Aspects of Site Supervision as Predictors of Group Leader Self-Efficacy for Pre-Service School Counselors

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ASPECTS OF SITE SUPERVISION AS PREDICTORS OF GROUP LEADER SELF-EFFICACY FOR PRE-SERVICE SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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ABSTRACT

ASPECTS OF SITE SUPERVISION AS PREDICTORS OF GROUP LEADER SELF-EFFICACY FOR PRE-SERVICE SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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As pre-service school counselors prepare to lead groups in practice, it is important to consider their beliefs about their abilities to run groups with children and adolescents in the school setting. Site supervision is one aspect of students’ experiential training that can impact the development of confidence surrounding group facilitation. The purpose of this study was to examine specific site supervisory factors that impact the development of pre-service school counselors’ group leader self-efficacy. Data from a sample of 123 pre-service school counseling internship students from CACREP-accredited programs was collected in order to determine the impact of predictor variables (general self-efficacy, experience, observation, feedback, and anxiety) on group leader self-efficacy. The results of multiple regression analysis suggest that above and beyond the influence of general self-efficacy, receiving feedback and managing anxiety specific to group leadership are the greatest predictors of students’ group leader self-efficacy. The numbers of groups led and designed also had a small statistically significant impact, while observation of group counseling did not contribute a meaningful change in the overall regression model. Implications for these findings and suggestions for future research are discussed.
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Chapter One

Aspects of Site Supervision as Predictors of Group Leader Self-Efficacy for Pre-Service School Counselors

Introduction

School counselors have an important responsibility to support all students in the academic environment. Those who are able to implement a comprehensive school counseling program within their schools, successfully balance school-wide prevention efforts with targeted strategies that address student needs. This includes advocacy for the academic, social/emotional, and career domains outlined within the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model (ASCA, 2012a). Within this comprehensive model, school counselors are encouraged to provide various interventions that help to foster a healthy school climate.

Group counseling is one treatment modality used to deliver services that address the needs of all students. It is becoming increasingly important to provide opportunities to reach students beyond the dyadic relationship given the rising student to counselor ratio (Akos, Hamm, Mack, & Dunaway, 2007). This includes offering preventative and targeted psycho-education and counseling groups that reach larger numbers of students and support peer relationships and connectedness to the school community (Corey & Corey, 2002). Research suggests that in order to successfully incorporate these interventions, it is important for school counselors to feel equipped with the knowledge and skills to perform small group counseling in the schools (Akos, Goodnough, Milsom,
Unfortunately, Akos et al. (2004) cite literature that suggests that master’s degree counselor preparation programs may prioritize the dissemination of content instruction over experiential group facilitation, which can contribute to underdeveloped group leadership knowledge and skills. This may in turn have implications for the confidence with which pre-service school counselors begin facilitating groups.

Self-efficacy is a construct interconnected with confidence. Albert Bandura (1986) defines self-efficacy as people’s beliefs about their abilities to accomplish future endeavors. Four sources of self-efficacy have been identified: 1) mastery experiences, 2) vicarious experiences, 3) verbal persuasion and 4) physiological state; according to research, these are likely related to the motivation to perform given tasks and the perseverance needed to maintain these efforts in the face of challenges (Bandura, 1986; Larson, 1998; Larson & Daniels, 1998; Larson et al., 1992). This suggests that pre-service school counselors who have opportunities to successfully experience leading groups, observe others leading groups, receive feedback around these experiences, and successfully manage their own anxiety involving these opportunities may feel more self-efficacious and therefore more motivated to initiate and sustain group interventions in practice. Examining group leadership training, an essential component of pre-service school counselor preparation (Akos et al., 2004), represents one way to understand the development of knowledge and skills needed to develop strong group leader self-efficacy.

There are four components that are typically included in group leadership training for pre-service counselors: didactic instruction, group leader observation, group
counseling membership, and supervised group leadership (Barlow, 2004). Akos (2004) suggests that, “experience in the practice and supervision of group work are often most engaging to students and seen as critical to competent practice” (p. 327). While much of this learning is obtained through fieldwork placement, Akos et al. (2004) advocate for supervised experiential opportunities involving the creation and evaluation of developmentally appropriate groups to also be included as part of coursework assessment. This implies that on-going experiences designing and delivering small group counseling in the schools is of particular importance to the development of competent group leadership. As pre-service counselors experience performance mastery, their confidence may likewise increase, potentially resulting in a greater sense of personal efficacy around their group leadership skills.

Erford (2010) suggests that group leadership development can be overwhelming for pre-service school counselors. The potential for elevated anxiety may be compounded by the fact that supervised group leadership opportunities with children and adolescents might be limited before and even during fieldwork (Bore et al., 2010; Steen, Bauman, & Smith, 2008). Furthermore, didactic coursework may be centered more on psychotherapy or process-oriented personal growth groups, rather than on psycho-education and counseling groups that focus on the developmental challenges appropriate for intervention in the school setting (Akos et al., 2004). Without exposure and practice leading these types of groups, pre-service school counselors may lack the preparation and confidence to manage the realities of group work practice in the schools.
Background

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) advocates for the training and ethical practice of group counseling with children and adolescents in the school setting. Outlined in the 2012 School Counselor Competencies, ASCA recommends that school counselor preparation should include knowledge, abilities and skills, and attitudes that support the implementation of group counseling in a comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2012b). In order for these groups to be successfully initiated and implemented, pre-service school counselors need to have adequate training and knowledge of group counseling as well as the skills to be able to navigate the intricate dynamics of the school environment.

Group Counselor Training

While most mental health training programs focus their efforts around counseling skills that can be utilized across both individual and group treatment modalities, an emphasis on the dyadic relationship between counselor and client continues to be at the center of most programmatic and curricular planning (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). As a result, a substantial amount of graduate training centers on individual counseling. This is problematic as “strong group leadership takes substantial preparation, reflection, and adaptability” (Sink et al., 2012, p. 32).

