

**Cultural Competence in Action: Self-Perceptions of Counselor Educators
in Higher Education Leadership Careers**

by

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Abstract

Cultural competence is regarded as the fourth force in the counseling profession (Sue, Sue, Neville, & Smith, 2019). Cultural competence and practice are topics that have been extensively researched in recent years. Those who identify as counselor educators commit themselves to the same professional standards as professional counselors upheld by the American Counseling Association (ACA) to have an awareness, knowledge, and skills sets, especially when working with diverse populations. Counselor educators are charged with not merely identifying as culturally competent, but to apply these skills in practice. Thus, making cultural competence more than a part of the professional identity alone but a part of professional practice. Culturally competent practices are behaviors that professional counselors should exhibit according to the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016). It is imperative to understand what culturally competent practices may consist of and how one knows they are truly competent.

Individuals who apply cultural competence beyond counselor education in leadership and administrative capacities have skill sets that could promote positive change for students, personnel, and academic programs (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Counselor educators in human service-related, complimentary, and alternative careers are equipped with skill sets that can translate culturally competent practice. Consequently, counselor educators have various opportunities to engage in culturally competent practice in leadership and administrative positions throughout their careers (Okech & Rubel, 2018). This study examined the self-perceptions of culturally competent practice among counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. To achieve an in-depth study of this phenomenon, a

phenomenological methodology was utilized via semi-structured interviews. There were twelve themes that emerged representing the phenomenon examined. This study contributes to existing research and understanding pertaining to cultural competence in practice in complementary and alternative counselor educator career pathways. The findings, limitations and implications of the study are presented.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to the Study

As diverse students, faculty, and staff are being recruited to affiliate with institutions of higher learning, it is essential that university leaders and administrators are knowledgeable about effective cultural practices for working with affiliate populations (Chrobot-Mason, 2012).

Counselor educators are committed professionals who value knowledge, awareness and a skill set for working with diverse populations, based on cultural competency being the fourth force in the counseling profession (Sue, Sue, Neville, & Smith, 2019). Moreover, the ethical standards that govern counselors and counselor educators espoused by the American Counseling Association (ACA) highlights the importance of acquiring an awareness, knowledge, and skills for working with marginalized, disenfranchised, and diverse populations.

Social justice and advocacy work are imperatives and engagement in this work is encouraged and apart of the identity of those in the counseling profession. Counseling and social justice work is connected, and counselor educators will discover advocacy work essential in their practices (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Additionally, the alignment of social justice or cultural competency practices may be found in counselor educators' administrative work. Moreover, counselor educators' skillsets can assist in making a constructive change for students, personnel, academic programs and more (Okech & Rubel, 2018).

Counselor educators are to uphold culturally competent standards sanctioned by ACA and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). There are similar standards regarding cultural competence that should be maintained by leadership in higher education and administration. The National Association of Diversity

Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) sanctions that Chief Diversity Officers are to practice in a culturally competent manner (Worthington, Stanley, & Smith, 2020). Moreover, these standards should also align with the mission, vision, and values of the institution.

According to the American Association of University Administrators (2017), administrators are to uphold the values of fairness and equity, welcoming diverse perspectives and respecting the dignity of all persons is always encouraged (American Association of University Administrators, 2017). Further, higher education leaders and administrators are fortified to appreciate human differences and not discriminate against anyone based on culture, ethnicity/race, age ability, sexual orientation, economic status, religion, and gender (American Association of University Administrators, 2017). Although, the Code of Ethics or standards regarding cultural practices for administration has been established, there is a paucity of research on the application of cultural competency practices among counselor educators in leadership and administrative roles in higher education.

Counselor educators may migrate and/or ascend to administrative positions for a variety of reasons. One of those reasons could include fitness because counselor educators are prepared with skill sets that can assist them in serving in an administrative capacity (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Counselor educators have numerous administrative roles that may occur within academic programs, departmentally, and beyond. Across a myriad of career choices that counselor educators may explore, there are counseling skills and ethical codes that counselor educators commit and adhere to. Uniformed standards in Counseling Education that emphasize the importance of demonstrating cultural competence is essential. However, understanding how to practice in a culturally competent way is also needed (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016). Counselor

educators are equipped with a variety of culturally competent skills that are transferable for work engagement in any higher education leadership and administrative career.

Counselor educators' skillsets can assist in making a positive change for students, staff, academic programs, and more (Chang, Minton, Dixon, Myers, & Sweeney, 2012; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Further, these skills and knowledge that counselor educators exhibit can assist others in their career choice and continued professional development. Counselor educators may have various opportunities to engage in administrative positions throughout their careers (Chang et al., 2012; Okech & Rubel, 2018). These positions in higher education settings included but are not limited to program coordinator, director, department chair and head, associate dean, dean, associate provost, provost, assistant and associate vice president, vice president, president, and other institutional capacities (Okech & Rubel, 2018). It is essential to note that counselor educators in administration may serve in administrative capacities and after their designated appointments have ended, counselor educators may transition back into a faculty role (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Regardless, these appointments can have lasting impacts on and have implications for counselor educators in their career development and trajectories.

To further understand this phenomenon, it is important to further explore the administration pipeline to better appreciate the context of counselor educators entering and remaining in academic leadership positions (Okech & Rubel, 2018). There is an increased need to select and prepare diverse counselor educators for meeting challenges and opportunities in higher education (Chang et al., 2012; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Further, it should be noted that there is significance given to the importance of diverse administration fulfilling administrative roles (Okech & Rubel, 2018). However, it can be challenging to ensure that these roles are filled by capable individuals because of the historical context surrounding what leadership traits and

models should encompass (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Leadership traits and models are characterized as more masculine and not always inclusive of diverse perspectives and populations. This can result in limiting marginalized individuals in their pursuit of leadership opportunities (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Nevertheless, counselor educators are going beyond faculty positions, clinical, and supervisory roles, and advancing themselves in administrative roles and capacities in higher education. With there being an array of higher education leadership and administrative position opportunities, counselor educators should explore how applicable their background and experience relate to other leadership and higher education administrative roles before making a career shift. Noting that each role is different implies that a thorough understanding be obtained of the many higher education leadership and administrative pathways available to counselor educators. One such higher education leadership and administrative position available to counselor educators is the program coordinator role within a department.

A program coordinator is an individual who oversees operational and strategic activities associated with a counselor education or counseling psychologist program (Chang et al., 2012; Okech & Rubel, 2018). It is important to understand that no two programs are alike. There are some programs that include certifications, undergraduate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral-level options (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Continuing, the courses that are offered, number and type of faculty, and level of involvement with the surrounding community will have great influence on the type of work a program coordinator might perform (Chang et al., 2012; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Furthermore, program coordinators may oversee each degree option as well as other individuals who serve as field placement or practicum and internship coordinators (Chang et al., 2012; Okech & Rubel, 2018). A common tasks of program coordinators is the program admissions process, scheduling courses in partnership with a department chair or another

administrator (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Program coordinators are tasked with: a) the development of course schedules that meet students' enrollment needs in a way that matriculates and progresses them through a program efficiently in instructional modalities that maximize learning; b) developing, and advocating for curricular offerings that help to market prospective students or meet the changing needs of a discipline, and avoiding scheduling courses in a manner that competes with other popular courses or fails to use the available scheduling periods well (Chang et al., 2012; CACREP, 2016; Okech & Rubel, 2018).

Program coordinators also engage in other tasks such as mediating conflict between students and/or between students and unit faculty members (CACREP, 2016; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Program coordinators support student organizations and other methods to foster students' professional development (CACREP, 2016; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Moreover, program coordinators are tasked with serving as a point of contact and hiring adjunct faculty members, mentoring faculty, and facilitating program-level meetings with faculty (Chang et al., 2012; CACREP, 2016; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Additionally, program coordinators develop and maintain program handbooks and program-related initiatives (Chang et al., 2012; CACREP, 2016; Okech & Rubel, 2018). These initiatives could be in the form of advocating for adequate personnel and other resources for the program; monitoring student and program-level records; ensuring that policies and procedures at the program level are followed; developing a strategic plan, goals, objectives, and indicators for the program; building program culture, attending specifically to diversity and advocacy; managing conflict and crises as well as the daily life of the program; and establishing program advisory councils and boards to support general program quality (CACREP, 2016; Okech & Rubel, 2018).

Further, program coordinators in CACREP-accredited programs often serve as the primary point of contact for accreditation procedures (CACREP, 2016; Okech & Rubel, 2018). As program coordinator these counselor educators are to see that the academic unit maintains the appropriate student-to-faculty ratio along with reasonable teaching and advising loads, recruits and retains students and faculty, and often serve as the primary point of contact for accreditation procedures. CACREP, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, is the accreditation body that publishes standards for master and doctoral counseling and its specialties (CACREP, 2016; Okech & Rubel, 2018).

Another role that counselor educators may assume is that of department chair or head. In this role, department chairs or heads are unit gatekeepers for curriculum changes, budget, they engage in strategic and tactical decision-making, and facilitate promotion and tenure processes (Buller, 2006; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Department chairs tend to have significant interactions with program faculty, program coordinators, and college-level administrators (Buller, 2006; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Departments vary in size, and department chairs or heads may or may not be the primary individual who evaluates faculty and staff within their department. Department chairs or heads also advocate for salary increases and make course scheduling decisions. In larger departments, department chairs or heads may have minimal to no teaching duties (Buller, 2006; Okech & Rubel, 2018). They are tasked with more indirect responsibility concerning course scheduling, assigning student workers and assistants to various duties, and other common activities (Buller, 2006; Okech & Rubel, 2018). With this particular arrangement, department chairs having integral roles in merit, promotion, and tenure decision conversations, and usually have line authority over faculty members within their department (Buller, 2006; Okech & Rubel, 2018).

Depending on the institution, the department chair's or head's role can vary tremendously (Buller, 2006; Okech & Rubel, 2018). There are some other responsibilities that department chairs are tasked with doing such as mediating conflict between students and/or between students and faculty members; engaging in the community on the behalf of the departmental programs or the college; advocating with deans for graduate assistantship and fellowship allocations; mentoring faculty, staff, students, and program coordinators; supporting faculty scholarship and teaching; recommending hires for programs and the department, fostering workload and salary equity for faculty and staff, serving as a communications link between the department and others, representing the department at the college level and beyond; developing and maintaining the flow of information within the department; developing and maintaining the departmental budget, including budgeting requisitions from faculty and programs; evaluating faculty, staff, and students; generating reports regarding departmental operations for internal and external audiences; and ensuring that policies and procedures are followed at the departmental level. Department chairs or heads work with program coordinators on program-level considerations; lead departmental implementation of the college mission; mobilize departmental resources; stimulate the curriculum; build department culture, attend specifically to diversity and advocacy; manage conflict and crises as well as the daily life of the department; and foster alumni relations (Buller, 2006; Okech & Rubel, 2018).

Another form of higher education leadership and administration that counselor educators may transition to is that of an assistant, associate, or executive dean. These are mid-level college/university positions, often entered by those with program coordinator and/or department chair experience but who are not ready or interested in a deanship or other upper administrative roles (Buller, 2006; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Individuals in these positions have an interest in

knowing broadly the positions and programs within and across colleges, creating a network across campus (Buller, 2006; Okech & Rubel, 2018). It is important to know that there are differences between assistant, associate, or executive deans (Okech & Rubel, 2018). The difference between an assistant dean and associate dean depends on the institution (Okech & Rubel, 2018).

For some, the associate dean may have more seniority or advanced skills than an assistant dean (Okech & Rubel, 2018). An assistant dean may lack a terminal degree, faculty classification, and/or tenure status. In other cases, the distinction between the positions may be related to the amount of administrative service the individual is completing in the context of their total academic workload (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Some colleges have the position of executive associate dean, a term that can be used interchangeably with the term vice dean (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Executive associate deans have substantial responsibility for internal college activities and may supervise or oversee in some ways the work of assistant or associate deans (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Assistant, associate, and executive associate deans work on the dean's behalf and are usually responsible for high-level tasks without having great authority to complete those tasks (Okech & Rubel, 2018). They tend to specialize in a single administrative area, such as assessment, research and projects, undergraduate programs, graduate programs, diversity, or faculty development (Okech & Rubel, 2018).

The dean serves in the capacity of an advocate for a collection of programs and initiatives that hold a common historical purpose in local, regional, national, and international communities (Buller, 2015; Montez, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 2003; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Deans have an array of responsibilities that help to set direction for the college, departments, and programs; empower others in the college, and build a sense of community internal and external to the

college (Buller, 2015; Montez et al., 2003; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Deans specifically tend to have the responsibilities of generating and apportioning external funds and developmental dollars for the college, meeting with external partners in the local community, and within the legislature to help advocate for the fiscal needs of the college as well as inform the college community of policy decisions (Buller, 2015; Montez et al., 2003; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Further, deans oversee the hiring decisions and protocols related to faculty and staff which also include guiding promotion and tenure procedures and mentoring faculty throughout the process (Buller, 2015; Montez et al., 2003; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Moreover, deans manage multiple day-to-day operational details such as promoting and marketing college-level initiatives and engaging in diversity initiatives that help to recruit and retain faculty, staff, and students (Buller, 2015; Montez et al., 2003; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Most importantly, deans are to develop a cohesive vision and set of goals that motivate other college personnel (Buller, 2015; Montez et al., 2003; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Lastly, deans are charged with establishing, encouraging, and evaluating curricula that both benefit students and generate revenue to name a few activities (Buller, 2015; Montez et al., 2003; Okech & Rubel, 2018).

Based on the premise that culturally competent practice is a quality that individuals should exhibit who work at an institution of higher education, regardless of one's primary profession or professional standards, this study was conducted. The researcher's lived experiences in higher education as well as the researcher's observations led to questions about culturally competent practices and self-perceptions of counselor educators working in leadership and administrative roles in higher education (Chrobot-Mason, 2012).

Supplemental to the previous statement, the researcher identifies as a Black woman who possesses a diverse background as well as leads critical conversations with reference to

marginalized groups within her discipline of study, Counselor Education and Supervision. The importance of this area of research was recognized by the researcher. Those in leadership positions should exemplify cultural competence within their practice in leadership and administration (Chrobot-Mason, 2012).

According to the researcher, it is imperative that the lived experiences and self-perceptions of culturally competent practice among counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education be explored. This study focused on the self-perceptions of culturally competent practices among counselor educators who work as administrators. Additionally, the researcher explored ways in which the demonstration level of cultural competence in higher education leaders and administrators, who identify as counselor educators, is self-determined. This study also seeks to explore these professionals' self-perceptions as to how they became culturally competent, more competent, and evidence to confirm demonstration of culturally competent practice. Lastly, to understand the phenomenon, the essence of leaders and administrator's lived experiences, various terms are used throughout and definitions are thusly presented.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this research study the following terms have been operationally defined and are used:

Attitudes and beliefs refer to having an awareness of social identities, social group statuses, power, privilege, oppression, strengths, limitations, assumptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and biases (Ratts et al., 2015).

Cultural competence for equity and inclusion is the ability to live and work effectively in culturally diverse environments and enact a commitment to fairness and to the full

participation of all members. In environments that are equitable and inclusive there is a fair distribution of resources and opportunities (Martin & Vaughn, 2007; Ratts et al. 2015).

Cultural humility is the ability to hold an accurate perception of their own cultural values as well as maintain other-oriented perspectives that involves respect, lack of superiority and attunement regarding their own cultural beliefs and values (Hook, Davis, Owen, & DeBlaere, 2017; Moon & Sandage, 2019).

Cultural inclusiveness all individuals need to feel they belong to the group, each individual is treated as an insider, while having the opportunity to sustain and express their unique identities (Ashikali, Groeneveld, & Kuipers, 2020).

Cultural responsiveness considers the multiplicity and fluidity of cultural practices, beliefs, and knowledge, and conveys a dynamic, synergistic relationship between the provider (in this case, organized activities) and adolescent participants (Simpkins, Riggs, Ngo, Ettekal, & Okamoto, 2017).

Higher Education administrators are responsible for overseeing college or university departments, faculty, staff, programs of study, curricula, budgets, facilities, and more. Higher education administrators assist in keeping colleges and universities running by designing, implementing, and overseeing the school's approach to subjects including academics, student life, etc. (Higher Education Administrator).

Higher Education leader is seen as involving the ability to navigate the many challenges, cultures, and stakeholders involved in higher education and engaging colleagues to collaborate in these activities; broadly, leadership is a process of social influence—a process that occurs through communication (Ruben, De Lisi, & Gigliotti, 2016).

Imposter Syndrome refers to the condition in which individuals find it difficult to believe that they deserve any credit for their achievements, and despite their outward appearances, remaining internally convinced that they are frauds (Clance & Imes, 1978).

Introspection refers to a reflective looking inward, an examination of one's own thoughts and feelings (Merriam-Webster).

Institutional betrayal refers to the wrongdoings and harm perpetrated by an institution upon individuals dependent on that institution, including an administrative failure to prevent harassment, sexual assault, retaliation, and more or to respond supportively to reports of such behaviors within the context of the institution (Pyke, 2018; Smith & Freyd, 2014)

Knowledge refers to possessing an understanding of social identities, social group statuses, power, privilege, oppression, strengths, limitations, assumptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and biases (Ratts et al., 2015).

Macroaggression refers to systematic forms of oppression rather than interpersonal forms of bias or discrimination (Gorski, 2014).

Marginalized groups and/or diverse individuals are individuals who are socially diverse (Adams, et al., 2013).

Master status refers to a particular status that has a profound effect on one's life, that dominates or overwhelms the other statuses one occupies (Pincus, 2011). Master Statuses include one's race, class, gender, sexual orientation, individuals with disabilities, age, and other statuses (Pincus, 2011).

Microaggressions refers to brief, everyday exchanges that send demeaning messages to marginalized individuals because they belong to a racial minority group. Further, racial

microaggressions can also be described as “subtle snubs or dismissive looks, gestures, and tones” (Sue & Constantine, 2007).

Skills refers to possessing abilities that enrich one’s understanding of others worldview, assumptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, biases, social identities, social group statuses, power, privilege, oppression, strengths, limitations, assumptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and biases (Ratts et al., 2015).

Social diversity refers to differences between social identity groups based on various social categories that include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, individuals with disabilities, religion, ageism, alternative families, immigrants/refugees, and others (Adams et al., 2013).

Literature Review

It is vital that individuals in leadership positions understand various challenges and the particular lived experiences individuals of diverse populations face especially given the steady rise of individuals with diverse backgrounds living in the United States. According to Johnson and Williams (2015), the percentage of racial minorities in America is projected to continue to increase by nearly 50% of the population by year 2050. Additionally, according to Harris (2013), due to the changing demographics, institutions that offer a variety of academic subjects for study should consider cultural differences broadly. By studying the impact cultural difference has on student performance, for example, higher education leaders and administrator become more knowledgeable of diverse student needs and concerns.

In recent years various taskforces or committees have formed to assist with addressing concerns related to multiculturalism in various programs at universities and higher education institutions (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Smith, 2020). In the United States, the public and a

variety of stakeholders found it imperative that issues related to diversity are in fact significant in higher education (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Smith, 2020). Also, according to Aguirre and Martinez (2006) and Smith (2020), the United States public and stakeholders in higher education recognize a need for colleges and universities to address issues and concerns raised by diversity initiatives. Although, the U.S. public and stakeholders have discovered that curriculum changes are necessary, there is little support for special admissions programs for minority students and few special recruitment programs for minority faculty (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Smith, 2020).

It was found that some aspects of the organizational culture in higher education receive public support for change and some do not accommodate initiatives that target diversity (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Smith, 2020). Exploring the perceptions of higher education leaders and administrators related to cultural competency may help advance understanding the phenomenon why some issues related to diversity are addressed, while others are overlooked. Moreover, leadership can have an impact on the culture at their perspective universities or higher education institutions (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Smith, 2020). Leaders may carry the authority to implement change and revise policies and procedures that are not culturally inclusive and relevant.

Higher education leadership and administration play an active role in assisting diverse individuals with their unique needs. Additionally, according to Chrobot-Mason (2012), leaders and administrators should demonstrate an openness to cultural differences, an understanding of what these differences encompasses, accepting and utilizing these differences to improve performance on the organizational level. Furthermore, higher education leaders and administrators at the college and university level should have an awareness of cultural best practices and possess skills for working with diverse individuals just as counselor educators

assist counselor trainees with gaining an awareness, understanding, and skills to work with diverse client populations (Ratts et al., 2015). There are many ways counselor educators assist counselors-in-training with developing an awareness, understanding, and skills regarding work with diverse individuals. For instance, there is an intentional and cognizant effort by counselor educators to infuse and integrate multiculturalism into all courses (ACA, 2014). The integration of multiculturalism, social justice and advocacy in counselor education and training programs has become standardized. By embracing standards, best practices, and competency-based skills, counselor educator leaders and administrators work practice and interactions can be culturally tailored (i.e., inclusive, and responsive) for various populations. Importance lies in how a professional becomes and remains competent in providing culturally relevant and meaningful assistance to those who have been socially, historically, and politically disenfranchised. Moreover, leaders and administrators have an ethical responsibility to uphold, as well as motivate other leaders, administrators, faculty, staff, and students to behave, practice, and work in an ethical manner.

Ethical Standards

It is imperative that leaders and administrators assist and guide faculty, staff, and students in “doing the right thing” (Couch & Dodd, 2005). When leaders and administrators assist in the regulation of ethical standards, simultaneously this fulfils an institution’s responsibility to the larger society (Couch & Dodd, 2005). Further, leaders and administrators who highlight ethical standards inform faculty and other members of the campus community on how to address ethical issues with respect to their relationships with students and each other (Couch & Dodd, 2005). Several universities have adopted institutional codes of ethics that highlight core ethical principles rather than adherence to laws and regulations (Couch & Dodd, 2005). Additionally,

there are some institutions that recognize ethical principles such as cultivation of an environment of mutual respect and tolerance for diversity, focusing on the well-being of students and others who are vulnerable, and differentiating between behavior that is ethical and that which is legal (Couch & Dodd, 2005), holding all, students to trustees, responsible both for the ethics of their own behavior and for the construction of an ethical institution (Couch & Dodd, 2005). It is imperative that leaders and administrators not only understand ethical standards but practice in an ethical manner (Couch & Dodd, 2005). The way leaders and administrators practice ethics may demonstrate how aligned their levels of competence are with their ascribed professional identity.

Professional Identity and Imposter Syndrome

Professional identity development consists of various developmental and interacting experiences in educational programs, and with mentoring that assists in the formation of an individual's professional identity. Professional identity is formed from within a person and includes intrapersonal dimensions of professional identity (Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2010). Professional identity in part can aid a professional in the formation of meaning and for determining their focus and career intent. Professional identity can assist an individual with knowing and doing in their process of work as a counselor educator but also working in leadership and administrative roles. This knowing and doing can be impacted significantly by a feeling of inadequacy and incompetence, even if not validated.

Imposter Syndrome is a phenomenon where individuals find it difficult to believe that they deserve any credit for their achievements, and despite outward appearances, remain internally convinced that they are frauds (Bothello & Roulet, 2018; Clance & Imes, 1978). This phenomenon can be illustrated in various areas of an individual's life, particularly in higher

education leadership and administration. Individuals experiencing the imposter syndrome find it difficult to accept accolades for their achievements because they have experienced numerous rejections and disparaging words (Bothello & Roulet, 2018; Clance & Imes, 1978).

Lived experiences of marginalization, social deprivations, microaggressions incited because of master status (e.g., ethnic and gender differences), etc., can contribute to the development of the imposter syndrome (Bothello & Roulet, 2018; Clance & Imes, 1978; Pincus, 2011). At the individual level, microaggressions (micro insults, micro assaults, and micro invalidations) are comprehensive, harmful, and potentially traumatic especially if repeated. The experience of being microaggressed can cause an individual to take on a stance of cultural humility because of their interactions with those who are not culturally humble or competent (Moon & Sandage, 2019; Sue & Constantine, 2007). Those who are micro aggressors may have blind spots (Luft & Ingram, 1961) in their awareness of their own behavior in interactions with others and may need education to increase interpersonal awareness of their actions. Like microaggressions that occur at the individual level, macroaggression are systematic oppressions that impact individuals through the implementation of policy and standards at the institution/ societal level (Gorski, 2014). Institutional betrayal, also occurring at the mesosystemic level, can also impact work engagement and individual's work behavior (Smith & Freyd, 2014; Pyke, 2018).

Leaders and administrator self-perception regarding their professional identity could impact how they address both microaggressions and macroaggressions. To alleviate and sometimes eliminate occurrences of such, counselor educator leaders and administrators can utilize culturally competent practices within their capabilities to make changes in procedures and the services provided to individuals. For students and professionals who experience the imposter

syndrome in higher education settings, the need for capable and skilled higher education leaders and administrators is great. Leaders and administrators in higher education who foster culturally negative interactions with the marginalized populations they serve could cause those populations to experience the Pygmalion effect at work (Stoicescu & Ghinea, 2013).

The Pygmalion Effect

The Pygmalion effect promotes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Stoicescu & Ghinea, 2013). Self-fulfilling prophecy comes into play when leaders and administrators in higher education behave in a way that further depresses, oppresses and/or otherwise overlooks the minority personnel, for example labeling them as low achievers (Stoicescu & Ghinea, 2013). These individuals begin to accept and demonstrate how they have been treated (Stoicescu & Ghinea, 2013). Further, life experiences, introspection, existentialism, social learning, socially constructed views all reflect negatively/positively on career choices. The way individuals derive meaning from these experiences can lead to the mechanisms engaged in by leadership and administrators in higher education that correlate to their culturally competent practices. In considering cultural competence practices, it is essential to understand how an individual's competency is determined. Although, there may be benefits in assuming a professional identity, the impact of experiencing microaggressions and macroaggressions could aid in fostering the imposter syndrome as well as have a Dunning-Kruger effect with regard to competence in practice.

