Student Socioeconomic Status and Gender: Impacts on School Counselors' Ratings of Student Personal Characteristics and School Counselors' Self-Efficacy

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This dissertation titled
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Abstract

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Student Socioeconomic Status and Gender: Impacts on School Counselors' Ratings of Student Personal Characteristics and School Counselors' Self-Efficacy

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This research focused on how students’ socioeconomic status and gender impact school counselors’ ratings of student personal characteristics and school counselor self-efficacy. While previous literature focuses on how students’ socioeconomic status and gender impact school counselors’ ratings of academic characteristics such as ability and potential (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a), research into how these factors impact ratings of personal characteristics is limited. Also, although research on how students’ socioeconomic status and gender impact teacher self-efficacy is available (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008b; Childs & McKay, 2001), research into how these factors impact school counselor self-efficacy is not. Two 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA’s were computed in order to determine if any significant differences exist between school counselors’ ratings of student personal characteristics and school counselor self-efficacy based on student socioeconomic status and gender or the interaction of student socioeconomic status and gender. The findings of the research indicate there was a significant difference in school counselors’ ratings of self-efficacy based on student socioeconomic status. There were no significant mean differences in school counselors’ ratings of student personal characteristics based on student socioeconomic status or gender and there was no
significant interaction for student socioeconomic status and gender. There were also no significant differences in school counselors’ ratings of their own self-efficacy based on student gender or the interaction of student socioeconomic status and gender.

Discussions of the research instrument, data collection procedures, recommendations, and directions for future research are presented.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Thomas E. Davis

Professor of Counseling and Higher Education
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The following introduction provides an overview of the influences of poverty on children’s academic achievement and development. Also discussed are the influences of socioeconomic status (SES), gender, and the interaction of SES and gender on both school counselors’ perceptions of students and their own perceived counseling self-efficacy. A brief background of the study is provided followed by the problem statement, research hypothesis, and significance of the study. Delimitations and limitations are addressed in addition to a definition of terms used in the study.

Background of the Study

The condition of poverty “may be the most important of all student differences” in relation to academic achievement (Burney & Beilke, 2008, p. 295). Although other elements, i.e., race, location, language, and culture definitely impact student achievement, “poverty may have the greatest impact on achievement” (p. 296) and thereby critically impacts a student’s future (Burney & Beilke, 2008). In the United States in 2010, a family of four is considered “poor” or “low-income” if their annual income falls below $22,050 or $44,100, respectively (National Center for Children in Poverty [NCCP], 2011). The U.S. Census Bureau reported that in 2010, 22% of all children under the age of 18 come from “poor” family socioeconomic backgrounds and that 43% of all children are considered “low-income” family socioeconomic backgrounds. These statistics indicate that a large and growing number of school-aged children are living in an environment of poverty. Recent literature also indicates that a student’s gender impacts educator’s views of the student’s academic potential (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a). To
ensure that all students are being given the same educational opportunities and resources, school counselors are increasingly being called upon to assist in eradicating the achievement gap and ensuring equal educational attainment for all students (American School Counselor Association [ASCA] Ethical Standards, 2010; The Education Trust, 2009). However, literature suggests that although school counselors are expected to advocate that all students are capable of achieving at high academic levels, school counselors are maintaining the status quo by framing differing perceptions of students’ academic ability based on socioeconomic status and gender (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a) and adhering to “deficit model thinking” regarding poor students’ academic abilities (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Burney & Beilke, 2008; Henfield, Owens, & Moore, 2008; Machtinger, 2007). Research has been conducted on the ways socioeconomic status (SES) relates to school and mental health counselors’ ratings of disturbance and attractiveness (Hutchison, 2009; Sladen, 1982), how SES interacts with gender to impact school counselors’ perceptions of students’ academic abilities (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a), how SES relates to how much a counselor believes a client will benefit from counseling, (Wright & Hutton, 1977) and the importance of counselors liking their clients in order to feel confident in their skills, comfortable treating the client and interested in treating the client (Lehman & Salovey, 1990). Yet, it is unclear how the perception of socioeconomic status alone or the interaction of SES and gender influences the perceptions that are formed by school counselors regarding students’ personal characteristics or a school counselor’s self-efficacy when counseling students. It is the goal of the present study to examine these constructs empirically.
The Impacts of Poverty on Children and Their Academic Achievement

Burney and Beilke (2008) described what they term “the discrete impact” of poverty on children and their academic achievement. These authors described the limited access to foundation-building resources low-income students have, i.e., not being read to as a small child, lack of access to books and computers, lack of academic conversations, and the myriad other intangibles inherent to the information-rich environments that middle-income students enjoy, and how these negatively impact a low-income child’s school achievement and readiness to benefit from instruction (Burney & Beilke, 2008). These foundation building skills provide the model for academic achievement from an early age. Moreover, in addition to providing the model for achievement, access to these academic resources provides young students with the opportunity to become confident in their academic skills, social skills interactions, and involvement with school-related activities to help them feel invested in their school environment (Burney & Beilke, 2008).

The authors go on to state that cultural deficit models and underrepresentation in rigorous and gifted courses put low-income students at an even greater disadvantage academically. Educators’ “deficit model thinking” or deficit views of children from low-income backgrounds surfaced throughout the literature as a major influence on children’s academic achievement (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Burney & Beilke, 2008; Henfield, Owens, & Moore, 2008; Machtinger, 2007). These authors described “deficit model thinking” as the various discrepancies in educators’ expectations and beliefs regarding low-income students’ academic abilities as opposed to their middle-income peers, and the impact on quality of education they receive. As found by Auwarter and
Aruguete (2008a), school counselors do rate students from high-SES backgrounds as having greater overall academic potential than low-SES students. Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) and Burney and Beilke (2008) described how educators who hold these deficit views believe that poor people are morally and culturally deficient or subscribe to a different set of values than middle-class people, and that these values and deficiencies perpetuate their low economic position and low educational attainment. Such educators ignore the culturally-relevant experiences of children living in poverty and invalidate those experiences by judging them against the middle-class norm. By not adopting a culturally-responsive curriculum and activities, educators further place low-income students at a disadvantage by not providing them with opportunities to show their own “way of knowing” simply because it is not compatible with the traditional school environment (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; D’Andrea & Daniels, 2007). Henfield et al. (2008) further describe how deficit model thinking discourages educators from being able to recognize “high academic potential” in low-income students, simply by not believing they are capable of doing the work. Burney and Beilke (2008) presented the identifying characteristics of high academic potential to be rapid learning, complex thinking, and creative problem solving.

How Socioeconomic Status Effects Counselors’ Perceptions

In a content analysis that reviewed journal articles from the Journal of Counseling Psychology, Journal of Counseling and Development, and Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development from the years 1981-2000, only 18% of articles used social class as a variable (Liu et al., 2004). Given the importance of these constructs on
individuals and the counseling relationship, it is imperative that these influences be better understood and empirically examined.

There is limited research on how student’s perceived socioeconomic status exclusively affects how school counselors perceive students and rate client disturbance (Hutchison, 2009). After an extensive literature review by the author, only two studies were found that isolated the effects of SES on school counselor’s perceptions of students (e.g., Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a; Hutchison, 2009). No studies were found that isolated the relationship of SES exclusively or that examined the interactions of SES and gender on school counselors’ perceptions of student personal characteristics as well as school counselor perceived self-efficacy. Hutchison’s 2009 dissertation focused exclusively on how SES relates to school counselors’ ratings of student attractiveness and disturbance and yielded interesting results. He found that school counselors’ rated students they perceived as poor as more attractive clients to work with and no differences in how SES relates to school counselors’ ratings of disturbance (Hutchison, 2009). This suggests that socioeconomic status may influence school counselors’ attraction to working with clients, but does not impact how disturbed they perceive students to be.

Another recent study that examined how school counselors’ perceptions of students’ academics varied by socioeconomic status yielded compelling results as well (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a). Results showed that school counselors rated high-SES students as having significantly greater overall academic potential than low-SES students as well as greater math ability for high-SES students than low-SES students (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a). This study is interesting in that it suggests that the differences in the
perceptions of academic ability formed by school counselors regarding low-SES and high-SES students could impact the career guidance and encouragement given to students depending on their socioeconomic status. This also suggests that as a group, low-SES students are considered to have less academic potential, but the present study aims to identify how a specific student’s SES is related to how school counselors’ rate students’ personal characteristics and their own counseling self-efficacy.

The researchers in the Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a) study described above utilized a hypothetical case vignette of a student and semantic differential scales (i.e. bipolar adjective rating scale) to gauge the school counselors’ attitudes toward the student. For example, when rating confidence level when counseling a student, “Confident” would be at “1” and “Unconfident” would be “7”. The participant would be asked to rate their response on a scale of 1-7, giving how confident or unconfident they would feel when counseling the student. The present research utilized a research design adapted with permission from the Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a) study (Aruguete, personal communication, July 18, 2011; August 2, 2011). The current research adapted the case vignettes and several semantic differential word-pair items from the instrument used in the Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a) study.

In a study that isolated the influences of poverty on mental health counselor perceptions, results indicated that how much the counselor “likes” the client and how much “personality similarity” exists are important factors on clinical mental health counselors’ views of whether low-income clients will benefit from counseling (Wright & Hutton, 1977). To this end, another study suggested that when mental health counselors
are working with clients who are “less liked” than others, the counselors reported they are less interested in treating them and felt less confident in their own skills (Lehman & Salovey, 1990). These studies suggest that poverty status could impact how much a counselor “likes” a client and thereby how much they are interested in treating them as well as how confident they are that their skills will benefit the low-SES client. Although this research sampled clinical counselors and not school counselors, the findings are significant in that they suggest for beneficial counseling to take place with low-SES students, it is critical that school counselors view their students as likeable in order to feel confident in their counseling skills despite their disparate backgrounds.

**How Gender Effects Counselors’ Perceptions**

In the same research performed by Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a), school counselors’ perceptions of students’ math ability showed a significant main effect for gender, with school counselors “predicting that male students would have higher math abilities than female students” (p. 393). The researchers went on to describe the implications of these results by stating that, “these findings are significant in a practical sense as school counselors’ provide career services and their beliefs about ability may influence whether they encourage girls to enroll in math classes or pursue careers involving mathematics” (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a, p. 393).

Another study regarding counselor responsiveness to female clients presenting problems also produced relevant results. This study showed that women who presented with “personal-social problems [i.e., personal sexual problems or anxiety] were considered by both male and female therapists as having more serious problems, being
able to profit more from counseling, being more desirable to work with, and needing more sessions of counseling…and also received more empathy” than women with educational-vocational concerns (Hill, Tanney, Leonard, & Reiss, 1977, p. 64). This finding could suggest that counselors who are in the position of assisting female clients make decisions regarding education and vocational concerns (i.e. school counselors) could receive less guidance and attention than those presenting with more typical traditional female concerns.

In regards to how gender relates to the way clinical counselors view male and female clients, a study performed by Jones and Zoppel in 1982 showed there is a difference in how male and female therapists described female clients. These researchers found that female therapists tended to use “more socially desirable” language when describing female clients than male therapists did, who appear to “assume a more judgmental and critical stance” (Jones & Zoppel, 1982, p. 264). However, depictions of male clients seemed to be more balanced and described both positive and less desirable characteristics (Jones & Zoppel, 1982). The present study can expand on this finding by examining if school counselors make similar judgments of students’ personal characteristics based on their gender.

**Socioeconomic Status Interacting with Gender on School Counselors’ Perceptions of Students**

After an extensive literature review by the author, one study was identified that examined the interaction of student SES and gender on school counselors’ perceptions of students’ academic capabilities. Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a) found interactions for
student gender and socioeconomic status of the student on school counselors’ ratings of students’ language arts ability. Low-SES males were rated the lowest in language arts ability, with high-SES males rated as highest, followed by high-SES females, and low-SES females (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a). This suggests that school counselors could judge students’ academic abilities based on their socioeconomic status in combination with gender. While this study focused on school counselor perceptions of academic ability, it is relevant to the present study in that it suggests there may be a negative bias for the interaction of SES and gender on the perceptions formed by school counselors’ regarding students’ academic abilities.

Another study produced results suggesting that low-SES males are significantly disadvantaged when starting school due to educators’ perceptions that they are more distractible and “hard to manage” in the classroom (Childs & McKay, 2001). These researchers concluded these perceptions had a “serious negative impact on the children’s teachers and the way they responded to them” (Childs & McKay, 2001, p. 304).

The present study hopes to expand on these findings by examining (a) how a specific student’s gender and/or SES are related to school counselors’ ratings of a student’s personal characteristics and (b) how a specific student’s gender and/or SES are related to school counselors’ self-efficacy when counseling that student.

Statement of the Problem

The described literature has shown the various negative effects that being a student from a poor family background has on academic development, educator and counselor perceptions of academic ability and potential, and counselors’ confidence with
clients. However, the influences of an individual student’s SES and gender or the interaction of student SES and gender on school counselor’s perceptions of student’s personal characteristics and on school counselor’s own perceived counseling self-efficacy with students is unclear.

Perhaps the most used definition of “prejudice” was put forth by Gordon Allport. He described prejudice as “an antipathy based on faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group or an individual of that group” (Allport, 1954, p. 9). While the prejudices held by educators and school counselors toward low-SES students as a group are well researched and described in depth in later chapters (particularly in regards to academic potential and ability), the present study seeks to identify if and how school counselors make judgments regarding a specific student’s personal characteristics or judgments regarding their own counseling self-efficacy with that student simply due to the student’s gender and socioeconomic status.

Currently, there is emphasis from the American Counseling Association [ACA], ASCA, Counselors for Social Justice [CSJ], and The Education Trust on the importance of school counselors acting as advocates that all students can achieve at the highest possible academic levels. Given this imperative and the growing number of students who are living in poor or low-income family backgrounds, it is essential that if and how SES alone or SES in combination with gender relates to school counselor’s perceptions of student characteristics and counseling self-efficacy that it be fully examined and better understood. An understanding of how student SES and gender relates to school
counselor self-efficacy will help identify if school counselors feel they will be effective when counseling poor students.

**Research Questions**

The overall goal of the study was to examine the relationship of perceived socioeconomic status exclusively on the personal characteristics that school counselors attribute to students and also how a student’s perceived socioeconomic status relates to a school counselor’s self-efficacy when counseling these students. Also of research interest was the interaction of SES and gender on school counselors’ perceptions of students’ personal characteristics and school counselor self-efficacy. Specific research questions addressed were:

1. Are there differences in the personal characteristics that school counselors attribute to a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student?
2. Are there differences in the personal characteristics that school counselors’ attribute to a specific male student versus a specific female student?
3. Is there a significant interaction between gender of the student and socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics?
4. Are there differences in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy when counseling a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student?
5. Are there differences in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy when counseling a specific male student versus a specific female student?
6. Is there a significant interaction between gender of the student and
socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of their own perceived self-efficacy when counseling these students?

Null Hypotheses

In accordance with the stated research questions, the following hypotheses were examined:

1. There is no significant mean difference in personal characteristics attributed by school counselors to a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student.

2. There is no significant mean difference in personal characteristics attributed by school counselors to a specific male student versus a specific female student.

