Multicultural Competence: An Examination of Critical Consciousness and Multicultural Awareness in Undergraduate Students

by

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Abstract

The purpose of the current study was to explore the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness among undergraduate students at Auburn University. Due to the constantly changing makeup of the United States population and the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics requiring counselors to be multiculturally competent with diverse populations, counselor educators are under more pressure than ever to promote multicultural competence in counselors-in-training (Cohn & Caumont, 2016; ACA, 2014; Hill, Vereen, McNeal, and Stotesbury, 2013; Zalaquett, Foley, Tillotson, Dinsmore, & Hof, 2008; Decker, Manis, & Paylo, 2015). This study found both political awareness and engagement in advocacy activities to be strong predictors of increased multicultural awareness among the participants. These predictors provide evidence linking critical consciousness and multicultural awareness, which can potentially be used by counselor educators to increase multicultural competence in counselors-in-training. Additionally, a discussion regarding the further discussion of the implications for counselor educators is provided.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The racial, ethnic, cultural, and demographic face of America is rapidly changing (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). According to the Pew Research Center, by the year 2055, there will no longer be a singular ethnic or racial majority—instead, individuals who identify as biracial will be the majority (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). These rapid population changes are largely influenced by immigration (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). In addition to changing the racial profile of America, immigrants also bring diverse cultures, customs, and religions. Although historically the United States is predominantly Christian, Muslims are expected to surpass Christians as the dominant religious group due to the aging Christian population and the increasing number of Muslim immigrants. At the same time racial demographics are changing, political and economic changes are also occurring.

Since 1992, there has been a steady increase in hate crimes with each presidential election (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017). The FBI crime report states hate crimes have increased two years in a row, with roughly 60% of hate crimes reported being based on the victim's race or ethnicity (FBI, 2017). The Federal Bureau of Investigation reported that in 2016, 21% of hate crimes were based on religion, while 17% of hate crimes were based on the victim's sexual orientation (2017). Two groups who have experienced an increasing number of hate crimes include the LGBTQ community and Muslims (FBI, 2017). One can expect that the changing population and continued political unrest will continue to increase the number of hate crimes reported.

Counselors are ethically and legally mandated to demonstrate competence in working with culturally diverse clients according to the American Counseling Association's Code of

Ethics (2014). As the population continues to shift and become more diverse, counselor educators should increasingly focus on developing counselors whose cultural competence reflects the population (Hill, Vereen, McNeal, and Stotesbury, 2013; Zalaquett, Foley, Tillotson, Dinsmore, & Hof, 2008; Decker, Manis, & Paylo, 2015). Classroom conversations and discussions incorporate current events involving increased awareness of police brutality towards minorities, the rising prominence of hate-based groups and leaders, and political unrest. Although counselor education as a field emphasizes cultural competence, many researchers argue that there is a gap between research and practice, and that simply having classroom discussions is not enough to promote multicultural competence (Decker et al., 2015). A concept that may help address this issue is critical consciousness. The purpose of this study was to explore the potential correlation between critical consciousness and cultural awareness by examining both critical consciousness levels and multicultural awareness in undergraduate students through the use of surveys.

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness, or conscientization, was originally developed as an educational construct by Paulo Freire (Freire, 1975). While living in Chile after his exile from Brazil following the coup d'état, which resulted in a military dictatorship and economic inequity among Brazilians, Freire created critical consciousness as part of an educational pedagogy to free peasants from societal constraints that systemically promoted oppression, discrimination, and inequality (Torres, 2014; Jemal, 2017). Freire's work initially focused on the literacy of migrant workers, but grew into much more (Freire, 1975).

Education has long been touted as the means to reduce poverty and achieve liberation; however, education can also be used to maintain an oppressive status quo by promoting a

banking system of learning, where the teacher possesses all the knowledge and fills the student

with the knowledge they need (Freire, 1975; Schugurensky, 2011; Jemal, 2017). The banking

system of learning is considered particularly oppressive, because the underlying assumption is

that the learner knows nothing, and knowledge is a gift from the oppressor who is viewed as all-

knowing (Freire, 2000; Jemal, 2017). Freire argued that simply teaching someone to decodify

words through literacy would not have any impact if the learner did not understand the culture in

which they lived (1975). Instead, for true impact to occur, both the oppressor and the oppressed

must challenge and change inequitable social conditions (Jemal, 2017). By developing a

constructivist model of literacy based on questions to elicit knowledge depending on the

learner's experiences, Freire challenged his students to understand societal constraints through

critical consciousness and take action to change them (Freire, 1975; Freire, 2000, Torres, 2014;

Kanpol, 1994). It is important to note that although the model is constructivist in nature, the

model is conservative, meaning that knowledge is generated through discussion and questions;

however, objective truth is believed to exist (Kanpol, 1994). This differs from liberal

constructivist models which postulate that truth is subjective in nature.

The process of understanding societal constraints can be transformative for not only the

student or oppressed, but also the teacher or oppressor (Freire, 1975, 2000; Kanpol, 1994).

Theorists and researchers have argued that to promote understanding in the students, the teachers

must love the students, and find commonalities with the student—despite the potential negative

consequences of losing social status for the teacher (Freire, 1975; Kanpol, 1994). Kanpol states

that after a relationship is established based on commonalities, then differences can be

celebrated, and change can occur (1994). The change desired occurs through critical action upon

the development of critical consciousness. Many of the modern social justice movements are rooted in Freirean ideas (Steele, 2008).

The field of education embraced critical consciousness to enable marginalized students to not only acknowledge systemic discrimination but also to act against such discrimination (Torres, 2014). Educational researchers have found that school-based programming designed to increase critical consciousness in marginalized students results in not only increased awareness, but also increased academic engagement, academic achievement, and engagement in higher education (Luter, Mitchell, & Taylor, 2016; Seider, Tamerat, Clark, & Soutter, 2017; El-Amin et al., 2017). By increasing academic engagement, achievement, and enrollment in higher education, educators are empowering students to use education as a means to liberation. The researchers suggest that critical consciousness empowers students to replace their feelings of marginalization with a sense of agency towards social justice (Seider et al., 2017). One study sought to identify how schools instilled critical consciousness and involved 50 African American students from five urban high schools to develop themes of successful programs (El-Amin et al., 2017). The researchers identified three common practices among the schools used to promote student success, which included "teaching the language of inequality," "create space to interrogate racism," and "teach students how to take action" (El-Amin et al., pgs. 20-22, 2017). These three practices align with the existing literature concerning critical consciousness and provide school personnel specific strategies to increase critical consciousness in students. At the conclusion of the study, students reported feeling changed by the educational program (El-Amin et al., 2017).

Consistent with Friere's vision for his work to be criticized, retooled, and applied in different cultures and fields, the construct has evolved and undergone several revisions since its

inception and is widely used in many fields (Freire, 1975; Schugurensky, 2011; Jemal, 2017). Because Freire did not develop a model for the application of critical consciousness, researchers and theorists have applied his work to different fields while developing field-specific models of critical consciousness (Jemal, 2017). One recognized risk of applying critical consciousness to other fields is the temptation to oversimplify and reduce the construct for manualization (Kanpol, 1994). Additionally, because critical consciousness has been applied to countless fields, the literature has become disjointed and lacks coherence (Jemal, 2017).

Critical consciousness has been defined in many different ways depending on the field (Schugurensky, 2011; Jemal, 2017). The construct of critical consciousness appears in the literature for social work, psychology, and education (Jemal, 2017; Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2014). The field of social work uses critical consciousness to combine evidence-based decision-making and practice with critical reflection and action to promote social justice in the field (O'Neill, 2015; Bransford, 2011). Social work research supports the idea that incorporating problem-based learning can facilitate critical thinking and critical consciousness with the hopes of increasing social justice actions (O'Neill, 2015). In psychology, critical consciousness is linked to promoting resilience and positive outcomes for marginalized adolescents and students (Shin, Ezeofor, Smith, Welch, & Goodrich, 2016). Higher education transformed critical consciousness into critical theory, or critical pedagogy, which promotes education as a means to political and social equity through developing critical consciousness in students (Kanpol, 1994). Researchers in education have advocated for music education programs to foster critical consciousness within music teachers to promote multicultural awareness and foster diversity among music teachers (Robinson, 2017). Despite the prevalence of critical consciousness in related fields, the literature concerning critical consciousness in counselor education is scant—

even with counselor educators purporting the use of critical pedagogy. One researcher in counselor education advocates for the use of the Liberation Model, which stems from Freire's body of work, to promote social justice in counselors in training; however, the Liberation Model does not focus on critical consciousness as a main component of the model (Steele, 2008).

Critical consciousness is the result of intensive self-reflection, or critical reflection, which takes into account individual experiences, societal constraints, systemic oppression, and the role that the individual has played to perpetuate the oppression (Freire, 1975; Diemer et al., 2014). Once critical consciousness has been achieved, critical action is the result, which consists of the individual taking definitive action to reduce inequalities and promote equity for all individuals (Diemer et al., 2014; Roberts, 2000). Diemer, Rapa, Park, and Perry argue that if critical action does not occur, that the individual has not achieved critical consciousness (2014).

Critical consciousness differs from critical thinking, in that critical consciousness allows individuals to understand how various systems work to discriminate based on sociocultural differences such as race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, etc. (Iverson, 2012). Additionally, critical consciousness focuses on an individual's self-reflection concerning their role as either the oppressor or the oppressed, while prompting action to reduce the oppression being inflicted (Freire, 1975; Roberts, 2000). Another related but separate area is critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy evolved from Freire's critical consciousness work, and became prominent during the human rights movements (Manis, 2012). While critical pedagogy differs from critical consciousness because critical pedagogy focuses on school environments, there are some shared aspects, such as the goal of achieving critical consciousness and the pursuit of social justice (Manis, 2012; Decker et al., 2015). A limited number of conceptual pieces in the

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literature argue that critical pedagogy may be a natural fit for increasing multicultural education to create culturally competent students who engage in social justice (Manis, 2012; Decker et al., 2015). Much like multicultural education for counselors, the prominent goal in critical consciousness is to eliminate multi-leveled oppression for the equitable treatment of individuals (D'Andrea & Daniels, 1999; Manis, 2012; Decker et al., 2015). Although there is preliminary evidence that critical consciousness and multicultural competence and awareness may be linked from other fields, there is a dearth of research specifically connecting the two constructs within Counselor Education literature. This study sought to assess whether multicultural awareness and critical consciousness were correlated, and if so, what were the dimensions of this relationship. For the purpose of this research study, critical consciousness was defined as intentionally developing awareness of systemic and structural inequalities (Freire, 1975; O'Neill, 2015; Shin et al., 2016). Additional concepts that need to be understood and defined are multicultural competence, and diversity competence as they apply to counseling and the field of Counselor Education. Also integrated into that discussion is social justice and advocacy which are directly linked to engagement in multicultural practice. These constructs will be defined next.

Multicultural and Diversity Competence

The ACA Code of Ethics defines multicultural competence as "counselors' cultural and diversity awareness and knowledge about self and others, and how this awareness and knowledge are applied effectively in practice with clients and client groups (ACA, pg. 20, 2014)." Multicultural competence is expected in all areas for counselor educators, including counseling practice, supervision, and teaching (Decker et al., 2015). Counselor educators should infuse issues of diversity and cultural competency throughout each course, instead of only focusing on cultural competence during a specific diversity course (CACREP, 2016; Zalaquett et

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al., 2008). Both counselor educators and counselors must operate within the boundaries of their cultural competence, and both are expected to be culturally competent to work with a diverse population (ACA, 2014).