Dunning-Kruger Effect

When considering cultural competence and skills that counselor educators are equipped with, we must consider how one is deemed competent, which leads to how one knows if they are truly competent in an area or not. The Dunning-Kruger effect must be considered in terms of

competency. The Dunning-Kruger effect could be displayed in terms of competence where counselor educators in administration perceive themselves or rate themselves high on cultural competence and may not be. When counselor educators serve in an administrative capacity, these skills may be practiced or implemented in their administrative duties. The question is if counselor educators are utilizing their skills sets within their administrative practice. To gain an in-depth study of this phenomenon, this study examined counselor educators in administrative roles self-perceptions of their practice regarding cultural competence.

With the Dunning Kruger Effect, consideration is given that success and satisfaction depend on knowledge, wisdom, or savvy in knowing the rules to respect and which policies to practice (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Further, in looking into the social and intellectual spheres which encompasses promoting effective leadership, raising children, constructing a solid logical argument, or designing a rigorous psychological study is reflected on one's knowledge, wisdom, or savvy (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). However, people fluctuate extensively in the knowledge and strategies they employ with varying levels of success (Dunning, Meyerowitz, & Holzberg, 1989; Dunning, Perie, & Story, 1991; Story & Dunning, 1998). Some of the knowledge and theories that people apply to their actions are sound and may be met by satisfactory results (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). In viewing other individuals by the lemon juice hypothesis of McArthur Wheeler, people are flawed at best and unwise, incompetent, or dysfunctional at worst (Kruger & Dunning, 1999).

Metacognitive deficits of the unskilled may assist in explaining the overall tendency toward an exaggerated self-appraisal (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Typically, individuals choose what they think is the most reasonable and the failure to recognize that an individual has performed poorly will leave a person assuming that an individual has performed a task well

(Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Resulting in the incompetent completely overestimating their skills and abilities (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). When individuals are incompetent in the strategies, they aim to achieve success and satisfaction, there is a dual burden (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). These individuals may not only reach an inaccurate conclusion and make unfortunate choices, but their incompetence deprives them of the ability to realize this occurrence (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). More specifically, leaders and administrators' roles in assisting with matters related to multiculturalism on campus regarding policies and procedures matters, it is necessary to understand the higher education leader and administrator's authentic assessment of their culturally competent practices. For example, these practices should include the ability to effectively advocate for marginalized populations within an institution of higher learning.

Social Justice and Advocacy

According to Chang et al. (2012), advocacy is the action taken on behalf of an individual to support appropriate policies and standards; oppose or work to change policies and procedures; promote individual human worth, dignity, and potential; and other actions. Advocacy and social justice work are focused on supporting a particular cause, defending the rights of others, and taking action which may be different based on the cause (Chang et al., 2012). Advocacy and social justice work are vital for leaders and administrators in higher education because diverse individuals need advocates to ensure that their individual educational and work-related needs are met as well as on the institutional level. Advocating with and for diverse populations is crucial to enable leaders and administrators to develop and maintain proficiency in working in a culturally competent manner, especially within higher education institutions.

Higher Education Institutions

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems model (Christensen, 2016) discusses not only the individual level – the professional (within a Microsystem), but the institutional level (the Mesosystem). Counselor educator leaders and administrators who work at higher education institutions are impacted professionally by the culture and climate of where they work. Higher education professionals who work with historically oppressed populations, as well as other groups, must understand the various intersecting identities that individuals bring with them when they enter and work at these institutions. Higher education professionals that have a more informed and introspective view of their own cultural competence may also engage in perspective taking and may have greater awareness of institutional climate issues, as well as the institutional importance placed on diversity and inclusion (Harris, 2013).

Workplace culture and the climate of work environments can promote various levels of work engagement that include culturally competent work behaviors (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Harris, 2013; Smith, 2020). Satisfaction with work culture and professional relationships can contribute both high engagement and disengagement. What we know about work engagement can impact professional motivation to work in a culturally competent (i.e., inclusive, and responsive way) and can impact the way professionals demonstrate cultural humility. What professionals notice about themselves and others, especially in instances of incivility and marginalization, can lead to diminished job satisfaction, career shift consideration, exploration and decision making. Work culture and climate concerns can promote further exploration and pursuit of additional job opportunities and career pathways open to counselor educators in higher education and may lead to career shifts.

Career Shift

According to Super (1980), career is described as the combination and sequence of roles played by a person during a lifetime. These roles range in being a student, citizen, parent, work and more (Super, 1980). The various roles that a counselor educator may occupy could be for short or long periods of time, highlighting the continuum of roles a counselor educator may occupy (Super, 1980). Further, work roles in which counselor educators serve may vary in importance as well as in the quality of a counselor educator's work performance (Super, 1980). Counselor educators who are leaders and administrators in higher education, serving in different roles could lead them to achieve to greater work satisfaction (Super, 1980). These different roles can assist in achieving a balance and promotion of good mental health (Super, 1980). Counselor educator leaders and administrators have found satisfaction as they work – engage and integrate their professional identities – helping professionals working in higher education.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research study is that those in contact with leaders and administrators in higher education can be impacted in numerous ways should they lack the awareness, knowledge, and the skills to work with diverse individuals (Chrobot-Mason, 2012). Higher education leaders and administrators should have an understanding of the unique needs and challenges diverse individuals face because this understanding may assist in reducing various forms of discrimination especially when considering the application of policies, handling/managing incidents of microaggressions, how to mitigate experiences of institutional racism, classism, religious oppression, sexism, heterosexism, transgender oppression, ableism, ageism and adultism, institutional betrayal, and other forms of oppression toward staff, students and faculty (Pyke, 2018). The magnitude of these negative experiences can greatly impact

marginalized individuals. Facing discrimination on various levels can lead to the internalization of discriminatory messages, can be a barrier to potential achievement, impact one's mental health, and other dynamics (Anderson, 2013). Having faced various forms of discrimination in higher education, it has become a mission of the researcher to further explore various factors such as the application of culturally competent skills and practice among counselor educators working in an administrative and leadership capacity.

Although there is a rich amount of research regarding diversity and inclusion within various aspects of the researcher's discipline (in the areas of counseling practice, supervision, research, educational, and leadership impacts), specifically those who serve in a leadership role, and how those dynamics may impact diverse individuals, there is little research on higher education leaders' perceptions related to cultural competence. Further, there is limited research that may illustrate what encompasses cultural competence among counselor educator leaders and administrators in higher education. By better understanding leaders' experiences related to cultural competency, this research study sought to bring about a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. Additionally, the research could assist with nuanced development and practices or policy implementation to assist diverse individuals in overcoming challenges experienced in higher education environments, thus making this study a worthy endeavor.

Research Questions

A diverse worldview enriched with various experiences has an impact on leaders and professional's perceptions of diverse individuals (Chrobot-Mason, 2012). Moreover, through a social constructivism framework this study sought to offer a way to better understand an aspect of the world we live in by exploring the perceptions of counselor educator administrators and leaders in higher education in regard for their own cultural competency in action. To better

understand the essence of counselor educator leaders and administrators lived experiences with regard to their self-perception of culturally competent practice in their roles, the following guiding and supporting questions were explored in this study:

1. How do counselor educators describe their own demonstration of culturally competent practice in their roles as administrators in higher education?
 - a.1.) What factors hinder counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice?
 - a.2.) What factors help counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice?
 - b.) How does race and gender (or lived experiences or job/career position type) influence counselor educator administrators' demonstration of culturally competent practices?

Summary

The present study was organized and has been presented in a historical context for the problem that was studied, and the significance of the problem is presented. This includes the importance of examining the self-perceptions of culturally competent practice among counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. Provided in this chapter is a context for the study of culturally competence self-perceptions of counselor educators who work in leadership and administrator capacities in higher education. A literature review of the research that currently exists in relation to the topic is presented as well as an exploration of the related issues discussed in the literature specific to the study population. In this chapter, gaps and areas for further research are presented. Chapter II presents the prevalence of the current study and variables this study sought to address. Chapter II also describes the

methods and procedures used for the current study, which includes descriptions of the participants, measures, procedures, and data analyses. A descriptive information and inclusion criteria are also described. Chapter III presents the results from the data analyses. In it the current experiences of counselor educators, their perceptions of their own cultural competence in practice, and factors contributing to their career pathway are described. Chapter IV presents a discussion and interpretation of these results, limitations, future research, and implications.

CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGY

This study examined the self-perceptions of counselor educators culturally competent practice and work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. To gain an in-depth study of this phenomenon, a qualitative-phenomenological methodology was utilized via semi-structured interviews. This study contributes to existing research that pertains to cultural competence in practice in human services-related, complementary, and alternative counselor educator careers. A rationale for the methodology, including theoretical framework, study procedures, and anticipated limitations for the study are presented.

Theoretical Framework

To address the research questions this study utilized a qualitative approach. The constructs being examined are leaders' knowledge, awareness, and skills related to cultural competency or practices. The phenomenon being examined is cultural competence and leaders' work experiences and practices working in higher education. A transcendental phenomenological approach was utilized to capture leaders and administrators' work experience related to culturally competent practices. This approach allowed the researcher to better understand the phenomenon by focusing on participants' experiences and exploring meaning (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004).

Social Constructivist Framework

The framework of this study is social constructivism. In social constructivism, the researcher relies on the participants' views of the situation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Addressing the process of interaction among individuals is necessary (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It's helpful to construct meaning of the situation by interacting with participants and gain information from

discussions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By employing a phenomenological approach, the researcher can interact with individuals and gain information through their worldview. Additionally, understanding of historical and cultural norms that impact how individual acts in a culturally competent manner was helpful for understanding when examining the phenomenon. Furthermore, utilizing transcendental phenomenology that is centered around meaning and collecting data that explains the essence of the human experience was necessary to better understand leaders and administrators' experiences related to cultural competency (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Moreover, with there being limited research on the examination of counselor educator leaders and administrators' experiences related to cultural competence in their roles, it was imperative that the researcher viewed the phenomenon newly and remained open to the whole experience (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). The researcher also engaged in Epochè to set aside prejudgment regarding this phenomenon (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004).

Research Significance

It was important that this research study be conducted to better address issues that may be related to counselor education leaders and administrators in higher education awareness, knowledge, and skillsets as applied or demonstrated in their work roles. Further, this study examined leader's unique perspectives thus sought to provide greater understanding of the significance of cultural competency related to work in higher education. This research study was essential for closing the gap in knowledge about the self-perceived cultural competency of counselor educators employed in higher education administration. This study also explored counselor educator higher education leaders and administrators' experiences related to working with diverse individuals as well as their experiences with their respective educational programs and administrative units.

Design Rationale

In order to explore the essence of the phenomenon studied, cultural competence, a phenomenological approach was utilized. The concepts examined were counselor educator leaders and administration in higher education self-perception of knowledge, awareness, and skills related to culturally competent practice. A phenomenological approach was utilized to capture leadership's lived experiences related to cultural competence on various levels in which an individual may apply or demonstrate competence in individual and microsystem levels (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By utilizing a qualitative study design, the researcher was able to explore the phenomenon by way of semi-structured interviews to gain knowledge of participants' self-perceptions related to culturally competent practice, as well as the unique and rich experiences leaders have related to the application and demonstration of culturally competent skills.

Research Questions

This study investigated the following guiding and supporting research questions:

1. How do counselor educators describe their own demonstration of culturally competent practice in their roles as administrators in higher education?
 - a.1.) What factors hinder counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice?
 - a.2.) What factors help counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice?
 - b.) How does race and gender (or lived experiences or job/career position type) influence counselor educator administrators' demonstration of culturally competent practices?

Participants

The population of interest pertaining to the study conducted were counselor educators in leadership and administrative positions in higher education at colleges and universities. Due to needing specific individuals in counselor education administration for participation for this study, a purposive sampling was most appropriate. Purposive sampling was the most inclusive approach for the selection of counselor educator leaders and administrators with careers in higher education for this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Inclusion criteria consisted of counselor educators who were leaders and administrators in higher education currently serving in these roles. Other requirements were the participants' role consumes at least 50% of their time and they could commit to a total of 2 hours involvement in the research study. Participants were asked to complete a 10-minute demographic questionnaire, 1 hour 15-minute interview, and a 35-minute verification of the interview transcription.

Potential participants were recruited by email and were provided information regarding the research study. These potential participants were asked to consent to participate and pre-qualify for the study by completing pertinent demographics about themselves. Based on their responses, those who qualified to participate in the study were contacted, via email, to schedule an interview. The researcher conducted one interview with each participant. Except for email correspondence, no previous rapport was established between study participants and the researcher. There was a total of 10 counselor educators who were leaders/administrators in higher education who participated in the research study. Also, there were four African Americans/Black women, one African American/Black man, one Biracial/multiracial woman, and four White women ranging in ages from 27 to 52. Participants ranged from 1 to over 10 years of higher education leader/administrator experience.

The number of participants were determined by thematic saturation or until saturation was reached (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The researcher reviewed the study information with each participant, discussed confidentiality, and answered additional questions that were given to participants before conducting the interviews. Participants were informed that the researcher followed the Auburn University Institutional Review Board for Research with Human Subjects (IRB) approval process and provided participants with the letter approval for the research study. Additionally, participants were made aware through the recruitment and consent letter that the researcher has undergone confidentiality training and possesses the required certification. Lastly, the recruitment letter highlighted the phenomenon being examined, that participants would be asked to interview with the researcher, the expected duration of the interview and anticipated involvement in the study, and any risks associated with this study (see Appendix A).

Instrumentation

The Interview Protocol was utilized to assist researcher in gaining an understanding of the phenomenon being examined (see Appendix B). This protocol consists of 10-questions along with an introductory statement and script that was utilized during the interview process with participants (Appendix B). This protocol was developed by the researcher for this research study. The protocol was verified and validated by experts in the field of counselor education. The 10-questions aligned with the three research questions for this study so that the researcher could deeply examine the phenomenon being studied.

Interview Protocol

The semi-structured interview protocol consisted of an introductory statement, directions and 10–12 items (see Appendix B). Semi-structured interview type was selected for this study to

allow participants the freedom to explain their thoughts and to allow participants the flexibility to discuss greater depth in the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews ranged from 18–60 minutes. Utilizing Zoom, the audio recordings of the interviews for each participant were captured. The researcher used Zoom and the transcription feature to collect data to generate themes from the information shared by the participants to explore the essence of this phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Interview Protocol Expert Review

The interview protocol was reviewed and evaluated during a pilot study. The pilot study was conducted by two experts in the field of counselor education to assist with the verification and validation of the interview protocol accuracy and validity (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The pilot study reviewers are faculty experts in counselor education administration and areas of counselor education empirical and evidence-based knowledge. These expert faculty reviewers provided the researcher feedback on the wording of the 10 interview protocol questions, ensuring that the questions highly aligned with knowledge of the field, the research questions, to best examine phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The feedback consisted of content validity, the interview protocol conceptual framework, and organizational structure (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Feedback and recommendations were used to modify the interview protocol. The guidelines for interview protocol development as well as feedback and recommendations from the pilot study were used to modify the questions (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). These modifications ensured greater alignment of the 10-interview protocol questions with the research questions of the study.

Procedures

This section provides an overview of how participants were recruited, further explain the sampling selection method utilized, the interview process, data analysis procedures utilized to achieve validity of the study, and researcher positioning.

Participant Recruitment and Sampling

Participants were recruited by utilizing purposive sampling method which is most appropriate because participants were counselor educator higher education leaders and administrators (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher aimed to interview anywhere from 5–10 professionals until saturation was reached (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). A recruitment email was sent to various Listservs (e.g., CESNET), and specific individuals that would likely qualify for inclusion in this research study. The recruitment email provided potential participants an overview of the research study information along with the Demographics Questionnaire that potential participants were asked to complete after consenting to participate in the study. The informed consent form and demographic questionnaire was provided for participants via Qualtrics survey. Participants were asked to complete the Interview Protocol Demographics that inquired about participant personal information (see Appendix C). Participants who qualified for this research study were contacted via email, provided a copy of their signed informed consent via email, and were asked to identify a day and time they could meet for the interview. Additionally, the researcher asked participants their preferred method in conducting the Zoom interview: with the video camera on or off. After participants responded with the preferred day and time for the interview, along with their video preference – camera on or off – the researcher followed-up by emailing each participant providing the Zoom access

information for their interview. The researcher sent a follow-up via email to participants who did not respond within a week to the initial email.

At the start of the interview, the details of the study were reviewed to ensure clarity and opportunity for questions. Also, the researcher informed participants that it was acceptable if there is some information that they wish not to answer nor provide. Furthermore, it was stated if participants experience discomfort and would like to discontinue the study for any reason, that this was acceptable and information on how to discontinue would be reviewed. The researcher further stated the sensitivity of the information being collected, as well as the audio equipment/technology utilized, the BOX repository utilized to store the data, and steps to keep the study data confidential. The researcher followed the interview protocol script, asking each participant to provide a pseudonym (name) for identification purposes for the study. Next, researcher asked each participant questions from the interview protocol to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon. The researcher utilized Zoom to audio record the interviews conducted as well as the transcription feature to collect study the data.

Next, the researcher transcribed all interviews and individually emailed transcripts to respective participants for verification. After participants verified the written transcription, themes were analyzed. It was imperative that each participant be informed that the information provided in interviews would not be linked to the individual participants. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher debriefed participants on the information they provided. Recognizing the sensitivity of the information and exploring this particular phenomenon (i.e., issues related to their lived experiences and multiculturalism), some level of discomfort may have been experienced by participants. Data from the audio equipment will be later destroyed in accordance with AU-IRB approval.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological Analysis

As the researcher transcribed all interviews, the researcher submerged herself in the details of the data searching for meaning in the relevant responses of the phenomenon that was to be studied (Moustakas, 1994). Also, an external auditor reviewed the transcriptions to ensure that mistakes were not made during this process (Creswell, 2014). The responses and meanings obtained from transcriptions were coded by horizontalizing each statement, treating it with having equal value (Moustakas, 1994). After engaging in several process rounds of analyzing significant statements, clusters of meaning from the significant statements were formed and themes were generated (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It was clear to the researcher that all significant themes were captured as no other novelties emerged. At that point, it was time to transition to the next phase.

Both the researcher and external auditor independently reviewed the transcriptions, horizontalizing each statement, deleting irrelevant information (Creswell, 2014). The external auditor reviewed the relationship between the research questions and the data as well as the process of data analysis (Creswell, 2014). The external auditor assisted in ensuring that there was no drift in the definition of the codes, and no change in the meaning of the codes during that process (Creswell, 2014). In addition, the researcher and external auditor came together and cross-checked codes, aiding in the intercoder agreement. Prior to meeting, the researcher targeted an 85% agreement rate with the external auditor (Creswell, 2014). However, after the codes were independently reviewed by the researcher and the external auditor, there was a 100% agreement rate. We created our codes and met via Zoom to review the codes. After the review of the codes and discussion it was determined we had reached a consensus.

Based on significant statements and themes generated, data was utilized to write a description of participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The essence of the phenomenon had been reported in terms of generated themes and analyzed themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The researcher reviewed the themes and meaning and wrote textural descriptions of the essence of the experiences of counselor educators who work in leadership and administration roles in higher education settings. The descriptions use the precise language given by the participants of this research study. The data was synthesized, providing a description of the essence of the experiences of counselor educators participants who work in higher education leadership and administration. All research inquiries were answered.

Trustworthiness of Data

For this qualitative study, it was imperative the researcher engage in various strategies to check for validity and accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2014). These strategies were implemented to maximize the trustworthiness of the research study data. Moreover, the strategies were incorporated to ensure the accuracy of findings were triangulated, contained member checking, thick description, an audit trail, Epoché, bracketing, and reflexivity.

Triangulation

Utilizing triangulation, the researcher selected different data sources of information, reviewed the sources, and integrated the sources to construct a clear explanation of the themes (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, since the themes were derived on the basis of joining several sources of data or perspectives from participants, they also contributed to the validity of the study (Creswell, 2014).

Member Checking

To assist with determining the accuracy of the findings, the researcher engaged in member checking with each participant to ensure the meaning of the information that was provided in the interviews (Creswell, 2014). In order to engage in member checking, each participant received an electronic copy of their transcribed interview and were asked to make any corrections for accuracy. After participants review the transcription and make corrections for accuracy, participants were asked to email the researcher the corrected transcriptions. Participants were asked to submit any corrections for accuracy to the researcher during the week following their respective interview. If participants did not reply email the researcher with any corrections to their transcription within a week, researcher emailed participants to re-confirm accuracy of the transcript.

Thick Description

Rich, thick description was utilized to communicate findings (Creswell, 2014). Also, thick description could aid the reader in the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences (Creswell, 2014). The researcher provided detailed descriptions of the setting and perspectives on themes captured through the participants' experience and researchers audit trail assisting in the results being richer and realistic (Creswell, 2014).

Researcher Positioning

Clarifying biases and engaging in reflexivity that the researcher brings to the study was essential (Creswell, 2014). The researcher engaged in self-reflection using an audit trail; this allowed the researcher to situate, confirm and verify the meaning of the participant narratives and validate researcher understanding of the study findings (Creswell, 2014).

Epoché/Bracketing

Epoché is a Greek word meaning to stay away from or abstain (Moustakas, 1994). In accordance with Creswell and Poth (2018) and Moustaka's (1994) approach, transcendental or psychological phenomenology is centered more on the description of the experiences of participants. Moreover, it was imperative that the researcher set aside their experiences as much as possible, in particular toward the phenomenon being researched (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Epoché is hardly faultlessly achieved (Moustakas, 1994). Although this was difficult to demonstrate, it is essential that this was given attention during this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Further, engagement in phenomenological reduction bracketing was also accomplished (Moustakas, 1994). In bracketing, the focus of the research is placed in brackets while everything else is set aside (Moustakas, 1994). Moreover, by horizontalizing each participant statement was treated as having equal value (Moustakas, 1994). Statements that were irrelevant to the topic and question were deleted (Moustakas, 1994).

Audit Trail

An audit trail was a qualitative research measure incorporated to assist in the validation of the documented thinking processes that would clarify researcher understandings over time (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The audit trail included information that was collected throughout the research process. The audit trail and all documents regarding this research study were stored in a double encrypted BOX folder.

Summary

Chapter II presented the qualitative-phenomenological methodology and theoretical framework employed for the examining the self-perceptions of the culturally competent practices of counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education.

Chapter II specifically describes the methods used for the current study, which includes descriptive information and inclusion criteria for participants, measures, procedures, data analysis, specifically strategies to ensure trustworthiness of the study data. Chapter III presents the findings from analysis of the data. Chapter IV presents a discussion and interpretation of these findings, limitations of the study, future research, implications, and conclusions.

CHAPTER III. FINDINGS

Social constructivist framework relies on the participants' viewpoint of the situation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, a social constructivist framework was utilized to situate participant perspectives on their lived experiences with culturally competent practices in their roles as counselor educators in leadership or administration; this facilitated the analysis of the study data. The purpose of this study was to examine the culturally competent practice self-perceptions of counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. This chapter presents the key findings collected from 10 detailed, semi-structured interviews. A general overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants Demographics

Participant	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Years of Higher Education Leader and/or Administrator Experience
Cupcake	46	African American/Black	Woman	1-3 years
Alexus	37	African American/Black	Woman	4-6 years
Amy	36	White American	Woman	1-3 years
Claudia	43	White American	Woman	4-6 years
Harper	43	White American	Woman	10+ years
Jane	39	White American	Woman	
Mindy	31	Biracial/Multiracial	Woman	4-6 years
Scobby	46	African American/Black	Woman	4-6 years
Serena	52	African American/Black	Woman	4-6 years
Adrian	27	African American/Black	Man	1-3 years

The findings are presented as themes that emerged from the analysis of the data; addressing the research questions: 1.) How do counselor educators describe their own demonstration of culturally competent practice in their roles as administrators in higher education? Themes: Counseling Identity, Culturally Informed Research, Internalized Self-Reflection. a.1.) What factors hinder counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? Themes: Blind Spots, Social Desirability, Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders. a.2.) What factors help counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? Themes: Evaluation of performance, Administrative Support and Mentorship, Multiplicity of Voices and Experiences. Themes: Blind Spots, Social Desirability, Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders. b.) How does race and gender (or lived experiences or job/career position type) influence counselor educator administrators' demonstration of culturally competent practices? Themes: Microaggressions and Life Experiences, White Superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression), Authenticity.

This study included four African American/Black women, one African American/Black man, one Biracial/multiracial woman, and four White women, ranging in age from 27 to 52 who identify as Counselor Educators in an administration and/or leadership position. Participants ranged from 1 to over 10 years of higher education leader or administrator experience.

Discussion of Themes

The researcher demonstrated credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability throughout the research process. The researcher requested that each participant review and verify their respective interviews transcript to ensure that the participant's voices were captured accurately. Member checking was completed so the researcher situates the phenomena being examined from the participants perspective and participant data could be analyzed (Trochim,

2020). Moreover, the researcher maintained an audit trail of steps and strategies of the study. This was performed to ensure transferability and dependability of research such that it could be explored beyond the setting and context discussed in the study (Trochim, 2020). To increase confirmability, the researcher engaged an external auditor to conduct a review and apply inferences from the research (Trochim, 2020). The codes that emerged and are described were validated by the external auditor, a Counseling Education and Supervision faculty member (Trochim, 2020).