3. There are no significant interactions between gender of the student and perceived socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics.

4. There is no significant mean difference in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy when counseling a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student.

5. There is no significant mean difference in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy when counseling a specific male student versus a specific female student.

6. There are no significant interactions between gender of the student and perceived socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of their own perceived self-efficacy when counseling these students.

Significance of the Study

This study investigates one of the “greatest impacts on [academic] achievement” (Burney & Beilke, 2008, p. 296) to examine if student socioeconomic status also
influences school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics as well as their own perceived counseling self-efficacy. Taking into account the negative effects SES has on perceptions of student academic potential (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a) and the effects that client-SES has on a counselor’s belief that the client will benefit from counseling (Wright & Hutton, 1977), it is possible these negative perceptions will influence a school counselor’s views of a student as well as his or her own self-efficacy in counseling the student. These perceptions, as well as their influence on a school counselor’s self-efficacy, may bias the school counselor’s ability to serve as a student advocate or even in developing a positive working relationship with the student. The interaction of student SES and gender on school counselors’ perceptions of student personal characteristics and school counselor self-efficacy is also of vital interest to the present study. More research is needed to investigate not only the influences that varying socioeconomic statuses and gender have on academic achievement and ratings of academic potential, but on how varying student socioeconomic statuses and the interaction of SES and gender impact school counselors’ perceptions of students’ personal characteristics and how these variables impact a school counselors’ self-efficacy in their counseling skills. Given our knowledge of how gender and SES negatively impact educators’ and school counselors’ perceptions of student academic potential (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a, 2008b; Childs & McKay, 2001), more research is needed to better understand how these constructs operate independently and if they interact to negatively influence school counselors’ view of students personal characteristics as well as their self-efficacy in their counseling skills. This study aims to do just that by
investigating if/how SES and gender influence school counselors’ perceptions of students and their relationship on school counselors’ self-efficacy in their counseling skills.

The present research will be specific to the field of school counseling and provide insights into how SES alone and the interaction of SES and gender relate to the school counselor-student dyad as opposed to the mental health counselor-client dyad. Given the emphasis from ACA, ASCA, CSJ, and The Education Trust for school counselors to advocate for educational equity and high academic achievement for all students, it is imperative that if and how socioeconomic status and gender relate to a school counselor’s perceptions of students or a school counselor’s self-efficacy in a negative way, that this be better understood so that school counselors’ can learn how to better fulfill their duty as advocates. The present study aims to further the understanding of SES exclusively on school counselor perceptions of student personal characteristics as well as school counselor self-efficacy in addition to examining the interaction of SES and gender on these variables. In an extensive literature review by the author, no studies were found that isolated the relationship of SES or the interaction of SES and gender on both school counselors’ perceptions of students’ personal characteristics and school counselors’ own perceived counseling self-efficacy. The present study proposes to fill this gap in the literature. Acquiring this knowledge will assist in designing and implementing better school counseling programs by providing data on what populations of students school counselors are counseling and advocating effectively with and which need improvement, in addition to establishing if school counselors are being trained adequately to effectively counsel students of varying socioeconomic statuses.
Delimitations of the Study

There are delimitations to be considered for this study. First is that the participants must be a currently practicing school counselor and have their current email addresses represented in the membership directory obtained from Sabella (personal communication, August 31, 2011). Also, although continuous gradients of socioeconomic status exist, for the purpose of this study, socioeconomic status was categorized into only two groups, low-SES and high-SES.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to be considered in this study. The first limitation is focusing on school counselors’ perceptions of a hypothetical student, not one the school counselor may have had personal interaction with currently or previously. It is assumed the participants responded honestly and that accurate information was provided. Also, social desirability may have biased the participant’s responses. An instrument was created for this study and therefore could be another identified potential limitation. However, several items were revised and reworded for clarification based on pilot study data analysis and two items were removed from the instrument completely to increase reliability. Also, the participants were asked to self-report on their own perceived counseling self-efficacy; a misrepresentation of their actually ability could be a limitation.

Due to an inability to distinguish currently practicing school counselors from other non-school counselors through email addresses in the email directory obtained from Sabella (personal communication, August 31, 2011), a misrepresentation is possible due
to the many individuals who are members of the directory but not currently practicing as a school counselor (i.e., counselor educators, school counseling graduate students, former school counselors). Also, 79.7% of the respondents were female, which may not be representative of the population of school counselors in the US, but could also be a potential limitation in the present research.

The sample of school counselors in the study might not represent the population of school counselors in the US, nor do the responses reported necessarily represent an accurate view of current practices in the field. Due to confidentially, specific school titles were not included on the completed survey and limited the demographic data available for analysis. Demographic data on the participants was also limited to number of age, race, gender, years practicing as a school counselor, current state the participant is practicing in, socioeconomic status of their childhood upbringing, and grade levels represented in the school counselor’s current school.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarification, the terms used in this study are defined accordingly:

*Affluent* is a term used to describe children of middle- to high-income family backgrounds. It refers to the ability of middle- and high-income families to gain access to resources and an emphasis on power, privilege, and control. The term affluent will be used interchangeably throughout this document with the terms middle- or high-income and high-SES.

*Low-income* is a term used to describe children who are living in a household with a family income that is less than 200% of the poverty level, or $44,100 for a family of
four (NCCP, 2011). In 2010, 42.3% of children (over 31 million) under the age of 18 in the US were considered low-income (NCCP, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The term low-income will be used interchangeably throughout this document with the terms poor and low-SES.

*Poor* is a term used to describe children who are living in a household with a family income that is less than the federal poverty level, or $22,050 for a family of four (NCCP, 2011). In 2010, 22% of children (16.4 million) under the age of 18 in the US were considered poor (Institute for Research on Poverty, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The term poor will be used interchangeably throughout this document with the terms low-income and low-SES.

*Poverty* is defined by the United States government by “a narrow income standard that does not include other aspects of economic status, such as material hardship or debt, nor does it consider financial assets (including savings or property)” (NCCP, 2011, How is poverty measured in the United States section, para. 1). The official poverty measure is a specific dollar amount that varies by family size and is the same across the continental US. According to the guidelines, the poverty level in 2009 is $22,050 a year for a family of four or $18,310 for a family of three (NCCP, 2011, How is poverty measured in the United States section, para. 2).

*Socioeconomic Status (SES)* “is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. It is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group” and in addition, “when viewed through a social class lens, privilege, power, and control are emphasized. Furthermore, an examination of SES as a
gradient or continuous variable reveals inequities in access to and distribution of resources (American Psychological Association [APA], 2011, Socioeconomic status section, para. 1). Low-SES will be used interchangeably throughout this document with the terms poor and low-income, as high-SES will be used interchangeably with the term affluent.

**Dependent Variables.** The dependent variables for this study are the school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics and the school counselors’ ratings of their own perceived self-efficacy when counseling these students.

**Independent Variables.** The two independent variables for this study are the perceived socioeconomic status of the student and gender of the student. There are two levels to the gender variable: female and male. There are two levels to the socioeconomic status variable: perception of low-SES and perception of high-SES.

*Perception of Low-SES* refers to the perception made by a school counselor that a student comes from a low-income or poor family background.

*Perception of High-SES* refers to the perception made by a school counselor that a student comes from a middle- to high-income or wealthy family background.

**Summary**

This chapter presented a brief overview of the influences of poverty, gender, and educators’ deficit model thinking on children’s academic achievement. A brief explanation of how socioeconomic status and gender relate to school counselors’ perceptions of students were also described. The problem statement was disclosed before identifying the research questions and hypothesis. Together with the significance of the
study, delimitations and limitations of the study were identified to the reader. Lastly, key terms were defined for the purpose of this study.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter two will focus on school counselors’ perceptions of students and the relationship that socioeconomic status, gender, and other variables have on these perceptions. The relationship of student SES and gender on teachers’ self-efficacy will also be reviewed. The impact of the counselor’s race and gender on the clients’ perceptions of counselors will also be reviewed. Various types of cognitive bias and how they relate to a counselor’s initial impressions of a client, as well as the counseling process and treatment outcomes will also be discussed. A discussion of how counselors’ bias relates to their own perceived self-efficacy is also addressed, followed by suggestions for how school counselors can increase their effectiveness when counseling poor students. A review of the roles that school counselors can implement when working with poor students as well as barriers to these roles will be given. A review of the importance of school counselors working as advocates for students as well as a review of advocacy standards from ACA, ASCA, CSJ, and The Education Trust will also be given.

To begin, a review of the impact of poverty during childhood on academics and literature regarding attitudes and attributes made about the personal origins of poverty and affluence are discussed.

Attitudes and Attributions Made About Poverty and Affluence

How do views regarding the personal origins of wealth and poverty vary? In a study that reviewed findings of various attitudes and attributions about wealth and poverty, it was stated that “prior research has sometimes yielded conflicting results” (p.
due to limited sample sizes, limited demographic variables, and not distinguishing between “attitudes” (i.e., favorable/unfavorable cognitive evaluation) and “attributes” (i.e., causal beliefs) (Cozzarrelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). There does seem to be consensus on three main ideas about the personal origins of wealth and poverty, one being “individualist” or internal causes, another “structuralist” or external causes, and a third, less often supported, “fatalist” explanation or bad luck (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2003; Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Hunt, 2004). Bullock, Williams, and Limbert (2003) asserted that individualist attributions are rooted in the “deficit model thinking” approach described earlier.

One study researched how perceptions vary across white Americans, African Americans, and Latino Americans on the attributions of poverty and wealth (Hunt, 2004). Data was collected from over 1,000 participants in Los Angeles County during interviews to survey how perceptions vary across racial and ethnic lines. Hunt (2004) found that across all respondents, 67% attributed wealth to individualist causes (i.e., personal drive) versus 39% who attributed wealth to structuralist (i.e., money inherited from families) causes. Also, across all respondents, poverty was attributed to structuralist causes (i.e., discrimination, systemic-causes) by 60% of respondents and 48% attributed poverty to individualist (i.e., lack of effort, lack of ability) causes (Hunt, 2004). Across racial and ethnic lines, “a remarkable consensus appears to exist on the issue of individualistic beliefs about wealth” (p. 841) or that individualist beliefs about wealth are consistent across all groups surveyed (Hunt, 2004). However, with respect to wealth, the minority groups studied rated structuralist causes as more important than whites, suggesting they
believe there are dual causes to wealth, both individualist and structuralist (Hunt, 2004). The same results were found for dual beliefs about poverty across racial and ethnic groups: all groups rated poverty as coming from structuralist causes yet minority groups also attributed more individualist beliefs about poverty than did whites (Hunt, 2004). Hunt (2004) suggested “minorities are also more likely than whites to hold the poor responsible for their plight” (p. 849). These results suggest that beliefs regarding poverty and wealth are very complex and multilayered across racial and ethnic groups. Yet Hunt (2004) concluded “respondents beliefs about economic inequalities seem to reflect the idea that the system is generally open for persons to pursue wealth, but with some important qualifications since important subgroups such as the poor are held back by structural barriers” (p. 840).

Another study that examined attitudes towards poor and middle class individuals produced interesting results (Cozzarelli et al., 2001). These researchers surveyed over 200 undergraduate students regarding their attitudes and attributions towards the poor and middle class. Results showed that participants were more likely to endorse negative attitudes about the poor (i.e., unmotivated, uneducated), yet some positive attitudes were present as well (i.e., capable, loving, nice) (Cozzarelli et al., 2001). However, in comparison with traits endorsed for middle class individuals:

Participants were significantly more likely to endorse all negative traits as being characteristic of the poor than of the middle class and to endorse all of the positive traits with the exception of humble as more characteristic of the middle class. (Cozzarelli et al., 2001, p. 214)
As far as attributions about the causes of poverty, internal attributions were more likely to be endorsed than external attributions (Cozzarelli et al.). Moreover, “negative stereotypes [about the poor] were associated with a strong tendency to make internal attributions” (Cozzarelli et al., p. 217), suggesting that if a person’s attitudes about the poor are negative, then their beliefs about the causes of poverty will be internal or the individual is somehow responsible for their poverty.

**Children’s Views of Poverty and Affluence**

An interesting pair of studies has been done on the perceptions of poor and affluent families by children (Weinger, 1998; 2000). In both studies, children (aged 5-13) were shown two photos of homes, one a rundown home and another a ranch-style home with a manicured lawn. Children were asked to talk about the people who they imagined lived in the house and also to describe the parents and children who lived there. Children identified as poor gave reports of the affluent home and people who lived there as, “nice”, “don’t get in trouble”, “nice parents”, “clean”, and “mannered” (Weinger, 1998; 2000). Yet the poor children also gave reports of suspecting insincerity from the affluent people towards the poor people (Weinger, 1998; Weinger, 2000). Middle class children identified the imagined affluent people as “normal”, “average”, “happy” and “responsible” (Weinger, 2000).

Poor children in these studies reported the imagined people who lived in the poor home as needing resources, giving reports such as, “hardworking”, “need a job”, “they need money”, “probably good people…may try to help people out when they can” (Weinger, 1998). Only three of the 24 poor children questioned gave negative views of
the imagined poor people, using words like, “lazy”, “unfortunate”, and “bad kids” (Weinger, 1998). Middle class children viewed the imagined poor family as “nice” but did not go into detail about any specific positive qualities (Weinger, 2000). More poor children described the plight of the poor than did middle class children, who simply labeled the poor family as poor, but could not describe the impact of poverty any more than that (Weinger, 2000). This suggests that poor children could make a closer connection to the imagined poor family than the middle class children could (Weinger, 1998; 2000). Poor children also attributed far more positive characteristics to the imagined poor family, using words to describe coping skills and closeness within the family, which were completely absent from the middle class children’s perceptions of the imagined poor family (Weinger, 2000). Twice as many middle class children used negative words to describe the poor family, using such words as “dirty”, “lazy”, and “mean” (Weinger, 2000).

These studies emphasize the differences in views of those living in poverty that are already in existence for school age children. It is a goal of the current study to help better isolate the relationship of perceived student socioeconomic status on school counselors’ perceptions of students so that school counselors can be better prepared to advocate for poor students and with all students regardless of socioeconomic status.

A similar study also found that adolescents rated “poor” and “rich” strangers as having differing character attributes (Skafte, 1989). This study sampled 638 adolescents, aged 11-16, and asked participants to give their impressions of a stranger (who was in their age category) based on a photo. Participants rated the stranger who they perceived
as “poor” as more likely to steal, more likely to feel worse about themselves, and as having a harder time making friends, while the stranger who was perceived as “rich” was rated as more intelligent, getting better grades, more likely to succeed in future endeavors, healthier, and happier (Skafte, 1989). These findings give further support that school age children have differing opinions about poor and affluent individuals, with poor people having more negative attributes and affluent people having more positive attributes (Skafte, 1989; Weinger, 1998; 2000). These studies shed light on how the school counselor’s population of students is already forming biases about their poor and affluent classmates’ characters and attributes.