Sink et al. (2012) further this point by suggesting that some counselors experience a “fear factor” particularly around their group leader competency and suggest that the resulting anxiety in addition to inadequate preparation may contribute to the lack of group counseling implementation. This may be particularly challenging for pre-service
school counselors who are likely to experience less exposure to group work with children and adolescents (Akos et al., 2004; DeLucia-Waak, 2000).

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the counseling profession’s accrediting body, has standards that require curricular experiences related to leadership, experiential participation and facilitation, and supervision of group work (CACREP, 2009). Many graduate programs satisfy this requirement by offering a semester long group counseling course that includes both didactic and experiential opportunities for students to understand group membership and apply their knowledge of group leadership to the facilitation of training groups (Akos et al., 2004; Bore et al., 2010). Akos et al. (2004) suggest that this may be especially concerning for pre-service school counselors, as “it is difficult to provide the depth and breadth of training adequate for the realities of school counseling practice in only one course” (p. 128). For some students, the next opportunities to observe and lead groups do not occur until their field placements in practicum and internship. As a result, without more opportunities to practice their leadership skills, students may feel less confident in their abilities to facilitate groups in practice. Exposure to group leadership opportunities at this point in their training may likewise increase anxiety and impact counselors’ future beliefs about their abilities to facilitate groups. Moreover, contextual factors related to the expectations of the school setting may further impact these perceptions. Self-efficacy may therefore be dually impacted by the lack of skill development and anxiety created by later exposure to group counseling with children and adolescents in the school setting.
One of the ways we can understand how confidence in group facilitation may develop is through the experiences of successful group counselors. Rubel and Kline’s (2008) qualitative study examined a population of expert group leaders and found that participants’ experiences of their training could be understood by considering three overarching themes: (a) experiential influence, (b) leader resources, and (c) leadership process. More specifically, they found that participants’ confidence levels increased with opportunities to run groups, knowledge around group interactions, and awareness of their own and other group members’ reactions to the dynamic process. This suggests that group counseling knowledge, experience, and supervision may be focal points in the development of confident group leaders.

**Group Counseling in the Schools**

ASCA has included group counseling as part of the competencies expected of practicing school counselors (ASCA, 2012b). “Professional school counselors at all levels who do not lead groups are not adequately performing their jobs” (Goodnough & Lee, 2004, p. 179). According to Bore et al. (2010), the establishment of theoretical knowledge alone is not enough to encourage competent practice; school counselors need to be adequately trained to manage the developmental needs of children and adolescents as well as the logistical challenges of running groups in school (Steen, Bauman, & Smith, 2007). With many counseling master’s preparation programs covering group counseling knowledge and skills over a one semester course, group leadership training for pre-service school counselors may be impacted (Akos et al., 2004; Bore et al., 2010). The
potential for limited exposure and training specific to conducting group counseling in the schools may also contribute to less confident group leadership.

**Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy, which represents people’s judgments about their future performance capabilities (Bandura, 1986), often develops through the knowledge, experiences, and feedback counselors obtain during graduate training (Larson & Daniels, 1998). Several of the 32 studies reviewed by Larson and Daniels (1998) examined counselor self-efficacy and the experiences, feedback, and emotional regulation skills counselors may need to obtain in order to initiate and persist when presented with more challenging counseling tasks. This is particularly important as confidence around group leadership often develops only after pre-service counselors feel more comfortable employing basic individual counseling and attending skills (Erford, 2010).

Group facilitation may initially present as a “highly threatening experience” (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005, p. 549) and create additional anxiety for the novice leader (Rubel & Kline, 2008). Because it requires significant time and logistical planning in the schools (Sink et al., 2012; Steen et al., 2007), group leadership is likely to be one area of school counselor development influenced by a counselor’s perceived self-efficacy. For instance, if school counselors are supported by building administrators and the community to provide group counseling with students, opportunities to engage in these interventions may promote greater confidence in school counselors’ future abilities to lead and initiate groups. On the other hand, if group counseling interventions are not supported, school counselors may need to design and advocate for creative ways to
incorporate small group counseling within the structure of the current school culture. The motivation and persistence needed to successfully negotiate these challenges may thus be associated with a school counselor’s sense of group leader self-efficacy.

As pre-service school counselors acquire group counseling knowledge and skills through coursework and experiential group membership, their perceived levels of competency are likewise impacted by their practicum and internship fieldwork (Akos, 2004). Trepal, Bailie, and Leeth (2010) referenced several studies that indicated that students’ experiences during field placements represented some of the greatest opportunities for learning during counselor training. Similarly, Furr and Carroll’s (2003) qualitative analysis described participants’ fieldwork placements as “crucial to their counselor development” (p. 488). These experiences offer a wealth of opportunities that can potentially impact perceived self-efficacy, including designing, observing, and leading group counseling with children and adolescents (Akos et al., 2004).

While group counseling observation and facilitation are required in internship in CACREP-accredited counseling programs (CACREP, 2009), students’ involvement in group counseling, including the numbers of groups and type of group participation, vary from site to site (Bore et al., 2010). Consequently, students’ experiences with facilitating and observing groups, two areas thought to be important to the development of counselor self-efficacy (Larson, 1998), may be impacted.

**Supervision**

Supervision is a core component of counselor training (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Fernando & Hulse-Killacky, 2005; Kozina, Grabovari, De Stefano, & Drapeau,
2010). With this support, pre-service counselors develop their clinical skills while learning to manage ambiguity within the counseling process (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Levitt & Jacques, 2005). According to Cashwell and Dooley (2001), without supervision, developing counselors may experience greater burnout, higher stress levels, and decrease in their confidence. Supervision involves feedback exchange and the management of many of these emotional responses, and as such, it is not surprising that research has uncovered connections between components of counselor self-efficacy and clinical supervision (Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001).

Specific to group leadership, supervision has been found to enhance the development of group facilitation skills (Bore et al., 2010). Akos (2004) posits that “similar to individual counseling, experience in the practice and supervision of group work is often most engaging to pre-service school counselors and seen as critical to competent practice” (p. 327). Research links performance feedback to overall counselor self-efficacy (Daniels & Larson, 2001), suggesting that counselor self-efficacy may be impacted by feedback received in supervision.