The interview data describes the lived experiences of counselor educators in higher-education leadership and/or administration positions and situates the essence of both the shared and individualized experiences of each counselor educator in a higher-education leadership/administration role. The study data reveal journeys of counselor educators in administration and/or leadership roles, reflexive self-perception of their own cultural competence in action in their positions. From the data captured, the essence of the phenomenon focused on counselor educators in administration and/or leadership; insight and awareness is gleaned about how counselor educators in higher-education administration and/or leadership roles perceive their cultural competence is demonstrated. Data was organized into themes using NVIVO software. NVIVO assisted in deciphering the essence of the lived experiences revealed in the data among the participants. There are three research questions and twelve themes emerged from the data discussed below.

The findings are addressed by each research question: 1.) How do counselor educators describe their own demonstration of culturally competent practice in their roles as administrators in higher education? Themes: Counseling Identity, Culturally Informed Research, Internalized Self-Reflection. a.1.) What factors hinder counselor educator administrators demonstrate

culturally competent practice? Themes: Blind Spots, Social Desirability, Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders. a.2.) What factors help counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? Themes: Evaluation of performance, Administrative Support and Mentorship, Multiplicity of Voices and Experiences. b.) How does race and gender (or lived experiences or job/career position type) influence counselor educator administrators' demonstration of culturally competent practices? Themes: Microaggressions and Life Experiences, White Superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression), Authenticity.

1. How do counselor educators describe their own demonstration of culturally competent practice in their roles as administrators in higher education?

The following themes are addressed for research question one:

Theme: Culturally Informed Research

Culturally informed research was identified as a theme in research question one. Culturally informed research is acknowledging the importance of conducting research that includes diversity, multiculturalism, advocacy and social justice in research frameworks, designs outcomes, and more (O'Hara, et al., 2016). Below are some participants' responses pertaining to the importance of culturally informed research and how this assists them in making culturally sound decisions as a counselor educator in leadership.

Amy stated it is essential to go beyond diverse relationships one may have but explore the literature for yourself to understand diverse experiences and your own blind spots:

And I really do think that...I've been much more intentional on how I build friendships and the things that I read, how I'm intentionally seeking out my own stuff, reading by diverse authors, researching more stuff so that I can speak to it better. And trying to do my own research, so I don't just rely on my friends, it's not like, "I have a Black friend

who tells me all this.” It’s not that, but being in relationships with people of color and people of diverse backgrounds opened my eyes to things I don’t know, like I was able to become more aware of my own blind spots and the biases and even racist perspectives that I hold myself, so that I can address them better. I don’t know. Yeah, and it’s... For me, it’s not always like... I know when I think as a counselor educator about research, it’s, “I’m reading journal articles,” and some of that’s true, but I’m also just being mindful of the news articles that I read and reading them with a more critical eye in terms of framing and word choices and trying to read from a variety of even news sources and things like that.

Claudia stated reading literature regarding multicultural is fundamental and assists in education in having meaningful conversations and becoming knowledgeable about diverse individuals:

Well, and recently reading, you know, reading a lot of literature about multicultural I’m in a reading book me and white supremacy, a reading book club, you know, things like that. I mean, trying to really not just reflect, but really do the work. You know, do the and introspective work. Yeah. That education piece is so crucial because if you don’t feel comfortable and somewhat knowledgeable right of what you’re talking about. That’s life in general, you just can’t talk, you ... then you don’t, can’t have a conversation, you really can’t have a meaningful conversation about this so that’s, that’s where it’s at. And, and I can see it in myself in the short amount of time I’ve been doing some concentrated reading. I can see my knowledge expansion and, you know, just my ease with which I can, you know, discuss this material and it’s ... it’s really, it’s really helpful. It’s really good.

Cupcake stated how research has aided in their professional development:

I've researched ... did my own research on the side related to being culturally competent. I've designed professional development for, um for my faculty and also for the college at large. I'm currently involved in... Ah, -- I grant related to cultural pedagogy or inclusive pedagogy um. And I've done you know outside training as well in terms of leadership, how to be a leader, but also there was cultural competence um. Content within that particular program.

Harper stated the importance of reading counseling literature but taking an interdisciplinary approach and understanding other disciplines is key:

Like learn the statistics learn this, the prevalence of different things and how some systems impact different groups in different ways like you know, that was very eye opening when I came into this role and started working more with the faculty, of their side. Like I did a lot of work looking at the leaky leadership pipeline and the leaky pipeline in academia and all of that and, and studying that work and, and so I think. That has really influenced like I just have this willingness to keep learning and, and Um, looking at different disciplines in that. Not just reading the counseling stuff because our stuff isn't all that great so. Um, so really looking at things like public health and I mean just fields we don't even necessarily think about right away, but and some education, but public health has been, it's been wonderful. And in terms of that and psychology has been, of course. So those kinds of things are important but, but also, I would say the other way, it influences when I think of it from the skills space, which is where we always struggle because we don't have a lot of like, okay, what does this look like in the real world. What does being multicultural look like an action.

Jane stated the importance of reading literature and taking an interdisciplinary approach while recognizing and reflecting on their worldview as Eurocentric and challenging that perspective through research:

How I apply it? So, I try to remain well-versed in readings and interdisciplinary. So, I try to recognize when I may be working from a Eurocentric perspective and how to disrupt that.

Scobby stated the importance of staying abreast on counseling literature and taking an interdisciplinary approach to better understand individuals of color and other marginalized communities:

Yeah. So, through workshops and through personal readings and just keeping abreast of what's happening, not only in the professional counseling arena, but just what's happening worldwide in terms of people of color or marginalized individuals and whatnot.

Alexus stated that they will seek out opportunities focused on multicultural competence:

I've gone to professional development opportunities when I attend conferences if it's something multiculturally competent or culturally related I'm probably in that session.

These statements highlight participants responses related to culturally informed research and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

Theme: Counseling Identity

Counseling identity was identified as a theme in research question one. Counseling identity can be defined as encompassing and in alignment with philosophical orientation of human development, prevention, and wellness areas within interprofessional counseling practice (Mellin, Hunt, & Nichols, 2011). Additionally, social justice and advocacy is another piece that

counselors integrate in theories, paradigms, and practice (Ratts, 2015). The social justice and advocacy component is another aspect of counseling identity. Counselor educators are counselors, supervisors, researchers, teachers, and leaders. Below, participants in the study discuss to how their counseling identity and related experiences have been beneficial to them in their leadership roles.

Adrian stated that relying on counseling skills has been an integral part of their development and in them doing their introspective work:

I feel like I wasn't explicitly taught like, "Hey, do this, these are the evidence-based strategies". I have had to rely on counseling experiences and pull from that to develop a set of skills for myself to say, "These are the kind of things that I would do to engage with other people and bring up these conversations." So, I don't know, being able to reflect on that process of growth is another source of evidence that I can tell myself that I'm actually competent and I have evidence to support that.

Alexus stated that showing empathy which is a part of the counseling process and skill has assisted them in showing that they come across as a leader and could provide individualized plans based on how a person learns and receives information:

I think and I kind of talked about it before. It's that base of being caring and taking everybody as an individual and learning. Even though it's still that, that gatekeeping piece that I have and then that leadership piece that I now have added on to that as a counselor educator. As a counselor, any student that walked into my office... Until I got to know them, I had to learn everything about them, and I had to figure out what made them unique, and what made them different and how they learn best so that I could help them and so...As far as being a counselor educator, there's really no difference. I'm still

trying to get to know students, get to know faculty, get to learn more about them without just assuming things so that I can learn more and then finding out the ways that they learn or in terms of leadership, the way that they respond best in terms of supervision, what they need. How they need it, and how much did they need. And so, I'm just not putting people in a box, but growing and learning and tailoring what I give to them to how they how they receive it best. Right, and then how they learn because everybody doesn't learn with just, you know. A conversation or email but some people, that's fine. Like, it gets through when they just need some extra sources. Other people need a conversation, need to be taught. Talk through it or a video demonstration but learning the best modality to support both students and faculty in ways that they respond to and learning about that because I may assume in the beginning that, okay, all I need to do is send an email or send some resources and that will help, but in talking with them or learning about them, maybe I need to go about it in another way. So, figuring out which way works to the response that, that we need.

Amy stated how sometimes they switch roles moving from administrator to counselor based on what is needed in the moment for an individual:

So just in general, my background in counseling, I think the... I'm doing so many... I'm meeting with so many students, especially in my administrative role that that clearly comes... The meeting that I had prior to this meeting felt a lot more... It was a fine balance between a counseling session and an advising session, and so I think in that just my counseling, you talked about active listening, but this idea of empathy and active listening, unconditional positive regard, authenticity, those core ways of being as a counselor, I want those to be my core way of being with students and in my role even in

administration, I'm working with other faculty members, and I want that to be clear. I want that to be who I am, I believe that a lot of that is most typically who I am, of course, stress can override some of that, but I want that to come out clearly...For me, I don't put on like, "Oh. Let me put on my Counselor coat. Okay. Wait, now I'm back in my administrator role, let me put on that administrator coat." That it's who I am, I'm bringing to each of these roles, and so I think that who I am as a counselor, comes out also as a teacher and an administrator, because that's who I am, that I bring my same way of being, and I am hopeful that my way of being is continuing to be influenced by my work that I'm doing culturally, that I really do believe that my way of being has shifted from where I was seven years ago, even last year, but definitely seven years ago, I've seen a big shift in my way of being, that who I am at my foundation has not changed, but how I am has changed.

Cupcake stated how they have been able to advocate for the profession by speaking to other leaders about the counseling profession:

Yeah. Yeah. And I think also I have of me. I've been up at the beginning like doing programming. Like, right now we're currently I'm working on programming for my school related to Black Lives Matters that's going to have an impact for all the programs, not just counseling. But we also have other programs within the School of Social Behavioral Sciences. So, I think that that's my role to it. And I always bring that counselor ed piece because sometimes that's a plus when you're working with across disciplines. And having to bring it back. So, I think that being able to sit at the table as a counselor educator. I've been able to get people to like, oh yeah, we forgot about counseling. Okay. And, you know, our larger for annual for larger discussion. I think

that's really important because I've recognized that part of this work is also related to advocacy. So not just advocacy for the students or for the community, but also advocacy for the profession. And having people understand what a counselor is what a counselor can do, what are their what was the training and then using the right terminology is really important to me. So, I always try to kind of wiggle my way into places where they didn't invite me initially was in their life. Oh, I'm so glad you're here. I'm like, I'm glad I'm here to, you know, is very important.

Harper stated that really exemplifying them being a counselor and those counseling skills into their role as a leader has been beneficial in being culturally responsive:

Just going back to my master's level counseling skills have been really helpful. I've had to reset right because I've learned certain ways to lead and those weren't always congruent with being a counselor. But the more that I infuse being a counselor with who I am as a leader, the better outcomes I have, the more trust I have with folks and you know, taking five minutes when someone comes to my office with something and going, oh, how's your family and blah, you know, and having that and getting to know them. Is, in my opinion, culturally responsive. Right. It's like, well, who do we show up at work. You know what's going on with our lives and Are they feeling engaged. Do they feel like they have a seat at the table, and so forth. So, um, so, yeah, I do think it comes back to our counselor skills in a lot of ways.

Mindy stated the importance of educating students on how to apply their counseling skills beyond the counseling room or session and use their voices to advocate for marginalized clients and dismantling systemic oppression:

You cannot be afraid of poor people and poverty. Systemic oppression is real. So, when I talk to my students about when I first started my job, a lot of things going on in the world and I was talking to my students about voting. And I said, “If you vote for someone who is against the expansion of Medicaid, know that you’re voting against your own self-interest.” I tell my students, “I am not telling you how to vote but what I am telling you is if you vote for someone who wants to repeal Medicaid or defund Medicaid or do any of that, who do you think you are going to see?” I tell them, “You cannot be afraid of severe mental illness, you cannot be afraid of poverty, you cannot be afraid of the criminal justice system. Those are our clients. Those may not be your clients in 15 years. Heck, they may not be your clients in six years.”

Scobby stated that showing empathy and unconditional positive regard which are counseling skills towards individuals especially in situations that they may not be as knowledgeable about even after reviewing the literature and approaching people in that manner has been helpful to them:

Okay, so other than reading, other than going to workshops, if I am presented with an opportunity, I like to see them as opportunities, to work with an individual or to address a scenario of which I am not completely knowledgeable about, I’ll tell you, I take a step back and I go do my research before approaching the individual or before approaching the scenario. Otherwise, other than that, I have no problem saying, “Okay, listen, this is new for me. I do wanna understand you, and I wanna make sure that we move forward in a way that is beneficial for you in the situation as well as the program or whatever environment it’s happening in. Can you help me understand this piece?” Because sometimes, the individual can provide you with some insight in regard to their perception

and how they are interacting and that caused the scenario in the first place. And that's always important, you know, as a counselor. It allows the individual to be heard and feel like they are important, they in fact matter, and that's what I think. And so, if I can't get those answers by doing my own research, then I lean on the individual. Help me out a little bit here. I really think... Ashley, it's the same answer I gave you earlier. I use that knowledge and skillset, I reflect, I try to meet individuals where they are, and again, transparency is important to me, so yeah.

Serena stated how counseling or clinical training has assisted in their leadership role specifically group therapy training:

I recognized how just the clinical, the clinical training that I received as a counselor educator prepared me for the role of leadership. And particularly my emphasis in group psychotherapy, which is also my area of research and scholarship and published a lot around diversity issues in group therapy, social justice, effective, you know, culturally effective interventions in group that this really prepared me for the leadership. But many moments as a leader I conceptualize the group, the entire department that I'm working with as a group. And in that group. I look at the systems that exist within that particular group. And how those systems function together where they are effective and where they're not effective. So, I look at the microsystems of different programs within my department. I look at the cultural dynamics at play, dominant cultural practices, and structures in academia, we, you know, and how they play out in a situation where me as a black woman sits in a position of leadership.

Jane stated being a part of a reading group and action steps are lacking. Jane continues by stating that the counseling profession is rooted in theory and application:

Okay, so I actually had a situation this week that I think applies to this. So, I'm part of a reading group and it's interdisciplinary in nature, and we get lots of readings that are very philosophical in nature, and don't have a lot of application or action, but are just these broad strokes or ideas. And I'm miserable reading the readings and I'm miserable in the discussions, and I think it's because in the counseling profession, has such an action and apply piece. And so, with the way that we train and the way that we work, we identify a problem and then we start trying to think about how to tackle or address it. And so, I think my identity in counseling has me troubleshooting or trying to prompt up situational leadership because there's a relationship and then there's the task and you balance the two. And I feel like that is foundational to who I am as a leader, but also a credit to our profession and the training in that we just don't recognize that there are large issues, we actually try to get our hands dirty and start working on them.

These statements highlight participants responses related to counseling identity and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

Theme: Internalized Self-Reflection

Internalized self-reflection was identified as a theme in research question one.

Internalized self-reflection work is defined as knowledge and understanding of oneself in relation to core values, beliefs, life experiences, and worldview (McGoldrick, 1998; Pieterse, Lee, Ritmeester, & Collins, 2013). Below, participants shared the internalized self-reflection work that was necessary for them to first explore and continue doing, so that they can engage in culturally competent practices as a leader.

Adrian stated the importance of internalized self-reflection particularly if asking others to take an intrinsic look regarding aspects of cultural competence:

Yeah. I feel like it causes me too always... I feel like a lot of social justice and culturally competent work focuses on change in other people. But one thing that it does for me, is it makes me look internally whenever I'm asking other people to change. I'm like, "Am I also engaging in this sort of change?" And I don't know. It's not as common with like racism necessarily, but with other aspects of cultural competence with like gender, gender identity and expression. If I'm asking people to build awareness of pronouns that people would use and gender identity expression also had moments where I'm like, "Are you Adrian looking up this information?" And I don't know, so I try to challenge myself to continue to grow, and I think that's ____ feeling the original question, but I feel like that's one way that this work is influencing me, or I use it to try to influence my own sort of growth.

Alexus stated that not making assumptions about students is essential as well as checking themselves on if their approach in working with diverse students that they are responding in a culturally competent way:

Way beyond just race or, or gender or things like that. There are a lot of different cultural issues. And so, I think I'm always...Self reflecting in terms of learning about students, learning about their differences, not assuming that all students are the same. Um, not making assumptions and taking every student as an individual, but then also, like I said, paying attention to me and how I feel and how I'm reacting culturally to something or what my cultural composition might be too. And so, it's kind of a dual process and learning about students and learning about others, and taking them as individuals, but then making sure that I'm always thinking about myself and analyzing myself as well.

Amy stated that self-reflection has been key in evaluating or considering their cultural competence practice as a whole and particularly in their program:

Cause it's a... I think it's a better representation of the population, and so trying to just even in that, be mindful of the language that I use. Skills, it's a lot of self-reflection, honestly, is probably the biggest skill that I use in terms of cultural competence, a lot of self-reflection or a lot of reflecting on my practice and then the practices within the program as a whole.

Claudia stated the importance of reflecting on recognizing and reflecting on errors made in the past and understanding why it occurred initially:

Being self-aware. Trying to understand my students' perspectives and my colleagues' perspectives and I'm learning as I go every day and I made some terrible mistakes in the past that I didn't even always know that I did, but I'm reflecting and thinking about things now, a lot more and recognizing those errors and now trying to okay understand why that happened in the first place. So, a lot of it is sort of just self-reflective introspective work. Well, and recently reading, you know, reading a lot of literature about multicultural I'm in a reading book me and White supremacy, a reading book club, you know, things like that. I mean, trying to really not just reflect, but really do the work. You know, do the and introspective work.

Harper stated reflection on the mistakes that were being made as a leader was necessary work and has provided a yearning to better understand diverse individuals' experiences is essential:

Yeah, I think that's fair. I think also just my general work experiences and I have, you know, several examples of kind of how I've been faced with injustices whether it's with

staff or faculty in terms of, okay, how do I not only... what are some of the mistakes I'm making as a leader and how can I be more responsive but also, like, how do I deal with this. I've never thought about it and so like those have been things. A lot of times around salary and pay equity and whether you know I had a staff member who if she took a pay cut of \$1,000 it would have her or, I'm sorry. She took a pay increase of \$1,000 she wouldn't be eligible for food stamps or WIC anymore. And like, never having to think about those kinds of things like really a bigger picture of advocacy or faculty leaving positions and those would be faculty of color and like why was that happening or being in a department chair role or the role, I am now and seeing a panel of White folks coming on campus to interview and folks saying, well, we just can't find any one of color, or they didn't apply and like so there's been a lot of experiences where, you know, maybe in the beginning stages of my career was like Okay, that makes sense. Like now, that I would like understand more. And I'm, I'm really invested in it in terms of this particularly around anti-racism and intersectionality

Mindy stated cultural competence is something that we may strive for and requires you to do the work and engage others beyond whom you may have been exposed to and what you have experienced:

I definitely would say I professionally identify as a counselor educator. Cultural competence is such a heavy term. I would say that I'm somebody who's always working on being culturally competent, who's aware that it's not a fixed state of being and that the more confident you are in saying you're culturally competent, my theory is that, usually, the shakier. So, I would say I'm a counselor educator who is really aware of cultural competence and who really works towards always growing in that area. And so, I think

that really requires you to work on it when you move, when you start engaging with other people and when you really start to realize like, again, no matter how culturally competent you are, you're really only culturally confident in what you experienced, and you knew, and you grew up in.

Serena stated even when encountering racism from others as the leader recognizing that the leader does not have the privilege to turn this into a competitive situation for the micro aggressor who is under their leadership:

Yes. But ... and but learning those counseling skills of self-regulation, you know, personal management. So even when encountering racism. You know, passive aggressive, my core response as a leader. You know when some injustice, oh, I'm not going to meet with you. You know, or sent you the email, you know the contract phase that I can only meet with you every other year. So, I do need to meet with you every year, you know, I said well you know we're not. You're not the one determining your salary. But that doesn't serve your best interest because I'm going to say this person doesn't get any merit pay. They cannot even make a meeting. So, part of that is just being aware as a counselor educator that I do not have the privilege as the one in leadership to turn it into a competition, you know, and sometimes I may name it, you know, I may name that maybe you're struggling with coming to me. No, no, no. And you know, I say okay. All right. Just wanted you to know that it did cross my mind. If this might be an issue for you. So, but just using my counseling skills, about how to engage in those cross, cross-cultural conversations with someone who is in an adversarial position. Without completely losing my ground, while remaining very regulated, I must be cool as cucumber in those settings

you know you. They will not know if, if I'm angry that they're not going to experience it in that but being a counselor educator. A lot of reflective practice.

These statements highlight participants responses related to internalized self-reflection and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

A.1. What factors hinder counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice?

The following themes are addressed for research question a.1.:

Theme: Blind Spots

Blind spots were identified as a theme in research question a.1. According to Luft and Ingram (1961), blind spots refer to features of an individual's personality that others are aware of, yet unaware, or oblivious is the individual to these features. These blind areas are those where others can see aspects of ourselves that we are unconscious of; these are also described by the Johari Window concept (Luft & Ingram, 1961). Below are the voices of participants describing blind spots experienced and ways in which they've associated and addressed their blind spots.

Amy stated it is important to get feedback from others in particular addressing their teaching practice and if their practice is inclusive or if there are some blind spots:

I don't wanna incorporate microaggressions regularly into my teaching practice, so I'm learning more and more where they are... 'Cause a lot of times they fall on blind spots, and so it's... Another piece of this is inviting others to speak into me in what I'm doing and hearing well from them because they can speak to my blind spots.

Scobby stated that there is still a lot that they can learn, and they acknowledge that their lived experience is diverse from others:

Okay, so are you asking me, I guess, maybe to rate my ability to be competent, culturally competent in my role? I guess if I rated myself, I would rate myself maybe as an eight.

There is still a lot I have to learn, there are individual scenarios that I've not been exposed to. However, my goal is to meet the person where they are and try to understand their perceptions of the scenario, their lived experience and how it may be different from mine, and how my perception may be different and impact our interactions together.

Harper stated that there has been a shift in counseling education scholarship that focuses on cultural competence as well as what being a leader entail:

And I think in some ways, while that history was important. It was very simplistic. It was a matter of, as you know, a lot of focus on awareness, knowledge, and skills of how to work with racially diverse individuals. There was some mention of power, but for the most part it was a lot of that the research that we were doing a lot of things we were talking about in counselor education. Were based in this older multicultural competency model of let me learn what I can about these groups. And not necessarily about, well, let's take a look at things like resilience or resistance or social injustice or how social injustice feeds into not only mental well-being, but social economic health factors that influences how we show up. And so, I say that because I'm... not as an excuse. But I think that back then. I was involved in a lot of scholarship, even as a beginning leader and back then I was like, oh, I got this like I, I know I know like what this is, and I think particularly in my most recent role in the college and particularly since the new multicultural and social justice competencies have been out but what I thought I knew or did okay as a leader has certainly shifted. So, I can tell you some good stuff and some bad stuff. But I would say that some of the factors and please follow up if I'm not answering

your question, but some of the factors have been shifts in the scholarship and the conversations we've had in counselor education around what multicultural competency is. I think there also have been shifts in our organization to focus more on what it means to be a leader, not just to the profession, but to the profession in the academy. We didn't, we didn't really talk about this. I mean ACES would have department chairs interest groups; they'd have some of that. But in terms of like what it meant to be a leader, much less a culturally competent leader that was just we didn't, you know, it wasn't even on the forefront. Part of it is, I think, we didn't have as many counselor educators in leadership roles. Right. So, I think the shifting dialogue, the way we define things. The, the greater number of us in these fields were beginning to have those conversations have, have been a big piece of it so.

These statements highlight participants responses related to blind spots and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

Theme: Social Desirability

Social desirability was identified as a theme in research question a.1. Social desirability is defined as the tendency of people to underestimate or overestimate the likelihood they would perform an undesirable or desirable action (Chung & Monroe, 2003). Moreover, it is the tendency that individuals deny socially undesirable actions and behaviors and generally admit to socially desirable ones (Chung & Monroe, 2003). Below are the voices of participants and their experiences with social desirability.

Adrian stated being aware of how individuals do not want to be labeled as someone who is insensitive to marginalized individuals, however, their speech does not match their actions:

I don't know, relevance of my counseling skills is that in terms of measuring and knowing if I'm having impact, I'm trying to be very aware of social desirability that most people in this world have... I don't want to be labeled as a racist, a sexist, homophobic, or whatever. And I feel like if I just give someone an instrument or something, those usually make... They don't necessarily account for social desirability unless they're constructed in that way... To measure something covertly rather than make it obvious or have face validity. So, I feel like that's like a prime example of where counseling skills can come in because in counseling, I work with people who tell me socially desirable things all the time and I'm listening like, "This doesn't add up, you're saying this and you're doing this." Whereas mix up in terms of a stage of change, I feel like that's sort of... I don't know. It's helpful in actually jump starting... Getting someone out of the pre-contemplation stage when they think in their own experience, they think they're in like a maintenance stage. I'm like "You actually haven't made any change at all." But you know.

These statements highlight participants responses related to social desirability and participants experiences.