The ACA Code of Ethics also requires that counselors and counselor educators promote social justice and advocacy (2014). ACA endorsed a committee to develop the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) for counselors to supplement the Code of Ethics concerning cultural competence and social justice (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016). While these competencies do not replace the Code of Ethics, they enhance counselors' and counselor educators' understanding of what multicultural competence looks like for counselors. The MSJCC includes a conceptual framework for multicultural and social justice that utilizes quadrants, domains, and competencies (Ratts et al., 2016). There are four quadrants, which are: Quadrant I privileged counselor-marginalized client, Quadrant II privileged counselor-privileged client, Quadrant III marginalized counselor-privileged client, and Quadrant IV marginalized counselor-marginalized client (Ratts et al., 2016). Both the client and the counselor can experience multiple quadrants, since both have multiple memberships in different groups. The domains include four areas, which are: counselor self-awareness, client worldview, counseling relationship, and counseling and advocacy interventions. The domains are intended to be developmental for counselors, and represent not only the counselor's self-awareness, but the counselor's awareness of the client, their worldview, the influences within the counseling relationship, and how the counselor uses all of the awareness to advocate for change on behalf of and with the client (Ratts et al., 2016). This conceptual framework would fit well with critical consciousness, which focuses on addressing "multi-systemic oppression" and could

be the pedagogical change needed to improve counselor multicultural competence (Jemal, pg. 2, 2017).

The 2016 CACREP standards address multicultural competence and diversity by including "Social and Cultural Diversity" as one of the eight common core areas for counseling (pg. 11). The Social and Cultural Diversity section requires counseling programs to infuse eight specific standards throughout the curriculum, including, but not limited to, multicultural characteristics, theories of multicultural counseling, multicultural counseling competencies, and counselor and client privilege. Programs must show documented evidence that each standard is covered in the curriculum to maintain CACREP accreditation (CACREP, 2016).

Although multicultural competence is a major aspect of the counseling field and counseling identity now, this was not always the case. Many researchers and counselors identified multicultural counseling as unnecessary or irrelevant, and they opposed the development of multicultural competencies (Smith, Ng, Brinson, & Mityagin, 2008). The first set of multicultural competencies was not developed until 1992, and there were no major revisions until the 2016 multicultural competencies were released (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason, 2009). While multicultural competence has received increased attention, the research regarding increasing multicultural competence has lagged. Very little research has focused on multicultural practice in counselors, despite an emphasis on multicultural competence in Counselor Education (Barden, Sherrell, & Matthews, 2017). Research regarding multicultural competence often relies on self-report, which may overstate multicultural competence due to social desirability, a lack of understanding of multicultural competence, and an inflation in self-perception (Barden et al., 2017). Additionally, researchers found that self-reported levels of multicultural competence that were evaluated

against observer ratings were significantly higher than the rating given by the observer (Cartwright, Daniels, & Zhang, 2008). Due to the reliance on self-report, there is no clear indication of multicultural competence. Decker, Manis, and Paylo argue that for students to truly be multiculturally competent, they must engage in social justice and advocacy efforts (2016).

Social Justice and Advocacy

In addition to being competent to work with diverse clients, counselors and counselor educators are expected to engage in social justice and advocacy efforts on behalf of marginalized populations (ACA, 2014). Recognizing that some issues experienced by diverse clients are a result of discrimination within the community or larger society can help a counselor determine if an intervention within session can be effective, or if a community wide intervention needs to occur (Ratts et al., 2016). Individuals who are marginalized can experience limited access to healthcare, education, employment, and residential opportunities, while experiencing racism, classism, sexism, or other forms of societal discrimination (Steele, 2008). The reduced opportunities and increased discrimination for marginalized individuals can directly impact the mental health of the individuals (Steele, 2008; Decker et al., 2016). Counselor educators must teach counselors-in-training to be advocates for their clients when necessary—including when systemic and individual discrimination is occurring to promote the mental well-being of their clients (Steele, 2008; Ratts et al., 2016). The change to include social justice in the title of the competencies indicates a change in the field to be more advocacy driven than before (Decker et al., 2016). The process of engaging in advocacy can make counselors more multiculturally competent by exposing them to more experiences, and ultimately cause them to be more invested in diverse and marginalized populations (Ratts et al., 2016; Decker et al., 2016).

While social justice and advocacy actions are expected of counselors, there is limited research as to how counselor educators teach counselors those constructs (Manis, 2012). Additionally, researchers found that Counselor Education programs were not investing in advocacy or giving special attention to social justice, despite research findings that infusing social justice and advocacy in Counselor Education programs may increase advocacy actions (Manis, 2012; Decker et al., 2015). Research supports three main factors that influence student engagement in social justice and advocacy as increasing the amount of information regarding social justice students receive in the classroom, the students' ability to make meaning from the information, and lastly, the students' self-confidence, which is determined by their willingness to reflect on their privilege (Manis, 2012; Decker, 2013).

Like critical consciousness, social justice and advocacy as constructs have a wide variety of definitions (Brady-Amoon, Makhija, Dixit, & Dator, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the constructs will be combined and referred to as social justice advocacy. Steele defined social justice advocacy as "professional practice, research, or scholarship intended to identify and intervene in social policies that have a negative impact on the mental health of clients who are marginalized on the basis of their social status" (2008, pgs. 74-75).

Critical Consciousness and Multicultural Competence, Social Justice, and Advocacy

The relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural competence, social justice, and advocacy has been suggested in the literature but not as clearly linked in counselor education research. The potential of this relationship is understandable within counselor education and counseling, due to the dual nature of reflection and action of critical consciousness and the practice of multiculturalism, as well as the engagement in social justice and advocacy (Decker, Manis, & Paylo, 2016; Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016). Moreover,

research supports a developmental, process-oriented approach to developing critical consciousness, multicultural education, social justice and advocacy actions (Manis, 2012). Since critical consciousness focuses on reflection on a personal and system level, which must result in critical action to truly be critical consciousness, critical consciousness development would promote multicultural competence, social justice, and advocacy (Freire, 1975). It can be suggested that by increasing critical consciousness levels in counselors, counselor educators may increase multicultural competence through increased reflection and a deeper understanding of oppressive systems, while promoting social justice and advocacy actions to reduce oppression and promote an equitable society (Freire, 1975; Seider et al., 2017; Luter et al., 2017). The process of increasing critical consciousness inherently prompts introspection and a deep understanding of how individuals are oppressed on multiple levels. Once this understanding is achieved, the individual must engage in critical action, which is the equivalent of social justice and advocacy on behalf of a client. Critical action can result in social justice and advocacy on a macro level, or a micro level.

Multicultural Attitudes

The word attitude is defined as a "manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing" (*Attitude*, 2019). Multicultural attitudes and awareness determine how individuals feel regarding diverse populations. Research indicates that multicultural attitudes and awareness are developed through a complex relationship between the individual and the environment. Although no research study has been able to definitively identify what influences multicultural attitudes and awareness, several studies have narrowed down factors that seem to impact attitudes towards diverse individuals. These factors include experiences, education and knowledge, travel experience, program culture, and personal beliefs will be explored below.

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One research study found factors that were instrumental regarding positive attitudinal change included exposure to various cultural backgrounds, education and educational experiences, and travel experiences (Garmon, 2004). The literature generally supports that individuals who are exposed to a variety of cultural backgrounds have more positive attitudes towards diverse individuals (Garmon, 2004; Smolen, Colville-Hall, Liang, & MacDonald, 2006). Exposure to a variety of cultural backgrounds could occur by several ways and can include living in a diverse area, having a diverse family, and moving frequently such as growing up in a military family (Garmin, 2004).

Another important factor for attitudinal change regarding multicultural attitudes is education and educational experiences. Research indicates that taking diversity courses, engaging in diversity workshops, and learning more about other cultures are associated with students showing more multicultural sensitivity (Mena, & Rogers, 2017). While educational experiences may positively impact multicultural attitudes, research also indicates that some students may use course material presented in diversity courses to support their previously held beliefs. The student's previously held beliefs may include negative beliefs regarding cultural diversity, which may become more negative upon engaging in a diversity course (Garmon, 2004; Mena & Rogers, 2017). Individual dispositions may influence whether a person responds positively or negatively to course content in a diversity course (Garmon, 2004). Individuals who have self-reflective and self-aware dispositions are more likely to have a multicultural attitude that is open to diversity, while individuals whose dispositions are less aware tend to have a negative attitude towards diversity (Garmon, 2004).

The next factor for multicultural attitudinal change is travel experiences (Garmon, 2004). One study found that international travel as a means of exposure to diverse cultures was an

important aspect of College of Education faculty being culturally sensitive to diverse students (Smolen, Colville-Hall, Liang, & MacDonald, 2006). Faculty who had travelled internationally reported feeling more comfortable interacting with students who were racially different from themselves (Smolen, Colville-Hall, Liang, & MacDonald, 2006). Additionally, cross-cultural experiences, such as travelling internationally, increases the likelihood of developing positive associations with diverse individuals (Garmon, 2004).

Another important aspect of multicultural attitudes is the individual's environment (Garmon, 2004; Dixson, Jepsen, & Barbee, 2008; Mena & Rogers, 2017; Smolen, Colville-Hall, Liang, & MacDonald, 2006). Dixson, Jepsen, and Barbee found that the only significant predictor of student attitudes towards racial diversity was the program ambience (2008). The program ambience included things such as having a diverse faculty and the faculty's attitudes towards diversity (Dixson, Jepsen, & Barbee, 2008). The researchers speculated that programs that are multiculturally sensitive may enhance positive multicultural attitudes of students within the program. Similarly, Smolen, Colville-Hall, Liang, and MacDonald found that College of Educations can play a critical role in shaping multicultural attitudes by modeling a pluralistic community where diversity is valued (2006). Lastly, Mena and Rogers indicated that a possible factor in multicultural attitudes in the influence of the multicultural environment (2017). Their research supported that having a diverse environment that values and celebrates diversity may be crucial in fostering positive multicultural attitudes.

Mena and Rogers found that "behavioral intentions to engage in socially just action, honesty in recruitment about the multicultural environment, and motivation to learn, grow, and improve had statistically significant associations with multicultural teaching competence" for university faculty (pg. 61, 2017). The Mena and Rogers findings support related findings that

education, personal experiences, and dispositions are related to multicultural attitudes and ultimately multicultural teaching competence. Garmon found that teachers' personal beliefs had a strong influence over their professional beliefs, indicating that if a teacher held a positive multicultural personal belief, they were likely to also hold a positive multicultural professional belief (2004).

Lastly, one research study found that multicultural competence was a significant predictor of individualistic poverty beliefs (Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017). The researchers found that multicultural knowledge was significantly related to structural poverty beliefs (Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017). In both areas, higher levels of competence and knowledge was related to viewing poverty as a systemic problem rather than an individual issue. Because multicultural attitudes are related to constructs such as systemic poverty, individualistic poverty, and racism, the concept may relate well to the construct of critical consciousness (Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017; Freire, 1994).