The majority of clinical supervision in pre-service counselor training occurs during fieldwork placement; site supervision, occurring between a practicum or internship supervisor and a pre-service counselor, seems to be an opportune time to examine the development of group leadership. Supervised practicum and internship placements provide important opportunities where pre-service counselors can experience and reflect on didactic and experiential knowledge and skills (Trepal et al., 2010).
According to CACREP (2009) standards, pre-service school counselors are required to have exposure to leading or co-leading groups during their internship experience. As pre-service school counselors observe the work of their supervisors and begin to practice their own skills, supervision provides them with opportunities to process these experiences. Unfortunately, according to Bore et al.’s (2010) study, more than half of the pre-service school counselor participants indicated dissatisfaction with the supervision they received specific to group facilitation (Bore et al., 2010). Without sufficient opportunities to perform, observe, receive feedback, and/or manage emotional responses to the group counseling process, pre-service school counselors may struggle to develop self-efficacy running groups.

**Statement of the Problem**

Group counseling is a common and important treatment modality used in the schools. Despite their value, Bore et al. (2010) postulate that, “[groups’] effectiveness and optimum utilization can only be realized if school counselors receive adequate pre-service training” (p.6). Examination of group leadership preparation for pre-service school counselors may provide further insight into the aspects of training most salient to the development of group leaders.

Research suggests that counselor self-efficacy is a personal trait influenced by successful performance, observation, feedback, and the management of emotional responses (Daniels & Larson, 2001; Larson & Daniels, 1998). Each of these sources of efficacy can be fostered throughout pre-service school counselor training, potentially impacting future motivation and performance of group leadership skills (Bandura, 1986;
Group counseling in the schools is well-documented (Erford, 2010; Hoag & Burlingame, 1997; Sink et al., 2012; Whiston & Sexton, 1998); the need for pre-service counselors to have a strong sense of group leader self-efficacy is significant. Pre-service school counselors’ increased self-efficacy in group facilitation may lead to their support and practice of group counseling in the schools.

Supervision is one aspect of counselor training that can foster the development of counselor self-efficacy. Students have multiple opportunities to receive supervision throughout their graduate programs; one of which occurs during their practicum and internship experiences during an accompanying course that incorporates group supervision. Site supervision is also an important aspect of training in the development of group leadership skills beyond group leadership instruction provided within the graduate curriculum (Akos et al., 2004). This may be a significant time where students have the most concentrated opportunities to process their experiences with group leadership. This study therefore examined pre-service school counselors’ perceived group leader self-efficacy in relation to their site supervisory experiences.

The research questions under investigation for this study were:

What aspects of the site supervisory experience predict group leader self-efficacy?

1) Does experience leading/co-leading and designing groups with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training predict group leader self-efficacy?
2) To what extent is observation of group counseling with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training associated with group leader self-efficacy?

3) To what extent is receiving feedback specific to group leadership with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training associated with group leader self-efficacy?

4) To what extent are supervisees’ abilities to manage anxiety specific to group leadership with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training associated with group leader self-efficacy?

5) Controlling for the others, which of these aspects of the site supervisory experience is most strongly associated with group leader self-efficacy?

**Significance of the Study**

Counselor self-efficacy continues to be examined in relation to motivation and performance outcomes. Research has suggested that the stronger counselors feel about their abilities to successfully counsel others, the more likely they will be to engage in interventions that support their clients (Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Daniels & Larson, 2001; Larson, 1992; Larson, 1998; Larson & Daniels, 1998). These findings also offer implications for pre-service counselors as far as examining the training and supervision needed to support the development of students’ self-efficacy (Al-Darmaki, 2004; Fernando & Hulse-Killacky, 2005; Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001; Urbani, Smith, Maddux, Smaby, Torres-Rivera, & Crews, 2002). The majority of this literature, however, does not differentiate individual counseling from group counseling. For
instance, Barnes (2004) cites that the most commonly used counselor self-efficacy scale in the literature is *The Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory* (COSE; Larson et al., 1992). He also notes that additional instruments have been developed to measure subspecialties, such as the *Group Leader Self-Efficacy Inventory* (GLSI; Page, Pietrzak & Lewis, 2001). To date, only three published studies (Moe, Autry, Olson, & Johnson, 2014; Ohrt, Robinson, & Hagedorn, 2013; Page et al., 2001) have measured group leader self-efficacy specifically using the GLSI. Given this small number of studies, there is a lack of validation for this scale, contributing to further challenges in measuring group leader self-efficacy. With research suggesting that pre-service graduate training generally centers on individual counseling skills (Ohrt, Ener, Porter, & Young, 2014; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005), it is likely that the studies examining pre-service counselor self-efficacy may reflect participants’ beliefs about their abilities to counsel individuals with little attention to self-efficacy related to group counseling. Bandura (2006) suggests that “The ‘one measure fits all approach’ usually has limited explanatory and predictive value because most of the items in an all-purpose test may have little or no relevance to the domain of functioning; scales of perceived self-efficacy must be tailored to the particular domain of functioning that is the object of interest” (pp. 307-308). Adapting a well-validated counselor self-efficacy instrument to the specific domain of interest, group leadership, can provide insight into the nature of group leader self-efficacy more specifically.

Group counseling is an integral part of a practicing school counselor’s responsibility to meet the needs of all students within a comprehensive school counseling
program. There are many factors that may contribute to the amount and types of groups run out of the school counselor’s office. School counselors need to develop the advocacy skills and motivation to persist when logistical concerns or administrative buy-in impede the school counselor’s access to students (Steen et al., 2007). While specific contextual factors are not addressed within the parameters of this study, exploring the development of self-efficacy related to group leadership highlights training aspects that support more adequate preparation of school counselors for the realities of counseling in a school setting.