Theme: Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders

Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders was identified as a theme in research question a.2. Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders refers to confronting oppressive problems and tackling those concerns (Weick & Chamberlain, 1997, 2002). Furthermore, stakeholders is an inclusive term that encompasses but not limited to staff, professional peers, leaders/administrators' supervisors. Moreover, how participants engaged in speaking up about

confrontational related issues is discussed. Below, are the voices of participants that reveal experiences with confronting colleagues and stakeholders.

Harper stated getting feedback from others where they felt others were not naming an injustice and mixed messages from leadership on marginalized individuals being supported however actions do not align:

I've gotten feedback from folks where they felt like other people weren't helpful because they weren't specific enough in naming an injustice. And I laugh about this in terms of, like, okay, we've had all of these killing of black and brown bodies. Right. But instead, we get messages of, oh we're in solidarity of the recent events like it's very like what is, what are you talking about like what recent event. First of all, it's not recent okay but anyway, right. So, like, I think that is such a good example of well-meaning leaders, saying, hey, we support you. But I'm going to stay over here. Like, I don't really understand your struggle, and I don't want to get specific. But I'm here to support you. And so, I think people feel that and, and, you know, and will tell you authentically if they trust you like that. Like, people don't care about them, frankly, So, um, so that's been especially in the past few months, that's been really eye opening to see. I feel like there's like this template. They sent out to all the universities and said, just use this for telling your stand in solidarity and like what does it mean to stand in solidarity, right. So, um, it's just... We just need more I think from a multicultural competency standard even in our own field. More specific training of examples of how it can be carried out, and these are some of the benefits and some of the risks you take. When you don't do it the right way at the right time. You know, I think, like, we can speak it. We can cite all the

components of multicultural competence, but until we make mistakes or see mistakes like we don't get it. So, work on that.

Claudia stated an experience in which a colleague was confronted regarding their pushback on hiring diverse individuals:

So, my institution we're a very pro social you know socially active institution but our leadership now faculty are predominantly Caucasian. So, we really needed to bring some diversity to our leadership to our faculty because our students are very diverse, and we need to have that element. In our classrooms. Well, one of the faculty that I work with, who's a White male also, you know, promotes the idea of inclusivity and you know diversity and ... and, and voices that. But when it came down to actually making the decision to add diversity to our faculty there was some pushback from him, and it was very interesting. It was very interesting, as I have to stand firm right in my position of no this is what we have to do, right, we, we, this is what we're gonna do right, we, we need to do this for ... for our program. So that was interesting. Because he's an older White male. And at that point, he was even in a higher leadership position than I am and so, but I was chair of the search committee, so I have some I have some ability to you know, make some decisions but ... but, yes that was very interesting, but I felt that it was important. So, I had to advocate right for that, for that need that we have as a department and to sort of fight that you know dominance racist, for lack of a better word, right, racist perspective because at the end of the day, that's what it was.

These statements highlight participants responses related to confrontation of colleagues and stakeholders perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this in leadership.

A.2. What factors help counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice?

The following themes are addressed for research question a.2.:

Theme: Evaluation of Performance

Evaluation of performance was identified as a theme in research question a.2. Evaluation of performance is referred to as ongoing feedback individuals receive that focus on professional demonstration of skills and professional development/advancement in various ways (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Evaluative performance information can be provided in different ways such as in the form of summative and formative feedback (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Formative feedback is the process of facilitating skill acquisition and professional growth through direct feedback (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Summative evaluation can provide part of an annual review of employee performance, teaching evaluations, or other feedback regarding counselor educators in leadership and or administration positions as well as areas of professional growth and decline. Below, are participant reflections how they evaluate their performance as counselor educators in leadership or administration positions in higher education.

Adrian stated ways in which they evaluate their performance through an informal assessment process to understand an individual's stages of change level:

Yeah, that's kind of tricky for me. I feel like I'm a data-driven person. So, I like something that's objective and tangible that I could look at to say like, "Here's this change as a result of the work that I'm doing," and oftentimes, it's really hard for me to assess because I'm not measuring things, and some things are just really hard to measure. But when I can, I try to take this pre-post sort of temperature check that's not official or anything, but I try to think, where were these... I'll just use this book club that I

mentioned, where were these people at when they started and where are they at now? Have they changed along the process? Doing an informal assessment of things. And if things are the exact same or seem pretty similar, then to me that's kind of evidence that whatever skills or approach I'm taking might not be working or be useful. However, if I do notice some sort of change, whether it's something that's tangible or measurable or something that's sort of like just internal to an individual, I take that as evidence that the work that I'm doing is having an impact. But yeah, I think that's... Yeah.

Alexus stated receiving reviews in courses, student feedback, and faculty feedback that assisted them with their evaluation of their performance:

And that's a hard one, because sometimes this job can be thankless, or people may not actually share it. I think the best way for me to be reinforced in what I'm doing is through course reviews from the students because they, a lot of times, they do not hold back in terms of that qualitative feedback. And this is what happened. And this is how the experience was. But also when I'm giving personal attention to either faculty or students and they respond back. I have a couple of faculty members that respond back to every email that I send, and thank you, and this is great. And we're so happy that you sent this in different ways, or that you paid attention to the fact that I have this going on at home, too. But I guess it would just be the responses that I do get when I get them whether they be in a conversation or, like I said, an anonymous review from a student or an email response from a student. I've also heard you know students talk so I've heard other students say, you know, I heard about you from another student who took this class, or who had you and they said, you know, good things about you that I'd be good there. And I was worried, but it's been a good experience and so that the times where I do get to hear

back from faculty and students will be the time that I can, when I'm reassured that what I've been doing at least was beneficial to somebody.

Claudia stated receiving informal feedback from students and emails have been helpful in reflecting on their evaluation of their performance:

You know, some informal feedback, students will say, you know, the in the class, we had in the spring, where you know, I give them the option to share or not share. And then one of them, emailed me after the fact and said, I chose not to share, and I appreciate you. Doing that, because I don't feel safe, or I don't feel like I can right now. And that's their thing. So that helped me know that it was a good decision on my part to give them the option. So that was validating of that piece of that cultural competence piece. You know, I guess student evaluations can give you some feedback related to that and I know I've seen others receive feedback on that piece. I never personally, but I know students can sometimes feel comfortable sharing feedback in that way.

Cupcake stated when sharing current literature with faculty and students and they discuss that information in meetings or other spaces helps them in evaluating their performance:

Faculty are able to kind of amend or modify how they've been teaching based upon some article or some feedback that I gave when students feel like they can advocate for themselves and come to me and say, you know, I think this could be better. And I'm like, you're absolutely right. I love that stuff. think that when once they graduate. I think that when they're able to be in practice, and then come back to me and say, oh, I've done x, y, and z. And I've utilized data. Or I might give some type of video for them to watch. And at the end of the semester, they still talk about, like, you know, I was hot. I can't see anything now except this I was like, I know I knew it was going to do that to you. When

you know I was like I knew was going to do that too. And they're like, I she was like yesterday. I didn't think this way. Now that's changed the way that I see the world. I was just like, yes. So, when it starts to change another person's behavior. I think that that's how I know I've been effective. And it might not be tomorrow, but it might be over time. And even when you know I think I had an intern student go out and she was doing her internship and she was sat at this table, and she was talking about data and somebody leaned in with like, you know Professor Cupcake. Yes, she's like you sound, just like her, like, I heard it come out of your mouth. I heard her coming out of your mouth. I was like who was that. You know, I was like, she's like, I can't not not hear your, your words. When I'm working with students, and I was like oh okay I'm going to consider that to be a compliment. So, so I think that that's what it is. Right. So, when you start to influence policy and people behavior that's when you know that you've been effective, you know, and also there's that thing where...I know that I'm doing the right thing. When I'm able to inform others like this is how I've done it. This is I've done it or share the stuff that I have done with other departments and other schools and other colleagues.

Harper stated taking inventory of individuals feeling comfortable to talk with them about an array of topics helps in evaluating their performance as a leader:

I think some of the things you know you alluded to some of this, but I think the fact that people will open up to me when they won't open up to other people that they feel comfortable talking with me. Um, I think that people say that, you know, I do what I say I'm going to do, and that I'm you know, I'm a person of my word and, and I get that feedback, whether they're like divulging personal stuff to me directly, or not like that

they feel heard, they feel like I'm doing something on behalf of the best interest of other folks. Um, and I think that, you know,

Scobby stated receiving formative and summative feedback from students and peers has been instrumental in evaluating their performance:

It's typically the response from my peers, from students, getting both formative and summative feedback from those individuals via the evaluations, student evaluations, my employee evaluations and the general... What am I trying to say? I guess I'll go back to the word 'interaction,' the approach, when individuals approach me, my colleagues tend to listen to me, and not because I'm in a leadership role, but because they respect me, and it's... That's different. And I think that's how I get that feedback and it tells me that, okay, you're doing something right, that this is what gets the job done, this is what helps the client move forward, this is what helps students learn. So that engagement piece. Yeah, interactions.

Serena stated the feedback they have received in their review by supervisor has been helpful for them in evaluating their performance in their leadership role:

And my review was exceptional. So, there's also feedback on leadership. So always seeking that feedback on leadership. Am I meeting my goals? What about my budget. How is it doing? So, there are very tangible things that show that the leader is doing something right. I'm doing something right with my budget, you know, I'm doing something right here. The feedback from my review as chair reflects at my leadership, it's seen as transformative. And so that has led me to really think about what else do I want to do and what I don't want to do.

These statements highlight participants' responses related to evaluation of performance and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

Theme: Administrative Support and Mentorship

Administrative support and mentorship were identified as a theme in research question a.1. Administrative support in higher education is defined as the leadership behavior that is associated with leadership effectiveness at a departmental level that includes but not limited a) to clear sense of direction/strategic vision; 2) preparing department arrangements to facilitate the direction set; 3) being considerate; 4) treating academic staff fairly and with integrity; 5) being trustworthy and having personal integrity; 6) allowing the opportunity to participate in key decisions/encouraging open communication; 7) acting as a role model/having credibility; 8) creating a positive/collegial work atmosphere in the department; 9) providing feedback on performance; and 10) providing resources for and adjusting workloads to stimulate scholarship and research (Bryman, 2007). Mentorship is that which is rooted in social constructivist principles involving social interaction and the co-construction of knowledge between individuals (Palincsar, 1998). Below are the voices of counselor educator leaders who demonstrate a value for administrative support and mentorship as they assist individuals, specifically historically oppressed populations with navigating various programs or spaces. Furthermore, participants describe the need for their supervisors to exhibit administrative support and mentorship.

Cupcake stated that there are not a lot of diverse leaders at their institution, however, there is an influx and higher-level administration is aware of this and supports marginalized individuals in their messages and actions:

Yeah. Yeah, and I think it's also important because I am in my school. Well at the college I might be one of like two or three chairs of color. In my school I'm definitely the only

chair of color. At the program director for them also program director as a program director. There's a lot more diversity. So, there's still like a handful of individuals of color. There's more persons of color at the program director level. But as we go up in higher administration. Not that meant, you know, well they're getting better. In terms of persons of color, being in higher level administration, but I felt like my college is really aware of that very cognizant about that and they. Are invested in that as well. So, it makes it a little bit easier to kind of speak out, since that's been messages that we have got received from the President, as well as the Provost. Able to be supportive. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. So, a lot of the affiliate program development that I've done at the college level has been with the support of the provost who is a Latino male. And so that's been, it's been great to have.

Harper stated having the authority to implement changes while being aware of White fragility and their own discomfort:

I've had more authority to be able to do things that I wouldn't have been able to do at a program or department level. And that's been really helpful in terms of multicultural competence and so I've engaged in some critical conversations with our students about their experiences in the academy and these are kind of undergraduates and graduate students, our doc students in particular, about what things they would like to see. We've done some one-on-one conversations. I've done small group conversations. I've done some surveys for folks that didn't feel comfortable. I've had conversations, mostly one-on-one with faculty particularly faculty of color and on tenured faculty who a lot of times, because of my role, I do a lot of faculty affairs work. They'll come to me and we, I've built a relationship, enough with them that they trust me to talk about where they're

not feeling a part of the community. And so, we've talked about that or unfortunately in cases where we've lost faculty, they tell us you know why they ...they're leaving right and so my confidence is always growing, but I think that I'm trying to continue to read, not just the counselor in leadership. But it's important to read the higher ed in leadership. About how different systems influence who we show up as, who are students show up as, who our faculty show up as, our staff and how we can engage them more. One of the things I will add Ashley, I think as a White woman that you know... I'm very well aware of White fragility. I'm well aware of, okay, I need to manage my comfort level or my discomfort with. Okay, I need to fix this now. And so, part of my growing edges continues to be. Slow down, not just listen but slow down because you can't force any intervention, even though it's the best anti-racist thing out there, right, or the best inclusive or activity around equity, you cannot throw a bunch of stuff at people. It's about pacing. It's about getting people's input in the right ways and at the right time frame. Serena stated naming events is vital as a leader as well as mentoring and providing support to all faculty especially faculty of color:

I think I just, I just don't collude in the silence around events that I've seen happen and that leaders act like they were not seeing happening. So, if something is going on. I'll name it. And part of it is also as a department chair making an effort to support faculty who I know deal with undue pressure due to their identities, or because of the courses they teach. So, for example, the faculty in my department who teach the race and racism courses in a predominantly White institution they face a lot of pushback, and you see it in the course evaluations. Which can be brutal. So, what I have done is that once they hit a certain target number, I give them a graduate assistant to just help with managing

classroom discussions and grading. And so, these are faculty were teaching large classes, but have never really received support and so, part of what I did is that irrespective of the academic rank, whether they were on tenure track or lecturers, I give them support and, and the way I couch it is that once the class gets that big, you need somebody helping you facilitate classroom discussions and so on and so forth. So just using my cultural awareness. That it is harder for faculty and those faculty tend to be faculty of color who are also less likely to ask for support. My White faculty asked for help, all the time, then you see the faculty ... the faculty of color who's carrying a double load, but they just struggle with it. So, what I've tried some, sometimes even create awareness. Do you know your colleagues are getting support? Do you know the other person has negotiated an extra credit? Why don't you come and meet with me and talk to me about how you could benefit from that kind of support. So just kind of trying to help them understand what's going on, the kind of support that they can get, and that they need to just come and talk to me about it. You know, to justify it so that they can get support. So just doing that. And then with some of the junior faculty of color provided graduate assistantship beyond the time that was typically given, and especially if they're performing well and I've just said you know this person is performing, is being productive in terms of their scholarship. They're using the graduate assistantship well; the student is benefiting by working with someone who's productive. I want that productivity to continue and the way I couch it in my budget is this is my retention efforts, the way I retain faculty of color is by giving them research support, you know, and so those are some of the practices very specific examples of just using my cultural awareness of the systems and who benefits from systems, who has privilege, who easily asks for help, who gets it, who is just assumed to

be a workhorse, you know, and how do you make it possible for other faculty of color or minority status to be successful. When you're in the position of privilege and so, so that has been very important and finally just realizing that it's important for somebody who's culturally competent to be at the table. I've seen it with other faculty other even White colleagues who are very culturally aware, having them at the table is critical. Because significant decisions are constantly being made. And when you don't have leaders who are culturally competent those are not the lenses through which they make decisions, whether it's cultural, retention.

Adrian stated receiving mentorship from those who are culturally competent has been instrumental to them and their professional experiences:

A couple of other things, mentorship from others who are culturally competent, has been useful and it's been useful to have a diverse range of people. Like, I've had White women who are culturally... Who I considered culturally competent, who have been able to mentor me and helped me work... Navigate a higher education system that I'm not used to and have no experience in. And that's been helpful, in terms of helping me get paid for something that I was going to do for free. I've had a White male as a mentor who had a similar role and he does a similar thing of helping me navigate higher education, helping inform me about what goes on behind the scenes or how things work. I'd say mentorship is probably like the biggest piece, it ties a textbook knowledge with a real person who cares and wants to see me succeed.

Alexus stated how mentors recognized the leadership qualities they possessed even when they were unaware of those qualities:

If I was only an instructor. So, I feel like it was just something that somebody else saw in me and pulled me in or a couple other people saw in me and pulled me in too, but then once I got into it. And I'm not just staying here because I've been able now that I'm in a position of leadership to pull other people in too, to give them opportunities, similar to mine. To where I saw things that they may not have seen or known about themselves and kind of encouraged them to do it too.

Harper stated the impact mentorship had on them and their early professional experiences:

Beginning of my master's program I had good mentors who got me involved in professional organizations and, and got me in on committees and leadership roles and so, I think that was that was really important because those early professional organization positions. Really shaped, a lot of what I was doing. So, and a lot of the ways that I think about diversity. I mean, I served on some diversity committees, for example, I served on awards committees, where I was, you know, really cognizant and making sure that we... We have folks of color that are recognized for awards. So, um, so I had a good training program, beginning at the master's level of that. And you know I had a lot of mentorship around scholarship and the types of scholarship particularly around multicultural competency. That wasn't the greatest, it was the beginning of scholarship. But again, for that time, for my developmental stage that was important.

Mindy stated their experiences in having mentees and how they have assisted mentees beyond their training program and the impact of having a phenomenal advisor:

So, I really work to continue to mentor them, as a person of color. They're not, right? They're both White women, but I also recognize that doctoral programs are a really hard

place and that there's a lot going on, and I've missed the connection. My program is only a master's level program, so I miss the connection. I've wanted to work more with doctoral students. So, for me, it fulfilled something for me, that I was able to... And then there was a mentorship opportunity on CESNET, and I reached out, and I've started mentoring someone who's at Florida, and that's been kind of interesting. And I'm not gonna lie, I got a White male mentee, and my friends laughed because they were like... 'Cause you just don't... It was Counselors for Social Justice. I did not think I was gonna get a White male mentee, and I did, and he's kind, and I had to suspend maybe my... And he's so great, and he's so great, and he does... He's meeting a lot of the things... I don't know. I would just say, I had a fantastic advisor who was really incredible and who did a lot of kind things for me, and I've continued to try to be that kindness moving forward. And so, I don't wanna forget... Like maybe when you talk about the training and things, I had a good advisor. I saw what it was like to have advisors who maybe were less present for you. I had a really good one, and that made I also think a lot of difference for me.

These statements highlight participants' responses related administrative support and mentorship and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

Theme: Multiplicity of Voices and Experiences

Multiplicity of voices and experiences was identified as a theme in research question a.1. Multiplicity of voices and experiences refers to the benefit of being exposed to individuals with diverse perspectives and how interactions in higher education are powerful such that people benefit educationally from one another (Chang, Denson, Sáen, & Misa, 2006). Moreover, multiplicity of voices and experiences is related to increased critical thinking, leadership ability,

and the skill development for working effectively with diverse individuals (Hurtado, 2001).

Below are the voices of participants discussing the importance of multiplicity of voices and experiences.

Claudia stated how beneficial it was to hear from diverse voices that challenged others in their perspective and thinking:

I was on the search committee, right. I was chair of it. And there was a Black woman on the search committee with me. And she would point things out, right, that I or somebody else was saying. And we were like, she would ... she would be ours. It was wonderful to have a perspective because she would give her side like what she was seeing in a dynamic, you know, that was at play. Wow. I never thought of it that way. So, it was just, it was so neat to have that, you know, rich kind of ability to, you know, collaborate, and hear, right not be defensive and not get angry, but really hear this other perspective and be able to work through it you know and, and there was nothing. It wasn't an argument, anything like that but I'm just saying that it was it was good to feel like you could be challenged and that that was a good thing, you know. But that was a good thing, and I didn't have to feel bad, or I didn't know what I was doing, or, you know, self-conscious or any of those things. It's just like, oh yeah, I see now what you're saying, okay, good. So, that was neat.

Harper stated the importance of hearing diverse voices and providing support for diverse voices:

So, it's been kind of this nice and way of empowering them to tell their story, but also educating others about different ways of knowing and stories. And so, I think I would just add that like as a leader like this is the stuff that gets me excited is like, how can we keep

pushing out different voices, right, whether it's representation and meetings or it's just different ways of defining constructs for stories like that stuff just gets me and keeps me in this position because there's ... there's so much to do.

Mindy stated how some universities recruit diverse individuals; however, they do not want diverse experiences that may arise:

Some people want diverse students at universities, but they don't want the experiences that diverse students bring and that's tough. My university, there are very few people of color, but the people of color are typically international, so there's not much domestic diversity. Well then, I need to be there to bring the perspective. So, I would say mostly that and a desire just to see us grow and get better.

Jane stated after the murder of Breonna Taylor, discussed a student on campus who recently experienced discrimination reported not knowing where faculty stood on racial injustices because of their silence. Jane discusses speaking up as a form of cultural competence:

Yes. Side story, I think it's speaking up, right? So this week, after the terrible outcome of the court case regarding the three police officers with Ms. Breonna Taylor's murder, after that this week, and discussions that are happening on campus, I had one individual say to me... A student, who had just experienced her own discrimination in our community, say, "I don't know where the faculties and leaders are on this when they're silent. I don't know where I'm safe and when somebody is an ally to me or not," and so I think it's also speaking up, it's not just under the right circumstances, flexing those culture competent muscles, but I think it's embodying what cultural competence means and then demonstrating that, and people knowing exactly where you stand.

Alexus stated their personal experience as a student of color in their training program and mixed messages received from leadership and how positive interactions in another training program was helpful where they felt supported and thrived:

I would have to say and kind of what inspired my dissertation is I was in a doctoral program that was not very multiculturally competent and I had a horrible experience in that doctoral program and actually ended up leaving because the students of color were not treated equally, and not treated well in that program. And so it kind of turned me off to the field of counselor education because as a counselor, you just assume that somebody is you know, caring and compassionate and then, especially when we're learning about how to be multiculturally competent counselor educators, it's kind of ... it plays with your mind because you hear one thing coming out of someone's mouth, but then they don't demonstrate those and so for me, that experience turned me off to counselor education, however. As a school counselor, I really wanted. I met a lot of not good school counselors. And so, I heard a lot of experiences from people who did not have very good school counselors and so I still had that motivation to want to train future school counselors to be competent and so I ended up applying to another doctoral program, was expecting the same treatment, and it was totally different. And so, everything about me culturally, from my role, you know, as a mother or my role as a full-time worker or a student, when everything was attended to and respected which was totally different from my first experience. But due to that experience, I learned what type of counselor educator I wanted to be, because I had, and it took a while to get over the trauma of how I was treated in that program and some of the other students we kind of get together sometimes and talk about it, but it really helps me in terms of motivating me

to study more about multicultural competence, but then wanting to make sure that I didn't make another student feel the way that I felt in that program. And so, for me, it's kind of personal because I recognize how damaging it can be to a student who just wants to, you know, be a counselor or just wants to be a counselor educator and it really helps and motivates me to practice what I preach and so it kind of motivated me to learn more, but definitely every day it motivates me on how to treat my students. Right, and then how they learn because everybody doesn't learn with just, you know, a conversation or email but some people, that's fine. Like, it gets through when they just need some extra sources. Other people need a conversation, need to be taught. Talk through it or a video demonstration but learning the best modality to support both students and faculty in ways that they respond to and learning about that because I may assume in the beginning that, okay, all I need to do is send an email or send some resources and that will help, but in talking with them or learning about them, maybe I need to go about it in another way. So, figuring out which way works to get the response that, that we need right, and I think that goes back to my experience because it was so negative, but it really influences how I interact. But within that program, I felt like I was always told that I was doing something wrong. But never really given guidance on how to do it right or the way that they wanted, and roles were always changing. And so, I just tried to make my work as a counselor educator and as a leader and administrator more so that I can explain if something's not going right, I could explain it. And then I check for understanding to make sure that I even explained it in a way that they understand, but what I don't want for students and for faculty is for them to assume that they have to figure it all out on their own.

These statements highlight participants' responses related to multiplicity of voices and experiences and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

B. How does race and gender (or lived experiences or job/career position type)

influence counselor educator administrators' demonstration of culturally competent practices?

The following themes are addressed for research question b.:

Theme: Microaggressions and Life Experiences

Microaggressions and life experiences was identified as a theme in research question b. Microaggressions refer to brief, everyday exchanges that send demeaning messages to marginalized individuals because they belong to a racial minority group (Sue & Constantine, 2007). Moreover, racial microaggressions may represent a noteworthy source of distress endured by individuals of color (Torres-Harding, Andrade, & Romero Diaz, 2012). The microaggressions and life experiences that participants have endured are described in their voices below.