Critical Consciousness and Multicultural Attitudes

As previously stated, critical consciousness consists of two main components: critical reflection and critical action (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). Critical reflection consists of gaining knowledge regarding inequalities, deeply processing and understanding both individual and systemic oppression, and then desiring societal equality for all individuals (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). Critical action is the result of the conscientization that society is not equal or equitable, where the individual acts to make society more equitable (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). True critical consciousness is believed to not be achieved until the individual engages in critical action as a response to the knowledge and awareness of inequality (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017).

The constructs of critical consciousness appear to parallel some of the components found to be important regarding positive multicultural attitudes. The overlapping aspects include developing knowledge and awareness of societal inequities and discrimination, a desire for social justice, and engaging in actions to promote an equitable society (Garmon, 2004, Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017; Freire, 1994; Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). Although there is research regarding both multicultural attitudes and critical consciousness, there is a paucity of research examining the two constructs together. Combining the body of research regarding critical consciousness with the research on multicultural attitudes could strengthen both areas, while possibly providing counselor educators the ability to promote higher levels of multicultural competence.

Statement of the Problem

Research has suggested that there may be a relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural practice, social justice and advocacy; however, there is limited research to support this relationship or explore it within counseling. The counseling field emphasizes multicultural competence and social justice through the ACA Code of Ethics and CACREP standards for counseling programs, but counseling research regarding effective methods for increasing multicultural competence highlights a lack awareness by Counselor Educators as to how multicultural competence is taught in courses (Hays, 2008; Cartwright et al., 2008). The current study proposed to measure critical consciousness and multicultural awareness in undergraduate students to determine if there was a relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness. If there was a positive correlation between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness, more research should be conducted regarding how to promote critical consciousness throughout counselor education programs.

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Significance of the Study

The current study is significant, because it can help promote multicultural competence, social justice actions, and advocacy in counselors through critical consciousness. Counselors must be multiculturally competent to work with a diverse population and advocate on behalf of their clients. Critical consciousness could increase both multicultural competence and advocacy efforts by increasing counselors'-in-training awareness of systemic discrimination and marginalization of diverse populations. This addition could have a direct impact on counselor educators, counselors-in-training, and ultimately clients by promoting pedagogy and training that increases awareness, competence, and advocacy efforts. However, before we consider the integration of critical consciousness as a process to impact multicultural development, advocacy, and social justice we need to more fully understand if a relationship exists between these constructs and the nature of the relationship.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of critical consciousness levels and multicultural attitudes and awareness in undergraduate students. The researcher evaluated whether specific aspects of critical consciousness related to increased levels of multicultural awareness in undergraduate students to see if there was a need to look at critical consciousness in practicing counselors. Critical consciousness levels were compared to levels of multicultural competence to see if there was a relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness and attitudes. Using information gathered through the demographic questionnaire, the researcher examined if the students' majors and number of multicultural courses taken impacted either critical consciousness or multicultural awareness. Critical action was explored to see if

higher levels of critical action were related to higher levels of multicultural awareness and attitudes.

According to Freire, critical reflection must be achieved for an individual to exhibit critical action; therefore, critical reflection was not examined independently (Freire, 1975). Instead of examining critical reflection, the participants were assumed to have experienced critical reflection if they are exhibited critical action because it is inherent to critical action. To achieve critical consciousness, individuals must exhibit critical action after integrating the realizations of their critical reflection (Freire, 1975). Lastly, critical consciousness and multicultural awareness were explored to see if there were interactions between the two constructs. Implications for counselor educators were included along with a discussion concerning increasing critical consciousness levels in counselors-in-training. Future research implications were included.

Research Questions

The research questions were explored using a demographic measure, the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale-Short Form (M-GUDS-S), and the Critical Consciousness Measure (CCM). The quantitative study proposed to investigate the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness?

2a. Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by academic major?

2b. Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by experience in a diversity course?

3. What is the relationship between multicultural awareness and participating in critical consciousness activities?

Summary

Counselors must be multiculturally competent to practice within the scope of the ACA ethical guidelines. Counselor educators are responsible for protecting clients from unethical counselors by training multiculturally competent counselors through infusing information regarding diverse populations throughout the program. As a field, counseling is moving to integrate social justice and advocacy as some of the major tenets of counselors' professional identities. The existing literature concerning critical consciousness supports the idea that increased levels of critical consciousness would result in higher levels of social justice and advocacy on behalf of marginalized, multicultural clients. If counselors who are more multiculturally competent exhibit higher levels of critical consciousness, then critical consciousness may be a viable solution for counselor education programs to effectively increase the multicultural competence of the counselors-in-training without exhausting already strained resources.

Chapter 2

Methodology

Due to the increasing cultural and ethnic diversity within the American population and continued calls for multicultural competence among counselors (Cohn & Caumont, 2016; Decker et al., 2015; Zalaquett et al., 2008), the focus of the study was on identifying possible relationships between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness. Critical consciousness can be defined as the intentional development of awareness of the systemic and structural inequalities that promotes multicultural awareness and prompts action towards social justice and advocacy (Freire, 1975; O'Neill, 2015; Shin et al., 2016). Multicultural awareness is defined as acknowledging and appreciating the cultural similarities and differences among individuals (Fuertes et al., 2000).

Although critical consciousness and multicultural awareness both have extensive literature bases (Jemal, 2017; Diemer et al., 2016; Decker et al., 2015; Zalaquett et al., 2008), the connection between levels of critical consciousness and multicultural awareness has not been explored. The current study focused on examining the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness through a quantitative research study. Within this chapter the methodology, operational definitions, research questions, participants, instrumentation, procedure, and data analysis for the proposed study were discussed.

Methodology

Research Questions

The study examined the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness?

2a. Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by academic major?

2b. Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by experience in a diversity course?

3. What is the relationship between multicultural awareness and participating in critical consciousness activities?

Participants

To meet inclusion criteria for the study, participants were 88 current undergraduate students at Auburn University who were over the age of 18 and were present in the COUN 2000 classes the day the surveys are administered. Participants were solicited from the COUN 2000 Diverse Populations class sections during class time following IRB approval. The courses were selected based on the course content—diverse populations—which was related to the study's focus. The Diverse Populations class also met the size requirement needed to conduct the study. The researcher developed an information sheet which was provided to potential participants regarding the study that stated that the risk of participation was low. Participation was voluntary, and all data was kept confidential. Participants were be able to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Measures

Demographic Survey

The demographic instrument was used to gather relevant information about the participants such as age, race, ethnic background, gender, current major, number of multicultural courses taken, and if they were enrolled in a multicultural course at the time the data was collected.

Critical Consciousness Measure

Critical consciousness levels were evaluated using the *Critical Consciousness Measure* (see Appendix B), which is a 26-item scale. The *CCM* was developed by the researcher to address the dearth of instruments to measure critical consciousness and help bring coherence to the disjointed literature on critical consciousness. Four major constructs are measured in the survey, which includes political and social advocacy, confronting discrimination, political awareness, and social issue awareness. These constructs reflect both the critical consciousness literature and the social justice and advocacy literature as being key constructs to evaluate attitudes concerning the topics of social justice and advocacy.

All scales use a 5-point Likert-type scale. For the first scale, political and social advocacy, participants respond to questions such as "I participate in demonstrations or rallies about social issues that I think are important." The confronting discrimination scale includes items such as "I feel comfortable engaging in a conversation with someone who is discriminating against another person who is culturally or ethnically different." The political awareness scale includes items such as "I think state and federal policies affect my access to education." The final scale, the social issue awareness scale, includes items like "I think discrimination is a problem in our culture."

According to Freire, critical reflection must be achieved for an individual to exhibit critical action; therefore, critical reflection was not examined independently (Freire, 1975). Instead of examining critical reflection, the participants were assumed to have experienced critical reflection if they exhibited political and social advocacy because it is inherent to critical action. To achieve critical consciousness, individuals must exhibit critical action after integrating the realizations of their critical reflection (Freire, 1975).

The measure was developed using a 7-person panel of expert counselors during the Survey Research course at Auburn University. Minor changes regarding wording were suggested by the panel and were incorporated into the survey for clarity purposes. Because the *CCM* is a newly developed instrument, additional validation data is unavailable.

Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale-Short (M-GUDS-S)

Multicultural awareness was assessed using the *Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale-Short* (M-GUDS-S; see Appendix C). The *M-GUDS-S* is a 15-item instrument based on Miville et al.'s construct of Universal-Diverse Orientation (UDO) where UDO was defined as "an attitude toward all other persons which is inclusive yet differentiating in that similarities and differences are both recognized and accepted; the shared experience of being human results in a sense of connection with people and is associated with a plurality or diversity of interactions with others" (Fuertes et al., 2000; p. 156). All item responses are on a 6-point Likert-type scale. There are three subscales which include diversity of contact, relativistic appreciation, and comfort with differences. A sample item from the diversity of contact subscale is "I would like to join an organization that emphasizes getting to know people from different countries." The relativistic appreciation scale includes items such as "Persons with disabilities can teach me things I could not learn elsewhere." The last subscale, the comfort with differences subscale, includes items such as "Getting to know someone of another race is generally an uncomfortable experience for me" (Fuertes et al., 2000).

Based on the literature, the MGUDS-S has excellent reliability with the coefficients ranging from 0.59 to 0.92 (Sarraj, Carter, & Burley, 2015). Additionally, "the CFA also resulted in good fit indices of CFI=0.92, non-normed fit index=0.94, and GFI=0.92 (Sarraj, Carter, & Burley, 2015; p. 229)."

Procedure

After the researcher received Institutional Review Board approval, the correlational study utilized COUN 2000 level courses to recruit participants. The researcher provided participants with an information letter that contained information regarding the study, the IRB approval number, and level of risk to the participants. Participants who agreed to participate were provided a paper survey during class time of COUN 2000. No identifiable participant data was gathered.

Only relevant data was collected, and all data was kept confidential. Participants had the option to withdraw from the study at any time during data collection; however, because no identifying information will be collected, the researcher was unable to remove data once it was submitted. After data collection ended, the researcher removed any incomplete surveys from the final results so only fully completed surveys were analyzed.

Data Analysis

In order to examine the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness, which will be determined by the CCM and the M-GUDS-S, the researcher utilized multiple regressions and a backward multiple regression. Multiple linear regressions were used to explore the relationships between critical consciousness, critical action, and multicultural awareness as indicated by the CCM and M-GUDS-S. Additionally, multiple linear regressions and backward regressions were used to determine if the number of diversity courses and academic major impacted critical consciousness and multicultural awareness. Descriptive statistics were provided concerning the instruments and participants, which was visually presented using charts and graphs when appropriate. All statistical analysis was conducted in SPSS.

Operational Definitions

Confronting Discrimination- An individual's willingness to confront discrimination experienced by other individuals based on a variety of cultural differences. Confronting discrimination was measured using the CCM.

Multicultural Awareness- Acknowledging and appreciating the cultural similarities and differences among individuals). Multicultural awareness was measured using the M-GUDS-S.

Political Awareness- Personal reflection on systemic oppression enacted by political systems. Political awareness was measured using the CCM.

Political and Social Advocacy- An individual taking definitive action to reduce inequalities and promote equity for all individuals both politically and socially. Political and social advocacy was measured using the CCM.