**Effects of Poverty During Childhood on Academic Development**

As stated in chapter one, there are many and various negative impacts that poverty holds for children. Chief among these was the “discrete impact of poverty” which was described as the lack of educational resources in the home as well as lack of early education experiences in the form of pre-school education (Burney & Beilke, 2008). Also described was the “deficit model thinking” employed by many educators and counselors alike, which holds that low-income or poor children are less capable academically than more affluent children and therefore they are not pushed to succeed academically to the same extent (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Burney & Beilke, 2008; Henfield, Owens, & Moore, 2008; Machtinger, 2007). The effects of living in an environment of poverty have been identified as a major obstacle (Caldas & Bankston, 1997; Evans & English, 2002) and will receive additional examination below.
In a retrospective study, the effects of growing up in an environment of poverty on children’s academic development was examined (Duncan et al., 1994). The data set comprised nearly 900 children from various metropolitan cities across the US. Of primary interest was the impact of the duration of poverty or persistent poverty on children’s academic development:

With respect to duration, it is likely that being poor for relatively short periods is less detrimental to children than are sustained bouts of poverty. At the same time, if families move above the poverty line, but not very far above it, then duration of poverty might make little difference since income has not risen enough to enable families to make the changes – for example, moving to a better neighborhood, purchasing high-quality child care, investing in a beneficial home-learning environment – that would produce measurable improvements in their children’s development. (Duncan et al., 1994, p. 297)

Their analysis showed that in regards to childhood Intelligence Quotient (IQ), the effects of persistent poverty were roughly twice as large as the effects of transient poverty, suggesting the effects of poverty during childhood are cumulative (Duncan et al., 1994). The cumulative impact of poverty on childhood development was further supported by Evans (2004) when stating:

Although each of these singular psychosocial and physical risk factors has adverse developmental consequences, exposure to cumulative risks accompanying poverty may be a key, unique aspect of the environment of poverty. The confluence of multiple demands from the psychosocial and physical environment
appears to be a powerful force leading to physical and psychological morbidity among low-income children. (Evans, 2004, p. 88)

Duncan et al. (1994) concluded that “SES [alone] is a more powerful correlate of childhood IQ than more conventional SES measures of maternal education, ethnicity, and female headship (i.e., female head of household) (p. 312).

Evans and English (2002) studied the physical (i.e., noise, crowding, housing quality) and psychosocial (i.e., violence, family turmoil, child-family separation) stressors inherent in living in an environment of poverty. These researchers found that poor children are not only exposed to stressors more often, they are also more likely to be under multiple stressors at any given time and they experience these stressors more intensely than do their middle-income peers. The authors also found that poor children are less likely to be under zero or only one stressor as compared to middle-income children. From this we can glean that poverty provides a large range of exposure to adverse physical and psychosocial conditions and that the accumulation of these multiple stressors leads to socioemotional difficulties associated with childhood poverty and could also contribute to the child’s lack of academic achievement.

Caldas and Bankston (1997) studied the impact of the overall socioeconomic status of the students in a school on an individual’s academic achievement. These authors found that children tend to go to school with large numbers of their same-race and similar SES background peers. They also found that poor students are more likely to attend school with peers who are disproportionately poor and that academic achievement is negatively impacted by the number of students from one-parent households (Caldas &
Bankston, 1997). These authors also found that if the individual is at the poverty level, his or her academic achievement will be negatively impacted and that there was also a negative influence on individual achievement for attending school with a high number of poor students. While studying the influence of neighborhood income and poverty, it was suggested that “having more affluent neighbors is associated with higher IQs, while having more low-income neighbors is associated with more externalizing problem behaviors” (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994, p. 309).

A lack of resources in the schools has been identified as a major hurdle for children who attend school with high numbers of other poor students (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Hines, 2002; Kozol, 1991; Machtinger, 2007). Foremost among these was a lack of experienced and highly qualified teachers in schools with high numbers of poor students (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Hines, 2002; Kozol, 1991; Machtinger, 2007; The Education Trust, 2009). Furthermore, schools with large numbers of low-SES students are more likely to have teachers who are teaching in out-of-licensure areas (Machtinger, 2007).

In his seminal 1991 book “Savage Inequalities”, Kozol describes the unbelievably deplorable facilities that poor children in urban areas throughout the United States are condemned to attend school in. He described whole schools without adequate heating and cooling equipment, complete lack of athletic, music, and art classes or even supplies, lack of sufficient or grade-level appropriate textbooks, and nonexistent science lab equipment, amongst many others. Machtinger (2007) went on to describe the lack of facilities, lack of teacher resources (i.e., poorly stocked libraries), and lack of on-site
support in the form of social workers and aides as further contributing to the obstacles confronting students from low-income backgrounds.

**Effects of Socioeconomic Status on Counselor Perceptions**

In an unpublished dissertation that focused exclusively on the school counselor-student dyad, the influence of perceived socioeconomic status and academic preparation on school counselors’ ratings of student attractiveness and disturbance was studied (Hutchison, 2009). This study yielded two main effects on the attractiveness variable, finding that school counselors rated students they perceived as poor as attractive clients and students they perceived as less prepared academically as unattractive (Hutchison, 2009). This finding suggests that school counselors may find students who they perceive as poor as more attractive clients. The present study aims to expand specifically on this finding of school counselors’ viewing poor students as more attractive by also investigating if school counselors’ self-efficacy changes when counseling low-SES and high-SES students.

The study performed by Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a) showed that school counselors rate students from high-SES backgrounds as having greater overall academic potential than students from low-SES backgrounds. Also, students from high-SES backgrounds were rated as having higher math ability than low-SES students (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a). The present study will investigate how SES relates to school counselors’ views of student personal characteristics and school counselor self-efficacy, not only the relationship of SES on perceptions of academic potential.
In one of the few studies that isolated the influence of SES alone on mental health counselors’ perceptions of clients, some interesting results were found regarding what contributes to how much graduate student-level counselors believe low-income clients will benefit from counseling (Wright & Hutton, 1977). These authors found that participants’ judgments on how much low-income status clients would benefit from counseling were related to the amount counselors reported “liking” the clients as well as how much “personality similarity” the counselors reported (Wright & Hutton, 1977). Though there are limitations to this study including a small sample size (n = 16) and that the participants were graduate students and not school counselors, the results suggest that counselor training must include an emphasis on gaining rapport with individuals from all different socioeconomic statuses and backgrounds in addition to the various multicultural and diverse backgrounds that are already being emphasized in counselor training programs.

In an unpublished dissertation, the impact of perceived socioeconomic status on the attitudes and attributions made by mental health counselors were examined (Crawford-Sturm, 2008). The author collected data from over 300 participants and found that “poverty was not a factor for counselors when forming positive or negative views about clients” (p. iv) and that clients who were not poor were held to a higher level of responsibility for the causes of problems than clients who were perceived as poor (Crawford-Sturm). The author concluded that “counselors are aware of the systemic and cultural forces impacting the problems of those who are poor” (Crawford-Sturm, p. iv). This result is in conflict with previous research that suggests SES does impact
counselors’ perceptions of clients and attraction to clients (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a; Hutchison, 2009; Sladen, 1982; Wright & Hutton, 1977). The present study aims to determine differences in school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics and counselor perceived self-efficacy based on socioeconomic status.

**Effects of Gender on Counselors’ Perceptions**

As stated earlier, the study performed by Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a) reported that school counselors do form different perceptions of students’ academic potential based on gender. Female students were rated as having less ability in mathematics than their male student counterparts (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a). This study supported an earlier finding by LaLonde, Leedy, and Runk (2003) that also reported that teachers rated males as having greater math ability than females. Again, these studies focused on academic potential, while the present study aims to investigate the relationship of gender on school counselors’ perceptions of student personal characteristics and school counselor self-efficacy.

Counselors were also found to rate female clients presenting with problems in the personal-social realm as more desirable clients, in need of more sessions, to benefit more from counseling, and as having more serious problems than female clients presenting with vocational-educational concerns (Hill et al., 1977). This suggests that counselors assisting female clients with educational-vocational concerns may not devote adequate time or attention to assist clients in resolving their concerns, or that presenting concerns in female clients are somehow less important.
Effects of the Interaction of Gender and Socioeconomic Status on School Counselor and Teacher Perceptions and Self-Efficacy

The first study performed by Auwarter and Aruguete in 2008 found school counselors’ judge students’ academic abilities based on gender and SES. In terms of language arts ability, there was a significant interaction with high-SES males rated as having the highest ability, followed by high-SES females, low-SES females, and low-SES males rated as having the lowest language arts ability. This study, however, focused on the school counselors’ ratings of students’ academic potential, not on how SES and gender affect how school counselors rate the student’s level of disturbance, their perceived attraction to working with the student, or their own perceived ability to be of help to the student in a counseling capacity. The present study can expand on this finding by furthering knowledge of how school counselors’ perceptions of low-SES male and female students differ from high-SES male and female students not only academically, but also how the interaction of SES and gender alter the perception of students’ personal characteristics and how effective school counselors believe themselves to be when counseling students.

As stated previously, in a study that examined the interaction of SES and gender on teachers’ ratings of student competence on students starting school reported low-SES males were “found to display significantly poorer learning behaviors at age five, especially in terms of distractible behavior, compared with middle-income [males] and with [females] generally” (Childs & McKay, 2001, p. 303). Although this study focused on teachers’ perceptions of students and not school counselors’ perceptions, it is relevant
in that it suggests SES and gender are interacting to impact teacher’s perceptions, even from the very beginning of their formal education (i.e., “age five”). More research is needed to understand the relationship these constructs have on school counselors’ perceptions as well.

In another study performed by Auwarter and Aruguete (2008b), the relationship of student SES on school teachers’ perceptions and self-efficacy found results similar to those of Childs and McKay (2001). Auwarter and Aruguete (2008b) found:

Teachers in our study rated hypothetical students in the low-SES scenarios as having less promising futures than did identical students portrayed as having high SES. This finding concurs with previous research showing that children from higher SES backgrounds are judged more favorably than are equally performing children of lower social class backgrounds. Teachers who believe that SES is a predetermining factor for students’ achievement will likely feel ineffective when working with low-SES students. These feelings of low efficacy may lead to fewer teaching efforts and therefore perpetuate low student achievement. (pp. 245)

Another study into teacher self-efficacy supported the above results. In 2002, Warren found that “the majority of teachers (21/29)…had a low sense of teaching efficacy” (p. 112) and teachers’ had different expectations for students based on SES. These findings, in particular those in regard to how student SES relates to teacher self-efficacy, are relevant to the current research in that student SES may or may not have the same relationship on school counselors’ self-efficacy – leading to fewer counseling efforts and
feeling ineffective in our abilities. The current research aims to fill this gap in the literature.

**Effects of the Interaction of Race and Socioeconomic Status on Counselor Perceptions**

As stated earlier, there is limited research how SES alone has on school counselors’ perceptions of students, judged attraction to students, and ratings of student disturbance (Hutchison, 2009). There is some research investigating the interactions of factors such as gender, race, and location with SES on counselor perceptions of clients (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a; Bishop & Richards, 1987; Childs & McKay, 2001; Jones & Zoppel, 1982; Myers & Gill, 2004; Sladen, 1982), yet counseling literature is scarce on the effects of SES alone and the interactions of SES and gender on school counselors’ perceptions of student characteristics and school counselor self-efficacy. The present study aims to examine the effects of perceived socioeconomic status and the interaction of SES and gender on school counselors’ perceptions of students and the school counselor’s own perceived self-efficacy when counseling students. The following research identifies findings on the interaction of SES and race on counselor perceptions.

Although colloquial knowledge may suggest there is an obvious interaction or cumulative effect of race and poverty status of an individual on the perceptions formed by others, research into how this interaction relates to counselors’ perceptions of clients does not support this concept (Bishop & Richards, 1987; Sladen, 1982). In the study performed by Sladen in 1982, subjects were asked to rate counselor empathy, client-counselor attraction, and cognitive similarity. The results showed:
Socioeconomic status was generally more important than race in influencing subjects’ judged attraction to and judged similarity with the clients. Black and white subjects were predominantly middle class and identified themselves at a significant level more strongly with middle class clients of either race. (Sladen, 1982, p. 565)

This result suggests that client-counselor SES similarity is a larger influence on a counselor’s perceived desire to work with a client, resemblance with a client, and possibly his or her self-efficacy with clients of differing socioeconomic statuses than racial similarity is. The goal of the present study is to investigate the influence of SES and the interaction of SES and gender on counseling self-efficacy more closely.

Race was also found not to have a significant impact on counselor judgments of students at a university counseling center during the intake process (Bishop & Richards, 1987). Counselor participants were asked to rate clients in three areas including vocational, personal, and educational problems. The counselor participants were also asked to give ratings on the client’s potential for change, the ease with which the client expressed him or herself, client motivation, as well as to indicate personal feelings toward the client. Race was not found to be a significant factor on counselor participants judgments on clients except for the area of potential for change, in which black clients were rated significantly higher at intake than white clients (Bishop & Richards, 1987).

Race is also becoming less of a factor when predicting poverty and defining who poor people are in the United States. Although there may be frequent association between race and socioeconomic status, “race is not a causal factor of poverty” (Burney
Between the years 2000-2005, poverty increased among all racial and ethnic groups, with the largest proportional increase among whites and Asians (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Lee, 2006). While these two groups have the lowest rates of poverty overall, this rise in proportion suggests the two groups are becoming more even with other racial and ethnic groups, making race and ethnicity less of a defining characteristic when addressing poverty (Seccombe, 2007).

There are also difficulties in distinguishing between racial and ethnic groups when attempting to “count” how many and who are the poor in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau collapses racial and ethnic categories into broad groups such as “Hispanic” as opposed to specific categories such as “Mexican American” or “Cuban American” (Seccombe, 2007). This masks differences among specific racial and ethnic groups and makes identifying poverty trends among each group much more difficult. All of these influences are vital to why isolating and studying the relationship of SES on school counselors’ perceptions of students are critical to the present research.

**Effects of the Interaction of Counselor Race and Gender on Clients’ Perceptions of Counselors**

There was substantial research on the topics of how the counselor’s race and gender relate to client’s perceptions of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and effectiveness (Gamst, Dana, Der-Karabetian & Kramer, 2004; Jones & Zoppel, 1982; Lee, Sutton, France & Uhlemann, 1983; Porche & Banikotes, 1982). Only one study found a significant interaction for race of the counselor and gender of the counselor, with white, female counselors being rated significantly higher for expertness than any other
group studied (i.e., white males, black males, and black females) (Porche & Banikiotes, 1982). The remainder of the studies isolated the effects of counselor race and gender on client’s perceptions separately and is discussed below.

In regards to how the counselor’s gender impacts perceptions made by clients, the research findings were mixed (Jones & Zoppel, 1982; Porche & Banikiotes, 1982). The interaction of counselor gender and client gender were found to be not significant for attractiveness, expertness, trustworthiness, or social attraction when rated by clients (Porche & Banikiotes, 1982). Yet in another study, in regards to the treatment process, “former clients [regardless of gender] agreed that women therapists were more effective in terms of actual behaviors that constitutes psychological intervention” (Jones & Zoppel, 1982, p. 270). Also, women therapists were judged as forming superior therapeutic alliances (Jones & Zoppel, 1982).