Serena stated their experience in being a Black woman leading their department in predominately White spaces:

As a black woman leading in a department that is predominantly white, you know, where I have large chunk of white, heterosexual males and white females. That, I remember my first year doing the annual review. Part of my responsibilities to do the annual review of all the faculty in the department. And I write, I write them a letter of that review, I review everyone's course evaluations, name it. I also make recommendations on merit pay based on that review. So, you know, and, and faculty have to then schedule the meeting, to meet with me. My, my administrative assistant works, works on networking with them. And

the first year, as I got close to the deadline. Five people had not scheduled meetings to meet with me for their annual review. And they were all white, heterosexual males in the department who had not scheduled. So, you know, I looked at it and I really thought about it. And I sent out a reminder, just okay, just calm down. So, I send out a reminder getting close to the deadline, you know, schedule a meeting, you need to reach out, because I'll be done on the state. And then the time goes. And again, none of them have scheduled the meeting to meet with me and I began to say, I wonder what this is about. And from a cultural perspective, I knew it, I knew what it was. It was hard for these white men to, in fact, to accept my leadership, but to be evaluated by me, to come and sit in there and talk about their work, and for me to review it and to evaluate it. I think that some of them were struggling with it, whether they accepted it to themselves or not. It was just very interesting, the demographic that did not schedule the meeting. So, I had a meeting with the Dean cause following up on things, well, I think things are really going well, but I've not met with five people. Would you be interested in knowing who? Then he looks at them and it's like, and I can see when, my Dean is a white male then he says, what do you think it is? I said what do you think. I said, Dean, looking at this list, what do you think is going on. Why have these people not scheduled an annual review meeting? Then he's like Oh, I'm going to talk to them. I said, No, I'm not asking you to intervene on my behalf. I am here to brainstorm with you because I have my own thoughts about why they haven't. But I'm really interested in your perspective as a white man. Why do you think these are the people who have not scheduled a meeting? We had an honest conversation, you know, this one's probably having a problem with your gender, race, is that probably playing, this one probably doesn't even know that, that's

what's going on, but is having a very difficult time, you know, so, so we went through that conversation and just validating back. I had to, kind of pushing to have to engage in that conversation, rather than go and intervene on my behalf and I've learned that sometimes when white men are alone, how they discuss that intervention. Who knows what it, what it sounds like, you know, might not? Be what is said when I'm in the room. And so, I sent out a final notification to, to these people. I didn't even send it directly. I asked my assistant to send it, just say okay I'm going to ask the assistant to send it and I told them that if I, if you do not schedule by this date, I will not meet with you. I will review and make my decisions based on my review of your material and then suddenly they wanted to schedule meetings to come in and two of them did not make it, did not make the cut. And I just told him I wasn't going to be able to meet with them accept the deadline for April 15th and I was done, so but part of it is just understanding systems, understanding the history of race and racism, understanding the dynamics and the intersections between race, gender, particularly for black women in leadership and how we encounter the structural racism, how you encounter it in the leadership. And that, for me, it was very interesting to have this experience where the white men were not scheduling their annual review meeting. You know, to come and meet with me and it was very important that I am very aware of my own identity, on who I am, and that is not defined by their behavior. So, their behavior exposed them to me. It exposed them to me in ways that were very interesting. I was like, Oh, these guys have been suffering and this is the passive aggressive way in which they try to communicate, that oh she's not going to be evaluating me and telling me about my performance, you know, and eventually they all had to meet with me. You know, and the following semester, they all scheduled

meetings, coming in there. I do suspect that the Dean communicated with them because I thought it was interesting how in the fall, they were in my calendar before you know, I even scheduled those meetings. I know that there was an intervention of you better meet with Serena because she, she's on to you. And you do not want to alienate the chair, you know, but part of the cultural competence and this is a challenge for women of color, and I think men of color to people of color in leadership. Is that you cannot let your anger, or your resentment, or just your disdain be on display, because as a leader that pushes, you have to rise above it. So, I, part of my cultural competence is learning where I process. And this is very intersected with my counselor training and practice is that when you're struggling with a client, you don't show the client your anger. Sometimes clients will annoy you. You talk about it in supervision or you peer supervision or whatever is the position. So, for me, I have a group of friends in leadership, who I trust, who understand the dynamics of culture and oppression and how it plays out in leadership, who I can go to and say, can you believe this is going on. And they are like no, they're joking. When I say yes, as you said, Yeah, I just, you know, I'm where I could vent. Where I could say things that I cannot say as a chair. I just, I just don't have the liberty to see certain things. So, too, you know, so when this man came to me and said, I wonder what is going on for you. This message was sent out multiple times. I met with everybody. And so, I wrote, you know, review report without your input. And now you're here available in the fall, long after it's done, recording the way for you, scheduling that meeting to come and meet with me oh, I was really stressed out and busy, I said, okay, well, I want you to know that it's important for you to prioritize it. Because this has implications for your career development, it has implications for your salary. And when you do not show up, I wrote

it in your letter that you do not meet your obligations for meeting with an annual review. Just like I kind of experienced it as disrespectful that you would ignore that request to meet with me, to hear directly from me. About how I'm experiencing your work and to give me the opportunity to have your input in how I experience you. So that was counseling 101. So, some of them are like I wish I could take that, then I condition my students. That's counseling 101. You know, if you, Serena, the second, who's talking in my head wants to punch this person and kick them out of the window, but Serena, the department chair, the counselor educator, knows that that's not going to be helpful.

Alexus stated some distressing experiences encountered in their graduate program that has had an impact on their leadership:

I would have to say and kind of what inspired my dissertation is I was in a doctoral program that was not very multiculturally competent and I had a horrible experience in that doctoral program and actually ended up leaving because the students of color were not treated equally, and not treated well in that program. And so it kind of turned me off to the field of counselor education because as a counselor, you just assume that somebody is you know, caring and compassionate and then, especially when we're learning about how to be multiculturally competent counselor educators, it's kind of it plays with your mind because you hear one thing coming out of someone's mouth, but then they don't demonstrate those and so for me, that experience turned me off to counselor education, however. As a school counselor, I really wanted. I met a lot of not good school counselors. And so, I heard a lot of experiences from people who did not have very good school counselors and so I still had that motivation to want to train future school counselors to be competent and so I ended up applying to another doctoral

program, was expecting the same treatment, and it was totally different. And so, everything about me. Culturally, from my role, you know, as a mother or my role as a full-time worker or a student, when everything was attended to and respected. Which was totally different from my first experience. But due to that experience, I learned what type of counselor educator, I wanted to be, because I had, and it took a while to get over the trauma of how I was treated in that program and some of the other students we kind of get together sometimes and talk about it, but it really helps me in terms of motivating me to study more about multicultural competence, but then wanting to make sure that I didn't make another student feel the way that I felt in that program.

These statements highlight participants' responses regarding microaggressions and life experiences they have endured during their professional career.

Theme: White Superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression)

White superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression) was identified as a theme in research question b. White superiority refers to a common attitude among some White individuals that White people have enhanced intelligence, preparedness, and education than people of color (Tochluk, 2010). Moreover, White superiority in educational systems was mentioned by participants. White superiority was presented by participants in a variety of ways during the study. Below are participants' voices and experiences/encounters with White superiority.

Harper stated different experiences they encountered or witnessed when White individuals discuss and present about the diversity work they are engaging in and how people of color doing this work may not be as recognized:

I think one other thing I would add, Ashley is that I think we make a, particularly on the white counselor educator side. I think we make a huge mistake when we, for whatever reason, publish, have white folks present, whatever it is, where they talk about...The diversity work they're doing, right. You know what I'm talking about. So, I mean, I see it in education too. I see white teachers all the time talking about how they love their children. They help their kids and I got in this field to help you know...It's very white savior. Right. And so, I think like as a field as we move forward. In leadership as counselor educators, whether it's administration or not, is we really got to take a backseat and say, okay, we have done enough talking, right we have done enough talking about this diversity topic like...Let's be, Let's be facilitators and encouragers of folks that might not feel safe but get out of the way. Right. And so, again, this is why I always say I keep trying to be multicultural competent because it's always like. There is that, like me, like, okay, like I feel like I am okay to say this, but I'm like no, you need to say always fight that urge to try to represent people of color. Right. And I'm trying in the best ways and the best intentions. A good person, the good white person, but it's not helpful and one of the funny things is like you know everybody's talking about Robin DiAngelo and White Fragility, right now. I mean, that woman poached that from MLK, but you don't, we don't hear that, right and so it's like I just want to be really sensitive about kind of appropriating things that I shouldn't be appropriating and, and speaking when I don't need to. So, anyway.

Claudia stated, reflecting back on a previous experience with another faculty member of color, acknowledging their role in aiding in systemic racism:

So, for me, it's been very much an evolution, right a developmental has been very developmental because as a white person I haven't had to face this, right. I haven't had to really talk about it. I've had the privilege to not have to deal with it so much. And, you know, my parents were immigrants, you know, from Eastern Europe, and they were racist, and you know it was just ... Yeah, so in growing up in that, you know, you come with certain assumptions and biases and then as you grow older. But I remember trying to challenge my mother, you know, all the time on things. And she just, she just would not hear, she just could not change her perspective and it's so interesting that I have right that I always have really, um, which probably contribute to me being a counselor. But, so, so, um, I was gonna say its developmental because I'm continuing to evolve in this journey. Well, you know, as I said earlier, my, you know, my parents were immigrants. And while we're whites, you know, and things like that. They, they were not, my mother was not, she did not assimilate to the US culture very well and I grew up. Yeah, I was born here in America, but I was clearly different or felt very different growing up because of that immigrant background. You know I trusted friends. I spoke different. My lunches were different. All of that. And so, I think that's certainly lends itself to my advocacy, you know, components because I knew what it felt like to feel different, and to not feel connected and to not belong and I felt that very much. Growing up, even though I grew up in Northeast Ohio where it was pretty diverse blue collar steel town. You know, even in that setting it just, it's interesting how, you know, it just didn't feel super, super accepted right at least in my childhood years. Once I got to college. I think I, I don't know, I just, it was a different story then I felt comfortable, then but that certainly helped me, you know, develop empathy and compassion for people who are you know are not of

the majority. Yeah. You know what, this thing just occurred to me, but it just occurred to me as you were talking about it. My real growth didn't happen until I moved south. Because I moved from, you know, Ohio to Atlanta and lived in Georgia for eight years. And that's where I was confronted with racism. Up in Ohio people didn't really, it again very diverse community racism wasn't a thing. I mean, it was but it wasn't really a thing, but it wasn't talked about, it wasn't ... I don't know how to explain it, but it really wasn't as much of an issue. It's almost just sort of there. Whereas in the south when I moved to Georgia, oh, you could feel it. You could feel it and I was confronted with it left and right. And so, I think I kind of had, I was forced to deal with it. You know, I, I didn't have to up in the north, I, I wasn't confronted with it. But once I moved South I, yes there was such a change in in how students experienced me and just there was, yeah. And I saw over and over again, even when I moved to Florida. At the institution I was at previous to the one I'm at now, the systemic racism, and yeah, I experienced it there too, so I wasn't aware of it, the systemic racism at the beginning. You know, then I became aware of it. And I think I contributed to it by being aligned with the people who were in positions of power, who are whites. This just reinforced the toxic environment for this individual and again at the time. I just was trying to do my best. You know, as a new faculty member trying to, you know, be the good little colleague or, you know, faculty member to my provost and being, you know, an emerging leader and all of those things that we strive to do. And, you know, in our roles and I just didn't pay any attention to that stuff that other stuff because it didn't impact me adversely right, I could still do what I needed to do now looking back. It didn't impact me adversely, of course, it impacted the entire department and I mean it was just, it was terrible. It was terrible. I wasn't happy there, but I was still

able to kind of, you know, I was protected, you know what I mean. I felt secure in some ways I was part of that little group. And she was not and so, and I thought she had an issue with me, and it wasn't really but it was. And so anyway, I'm kind of getting off track here but yeah, I've learned. I learned that I just been thinking about that experience recently actually and, and how differently it could have maybe been for her and for me. You know, how differently the whole thing could have been if I would have chosen to, you know, not stay comfortable and align myself with the people in power. If I would have tried to bring her in more, right versus keeping her on the periphery. Yeah.

Claudia stated an experience in which they had to advocate when another leader pushed back on hiring diverse faculty:

So, my institution we're a very pro social you know, socially active institution but our leadership now faculty are predominantly Caucasian. So, we really needed to bring some diversity to our leadership to our faculty because our students are very diverse, and we need to have that element. In our classrooms. Well, one of the faculty that I work with, who's a white male also, you know, promotes the idea of inclusivity and you know diversity and, and, and voices that. But when it came down to actually making the decision to add diversity to our faculty there was some pushback from him, and it was very interesting. It was very interesting, as I have to stand firm right in my position of no this is what we have to do, right, we, we, this is what we're gonna do right, we, we need to do this for, for our program. So that was interesting. Because he's an older white male. And at that point, he was even in a higher leadership position than I am and so, but I was chair of the search committee, so I have some I have some ability to you know, make some decisions but ... but yes that was very interesting, but I felt that it was important.

So, I had to advocate right for that for that need that we have as a department and to sort of fight that you know dominance racist, for lack of a better word, right, racist perspective because at the end of the day, that's what it was.

These statements highlight participants' responses related to White superiority and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration and experiences/encounters of this within their professional careers.

Theme: Authenticity

Authenticity was identified as a theme in research question b. Being an authentic leader encompasses leader behavior that 1) draws upon and upholds both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate; 2) cultivates increased self-awareness; 3) having an internalized moral perspective; 4) the steady processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers; and 5) fostering positive self-development (Ilies, Morgenson, & Nahrgang, 2005; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). In this study, participants reported authenticity in their leadership role as something they strive to display. Below are the voices of participants sharing their experiences in demonstrating authenticity in their leadership roles.

Harper stated being a real individual in leadership is important and understanding and knowing people on the individual level is necessary:

Because you can ... you can find a lot of leaders out there that are really fake and they're real, like, oh, good to see you. You're doing great work. But like, can you name it, right and so...I think like knowing people on an individual level, and like thinking about them as individuals and their own struggles are the things they bring is, is kind of some of the ways that I try to bring it every day.

Mindy stated it is important to be transparent about counseling experiences and how to navigate those challenging experiences:

So, I don't know. I think look, when you come from a field like ours, you learn that people are complex. Again, people are complex and they're whole beings and be real. Because being fake only gets you so far. I could be quiet and demure, "Hi, hello," right? Oh my gosh. No, I'm gonna be blunt. I'm gonna be like, "I one time touched a kid's head and found out that that family had scabies and went home and was petrified I would have scabies." And I taught my students, do not ever let a child put a hat on your head, do not touch someone if you don't know what the deal is. If people are whispering in the room and you can't quite figure out what they're whispering about, keep yourself to yourself until you know.

Scobby stated transparency is key in embracing leadership and realizing that their lived experiences are different than others and embracing that genuinely is key:

Honestly, not anything that I haven't mentioned. I will, I try to do genuine, I try to be authentic, but I also try to be transparent. And realizing that my lived experiences and my world views are not necessarily the same as everyone else's, so I just try to embrace that. It probably has a lot to do with my current leadership role right now, because again, people that I work with, people that I interact with have learned that regardless of the environment, regardless of the situation, this is what you get. I'm going to be professional and you're right, the environment determines the delivery, but I respect who you are and what you bring to the table. Honestly, that's ... I don't have much more to add to that.

These statements highlight participants' responses related to authenticity in leadership and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this in leadership.

Summary

Chapter III presented the findings from the data analysis and the qualitative-phenomenological methodology and theoretical framework employed in which culturally competent practice self-perceptions of counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher was examined. The data provided a rich contextualization of the phenomenon. Specifically in this chapter, the themes resulting for each research question were presented. The thematic findings addressing each research question were: 1.) How do counselor educators describe their own demonstration of culturally competent practice in their roles as administrators in higher education? Themes: Counseling Identity, Culturally Informed Research, Internalized Self-Reflection. a.1.) What factors hinder counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? Themes: Blind Spots, Social Desirability, Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders. a.2.) What factors help counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? Themes: Evaluation of performance, Administrative Support and Mentorship, Multiplicity of Voices and Experiences. b.) How does race and gender (or lived experiences or job/career position type) influence counselor educator administrators' demonstration of culturally competent practices? Themes: Microaggressions and Life Experiences, White Superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression), Authenticity. Chapter IV will present a discussion and interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, future research, implications, and conclusions.

CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSION

The findings derived from the present study contributed to an amplified understanding of the culturally competent practice self-perceptions of counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. A transcendental phenomenological approach was employed operating from a social constructivist framework. The research questions for this study were as follows: 1.) How do counselor educators describe their own demonstration of culturally competent practice in their roles as administrators in higher education? a.1.) What factors hinder counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? a.2.) What factors help counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? b.) How does race and gender (or lived experiences or job/career position type) influence counselor educator administrators' demonstration of culturally competent practices?

A transcendental phenomenological data analysis was conducted to make meaning, cultivate understanding, and situate the essence of the phenomenon examined. There were twelve themes that emerged as the research findings as revealed participants lived experiences. The voices of the participants were captured and highlighted in the quotes presented after each theme. It was imperative that participants voices were captured, and the fullness of their experiences provided to amplify their experiences and self-perceptions of their own culturally competent practices within their leadership and/or administrator roles in higher education.

This study addresses constructs of leaders' knowledge, awareness, and skills related to the demonstration of cultural competency or practices. The phenomenon examined was cultural competence and counselor educator leaders' administrative experiences working higher education. The transcendental phenomenological approach was used to explore leaders and/or

administrator experience and self-perceptions of cultural competence. The approach allowed the researcher to examine the phenomenon focusing on participants' experiences and understand the meaning participants attributed to the phenomenon (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004).

Additionally, by way of the social constructivism framework, the researcher could rely fully on the participants' views of the situation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to interact with the participants and understand their respective lived experiences. Moreover, it allowed the researcher to incorporate and understand if historical and cultural norms impacted how the participants' demonstration of cultural competence developed for them and whether this would be evident when examining the phenomenon.

Social constructivism and consideration of Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework along with a transcendental phenomenological – qualitative research methodology – helped the researcher contextualize the meaning of the findings – culturally competent practice self-perceptions of counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education.

Discussion of Research Findings

In this research study, the findings represented the essence of the individual (Microsystem) as well as the institutional (Mesosystem) experiences of counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. As aforementioned, Bronfenbrenner's ecological system model assisted in further contextualizing the participants responses by considering the relationship between the participants individual lived experiences and their experiences working at a higher education institution (Christensen, 2016). These relationships or connections found between the participants shared lived experiences in higher education is situated in and characterized as the microsystem and the mesosystem (Christensen,

2016). For example, the participants' lived experiences as Black women who were microaggressed, the interpersonal impact that experience had on them was noticed – this situated as part of a microsystemic context. The participants' lived experience being microaggressed at the institution/place where they work, that created a negative experience or instance where institutional betrayal occurred, were noticed – these are situated as part of the mesosystemic context. These examples illustrate distinct systemic contextual dynamics – the participants lived experiences and what occurred at institution/place of work and the impact of the institutional response on the participant. Moreover, Bronfenbrenner's ecological system model was an additive way to deepen the contextualization of participants responses for each of the twelve themes.

The twelve themes to emerge from the research findings representing participant experiences and voices are: 1) Counseling Identity, 2) Culturally Informed Research, 3) Internalized Self-Reflection, 4) Blind Spots, 5) Social Desirability, 6) Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders, 7) Evaluation of performance, 8) Administrative Support and Mentorship, 9) Multiplicity of Voices and Experiences, 10) Microaggressions and Life Experiences, 11) White Superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression), and 12) Authenticity.

Culturally Informed Research

Culturally informed research is at the crux for counselor educators in leadership and or administration for making informed culturally competent decisions as well as for engaging in self-reflection. Participants discussed ways in which they intentionally sought out literature by diverse authors to not only continue in their introspective work but to apply this literature into their programs as a leader or administrator. Being a culturally informed leader was discussed as a

vital aspect that counselor educators in leadership or administration demonstrate through research. Counselor educators sought out literature that would give them a diverse perspective than their own worldview to assist in better understanding individuals' experiences; allowing them to assist in providing a solution to an issue or even creating spaces through programmatic changes so that diverse individuals and the resources those individuals needed were identified and applied. Furthermore, engaging in culturally informed research is a component that counselor educators learn in their programs which aids in the development and understanding of a counselor educators counseling identity.

Counseling Identity

Counselor educators are counselors, supervisors, researchers, teachers, and leaders. These five areas are explored in counseling education programs to assist counselor educators in developing their professional identity. Moreover, counselor educators have received specific training on the necessary skills that must be learned and cultivated in becoming a professional counselor. Counselor educators understanding and application of ethical codes, as well as their theoretical orientation, and the tool of self-reflection can be instrumental in navigating counseling sessions and beyond. Leaders voiced how they would operationalize aspects of their professional counselor identity, as a counselor educator, and apply skills cultivated in working with individuals, to catalyze their cultural competence in different ways at their institution. Moreover, an aspect of counseling educator's identity is being culturally competent (inclusive and responsive). Counselor educators spoke more to the tool and benefit of self-reflection being a vital and necessary part of their journey as a leader.

Internalized Self-Reflection

Internalized self-reflection work is where individuals take an introspective view of their social identities and how it impacts the world around them, but also the greater impact these identities have on others who identify as marginalized, in some way. This internalized work can be difficult yet necessary in that it allows for an individual to better understand themselves and others. Participants shared that internalized self-reflection work was necessary for them to explore and continue to explore so that they could engage in culturally competent practices as a leader and/or administrator.

Furthermore, the tool of reflecting on your own worldview and considering other worldviews potentially different from their own, because of an array of reasons, is crucial in understanding what others could be experiencing. Also, this can help leaders consider ways in which they have been helpful as well as ways they have hindered those they serve or work within their administrative roles. Reflecting on past experiences was a vital and painful aspect that some counselor educators had to explore to better understand how to move forward. In providing support to students, faculty, and staff, as well as mentorship opportunities, especially those who were not provided advancement and career opportunities to assist in meeting goals and had accomplish these for themselves. Lastly, counselor educators in leadership or administration found it an important part of their self-reflection to take inventory of their performance to better understand what has been helpful to others as well as what has hindered others, especially marginalized individuals.

Blind Spots

Blind spots are features of an individual's personality that others are aware of, however, the individual is unaware or oblivious to these features (Luft & Ingram, 1961). The Johari

Window is a model that describes self-awareness as well as unawareness (Luft & Ingram, 1961). The blind spots in which others can see in us that we are unconscious of was discussed by participants, in addition to their experience navigating the blind spots they would come across as counselor educators in leadership and administration (Luft & Ingram, 1961). When people ask for feedback, this minimizes the blind area and allows for growth as well as an opening of the area (Luft & Ingram, 1961). Participants described the importance of asking for feedback so that they could become more aware of areas they are unaware of, especially related to demonstrating inclusivity with marginalized individuals. Furthermore, counselor educators in leadership and administration discussed how blind areas have been uncovered using scholarship focused on marginalized individuals that has evolved over the years.

Social Desirability

Social desirability refers to the tendency of individuals to underestimate or overestimate the likelihood they would perform an undesirable or desirable action (Chung & Monroe, 2003). Participants discussed being aware of how others they work with may give what may be perceived as a desirable response regarding cultural competence or social justice work. Moreover, participants discussed how despite the messaging and information shared by other faculty, staff, and leaders and administrators in higher education, their actions are not in alignment with available messaging. Some individuals may be concerned about being perceived or labeled as someone who is insensitive and not inclusive. Additionally, some individuals may want to be identified as being culturally competent; however, the Dunning-Kruger effect occurred when it was noticed that their actions did not align. It takes courage to engage in antiracist work on all levels. Engaging in culturally competent practice/work means that one

must speak up and advocate for others in need of advocacy. In some instances this may mean confronting colleagues and others to assist in addressing systematic oppression.

Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders

Confrontation of colleagues and stakeholders is confronting oppressive problems and the tackling of those concerns (Weick & Chamberlain, 1997, 2002). It is necessary for individuals to confront and engage in advocacy/social justice work to bring an end to oppression experienced by marginalized groups. In an effort to stand up against oppression, sometimes it is necessary to confront others and to challenge perspectives/worldviews is also to assist them in gaining an awareness and knowledge of what marginalized individuals have experienced and sometimes themselves perpetuate. Participants revealed times where they had to speak up and address inequitable practices that were occurring at the programmatic, departmental, and/or at the college/school level.

Moreover, participants reported incongruencies in higher education administrator and leader messaging regarding people with diverse background, their own willingness to support and as well as their actions. Furthermore, participants stated how some leaders and administrators are not able to name injustices directly and how that has negatively impacted others and their experiences with these professionals. Also, in considering ways in which individuals can engage in social justice work/advocacy specifically using their voice, can sometimes cause harm to the individual speaking out against any injustice. Because of the consequences that can be experienced from advocating on different levels in higher education, professionals may feel silenced and unsupported in speaking their truths. These consequences can affect an individual's job performance/work engagement in a negative or positive way. This

is one of the important reasons for conducting periodic performance evaluations that include an appraisal of work behaviors as well as feedback.

Evaluation of Performance

Counselor educators in leadership and administration in higher education participants in this study discussed the importance of being evaluated, and how periodic evaluation processes can assist them in understanding what practices they have implemented are effective and those that may not be as helpful. Moreover, counselor educators in leadership and administration roles shared the importance of ongoing feedback and the various ways in which they receive evaluative feedback. Although formative and summative feedback are ways in which participants discussed receiving feedback, most often they described receiving formative feedback.

Participants spoke more about how direct feedback from students, faculty, and staff assisted them in taking inventory of processes they have implemented in the classroom, programmatic, departmental, and college/school level. Furthermore, participants spoke about how gathering this information assisted them in evaluating their cultural competence skills in action and to note what is effective and what needs improvement. Participants stated the importance of sharing literature with others in hopes of increasing their awareness, knowledge, and skills on specific topics related to marginalized groups. Participants stated that other faculty members would comment to them regarding a student they previously worked with, and how knowledgeable those students felt they were about subject matter. Also, some participants stated that they would evaluate and observe and identify student's skill or faculty, and staff cultural competence skills, and would notice if they made some improvement (use of appropriate terminology, increased self-reflection, and knowledge regarding marginalized individuals). Moreover, counselor educators in leadership and administration discussed the importance of not

only gaining feedback from others about the culturally competent work they are doing in a periodic evaluation of their performance, but participants also stated the importance of having administrative support and mentorship to implement culturally competent efforts.