Social Issue Awareness- The awareness of social issues that impact other individuals and includes things such as discrimination and access to services. Social issue awareness was measured using the CCM.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter provided an overview of the methodology, operational definitions, research questions, participants, instrumentation, procedure, and data analysis for the proposed study. The researcher used a demographics survey, the CCM, and the M-GUDS-S to explore the relationships between critical consciousness levels and multicultural awareness in undergraduate students. Additional layers of critical consciousness and multicultural competence were evaluated by using the demographics survey to establish the academic major

and the level of multicultural training each participant received. Participants were solicited

through COUN 2000 Diverse Populations courses and experienced minimal risk. The researcher

adhered to all IRB guidelines and recommendations for promoting the wellbeing of all

participants.

Chapter 3

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential link between critical consciousness levels and multicultural awareness in undergraduate students. The researcher used a demographic survey, the Critical Consciousness Measure (CCM), and the Miville-Guzman Universality Scale- Short Form (M-GUDS-S) to measure these constructs. A linear regression was used to determine if the constructs were in fact related. Additionally, mediating factors such as academic major, diversity courses, and participation in critical consciousness activities were explored using linear regressions to determine if they had a relationship to critical consciousness and multicultural awareness.

Research Questions

The study examined the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness?

2a. Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by academic major?

2b. Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by experience in a diversity course?

3. What is the relationship between multicultural awareness and participating in critical consciousness activities?

Demographics

There was a total of 88 undergraduate students who participated in the research study. Of the 88 who participated, 68 (77.27%) of the students identified as female, and 20 (22.73%) of the students identified as male. In comparison, 80% of undergraduate students at Auburn University identify as White, 6.1% identify as Black or African American, and 3.3% identify as Asian. Auburn University general undergraduate students identify as 51.3% male, and 48.7% female.

Table 1

Demographic Information

Characteristic		N	Percentage
Gender	Male	20	22.7%
	Female	68	77.3%
Age	18	20	22.8%
	19	28	31.9%
	20	22	25%
	21	12	13.6%
	22	3	3.4%
	23	2	2.2%
	26	1	1.1%
Race	African American/ Black	16	18.2%
	Arabic	1	1.1%
	Asian	6	6.9%

	Latina	1	1.1%
	Multiracial	1	1.1%
	White	63	71.6%
Ethnic/Cultural Background	African American/ Black	11	12.5%
	American	24	27.3%
	Asian	1	1.1%
	Chinese	3	3.4%
	Christian	1	1.1%
	European	3	3.4%
	Hungarian	1	1.1%
	Irish American	1	1.1%
	Irish British	1	1.1%
	Islamic	1	1.1%
	Italian/Polish	1	1.1%
	Korean/Russian	1	1.1%
	Latina	1	1.1%
	Liberian	1	1.1%
	Native American	1	1.1%
	Polish	1	1.1%
	White	12	13.6%
	American/Asian	1	1.1%
	White Catholic	1	1.1%

Current Major	Human Sciences	29	33%
	Education	25	28.4%
	Engineering	9	10.2%
	Business	9	10.2%
	Science & Math	16	18.2%
Currently Enrolled in Multicultural Course	Yes	84	95.5%
	No	4	4.5%
Number of Multicultural Courses Completed	0	18	20.5%
	1	55	62.5%
	2	8	9.1%
	3	3	3.4%

Table 2

Scale Reliability Statistics

Scale	N	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
CCM- Social Issues Awareness Scale	5	3.18	1.25	.869
CCM- Political Awareness Scale	4	3.98	.982	.651
CCM- Political & Social Advocacy Scale	10	2.60	.996	.850
CCM- Confronting Discrimination	7	3.21	1.29	.881
M-GUDS-S Diversity of Contact Scale	5	4.06	1.34	.728
M-GUDS-S Relativistic Appreciation Scale	5	4.89	0.99	.670
M-GUDS-S Comfort With Differences Scale	5	4.71	1.20	.762

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness?

Three linear multiple regressions were utilized to determine the relationship between multicultural awareness, as measured by the three subscales of the M-GUDS-S, and critical consciousness, as measured by the CCM. Multicultural awareness was entered as the dependent variable, while the independent variables were entered as the four CCM subscales. The first two regressions indicated a significant relationship between the CCM Political Awareness scale and two M-GUDS-S scales-- the Diversity of Contact scale and the Relativistic Appreciation scale. The last regression using the Comfort with Differences scale did not yield any significant results. Correlation summaries can be viewed in Table 3.

Finally, a backward linear regression was conducted to examine the best predictor within the model. Political awareness significantly predicted higher levels of multicultural awareness as seen by $f_{(4,79)} = 10.912$, $p<.000$ with an r^2 of .356. The positive beta value of .655 indicates that there is a positive relationship between political awareness and multicultural awareness. The r^2 (.356) accounts for 35% of the variance in multicultural awareness. The regression summary can be seen in Table 4.

Table 3

Correlation Summary M-GUDS-S vs. CCM Subscales

Scale	M-GUDS-S Diversity of Contact	M-GUDS-S Relativistic Appreciation	M-GUDS-S Comfort with Differences
	r	r	r
CCM Social Issues Awareness	.311	.341	.059
CCM- Political Awareness	.558	.441	.152
CCM- Political and Social Advocacy	.488	.346	-.035
CCM- Confronting Discrimination	.361	.263	-.029
R^2	.356	.225	.060
F	10.912***	5.662***	1.249

p<.001***

Table 4

Regression Summary M-GUDS-S vs. CCM Subscales

Scale	M-GUDS-S Diversity of Contact			M-GUDS-S Relativistic Appreciation			M-GUDS-S Comfort with Differences		
Full Model	r^2	Beta	Semi-Partial	r^2	Beta	Semi-Partial	r^2	Beta	Semi-Partial

CCM Social Issues Awareness	.097	-.019	-.015	.116	.148	.121	.003	.053	.044
CCM- Political Awareness	.311	.398	.287	.194	.322	.233	.023	.308	.224
CCM- Political and Social Advocacy	.238	.170	.117	.120	.009	.007	.001	-.247	-.171
CCM- Confronting Discrimination	.130	.156	.142	.069	.111	.115	.001	-.052	-.048
R^2		.127			.225			.060	
F		10.912***			5.662***			1.249	

Final Model	Beta	Semi-Partial	Beta	Semi-Partial	Beta	Semi-Partial
CCM- Political Awareness	.492	.460	.441	.441	.312	.234
CCM- Confronting Discrimination	.186	.173	---	----	---	---
CCM- Political and Social Advocacy	---	---	---	---	-.242	-.181
R^2	.117		.194		.056	
F	21.024***		19.538***		2.375	

***$p<.001$

Research Question 2a: Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by academic major?

Research Question 2b: Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by experience in a diversity course?

A backward multiple regression model was used, which allowed the researcher to get both a full model and a final model based on the model fit. The backward model was utilized to examine if there was a relationship between multicultural awareness and either academic major or the number of diversity courses taken. Three linear multiple regressions were conducted with each of the three M-GUDS-S subscales entered as the dependent variable, and both academic major and the number of diversity courses were entered as the independent variables. For the purpose of analysis, academic major was collapsed into five major categories based on the existing literature. The categories included human sciences, education, engineering, business, and science and math. It was found through the backward multiple regression that the number of diversity courses taken was not a statistically significant predictor of multicultural awareness (F 1, 82= 3.96, p= .730) and was therefore excluded from further data analysis. The results from these regressions are summarized in Table 5.

Academic Major

Engineering was the only academic major that was statistically significant in the backward regression model (F 1, 82= 3.96, p=.001). Engineering was negatively associated with multicultural awareness r=-.346, indicating that engineer majors have lower multicultural awareness than other majors. No other majors were statistically significant in the model.

Table 5

Backward Regression Summary M-GUDS-S vs. Academic Major and Number of Diversity Courses Completed

	M-GUDS-S Diversity of Contact Scale			M-GUDS-S Relativistic Appreciation			M-GUDS-S Comfort with Differences		
		Full Model	Restricted Model		Full Model	Restricted Model		Full Model	Restricted Model
R Square		.055	.019		.125	.120		.058	.100
Number of Predictors		5	1		5	1		5	1
Academic Major	r^2	Beta	Beta	r^2	Beta	Beta	r^2	Beta	Beta
Human Sciences	.005	.017	---	.001	-.068	---	.007	-.013	---
Education	.002	---	---	.012	---	---	.007	---	---
Engineering	.018	-.143	---	.120	-.376***	-.346***	.112	-.356**	-.334**
Business	.020	.108	---	.000	-.033	---	.004	.019	---

Science & Math	.020	-.139	-.140	.007	-.022	---	.000	-.048	---
Courses Completed	.003	.001	---	.004	-.039	---	.003	-.049	---
F		10.912***	21.024***		5.662***	19.538***		1.249	2.375

***p<.001 **p<.005

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between multicultural awareness and participating in critical consciousness activities?

For research question three, the researcher ran three backward elimination regressions with the M-GUDS-S subscales entered as the dependent variable and the Political and Social Advocacy CCM subscale, which measured participation in advocacy activities, entered as the independent variable. Five specific questions based on advocacy activities were determined to be statistically significant. The results from the regression are listed in Table 6. The specific questions that were found to be significant based on the M-GUDS-S subscales are listed below:

1. I participate in demonstrations or rallies about social issues that I think are important.

2. I make telephone calls to policy makers about social issues that are important to me.

3. I volunteer for political causes and candidates who support values that are important to me.

6. I plan to write letters or emails to influence politicians regarding issues that are important to me.

14. I think that building relationships can help make a difference in the world.

Question 1 was found to be statistically significant (F 3, 82= 12.049, p=.003). Participation in demonstrations or rallies was positively associated with multicultural awareness R=.438. Research question 2 was also statistically significant with an r value of -.253 (F 3, 82= 5.940, p=.001) revealing a negative relationship between calling policy makers about important issues and multicultural awareness.

Question 3 yielded significant results (F 2, 82= 16.022, p=.007) with an r value of .347suggesting that volunteering for political causes is positively associated with multicultural awareness levels. Question 6 resulted in a statistically significant finding (F 3, 82= 12.049, p=.006) with r=.442 indicating that intentions to write letters or emails to politicians is positively associated with multicultural awareness. Question 14 revealed that students associated building relationships as a way to make a difference, which was positively associated with multicultural awareness (F 2, 82= 16.022, p<.001) with an associated r value of .462.