Upon review of the literature, it was suggested that a counselor’s race does influence the perceptions formed by clients, with white counselors being rated higher in perceived attractiveness than African American or other ethnic minority counselors (Lee, Sutton, France, & Uhlemann, 1983; Porche & Banikiotes, 1982). However, this significant effect was not found for other variables such as expertness, trustworthiness, or social attraction when rated by the clients (Porche & Banikiotes, 1982). Also, in the study performed by Gamst et al., in 1994, their findings suggested that client-counselor ethnic matching does not significantly influence child and adolescent clinical outcomes as measured by Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) difference scores. These results suggest that counselor race may influence the perceptions of counselors that are formed
by clients in some areas, yet there is insufficient evidence regarding whether the racial and ethnic matching of client and counselor leads to superior treatment outcomes.

**Counselor Bias and Perceptions of Clients**

There is a dearth of literature on the various forms or types of cognitive bias and their relationship to the counseling process, particularly on the assessment or beginning phases of counseling. “Accurate diagnostic judgments made at the end of the intake process often determine the type of theoretical approach to be used with the client, the length of treatment, and the level of experience of the counselor” (Bishop & Richards, 1987, p. 96). Although the majority of this research is focused on clinical practitioners and how bias relates to their initial clinical diagnosis and subsequent treatment of clients, cognitive biases are still a relevant factor in school counselors’ judgments of students. According to Haverkamp (1994), “[clinical] judgment is dependent on the knowledge and experiences that the counselor brings to judgment tasks” (p. 156). This suggests that each counselor interprets each client and situation differently, depending upon personal factors such as their theoretical orientation, training, past experiences with similar clients, and prior knowledge of the client (Morrow & Deidan, 1992), all of which can influence counselor bias. Haverkamp (1994) went on to observe that “the further the judgmental process goes beyond immediate information [from the client], the greater the chances that the counselor’s experience or beliefs will influence conclusions and become a source of error or bias” (p. 156).

There are several different types of cognitive bias that were identified throughout the literature (Haverkamp, 1994; Morrow & Deidan, 1992), in addition to where bias
comes from (Salzman, 1995), how counselor’s use bias when making hypotheses about clients (Strohmer & Boas, 1996; Strohmer & Shivy, 1994), and fortunately, ways to avoid bias (Haverkamp, 1994).

Types of bias include fundamental attribution bias and confirmatory bias (Haverkamp, 1994; Morrow & Deidan, 1992), evaluation or negativity bias (Haverkamp, 1994), availability and representativeness heuristics, anchoring, prior knowledge, and labeling, and reconstructive memory bias (Morrow & Deidan, 1992). Fundamental attribution bias and confirmatory bias received a great deal of attention in previous research and are of particular relevance to the present study and will therefore be described more in depth below.

Fundamental attribution bias was reviewed as an observer-actor effect (Haverkamp, 1992; Morrow & Deidan, 1994) where two parties tend to view a given situation differently depending upon whether they are the individual in the situation (actor) or if they are an outsider looking in on a situation (observer). These authors described how the “actor” will tend to attribute causes of their behavior to external factors regarding the situation whereas the “observer” will attribute the same events to some internal characteristics about the individual, i.e., the “actor”. The authors went on to describe how counselors’ will implement this bias by overlooking the situational or external factors involved in their clients lives and overemphasize the client’s personal responsibility and ability to change the situation. This is much the same as the “deficit model thinking” described earlier where educators and counselors fail to recognize the ecological or societal influences of poverty on student problems with academic
achievement and place full responsibility on the student (Greenleaf & Williams, 2009) or assuming that poor people subscribe to a different set of values than do middle-income people that perpetuate their low economic status and low educational attainment – that it is something that the individual themselves is doing to make the situation what it is (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Burney & Beilke, 2008). Many of the problems faced by students in poverty exist in environmental and societal factors that are outside the control of the individual (i.e., oppression and discrimination). By implementing this type of fundamental attribution bias on poor students and their problems, we fail to recognize that many of these problems are rooted in areas the student has little or no control over and that they may not be able to effect the necessary changes themselves.

Confirmatory bias was described as a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the counselor “fails to search for, or tends to disregard, information that would contradict the initial impression” (Haverkamp, 1992, p. 161). Counselors actively engaging in confirmatory bias will attend only to information consistent with their initial hunches and impressions of clients and further supports these ideas, ignoring information to the contrary. Strohmer and Boas (1996) suggested “counselor training tends to focus on client presenting concerns, not on strengths…which tends to keep client problems in the forefront and leads to bias for negative information over positive information” (p. 165). The authors went on to study confirmation bias in mental health counselors. They asked mental health counselors to read information on a fictitious client and to select information that they felt was most important to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis that a client had or lacked self-control, what they called a “negative hypothesis bias”
(Strohmer & Boas, 1996). Their results showed participants identified more
disconfirmatory information than confirmatory when their “client” had the positive
condition (i.e., has self-control) and more confirmatory information than disconfirmatory
when the “client” had the negative condition (i.e., lacked self-control). This result
suggested participants tend to disconfirm positive information and confirm negative
information (Strohmer & Boas). The authors concluded that mental health counselors are
not exactly looking for negative information, but failing to integrate positive information
into their assessment of clients. These results further supported an earlier study
performed by Strohmer and Shivy in 1994 in which the researchers asked counselor
participants to listen to an introduction done by a “client” and were then asked to recall
information that would confirm or disconfirm if the “client” had or lacked self-control.
Their results showed that counselor participants recalled more confirmatory information
than disconfirmatory information when forming their hypothesis about a client. This
result proved similar to the “reconstructive memory bias” in which counselors fill in gaps
in recall memory to be consistent with the present situation (Morrow & Deidan, 1992).
This confirmatory bias held strong even when participants were told they would be
accountable to another counselor to explain the information they did recall when forming
clinical hypotheses (Strohmer & Shivy, 1994). These researchers pointed out the effects
confirmatory bias can have on counselor effectiveness as a “troubling clinical judgment
problem” (p. 195).

These studies of confirmatory bias and fundamental attribution bias are significant
to the present study due to their findings that initial impressions formed by counselors
(i.e., that a client is low-SES or high-SES) can have lasting relationship with the counselors’ judgments of clients and therefore treatment methods and therapy outcomes. Counselors in all settings must become vigilant against these biases by being critical of hunches made about clients, gathering information in a standardized way with all clients, and forming alternative hypotheses or counterarguments for client behaviors and problems (Haverkamp, 1994).

**How Counselor Bias Relates to Counselor Self-Efficacy**

In a study performed by Lehman and Salovey (1990), therapist initial impressions of liked and less liked patients and how their personal feelings toward the patient altered their expectations of the subsequent therapy process was examined. This study showed significant impacts on counselor self-efficacy with less liked patients. Researchers found that when counselors imagined themselves working with negative patients, they were less comfortable and less confident in their own skills (Lehman & Salovey, 1990). The authors concluded:

> When confronted with a written intake summary of an unlikeable potential therapy patient, therapist’s self-perceptions appeared to be negatively influenced: They felt less confident in their skills and expected a less successful outcome. In stark contrast to the likeable patient, the expected course of therapy with a less liked patient was significantly more negative. (Lehman & Salovey, 1990, p. 390)

As mentioned earlier in chapter one, therapists were also less interested in treating clients they did not like (Lehman & Salovey, 1990). This study emphasizes the importance of a counselor “liking” a client or student from the initial assessment in order
to effect the most beneficial therapeutic changes. The concept of confirmatory bias also
becomes relevant here as it has been suggested that counselors seek to confirm their
initial conceptualizations of a client throughout the course of treatment (Haverkamp,
1994) as well as confirming negative information and disconfirming positive information
(Strohmer & Boas, 1996; Strohmer & Shivy, 1994). These studies in combination with
the findings of how much a counselor likes a poor client, as well as the amount of
personality similarity that exists between the counselor and the poor client, determines
the amount the counselor feels the client will benefit from counseling (Wright & Hutton,
1977) suggest that it is imperative that a poor client is liked by the counselor and makes a
positive initial impression in order for the counselor to feel confident in his or her skills
that positive, beneficial counseling can take place (Haverkamp, 1994; Lehman &

School Counselor Self-Efficacy

Counselor self-efficacy was defined as "one's beliefs or judgments about his or
her capabilities to effectively counsel a client in the near future" (Larson & Daniels,
1998, p.180). Self-efficacy in the present study refers to school counselors’ beliefs about
his or her capabilities to effectively counsel a student. Specifically,
“school counselor self-efficacy is a conceptualization of self-efficacy that reflects
a counselor's perceived ability to carry out school counseling related tasks” (Holcomb-
beliefs regarding our counseling self-efficacy were the primary determinant of our
actions as counselors, and that counselors’ with lower efficacy would not be as effective.
Many factors influence a school counselor’s self-efficacy; it is the goal of the current study to examine how student SES and gender relate to school counselor self-efficacy.

A recent study examining the relationship of empathy and mindfulness on counselor self-efficacy produced interesting results. Greason and Cashwell (2009) described empathy as the counselor’s ability to suspend judgment and walk in the clients shoes. The authors speculated there may be a gap in how empathy is taught in theory and how it is put into practice in counselor education. The authors stated that counselors are trained to respond empathically in external, observable ways while less emphasis is placed on internal processes that lead to empathic understanding of a client or student. Their results showed that empathy was not a significant predictor of counselor self-efficacy, suggesting that having the ability to gain empathy for a client or student is not a factor in a counselor’s belief of their effectiveness. The role of empathy on school counselor self-efficacy was well researched in areas such as suicide prevention and intervention (King and Smith, 2009), counseling supervision (Barnes, 2004), student self-injury (Roberts-Dobie and Donatelle, 2007), and multicultural counseling competence (Constantine, 2000). However, a literature review of the relationship of empathy on school counselors’ self-efficacy with students of varying SES and gender showed no results.

**Ways for School Counselors to Increase Effectiveness When Counseling Poor Students**

Upon review of the literature, there were several suggestions as to what skills are needed for school counselors to be most effective in working with low-income students
and their families. Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) asserted that school counselors are in excellent positions to aid teachers and administrators in this type of work due to previous training in multicultural counseling, which should lend itself to an understanding of the sociopolitical influences of poverty on families and education and an increased ability to block-blame and offer alternative perspectives on situations involving low-income students. Henfield et al. (2008) suggested increasing visibility and vigilantly building rapport with these students and their families. Knowing how to collect, analyze, and present research and data to identify disparities and also to validate the school counselors’ efforts when positive changes occur was also identified as being of vital importance (Henfield et al., 2008; Hines, 2002; The Education Trust, 2009) to increasing school counselor efficacy.

Perhaps most significant, the importance of developing a close, personal, supportive, predictable, relationship with students and families (Burney & Beilke, 2008) is critical to working effectively with low-income students. Acting as a “mentor” and a role model for low-income students, who may not have any family members who have succeeded in school is also described as being critical to how effectively school counselors can engage low-income students to invest in their education (Cross & Burney, 2005; Knowlton, 2006).

**Roles for School Counselors to Implement When Counseling Poor Students**

Wide disparities in the academic achievement gap between low-income students compared to middle or high-income students are well documented. An emphasis on the roles that school counselors can have as advocates for these students and educational
reform agents is also growing (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Goodman et al., 2004; House & Martin, 1998; Ratts, 2008; The Education Trust, 2009).

The National Center for Transforming School Counseling defined new roles for school counselors as:

The trained school counselor must be an assertive advocate creating opportunities for all students to pursue dreams of high aspirations. The counselor assists students in their academic, career, social and personal development and helps them follow the path to success. The school counselor serves as a leader as well as an effective team member working with teachers, administrators, and other school personnel to help each student succeed. The school counselor as consultant empowers families to act on behalf of their children by helping parents and guardians identify student needs and interests, and access available resources. (The Education Trust, 2009, Transforming School Counseling, Definition of school counseling section, para. 2)

These roles of advocate, leader, team member, and consultant for family involvement are closely aligned with the roles outlined by Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) that garnered so much support from the literature on how school counselors can take more proactive and powerful positions in contributing to educational equity and the academic success of all students.

Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) suggested three emerging leadership roles for school counselors when working with students from low-SES backgrounds that were also strongly supported throughout the literature. These three roles include (a) acting as a
cultural bridge between teachers and students and their families, (b) acting as a pedagogical partner with teachers to ensure the curriculum connects directly to the student’s lives, and (c) as a collaborator with teachers and administrators to create a family-centric and open school environment.

Acting as a cultural bridge would include such advocacy efforts as countering and re-informing teachers’ deficit views of children from poverty (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Machtinger, 2007). These authors encouraged school counselors to take an active role in challenging the low expectations and deficit model beliefs that low-SES students are somehow incapable of achieving academically or are inferior to their middle-class counterparts. This deficit view does not take into account the socio-political context of poverty and allows educators to remain unaware of their advantaged status (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007). School counselors acting in this role could help to bring awareness of deficit thinking to school staff and work to change it. Acting as a blame blocker is also an important function of this role as cultural bridge (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Burney & Beilke, 2008). This would entail the school counselor serving as a mediator for teachers who blame a low-income student’s academic difficulties on their perceptions of the parent being uninvolved or unconcerned with the child’s academics. Focusing blame on parents triggers defensiveness and further alienates low-income parents from school involvement. Acting as a blame blocker can help refocus interactions with low-income parents to solutions rather than who is at fault.

A school counselor serving as a pedagogical partner would help teachers to design curriculum that values, validates, and integrates learning practices held by the culture of
low-income students as opposed to their middle-income peers into the school curricula (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Machtinger, 2007). Designing curriculum that is culturally responsive reflects cultural sensitivity, respect, and inclusion (D’Andrea & Daniels, 2007). Implementing instructional activities that validate their distinctive ways of learning and legitimizes their previous experiences will make these activities more meaningful to students and build upon their interests. Validating experiences was described by Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) as critically important to empowering students and their families to be contributors to their own academic success. This role in particular may be difficult for many school counselors to undertake, since many school teachers may feel that classroom decisions regarding curriculum and instruction should be under the teacher’s purview.

The third suggested role of collaborator would involve teaming with teachers and administrators to work together to redesign school activities that would foster family involvement and enjoyment, and working to create an environment of communication and support for the student’s academic success (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Keys, Bemak, Carpenter & King-Sears, 1998; The Education Trust, 2009). A school counselor working in this role would encourage activities and participation by all families, emphasize positive interactions with low-income parents, increase support social support among parents, and emphasize a collaborative, mutually beneficial relationship between families and schools, whether they are able to come to the school or not (Amatea, Daniels, Bringman, & Vandiver, 2004; Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007). Keys et al. (1998) described a Collaborative Consultation model in which teachers, parents,
administrators, counselors, and even students, work together as equal contributors and experts in supporting the student’s academic success and fostering open, no-fault communication among all stakeholders. Once again, a counselor who is working in the three roles of cultural bridge, pedagogical partner, and collaborator would work to give low-income students the same opportunity to be successful early on in their academics as middle-income students (develop self-efficacy) and would work to make curriculum relevant and interesting to the student as to ensure their continued interest and help to demonstrate their academic efforts are worth the time investment.

