Supervision, *40*(2), 141–152.

Daniels, J. A., & Larson, L. M. (2001). The impact of performance feedback on

    counseling self-efficacy and counselor anxiety. *Counselor Education and*

    Supervision, *41*, 120–30.

Grusec, J. E. (1992). Social learning theory and developmental psychology: The legacies

    of Robert Sears and Albert Bandura. *Developmental Psychology*, *28*(5), 776–786.

Holcomb-McCoy, C., Bryan, J., & Rahill, S. (2002). Importance of the CACREP school

    counseling standard: School counselors' perceptions. *Professional School*

    Counseling, *6*(2), 112–119.

Hornby, G. (2011). *Parental Involvement in Childhood Education: building effective*

    school family partnerships. Springer.

Kozina, K., Grabovari, N., De Stefano, J., & Drapeau, M. (2010). Measuring changes in

    counselor self-efficacy: Further validation and implication for training and

    supervision. *The Clinical Supervisor*, *29*, 117–127.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/07325223.2010.517483

Kraus, I. (1998). A fresh look at school counseling: A family-systems approach.

    Professional School Counseling, *1*(4), 12–17.

LaMorte, W. W. (2016). *Behavioral change models*. Boston University Medical Campus.

    http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/MPH-Modules/SB/BehavioralChangeTheories/Be

    havioralChangeTheories5.html

Larson, L. M. (1998). The social cognitive model of counselor training. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *26*, 219–273.

Larson, L. M., & Daniels, J. A. (1998). Review of the counseling self-efficacy literature. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *26*, 179–218.

Martin, J. P. (2002). Transforming school counseling: A national perspective. *Theory into Practice*, *41*(3), 148–153.

Martin, D. (2013). *Factors Associated With School Counselors' Use of a Family Systems Perspective*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Martin, D. (2017). School counselors' perceptions of family systems perspectives. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, *25*(3), 271–277.

Merlin, C., Pagano, T., George. A., Zanone, C., & Newman, B. (2017). Moving beyond debate: Support for CACREP's standard requiring 60 credit hours for school counseling programs. *Professional Counselor*, *7*(1), 76–88. https://doi.org/10.15241/cm.7.1.76

Miller, J., Todahl, J., & Platt, J. (2010). The core competency movement in marriage and family therapy: Key considerations from other disciplines. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *36*(1), 59–70.

Nassar-McMillian, S., Karvonen, M., Perez, T., & Abrams, L. (2009). Identity development and school climate: The role of the school counselor. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development*, *48*, 195–214.

National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences. (2018a). *The condition of education 2018*. U.S. Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018144.pdf

National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences. (2018b). *Stats in brief: High school students' views on who influences their thinking about education and careers*. U.S. Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018088.pdf

Paisley, P. O., & Hayes, R. L. (2003). School counseling in the academic domain: Transformations in preparation and practice. *Professional School Counseling*, *6*(3), 198–204.

Pajares, F., & Schunk, D. H. (2002). Self and self-belief in psychology and education: An historical perspective. In J. Aronson (Ed.), *Improving academic achievement*. Academic Press.

Paylo, M. J. (2011). Preparing school counseling students to aid families: Integrating a family systems perspective. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, *19*(2), 140–146.

Perusse, R., & Goodnough, G. E. (2005). Elementary and secondary school counselors' perceptions of graduate preparation programs: A national study. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, *45*, 109–118.

Perusse, R., Goodnough, G. E., & Noel, C. J. (2001). A national study of school counselor preparation programs: Screening methods, faculty experiences, curricular content, and fieldwork requirements. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, *40*, 252–262.

Ross, J., & Bruce, C. (2007). Professional development effects on teacher efficacy: Results of randomized field trial. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *101*, 50–60.

Simon, S. D., & Pajares, F. (1999). *From neo-behaviorism to social constructivism; The paradigmatic non evolution of Albert Bandura* [Master's thesis]. www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/simon.PDF

Spoth, R., Randall, K. G., & Shin, C. (2008). Increasing school success through partnership-based family competency training: Experimental study of long-term outcomes. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23(*1*), 70–89.