Table 6

Regression Summary M-GUDS-S vs. CCM Political and Social Advocacy Questions

	M-GUDS-S Diversity of Contact			M-GUDS-S Relativistic Appreciation			M-GUDS-S Comfort with Differences		
Full R^2	.340			.329			.167		
	r^2	Beta	Semi-Partial	r^2	Beta	Semi-Partial	r^2	Beta	Semi-Partial
CCM Q 1	.192	.276	.222	.018	.038	.031	.011	-.109	-.086
CCM Q 2	.145	.108	.060	.028	.154	.085	.064	-.324	-.180
CCM Q3	.162	.094	.062	.120	.159	.104	.009	-.089	-.058
CCM Q4	.141	.151	.089	.100	.257	.152	.001	-.026	-.015
CCM Q5	.121	-.060	-.029	.003	-.068	-.033	.026	-.145	-.069
CCM Q 6	.195	.256	.133	.015	-.162	-.084	.031	.310	.156
CCM Q 8	.099	-.166	-.109	.024	-.140	-.092	.001	.166	.110

CCM Q 10	.003	-.080	-.059	.066	.039	.029	.000	-.071	-.052
CCM Q 11	.047	-.007	-.005	.069	.000	.000	.004	.127	.087
CCM Q 14	.063	.193	.177	.213	.427	.392	.020	.070	.064

Final Model

	Beta	Semi-Partial		Beta	Semi-Partial		Beta	Semi-Partial
R^2	.306			.281			.127	
CCM 1	.308**	.283**		---	---			
CCM 2	---	---		---	---		-.461***	-.354***
CCM 3	---	---		.265**	.260**		---	---
CCM 6	.289**	.262**		---	---		.325*	.250*
CCM 14	.172	.169		.409***	.401***		---	---

Note: *$p<.05$ **$p<.01$ ***$p<.0001$

Summary

The purpose of the current study was to explore if there is a relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness among undergraduate students by using a Demographic Questionnaire, the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale- Short Form (M-GUDS-S), and the Critical Consciousness Measure (CCM). Additionally, the researcher sought to determine if the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness are mediated by academic major and experience in a diversity course. Lastly, the research study explored if student participation in advocacy activities impacted multicultural awareness. The study results indicate a significant correlation between multicultural awareness and political awareness. Additionally, there is a negative relationship between engineering majors and multicultural awareness; however, there was no significant relationship between other majors or the number of multicultural courses taken. Lastly, five advocacy activity questions were significantly related to increased multicultural awareness among the student participants.

Chapter 4

Discussion

Due to the rapidly changing face of the American population, counselors and counselors educators are constantly challenged to be multiculturally competent with a wide variety of populations (Cohn & Caumont, 2016; Hill, Vereen, McNeal, and Stotesbury, 2013; Zalaquett, Foley, Tillotson, Dinsmore, & Hof, 2008; Decker, Manis, & Paylo, 2015). According to the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics, counselors are ethically and legally mandated to demonstrate competence in working with diverse populations (2014). The literature consistently supports the idea that counselor educators should be increasingly focused on developing counselors whose cultural competence accurately reflects the population; however, many researchers argue that there is a gap between the research and classroom practices of counselor educators (Hill, Vereen, McNeal, and Stotesbury, 2013; Zalaquett, Foley, Tillotson, Dinsmore, & Hof, 2008; Decker, Manis, & Paylo, 2015; Decker et al., 2015).

A concept that may be helpful for counselor educators to use to infuse multicultural awareness and competence in the classroom is critical consciousness. Critical consciousness has been embraced by several fields including education, psychology, and social work; however, there is a paucity of research concerning critical consciousness in the counselor education literature (Torres, 2014; Jemal, 2017; Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2014). Critical consciousness results from intensive self-reflection, or critical reflection, which takes into account an individual's experiences, the current societal constraints, systemic oppression, and the role that the individual has played to perpetuate oppression (Freire, 1975; Diemer et al., 2014). Once critical consciousness has been achieved by an individual, the result is critical action, which consists of the individual taking definitive action to reduce current inequalities and promote equity for all individuals (Diemer et al., 2014; Roberts, 2000). Diemer, Rapa, Park, and

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Perry argue that if the individual does not engage in critical action, the individual has not actually achieved critical consciousness (2014).

A similar construct that is present in the counselor education literature is multicultural awareness or attitudes, which determines how an individual feels regarding diverse populations. Many factors may impact an individual's multicultural awareness including educational experiences, personal experiences such as travel or discrimination, individual dispositions, the individual's environment, and even an individual's beliefs about poverty (Garmon, 2004; Dixson, Jepsen, & Barbee, 2008; Mena & Rogers, 2017; Smolen, Colville-Hall, Liang, & MacDonald, 2006; Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017). Since multicultural attitudes are closely related to constructs such as systemic poverty, individualistic poverty, and racism, the concept may relate well to the construct of critical consciousness (Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017; Freire, 1994).

The constructs of critical consciousness appear to parallel some of the components found to be important regarding positive multicultural attitudes. Aspects that overlap include developing knowledge and awareness of societal inequities and discrimination, an individual's desire for social justice, and an individual engaging in actions to promote an equitable society (Garmon, 2004, Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017; Freire, 1994; Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). Although there is an abundance of research regarding both multicultural awareness and critical consciousness, there is a lack of research examining the constructs together. Combining the body of research regarding critical consciousness with the research on multicultural attitudes could strengthen both areas, while possibly providing counselor educators the ability to promote higher levels of multicultural competence among counselors-in-training.

The purpose of the current study was to bridge the research gap by exploring the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness. This was accomplished

by examining both critical consciousness levels and multicultural awareness in undergraduate students. Determining if there is a relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness may provide a foundation for integrating critical consciousness into preparation and training of counselors and other professionals on multiculturalism. Specifically, due to the changing American population and the ACA requirements for counselors to be multiculturally competent, this research can provide a valuable method or process for addressing multicultural training for counselors.

When considering if there is a relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness there was evidence that some aspects of critical consciousness appeared to be related to multicultural awareness.   For example, political awareness was found to be a significant predictor of multicultural awareness. Specifically, those in the sample with the highest level of political awareness also reported the highest levels of multicultural awareness. While political awareness is not always directly related to the content of counselor education programs, increasing the discussion of how political policies impact clients, counselors, and the entire system could potentially promote higher levels of multicultural awareness among counselors-in-training. One researcher identified student learning about social justice and advocacy as a crucial way to increase understanding of privilege and willingness to engage in advocacy (Manis, 2012) Recognizing the connection between politics and the role of counselors would not be a stretch given the push for counselors to advocate on behalf of marginalized individuals.

Upon examining the relationships between critical consciousness, multicultural awareness, the student's academic major, and their experience in a diversity course, there was limited evidence that academic major had an impact. The findings in the current study paralleled

similar research on critical consciousness, this was that there were no significant findings regarding the number of diversity courses taken (Garmon, 2004; Mena & Rogers, 2017). Although research supports that educational experiences may positively impact multicultural attitudes, research also indicates that some students may use course material presented in diversity courses to support their previously held beliefs indicating no change in the student's attitude to become more positive(Garmon, 2004; Mena & Rogers, 2017). A student's previously held beliefs may include negative beliefs regarding cultural diversity, which may become more negative upon engaging in a diversity course (Garmon, 2004; Mena & Rogers, 2017). It should be noted that students majoring in engineering reported the lowest levels of multicultural awareness in the sample. It may be challenging to hypothesize the reason for this finding, but it may be due to a lack of focus on multicultural awareness in the field.

The final noteworthy outcome indicated that there is a relationship between engaging in advocacy activities and multicultural awareness. The findings indicated that engagement in one of five specific advocacy activities corresponded to higher levels of multicultural awareness. The activities included participation in demonstrations or rallies, contacting policy makers concerning social issues, volunteering for political causes, intentions of contacting politicians regarding important issues, and finally that building relationships can make a difference. These findings are consistent with the critical consciousness literature that individuals who have higher levels of critical consciousness must engage in advocacy activities to truly have achieved critical consciousness (Diemer et al., 2014). Additionally, these findings help are parallel to those in the study that critical consciousness and multicultural awareness are in fact related constructs. This may more specifically indicate that individuals who engage in specific types of critical consciousness activities are more likely to hold more positive attitudes toward multiculturalism.

Implications for Counselor Educators and Supervisors

The findings that critical consciousness and multicultural awareness are related could be invaluable to counselor educators by providing another approach to developing multicultural competence among counselors-in-training. Educators ranging from elementary school teachers to higher education professors have been utilizing critical consciousness as a means to promote inclusivity both inside and outside the classroom while reducing discrimination. If counselor educators could build on the existing critical consciousness literature and apply it to counseling specific topics, both multicultural competence and advocacy could be radically transformed and hopefully become far more effective than the current methods.

In keeping with the ACA Advocacy Competencies, counselor educators should teach counselors-in-training to focus on both individual advocacy and advocacy to make systemic changes (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). Through the process of identifying the strengths and barriers the client faces to help empower the client and develop an advocacy plan, the counselor may experience critical reflection (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). Because engagement in advocacy activities was shown to be predictive of multicultural awareness, the advocacy process may increase both critical consciousness levels and multicultural awareness in counselors-in-training. Emphasizing engagement in advocacy activities may be a simple way counselor education programs can increase not only multicultural awareness, but also adhere to the ACA Code of Ethics.

Although the literature supports the use of advocacy activities in diversity courses, few opportunities are provided to counselors-in-training to engage in advocacy efforts either as an individual or as a group (Manis, 2012). By emphasizing the importance of engaging in social justice and advocacy efforts through advocacy activities, programs can simultaneously increase

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student multicultural awareness and potentially increase multicultural competence among counselors-in-training. Additionally, counselor education programs could have a significant impact on the communities in which they reside by advocating for both individual and systemic change.

Limitations

The main limitation of the study was the difficulty of accurately measuring participant levels of multicultural awareness and critical consciousness. This limitation is well highlighted within the literature and is a known limitation when conducting research regarding topics related to multiculturalism (Hays, 2011). While there are a limited number of common factors, the literature contains seemingly conflicting information regarding multicultural awareness depending on the measures used, the population, and the overall focus of the research study (Garmon, 2004; Smolen, Colville-Hall, Liang, & MacDonald, 2006).

Another limitation of the present study was the use of undergraduate students, who were used to establish a link between multicultural awareness and critical consciousness. While this was a convenient sample and necessary to verify a connection, using counselors-in-training or practicing counselors would make the findings more relevant to counselor educators and would further solidify the relationship between the constructs.

The final limitation is the use of the Critical Consciousness Measure, which is a newly developed measure that lacks additional validity and reliability data. The scale has an unbalanced number of questions for each scale and may be too long for participants to maintain interest throughout the entire survey. Using a more established, shorter measure may change the results of future research regarding critical consciousness.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should focus on specifically looking at the connection between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness among counselors-in-training, and then ultimately expand to examine the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural competence among counselors-in-training. Because the present study focused on establishing the link between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness, the findings are less helpful than a study specifically focused on counselors-in-training and multicultural competence. The overlap of these constructs could help counselor educators promote multicultural competence among counselors-in-training and could bridge the gap between research and practice by providing specific ways to increase critical consciousness. Establishing a connection between multicultural competence and critical consciousness among counselors-in-training would be an essential step in the research moving forward.

Due to the challenging nature of measuring critical consciousness, multicultural awareness, and multicultural competence, once a relationship is established through more quantitative research, utilizing a qualitative approach to further examine the relationship between the constructs could be very beneficial to get more rich data concerning the participants.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential link between critical consciousness levels and multicultural awareness in undergraduate students. The researcher found evidence that the two constructs are related; however, more research should be conducted to expand the current findings since this was a preliminary study. Specifically, higher levels of an aspect of critical consciousness—political awareness—was significantly related to higher levels of multicultural awareness of the undergraduate students surveyed. Further evidence of a

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relationship between the concepts was found through research question three, where five specific

advocacy activities were found to be significant predictors of higher levels of multicultural

awareness. Additional research should be conducted to provide further evidence that the two

constructs are related.