Administrative Support and Mentorship

Administrative support highlights leadership behavior that is associated with effectiveness at a departmental level that includes but not limited to clear sense of direction/strategic vision, preparing department arrangements to facilitate the direction set, being considerate, treating academic staff fairly and with integrity, being trustworthy and having personal integrity, allowing the opportunity to participate in key decisions/encouraging open communication, acting as a role model/having credibility, creating a positive/collegial work atmosphere in the department, providing feedback on performance, and providing resources for and adjusting workloads to stimulate scholarship and research (Bryman, 2007). If these behaviors are not demonstrated on the programmatic, departmental, college/school levels it allows for people to be excluded and not included, further marginalizing. Furthermore, if these leadership behaviors are not exhibited, marginalized individuals may not feel a sense of belonging, become silence, therefore not heard, not supported, and thusly, may not have access to the resources they need to be successful. Moreover, if upper-level administration displaying the leadership behaviors and promoting an inclusive environment, this can assist and motivate others to practice in a like manner, fostering greater inclusivity. Participant counselor educators in leadership and administrative roles voiced how important administrative support can be as well as mentorship.

Mentorship can be beneficial to both mentee and mentor because it allows space for reflection, sharing ideas, professional growth, and personal satisfaction. Participants voiced the

importance of mentoring other faculty to assist them in cultivating their goals as well as making a way for leadership experiences and opportunities. Moreover, participant counselor educators in leadership and administration roles stated mentorship opportunities, in particular for marginalized individuals, is essential and described how it allows others who may not generally be given an opportunity, to lead and do more. Mentorship coupled with administrative support is critical and provides support for conducting more research to cultivate even more rich insights, further deepening the understanding by way of the voices of those with these lived experiences.

Multiplicity of Voices and Experiences

Multiplicity of voices and experiences highlights the benefit of having diverse individuals' voices heard and the importance of those interactions which can benefit individuals regarding education (Chang et. al., 2006). Counselor educator leadership and administration discussed the importance of having diverse individuals affiliated with the university in different capacities (student, staff, faculty, leadership), because there is value in having diverse perspectives when exploring a topic or an issue. Moreover, it is important that diverse individuals feel comfortable they can trust that when they share their experiences, they will not be penalized, especially if in sharing, they disrupt and/or challenge the dominant culture's perspective.

Multiplicity of voices and experiences is related to increased critical thinking, leadership ability, and the skill to work effectively with diverse individuals (Hurtado, 2001). Diverse perspectives can assist others with considering their own worldview and becoming more open to their blind spots. When blind spots are not considered, this can cause the person to miss areas where competence development, awareness and feedback is needed. If unaddressed, the

professional is left unaware and the blind spots unexplored, the person may continue unhealthy, uncivil, inappropriate, and unprofessional behaviors, including microaggressions.

Microaggressions and Life Experiences

Microaggressions are brief, everyday exchanges that send demeaning messages to individuals because of the racial minority group to which they belong (Sue & Constantine, 2007). Microaggressions and life experiences were discussed by participants as how they have endured these subtle and sometimes overt messages because of their marginalized identities. Participants of color discussed how the difference of power played a role in these experiences and despite the positions they hold, they still received demeaning messages because of their identities furthering the complexity of their experiences. Participants of color voiced their experiences being counselor educators in leadership and administration having to navigate microaggressions experienced by colleagues or individuals they were evaluating. Furthermore, participants of color discussed being students in their training programs and receiving demeaning messages or microaggressions that discouraged and deterred them from engaging in counseling education work. Because they had positive experiences in a different training program, this in turn assisted a participant with becoming re-energized to engage in counseling education work and to explore alternative leadership and administration career paths aligned with their background and training. Microaggressions and negative messages individual experience is deeply rooted in white superiority.

White Superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression)

White superiority is an attitude common among White individuals (individuals of European descent) that their education, preparedness, and intelligence is greater than individuals of color. White supremacy has been embedded in different systems in society, such as education,

health care, government, and more. These systems historically have been oppressive in many ways. Historically, the education system in the United States has marginalized individuals, their stories have been largely excluded from the curriculum, their voices not broadly heard. A culture of white superiority in higher education is harmful and does not allow for inclusivity and the valuation of diversity. Participants discussed experiences watching White colleagues exhibit double consciousness in choosing when to authentically engage in social justice work and when not.

The participant counselor educators in leadership and administration roles discussed how some people mentioned the importance of diverse individuals' presence, however immobile or limited to no action in support of what was mentioned. Also, participants discussed when some were presented with the opportunity to prioritize the recruitment and/or selection of diverse faculty, other elected not to engage. Furthermore, participants reported ways in which they engaged in social justice work and demonstrated their cultural competency by speaking up and bringing awareness to more equitable practices. Moreover, participants discussed how some White individuals engage in social justice work with this perception to save marginalized individuals from oppression, while also focusing on themselves (i.e., how others may perceive them). Additionally, participant counselor educators in leadership and administration roles discussed the importance of engaging in social justice/antiracist work as well as the need to be authentic in doing this work.

Authenticity

Authenticity means that someone is being true to themselves, showing who they are in a variety of settings in a transparent way (Ilies et. al., 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Being an authentic leader allows who the person is to come through how their leadership role is

demonstrated. Participants discussed how authenticity was an important tool to possess as a leader. Expressing and showing empathy in the attempt to understand others and their struggles, as well as being direct or authentic about their own experiences or their journey, also tantamount in understanding others. Furthermore, participant counselor educator leadership and administration roles discussed that in their demonstration of authenticity, students, faculty, and staff would openly discuss their personal matters with them. Also, when students, faculty and staff openly discussed their personal matters with leadership, it, in turn, assisted these leaders with greater awareness for creating and enforcing policies that would be supportive to the unit. Participants reiterated that their transparency and empathy allowed them to establish/form a relationship with students, faculty, and staff allowing for those individuals to trust and feel comfortable with sharing their professional and personal matters. Participants spoke of the importance of building a genuine, transparent rapport with others; that is an essential part of the leadership and administrative role.

Limitations of Study

There are some limitations that should be considered regarding this study. First, restricting the participant sample only to counselor educators in higher education leadership and administration roles in which 50% of their time is allocated limits the extent of the study. This is not representative of those who serve in a dual capacity within counseling education in higher education settings. There are other counselor educators who serve in leadership roles where their full-time employment status in leadership does not occupy 50% of their time.

Also, full time employment allocation for leadership and/or administrators could vary in definition across colleges and universities. Further, limiting this research to counselor educators who are in leadership and administration does not incorporate other disciplines, such as those

working in leader and administrator capacities in higher education. Moreover, other entities were not explored in this study. Exclusively, leaders and administrators in academia were the focus and must be broadened. Additionally, the sample is not as diverse racially/ethnically and is not diverse in terms of gender identity. The potential for there being a more accurate representation is there. It is necessary to capture a larger demographic range of men who serve as leaders or administrators in academia. With a more diverse sample, it may have allowed additional themes to arise in understanding how individual's identities may have an impact on their self-perceptions of cultural competence in their administration/leadership roles.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future research study of the phenomenon examined, exploration of counselor educators who operate in a leadership and administrative capacity at any level within their program or beyond is needed as well as in other entities. Exploring leaders' and/or administrators' self-perceptions of their cultural competence in roles in higher education without any restrictions to their allocation percentage would be a beneficial exploration. In addition, further mining the experiences of diverse individuals' perception of cultural competence related to being a counselor educator in an administrative/leadership position is essential. Expanding on how diverse individuals' identities have an impact on their culturally competent practice in their leadership and/or administrator roles would also be important future research.

It is also important to consider researching the lived experiences with culturally competent practice of leaders and administrators in higher education who identify as ethnically diverse as compared to the lived experiences of leaders and administrators in higher education who identify as White/or European American. The results of this study may also support advancing specific recruitment and retention policies and career pipelining of human service

professionals and social scientists into higher education leader and administrator positions. Moreover, considering the area of professional identity, this research can enhance our understanding of it and how people experience it. There are more options for counselor educators to expand their horizons in leadership and administration in higher education. This pathway is accomplished through representation and examples of diverse counselor educators serving as a leader or administrator in academia. Researchers must consider the impact of internalized racism and how it may contribute to some people exploring leadership and/or administration as opposed to others who do not.

Furthermore, cultural humility as a bases for developing cultural competence should be further studied. Cultural humility as defined by Hook et al. (2017) and Moon and Sandage (2019) is the ability to hold an accurate perception of their own cultural values as well as maintain other-oriented perspectives that involves respect, lack of superiority and attunement regarding their own cultural beliefs and values. Cultural humility is the framework that could be used to foster an accurate self-perceptions of counselor educator leaders/administrators in higher education. According to Moon and Sandage (2019), their research presented a growing body of empirical research on cultural humility. Further, the research and literature heralding the value for cultural humility represents a very promising advance in what is known in domains of counseling, counselor education, multicultural psychology, and psychotherapy; continuing to inform culturally sensitive approaches to mental health practices. We must utilize cultural humility as a basic way that counselor educators who are leaders/administrators in higher education can begin to assess their own cultural competence. These findings in the research study leads to leadership and administrative competencies with emphasis on working with diverse populations. Moreover, these findings should not only be viewed as relevant for leaders

and administrators in higher education, but also for primary and secondary school (K–12) administrators and leaders. Leaders and administrators who work in primary and secondary (K–12) settings would benefit from further competency development that emphasizes best cultural practice with diverse populations. As a profession we can begin correcting the mistakes we are currently living. This paradigm shift in our society where injustices are being acknowledged, requires further research as well as ways in which our society and systemic racism functions. As counselor educator's this research will aid in exploring ways to engage our community in healing efforts through truth telling and processing. As research is one of a counselor's instruments/tools for advocacy, it is recommended that more research be conducted in these areas.

Conclusion

In studying the essence of the lived experiences of counselor educators in administration/leadership roles and their self-perceptions of their culturally competent practices, a wealth of information was revealed. Through the phenomenological analysis process the themes emerged provided the researcher with insight on self-perceptions of counselor educators in leadership and administration regarding their culturally competent practices and key factors that were essential in knowing if they were acting in a culturally competent way.

The findings revealed that having a strong counseling identity, engaging in culturally informed research, internalized self-reflection work, evaluation of their performance, administrative support and mentorship, multiplicity of voices and experiences, understanding their blind spots, taking inventory of social desirability factors, the importance and challenges of confronting colleagues and stakeholders, considering microaggressions and life experiences that leaders endure, impact of White superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression), and

demonstrating authenticity are all factors that assist leaders in having a critical view of their cultural competent practices.

The limitations of this research study along with the literature review regarding the research focus signals a need for further research. This study will help counseling professionals, counselor educators in leadership and/ or administrative roles in higher education better understand if their responses or actions at work are culturally competent. Further, this research will help with the nuanced development of practices as well as policy implementation to assist diverse individuals in overcoming challenges experienced in higher education environments. The lived experiences, self-perceptions, and voices of counselor educators in leadership and administrative roles show that culturally competent practices are demonstrated – these narratives are indeed rich and compelling and are heard.

CHAPTER 5: MANUSCRIPT

Abstract

Counselor educators in human service-related, complimentary, and alternative careers are equipped with skill sets that can translate culturally competent practice. Consequently, counselor educators have various opportunities to engage in culturally competent practice in leadership and administrative positions throughout their careers (Okech & Rubel, 2018). This study examined the self-perceptions of culturally competent practice among counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. To achieve an in-depth study of this phenomenon, a phenomenological methodology was utilized via semi-structured interviews. There were twelve themes that emerged representing the phenomenon examined.

Keywords: Cultural competence, Cultural humility, Cultural inclusiveness, Cultural responsiveness

Literature Review

It is vital that individuals in leadership positions understand various challenges and the particular lived experiences individuals of diverse populations face especially, given the steady rise of individuals with diverse backgrounds living in the United States. According to Johnson and Williams (2015), the percentage of racial minorities in America is projected to continue to increase by nearly 50% of the population by year 2050. Additionally, according to Harris (2013) due to the changing demographics, institutions that offer a variety of academic subjects for study should consider cultural differences broadly. By studying the impact cultural difference has on student performance, for example, higher education leaders and administrator become more knowledgeable of diverse student needs and concerns.

Higher education leadership and administration play an active role in assisting diverse individuals with their unique needs. Additionally, according to Chrobot-Mason (2012), leaders and administrators should demonstrate an openness to cultural differences, an understanding of what these differences encompasses, accepting and utilizing these differences to improve performance on the organizational level. Furthermore, higher education leaders and administrators at the college and university level should have an awareness of cultural best practices and possess skills for work with diverse individuals just as counselor educators assist counselor trainees with gaining an awareness, understanding, and skills to work with diverse client populations (Ratts, et al., 2015). There are many ways counselor educators assist counselors-in-training with developing an awareness, understanding, and skills regarding work with diverse individuals. For instance, there is an intentional and cognizant effort by counselor educators to infuse and integrate multiculturalism into all courses (ACA, 2014). The integration of multiculturalism, social justice and advocacy in counselor education and training programs

has become standardized. By embracing standards, best practices, and competency-based skills, counselor educator leaders and administrators work practice and interactions can be culturally tailored (i.e., inclusive, and responsive) for various populations. Importance lies in how a professional becomes and remains competent in providing culturally relevant and meaningful assistance to those who have been socially, historically, and politically disenfranchised. Moreover, leaders and administrators have an ethical responsibility to uphold, as well as motivate other leaders, administrators, faculty, staff, and students to behave, practice, and work in an ethical manner.

Ethical Standards

It is imperative that leaders and administrators assist and guide faculty, staff, and students in “doing the right thing” (Couch & Dodd, 2005). When leaders and administrators assist in the regulation of ethical standards, simultaneously this fulfils an institution's responsibility to the larger society (Couch & Dodd, 2005). Further, leaders and administrators who highlight ethical standards inform faculty and other members of the campus community on how to address ethical issues with respect to their relationships with students and each other (Couch & Dodd, 2005). Several universities have adopted institutional codes of ethics that highlight core ethical principles rather than adherence to laws and regulations (Couch & Dodd, 2005). Additionally, there are some institutions that recognize ethical principles such as cultivation of an environment of mutual respect and tolerance for diversity, focusing on the well-being of students and others who are vulnerable, and differentiating between behavior that is ethical and that which is legal holding all, students to trustees, responsible both for the ethics of their own behavior and for the construction of an ethical institution (Couch & Dodd, 2005). It is imperative that leaders and administrators not only understand ethical standards but practice in an ethical manner (Couch &

Dodd, 2005). The way leaders and administrators practice ethics may demonstrate how aligned their levels of competence are with their ascribed professional identity.

Professional Identity and Imposter Syndrome

Professional identity development consists of various developmental and interacting experiences in educational programs, and with mentoring that assist in the formation of an individual's professional identity. Professional identity is formed from within a person and includes intrapersonal dimensions of professional identity (Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2010). Professional identity in part can aid a professional in the formation of meaning and for determining their focus and career intent. Professional identity can assist an individual with knowing and doing in their process of work as a counselor educator but also working in leadership and administrative roles. This knowing and doing can be impacted significantly by a feeling of inadequacy and incompetence, even if not validated.

Imposter Syndrome is a phenomenon that where individuals find it difficult to believe that they deserve any credit for their achievements, and despite outward appearances, remain internally convinced that they are frauds (Bothello & Roulet, 2018; Clance & Imes, 1978). This phenomenon can be illustrated in various areas of an individual's life particularly in higher education leadership and administration. Individuals experiencing the imposter syndrome find it difficult to accept accolades for their achievements because they have experienced numerous rejections and disparaging words (Bothello & Roulet, 2018; Clance & Imes, 1978).

Lived experiences of marginalization, social deprivations, microaggressions incited because of master status (e.g., ethnic and gender differences), etc., can contribute to the development of the imposter syndrome (Bothello & Roulet, 2018; Clance & Imes, 1978; Pincus, 2011). At the individual level, microaggressions (micro insults, micro assaults, and micro

invalidations) are comprehensive, harmful, and potentially traumatic especially if repeated. The experience of being micro aggressed can cause an individual to take on a stance of cultural humility because of their interactions with those who are not culturally humble or competent (Moon & Sandage, 2019; Sue & Constantine, 2007).

Leaders and administrator self-perception regarding their professional identity could impact how they address both microaggressions and macroaggressions. Leaders and administrators in higher education who foster culturally negative interactions with the marginalized populations they serve could cause those populations to experience the Pygmalion effect at work (Stoicescu & Ghinea, 2013).

Pygmalion Effect

The Pygmalion effect promotes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Stoicescu & Ghinea, 2013). Self-fulfilling prophecy comes into play when leaders and administrators in higher education behave in a way that further depresses, oppresses and/or otherwise overlooks the minority personnel, for example, labeling them as low achievers (Stoicescu & Ghinea, 2013). These individuals begin to accept and demonstrate how they have been treated (Stoicescu & Ghinea, 2013). Further, life experiences, introspection, existentialism, social learning, socially constructed views all reflect negatively/positively on career choices. The way individuals derive meaning from these experiences can lead to the mechanisms engaged in by leadership and administrators in higher education that correlate to their culturally competent practices. In considering cultural competence practices, it is essential to understand how an individual's competency is determined. Although, there may be benefits in assuming a professional identity, the impact of experiencing microaggressions and macroaggressions could aid in fostering the

imposter syndrome as well as have a Dunning-Kruger effect with regard to competence in practice.

Dunning-Kruger Effect

When considering cultural competence and skills that counselor educators are equipped with, we must consider how one is deemed competent. Which leads to how one knows if they are truly competent in an area or not. The Dunning-Kruger effect must be considered in terms of competency. The Dunning-Kruger effect could be displayed in terms of competence where counselor educators in administration perceive themselves or that rate themselves high on cultural competence and may not be. When counselor educators serve in an administrative capacity, these skills may be practiced or implemented in their administrative duties. The question is if counselor educators are utilizing their skills sets within their administrative practice.

With the Dunning-Kruger effect, consideration is given that success and satisfaction depend on knowledge, wisdom, or savvy in knowing the rules to respect and which policies to practice (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Typically, individuals choose what they think is the most reasonable and the failure to recognize that an individual has performed poorly will leave a person assuming that an individual has performed a task well (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). This will result in the incompetent completely overestimating their skills and abilities (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). When individuals are incompetent in the strategies, they aim to achieve success and satisfaction, there is a dual burden (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). These individuals may not only reach an inaccurate conclusion and make unfortunate choices, but their incompetence deprives them of the ability to realize this occurrence (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). More specifically, leaders and administrator's role in assisting with matters related to multiculturalism

on campus regarding policies and procedures matters, it is necessary to understand the higher education leader and administrator's authentic assessment of their culturally competent practices. For example, these practices should include the ability to effectively advocate for marginalized populations within an institution of higher learning.

Social Justice and Advocacy

According to Chang et al., (2012), advocacy is the action taken on behalf of an individual to support appropriate policies and standards; oppose or work to change policies, and procedures, promote individual human worth, dignity, and potential; and other actions. Advocacy and social justice work are focused on supporting a particular cause, defending the rights of others, and acting which may be different based on the cause (Chang et al., 2012). Advocacy and social justice work are vital for leaders and administrators in higher education because diverse individuals need advocates to ensure that their individual educational and work-related needs are met as well as on the institutional level. Advocating with and for diverse populations is crucial to enable leaders and administrators to develop and maintain proficiency in working in a culturally competent manner, especially within higher education institutions.

Higher Education Institutions

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems model (Christensen, 2016) discusses not only the individual level – the professional (within a Microsystem), but the institutional level (the Mesosystem). Counselor educator leaders and administrators who work at higher education institutions are impacted professionally by the culture and climate of where they work. Higher education professionals who work with historical oppressed populations as well as other groups, must understand the various intersecting identities that individuals bring with them when they enter and work at these institutions. Higher education professionals that have a more informed

and introspective view of their own cultural competence may also engage in perspective taking and may have greater awareness of institutional climate issues, as well as the institutional importance placed on diversity and inclusion (Harris, 2013).

Work culture and climate concerns can promote further exploration and pursuit of additional job opportunities and career pathways open to counselor educators in higher education and may lead to career shifts.

Career Shift

According to Super (1980) career is described as the combination and sequence of roles played by a person during a lifetime which range in being a student, citizen, parent, worker and more (Super, 1980). The various roles that a counselor educator may occupy could be for short or long periods of time, highlighting the continuum of roles a counselor educator may occupy (Super, 1980). Further, work roles in which counselor educators serve may vary in importance as well as in the quality of a counselor educator's work performance (Super, 1980). Counselor educators who are leaders and administrators in higher education serving in different roles could lead them to achieve to greater work satisfaction (Super, 1980). These different roles can assist in achieving a balance and promotion of good mental health (Super, 1980). Counselor educator leaders and administrators have found satisfaction as they work-engage and integrate their professional identities – helping professionals working in higher education.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research study is that those in contact with leaders and administrators in higher education can be impacted in numerous ways should they lack the awareness, knowledge, and the skills to work with diverse individuals (Chrobot-Mason, 2012). Higher education leaders and administrators should have an understanding of the unique needs

and challenges diverse individuals face because this understanding may assist in reducing various forms of discrimination especially when considering the application of policies, handling/managing incidents of microaggressions, how to mitigate experiences of institutional racism, classism, religious oppression, sexism, heterosexism, transgender oppression, ableism, ageism and adultism, institutional betrayal, and other forms of oppression toward staff, students and faculty (Pyke, 2018). The magnitude of these negative experiences can greatly impact marginalized individuals.

Although there is a rich amount of research regarding diversity and inclusion within various aspects of the researcher's discipline (in the areas of counseling practice, supervision, research, educational, and leadership impacts), specifically those who serve in a leadership role, and how those dynamics may impact diverse individuals, there is little research on higher education leaders' perceptions related to cultural competence.

Research Questions

To better understand the essence of counselor educator leaders and administrators lived experiences with regard to their self-perception of culturally competent practice in their roles, the following guiding and supporting questions were explored in this study:

1. How do counselor educators describe their own demonstration of culturally competent practice in their roles as administrators in higher education?
 - a.1.) What factors hinder counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice?
 - a.2.) What factors help counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice?

- b. How does race and gender (or lived experiences or job/career position type) influence counselor educator administrators' demonstration of culturally competent practices?

Summary

The present study was organized and has been presented in a historical context for the problem that was studied, and the significance of the problem is presented. This includes the importance of examining the self-perceptions of culturally competent practice among counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. Provided is a context for the study of culturally competence self-perceptions of counselor educators who work in leadership and administrator capacities in higher education. A literature review of the research that currently exists in relation to the topic is presented as well as an exploration of the related issues discussed in the literature specific to the study population. Gaps and areas for further research are presented.

Design Rationale

In order to explore the essence of the phenomenon studied, cultural competence, a transcendental phenomenological approach was utilized. The concepts examined were counselor educator leaders and administration in higher education self-perception of knowledge, awareness, and skills related to culturally competent practice. A phenomenological approach was utilized to capture leadership's lived experiences related to cultural competence on various levels in which an individual may apply or demonstrate competence – individual and microsystem levels (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By utilizing a qualitative study design, the researcher was able to explore the phenomenon by way of semi-structured interviews to gain knowledge of participants' self-perceptions related to culturally competent practice, as well as the unique and rich

experiences leaders have related to the application and demonstration of culturally competent skills.

Procedures

This section provides an overview of how participants were recruited, further explain the sampling selection method utilized, the interview process, data analysis procedures utilized to achieve validity of the study, and researcher positioning.

Participant Recruitment and Sampling

Participants were recruited by utilizing purposive sampling method which is most appropriate because participants were counselor educator higher education leaders and administrators (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher aimed to interview anywhere from 5–10 professionals until saturation was reached (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). A recruitment email was sent to various Listservs (e.g., CESNET), and specific individuals that would likely qualify for inclusion in this research study. The recruitment email provided potential participants an overview of the research study information along with the Demographics Questionnaire that potential participants were asked to complete after consenting to participate in the study. The informed consent form and demographic questionnaire was provided for participants via Qualtrics survey. Participants were asked to complete the Interview Protocol Demographics that inquired about participant personal information (see the Interview Protocol Demographics in Appendix B). Participants who qualified for this research study, were contacted via email, provided a copy of their signed informed consent via email, and were asked to identify a day and time they could meet for the interview. Additionally, the researcher asked participants their preferred method in conducting the Zoom interview: with the video camera on or off. After participants responded with the preferred day and time for the interview, along with

their video preference – camera on or off – the researcher followed-up by emailing each participant providing the Zoom access information for their interview. The researcher sent a follow-up via email to participants who did not respond within a week to the initial email.

At the start of the interview, the details of the study were reviewed to ensure clarity and opportunity for questions. Also, the researcher informed participants that it was acceptable if there is some information that they wish not to answer nor provide. Furthermore, it was stated if participants experience discomfort and would like to discontinue the study for any reason, that this was acceptable and information on how to discontinue would be reviewed. The researcher further stated the sensitivity of the information being collected, as well as the audio equipment/technology utilized, the BOX repository utilized to store the data, and steps to keep the study data confidential. The researcher followed the interview protocol script, asking each participant to provide a pseudonym (name) for identification purposes for the study. Next, the researcher asked each participant questions from the interview protocol to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon. The researcher utilized Zoom to audio record the interviews conducted as well as the transcription feature to collect study the data.