The development of group leadership skills is important to counselor preparation, yet does not always receive equal attention in comparison to individual counseling skills during graduate school (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). This may contribute to some counselors not feeling as confident in their abilities to run groups (Sink et al., 2012). Examining the sources of pre-service school counselor group leader self-efficacy also highlights important training factors (e.g. the need to increase feedback specific to group leadership) that can foster greater confidence, persistence, and motivation to initiate and run groups.

Site supervision is one avenue in which pre-service school counselors are provided opportunities to observe, perform, and receive feedback around their group leadership skills. Experiencing group leadership, observing more experienced counselors, and processing these experiences through feedback exchanges are important aspects of the site supervisory experience linked to counselor development and confidence (Buser, 2008). While these connections between supervision and counselor
self-efficacy have been explored in the literature, there is a paucity of research that has specifically examined the supervision of group work and its impact on the development of pre-service school counselor group leader self-efficacy. Knowing that most pre-service school counselors gain experience leading groups, observe groups run by or co-facilitated with their supervisors, and receive feedback around their experiences and emotional responses during site supervision, fieldwork represents an opportune time to examine the development of counselor self-efficacy specific to group work. This information is critical in understanding the development of competent and confident group leadership and may have implications for the creation, initiation, and advocacy of group work in practice.

**Conceptual Framework**

This study has been explored through the lens of Albert Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Bandura’s theory postulates that people are individually capable of changing the direction of their behavior (Corey, 2005). Learning can be explained through the reciprocal interaction between the environment and a person’s behaviors and cognitions. The way in which people view contextual situations influences the choices they make and their resulting psychological responses (Corsini & Wedding, 2011).

One of the most powerful influences on human agency is people’s beliefs about their capabilities to control things that happen in their lives (Bandura, 1989). These beliefs reflect the construct of perceived self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is cultivated through mastery experiences, vicarious observation, social persuasion, and the management of
physiologic traits and has been found to directly impact motivation and performance outcomes (Bandura, 1986/2009). Thus, those who have a strong sense of self-efficacy are more likely to set higher goals and maintain the commitment to achieve them.

Throughout their training, pre-service counselors are likely to have many opportunities to practice and observe clinical skills and receive feedback around their development. This suggests that there are various avenues in which graduate programs can help to foster student self-efficacy.

Larson’s (1998) Social Cognitive Model of Counselor Training (SCMCT) represents one example of SCT application to counselor education. This model posits that one of the main avenues in which counselors-in-training learn is through performance feedback provided in supervision. Through these experiences, pre-service counselors begin to evaluate their own abilities in relation to performance outcomes, feedback, and the observation of others’ behaviors. Specific to group leadership, it is likely that the more pre-service school counselors engage in facilitation and observation under supervision, the greater their opportunities to develop a stronger sense of group leader self-efficacy.

This dissertation specifically considered the way in which the site supervisory experience supports pre-service school counselors with the development of their group leadership skills and self-efficacy. From a social cognitive theoretical lens, it is expected that learning is occurring through mastery experiences, vicarious observation, feedback, and the management of emotional regulation. Focusing on an important experiential component of pre-service counselors’ learning, this study aimed to understand the
relationship between students’ group leader self-efficacy and their experiences in field-based supervision. After leading and/or observing groups in the school setting, it is thought that students have opportunities to make sense of their performance through feedback exchanges with their supervisors. Students’ beliefs about their abilities to successfully perform group leadership skills and perceptions of these supervisory experiences may have a lot to do with their future performance, motivation, and perseverance around the practice of group counseling. Studying self-efficacy as it relates to group leadership highlights some of the specific experiences pre-service school counselors need in order to facilitate group counseling interventions appropriately.

**Chapter Summary**

Group counseling in the school setting is an essential component of a comprehensive school counseling program. School counselors are expected to possess the knowledge, skills, and confidence to deliver counseling and psycho-education small groups to students on a variety of developmentally relevant topics. Much of this confidence around their group leadership knowledge and skills with children and adolescents is likely to develop in their pre-service training. While the dissemination of core group leadership skills and experiential group membership are required elements in the CACREP (2009) standards, site supervision represents a more variable component of pre-service school counselor training. The development of group leader self-efficacy is likely to be shaped by many of these experiences and the need to examine specific aspects likely to contribute to their beliefs about their abilities to run groups in practice is significant.
Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. The theoretical framework for this study, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), is embedded within each chapter. The first chapter provides an overview and rationale for the study while connecting the theoretical underpinnings of SCT to the development of group leadership. The second chapter includes a comprehensive literature review supporting the current study. Chapter three outlines the methodology, variables, and statistical analysis used to interpret statistically significant findings. Chapter four details the results of the study, and the final chapter discusses its meaningfulness in practice, including the implications for future research and the study’s limitations.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were used for each of the constructs.

Comprehensive School Counseling Program

According to the American School Counselor Association (2012), a Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP) is a plan designed and implemented by school counselors that includes the following four components: foundation, delivery system, management system, and accountability. A (CSCP) is considered “comprehensive in scope, preventative in design, and developmental in nature” (p.9).
**ASCA National Model.** The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model created in 2003, revised in 2005 and again in 2012 is an example of a widely used comprehensive school counseling program.

**CACREP-Accredited Programs**

CACREP is the accrediting body for the counseling profession. Accredited programs have met standards set forth by the profession related to curriculum and programmatic experiences.

**Group Leader/Group Facilitator**

*Group leader* and *group facilitator* will be used interchangeably and defined as a trained pre-service school counselor or practicing school counselor who leads small counseling or psycho-education groups in the schools.

*Co-leader/Co-facilitator.* *Co-leadership* and *co-facilitation* will be used interchangeably and defined as a pre-service school counselor or practicing school counselor who simultaneously leads/facilitates a small counseling or psycho-education group with another pre-service school counselor or practicing school counselor.

**Practicing School Counselor**

“Professional school counselors are certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a master’s degree in school counseling” (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2012). *Practicing school counselors* are currently employed in elementary, middle, or high school settings.

**Pre-Service School Counselor/Site Supervisee/Student/Counselor-in-Training**
Pre-service school counselor will be used interchangeably with site supervisee, student and counselor-in-training. The term refers to individuals enrolled in a master’s level internship experience and accompanying course, consistent with CACREP standards.