Chapter 5: Manuscript

Introduction and Background of the Problem

The racial, ethnic, cultural, and demographic face of America is rapidly changing (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). According to the Pew Research Center, by the year 2055, there will no longer be a singular ethnic or racial majority—instead, individuals who identify as biracial will be the majority (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). These rapid population changes are largely influenced by immigration (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). In addition to changing the racial profile of America, immigrants also bring diverse cultures, customs, and religions. Although historically the United States is predominantly Christian, Muslims are expected to surpass Christians as the dominant religious group due to the aging Christian population and the increasing number of Muslim immigrants. At the same time racial demographics are changing, political and economic changes are also occurring.

Counselors are ethically and legally mandated to demonstrate competence in working with culturally diverse clients according to the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics (2014). As the population continues to shift and become more diverse, counselor educators should increasingly focus on developing counselors whose cultural competence reflects the population (Hill, Vereen, McNeal, and Stotesbury, 2013; Zalaquett, Foley, Tillotson, Dinsmore, & Hof, 2008; Decker, Manis, & Paylo, 2015). Although counselor education as a field emphasizes cultural competence, many researchers argue that there is a gap between research and practice, and that simply having classroom discussions is not enough to promote multicultural competence (Decker et al., 2015). A concept that may help address this issue is critical consciousness. The purpose of this study was to explore the potential correlation between critical consciousness and cultural awareness by examining both critical consciousness levels and cultural competence in undergraduate students through the use of surveys.

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness, or conscientization, was originally developed as an educational construct by Paulo Freire (Freire, 1975). While living in Chile after his exile from Brazil following the coup d'état, which resulted in a military dictatorship and economic inequity among Brazilians, Freire created critical consciousness as part of an educational pedagogy to free peasants from societal constraints that systemically promoted oppression, discrimination, and inequality (Torres, 2014; Jemal, 2017). Freire's work initially focused on the literacy of migrant workers, but grew into much more (Freire, 1975).

The process of understanding societal constraints can be transformative for not only the student or oppressed, but also the teacher or oppressor (Freire, 1975, 2000; Kanpol, 1994). Theorists and researchers have argued that to promote understanding in the students, the teachers must love the students, and find commonalities with the student—despite the potential negative consequences of losing social status for the teacher (Freire, 1975; Kanpol, 1994). Kanpol states that after a relationship is established based on commonalities, then differences can be celebrated, and change can occur (1994). The change desired occurs through critical action upon the development of critical consciousness. Many of the modern social justice movements are rooted in Freirean ideas (Steele, 2008).

Critical consciousness is the result of intensive self-reflection, or critical reflection, which takes into account individual experiences, societal constraints, systemic oppression, and the role that the individual has played to perpetuate the oppression (Freire, 1975; Diemer et al., 2016). Once critical consciousness has been achieved, critical action is the result, which consists of the individual taking definitive action to reduce inequalities and promote equity for all individuals

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(Diemer et al., 2016; Roberts, 2000). Diemer, Rapa, Park, and Perry argue that if critical action does not occur, that the individual has not achieved critical consciousness (2016).

Although there is preliminary evidence that critical consciousness and multicultural competence and awareness may be linked from other fields, there is a dearth of research specifically connecting the two constructs within Counselor Education literature. This study aimed to assess whether multicultural awareness and critical consciousness are correlated, and if so, what were the dimensions of this relationship. For the purpose of this research study, critical consciousness was defined as intentionally developing awareness of systemic and structural inequalities (Freire, 1975; O'Neill, 2015; Shin et al., 2016).

Multicultural and Diversity Competence

The ACA Code of Ethics defines multicultural competence as "counselors' cultural and diversity awareness and knowledge about self and others, and how this awareness and knowledge are applied effectively in practice with clients and client groups (ACA, pg. 20, 2014)." Multicultural competence is expected in all areas for counselor educators, including counseling practice, supervision, and teaching (Decker et al., 2015). Counselor educators should infuse issues of diversity and cultural competency throughout each course, instead of only focusing on cultural competence during a specific diversity course (CACREP, 2016; Zalaquett et al., 2008). Both counselor educators and counselors must operate within the boundaries of their cultural competence, and both are expected to be culturally competent to work with a diverse population (ACA, 2014).

Social Justice and Advocacy

In addition to being competent to work with diverse clients, counselors and counselor educators are expected to engage in social justice and advocacy efforts on behalf of marginalized populations (ACA, 2014). Recognizing that some issues experienced by diverse clients are a result of discrimination within the community or larger society can help a counselor determine if an intervention within session can be effective, or if a community wide intervention needs to occur (Ratts et al., 2016). Individuals who are marginalized can experience limited access to healthcare, education, employment, and residential opportunities, while experiencing racism, classism, sexism, or other forms of societal discrimination (Steele, 2008). The reduced opportunities and increased discrimination for marginalized individuals can directly impact the mental health of the individuals (Steele, 2008; Decker et al., 2016). Counselor educators must teach counselors-in-training to be advocates for their clients when necessary—including when systemic and individual discrimination is occurring to promote the mental well-being of their clients (Steele, 2008; Ratts et al., 2016).

While social justice and advocacy actions are expected of counselors, there is limited research as to how counselor educators teach counselors those constructs (Manis, 2012). Additionally, researchers found that Counselor Education programs were not investing in advocacy or giving special attention to social justice, despite research findings that infusing social justice and advocacy in Counselor Education programs may increase advocacy actions (Manis, 2012; Decker et al., 2015). Research supports three main factors that influence student engagement in social justice and advocacy as increasing the amount of information regarding social justice students receive in the classroom, the students' ability to make meaning from the information, and lastly, the students' self-confidence, which is determined by their willingness to reflect on their privilege (Manis, 2012; Decker, 2013).

Critical Consciousness and Multicultural Competence, Social Justice, and Advocacy

The relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural competence, social justice, and advocacy has been suggested in the literature but not as clearly linked in counselor education research. The potential of this relationship is understandable within counselor education and counseling, due to the dual nature of reflection and action of critical consciousness and the practice of multiculturalism, as well as the engagement in social justice and advocacy (Decker, Manis, & Paylo, 2016; Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016). Moreover, research supports a developmental, process-oriented approach to developing critical consciousness, multicultural education, social justice and advocacy actions (Manis, 2012). Since critical consciousness focuses on reflection on a personal and system level, which must result in critical action to truly be critical consciousness, critical consciousness development would promote multicultural competence, social justice, and advocacy (Freire, 1975). It can be suggested that by increasing critical consciousness levels in counselors, counselor educators may increase multicultural competence through increased reflection and a deeper understanding of oppressive systems, while promoting social justice and advocacy actions to reduce oppression and promote an equitable society (Freire, 1975; Seider et al., 2017; Luter et al., 2017).

Multicultural Attitudes

The word attitude is defined as a "manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing" (*Attitude*, 2019). Multicultural attitudes and awareness determine how individuals feel regarding diverse populations. Research indicates that multicultural attitudes and awareness are developed through a complex relationship between the individual and the environment. Although no research study has been able to definitively identify what influences multicultural attitudes and awareness, several studies have narrowed down factors that

seem to impact attitudes towards diverse individuals. These factors include experiences, education and knowledge, travel experience, program culture, and personal beliefs (Garmon, 2004; Smolen, Colville-Hall, Liang, & MacDonald, 2006; Mena, & Rogers, 2017).

Critical Consciousness and Multicultural Attitudes

As previously stated, critical consciousness consists of two main components: critical reflection and critical action (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). Critical reflection consists of gaining knowledge regarding inequalities, deeply processing and understanding both individual and systemic oppression, and then desiring societal equality for all individuals (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). Critical action is the result of the conscientization that society is not equal or equitable, where the individual acts to make society more equitable (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). True critical consciousness is believed to not be achieved until the individual engages in critical action as a response to the knowledge and awareness of inequality (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017).

The constructs of critical consciousness appear to parallel some of the components found to be important regarding positive multicultural attitudes. The overlapping aspects include developing knowledge and awareness of societal inequities and discrimination, a desire for social justice, and engaging in actions to promote an equitable society (Garmon, 2004, Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017; Freire, 1994; Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). Although there is research regarding both multicultural attitudes and critical consciousness, there is a paucity of research examining the two constructs together. Combining the body of research regarding critical consciousness with the research on multicultural attitudes could strengthen both areas, while possibly providing counselor educators the ability to promote higher levels of multicultural competence.

Statement of the Problem

Research has suggested that there may be a relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural practice, social justice and advocacy; however, there is limited research to support this relationship or explore it within counseling. The counseling field emphasizes multicultural competence and social justice through the ACA Code of Ethics and CACREP standards for counseling programs, but counseling research regarding effective methods for increasing multicultural competence highlights a lack awareness by Counselor Educators as to how multicultural competence is taught in courses (Hays, 2008; Cartwright et al., 2008). The current study measured critical consciousness and multicultural awareness in current counselors to determine if there is a relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness.

Significance of the Study

The current study is significant, because it can help promote multicultural competence, social justice actions, and advocacy in counselors through critical consciousness. Counselors must be multiculturally competent to work with a diverse population and advocate on behalf of their clients. Critical consciousness could increase both multicultural competence and advocacy efforts by increasing counselors'-in-training awareness of systemic discrimination and marginalization of diverse populations. This addition can have a direct impact on counselor educators, counselors-in-training, and ultimately clients by promoting pedagogy and training that increases awareness, competence, and advocacy efforts. However, before considering the integration of critical consciousness as a process to impact multicultural development, advocacy, and social justice we need to more fully understand if a relationship exists between these constructs and the nature of the relationship.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of critical consciousness levels and multicultural attitudes and awareness in undergraduate students. The researcher evaluated whether specific aspects of critical consciousness relate to increased levels of multicultural awareness in undergraduate students to see if there was a need to look at critical consciousness in practicing counselors. Critical consciousness levels were compared to levels of multicultural competence to see if there is a relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness and attitudes. Using information gathered through the demographic questionnaire, the researcher examined if the students' majors and number of multicultural courses taken impact either critical consciousness or multicultural awareness. Critical action was explored to see if higher levels of critical action are related to higher levels of multicultural awareness and attitudes.

According to Freire, critical reflection must be achieved for an individual to exhibit critical action; therefore, critical reflection was not examined independently (Freire, 1975). Instead of examining critical reflection, the participants were assumed to have experienced critical reflection if they are exhibited critical action because it is inherent to critical action. To achieve critical consciousness, individuals must exhibit critical action after integrating the realizations of their critical reflection (Freire, 1975). Lastly, critical consciousness and multicultural awareness were explored to see if there were interactions between the two constructs. Implications for counselor educators were included along with a discussion concerning increasing critical consciousness levels in counselors-in-training. Future research implications were included.

Research Questions

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The quantitative study investigated the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness?

2a. Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by academic major?

2b. Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by experience in a diversity course?

3. What is the relationship between multicultural awareness and participating in critical consciousness activities?

Participants

Participants were current undergraduate students at Auburn University who were over the age of 18 and were present in the COUN 2000 class the day the surveys were administered. Participants were solicited from the COUN 2000 Diverse Populations class sections during class time following IRB approval. The courses were selected based on the course content—diverse populations—which is related to the study's focus. The Diverse Populations class also met the size requirement needed to conduct the study. The researcher provided an information sheet to participants regarding the study that stated that the risk of participation is low. Participation was voluntary, and all data is confidential. Participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Procedures

Upon receiving Institutional Review Board approval, the correlational study utilized COUN 2000 level courses to recruit participants. The researcher provided participants with an information letter that contained information regarding the study, the IRB approval number, and level of risk to the participants. Participants who agreed to participant were provided a paper survey during class time of four sections of COUN 2000. No identifiable participant data was gathered.