Next, the researcher transcribed all interviews and individually emailed transcripts to respective participants for verification. After participants verified the written transcription, themes were analyzed. It was imperative that each participant be informed that the information provided in interviews would not be linked to the individual participants. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher debriefed participants on the information they provided. Recognizing the sensitivity of the information and exploring this particular phenomenon (i.e., issues related to their lived experiences and multiculturalism), some level of discomfort may

have been experienced by participants. Data from the audio equipment will be later destroyed in accordance with AU-IRB approval.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological Analysis

As the researcher transcribed all interviews, the researcher submerged herself in the details of the data searching for meaning in the relevant responses of the phenomenon that was to be studied (Moustakas, 1994). Also, an external auditor reviewed the transcriptions to ensure that mistakes were not made during this process (Creswell, 2014). The responses and meanings obtained from transcriptions were coded by horizontalizing each statement, treating it with having equal value (Moustakas, 1994). After engaging in several process rounds of analyzing significant statements, clusters of meaning from the significant statements were formed and themes were generated (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It was clear to the researcher that all significant themes were captured because as no other novelties emerged. At that point, it was time to transition to the next phase.

Both the researcher and external auditor independently reviewed the transcriptions, horizontalizing each statement, deleting irrelevant information (Creswell, 2014). The external auditor reviewed the relationship between the research questions and the data as well as the process of data analysis (Creswell, 2014). The external auditor assisted in ensuring that there was no drift in the definition of the codes, and no change in the meaning of the codes during that process (Creswell, 2014). In addition, the researcher and external auditor came together and cross-checked codes, aided in the intercoder agreement. Prior to meeting, the researcher targeted an 85% agreement rate with the external auditor (Creswell, 2014). However, after the codes were independently reviewed by the researcher and the external auditor, there was a 100% agreement

rate. We created our codes and met via Zoom to review the codes. After the review of the codes and discussion it was determined we had reached a consensus.

Based on significant statements and themes generated, data was utilized to write a description of participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The essence of the phenomenon had been reported in terms of generated themes and analyzed themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher reviewed the themes and meaning and wrote textural descriptions of the essence of the experiences of counselor educators who work in leadership and administration roles in higher education settings. The descriptions used the precise language given by the participants of this research study. The data was synthesized providing a description of the essence of the experiences of counselor educators participants who work in higher education leadership and administration. All research inquiries were answered.

Trustworthiness of Data

For this qualitative study, it was imperative the researcher engage in various strategies to check for validity and accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2014). These strategies were implemented to maximize the trustworthiness of the research study data. Moreover, the strategies were incorporated to ensure the accuracy of findings were triangulated, contained member checking, thick description, researcher positioning, Epoché/bracketing, and audit trail.

Findings

Social constructivist framework relies on the participants' viewpoint of the situation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, a social constructivist framework was utilized to situate participant perspectives on their lived experiences with culturally competent practices in their roles as counselor educators in leadership or administration; this facilitated the analysis of the study data. The purpose of this study was to examine the culturally competent practice self-

perceptions of counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. This chapter presents the key findings collected from 10 detailed, semi-structured interviews. A general overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants Demographics

Participant	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Years of Higher Education Leader and/or Administrator Experience
Cupcake	46	African American/Black	Woman	1-3 years
Alexus	37	African American/Black	Woman	4-6 years
Amy	36	White American	Woman	1-3 years
Claudia	43	White American	Woman	4-6 years
Harper	43	White American	Woman	10+ years
Jane	39	White American	Woman	
Mindy	31	Biracial/Multiracial	Woman	4-6 years
Scobby	46	African American/Black	Woman	4-6 years
Serena	52	African American/Black	Woman	4-6 years
Adrian	27	African American/Black	Man	1-3 years

The findings are presented as themes that emerged from the analysis of the data addressing the research questions: 1.) How do counselor educators describe their own demonstration of culturally competent practice in their roles as administrators in higher education? Themes: Counseling Identity, Culturally Informed Research, Internalized Self-Reflection. a.1.) What factors hinder counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? Themes: Blind Spots, Social Desirability, Confrontation of Colleagues and

Stakeholders. a.2.) What factors help counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? Themes: Evaluation of performance, Administrative Support and Mentorship, Multiplicity of Voices and Experiences Themes: Blind Spots, Social Desirability, Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders. b.) How does race and gender (or lived experiences or job/career position type) influence counselor educator administrators' demonstration of culturally competent practices? Themes: Microaggressions and Life Experiences, White Superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression), Authenticity.

This study included four African American/Black women, one African American/Black man, one Biracial/multiracial woman, and four White women ranging in age from 27 to 52 who identify as counselor educators in an administration and/or leadership position. The participants had from 1 to over 10 years of higher education leader or administrator experience.

Discussion of Themes

The researcher demonstrated credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability throughout the research process. The researcher requested that each participant review and verify their respective interviews transcript to ensure that the participant's voices were captured accurately. Member checking was completed so the researcher situates the phenomena being examined from the participants perspective and participant data could be analyzed (Trochim, 2020). Moreover, the researcher maintained an audit trail of steps and strategies of the study. This was performed to ensure transferability and dependability of research such that it could be explored beyond the setting and context discussed in the study (Trochim, 2020). To increase confirmability, the researcher engaged an external auditor to conduct a review and apply inferences from the research (Trochim, 2020). The codes that emerged and are described were

validated by the external auditor, a Counseling Education and Supervision faculty member (Trochim, 2020).

The interview data describes the lived experiences of counselor educators in higher-education leadership and/or administration positions and situates the essence of both the shared and individualized experiences of each counselor educator in a higher-education leadership/administration role. The study data reveal journeys of counselor educators in administration and/or leadership roles, reflexive self-perception of their own cultural competence in action in their positions. From the data captured, the essence of the phenomenon focused on counselor educators in administration and/or leadership; insight and awareness is gleaned about how counselor educators in higher-education administration and/or leadership roles perceive their cultural competence is demonstrated. Data was organized into themes using NVIVO software. NVIVO assisted in deciphering the essence of the lived experiences revealed in the data among the participants. There are three research questions and twelve themes emerged from the data discussed below.

The findings are addressed by each research question: 1.) How do counselor educators describe their own demonstration of culturally competent practice in their roles as administrators in higher education? Themes: Counseling Identity, Culturally Informed Research, Internalized Self-Reflection. a.1.) What factors hinder counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? Themes: Blind Spots, Social Desirability, Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders. a.2.) What factors help counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? Themes: Evaluation of performance, Administrative Support and Mentorship, Multiplicity of Voices and Experiences b.) How does race and gender (or lived experiences or job/career position type) influence counselor educator administrators’

demonstration of culturally competent practices? Themes: Microaggressions and Life Experiences, White Superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression), Authenticity. Excerpts were provided from a participant under each theme in lieu of the full response.

1. How do counselor educators describe their own demonstration of culturally competent practice in their roles as administrators in higher education?

The following themes are addressed for research question one:

Theme: Culturally Informed Research

Culturally informed research was identified as a theme in research question one. Culturally informed research is acknowledging the importance of conducting research that includes diversity, multiculturalism, advocacy and social justice in research frameworks, designs outcomes, and more (O'Hara, et al., 2016). Below is an excerpt of a participant's response pertaining to the importance of culturally informed research and how this assists them in making culturally sound decisions as a counselor educator in leadership.

Amy stated it is essential to go beyond diverse relationships one may have but explore the literature for yourself to understand diverse experiences and your own blind spots:

And I really do think that...I've been much more intentional on how I build friendships and the things that I read, how I'm intentionally seeking out my own stuff, reading by diverse authors, researching more stuff so that I can speak to it better. And trying to do my own research, so I don't just rely on my friends, it's not like, "I have a Black friend who tells me all this." It's not that, but being in relationship with people of color and people of diverse backgrounds opened my eyes to things I don't know, like I was able to become more aware of my own blind spots and the biases and even racist perspectives that I hold myself, so that I can address them better. I don't know. Yeah, and it's... For

me, it's not always like... I know when I think as a counselor educator about research, it's, "I'm reading journal articles," and some of that's true, but I'm also just being mindful of the news articles that I read and reading them with a more critical eye in terms of framing and word choices and trying to read from a variety of even news sources and things like that.

The statement highlighted a participant's response related to culturally informed research and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

Theme: Counseling Identity

Counseling identity was identified as a theme in research question one. Counseling identity can be defined as encompassing and in alignment with philosophical orientation of human development, prevention, and wellness areas within interprofessional counseling practice (Mellin, Hunt, & Nichols, 2011). Additionally, social justice and advocacy is another piece that counselors integrate in theories, paradigms, and practice (Ratts, 2015). The social justice and advocacy component is another aspect of counseling identity. Counselor educators are counselors, supervisors, researchers, teachers, and leaders. Below is an excerpt of a participant's response on how their counseling identity and related experiences have been beneficial to them in their leadership roles.

Adrian stated that relying on counseling skills has been an integral part of their development and in them doing their introspective work:

I feel like I wasn't explicitly taught like, "Hey, do this, these are the evidence-based strategies". I have had to rely on counseling experiences and pull from that to develop a set of skills for myself to say, "These are the kind of things that I would do to engage with other people and bring up these conversations." So, I don't know, being able to

reflect on that process of growth is another source of evidence that I can tell myself that I'm actually competent and I have evidence to support that.

This statement highlights a participant's response related to counseling identity and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

Theme: Internalized Self-Reflection

Internalized self-reflection was identified as a theme in research question one.

Internalized self-reflection work is defined as knowledge and understanding of oneself in relation to core values, beliefs, life experiences, and worldview (McGoldrick, 1998; Pieterse, Lee, Ritmeester, & Collins, 2013). Below is an excerpt of a participant's response sharing the internalized self-reflection work that was necessary for them to first explore and continue doing, so that they can engage in culturally competent practices as a leader.

Alexus stated not making assumptions about students is essential as well as checking themselves on if their approach in working with diverse students that they are responding in a culturally competent way:

Way beyond just race or, or gender or things like that. There are a lot of different cultural issues. And so, I think I'm always...Self reflecting in terms of learning about students, learning about their differences, not assuming that all students are the same. Um, not making assumptions and taking every student as an individual, but then also, like I said, paying attention to me and how I feel and how I'm reacting culturally to something or what my cultural composition might be too. And so, it's kind of a dual process and learning about students and learning about others, and taking them as individuals, but then making sure that I'm always thinking about myself and analyzing myself as well.

This statement highlights a participant's response related to internalized self-reflection and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

A.1. What factors hinder counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? The following themes are addressed for research question a.1.:

Theme: Blind Spots

Blind spots were identified as a theme in research question a.2. According to Luft and Ingram (1961), blind spots refer to features of an individual's personality that others are aware of, yet unaware, or oblivious is the individual to these features. These blind areas are those where others can see aspects of ourselves that we are unconscious of; also described by the Johari Window concept (Luft & Ingram, 1961). Below is an excerpt of a participant's response describing blind spots experienced and ways in which they've associated and addressed their blind spots.

Amy stated it is important to get feedback from others in particular addressing their teaching practice and if their practice is inclusive or if there are some blind spots:

I don't wanna incorporate microaggressions regularly into my teaching practice, so I'm learning more and more where they are... 'Cause a lot of times they fall on blind spots, and so it's... Another piece of this is inviting others to speak into me in what I'm doing and hearing well from them because they can speak to my blind spots.

This statement highlights a participant's responses related to blind spots and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

Theme: Social Desirability

Social desirability was identified as a theme in research question a.2. Social desirability is defined as the tendency of people to underestimate or overestimate the likelihood they would

perform an undesirable or desirable action (Chung & Monroe, 2003). Moreover, it is the tendency that individuals deny socially undesirable actions and behaviors and generally admit to socially desirable ones (Chung & Monroe, 2003). Below is an excerpt of a participant's response and their experiences with social desirability.

Adrian stated being aware of how individuals do not want to be labeled as someone who is insensitive to marginalized individuals; however, their speech does not match their actions:

I don't know, relevance of my counseling skills is that in terms of measuring and knowing if I'm having impact, I'm trying to be very aware of social desirability that most people in this world have... I don't want to be labeled as a racist, a sexist, homophobic, or whatever. And I feel like if I just give someone an instrument or something, those usually make... They don't necessarily account for social desirability unless they're constructed in that way... To measure something covertly rather than make it obvious or have face validity. So, I feel like that's like a prime example of where counseling skills can come in because in counseling, I work with people who tell me socially desirable things all the time and I'm listening like, "This doesn't add up, you're saying this and you're doing this." Whereas mix up in terms of a stage of change, I feel like that's sort of... I don't know. It's helpful in actually jump starting... Getting someone out of the pre-contemplation stage when they think in their own experience, they think they're in like a maintenance stage. I'm like "You actually haven't made any change at all." But you know.

This statement highlights a participant's response related to social desirability and participants experiences.

Theme: Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders

Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders was identified as a theme in research question a.2. Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders refers to confronting oppressive problems and tackling those concerns (Weick & Chamberlain, 1997, 2002). Furthermore, stakeholders is an inclusive term that encompasses but not limited to staff, professional peers, leaders/administrators' supervisors. Moreover, how participants engaged in speaking up about confrontational related issues is discussed. Below is an excerpt of a participant's response that reveal experiences with confronting colleagues and stakeholders.

Claudia stated an experience in which a colleague was confronted regarding their pushback on hiring diverse individuals:

So, my institution we're a very pro social you know socially active institution but our leadership now faculty are predominantly Caucasian. So, we really needed to bring some diversity to our leadership, to our faculty because our students are very diverse, and we need to have that element in our classrooms. Well, one of the faculty that I work with, who's a White male also, you know, promotes the idea of inclusivity and you know diversity and, and, and voices that. But when it came down to actually making the decision to add diversity to our faculty there was some pushback from him, and it was very interesting. It was very interesting, as I have to stand firm right in my position of no this is what we have to do, right, we, we, this is what we're gonna do right, we, we need to do this for, for our program. So that was interesting. Because he's an older White male. And at that point, he was even in a higher leadership position than I am and so, but I was chair of the search committee, so I have some ... I have some ability to you know, make some decisions but ... but yes that was very interesting, but I felt that it was important.

So, I had to advocate right for that for that need that we have as a department and to sort of fight that you know dominance racist, for lack of a better word, right, racist perspective because at the end of the day, that's what it was.

This was an excerpt of a participant's response related to confrontation of colleagues and stakeholder's perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this in leadership.

A.2. What factors help counselor educator administrators demonstrate culturally competent practice? The following themes are addressed for research question a.2.:

Theme: Evaluation of Performance

Evaluation of performance was identified as a theme in research question a.1. Evaluation of performance is referred to as ongoing feedback individuals receive that focus on professional demonstration of skills and professional development/advancement in various ways (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Evaluative performance information can be provided in different ways such as in the form of summative and formative feedback (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Formative feedback is the process of facilitating skill acquisition and professional growth through direct feedback (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Summative evaluation can provide part of an annual review of employee performance, teaching evaluations, or other feedback regarding counselor educators in leadership and or administration positions as well as areas of professional growth and decline. Below is an excerpt of a participant's reflections how they evaluate their performance as counselor educators in leadership or administration positions in higher education.

Scobby stated receiving formative and summative feedback from students and peers has been instrumental in evaluating their performance:

It's typically the response from my peers, from students, getting both formative and summative feedback from those individuals via the evaluations, student evaluations, my

employee evaluations and the general... What am I trying to say? I guess I'll go back to the word 'interaction,' the approach, when individuals approach me, my colleagues tend to listen to me, and not because I'm in a leadership role, but because they respect me, and it's... That's different. And I think that's how I get that feedback and it tells me that, okay, you're doing something right, that this is what gets the job done, this is what helps the client move forward, this is what helps students learn. So that engagement piece. Yeah, interactions.

These statements highlight participants responses related to evaluation of performance and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

Administrative Support and Mentorship

Administrative support and mentorship were identified as a theme in research question a.1. Administrative support in higher education is defined as the leadership behavior that is associated with leadership effectiveness at a departmental level that includes, but is not limited to a) clear sense of direction/strategic vision; 2) preparing department arrangements to facilitate the direction set; 3) being considerate; 4) treating academic staff fairly and with integrity; 5) being trustworthy and having personal integrity; 6) allowing the opportunity to participate in key decisions/encouraging open communication; 7) acting as a role model/having credibility; 8) creating a positive/collegial work atmosphere in the department; 9) providing feedback on performance; and 10) providing resources for and adjusting workloads to stimulate scholarship and research (Bryman, 2007). Mentorship is that which is rooted in social constructivist principles involving social interaction and the co-construction of knowledge between individuals (Palincsar, 1998). Below are the voices of counselor educator leaders who demonstrate a value for administrative support and mentorship as they assist individuals, specifically historically

oppressed populations with navigating various programs or spaces. Furthermore, participants describe the need for their supervisors to exhibit administrative support and mentorship.

Cupcake stated that there are not a lot of diverse leaders at their institution, however, there is an influx and higher-level administration is aware of this and supports marginalized individuals in their messages and actions:

Yeah. Yeah, and I think it's also important because I am in my school. Well at the college I might be one of like two or three chairs of color. In my school I'm definitely the only chair of color. As the program director for them also program director as a program director, there's a lot more diversity. So, there's still like a handful of individuals of color. There's more persons of color at the program director level. But as we go up in higher administration, not that meant, you know, well they're getting better. In terms of persons of color, being in higher level administration, but I felt like my college is really aware of that very cognizant about that and they are invested in that as well. So, it makes it a little bit easier to kind of speak out, since that's been messages that we have got received from the President, as well as the provost. Able to be supportive. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. So, a lot of the affiliate program development that I've done at the college level has been with the support of the provost who is a Latino male. And so that's been, it's been great to have.

These statements highlight participants responses related administrative support and mentorship and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

Multiplicity of Voices and Experiences

Multiplicity of voices and experiences was identified as a theme in research question a.1. Multiplicity of voices and experiences refers to the benefit of being exposed to individuals with diverse perspectives and how interactions in higher education are powerful such that people benefit educationally from one another (Chang, Denson, Sáen, & Misa, 2006). Moreover, multiplicity of voices and experiences is related to increased critical thinking, leadership ability, and the skill development for working effectively with diverse individuals (Hurtado, 2001). Below are the voices of participants discussing the importance of multiplicity of voices and experiences.

Harper stated the importance of hearing diverse voices and providing support for diverse voices:

So, it's been kind of this nice and way of empowering them to tell their story, but also educating others about different ways of knowing and stories. And so, I think I would just add that like as a leader like this is the stuff that gets me excited is like, how can we keep pushing out different voices, right, whether it's representation and meetings or it's just different ways of defining constructs for stories like that stuff just gets me and keeps me in this position because there's ... there's so much to do.

These statements highlight participants' responses related to multiplicity of voices and experiences and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this within their professional careers.

B. How does race and gender (or lived experiences or job/career position type) influence counselor educator administrators' demonstration of culturally competent practices? The following themes are addressed for research question b.:

Microaggressions and Life Experiences

Microaggressions and life experiences was identified as a theme in research question b. Microaggressions refer to brief, everyday exchanges that send demeaning messages to marginalized individuals because they belong to a racial minority group (Sue & Constantine, 2007). Moreover, racial microaggressions may represent a noteworthy source of distress endured by individuals of color (Torres-Harding, Andrade Jr., & Romero Diaz, 2012). The microaggressions and life experiences that a participant endured is described in their voice below in an excerpt.

Alexus stated some distressing experiences encountered in their graduate program that has had an impact on their leadership:

I would have to say and kind of what inspired my dissertation is I was in a doctoral program that was not very multiculturally competent and I had a horrible experience in that doctoral program and actually ended up leaving because the students of color were not treated equally, and not treated well in that program. And so it kind of turned me off to the field of counselor education because as a counselor, you just assume that somebody is you know, caring and compassionate and then, especially when we're learning about how to be multiculturally competent counselor educators, it's kind of it plays with your mind because you hear one thing coming out of someone's mouth, but then they don't demonstrate those and so for me, that experience turned me off to counselor education, however. As a school counselor, I really wanted ... I met a lot of not good school counselors. And so, I heard a lot of experiences from people who did not have very good school counselors and so I still had that motivation to want to train future school counselors to be competent and so I ended up applying to another doctoral

program, was expecting the same treatment, and it was totally different. And so, everything about me. Culturally, from my role, you know, as a mother or my role as a full-time worker or a student, when everything was attended to and respected which was totally different from my first experience. But due to that experience, I learned what type of counselor educator I wanted to be, because I had, and it took a while to get over the trauma of how I was treated in that program and some of the other students we kind of get together sometimes and talk about it, but it really helps me in terms of motivating me to study more about multicultural competence, but then wanting to make sure that I didn't make another student feel the way that I felt in that program.

These statements highlight participants' responses regarding microaggressions and life experiences they have endured during their professional career.

Theme: White Superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression)

White superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression) was identified as a theme in research question b. White superiority refers to a common attitude among some White individuals that White people have enhanced intelligence, preparedness, and education than people of color (Tochluk, 2010). Moreover, White superiority in educational systems was mentioned by participants. White superiority was presented by participants in a variety of ways during the study. Below is an excerpt of a participant's voice and experience/encounter with White superiority.

Claudia stated an experience in which they had to advocate when another leader pushed back on hiring diverse faculty:

So, my institution we're a very pro social you know socially active institution but our leadership now faculty are predominantly Caucasian. So, we really needed to bring some

diversity to our leadership to our faculty because our students are very diverse, and we need to have that element. In our classrooms. Well, one of the faculty that I work with, who's a White male also, you know, promotes the idea of inclusivity and you know diversity and, and, and voices that. But when it came down to actually making the decision to add diversity to our faculty there was some pushback from him, and it was very interesting. It was very interesting, as I have to stand firm right in my position of no this is what we have to do, right, we, we, this is what we're gonna do right, we, we need to do this for ... for our program. So that was interesting. Because he's an older White male. And at that point, he was even in a higher leadership position than I am and so, but I was chair of the search committee, so I have some I have some ability to you know, make some decisions but, but yes that was very interesting, but I felt that it was important. So, I had to advocate right for that for that need that we have as a department and to sort of fight that you know dominance racist, for lack of a better word, right, racist perspective because at the end of the day, that's what it was.

These statements highlight participants responses related to White superiority and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration and experiences/encounters of this within their professional careers.

Theme: Authenticity

Authenticity was identified as a theme in research question b. Being an authentic leader encompasses leader behavior that 1) draws upon and upholds both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate; 2) cultivates increased self-awareness; 3) having an internalized moral perspective; 4) the steady processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers; and 5) fostering positive self-

development (Ilies, Morgenson, & Nahrgang, 2005; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). In this study, participants reported authenticity in their leadership role as something they strive to display. Below is an excerpt of a participant's response sharing their experiences in demonstrating authenticity in their leadership roles.

Scobby stated transparency is key in embracing leadership and realizing that their lived experiences are different than others and embracing that genuinely is key:

Honestly, not anything that I haven't mentioned. I will, I try to do genuine, I try to be authentic, but I also try to be transparent. And realizing that my lived experiences and my world views are not necessarily the same as everyone else's, so I just try to embrace that. It probably has a lot to do with my current leadership role right now, because again, people that I work with, people that I interact with have learned that regardless of the environment, regardless of the situation, this is what you get. I'm going to be professional and you're right the environment determines the delivery, but I respect who you are and what you bring to the table. Honestly, that's... I don't have much more to add to that.

These statements highlight participants responses related to authenticity in leadership and their perspective on this concept and their demonstration of this in leadership.

Discussion of Research Findings

In this research study, the findings represented the essence of the individual (Microsystem) as well as the institutional (Mesosystem) experiences of counselor educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. As aforementioned, Bronfenbrenner's ecological system model assisted in further contextualizing the participants responses by considering the relationship between the participants individual lived experiences and their experiences working at a higher education institution (Christensen, 2016). These

relationships or connections found between the participants shared lived experiences in higher education is situated in and characterized as the microsystem and the mesosystem (Christensen, 2016). For example, the participants lived experiences as Black women who were microaggressed, the interpersonal impact that experience had on them was noticed - this situated as part of a microsystemic context. The participants lived experience being microaggressed at the institution/place where they work, that created a negative experience or instance where institutional betrayal occurred, were noticed – these are situated as part of the mesosystemic context. These examples illustrate distinct systemic contextual dynamics – the participants lived experiences and what occurred at institution/place of work and the impact of the institutional response on the participant. Moreover, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system model was an additive way to deepen the contextualization of participants responses for each of the twelve themes.

The twelve themes to emerge from the research findings representing participant experiences and voices are: 1) Counseling Identity, 2) Culturally Informed Research, 3) Internalized Self-Reflection, 4) Blind Spots, 5) Social Desirability, 6) Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders, 7) Evaluation of Performance, 8) Administrative Support and Mentorship, 9) Multiplicity of Voices and Experiences, 10) Microaggressions and Life Experiences, 11) White Superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression), and 12) Authenticity.

Culturally Informed Research

Culturally informed research is at the crux for Counselor Educators in leadership and or administration for making informed culturally competent decisions as well as for engaging in self-reflection. Participants discussed ways in which they intentionally sought out literature by

diverse authors to not only continue in their introspective work but to apply this literature into their programs as a leader or administrator. Being a culturally informed leader was discussed as a vital aspect that counselor educators in leadership or administration demonstrate through research. Counselor educators sought out literature that would give them a diverse perspective than their own worldview to assist in better understanding individuals' experiences; allowing them to assist in providing a solution to an issue or even creating spaces through programmatic changes so that diverse individuals and the resources those individuals needed were identified and applied. Furthermore, engaging in culturally informed research is a component that counselor educators learn in their programs which aids in the development and understanding of a counselor educators counseling identity.