Self-Efficacy

People’s beliefs about their abilities to successfully perform future tasks (Bandura, 1986).

Counselor Self-Efficacy. Counselors’ beliefs about their abilities to effectively counsel others in the future (Larson et al., 1992).

Group Leader Self-Efficacy. Participants’ beliefs about their abilities to be successful performing group leadership skills (Page, Pietrzak, & Lewis, 2001).

Small Group Counseling

Counseling or psycho-education groups with 10 or fewer members who meet for a defined period of time. Identified students will be screened and chosen prior to the onset of the group.

Counseling Group. A closed small counseling group that may be centered on prevention or the remediation of particular skills (Gladding, 2012). These groups focus on developmental issues concerning children and adolescents in the school setting (e.g. divorce, grief, school anxiety, anger management).

Psycho-Education Group. A closed small group counseling with a skills focus that centers on universal student issues in the school environment (e.g. test taking skills, healthy relationships, career exploration groups).
Supervision

An on-going educational relationship provided by an experienced member of a profession to a novice member of the field (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009).

Site Supervision. Supervision received from a designated elementary, middle, or high school counselor during supervisees’ practicum and internship experiences.

Site Supervisor. A graduate counseling program’s designated supervisor at an elementary, middle, or high school setting.
Chapter Two

Introduction

School counselors who have attended CACREP-accredited graduate programs are trained to implement comprehensive school counseling programs in their schools. This includes providing students with a variety of interventions that focus on academic, social/emotional, and career development (ASCA, 2012a). It is important for school counselors to utilize group counseling now more than ever to meet the needs of the entire school community given continued increase in the student to counselor ratio (Akos et al., 2007). In order to be motivated to design and initiate these groups, pre-service school counselors need to feel confident in their abilities to deliver group interventions.

Examining group leadership training is an important avenue to understand how pre-service school counselors develop the ability and confidence to begin running these groups in practice. Site supervision is one aspect of pre-service school counselor training that most often includes direct experiences, observation of group leadership, performance feedback, and the management of emotional responses. As such, this is likely an important time in the development of counselor self-efficacy, and more specifically, group leader self-efficacy.

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the factors associated with the development of counselor self-efficacy; this will be followed by an overview of group counseling and its relevance to the school setting. A review of pre-service school counselor training specific to group leadership will follow, specifically highlighting the supervisory practices to which they are exposed during their fieldwork training. This
chapter will then highlight aspects of site supervision specific to group counseling that are likely to impact supervisees’ group leader self-efficacy.

**Self-Efficacy**

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), originating from Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, considers the social context in which people acquire knowledge. The reciprocal interaction of people’s experiences, choices, and the surrounding social context help to explain their courses of action and whether they maintain these behaviors in the future. Bandura refers to the importance of human agency, which reflects people’s abilities to control their cognitions and behaviors in various situations. According to Larson and Daniels (1998), personal agency is defined as, “a dynamic, interactive, and complex system that allows humans to be both responsive to an ever-changing environment and to be proactive in determining that environment” (p. 181). The Social Cognitive Model of Counselor Development (SCMCD) initiated by Larson (1998) demonstrates how SCT can be applied to the training of pre-service counselors. This model suggests that the environment and factors associated with personal agency (e.g. cognitions, emotional responses, and forethought) affect decision-making and resulting performance outcomes (Barnes, 2004). As applied to counselor development, Bandura’s concept of triadic reciprocality refers to the interactive nature of the training environment with counselees’ thoughts and behaviors. In other words, trainees’ perceptions of their experiences impact the confidence with which they approach future decisions and their resulting actions.

Confidence represents a personal attribute that is often tied to the construct of self-efficacy (Erford, 2010). According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy represents
people’s beliefs about their abilities to successfully perform given tasks. These judgments are influenced by the amount of perceived control people have in a given situation and the level of preparation they feel to be able to cope with specific expectations (Bandura, 1986). When faced with challenging tasks, those who feel confident in their abilities to overcome these hurdles are more likely to persist than those who perceive the tasks as threatening obstacles (Bandura, 1977/2009). Counselor self-efficacy has been defined as counselors’ beliefs about their abilities to successfully counsel future clients (Daniels & Larson, 2001). Research has suggested that these personal judgments, impacted by experiences, observational learning, feedback exchange, and management of physiological triggers have implications for motivation and performance outcomes in the counseling relationship (Bandura, 1977/2009).

Several researchers have explored the construct of counselor self-efficacy in relation to pre-service counselors. Larson and Daniels (1998) conducted an extensive review of this literature and discovered many variables associated with training that have implications for the development of counselor self-efficacy. Specifically, the studies that examined performance outcomes, affective arousal, and evaluation were closely tied to the experiences, vicarious learning, physiologic responses, and feedback commonly attended to during graduate training. For instance, Daniels and Larson’s (2001) and Larson et al.’s (1992) studies found that engagement in role plays, modeling, and opportunities to receive positive feedback specific to skill development increased counselor self-efficacy and performance outcomes in pre-service counselors. Al-Darmaki (2004) examined a common physiologic response, anxiety, in relation to the
impact of training on pre-service counselor self-efficacy. These findings suggested that with increased training, pre-service counselors experienced greater counselor self-efficacy and a decrease in anxiety. Subsequently, participants felt more confident managing future challenges.

Conceptualized through the lens of SCT, pre-service counselor development can be understood by examining the reciprocal interactions between students’ thoughts, behaviors, and the environment. This interaction is expected to have an impact on perceived self-efficacy. As such, it is expected that students’ graduate training and the way they view their counseling capabilities may impact how they will respond to future challenges. For instance, if pre-service counselors believe that they lack the ability to successfully run a particular type of group (thought), and they do not receive encouragement from their site supervisors to try out this experience (environment), they may be less likely to initiate similar groups in the future (behavior). From another angle, if counselors facilitate a group session (behavior) and then receive positive performance feedback (environment), their beliefs about their abilities to run this type of session or group in the future may in turn be even stronger (thought). Prior research suggests that they are also likely to feel more motivated to engage in this intervention and persevere if their initial experiences were not as successful (Daniels & Larson, 2001). Self-efficacy beliefs therefore play an important role in the choices counselors make to engage in and continue performing particular counseling interventions.