**Challenges to Effectively Implementing These Roles.** Amatea and West-Olatunji (2007) suggested four systemic or external barriers for why school counselors have trouble implementing the roles outlined in the previous section. They suggested the school counselor may feel inadequately trained to undertake these tasks, the counselor may face too many institutionalized rules and policies at the school level; the counselor may encounter barriers from other staff member regarding the “role” of a school counselor in classroom issues, and finally the counselor may simply not have the time or resources to undertake these new activities. Goodman et al. (2004), House, Martin, and Ward, (2002), Ratts (2008) and Toporek (1999) all suggested school counselors are reluctant to serve in these roles due to their inadequate (or non-existent) training in how to become an advocate and a reformer. Ratts (2008) and Goodman et al. (2004) asserted that the lack of emphasis from counseling accreditation bodies on social justice advocacy also serves as a barrier.
Other internal or personal challenges to these roles were identified as the tendency to view problems from an intra-psychic view, a belief that counselors should be value-neutral or apolitical, outsiders interference, a belief that social justice advocacy is not counseling, or that it is too abstract (Goodman et al., 2004; Ratts, 2008; Toporek, 1999). These more internal barriers are of primary focus in the present study.

Bemak and Chung (2005) also suggested what they termed Nice Counselor Syndrome (NCS) as a barrier to effectively implementing these roles. These authors asserted that counselors fall into NCS in order to maintain harmony in the workplace, avoid conflict by acquiescing to other’s ideas of the school counselor’s role, and to appear cooperative. Some of the personal factors contributing to NCS were the desire to be liked, not wanting to be labeled as a troublemaker, apathy and complacency, guilt, resentment, a false sense of powerlessness and a personal feeling of discomfort or a lack of support (Bemak & Chung, 2005). Professional factors contributing to NCS include feeling overwhelmed, turf wars with other school personnel about the school counselor’s role, administrative resistance, fear of personal character attacks, and fears regarding job security.

The Importance of School Counselors as Advocates

The American Counseling Association’s (ACA) Advocacy Competencies developed by Lewis, Arnold, House, and Toporek (2002) and endorsed by the ACA in 2003, reflect the growing emphasis on the importance of advocacy in the counseling profession at large. The advocacy competencies include three levels of advocacy, the client/student level, the community/school level, and the public arena level. The
client/student level focuses on empowerment and advocating for and on behalf of the individual, advocacy at the community/school level focuses on collaboration, and advocacy at the public arena level focuses on informing others of social justice issues and barriers (Lewis et al., 2002).

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) emphasizes the need for multicultural and social justice advocacy and leadership in their 2010 Ethical Standards (ASCA, 2011) and highlight the school counselor’s role in eradicating the academic achievement gap. Per their ethical standards, school counselors should “work as advocates and leaders in the school to create equity based school counseling programs that help close any achievement, opportunity and attainment gaps that deny all students the chance to pursue their educational goals” (ASCA 2010 Ethical Standards, E.2.G, p. 6).

In regards to competencies needed when counseling students from various socioeconomic backgrounds, ASCA also emphasizes that school counselors “develop competencies in how prejudice, power and various forms of oppression, such as ableism, ageism, classism, familyism, genderism, heterosexism, immigrationism, linguicism, racism, religionism and sexism, affect self, students and all stakeholders (ASCA 2010 Ethical Standards, E.2.B, p. 5).

Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ), a division of ACA, have also offered a position on the academic achievement gap and the counseling profession’s role in combating it. According to their position statement regarding the achievement gap and educational equity, they believe the profession must work to eradicate the achievement gap through individual, community, and societal level interventions. Bemak and Chung
(2008) emphasized the need for school counselors to implement new roles for themselves as advocates and change agents to help address the achievement gap and to fill these needs defined by the ACA, ASCA, and CSJ.

The Education Trust (2009) has also called for a system of change through various initiatives and accountability systems for all educators to assist in closing the achievement gap. The mission of The Education Trust is to:

Promote high academic achievement for all students at all levels – pre-kindergarten through college. Our goal is to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement that consign far too many young people – especially those from low-income families…to lives on the margins of the American mainstream (2009, Our Mission section, para.1).

Their solution includes a process of measures, goals, incentives and consequences, and moving to new, higher standards and assessments. They suggest using measures to gather “a broad mix of data…to inform improvement efforts” (The Education Trust, 2009, Accountability and results for struggling schools fact sheet, p. 1). The Education Trust also suggests setting aggressive but achievable goals for all schools and districts. Incentives and consequences should be established for schools that meet their goals and for those schools that continue to perform at low levels. Lastly, a transition to new, higher standards and assessments must be implemented so that students are aiming higher and can begin performing at higher levels; this would include providing the support states would need to develop the tools necessary for higher achievement (The Education Trust, 2009, Accountability and results for struggling schools fact sheet, p. 3).
The Education Trust sees school counselors as essential players in advocating for educational equity. The National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) “promotes a new vision…in which school counselor’s advocate for educational equity, access to rigorous curriculum, and academic success for all students” (The Education Trust, Transforming School Counseling section, 2009). The NCTSC sees school counselors as “powerful change agents to close gaps in opportunity and achievement for low-income students” (The Education Trust, Transforming School Counseling section, 2009). The NCTSC goes on to define a new role for school counselors as one to “focus attention on students for whom schools have been least successful – low-income students….Counselors must concentrate on issues, strategies, and interventions that will help close the achievement gap between these students and their more advantaged peers” (The Education Trust, Transforming School Counseling section, 2009).

Ratts, DeKruyf, & Chen-Hayes (2007) suggested that school counselors can become effective advocacy counselors by following the guidelines set forth in the ACA Advocacy Competencies (Lewis et al., 2002). Again, advocacy competencies include three levels of advocacy: the client/student level, the community/school level, and the public arena level. He described advocacy on the client/student level as being focused on empowerment and student advocacy for school counselors working as advocates. Advocacy at this level involves advocating with students and on behalf of students. Empowerment also includes teaching students self-advocacy skills, so they can begin to speak up for themselves. Ratts et al. (2007) further described the advocacy counselor’s role on the community/school level as one of an ally. Advocacy at the public arena level
calls for informing the public about issues of educational access and inequities (Ratts et al., 2007). Bringing awareness of these issues to a wide audience by way of working with board members and working with state school counseling associations are examples of ways school counselors can work in this role.

Summary

This review of the literature on the relationship of socioeconomic status on school counselors’ perceptions of students as well as on school counselor self-efficacy began with a discussion on views of the personal origins of poverty and affluence. A brief review of how student SES and gender relates to teachers’ self-efficacy was also presented. It continued with a review of how the condition of childhood poverty impacts academic achievement followed by a review of the data focusing on SES alone in influencing school counselors and clinical counselors’ perceptions of students and clients. Interactions of SES with gender and race on perceptions of clients preceded a review of the influences of the counselor’s gender and race on client’s perceptions of the counselor. A review of various forms of cognitive bias and their relationship with counselors’ perceptions of clients was offered in addition to a review of how counselor bias also relates to counselor self-efficacy. Skills for how school counselors can be effective with low-SES students, roles for school counselors in schools with high numbers of poor students, and barriers to these roles were also provided. Finally, a review of the importance of school counselors working as advocates for students as well as a review of advocacy standards from ACA, ASCA, CSJ, and The Education Trust was also given.
From this literature, it can be deduced that SES is a major influence on the perceptions formed by counselors, how much counselors like counseling individuals they perceive as poor, and the influences of negative information and cognitive biases on the counseling relationship (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a; Strohmer & Boas, 1996; Strohmer & Shivy, 1994; Wright & Hutton, 1977). The negative influence of the interaction of SES and gender on the perceptions formed by school counselors regarding students’ academic potential is also of concern (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a; Childs & McKay, 2001). The negative impact of counseling clients whom counselors did not like was also shown to impact a counselor’s self-efficacy (Lehman & Salovey, 1990). From this literature and the earlier stated imperative for school counselors to advocate for all students to achieve at the highest possible academic levels, this research examines the relationship of perceived socioeconomic status and the interaction of SES and gender on school counselors’ ratings of student personal characteristics as well as school counselors’ own perceived counseling self-efficacy.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research design. The operational definition of the variables, sampling plan, and identification of the population will be explored in this chapter. The development of the instrument is presented, including the results of the pilot study, and modifications to the instrument. The final areas of research design are data collection, analysis and post-hoc procedures.

Research Design

The research design was a true experiment with random assignment of the participants. The researcher examined the main effects of a specific student’s socioeconomic status and gender on school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics as well as the relationship of perceived student socioeconomic status and gender on school counselors’ ratings of their own perceived counseling self-efficacy. Also of research interest was the interaction of socioeconomic status with gender of the student on school counselors’ perceptions of students’ personal characteristics and self-efficacy. The research analysis used in this study was a 2 (gender) x 2 (socioeconomic status) factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA). One 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was performed on the dependent variable of student personal characteristics and a second 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was performed on the dependent variable of school counselor self-efficacy. The participants were currently practicing school counselors in the US who completed semantic differential rating scales on student personal characteristics and their own perceived counseling self-efficacy. Specific research questions addressed were:

1. Are there differences in the personal characteristics that school counselors
attribute to a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student?

2. Are there differences in the personal characteristics that school counselors’
attribute to a specific male student versus a specific female student?

3. Is there a significant interaction between gender of the student and
socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of students’
personal characteristics?

4. Are there differences in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy when
counseling a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student?

5. Are there differences in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy when
counseling a specific male student versus a specific female student?

6. Is there a significant interaction between gender of the student and
socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of their own
perceived self-efficacy when counseling these students?

Operational Definition of Variables

In this study, there were two independent variables (socioeconomic status and
gender) and two dependent variables measuring how perceived socioeconomic status and
gender relate to school counselors’ ratings of student characteristics (SC) (i.e., SC
dependent variable items 3-16) and school counselors’ ratings of their own counseling
self-efficacy (SE) (i.e., SE dependent variable items 17-26). Both independent variables
had two levels. The two levels of socioeconomic status were the perception of low-SES
and the perception of high-SES. What was considered perception of low-SES and
perception of high-SES was determined by the literature (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a,
The Perception of Low-SES refers to the perception made by a school counselor that a student comes from a low-income or poor family background. The Perception of High-SES refers to the perception made by a school counselor that a student comes from a middle- to high-income or wealthy family background. The two levels of gender were male and female. In addition, the two dependent variables were derived through the literature by the researcher.

**Identification of the Population**

The target population for this study was currently practicing school counselors in the US. The sample was derived from the school counselor email directory which consisted of 22,318 school counselors and educators across the US (Sabella, personal communication, August 31, 2011). Since many school counselors reported working for more than one school or multiple school levels, standardization of this information was not possible for this study.

**Sampling Plan**

Participants were sampled from the school counselor membership directory obtained from Sabella (personal communication, August 31, 2011). Utilizing the email directory which consisted of 22,318 email addresses of current school counselors, a total of 2,000 school counselors were randomly selected using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V.18) and invited to participate in the study. The sample size was selected based on the third pilot study response rate in order to ensure that an adequate number of participants were achieved. Of the 2,000 randomly selected participants, 25%
(500) were sent Vignette 1 which described a low-SES, female hypothetical student, 25% (500) were sent Vignette 2 which described a high-SES, female hypothetical student, 25% (500) were sent Vignette 3 which described a low-SES, male hypothetical student, and 25% (500) were sent Vignette 4 which described a high-SES, male hypothetical student. Further information on sampling is presented in the Data Collection Procedures.

**Instrumentation**

No instrument was available to study both the relationship of perceived socioeconomic status and gender on school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics as well as perceived socioeconomic status and gender on school counselors’ ratings of their own counseling self-efficacy. A review of psychological literature by Cozzarelli et al. (2003) revealed there are “few studies of Americans’ attitudes toward the poor and, correspondingly, few scales designed to measure such attitudes” (p. 209).

However, throughout the literature review, several studies were identified by the researcher that utilized case vignettes and semantic differential scales to measure counselors’ and educators’ views regarding poor clients and students. Therefore, a single instrument containing one of four case vignettes that described a hypothetical student of varying gender and socioeconomic status (i.e., Low-SES Female, High-SES Female, Low-SES Male, and High-SES Male) and semantic differential rating scales was created based on studies conducted by Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a; 2008b), Bishop and Richards (1987), Cozzarelli et al. (2003), Crawford-Sturm (2008), Desselle (2005), Hutchison (2009), Jones and Zoppel (1982), Lee et al. (1983), Lehman and Salovey
(1990), Skafte (2001), and Tournaki (2003) were randomly assigned to participants. For a full list of semantic differential survey items and their source research document, see Appendix C. Additionally, the researcher reviewed information from the ACA, ASCA, CSJ, NCCP, The Education Trust, and The Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) websites as well as conducted several personal communications with established researchers in the field to further inform survey design (Aruguete, personal communication, July 18, 2011; August 2, 2011; Crawford-Sturm, personal communication, August 9, 2011). The researcher also conducted phone interviews with two currently practicing elementary school counselors (one in West Virginia and one in Kentucky) whose experience and expertise in schools with high numbers of low-SES students was utilized in order to better inform instrument design. Finally, the researcher had numerous in-person communications with a former school psychologist as well as a current counselor educator at a large, Appalachian university who was formerly a school counselor in order to assist in instrument design.

Semantic differential scales are a type of summated rating scale, which are the “most commonly used attitude scales in education research” and “provide the researcher with the most varied and effective toolbox to elicit attitudinal responses” (Desselle, 2005, p. 3). When describing the general utility of summated rating scales, Desselle (2005) wrote:

A summated rating scale is comprised of a set of attitude items, all of which are considered of approximately equal “attitude value,” and to each of which participants respond with varying degrees of intensity….The scores of the items
on such a scale are summed, or summed and averaged, to yield an individual’s attitude score. The purpose of the summated rating scale is to place an individual somewhere on a continuum of the attitude in question. Allowing the individual to express intensity (on a multipoint scale) allows for greater variance and precision among responses and, in many cases, the ability to employ more robust statistical testing procedures. (p. 3)

Specific to this research, a semantic differential rating scale was constructed. Semantic differential scales are designed to “acquire responses to a number of scales anchored by a set of bipolar descriptors [adjectives] that describe the reference object” (Desselle, 2005, p. 8). Semantic differential scales have “a number of appealing features including being easily adapted to a number of concepts as well as having intuitive appeal because characteristics of various phenomena are communicated largely by adjectives that have relatively logical opposites” (i.e., rude/courteous, poor/affluent) (Desselle, 2005, p. 8-9).

The quantitative items utilized semantic differential rating scales with values ranging from one to seven in order to assess the continuum of attitudes regarding the two dependent variables of (a) the relationship of perceived socioeconomic status and gender on school counselors’ perceptions of students’ personal characteristics and (b) the relationship of perceived socioeconomic status and gender on school counselors’ ratings of their own counseling self-efficacy. Two open-ended questions were also included to allow the participants to state their initial impression of the student as well as to state the grade-level they assumed the student to be.
As mentioned previously in chapter one, the researchers in the Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a) study utilized a hypothetical case vignette of a student and semantic differential scales to gauge the school counselors’ attitudes toward the student. The present research utilized a similar research design. The case vignettes used in the current study were adapted from those utilized in the Auwarter and Aruguete study. Permission to use and/or modify items was obtained from Aruguete (Aruguete, personal communication, July 18, 2011). The vignettes described a low-SES female, high-SES female, low-SES male, or high-SES male. In the present study, the parents’ occupations were altered to reflect the students’ socioeconomic background. Several semantic differential word-pair items from the instrument used in the Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a) study were included in the semantic differential scale used in the present research. For a full list of semantic differential survey items and their source research document, see Appendix C. In both studies, semantic differential ratings were to be made based on information provided in a case vignette that described a hypothetical student of varying socioeconomic statuses and gender.