Counseling Identity

Counselor educators are counselors, supervisors, researchers, teachers, and leaders. These five areas are explored in counseling education programs to assist counselor educators in developing their professional identity. Moreover, counselor educators have received specific training on the necessary skills that must be learned and cultivated in becoming a professional counselor. Counselor educators' understanding and application of ethical codes, as well as their theoretical orientation, and the tool of self-reflection that can be instrumental in navigating counseling sessions and beyond. Leaders voiced how they would operationalize aspects of their professional counselor identity, as a counselor educator, and apply skills cultivated in working with individuals, to catalyze their cultural competence in different ways at their institution. Moreover, an aspect of a counseling educator's identity is being culturally competent (inclusive and responsive). Counselor educators spoke more to the tool and benefit of self-reflection being a vital and necessary part of their journey as a leader.

Internalized Self-Reflection

Internalized self-reflection work is where individuals take an introspective view of their social identities and how it impacts the world around them, but also the greater impact these identities have on others who identify as marginalized, in some way. This internalized work can be difficult yet necessary in that allows for an individual to better understand themselves and others. Participants shared the internalized self-reflection work was necessary for them to explore and continue to explore so that they could engage in culturally competent practices as a leader and/or administrator.

Furthermore, the tool of reflecting on your own worldview and considering other worldviews potentially different from their own, because of an array of reasons, is crucial in understanding what others could be experiencing. Also, this can help leaders consider ways in which they have been helpful as well as ways they have hindered those they serve or work within their administrative roles. Reflecting on past experiences was a vital and painful aspect that some counselor educators had to explore to better understand how to move forward. In providing support to students, faculty, and staff, as well as mentorship opportunities, especially those who were not provided advancement and career opportunities to assist in meeting goals and had accomplish these for themselves. Lastly, counselor educators in leadership or administration found it an important part of their self-reflection to take inventory of their performance to better understand what has been helpful to others as well as what has hindered others, especially marginalized individuals.

Blind Spots

Blind spots are features of an individual's personality that others are aware of, however, the individual is unaware or oblivious to these features (Luft & Ingram, 1961). The Johari

Window is a model that describes self-awareness as well as unawareness (Luft & Ingram, 1961). The blind spots in which others can see in us that we are unconscious of was discussed by participants; in addition to their experience navigating the blind spots they would come across as counselor educators in leadership and administration (Luft & Ingram, 1961). When people ask for feedback, this minimizes the blind area and allows for growth as well as an opening of the area (Luft & Ingram, 1961). Participants described the importance of asking for feedback so that they could become more aware of areas they are unaware of, especially related to demonstrating inclusivity with marginalized individuals. Furthermore, counselor educators in leadership and administration discussed how blind areas have been uncovered using scholarship focused on marginalized individuals that has evolved over the years.

Social Desirability

Social desirability refers to the tendency of individuals to underestimate or overestimate the likelihood they would perform an undesirable or desirable action (Chung & Monroe, 2003). Participants discussed being aware of how others they work with may give what may be perceived as a desirable response regarding cultural competence or social justice work. Moreover, participants discussed how despite the messaging and information shared by other faculty, staff, and leaders and administrators in higher education, their actions are not in alignment with available messaging. Some individuals may be concerned about being perceived or labeled as someone who is insensitive and not inclusive. Additionally, some individuals may want to be identified as being culturally competent, however the Dunning-Kruger effect occurred when it was noticed that their actions did not align. It takes courage to engage in antiracist work on all levels. Engaging in culturally competent practice/work means that one must speak up and

advocate for others in need of advocacy. In some instances, this may mean confronting colleagues and others to assist in addressing systematic oppression.

Confrontation of Colleagues and Stakeholders

Confrontation of colleagues and stakeholders is confronting oppressive problems and the tackling of those concerns (Weick & Chamberlain, 1997, 2002). It is necessary for individuals to confront and engage in advocacy/social justice work to bring an end to oppression experienced by marginalized groups. In an effort to stand up against oppression, sometimes it is necessary to confront others and to challenge perspectives/worldviews is also to assist them in gaining an awareness and knowledge of what marginalized individuals have experienced and sometimes themselves perpetuate. Participants revealed times where they had to speak up and address inequitable practices that were occurring at the programmatic, departmental, and/or at the college/school level.

Moreover, participants reported incongruencies in higher education administrator and leader messaging regarding people with diverse background, their own willingness to support and as well as their actions. Furthermore, participants stated how some leaders and administrators are not able to name injustices directly and how that has negatively impacted others and their experiences with these professionals. Also, in considering ways in which individuals can engage in social justice work/advocacy specifically using their voice, can sometimes cause harm to the individual speaking out against any injustice. Because of the consequences that can be experienced from advocating on different levels in higher education, professionals may feel silenced and unsupported in speaking their truths. These consequences can affect an individual's job performance/work engagement in a negative or positive way. This

is one of the important reasons for conducting periodic performance evaluations that include an appraisal of work behaviors as well as feedback.

Evaluation of Performance

Counselor educators in leadership and administration in higher education participants in this study discussed the importance of being evaluated, and how periodic evaluation processes can assist them in understanding what practices they have implemented are effective and those that may not be as helpful. Moreover, counselor educators in leadership and administration roles shared the importance of ongoing feedback and the various ways in which they receive evaluative feedback. Although, formative and summative feedback are ways in which participants discussed receiving feedback, most often they described receiving formative feedback.

Participants spoke more about how direct feedback from students, faculty, and staff assisted them in taking inventory of processes they have implemented in the classroom, programmatic, departmental, and college/school level. Furthermore, participants spoke about how gathering this information assisted them in evaluating their cultural competence skills in action and to note what is effective and what needs improvement. Participants stated the importance of sharing literature with others in hopes of increasing their awareness, knowledge, and skills on specific topics related to marginalized groups. Participants stated that other faculty members would comment to them regarding a student they previously worked with, and how knowledgeable those students felt they were about subject matter. Also, some participants stated that they would evaluate and observe and identify student's skill or faculty, and staff cultural competence skills, and would notice if they made some improvement (use of appropriate terminology, increased self-reflection, and knowledge regarding marginalized individuals).

Moreover, counselor educators in leadership and administration discussed the importance of not only gaining feedback from others about the culturally competent work they are doing in a periodic evaluation of their performance, but participants also stated the importance of having administrative support and mentorship to implement culturally competent efforts.

Administrative Support and Mentorship

Administrative support highlights leadership behavior that is associated with effectiveness at a departmental level that includes but no limited to clear sense of direction/strategic vision, preparing department arrangements to facilitate the direction set, being considerate, treating academic staff fairly and with integrity, being trustworthy and having personal integrity, allowing the opportunity to participate in key decisions/encouraging open communication, acting as a role model/having credibility, creating a positive/collegial work atmosphere in the department, providing feedback on performance, and providing resources for and adjusting workloads to stimulate scholarship and research (Bryman, 2007). If these behaviors are not demonstrated on the programmatic, departmental, college/school levels it allows for people to be excluded and not included, further marginalizing. Furthermore, if these leadership behaviors are not exhibited, marginalized individuals may not feel a sense of belonging, become silence, therefore not heard, not supported, and thusly, may not have access to the resources they need to be successful. Moreover, if upper-level administration displaying the leadership behaviors and promoting an inclusive environment, this can assist and motivate others to practice in a like manner, fostering greater inclusivity. Participant counselor educators in leadership and administrative roles voiced how important administrative support can be as well as mentorship.

Mentorship can be beneficial to both mentee and mentor because it allows space for reflection, sharing ideas, professional growth, and personal satisfaction. Participants voiced the importance of mentoring other faculty to assist them in cultivating their goals as well as making a way for leadership experiences and opportunities. Moreover, participant counselor educators in leadership and administration roles stated mentorship opportunities, in particular for marginalized individuals, is essential and described how it allows others who may not generally be given an opportunity, to lead and do more. Mentorship coupled with administrative support is critical and provides support for conducting more research to cultivate even more rich insights, further deepening the understanding by way of the voices of those with these lived experiences.

Multiplicity of Voices and Experiences

Multiplicity of voices and experiences highlights the benefit of having diverse individuals' voices heard and the importance of those interactions which can benefit individuals regarding education (Chang et al., 2006). Counselor educator leadership and administration discussed the importance of having diverse individuals affiliated with the university in different capacities (student, staff, faculty, leadership), because there is value in having diverse perspectives when exploring a topic or an issue. Moreover, it is important that diverse individuals feel comfortable they can trust that when they share their experiences, they will not be penalized, especially if in sharing, they disrupt and/or challenge the dominant culture's perspective.

Multiplicity of voices and experiences is related to increased critical thinking, leadership ability, and the skill to work effectively with diverse individuals (Hurtado, 2001). Diverse perspectives can assist others with considering their own worldview and becoming more open to their blind spots. When blind spots are not considered, this can cause the person to miss areas

where competence development, awareness and feedback is needed. If unaddressed, the professional is left unaware and the blind spots unexplored, the person may continue unhealthy, uncivil, inappropriate, and unprofessional behaviors, including microaggressions.

Microaggressions and Life Experiences

Microaggressions are brief, everyday exchanges that send demeaning messages to individuals because of the racial minority group to which they belong (Sue & Constantine, 2007). Microaggressions and life experiences were discussed by participants as how they have endured these subtle and sometimes overt messages because of their marginalized identities. Participants of color discussed how the difference of power played a role in these experiences and despite the positions they hold, they still received demeaning messages because of their identities furthering the complexity of their experiences. Participants of color voiced their experiences being counselor educators in leadership and administration having to navigate microaggressions experienced by colleagues or individuals they were evaluating. Furthermore, participants of color discussed being students in their training programs and receiving demeaning messages or microaggressions that discouraged and deterred them from engaging in counseling education work. Because they had positive experiences in a different training program, this in turn assisted a participant with becoming re-energized to engage in counseling education work and to explore alternative leadership and administration career paths aligned with their background and training. Microaggressions and negative messages individual experience is deeply rooted in White superiority.

White Superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression)

White superiority is an attitude common among White individuals (individuals of European descent) that their education, preparedness, and intelligence is greater than individuals

of color. White supremacy has been embedded in different systems in society, such as education, health care, government, and more. These systems historically have been oppressive in many ways. Historically, the education system in the United States has marginalized individuals, their stories have been largely excluded from the curriculum, their voices not broadly heard. A culture of White superiority in higher education is harmful and does not allow for inclusivity and the valuation of diversity. Participants discussed experiences watching White colleagues exhibit double consciousness in choosing when to authentically engage in social justice work and when not.

The participant counselor educators in leadership and administration roles discussed how some people mentioned the importance of diverse individuals' presence; however, immobile or limited to no action in support of what was mentioned. Also, participants discussed when some were presented with the opportunity to prioritize the recruitment and/or selection of diverse faculty, other elected not to engage. Furthermore, participants reported ways in which they engaged in social justice work and demonstrated their cultural competency by speaking up and bringing awareness to more equitable practices. Moreover, participants discussed how some White individuals engage in social justice work with this perception to save marginalized individuals from oppression, while also focusing on themselves (i.e., how others may perceive them). Additionally, participant counselor educators in leadership and administration roles discussed the importance of engaging in social justice/ antiracist work as well as the need to be authentic in doing this work.

Authenticity

Authenticity means that someone is being true to themselves, showing who they are in a variety of settings; in a transparent way (Ilies et. al., 2005; Walumbwa et. al., 2008). Being an

authentic leader allows who the person is to come through how their leadership role is demonstrated. Participants discussed how authenticity was an important tool to possess as a leader. Expressing and showing empathy in the attempt to understand others and their struggles, as well as being direct or authentic about their own experiences or their journey, also tantamount in understanding others. Furthermore, participant counselor educator leadership and administration roles discussed that in their demonstration of authenticity, students, faculty, and staff would openly discuss their personal matters with them. Also, when students, faculty and staff openly discussed their personal matters with leadership, it in turn assisted these leaders with greater awareness for creating and enforcing policies that would be supportive to the unit. Participants reiterated that their transparency and empathy allowed them to establish/form a relationship with students, faculty, and staff allowing for those individuals to trust and feel comfortable with sharing their professional and personal matters. Participants spoke of the importance of building a genuine, transparent rapport with others; that is an essential part of the leadership and administrative role.

Limitations of Study

There are some limitations that should be considered regarding this study. First, restricting the participant sample only to counselor educators in higher education leadership and administration roles in which 50% of their time is allocated limits the extent of the study. This is not representative of those who serve in a dual capacity within counseling education in higher education settings. There are other counselor educators who serve in leadership roles where their full-time employment status in leadership does not occupy 50% of their time.

Also, full time employment allocation for leadership and/or administrators could vary in definition across colleges and universities. Further, limiting this research to counselor educators

who are in leadership and administration does not incorporate other disciplines, those working in leader and administrator capacities in higher education. Moreover, other entities were not explored in this study. Exclusively, leaders and administrators in academia were the focus and must be broadened. Additionally, the sample is not as diverse racially/ethnically and is not diverse in terms of gender identity. The potential for there being a more accurate representation is there. It is necessary to capture a larger demographic range of men who serve as leaders or administrators in academia. With a more diverse sample, it may have allowed additional themes to arise in understanding how individual's identities may have an impact on their self-perceptions of cultural competence in their administration/leadership roles.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future research study of the phenomenon examined, exploration of counselor educators who operate in a leadership and administrative capacity at any level within their program or beyond is needed as well as in other entities. Exploring leaders' and/or administrators' self-perceptions of their cultural competence in roles in higher education without any restrictions to their allocation percentage would be a beneficial exploration. In addition, further mining the experiences of diverse individuals' perception of cultural competence related to being a counselor educator in an administrative/leadership position is essential. Expanding on how diverse individuals' identities have an impact on their culturally competent practice in their leadership and/or administrator roles would also be important future research.

It is also important to consider researching the lived experiences with culturally competent practice of leaders and administrators in higher education (who identify as ethnically diverse) as compared to the lived experiences of leaders and administrators in higher education (who identify as White/or European American). The results of this study may also support

advancing specific recruitment and retention policies and career pipelining of human service professionals and social scientists into higher education leader and administrator positions. Moreover, considering the area of professional identity, this research can enhance our understanding of it and how people experience it. There are more options for counselor educators to expand their horizons in leadership and administration in higher education. This pathway is accomplished through representation and examples of diverse counselor educators serving as a leader or administrator in academia. Researchers must consider the impact of internalized racism and how it may contribute to some people exploring leadership and/or administration as opposed to others who do not.

Furthermore, cultural humility as a bases for developing cultural competence should be further studied. Cultural humility as defined by Hook et al. (2017) and Moon and Sandage (2019) is the ability to hold an accurate perception of their own cultural values as well as maintain other-oriented perspectives that involves respect, lack of superiority and attunement regarding their own cultural beliefs and values. Cultural humility is the framework that could be used to foster accurate self-perceptions of counselor educator leaders/administrators in higher education. According to Moon and Sandage (2019), their research presented a growing body of empirical research on cultural humility. Further, the research and literature heralding the value for cultural humility represents a very promising advance in what is known in domains of counseling, counselor education, multicultural psychology, and psychotherapy, continuing to inform culturally sensitive approaches to mental health practices. We must utilize cultural humility as a basic way that counselor educators who are leaders/administrators in higher education can begin to assess their own cultural competence. These findings in the research study leads to leadership and administrative competencies with emphasis on working with

diverse populations. Moreover, these findings should not only be viewed as relevant for leaders and administrators in higher education, but also for primary and secondary school (K–12) administrators and leaders. Leaders and administrators who work in primary and secondary (K–12) settings would benefit from further competency development that emphasizes best cultural practice with diverse populations. As a profession we can begin correcting the mistakes we are currently living. This paradigm shift in our society where injustices are being acknowledged, requires further research as well as ways in which our society and systemic racism functions. As counselor educators this research will aid in exploring ways to engage our community in healing efforts through truth telling and processing. As research is one of a counselor's instruments/tools for advocacy, it is recommended that more research be conducted in these areas.

Conclusion

In studying the essence of the lived experiences of counselor educators in administration/leadership roles and their self-perceptions of their culturally competent practices, a wealth of information was revealed. Through the phenomenological analysis process the themes emerged provided the researcher with insight on self-perceptions of counselor educators in leadership and administration regarding their culturally competent practices and key factors that were essential in knowing if they were acting in a culturally competent way.

The findings revealed that having a strong counseling identity, engaging in culturally informed research, internalized self-reflection work, evaluation of their performance, administrative support and mentorship, multiplicity of voices and experiences, understanding their blind spots, taking inventory of social desirability factors, the importance and challenges of confronting colleagues and stakeholders, considering microaggressions and life experiences that leaders endure, impact of White superiority (White savior, aiding in systemic oppression), and

demonstrating authenticity are all factors that assist leaders in having a critical view of their cultural competent practices.

The limitations of this research study along with the literature review regarding the research focus signals a need for further research. This study will help counseling professionals, counselor educators in leadership and/ or administrative roles in higher education better understand if their responses or actions at work are culturally competent. Further, this research will help with the nuanced development of practices as well as policy implementation to assist diverse individuals in overcoming challenges experienced in higher education environments. The lived experiences, self-perceptions, and voices of counselor educators in leadership and administrative roles show that culturally competent practices are demonstrated – these narratives are indeed rich and compelling and are heard.

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APPENDIX A:
RECRUITMENT FLYER

**Cultural Competence in Action: Self-Perceptions of
Counselor Educators in Higher
Education Leadership Careers
Study**

Do you identify as a Counselor Educator? Are you also serving as a leader and/or administrator in higher education? If so, please consider participating in this study.

My name is Ashley Brown, and I am currently a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education and Supervision program at Auburn University. As a part of my dissertation research, I am seeking participants for my study to examine the self-perceptions of culturally competent practice of Counselor Educators who work in leadership and/or administrative roles in higher education. This study will aim to examine leader's unique perspectives providing a greater understanding of the significance of cultural competency related to work in higher education. Dr. Chippewa Thomas is the faculty advisor of this research project.

You are invited to participate if you meet the following selection criteria: 1) Counselor Education faculty; 2) serve as a leader and/or administrator in higher education; 3) willing to commit to one audio recorded interview on your experience of culturally competent practice as a Counselor Educator who works as a leader and/or administrator.

If you participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete informed consent to participate, a demographic questionnaire, and one audio recorded semi-structured interview. Your total time commitment will be approximately 2 hours (10-minute demographic questionnaire, 1 hour 15-minute interview, 35-minute verification of transcription).

Your identity and responses will be kept confidential.
Your personal experience will be collected and

analyzed to more deeply describe a phenomenon. All data collection and transmission will be protected by secure technology.

If you are interested in participating in the research study, please click on the link below. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Please contact Ashley Brown at abb0010@auburn.edu with any questions.

https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eb7u9ezapveKJi5

Please feel free to distribute and share with anyone who might be interested in participating in this study.

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APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction:

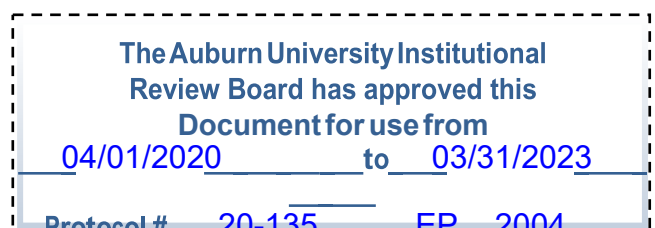
The study that will be conducted is designed to assist in better understanding the essence of experiences that counselor educators have who work in leadership and administrative capacities regarding their self-perception of culturally competent practice.

Script:

The researcher will ask a series of questions to gain a better understanding of your self-perceptions of your culturally competent practices as a counselor educator who works in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. At this time, please take a moment to reflect on your experiences as a counselor educator who works in leadership and administrative roles in higher education.

Questions:

1. Do you professionally identify as a counselor educator and as culturally competent?
2. What factors have contributed to your cultural competence practice at work?
3. What is your self-perception regarding if and how you demonstrate cultural competence in your role?
4. In what ways do you apply cultural competence or skill in your work.
5. In what other ways does your education, training, background (experience), and identity in counseling show up in your approach to the work you do?
6. How does your experience in counseling, background, education and training a counseling influence your application/demonstration of culturally competent skills in the work you do?
7. In what ways does a culturally competent approach influence your work?
8. How do you know you are demonstrating cultural competence at work?
9. What factors influence you to pursue and assume complementary or alternative leadership career in higher education?
10. Is there anything else you'd like to add?



APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic Section

Gender:

Man

Woman

Transgender Woman

Transgender Man

Other (please specify)

1. Please select the ethnicity you feel best describes your background:

African American/Black

Asian American

White American

Hispanic/Hispanic American/Chicano/a/Latino/a/Latinx

American Indian

Biracial/Multiracial

International

Other (please specify)

2. Sexual Orientation:

Heterosexual

Bisexual

Gay

Asexual

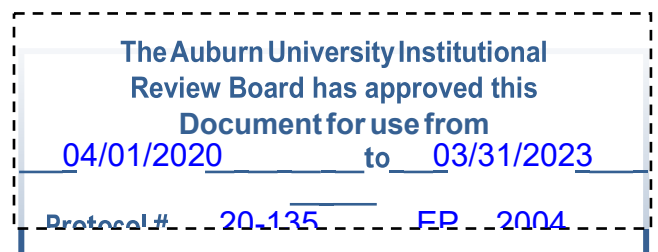
Other (please specify)

3. Age:

(Text Entry)

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4. Are you a counselor educator in an administrative position in higher education?
- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)
5. What population do you work with the most?
- Faculty
- Staff
- Students
- Other (please specify)
6. Would you consider the population in which you work with as a counselor educator administrator diverse (race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, individuals with disabilities, age, religion, etc.)?
- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)
7. Years of administrative experience:
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10+ years
8. Number of course(s), and professional development training (s), on diversity completed in the last three calendar years:
- # of graduate courses (Text entry)
- # of professional development trainings (Text entry)



APPENDIX D:
STUDY INFORMATION LETTER



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION, REHABILITATION, AND COUNSELING

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP
WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMED CONSENT
for a Research Study e n t i t l e d

**“Cultural Competence in Action: Self-
Perceptions of Counselor Educators in
Higher Education Leadership Careers
Study”**

General Information: You are being asked to take part in a research study to examine the self-perceptions of the culturally competent practices of Counselor Educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education. This research study is voluntary, meaning you do not have to take part in it. The procedures, risks, and benefits are fully described further in the consent form.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to explore the self-perceptions of the culturally competent practices of Counselor Educators in leadership and administrative roles in higher education.

Duration & Visits: There will be a total time commitment of approximately 2 hours .

Overview of Procedures: You will be asked to complete a 10-minute demographic questionnaire, 1 hour 15-minute interview, and 35-minute verification of transcription.

Risks: The risks associated with participating in this study are minimal. Minimal risks include potential loss of confidentiality.

Benefits: If you participate in this study, you may benefit from reflecting on your roles, responsibilities, and the impact your practices have on others. In addition, it may help participants identify how they might expand culturally competent practice in their work.

Alternatives: The alternative is to not participate in this study.

You are being asked to take part in a research study to *examine the self-perceptions of the culturally competent practices of Counselor Educators who work in leadership and administrative roles in higher education*. The study is being conducted by Ashley Brown, a Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral candidate at Auburn University; under the supervision of Dr. Chippewa Thomas. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a Counselor Educator and Higher education administrator/leader and are age 19 or older. This research study is voluntary, meaning you do not have to take part in it. The procedures, risks, and benefits are fully described further in this consent form.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire, and participate in one audio recorded semi-structured interview using Zoom (video or teleconference), and spend time to verify the accuracy of the interview transcript. Your total time commitment will be approximately 2 hours (1 hour 15-minute interview and 45-minute transcript authentication).

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risks associated with participating in this study are minimal. Minimal risks include potential loss of confidentiality. To minimize potential risks, steps have been taken to protect confidentiality of participant information. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Information obtained through your participation will be used in professional conference presentations and/or published in professional journals.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? If you participate in this study, you may benefit from reflecting on your roles, responsibilities, and the impact your practices have on others. In addition, it may help participants identify how they might expand culturally competent practice in their work. The benefit to the principal investigator and the field of counselor education/supervision is to help with understanding how culturally competent practice might appear in higher education.

Will you receive compensation for participating? No.

Are there any costs? No.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate, please contact the principal investigator Ashley Brown, at abb0010@auburn.edu. Your responses will not be included in the study data if you choose to discontinue participation. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, and the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling.

If you have any questions about this study, please ask them now or contact the principal investigator, Ashley Brown at abb0010@auburn.edu or contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Chippewa Thomas at thoma07@auburn.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institution Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at IRBAdmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR CONSENT.

IN ADDITION, ENTER YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS SIGNED CONSENT DOCUMENT TO RETAIN FOR YOUR RECORDS AND TO BE CONTACTED TO SCHEDULE THE INTERVIEW. ALTERNATIVELY, ENTER A PHONE NUMBER AS A SECONDARY MEASURE TO SCHEDULE THE INTERVIEW.

Participant's e-Signature

Date

Investigator obtaining consent

Date

Ashley Brown

Printed Name

Printed Name

Participant's email address

Version Date (date document created): _____

Review Board has approved this

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