It is important to consider, however, that counselors’ self-efficacy may not be consistent with all client populations and across all counseling interventions. For
instance, group counseling requires counselors to learn skills specific to group leadership. Counselors’ beliefs about their abilities to run groups may therefore differ from individual counselor self-efficacy. In order to identify the specific factors that contribute to group leader self-efficacy, it is important to understand the characteristics, processes, and skills needed to lead groups.

**Group Counseling**

Gladding (2012) states that groups are comprised of two or more members who identify themselves as collectively belonging to a setting in which there are mutually defined outcomes. The Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW, 2000), a division of the American Counseling Association that organizes standards and group counselor competencies, defines group work as

the application of knowledge and skill in group facilitation to assist an interdependent collection of people to reach their mutual goals, which may be intrapersonal, interpersonal, or work related. The goals of the group may include the accomplishment of tasks related to work, education, personal development, personal and interpersonal problem solving, or remediation of mental and emotional disorders. (pp. 2-3)

Group counseling is an intervention led by a trained facilitator in which members receive therapeutic support. Corey (2008) specifies the role of the facilitator by suggesting that a leader “facilitate[s] interactions among the members, help[s] them learn from one another, assist[s] them in establishing personal goals, and encourage[s] them to translate their insights into concrete plans” (p. 5). Throughout this process, the facilitator
identifies opportunities to help members develop insight, or intrapersonal knowledge, connect with other members interpersonally, and identify commonalities through shared experiences with many members of the group. This is accomplished through interventions at the individual or personal level, sub-system or interpersonal level, and whole group level. For instance, a group leader might help individual members to process their anger by encouraging others to share their reactions and provide feedback and support to the struggling members (sub-system). The facilitator may then support this member by helping him/her to process any insight (intrapersonal) gained from this feedback. The facilitator may identify and share an observation that many members of the group seem to have experienced similar challenges and begin to process with the group what it feels like to know that others may have similar struggles (group as a system). These interventions contribute to the unique nature of the group counseling experience and differentiate this treatment modality from individual counseling. Self-efficacy specific to group leadership therefore warrants its own investigation.

As suggested by ASGW (2000), there are four categories of groups: task/work, psycho-education, counseling, and psychotherapy; each is outlined by a set of standards and competencies. Task/work groups have shared performance goals; for example, members of an organization that meet weekly to work on a project to promote a particular product. This type of group may or may not include an identified facilitator, and the goals of the group are not likely to include therapeutic support. Psycho-education groups, which may be preventative or focused on at-risk populations, may be centered on particular content areas. These groups are generally led by a trained facilitator, short
term, and include instructional strategies to support members with everyday challenges. A group for children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) focused on classroom organization skills is an example of a psycho-education group. These members might meet for eight weeks to process challenges and learn more effective strategies for helping them to successfully organize their instructional materials. Counseling and psychotherapy groups tend to center more on remediation and the relational aspects inherent in the dynamics of the group. Counseling groups that are run in schools are often time-limited and include topics of relevance to typically functioning children and adolescents. For instance, a counseling group might be used to support students who are managing the loss of a loved one or who are struggling with body image disturbance. Group leaders facilitate discussions that help to support members with these life challenges. Psychotherapy groups, on the other hand, tend to be long term and focused on more severe psychological disturbances. Facilitators often run psychotherapy groups at in-patient centers and/or hospitals and work with clients on basic life skills. While there may be some similarities in each of these groups such as the ways members communicate with each other, psycho-education and counseling groups seem to be most congruent with the wellness orientation of the counseling discipline taught during counselor training and the prevention initiatives outlined in the ASCA National Model (2012). Counselor training that includes the development of group leadership skills specific to psycho-education and counseling groups may therefore support confident practice and the development of group leader self-efficacy.
History of Group Counseling

Group counseling can be traced back as early as the 1900s; however, the recognition of its efficacy as a viable therapeutic option began around the time of World War II. Elton Mayo and his associates were some of the first researchers recognized for their contribution to our understanding of the way people relate to each other in groups, often referred to as group dynamics (Gladding, 2012). In 1945, Mayo and his colleagues conducted one of the first studies that examined the influence of group dynamics and found what is now known as the Hawthorne Effect. This came to be understood as behavioral modifications that occur as a result of environmental manipulation (Gladding, 2012). At the onset of these studies, Mayo found particular interest in findings that associated workers’ attitudes with their productivity. This sparked continued exploration of the origins of human behavior with fellow researchers from Harvard University. By examining the work place setting, Mayo and his team discovered that altering the physical group environment was less influential than changing the social dynamics between people (Mayo, 1945). Further emphasis on group dynamics was placed on the interactions occurring between members as they affected group development. This focus on group process is still emphasized in the preparation of group leaders.

Kurt Lewin, another pioneer in the field of group work, continued to explore the intricacies of group dynamics. Lewin’s findings not only furthered our understanding of group process but highlighted the importance of examining group member roles (Gladding, 2012; Southern, Erford, Vernon, & Davis-Gage, 2011). Most notably, Lewin developed training groups (T-groups), which were formed to help individuals grow from
each other (Vernon & Davis-Gage, 2011). After arranging for his students to observe and analyze these groups, Lewin identified the benefits of examining intragroup dynamics and the power of group discussion on human ideas and behaviors (Gladding, 2012; Vernon & Davis-Gage, 2011). This work ultimately helped to shape our understanding of power dynamics, member roles, and group facilitation (Gladding, 2012).