Pilot Study

A survey was developed through the literature review and validation of this instrument was enhanced with three pilot studies. In addition to the information gathering that informed instrument design and development, a first pilot study was performed to increase reliability and to test face validity. Seventeen school counselors in one rural, Appalachian county were asked to complete the survey in order to examine the psychometric properties of the instrument. The first pilot study yielded a 30% response
rate (N = 5), yet more information on the properties of the instrument was desired. To this end, a second pilot was conducted with 16 second-year school counseling master’s students at a large Appalachian university to further examine reliability and validity issues of the instrument. This pilot study yielded a 31% response rate (N = 5). More information on the properties of the instrument was still desired due to the small amount of respondents in these pilots and due to the varied levels of experience of the participants in the first two pilot studies. In response, a third pilot was conducted with a random sample of 200 members from the email directory obtained from Sabella (personal communication, August 31, 2011). The random sample was selected utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V.18). This final pilot study provided a response rate of 17.5% and produced an N = 35. Preliminary data analysis was then conducted on the responses to this pilot study to make modifications to the instrument and to ensure the quality of the instrument.

**Reliability and Validity Issues**

At the outset, content validity of the instrument was determined through the compilation of literature for this study. In order to increase the reliability of this instrument, a pilot study was administered to 17 school counselors in a rural, Appalachian county. The school counselors were currently working at elementary, middle, and high schools in the county. Another pilot study was conducted with 16 second-year school counseling master’s students at a large, Appalachian university. A final pilot study was conducted with a random sample of 200 school counselors from the
email directory; these school counselors were currently working in elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the United States.

The pilot studies were conducted through Ohio University’s online survey tool, Qualtrics. In designing the survey, multiple security procedures were set in Qualtrics to ensure confidentiality and to disable multiple responses from individual participants. The results were then analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V.18). The internal-consistency of the instrument was assessed by calculating the Cronbach’s alpha as shown in Table 1 where coefficient alpha for the Student Characteristics variable was .70 and alpha for the Self-Efficacy variable was .58.

**Modifications to the Instrument**

The researcher reviewed data from the final pilot study to increase reliability and validity of the instrument. Due to its negative association with other items in the Student Characteristics dependent variable questions, one item (i.e., “adequate/inadequate”) was removed which increased coefficient alpha from .63 to .70. For the final survey, this item was removed as displayed in Table 1. Additionally, based on analysis from the pilot study, one item in the Student Characteristics dependent variable questions was revised and reworded for clarification (i.e., “impassive/self-expressive” was reworded to “passive/expressive”). Lastly, two items in the Self-Efficacy dependent variable questions were revised and reworded for clarification based on analysis from the pilot study (i.e., “low number of session needed/high number of sessions needed” was reworded to “typical number of sessions needed/prolonged number of sessions needed” and “personality similar/personality dissimilar” was reworded to “your personality
similar to this student/your personality dissimilar to this student”). This brought the total number of items on the Student Characteristics dependent variable questions to 14 for the full-scale study. The Self-Efficacy dependent variable items were not removed, but instead reworded, due to the limited number of items for this dependent variable. Additionally, one item was added to the Self-Efficacy dependent variable questions for the full-scale study that was not on the pilot study instrument (i.e., able to gain empathy for this student/unable to gain empathy for this student”) which increased the number of items for this dependent variable for the full-scale study to 10 items. For the Student Characteristic dependent variable items 3-16, several were reverse coded (i.e., #5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15) and for the Self-Efficacy dependent variable items 17-26, several of these were reverse coded (i.e., #18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26). To enhance the survey taking experience, multiple on screen adjustments were made in Qualtrics, including adding progress indicators.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Revised α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection Procedures

The survey, introduction letter and procedures were approved by Ohio University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to conducting this research. Participants needed to have access to the internet in order to complete the survey. Like the pilot studies, the survey utilized the online survey tool Qualtrics. A link containing the survey was sent to email addresses obtained from the aforementioned email directory (Sabella, personal communication, August 31, 2011). As opposed to the traditional pencil and paper survey, Crano and Brewer (2002) reported Computer-Assisted Self-Administered Interviewing (CASAI) is both cost and time efficient. The study included collecting basic background information for each participant (i.e. age, race, and gender), gathering information on their own perceptions regarding a hypothetical student’s personal characteristics, and gathering information on their own perceptions regarding their own counseling self-efficacy with the hypothetical student. Additional demographic information included what level the school counselor currently employed in, state in which the school counselor is currently employed, socioeconomic status of the school counselors’ own childhood upbringing, and number of years the school counselor has been practicing as a school counselor.

To increase participation, an initial email with a brief introduction was sent to the participants expressing appreciation for each person’s participation and time in completing the survey along with the actual survey link. The researcher requested a response within two weeks of the initial email. After the two-week time frame, the
researcher sent a follow-up email to encourage an initial response from those who had not completed the survey.

To obtain statistical significance, information was inserted into the G*Power 3.1.3 analysis (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang 2009). For a factorial ANOVA, this study required a total sample size of 128, to achieve a medium effect size (f = .25), power (1-β err prob) = .80, α = .05, with four groups (Faul et al., 2009).

**Data Analysis Procedures**

To answer the research questions and hypotheses, this study was conducted using two 2 x 2 factorial ANOVAs. One 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted to determine the extent to which a specific student’s socioeconomic status relates to school counselors’ perceptions of the student’s personal characteristics and school counselors’ self-efficacy when counseling that student. Next, a second 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted to determine the extent to which a specific student’s gender relates to school counselors’ perceptions of the student’s personal characteristics and school counselors’ self-efficacy when counseling that student. Also, analysis determined if there was any interaction between a specific student’s socioeconomic status and gender on school counselors’ perceptions of the student’s personal characteristics and school counselors’ self-efficacy when counseling that student.

There are several benefits to using a factorial ANOVA. The two-way ANOVA is more powerful than one-way ANOVA (Vallejo, Ato, Fernandez, & Livacic-Rojas, 2008) by the added ability to detect any significant interactions (i.e., do SES and gender of a
student interact to relate to a school counselor’s self-efficacy?). The interaction effect was crucial information to analyze in this study.

This procedure was implemented using the computer software program SPSS V.18. All of the statistical hypotheses were tested at the alpha (\( \alpha \)) = .05 level of significance to control for Type I error. To maintain statistical power, Light et al. (1990) recommend moderate to high power as well as a medium effect size to detect significant results. Outliers and other potential influential data were screened using scatter plots and additional post-hoc tests. It is important to be aware of the assumptions of a factorial ANOVA. Assumptions to be met by the data in order to complete this analysis were as follows:

1. The dependent variable should come from a population that is normally distributed (normality assumption) (Coolidge, 2006, p. 285). A factorial ANOVA is robust with regards to violations of this assumption (Coolidge).

2. The variances of the levels of the independent variables should come from populations whose variances do not differ (homogeneity of variance assumption) (Coolidge, 2006, p. 285). A factorial ANOVA is robust with regards to violations of this assumption (Coolidge).

3. The scores should be independent of one another throughout all levels of the independent variables (Coolidge, 2006, p. 285). This assumption should never be violated (Coolidge).
Summary

Chapter three focused on the methodology. An experimental research design was implemented for this study. The data analysis was a 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA with two independent variables, each consisting of two levels, and two dependent variables. The population was identified for this study as well as the sampling plan. An instrument was created for this study and three pilot studies were conducted to ensure reliability and validity of instrumentation. Modifications were made to the instrument and increased the study’s reliability and validity. Finally, this chapter reported data collection and analysis procedures and assumptions.
Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to examine how a student’s socioeconomic status (i.e., Low-SES or High-SES) and gender (i.e., Male or Female) relate to school counselors’ ratings of a student’s personal characteristics and school counselors’ rating of their own counseling self-efficacy. This study was also designed to investigate if a significant interaction existed among these factors. This chapter provides the results of the two 2 x 2 Factorial ANOVA procedures and supplementary analyses described in the previous chapter.

First, this chapter presents demographic descriptions of the research participants. Next, it presents the reliability analyses of the current instrument and additional descriptive data. Finally, it presents results of the null hypothesis tests, post-hoc, and supplemental analyses.

Description of Participants

The participants in this study were currently practicing school counselors in the US. Email requests were sent to 2,000 subjects. One hundred fifty emails were eliminated due to faulty email addresses, or because participants replied to the researcher via email stating they were still graduate students, retired school counselors, or counselor educators, and therefore ineligible to participate. A total of 217 participants (11.7%) responded to the email message, but 27 responses were discarded due to missing data on the Student Characteristics dependent variable semantic differential items. Therefore, responses from 190 (10.3%) of the 1,850 invited participants were included for the statistical analyses on the Student Characteristics dependent variable (Power = .93).
Also, of the 217 total participants who responded to the email message, 19 responses were discarded due to missing data on the Self-Efficacy dependent variable semantic differential items. Finally, responses from 198 (10.6%) of the 1,850 invited participants were included for the statistical analyses on the Self-Efficacy dependent variable (Power = .94). Also, of the 217 total participants, 41 responded to Vignette 1 (Low-SES Female), 59 responded to Vignette 2 (High-SES Female), 72 responded to Vignette 3 (Low-SES Male), and 45 responded to Vignette 4 (High-SES Male).

Of the total participants for each dependent variable, several were missing one of their total 22 semantic differential responses. Averaging the mean is recognized by Field (2005) as an acceptable way to replace missing data. Therefore, averages of the remaining items were used to replace the missing value. A new total was then computed for the participant and added to the corresponding dependent variable.

**Demographic Characteristics**

The demographic questionnaire consisted of questions regarding gender, race, age, socioeconomic status of their own childhood upbringing, grade level at which they are a currently practicing school counselor, years of school counseling experience, and the state in which they are currently practicing as a school counselor. Of the 217 total participants, 213 participants responded to the question regarding gender; 173 (79.7%) were female, and 40 (18.4%) were male. Four participants did not answer the question, although there was an option for “other/choose not to disclose”. Two hundred ten participants answered the question regarding race with 181 (83.4%) identified as White or Caucasian, 15 (6.9%) identified as Black or African American, 6 (2.7%) identified as
Hispanic or Latino, 5 (2.3%) identified as Other, and 3 (1.3%) identified as Biracial/Multiracial.

Years of experience as a school counselor ranged from 1-34, with a mean of 17.9 years of experience. Participants were employed at elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the US, yet reporting on demographics as to what grade level the school counselor currently worked in was not possible due to most participants reporting currently working at multiple schools and grade levels. Ages of the participants ranged from 22-65, with a mean age of 41 years.

Two hundred ten participants answered the question regarding their own childhood SES, with 38 (17.5%) identified as low-SES, 25 (11.5%) identified as lower/middle-SES, 123 (56.7) identified as middle-SES, 22 (10.1%) identified as upper/middle-SES, and 2 (.9%) identified as upper-SES.

Reliability and Validity Issues

Ratings of student characteristics and school counselor self-efficacy were measured by a single instrument, tested in a pilot study. The instrument measured school counselors’ ratings of student characteristics and school counselors’ reported self-efficacy when counseling a hypothetical student of varying gender and SES. The questions regarding ratings of student characteristics consisted of 14 items and the questions regarding ratings of school counselors’ self-efficacy consisted of 10 items.

On the student characteristics questions, one item (i.e., passive/expressive) was removed due to its continued negative correlation with other items. This item had been reworded due to its negative correlation in the pilot study, yet the item continued to
correlate poorly and was removed from analysis in the full-scale study. Also, on the self-efficacy questions, one item (i.e., typical number of sessions needed/prolonged number of sessions needed) was removed due to its ambiguity and negative correlation with other items. This item had been reworded due to its negative correlation in the pilot study, yet the item continued to correlate poorly and was removed from analysis in the full-scale study.

The internal consistency of the instrument was assessed by calculating the Cronbach’s alpha where coefficient alphas were calculated at $\alpha = .79$ for the student characteristics dependent variable and $\alpha = .77$ for the self-efficacy dependent variable, as shown in Table 2. Table 3 contains the calculated Cronbach’s alpha reliability scores for Vignettes 1-4.

Table 2

*Reliability of Dependent Variables - Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>Cronbach’s $\alpha$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

Reliability of Vignettes - Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SC</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SE</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“SC” represents items for the student characteristics dependent variable and “SE” represents items for the self-efficacy dependent variable.

Statistical Analysis to Test Null Hypothesis

Statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows, version 18.0. Descriptive statistics were computed to test for assumptions and supplemental analyses were carried out.

The assumptions underlying the significance test for Factorial ANOVA were normality, homogeneity of variance, and independence of scores in the independent variables (Coolidge, 2006). The first assumption of normality was met using Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality. The second assumption of homogeneity of variance was also met using Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variances. The third assumption of independence was also met since participants were in different groups and responded to questions based on only one of the four vignettes.

Testing of the Null Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant mean difference in personal characteristics attributed by school counselors to a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student.
2. There is no significant mean difference in personal characteristics attributed by school counselors to a specific male student versus a specific female student.

3. There are no significant interactions between gender of the student and perceived socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics.

4. There is no significant mean difference in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy when counseling a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student.

5. There is no significant mean difference in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy when counseling a specific male student versus a specific female student.

6. There are no significant interactions between gender of the student and perceived socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of their own perceived self-efficacy when counseling these students.

   One 2 x 2 Factorial ANOVA was computed to determine if there were any significant differences in the personal characteristics attributed to a specific student by school counselors based on socioeconomic status or gender, as well as to identify if there was any significant interaction of socioeconomic status and gender on these ratings. A second 2 x 2 Factorial ANOVA was computed to determine if there were any significant differences in school counselors’ reported self-efficacy when counseling a specific student based on socioeconomic status or gender, as well as to identify if there was any significant interaction of socioeconomic status and gender on these ratings of self-efficacy.
Null Hypothesis 1. There was no significant mean difference in personal characteristics attributed by school counselors to a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student. This resulted in a failure to reject the null hypothesis, because the results show there was no significant difference in personal characteristics attributed by school counselors based on student socioeconomic status, $F(1, 211) = 2.737, p = .100$.

Null Hypothesis 2. There was no significant mean difference in personal characteristics attributed by school counselors to a specific male student versus a specific female student. This resulted in a failure to reject the null hypothesis, because the results show there was no significant difference in the personal characteristics attributed by school counselors based on student gender, $F(1, 211) = .265, p = .607$.