State Board for Educator Certification. (2017). *Discussion of proposed amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 239 Student Services Certificates, Subchapter A and C*. TEA. http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/sbecrules/tac/chapter239/ch239a.pdf

Stinchfield, T., & Zyromski, B. (2010). A training model for school, family, and community collaboration. *The Family Journal*, 18(*3*), 263–268.

Terry, L. (2002). Family counseling in the schools: A graduate course. *The Family Journal*, *10*, 419–428.

Terry, S. (2002). The relationship of school climate factors to counselor self-efficacy. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *70*, 487–498.

Widerman, J. L., & Widerman, E. (1995). Family systems-oriented school counseling. *The School Counselor*, *43*(1), 66–73. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23901430

Wilkerson, K., Perusse, R., & Hughes, A. (2013). Comprehensive school counseling programs and student achievement outcomes: A comparative analysis of RAMP

versus Non-RAMP schools. *Professional School Counseling*, *16*(3), 172–184.

https://doi.org/10.11777/2156759x1701600302

Woody, R. H., & Woody, J. K. (1994). The fourth revolution: Family systems in the

schools. *The Family Journal*, *2*(1), 19–26.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480794021004

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: Self-Efficacy of School Counselors use of Family Systems Perspectives in the School Setting

Investigator: Ebony Morrow, M.S..(281) 757-1726

Advisor: Brigitte Vittrup, Ph.D..(940) 898-2624

<u>Summary and Key Information about the Study</u>

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Ebony Morrow, a doctoral student at Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. The purpose of the study is to determine how often family systems approaches are used by school counselors, what training school counselors obtained, which barriers exist, and the level of self-efficacy of school counselors in regard to use of family systems approaches in the school setting. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to refuse or discontinue participation at any time.

<u>Research Procedures</u>

Research will be conducted via an on-line survey, which participants can complete anonymously in the privacy of their home or chosen location. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

<u>Potential Risks</u>

The risks associated with this study are minimal. Some participants may feel discomfort due to the questions asked, because they are work related. You may choose not to answer any questions with which you feel uncomfortable, and are free to discontinue participation at any time. Another possible risk involves loss of confidentiality. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law. Information entered into the survey will not be shared beyond the purposes and intent for this study, and responses from individual participants will not be identified.

If you experience any problems while participating in this study, please contact the researchers whose contact information is listed above. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen as a result of your participation.

<u>Participation and Benefit</u>

Participation in this study is solely voluntary and consent to participate may be withdrawn at any time. Your participation will add to the body of knowledge in the field of school counseling.

Questions Regarding the Study

If you have questions about this research study you may contact the research investigator or advisor. Contact information has been provided at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or in the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at (940) 898-3378 or via email at IRB@twu.edu.

Clicking on the "Continue" button below indicates your consent to participate in this study.

APPENDIX B

The Initial Participant Email

Hello,

My name is Ebony Morrow, and I am a Doctoral Candidate at Texas Woman's University in Denton, TX. Under the advisement of Dr. Brigitte Vitrrup, I am currently conducting a study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy. I am writing to ask for your voluntary participation in a study examining the self-efficacy of practicing school counselors and the relationship to using a family systems approach in the school setting. I also aim to explore school counselor perceptions as it relates to preparedness, competence, and importance of use of family systems perspectives.

As a practicing professional school counselor, I am well aware of the time constraints inherent to the life of school counselors. Therefore, the process for this study has been made simple and should require no more than 20 minutes to complete. Please click on the link provided on the attached page describing the details of the study and explaining informed consent. Directions for answering the School Counselor Questionnaire are contained at the beginning of the first page of the site. If you would like the results of the study emailed to you, please contact the primary researcher at EMorrow1@twu.edu.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your current employment. No identifying information will be collected, and your individual answers will not be shared with your school or district administrators. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all Internet transactions. However, the data will be housed on PsychData, which is a secure survey site.

Thank You,

Ebony Morrow, M.S.