During the 1960s and 1970s, Carl Rogers’ person-centered theoretical approach inspired popularity in the group counseling field (Erford, 2010). One of his most recognized contributions to the practice of group work was the experience he coined the “encounter group” which prioritized personal and relational growth by emphasizing connectedness and community (Gladding, 2012). Marathon groups were equally common and supported genuine interactions by encouraging members to remain together continuously for one to two days. The goal of marathon groups was to foster personal growth by helping people to rid themselves of false personas. In doing so, people were encouraged to experience extreme fatigue long enough to lessen defenses and increase authenticity between members. Despite good intentions, these groups were often facilitated by untrained leaders. At times, this resulted in emotional harm to participants and evidenced the unfortunate consequences of groupthink, or the influence a group may have on potentially detrimental conforming behaviors (Gladding, 2012). At this point, the need for training for practicing counselors around group leadership became evident, and in 1973, mental health professionals established the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW), a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA). This organization continues to advocate for appropriate group work standards of practice as
well as training standards for pre-service counselors. The Professional Training Standards for the Training of Group Workers (ASGW, 2000) is an important document used to understand the basis for which some counseling programs may incorporate group leadership knowledge and skills into their curricula.

Beginning in the 1970s, Irvin Yalom’s seminal work furthered understanding of groups through the identification of specific therapeutic factors that contribute to clients’ interpersonal learning and intrapersonal insight (Akos et al., 2007; Bore et al., 2010; Perusee et al., 2009; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). This research continues to be a foundational component in the preparation of group therapists (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Over the years, as our understanding of group work has continued to evolve, counselors have considered its application with a variety of populations. Research has suggested that group counseling represents a microcosm of children and adolescents’ natural social environments (Gladding, 2012; Kulic, Horne, & Dagley, 2001; Perusse, Goodnough, & Lee, 2009). As such, counselors may reflect on the efficacy of group counseling with younger populations and in the school setting. Since the developmental needs of children and adolescents differ from those of adults (DeLucia-Waak, 2000; Perusse et al., 2009), it is important to consider the needs of and specific approaches for conducting group counseling with this population. Understanding these needs is particularly important for pre-service school counselors as they begin developing self-efficacy around their group leadership skills with children and adolescents.
Group Counseling with Children and Adolescents

Counseling literature indicates that working with children and adolescents requires additional knowledge and skills that address specific developmental needs and ethical considerations (DeLucia-Waak, 2000; Goodnough & Lee, 2004; Perusse et al., 2009, Sink et al., 2012). Unfortunately, Shechtman (2002) posits that “too much of what is known about group work with children is based on adult groups; however, it is clear that the dynamics in children’s groups—as well as children’s needs—are very different from those of adults” (p. 293). Pre-service school counselors must not only possess developmental content knowledge in order to appropriately design and structure groups for children and adolescents, but they must also learn how to translate this knowledge into practice. Opportunities to study and perform group counseling with children and adolescents are likely to support the confidence needed to run successful groups in practice.

Counselors running groups with children and adolescents also need to incorporate child and adolescent development into their understanding of counseling theory, content specific knowledge, group dynamics and process, and relevant contextual factors affecting their respective populations (DeLucia-Waak, 2000; Gladding, 2012; Goodnough & Lee, 2004; Perusse et al., 2009). This includes recognizing the many developmental factors that impact children and adolescents’ abilities to respond effectively to a group treatment modality. For instance, while spontaneity, self-disclosure, and feedback are an important part of the group process for all ages, many interventions that meet the developmental needs of children and/or special populations
require more structured facilitation and directive intervention (DeLucia-Waak, 2000; Gladding, 2012). Facilitators should be mindful of the number of group sessions, length of each group, and the age ranges within each group (Sink et al., 2012). The type of communication expected is also important, as certain ages and populations may rely more on non-verbal cues, play, and/or artistic means to express their needs (Gladding, 2012). The fact that children and adolescents are minors raises additional considerations for successful group counseling. Communication with parents/guardians is typically expected, and the discussion of confidentiality and its role in group dynamics is a key factor in the progress of these groups. Given that counselors cannot ever guarantee confidentiality in group counseling, and parents/guardians have a right to know relevant information about their children, counselors’ negotiation of these challenges can have significant implications for the efficacy of the groups themselves (Gladding, 2012). Subsequently, observation and experience leading groups with children and adolescents are important aspects of group leader training for pre-service school counselors as they develop the confidence to run groups in the school setting.

**Group Counseling in the Schools**

Because children spend the better portion of their weekdays in an educational environment, emotional projections and/or displacement of feelings are likely to manifest themselves in various ways throughout the school day (Shillingford & Edwards, 2008). Emotional expression skills and self-regulation can be effectively addressed through meaningful feedback exchanges in the small group setting. As such, it is not surprising
that Shechtman (as cited in Gladding, 2012) found that as many as 70% of groups with youth occur in the schools.

The ASCA National Model (2012a) recognizes group counseling as an important intervention that supports healthy socialization and the management of academic expectations and career decision-making in the school environment (Akos et al., 2004; Bore et al., 2010; Duba & Mason, 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Kayler & Sherman, 2009; Shechtman, 2002; Sink et al., 2012). As defined by the ASCA Professional School Counselor and Group Counseling Position Statement (2008), “Group counseling involves a number of students working on shared tasks and developing supportive relationships in a group setting” (p. 28). Groups are often organized around a specific population of students (e.g. students with social skill deficits) or a particular topic of interest (e.g. anger management). Stakeholder input may be sought through needs assessments and considered in helping to organize the logistics of the group. During the group itself, rules, expectations, and individual and collective goals are established to help structure the process and support member accountability. Open and consistent dialogue with students, school personnel, and families within the parameters of confidentiality is often used to garner support for group interventions and proactively address any stakeholder concerns. While seasoned school counselors may struggle to balance potential ethical dilemmas related to informed consent, confidentiality and screening, and specific school district priorities, their less experienced colleagues and counselors-in-training may find the navigation of this process even more daunting. This may impact the confidence with which pre-service school counselors begin to lead groups.
Similarly, specific knowledge and awareness of the developmental needs of all students is also important in order to successfully navigate the planning and execution of groups in the school setting (Akos et al., 2004; Delucia-Waack, 2000). For instance, it is particularly important that school counselors be aware of and accommodate the educational needs of each group member, especially students who have disabilities and are served through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or who have a 504 plan through the Americans with Disabilities Act. As school employees, counselors need to follow the specified plans for each of these students while preparing them for and engaging them in the group process. In some cases, students may have documented group counseling interventions written into these plans, which could result in certain group members feeling mandated to join. School counselors need consent from caregivers to deliver on-going interventions with children and adolescents. This can result in school counselors needing the skills to help navigate differences in caregivers’ priorities and students’ wishes in order to provide necessary interventions and maintain successful relationships with both parties.