Null Hypothesis 3. There were no significant interactions between gender of the student and perceived socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics. This resulted in a failure to reject the null hypothesis, because the results show there was no significant interaction effect for the personal characteristics attributed by school counselors based on student socioeconomic status and gender, $F(1, 211) = 2.482, p = .117$. The mean differences of gender and SES on school counselors’ ratings of student personal characteristics is shown in Figure 1.

Null Hypothesis 4. There was a significant mean difference in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy when counseling a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student. The null hypothesis was rejected, because results show there was a significant difference in school counselors’ reported counseling self-efficacy based on student socioeconomic status, $F(1, 211) = 5.140, p = .024$, partial $\eta^2 = .024$. 
Null Hypothesis 5. There was no significant mean difference in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy when counseling a specific male student versus a specific female student. This resulted in a failure to reject the null hypothesis, because results show there was no significant difference in school counselors’ reported counseling self-efficacy based on student gender, \( F(1, 211) = 3.226, p = .074 \).

Null Hypothesis 6. There were no significant interactions between gender of the student and perceived socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of their own perceived self-efficacy when counseling these students. This resulted in a failure to reject the null hypothesis, because results show there was no significant interaction effect in school counselors’ reported counseling self-efficacy based on student socioeconomic status and gender, \( F(1, 211) = .059, p = .809 \). The mean differences of gender and SES on school counselors’ ratings of their own self-efficacy is shown in Figure 2.
Figure 1. Mean scores for gender and SES on school counselors’ ratings of student characteristics.
Post Hoc Analysis

To control for Type I error rate, Tukey’s HSD test was used in post hoc analysis to determine significant differences across the four vignettes (i.e., low-SES Female, high-SES Female, low-SES Male, and high-SES Male) on school counselors’ ratings of self-efficacy. Since there were no significant effects on the student characteristics hypotheses, post hoc analysis was limited to examining differences across vignettes on school counselors’ ratings of self-efficacy. Also, correlations between the school counselors’ gender and reported childhood SES were computed to determine any
significant differences in their ratings of self-efficacy based on the student described in the vignette (i.e., Low-SES female, High-SES female, Low-SES male, High-SES male).

Tukey’s HSD showed a significant difference in mean scores for Vignette 1 (i.e., low-SES Female) and Vignette 4 (i.e., high-SES Male) \((p = .045)\). This indicates that the largest gap in school counselors’ self-efficacy lies between low-SES females and high-SES males. Other non-significant mean differences were as follows: Vignette 1 (i.e., low-SES female) and Vignette 2 (i.e., high-SES female) \((p = .510)\), Vignette 1 (i.e., low-SES female) and Vignette 3 (i.e., low-SES male) \((p = .686)\), Vignette 2 (i.e., high-SES female) and Vignette 3 (i.e., low-SES male) \((p = .982)\), Vignette 2 (i.e., high-SES female) and Vignette 4 (i.e., high-SES male) \((p = .481)\), and Vignette 3 (i.e., low-SES male) and Vignette 4 (i.e., high-SES male) \((p = .258)\). Tukey’s HSD significance values for self-efficacy across vignettes are reported in Table 4.
Table 4

Tukey’s HSD Values for Self-Efficacy Across Vignettes - Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. L-F</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>.510</td>
<td>.686</td>
<td>.045*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. H-F</td>
<td>.510</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>.481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. L-M</td>
<td>.686</td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. H-M</td>
<td>.045*</td>
<td>.481</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on observed means.
The error term is Mean Square (Error) = .530.
*The mean difference is significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Supplementary Analysis

Supplemental frequencies, descriptive data, and factorial ANOVA analyses were conducted to better understand the data. In order to control for Type I error, exploratory analyses on years of experience, age, race, gender, and the school counselors’ childhood SES and their effects on ratings of school counselors’ self-efficacy should be interpreted with caution.

Gender

In regard to how school counselors’ gender related to their ratings of their own counseling self-efficacy with students of varying SES, there was no significant difference, $F (1, 211) = .235, p = .628$. See Figure 3 for mean scores of school counselors’ gender and ratings of school counselors’ self-efficacy. Also, there was a
significant negative correlation between the school counselor’s gender and the gender of the student described in the vignette, \( r = -.130, n = 213, p = .029 \).

![Estimated Marginal Means of SE_Combined](image)

**Figure 3.** Mean scores of school counselors’ gender and self-efficacy.

**Age**

In regard to how school counselors’ age related to their ratings of their own counseling self-efficacy with students of varying SES, there was no significant difference, \( F (44, 160) = .912, p = .631 \).

**Race**

In regard to how school counselors’ race related to their ratings of their own counseling self-efficacy with students of varying SES, there was no significant difference, \( F (4, 205) = .338, p = .852 \). See Figure 4 for mean scores of school counselors’ race and ratings of school counselors’ self-efficacy.
Years of Experience

In regard to how school counselors’ years of experience related to their ratings of their own counseling self-efficacy with students of varying SES, there was no significant difference, F (4, 207) = .212, p = .814.

School Counselors’ Childhood SES

In regard to how school counselors’ reported SES of their family of origin related to their ratings of their own counseling self-efficacy with students of varying SES, there was no significant difference, F (4, 205) = 1.148, p = .335. Also, the correlation between the student’s SES and the school counselor’s SES was not significant, r = .104, n = 210, p = .066.

Figure 4. Mean scores of school counselors’ race and self-efficacy.
Summary

This chapter reported participant demographics, reliability and validity issues, and results from the statistical analysis. The findings on the 2 x 2 Factorial ANOVA and follow up analysis found significant differences in school counselors’ reported self-efficacy based on a specific student’s SES. The results did not show significant differences in school counselors’ reported self-efficacy based on student gender or the interaction of gender and SES. The results did not show significant differences in school counselors’ perceptions of student characteristics based on student gender, SES, or an interaction of gender and SES. Several supplementary analyses were conducted on variables including gender, age, race, years of experience, and childhood SES of the school counselor. Additional descriptive data was reported in this chapter as well. The following chapter provides a discussion of the sample, null hypothesis, supplemental analyses, limitations, implications and directions for future research.
Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of students’ gender and socioeconomic status on school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics and school counselor self-efficacy. In this chapter, a discussion of the sample characteristics is presented followed by the null hypothesis and then supplemental analyses are discussed. A review of the findings and implications are presented. Lastly, recommendations for future research are discussed.

Sample Characteristics

A simple random sample of 2,000 currently practicing school counselors was requested to participate in the survey from the email directory of 22,318 obtained from Sabella (personal communication, August 31, 2011). The response rate was 11.7% (N = 217) of participants, 10.3% (N = 190) usable survey responses on the student characteristics dependent variable, and 10.6% (N = 198) usable survey responses on the self-efficacy dependent variable. One hundred fifty email addresses were eliminated due to rejected email addresses or responses from individuals reporting to the researcher they were either school counseling graduate students, counselor educators, or retired school counselors.

Lower response rates may be due to surveys being sent during the month of December, which is often a hectic time for school counselors due to holiday and winter breaks. Several emails were returned with messages that individuals were out of the office for holiday and winter breaks. Also, several emails were returned to the researcher with messages reporting that the individuals were school counseling graduate students,
counselor educators, and retired school counselors; and therefore inappropriate participants. Additional unidentified reasons of response rate may suggest a lack of interest in the research, lack of incentive, time constraints, or explanations provided by other respondents.

**Review of Findings**

A 2 x 2 factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed to evaluate any significant differences in school counselors’ ratings of a specific student’s personal characteristics and school counselors’ self-efficacy based on student gender and socioeconomic status. The ANOVA resulted in the rejection of five null hypotheses. There was a significant mean difference in school counselors’ reported self-efficacy based on student socioeconomic status. Thus, this null hypothesis was accepted.

A 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted for the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant mean difference in personal characteristics attributed by school counselors to a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student.
2. There is no significant mean difference in personal characteristics attributed by school counselors to a specific male student versus a specific female student.
3. There are no significant interactions between gender of the student and perceived socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics.
4. There is no significant mean difference in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy when counseling a specific low-SES student versus a specific high-SES student.
5. There is no significant mean difference in school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy
when counseling a specific male student versus a specific female student.

6. There are no significant interactions between gender of the student and perceived socioeconomic status of the student for school counselors’ ratings of their own perceived self-efficacy when counseling these students.

**Null Hypothesis 1.** The finding resulted in a failure to reject the null hypothesis, \( F(1, 211) = 2.737, p = .100 \), indicating no significant mean differences in personal characteristics attributed to a student by school counselors based on student SES. There were no significant mean differences in the personal characteristics attributed by school counselors’ to a student based on the student being of low-SES or high-SES. This finding is similar to the results of Hutchison (2009) which reported no significant differences in school counselors’ ratings of a student’s level of disturbance based on varying socioeconomic status. In terms of how a school counselor rates a student’s personal characteristics, not academic characteristics, (i.e., academic potential, academic achievement, readiness to benefit from instruction, classroom behavior) socioeconomic status of the student does not appear to be a significant factor.

**Null Hypothesis 2.** The finding resulted in a failure to reject the null hypothesis, \( F(1, 211) = .265, p = .607 \), indicating no significant mean differences in personal characteristics attributed to a student by school counselors’ based on student gender. There were no significant differences in the personal characteristics school counselors attributed to a student based on the student being male or female. This is counter to previous literature that reports school counselors’ rate students’ academic ability and potential differently according to the student’s gender (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a).
However, since the current research did not focus on ratings of academic characteristics, but instead personal characteristics, comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

**Null Hypothesis 3.** The finding resulted in a failure to reject the null hypothesis, $F(1, 211) = 2.482, p = .117$, indicating no significant interaction of student gender and SES for school counselors’ ratings of student personal characteristics. There was also no significant interaction for student gender and SES on school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics. Previous research suggests that teachers had different perceptions of students based on the interaction of gender and SES (Childs & McKay, 2001). However, once again, when school counselors are rating a student’s personal characteristics and not academic potential or achievement, gender and SES do not appear to be significant factors.

**Null Hypothesis 4.** The finding resulted in the rejection of the null hypothesis, $F(1, 211) = 5.140, p = .024$, partial $\eta^2 = .024$, indicating a significant mean difference in school counselors’ reported self-efficacy when counseling a low-SES ($M = 5.41, SD = .717$) versus a high-SES student ($M = 5.21, SD = .745$). There was a significant difference in school counselors’ reported self-efficacy when counseling a student based on the students’ socioeconomic status. Although the resulting effect size was small, school counselors rated their self-efficacy higher when counseling a low-SES student than when counseling a high-SES student. This result is supportive of Hutchison’s 2009 finding that school counselors rated low-SES students as “more attractive” students to counsel than high-SES students. These findings taken together suggest that school counselors not only want to counsel low-SES students, but that they also feel more
effective in their counseling skills with a low-SES student than a high-SES student.

This result is also in direct conflict with previous literature regarding teachers’ self-efficacy with low-SES students. Previous research suggests that teachers have different expectations for students based on SES and that teachers judge higher-SES students “more favorably” and as having “more promising futures” (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008b; Warren, 2002). It was concluded that teachers who believe students’ SES impacts their academic achievement will feel ineffective in their ability to teach the student (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008b). Warren (2002) reported that when teaching low-SES students, a majority of teachers had low self-efficacy. This results in fewer teaching efforts and perpetuates the students’ low academic achievement (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008b).

These conflicting results regarding self-efficacy with low- and high-SES students could be due to the different relationship and goals that school counselors and teachers have with their students. Due to standards in testing and expectations for teachers and students to make yearly academic progress and advances, teachers may experience feelings of low self-efficacy with low-SES students because of the accumulation of ill-effects growing up in an environment of poverty does to a student’s academic development and thereby, their ability and achievement. These negative effects (i.e., lack of resources in the home, environmental stressors) described in detail in earlier chapters, could simply create an obstacle that teachers do not feel they can overcome in order to feel equally effective with low-SES and high-SES students.
There could also be intrinsic qualities of school counselors that influence their higher self-efficacy with low-SES students. Presumably, school counselors chose their profession in order to help students succeed. Since low-SES students are in greater need than high-SES students of additional, external support in order to succeed academically, school counselors could see themselves as natural advocates to step into this role for low-SES students; therefore increasing their self-efficacy and confidence that they will be able to be a positive support for low-SES students. Additionally, school counselors could still view themselves as effective with high-SES students, but could view their ability to be helpful as an accumulative impact on the already higher expectations, ratings of potential, and access to other resources that high-SES students have that low-SES students do not.

**Null Hypothesis 5.** The finding resulted in a failure to reject the null hypothesis, $F(1, 211) = 3.226, p = .074$, indicating no significant mean difference in school counselors’ reported self-efficacy when counseling a male versus a female student. There were no significant differences in school counselors’ self-efficacy based on student gender. This finding suggests that in terms of school counselors’ self-efficacy, an individual student’s gender is not a significant factor.

**Null Hypothesis 6.** The finding resulted in a failure to reject the null hypothesis, $F(1, 211) = .059, p = .809$, indicating no significant interaction of student gender and SES on school counselors’ reported self-efficacy. This finding is contrary to Childs and McKay’s 2001 finding that student gender and SES do interact to have a negative effect on teachers’ self-efficacy. Once again, due to the different relationship between teachers
and students and school counselors and students, comparisons between the two groups should be interpreted with caution.

**Supplementary Analysis**

Supplementary analyses found no significant difference between school counselors’ gender and school counselors’ ratings of self-efficacy. One hundred seventy three (79.7%) females and 40 (18.4%) males responded to the question of gender. In a study which included 173 school counselor respondents, Hutchison (2009) found 86.7% to be female. Of 103 school counselor respondents in Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a), 88% were female. However, the present research included a national sample of school counselors while the two described above were confined to state and regional participants.

Among the participants, the reported age of the school counselors’ ranged between 22-65 years with a mean age of 41 years. It is unclear whether the ages of participants are reflective of the population of school counselors in the US. Supplementary analyses found no significant difference between school counselors’ age and school counselors’ ratings of self-efficacy.

Among the participants, 181 (83.4%) identified as White/Caucasian, 15 (6.9%) identified as Black/African American, 6 (2.7%) identified as Hispanic/Latino, 5 (2.3%) identified as Other, and 3 (.9%) identified as Multiracial. Similar demographics were reported in Hutchison’s 2009 study of school counselors where 88% identified as Caucasian, 4% Hispanic, 3% African American, 1.7% Asian, and 2.3% Multiracial.
Supplementary analyses found no significant difference between school counselors’ race and school counselors’ ratings of self-efficacy.

Participants’ years of experience ranged from 1-34 years, with a mean of 17.9 years of experience. This is similar to Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a), where participants’ years of experience ranged from 1-32 years. Supplementary analyses showed no significant difference between school counselors’ years of experience and school counselors’ ratings of self-efficacy.

Among participants, 38 (17.5%) identified their childhood SES as low-SES, 25 (11.5%) identified their childhood SES as low/middle-SES, 123 (56.7%) identified as middle-SES, 22 (10.1%) identified as upper/middle-SES, and 2 (.9%) identified as upper-SES. Supplementary analyses showed no significant difference between school counselors’ reported childhood SES and school counselors’ ratings of self-efficacy.