Data Analysis

In order to examine the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness, which will be determined by the CCM and the M-GUDS-S, the researcher used multiple regressions and a backward linear regression. Multiple linear regressions were used to explore the relationships between critical consciousness, critical action, and multicultural awareness as indicated by the CCM and M-GUDS-S. Additionally, multiple linear regressions were used to determine if the number of diversity courses and academic major impact critical consciousness and multicultural awareness. Descriptive statistics are provided concerning the instruments and participants, which are visually presented using charts and graphs when appropriate. All statistical analysis was conducted in SPSS.

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential link between critical consciousness levels and multicultural awareness in undergraduate students. Additionally, the researcher sought to determine if the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness are mediated by academic major and experience in a diversity course. Lastly, the research study explored if student participation in advocacy activities impacted multicultural awareness. The researcher used a demographic survey, the Critical Consciousness Measure (CCM), and the Miville-Guzman Universality Scale- Short Form (M-GUDS-S) to measure these constructs.

Demographics

There was a total of 88 undergraduate students who participated in the research study. Of the 88 who participated, 68 (77.27%) of the students identified as female, and 20 (22.73%) of the students identified as male. Of the 88 participants, 18 (20.5%) reported having not completed any diversity courses, 55 (62.5%) reported completing one diversity course, 8 (9.1%) reported

having completed two diversity courses, and three (3.4%) reported having completed three or more diversity courses. Current major was collapsed into five major categories. Within the categories, 29 (33%) identified as a Human Sciences major, 25 (28.4%) identified as an Education major, 9 (10.2%) identified as an Engineering major, 9 (10.2%) identified as a business major, and 16 (18.2%) identified as a Science & Math major.

Instrumentation

A demographic instrument was used to gather relevant information about the participants such as age, race, ethnic background, gender, current major, number of multicultural courses taken, and if they are currently enrolled in a multicultural course.

Critical consciousness levels were evaluated using the *Critical Consciousness Measure*, which is a 26-item scale. The *CCM* was developed by the researcher to address the dearth of instruments to measure critical consciousness and help bring coherence to the disjointed literature on critical consciousness. Four major constructs are measured in the survey, which includes political and social advocacy, confronting discrimination, political awareness, and social issue awareness. All scales use a 5-point Likert-type scale.

Multicultural awareness will be assessed using the *Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale-Short* (M-GUDS-S). The *M-GUDS-S* is a 15-item instrument based on Miville et al.'s construct of Universal-Diverse Orientation (UDO). All item responses are on a 6-point Likert-type scale. There are three subscales which include diversity of contact, relativistic appreciation, and comfort with differences. See Table 1 for a summary of the reliability statistics.

Table 1

Scale Reliability Statistics

Scale	N	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
CCM- Social Issues Awareness Scale	5	3.18	1.25	.869
CCM- Political Awareness Scale	4	3.98	.982	.651
CCM- Political & Social Advocacy Scale	10	2.60	.996	.850
CCM- Confronting Discrimination	7	3.21	1.29	.881
M-GUDS-S Diversity of Contact Scale	5	4.06	1.34	.728
M-GUDS-S Relativistic Appreciation Scale	5	4.89	0.99	.670
M-GUDS-S Comfort With Differences Scale	5	4.71	1.20	.762

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness?

Three linear multiple regressions were utilized to determine the relationship between multicultural awareness, as measured by the three subscales of the M-GUDS-S, and critical consciousness, as measured by the CCM. Multicultural awareness was entered as the dependent variable, while the independent variables were entered as the four CCM subscales. The first two regressions indicated a significant relationship between the CCM Political Awareness scale and two M-GUDS-S scales-- the Diversity of Contact scale and the Relativistic Appreciation scale. The last regression using the Comfort with Differences scale did not yield any significant results. Correlation summaries can be viewed in Table 2.

Finally, a backward linear regression was conducted to examine the best predictor within the model. Political awareness significantly predicted higher levels of multicultural awareness as seen by $f(4,79) = 10.912$, $p<.000$ with an r^2 of .356. The positive beta value of .655 indicates that there is a positive relationship between political awareness and multicultural awareness. The

r^2 (.356) accounts for 35% of the variance in multicultural awareness. The regression summary can be seen in Table 3.

Table 2

Correlation Summary M-GUDS-S vs. CCM Subscales

Scale	M-GUDS-S Diversity of Contact	M-GUDS-S Relativistic Appreciation	M-GUDS-S Comfort with Differences
	r	r	r
CCM Social Issues Awareness	.311	.341	.059
CCM- Political Awareness	.558	.441	.152
CCM- Political and Social Advocacy	.488	.346	-.035
CCM- Confronting Discrimination	.361	.263	-.029
Model R	.597	.474	.245
F	10.912***	5.662***	1.249

p<.001***

Table 3

Regression Summary M-GUDS-S vs. CCM Subscales

Scale	M-GUDS-S Diversity of Contact			M-GUDS-S Relativistic Appreciation			M-GUDS-S Comfort with Differences		
Full Model	r	Beta	Semi-Partial	r	Beta	Semi-Partial	r	Beta	Semi-Partial
CCM Social Issues Awareness	.311	-.019	-.015	.341	.148	.121	.059	.053	.044
CCM- Political Awareness	.558	.398	.287	.441	.322	.233	.152	.308	.224
CCM- Political and Social Advocacy	.488	.170	.117	.346	.009	.007	-.035	-.247	-.171
CCM- Confronting Discrimination	.361	.156	.142	.263	.111	.115	-.029	-.052	-.048
Model R		.356			.474			.245	
F		10.912***			5.662***			1.249	
Final Model		Beta	Semi-Partial		Beta	Semi-Partial		Beta	Semi-Partial
CCM- Political Awareness		.492	.460		.441	.441		.312	.234
CCM- Confronting Discrimination		.186	.173		---	----		---	---
CCM- Political and Social Advocacy		---	---		---	---		-.242	-.181

R^2	.117	.194	.056
F	21.024***	19.538***	2.375

***p<.001

Research Question 2a: Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by academic major?

Research Question 2b: Is the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness mediated by experience in a diversity course?

A backward multiple regression model was used, which allowed the researcher to get both a full model and a final model based on the model fit. The backward model was utilized to examine if there was a relationship between multicultural awareness and either academic major or the number of diversity courses taken. Three linear multiple regressions were conducted with each of the three M-GUDS-S subscales entered as the dependent variable, and both academic major and the number of diversity courses were entered as the independent variables. For the purpose of analysis, academic major was collapsed into five major categories based on the existing literature. The categories included human sciences, education, engineering, business, and science and math. It was found through the backward multiple regression that the number of diversity courses taken was not a statistically significant predictor of multicultural awareness (F 1, 82= 3.96, p= .730) and was therefore excluded from further data analysis. The results from these regressions are summarized in Table 4.

Academic Major

Engineering was the only academic major that was statistically significant in the backward regression model (F 1, 82= 3.96, p=.001). Engineering was negatively associated with multicultural awareness r=-.346, indicating that engineer majors have lower multicultural awareness than other majors. No other majors were statistically significant in the model.

Table 4

Backward Regression Summary M-GUDS-S vs. Academic Major and Number of Diversity Courses Completed

	M-GUDS-S Diversity of Contact Scale			M-GUDS-S Relativistic Appreciation			M-GUDS-S Comfort with Differences		
		Full Model	Restricted Model		Full Model	Restricted Model		Full Model	Restricted Model
R Square		.055	.019		.125	.120		.058	.100
Number of Predictors		5	1		5	1		5	1
Academic Major	r	Beta	Beta	r	Beta	Beta	r	Beta	Beta
Human Sciences	.072	.017	---	.028	-.068	---	.081	-.013	---
Education	.041	---	---	.109	---	---	.081	---	---
Engineering	-.137	-.143	---	-.346	-.376***	-.346***	-.334	-.356**	-.334**
Business	.140	.108	---	.022	-.033	---	.067	.019	---

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Science & Math	-.140	-.139	-.140	.086	-.022	---	.011	-.048	---
Courses Completed	.051	.001	---	.065	-.039	---	.053	-.049	---
F		10.912***	21.024***		5.662***	19.538***		1.249	2.375

***p<.001 **p<.00

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between multicultural awareness and participating in critical consciousness activities?

For research question three, the researcher ran three backward elimination regressions with the M-GUDS-S subscales entered as the dependent variable and the Political and Social Advocacy CCM subscale, which measured participation in advocacy activities, entered as the independent variable. Five specific questions based on advocacy activities were determined to be statistically significant. The results from the regression are listed in Table 5. The specific questions that were found to be significant based on the M-GUDS-S subscales are listed below:

4. I participate in demonstrations or rallies about social issues that I think are important.

5. I make telephone calls to policy makers about social issues that are important to me.

6. I volunteer for political causes and candidates who support values that are important to me.

7. I plan to write letters or emails to influence politicians regarding issues that are important to me.

14. I think that building relationships can help make a difference in the world.

Question 1 was found to be statistically significant (F 3, 82= 12.049, p=.003). Participation in demonstrations or rallies was positively associated with multicultural awareness r=.438. Research question 2 was also statistically significant with an r value of -.253 (F 3, 82= 5.940, p=.001) revealing a negative relationship between calling policy makers about important issues and multicultural awareness.

Question 3 yielded significant results (F 2, 82= 16.022, p=.007) with an r value of .347suggesting that volunteering for political causes is positively associated with multicultural awareness levels. Question 6 resulted in a statistically significant finding (F 3, 82= 12.049, p=.006) with r=.442 indicating that intentions to write letters or emails to politicians is positively associated with multicultural awareness. Question 14 revealed that students associated building relationships as a way to make a difference, which was positively associated with multicultural awareness (F 2, 82= 16.022, p=.000) with an associated r value of .462.

Table 5

Regression Summary M-GUDS-S vs. CCM Political and Social Advocacy Questions

	M-GUDS-S Diversity of Contact			M-GUDS-S Relativistic Appreciation			M-GUDS-S Comfort with Differences		
Full r^2	.340			.329			.167		
	R	Beta	Semi-Partial	R	Beta	Semi-Partial	R	Beta	Semi-Partial
CCM Q 1	.438	.276	.222	.133	.038	.031	-.103	-.109	-.086
CCM Q 2	.381	.108	.060	.167	.154	.085	-.253	-.324	-.180

CCM Q3	.402	.094	.062	.347	.159	.104	-.097	-.089	-.058
CCM Q4	.379	.151	.089	.316	.257	.152	.026	-.026	-.015
CCM Q5	.348	-.060	-.029	.057	-.068	-.033	-.162	-.145	-.069
CCM Q 6	.442	.256	.133	.122	-.162	-.084	.031	.310	.156
CCM Q 8	.315	-.166	-.109	.156	-.140	-.092	.103	.166	.110
CCM Q 10	.051	-.080	-.059	.257	.039	.029	.015	-.071	-.052
CCM Q 11	.216	-.007	-.005	.263	.000	.000	.063	.127	.087
CCM Q 14	.251	.193	.177	.462	.427	.392	.130	.070	.064

Final Model

r^2	.306		.281		.127
	Beta	Semi-Partial	Beta	Semi-Partial	Beta	Semi-Partial
CCM 1	.308**	.283**	---	---		
CCM 2	---	---	---	---	-.461***	-.354***
CCM 3	---	---	.265**	.260**	---	---
CCM 6	.289**	.262**	---	---	.325*	.250*

| CCM 14 | .172 | .169 | .409*** | .401*** | --- | --- |

Note: *p<.05   **p<.01   ***p<.0001

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential link between critical consciousness levels and multicultural awareness in undergraduate students. A demographic survey, the Critical Consciousness Measure (CCM), and the Miville-Guzman Universality Scale- Short Form (M-GUDS-S) was used by the researcher to measure these constructs. Results from these measures will be discussed in this chapter including implications for counselor educators, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Implications for Counselor Educators and Supervisors

The findings that critical consciousness and multicultural awareness are related could be invaluable to counselor educators by providing another approach to developing multicultural competence among counselors-in-training. Educators ranging from elementary school teachers to higher education professors have been utilizing critical consciousness as a means to promote inclusivity both inside and outside the classroom while reducing discrimination. If counselor educators could build on the existing critical consciousness literature and apply it to counseling specific topics, both multicultural competence and advocacy could be radically transformed and hopefully become far more effective than the current methods.