Marriage and Family Therapy
Doctoral Candidate
Texas Woman's University

APPENDIX C

The School Counselor Questionnaire

Section I - Demographics and Training Information:

1. **Age:** _____

2. **Gender:**
   1. Male
   2. Female

3. **Race/Ethnicity:** (Check all that apply)
   1. American Indian or Alaska Native
   2. Asian or Island Pacific
   3. Biracial
   4. Black or African American
   5. Hispanic or Latin American
   6. White or Caucasian
   7. Other

4. **I am currently a practicing certified school counselor:**
   1. Yes
   2. No

5. **Total number of years in education** _____
   a.) practicing as a certified school counselor? _____
   b.) working as a classroom teacher/ educator? _____

6. **Which best describes your present school counseling position?**
   1. Elementary
   2. Intermediate
   3. Middle
   4. Junior High
   5. High School
   6. K-12

7. **As a school counselor, which student issues do you deal with most often?** Please make a list:

8. What type of degree program did you graduate from?
   1. Clinical Mental Health
   2. Marriage and Family Therapy
   3. School Counseling
   4. Social Work
   5. Education

9. Do you hold a professional license and/or certification? (select all that apply)
   1. Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)
   2. Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)
   3. Licensed Clinical Social Work (LCSW)
   4. Licensed Psychologist
   5. National Certified Counselor (NCC)
   6. National Certified School Counselor (NCSC)
   7. Registered Play Therapist
   8. School Counseling Certification/License
   9. Other (write in Licensure or certification) _____
   10. None

10. How important do you think it is to use a family systems approach in school counseling?
   1. Not important at all
   2. Not too important
   3. Somewhat important
   4. Very important

11. How important is it for school counselors to make a apecific effort to work with both the child and the family within the school setting?
   1. Not important at all
   2. Not too important
   3. Somewhat important
   4. Very important

12. How important is it for YOU to use family systems approaches when working with children in the school setting?

1. Not important at all
2. Not too important
3. Somewhat important
4. Very important

13. How often do you use a family systems approach when working with children in the school setting?
1. Daily
2. Several times a week
3. Once a week
4. Less than once a week
5. Once a month
6. Once in a 6-9week period
7. Once a semester
8. Once a year
9. I do not use a family systems approach

14. Was a course in family systems a part of your course requirement in your school-counseling program?
1. Yes
2. No
3. My degree is not is school counseling

15. How important is it for a family systems course to be required for the school counseling degree track?
1. Not important at all
2. Not too important
3. Somewhat important
4. Very important

16. Have you taken the opportunity to learn about family systems approaches by any of the following means: (select all that apply)
1. Family Systems Course Work
2. Workshop/Seminar
3. Practicum/Internship Experience
4. Post-Degree Supervision received from a systems oriented supervisor
5. Research/Reading

6.   Professional Development Conferences
7.   Professional Consultations
8.   Other
9.   I have not learned of family systems perspectives

17. How important is it for family systems approaches to be offered in pre-service trainings?
1.   Not important at all
2.   Not too important
3.   Somewhat important
4.   Very important

18. How important is it for family systems approaches to be offered as professional development opportunities?
1.   Not important at all
2.   Not too important
3.   Somewhat important
4.   Very important

19. Approximately, how many hours of professional development/training did you receive relating to family systems perspectives? (This includes webinars, professional development conferences including but not limited to TCA, ACA, & ASCA, hours of research/study completed to become more competent in the area of family systems, etc.) _____

20. Approximately, how many hours of preservice training (prior to becoming a school counselor (i.e. grad school, internships, conferences,etc.) did you receive relating to family systems perspectives in school counseling? (This includes webinars, professional development conferences including but not limited to TCA, ACA, & ASCA, hours of research/study completed to become more competent in the area of family systems, etc.) _____

21. Does your school or district provide annual training on topics related to families and family systems?
1.   Yes
2.   No

22. How often do you counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns?
1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Almost Daily

23. How often do you counsel with students regarding family relationships?
1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Almost Daily

24. How often do you counsel with students regarding crisis/emergency situations related to family?
1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Almost Daily

25. How often do you provide small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills related to family?
1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Almost Daily

26. How often do you provide small group counseling addressing family/personal issues (divorce, substance use, family violence, etc.)?
1. Never

2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Almost Daily

27. How often do you consult with school staff concerning student behavior?
1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Almost Daily

28. How often do you consult with parents regarding child/adolescent developmental issues?
1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Almost Daily

29. How often do you coordinate referrals for students and families to community or education professionals (mental health, speech, medical, etc.)?
1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Almost Daily

Section II - Perceptions of Preparedness: How well prepared do you believe you are to use a family systems approach when working with students in the school counseling setting?