Participants were also asked to state any thoughts or comments they had regarding the student from the vignette in the second question (i.e., “What is your general view of this student?”). Responses were neutral, focusing on the students’ academic struggles and personal issues that seem to have had a negative influence on the students’ current state. The participants did make statements regarding their ability to be of assistance with this student and that the student has potential to be successful.

**Supplementary Findings**

There were no significant mean differences in supplementary analyses performed on demographic information of the school counselor (i.e., gender, age, race, years of experience, and childhood SES). Demographic information regarding which grade level
the school counselor currently works in was also collected but was unable to be used in
analysis due to multiple respondents reporting currently working in more than one school
and/or with multiple or changing grade levels. Due to inconsistent grade levels that
comprise elementary, middle, and high schools in the U.S., standardization of this
demographic information was not possible.

There were no significant differences in how the school counselors’ gender relates
to their self-efficacy with students of varying SES. This suggests that school counselors
feel equally effective with students of the same or opposite gender. This finding serves
as a corollary to previous research including that of Porche and Banikotes (1982) which
reported that from the clients’ perspective, the interaction of gender of the counselor and
client was not significant for attractiveness, expertness, trustworthiness, or social
attraction. Also, there was a significant negative correlation between the school
counselors’ gender and the gender of student in the vignette. These current findings
suggest that from the school counselors’ perspective, gender matching of the school
counselor and student are also not significant in terms of school counselors’ self-efficacy.

The school counselors’ age was also found to not be significant in terms of ratings
of school counselors’ self-efficacy. This finding provides new data and literature in the
field of school counseling. This finding suggests that school counselors’ feel equally
effective with students of varying SES regardless of their current age and also suggests
that they will continue to feel effective as they grow older and continue to serve as school
counselors across their career lifetime.
There were no significant differences in school counselors’ self-efficacy with students of varying SES based on the school counselors’ race. This suggests that school counselors, regardless of their own race, feel equally effective with students of varying SES. This finding supports previous research by Sladen (1982) which found that race matching of counselor and client was less important than SES of the client for counselors’ attraction to and similarity with clients, both of which relate to a counselor’s self-efficacy. Although student race was not a variable that was researched in the current study, this information could be useful in future research and is discussed later in recommendations for future research.

The school counselors’ years of experience working as a school counselor were also not significant in school counselors’ ratings of self-efficacy. This suggests that school counselors feel equally effective with students of varying SES no matter if they are in their first year or if they are in their thirtieth. This finding suggests historical consistency not only in school counselor training and preparation programs, but also that school counselors are continuing to feel effective with students of varying SES across long periods of time; that they are not experiencing burnout or compassion fatigue from working with these students throughout their careers.

In this study, the school counselors’ reported childhood SES was also found to not be significant in their ratings of self-efficacy. The school counselors childhood SES and the SES of the student in the vignette were also not significantly correlated. Although the school counselors in the sample reported being from a wide range of socioeconomic
backgrounds, these backgrounds and experiences did not have a significant effect on the school counselors’ ability to be effective with students of varying SES.

**Implications**

The results of the current study have several implications for school counseling and counselor education. Firstly, school counselors are feeling most effective with students who are most in need of their support and assistance. Secondly, school counselor education programs are doing an effective job of preparing school counseling graduate students to be effective counselors and advocates for these populations.

The results of the study show that school counselors rate their self-efficacy as higher with students of low-SES. This suggests that school counselors are feeling most effective with students who are perhaps most in need of them as a resource and as an advocate. This finding can translate into a very beneficial relationship for the student, their family, the school, and the community as well. The results also suggest that although school counselors are not unaware of the group prejudices that are held regarding students of various SES backgrounds, especially regarding academic characteristics and potential, but that school counselors are decidedly unprejudiced when counseling an individual student.

Also, school counselor education programs are adequately training and preparing school counseling graduate students to effectively counsel students of varying gender and SES. The results of the study and supplementary analysis show that school counselors, regardless of years of experience, are feeling equally effective when counseling students.
This suggests that historically, school counseling preparation programs are training school counseling graduate students to be effective with students regardless of SES.

The results could also indicate that the need for effective interventions with low-SES students is translating into feelings of higher self-efficacy on behalf of school counselors with low-SES students – school counselors feel they can make a positive impact with these students and not that low-SES students are beyond their assistance. The findings of this study also show that school counselors have equal views of individual students’ personal characteristics regardless of gender and/or socioeconomic status, which suggests that judgments or preconceived notions of who the student is based on their group prejudices surrounding gender or SES are not occurring. Although previous literature indicated differences in school counselors’ views of academic characteristics (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a; Childs & McKay, 2001), the current study did not support similar attitudes held by school counselors’ towards students’ personal characteristics.

The results of the study show that school counselors do not view student personal characteristics differently based on the student variables of gender and socioeconomic status. Although Auwarter and Aruguete (2008a) cautioned against treating all students the same since students of varied social backgrounds often have different needs and experiences, these researchers concluded that school counselors should utilize models that focus on student strengths to reduce stigmatization.
Recommendations for Future Research

The current study provided an understanding of the ways that student gender and socioeconomic status effect school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics and school counselors’ self-efficacy. The results helped to distinguish perceptions of self-efficacy made by school counselors from those made by teachers. The current study also focused on school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics, as opposed to ratings of academic characteristics, which was a distinction not made in previous research.

The scale created for this study could be analyzed to increase understanding of the effects of student gender and SES on school counselors’ ratings of student personal characteristics and school counselors’ self-efficacy. Additional examination of the factor analysis of individual scale items would be useful in identifying variables that are correlated with one another, as well as identifying which items should be removed or modified. Continued development of this scale could be beneficial due to no scales being available that are specific to measuring the relationship of student gender and SES on school counselors’ perceptions of students and school counselors’ self-efficacy.

Along with continued development of the scale, other variables could also be introduced to add a more comprehensive picture of the hypothetical student in the vignettes. Variables such as race, age, or grade level of the student could have significant impacts on school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics or school counselors’ self-efficacy.
Identifying what areas specifically school counselors feel most effective with low-SES students would also be an area for further investigation. Several skills, roles, and strategies were suggested in chapter two (i.e., use of technology, collecting data, acting as a cultural bridge, countering deficit model thinking, etc.) that school counselors can utilize with low-SES students. Identifying which of these strategies school counselors are using and which they feel are most beneficial would be helpful in school counselor training and preparation.

Analysis on the school counselors’ current grade level of practice may also be significant and standardization of these grade levels (i.e., elementary, middle, or high) should be included in future analysis. School counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics or their own self-efficacy could be significantly related to the grade level of the student and should be examined in future studies.

A study that is qualitative in nature could also provide a more comprehensive and insightful understanding of the relationship of student gender and SES on school counselors’ ratings of students’ personal characteristics and school counselors’ self-efficacy.

**Conclusion**

This research adds to the literature on the effects of student gender and SES on school counselors’ perceptions of student personal characteristics and ratings of school counselors’ self-efficacy. The emphasis of the study was on the relationship of varying a student’s gender and SES and examining the effects this had on school counselors’ perceptions of student personal characteristics as well as school counselors’ self-efficacy.
Previous research in this area was largely confined to examining the effects of gender and SES on perceptions of academic potential, ability, and achievement. The current research has added new literature on how these variables effect school counselors’ perceptions of personal characteristics, not just academic characteristics. The current research has also added new knowledge to how student SES relates to school counselors’ self-efficacy, which was a gap in the literature.

The findings of the research showed a significant difference in school counselors’ self-efficacy when counseling students based on socioeconomic status. School counselors’ rated their self-efficacy as higher when counseling a low-SES student than a high-SES student. Although there was no significant difference in self-efficacy based on student gender or the interaction of student gender and SES, the finding on student SES alone provided insight into what factors contribute to school counselors’ self-efficacy.

No significant differences were found in regards to counselor demographics such as age, race, gender, years of experience, or childhood SES of the school counselor. However, caution has to be used when interpreting these results as it was not a representative sample of the profession as a whole. Implications, including those on the school counseling profession as well as counselor education were discussed in addition to areas for future research.
References


Appendix A: School Counselor Ratings of Student Personal Characteristics and Counseling Self-Efficacy

The information in the following survey is being collected for research purposes through Ohio University. Completion of the survey is completely voluntary and you can stop at any time. The estimated time of completion of the survey is about 10 minutes. By completing and submitting this survey, you consent to have your responses used in said research purposes. You must be at least 18 years of age and currently practicing as a professional school counselor in order to be eligible to participate. Thank you for your time and participation!

Instructions: Please read the case vignette below about a hypothetical student and answer the questions regarding the student from the vignette.

Disclaimer: I realize the information provided is inadequate for a comprehensive understanding of this student. Please consider the following information to be equivalent to case notes/descriptions that would be provided to you by a colleague.

Case Vignette #1: Jane is a public school student. Jane lives with both parents and is the middle child in the family. Jane’s mother is a hotel custodian and Jane’s father has been laid off from his factory job and is seeking employment. Jane has an average IQ but is earning poor grades and failing in math. Jane has not been turning in homework in several subjects and does not use time efficiently in class. Jane used to have a positive
attitude about school, earned good grades and was well liked by teachers. Recently, Jane has become withdrawn and has begun to receive a number of behavioral referrals. For example, Jane has become aggressive with peers by getting into both verbal and physical fights several times a month. Jane’s parents have met with teachers and the school counselor on a few occasions but the situation has not improved.

Please rate the student from the vignette currently on each of the following characteristics. I realize you may not have all of the information needed to fill out this rating scale. Make your best prediction when answering questions about this child. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Please read each question carefully.

1) What is your general view of this student?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2) What grade level do you assume this student to be?

________________________________________________________________________

3) Unconfident

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Confident

4) Lazy

Industrious
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<td>6) Low Self-Regard</td>
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<td>7) Sad</td>
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<td>8) Possesses Self-Discipline</td>
<td>Does not possess Self-Discipline</td>
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<td>9) Takes Initiative</td>
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<td>10) Ambitious</td>
<td>Not Ambitious</td>
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<td>11) Perseveres</td>
<td>Gives Up Easily</td>
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12) Unlikeable  Likeable

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

*13) Motivated  Unmotivated

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

14) Low future potential  High future potential

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

*15) Productive  Unproductive

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

16) Passive  Expressive

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Please rate your ability to counsel the student from the vignette on the following items below. I realize you may not have all of the information needed to fill out this rating scale. Make your best prediction when answering questions about your ability to counsel this child. There are no correct or wrong answers. *Please read each question carefully.*

17) Unmotivated to Counsel  Motivated to Counsel
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*18) Typical number of sessions needed
Prolonged number of sessions

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19) Unproductive Sessions
Productive Sessions

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20) Ineffective Skill Set
Effective Skill Set

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21) Unconfident in Skill Set
Confident in Skill Set

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*22) Beneficial Counseling Sessions
Non-beneficial Counseling Sessions

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*23) Able to Gain Rapport
Unable to Gain Rapport

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*24) Type of Student you do prefer to counsel  
   Type of Student you do not prefer to Counsel
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

*25) Your personality similar to this Student  
   Your personality dissimilar to this Student
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

*26) Unable to gain empathy for this student  
   Able to gain empathy for this student
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

(*Item was reverse coded)

Demographic Information: Please indicate your response.

*Gender:__________________________________________________________

*Race:___________________________________________________________

*Age:___________________________________________________________

*Socioeconomic status background of your own childhood upbringing:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
*Current school level at which you are a school counselor (please indicate all grades that are represented in your current school)

_________________________________________________

*Number of Years you have worked as a professional school counselor

_________________________________________________

*State in which you are currently practicing as a professional school counselor

_________________________________________________

Please list any questions or comments below:

_________________________________________________
Appendix B: Alternative Case Vignettes (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a)

Adapted with permission (Aruguete, personal communication, July 18, 2011)

**Case Vignette #2:** Jane is a public school student. Jane lives with both parents and is the middle child in the family. Jane’s mother is a pediatrician and Jane’s father is a teacher at another school. Jane has an average IQ but is earning poor grades and failing in math. Jane has not been turning in homework in several subjects and does not use time efficiently in class. Jane used to have a positive attitude about school, earned good grades and was well liked by teachers. Recently, Jane has become withdrawn and has begun to receive a number of behavioral referrals. For example, Jane has become aggressive with peers by getting into both verbal and physical fights several times a month. Jane’s parents have met with teachers and the school counselor on a few occasions but the situation has not improved.

**Case Vignette #3:** John is a public school student. John lives with both parents and is the middle child in the family. John’s mother is a hotel custodian and John’s father has been laid off from his factory job and is seeking employment. John has an average IQ but is earning poor grades and failing in math. John has not been turning in homework in several subjects and does not use time efficiently in class. John used to have a positive attitude about school, earned good grades and was well liked by teachers. Recently, John has become withdrawn and has begun to receive a number of behavioral referrals. For example, John has become aggressive with peers by getting into both verbal and physical fights several times a month. John’s parents have met with teachers and the school counselor on a few occasions but the situation has not improved.
Case Vignette #4: John is a public school student. John lives with both parents and is the middle child in the family. John’s mother is a pediatrician and John’s father is a teacher at another school. John has an average IQ but is earning poor grades and failing in math. John has not been turning in homework in several subjects and does not use time efficiently in class. John used to have a positive attitude about school, earned good grades and was well liked by teachers. Recently, John has become withdrawn and has begun to receive a number of behavioral referrals. For example, John has become aggressive with peers by getting into both verbal and physical fights several times a month. John’s parents have met with teachers and the school counselor on a few occasions but the situation has not improved.
Appendix C: Survey Items Source Document List

Student Characteristics Dependent Variable Questions 1-13

1. Confident/Unconfident (Crawford-Sturm, 2009)
2. Lazy/Hard working (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a)
3. Perceptive/unperceptive (Crawford-Sturm, 2009)
4. Low Self-Regard/high Self-Regard (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a)
5. Sad/Happy (Crawford-Sturm, 2009)
6. Possesses Self-Discipline/Does not possess Self-Discipline (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a)
7. Takes initiative/does not take initiative (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a)
8. Ambitious/not ambitious (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a)
9. Perseveres/does not persevere (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a)
10. Unlikeable/likeable (Hutchison, 2009; Lehman & Salovey, 1990; Wright & Hutton, 1977)
11. Motivated/unmotivated (Hutchison, 2009)
12. Low future potential/high future potential (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a)
13. Productive/unproductive (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008a)

School Counselor Self-Efficacy Dependent Variable Questions 14-22

14. Unmotivated/motivated (Hutchison, 2009)
15. Unproductive sessions/productive sessions (Hutchison, 2009)

17. Unconfident in skill set/confident in skill set (Lehman & Salovey, 1990)

18. Beneficial sessions/unbeneficial sessions (Hutchison, 2009; Lehman & Salovey, 1990)

19. Able to gain rapport with this student/unable to gain rapport with this student (Jones & Zoppel, 1982)

20. Type of student you do prefer to counseling/type of student you do not prefer to counsel (Hutchison, 2009)

21. Your personality similar to this student/Your personality dissimilar to this student (Hutchison, 2009; Sladen, 1982; Wright & Hutton, 1977)

22. Unable to gain empathy for this student/Able to gain empathy for this student (Lehman & Salovey, 1990)