In keeping with the ACA Advocacy Competencies, counselor educators should teach counselors-in-training to focus on both individual advocacy and advocacy to make systemic changes (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). Through the process of identifying the strengths and barriers the client faces to help empower the client and develop an advocacy plan, the counselor may experience critical reflection (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009). Because engagement in advocacy activities was shown to be predictive of multicultural awareness, the advocacy process may increase both critical consciousness

levels and multicultural awareness in counselors-in-training. Emphasizing engagement in advocacy activities may be a simple way counselor education programs can increase not only multicultural awareness, but also adhere to the ACA Code of Ethics.

Although the literature supports the use of advocacy activities in diversity courses, few opportunities are provided to counselors-in-training to engage in advocacy efforts either as an individual or as a group (Manis, 2012). By emphasizing the importance of engaging in social justice and advocacy efforts through advocacy activities, programs can simultaneously increase student multicultural awareness and potentially increase multicultural competence among counselors-in-training. Additionally, counselor education programs could have a significant impact on the communities in which they reside by advocating for both individual and systemic change.

Limitations

The main limitation of the study was the difficulty of accurately measuring participant levels of multicultural awareness and critical consciousness. This limitation is well highlighted within the literature and is a known limitation when conducting research regarding topics related to multiculturalism (Hays, 2011). While there are a limited number of common factors, the literature contains seemingly conflicting information regarding multicultural awareness depending on the measures used, the population, and the overall focus of the research study (Garmon, 2004; Smolen, Colville-Hall, Liang, & MacDonald, 2006).

Another limitation of the present study was the use of undergraduate students, who were used to establish a link between multicultural awareness and critical consciousness. While this was a convenient sample and necessary to verify a connection, using counselors-in-training or practicing

counselors would make the findings more relevant to counselor educators and would further solidify the relationship between the constructs.

The final limitation is the use of the Critical Consciousness Measure, which is a newly developed measure that lacks additional validity and reliability data. The scale has an unbalanced number of questions for each scale and may be too long for participants to maintain interest throughout the entire survey. Using a more established, shorter measure may change the results of future research regarding critical consciousness.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should focus on specifically looking at the connection between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness among counselors-in-training, and then ultimately expand to examine the relationship between critical consciousness and multicultural competence among counselors-in-training. Because the present study focused on establishing the link between critical consciousness and multicultural awareness, the findings are less helpful than a study specifically focused on counselors-in-training and multicultural competence. The overlap of these constructs could help counselor educators promote multicultural competence among counselors-in-training and could bridge the gap between research and practice by providing specific ways to increase critical consciousness. Establishing a connection between multicultural competence and critical consciousness among counselors-in-training would be an essential step in the research moving forward.

Due to the challenging nature of measuring critical consciousness, multicultural awareness, and multicultural competence, once a relationship is established through more quantitative research, utilizing a qualitative approach to further examine the relationship between the constructs could be very beneficial to get more rich data concerning the participants.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential link between critical consciousness levels and multicultural awareness in undergraduate students. The researcher found evidence that the two constructs are related; however, more research should be conducted to expand the current findings since this was a preliminary study. Specifically, higher levels of an aspect of critical consciousness—political awareness—was significantly related to higher levels of multicultural awareness of the undergraduate students surveyed. Further evidence of a relationship between the concepts was found through research question three, where five specific advocacy activities were found to be significant predictors of higher levels of multicultural awareness. Additional research should be conducted to provide further evidence that the two constructs are related.

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Appendix A. IRB Approval

**(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH
CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)**

INFORMATION LETTER

for a Research Study entitled

"Critical Consciousness: Improving Multicultural Competence in Counselors"

You are invited to participate in a research study to examine critical consciousness levels and multicultural attitudes in undergraduate students. The study is being conducted by Kaitlin McIntosh, doctoral candidate, under the direction of Dr. Jamie Carney, Humana-Germany-Sherman Distinguished Professor & Department Head, in the Auburn University Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling. You are invited to participate because you are a currently an undergraduate student enrolled in a COUN or RSED undergraduate course and are 19 years or older.

What will be involved if you participate? Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a paper survey in class. Your total time commitment will be approximately thirty minutes.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risks associated with participating in this study are minimal. To minimize these risks, we will not ask for identifying information and will keep all data confidential.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? If you participate in this study, you can expect to become more aware of your attitudes. Benefits to others may include an increased understanding of how to improve multicultural competence.

Will you receive compensation for participating? There is no compensation offered for participation in this study.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time by discontinuing the survey. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn prior to the survey submission. Once you've submitted anonymous data, it cannot be withdrawn since it will be unidentifiable.   Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will

not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling or Kaitlin McIntosh.

Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous. We will protect your privacy and the data you provide by not collecting any identifiable information, and by keeping all information confidential. Information collected through your participation may be for the fulfillment of an educational requirement and for a professional publication upon graduation.

If you have questions about this study, please contact Kaitlin McIntosh at kon0001@auburn.edu or Dr. Jamie Carney at carnejs@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 Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844- 5966 or e-mail at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO. THIS LETTER IS YOURS TO KEEP.

Kaitlin McIntosh   January 20, 2019

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from
 03/25/2019 to_____. Protocol # 19-073 EX 1903

Appendix B. Demographic Questionnaire

1. Gender: _____ FEMALE _____ MALE _____ TRANSGENDER

    _____Other

2. Age _____

3. Race _____

4. Ethnic/Cultural Background _____

7. Current Major: _____

8. Are you currently enrolled in a multicultural course? ____YES ____ NO

9. Number of multicultural courses completed: _____

Appendix C. Critical Consciousness Scale

For each item below, please choose the option that best describes you:

    (1) Never (2) Rarely (3) Occasionally (4) Frequently (5) Very frequently

1. I participate in demonstrations or rallies about social issues that I think are important.

                1   2   3   4   5

2. I make telephone calls to policy makers about social issues that are important to me.

                1   2   3   4   5

3. I volunteer for political causes and candidates who support values that are important to me.

                1   2   3   4   5

4. I am interested in volunteering for political causes and candidates who support values that are important to me.

                1   2   3   4   5

5. I write letters or emails to influence politicians regarding issues that are important to me.

                1   2   3   4   5

6. I plan to write letters or emails to influence politicians regarding issues that are important to me.
                1   2   3   4   5

7. I think being informed about social issues is important.

                1   2   3   4   5

8. I want to get involved and participate in demonstrations or rallies regarding social issues that are important to me.

                1   2   3   4   5

9. I keep track of important bills/legislative issues that are being debated that I think are important.
                1   2   3   4   5

10. I plan to register to vote and participate in elections.

                1   2   3   4   5

For each item below, please choose the option that best describes you:

Never (2) Rarely (3) Occasionally (4) Frequently (5) Very frequently

11. I think it is important to be involved in politics.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

12. I think I can make a difference in the world.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

13. I think discrimination is a problem in our culture.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

14. I think that building relationships can help make a difference in the world.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

15. I think state policies affect my access to social services.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

16. I think federal policies affect my access to social services.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

17. I think state and federal policies affect my access to education.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

18. I think societal forces (public policies, resource allocation, human rights) affect people's health and well-being.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

19. I feel comfortable engaging in a conversation with someone who is discriminating against another person who is culturally or ethnically different.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

20. I feel comfortable engaging in a conversation with someone who is discriminating against a person with a disability.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

For each item below, please choose the option that best describes you:

Never (2) Rarely (3) Occasionally (4) Frequently (5) Very frequently

21. I feel comfortable engaging in a conversation with someone who is discriminating against a person based on their gender or gender expression.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

22. I feel comfortable engaging in a conversation with someone who is discriminating against a person based on their religion.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

23. I feel comfortable engaging in a conversation with someone who is discriminating against a person based on their ethnicity.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

24. I believe it is important to engage in conversations about equitable and fair treatment.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

25. I use social media to promote equitable treatment for all people.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

26. I believe that all people should receive equitable treatment.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

Appendix D. Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale-Short Form (M-GUDS-S)

MIVILLE-GUZMAN UNIVERSALITY-DIVERSITY SCALE – SHORT FORM, (M-GUDS-S)

The following items are statements using several terms that are defined below for you. Please refer to these definitions throughout the rest of the questionnaire.

Culture refers to the beliefs, values, traditions, ways of behaving, and language of any social group. A social group may be racial, ethnic, religious, etc.

Race or racial background refers to a sub-group of people possessing common physical or genetic characteristics. Examples include White, Black, American Indian, etc.

Ethnicity or ethnic group refers to a specific social group sharing a unique cultural heritage (e.g., customs, beliefs, language, etc.). Two people can be of the same race (i.e., White), but from different ethnic groups (e.g., Irish-American, Italian-American, etc.).

Country refers to groups that have been politically defined; people from these groups belong to the same government (e.g., France, Ethiopia, United States). People of different races (White, Black, Asian) or ethnicities (Italian, Japanese) can be from the same country (United States).

Instructions: Please indicate how descriptive each statement is of you by circling the number corresponding to your response. This is not a test, so there are neither right nor wrong, good nor bad answers. All responses are anonymous and confidential.

Indicate how descriptive each statement is of you by circling the number corresponding to your response.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree a Little Bit	Agree a Little Bit	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I would like to join an organization that emphasizes getting to know people from different countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Persons with disabilities can teach me things I could not learn elsewhere.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Getting to know someone of another race is generally an uncomfortable experience for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I would like to go to dances that feature music from other countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Indicate how descriptive each statement is of you by circling the number corresponding to your response.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree a Little Bit	Agree a Little Bit	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. I can best understand someone after I get to know how he/she is both similar to and different from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I am only at ease with people of my race.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I often listen to music of other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Knowing how a person differs from me greatly enhances our friendship.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. It's really hard for me to feel close to a person from another race.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I am interested in learning about the many cultures that have existed in this world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. In getting to know someone, I like knowing both how he/she differs from me and is similar to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. It is very important that a friend agrees with me on most issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I attend events where I might get to know people from different racial backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Knowing about the different experiences of other people helps me understand my own problems better.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I often feel irritated by persons of a different race.	1	2	3	4	5	6