I believe I am prepared to:

30. Assess family roles when working with the student and their family

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

31. Clearly structure or direct appropriate interactions among family members
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Unsure
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

32. Gather and use family history when conceptualizing a case
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Unsure
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

33. Assess spoken and unspoken rules when conceptualizing family dynamics
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Unsure
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

34. Help students and parents establish appropriate boundaries
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Unsure
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

35. Utilize the technique of reframing when conducting counseling

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

36. Utilize genograms when conducting counseling
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Unsure
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

Section III - Perceptions of Competence: How competent do you believe you are to understand a family systems approach when working with students in the school counseling setting?

I believe I am competent to:

37. Understand family systems theory
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Unsure
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

38. Understand family development and family life cycle
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Unsure
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

39. Recognize family behavioral patterns
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Unsure
   4. Disagree

5.   Strongly disagree

40. Conceptualize how gender, culture, and class impact a student
1.   Strongly agree
2.   Agree
3.   Unsure
4.   Disagree
5.   Strongly disagree

41. Articulate systemic concepts and approaches when conceptualizing students' problems
1.   Strongly agree
2.   Agree
3.   Unsure
4.   Disagree
5.   Strongly disagree

42. Recognize family hierarchies in conceptualizing a case
1.   Strongly agree
2.   Agree
3.   Unsure
4.   Disagree
5.   Strongly disagree

43. Understand the connection between students' behavior exhibited at home and at school
1.   Strongly agree
2.   Agree
3.   Unsure
4.   Disagree
5.   Strongly disagree

Section IV - Perceptions of Importance: How important do you believe it is to facilitate a family systems approach when working with students in the school counseling setting?

I believe it is important to:

44. Utilize family systems interventions and techniques
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

45. Involve the family in counseling when working with students in the school setting
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

46. Explore patterns in the family history when conceptualizing student issues within the counseling setting
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

47. Account for the impact of family interaction when conceptualizing a case
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

48. Structure or direct interactions among family members
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree

5. Strongly disagree

49. Consult with other professionals knowledgeable in family systems
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

50. Consult with other outside community agencies when conceptualizing a case in the school setting
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Section V - Barriers to Implementation:

51. What obstacles or barriers have you experienced in either implementing or trying to implement a family systems approach when working with students in the school setting? (List each barrier separately)

52. Which <u>one</u> of the barriers or obstacles listed above do you consider to be the most significant?

APPENDIX D

Initial Follow-Up Email

Dear School Counselor,

This email serves as a follow-up to the email you received four weeks ago requesting for your participation in a study pertaining to the self-efficacy of school counselors and their perceptions of using a family systems approach in the school counseling setting. Your name was selected at random from a list of school counselors provided by your local education service center.

Your time and participation is greatly appreciated. Data obtained from this study will add to the knowledge and field of professional school counselors. If you have already visited the website and submitted your answers to both the questionnaire and self-efficacy scale, please accept my overwhelming gratitude. If not, please be sure and do so today.

If you have questions pertaining to the study or the questions on the website, please email me at EMorrow1@twu.edu.

Thank You,

Ebony Morrow, B.S., M.A., M.S.

Marriage and Family Therapy
Doctoral Candidate
Texas Woman's University

APPENDIX E

Final Email

Dear School Counselor,

This email serves as a final follow-up to the email you received four weeks ago requesting for your participation in a study pertaining to the self-efficacy of school counselors and their perceptions of using a family systems approach in the school counseling setting. Your name was selected at random from a list of school counselors provided by your local education service center.

Your time and participation is greatly appreciated. Data obtained from this study will add to the knowledge and field of professional school counselors. If you have already visited the website and submitted your answers to both the questionnaire and self-efficacy scale, please accept my overwhelming gratitude. If not, please be sure and do so today.

If you have questions pertaining to the study or the questions on the website, please email me at EMorrow1@twu.edu.

Thank You,

Ebony Morrow, B.S., M.A., M.S.

Marriage and Family Therapy
Doctoral Candidate
Texas Woman's University