Maintaining connections with students may also be challenging when group counseling in the schools involves members regularly interacting with each other outside of the small group setting. While confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in group counseling in any setting, school counselors need to possess the skills to address the limitations of the group with members who are likely to be engaging with their peers on a daily basis (Bore et al., 2010). The negotiation of these challenges may have significant implications for the dynamics of each group and the productivity of its process. From a
logistical standpoint, school counselors also need to use their communication skills to successfully negotiate with staff and administrators for release time for students to participate in groups during the school day. Furthermore, if groups are run outside of the school day, counselors may need to support caregivers with issues around transportation or find confidential space to provide these interventions without the presence of building personnel. At times, this may equally require creative problem solving skills.

Group facilitation in the schools therefore represents an on-going process that utilizes the input and support of many stakeholders; it is important for school counselors to use a variety of skills to manage each of these roles while preserving strong connections with students. This likely requires school counselors to rely heavily on their group leadership knowledge and skills to initiate needs assessments, facilitate appropriate group interventions, and conduct outcome assessments that are consistent with the expectations of school and building administrators. Examining group leadership training can further help to understand how pre-service school counselors begin to develop these foundational skills and the confidence needed to successfully negotiate these challenges in practice.

**Group Leader Training**

“Good group leaders are not born; they are trained” (Barlow, 2004, p. 113).

While some pre-service counselors possess higher levels of conceptualization and interpersonal skills than others, much of the knowledge, skills, and demeanor needed to be effective group leaders are developed through training experiences. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is the
counseling profession’s recognized accrediting body that develops minimum standards for the education of pre-service counselors and provides accountability for the maintenance of this training. CACREP-accredited counseling programs align their training with eight common core curricular areas. One of these areas includes the foundational knowledge and skills expected for the practice of group work. According to CACREP (2009) standards, the development of group leadership includes both didactic instruction and experiential opportunities that cover various components of group work. These standards indicate that students must receive training in group dynamics, leadership styles, theories of group counseling and methods, and at least 10 hours of group membership over at least one full term of coursework.

The Professional Training of Group Workers (2000) includes recommendations for the percentage of practicum and internship time that should be devoted to group counseling. The professional standards for the training of group workers (ASGW, 2000) recommends that at least 10 of the 40 hours of practicum experience include working under supervision as a facilitator or co-facilitator of group. Furthermore, it is recommended that at least 60 of the 240 direct internship hours be spent under supervised group leadership or co-leadership. Many counseling graduate programs rely on both of these organizations and recognized standards to design group counseling curricula that foster the development of competent and confident pre-service group counselors.

**Group Counselor Development**

CACREP-accredited programs traditionally include didactic/academic instruction, observational learning, and experiential opportunities under supervision (Barlow, 2004;
Gladding, 2012; Ohrt et al., 2013; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). This training mirrors the sequential nature of counselor development. According to Granello and Underfer-Babalis (2004), “research has found that counselors-in-training increase in their cognitive complexity related to counseling as they complete more advanced levels of training” (p. 160). The progression of group leadership training from didactic instructions to facilitation equally requires the development of cognitive complexity as pre-service counselors begin to implement the knowledge and skills necessary to lead effective groups. Self-efficacy may be fostered throughout this process as pre-service counselors expand their conceptualization skills, become more confident, and begin to receive more opportunities to make decisions autonomously. As students find success, these experiences are likely to support future beliefs about their abilities to run groups.

ASGW (2000) recommends that at least one course in the counseling curriculum be devoted to “scope of practice, types of group work, group development, group process and dynamics, group leadership, and standards of training and practice for group workers” (p. 4). Downing, Smaby, and Maddux (2001) looked at the efficacy of a Skilled Group Counseling Training Model (SGCTM) that focused on competencies related to personal awareness of group leadership strengths and weaknesses, values and theoretical orientation, identification of a conceptual framework, understanding and application of group dynamics, and group process. The three proposed stages of counseling, exploring, understanding, and acting, follow a developmentally appropriate counselor trainee process. The first stage reviews basic counseling skills previously learned and focuses on pre-service counselors’ abilities to identify particular issues
within the group process. The second stage focuses on pre-service counselors’ abilities to convey empathic support and encourages skills that reflect understanding. The third stage is focused on the intentionality of the actions pre-service counselors choose in achieving goals for the group. A notable recommendation for counselor educators in Downing et al.’s (2001) study includes using this model to teach both basic counseling skills such as reflecting and summarizing and higher level group counseling skills such as case conceptualization and strategic planning. Specifically targeting both lower and higher level group counseling skills during training may help pre-service counselors feel more confident in their group leadership abilities.

According to Yalom and Leszcz (2005), perhaps the most important aspect of group counselor development includes group membership participation and/or opportunities to experience role-plays that promote empathy and provide observational learning. Mandating participation in a personal growth group, however, may result in ethical implications. For instance, depending on the structure of the group, professors who teach the didactic portion of the class in addition to facilitating the experiential growth group may find themselves in difficult dual relationships. This becomes especially problematic when the professor is evaluating student progress at the same time as facilitating a group in which students are encouraged to openly share personal details. To help minimize the potential negative impact, Kottler (2004) discusses safeguards that are often put in place to support ethical practice. Some of these include agreement of the experience through an informed consent process, discussion of students’ rights to participate in an alternative experience, or support for students to share as much or as
little information during group without being evaluated on the content of their discussions.

To support ethical practice graduate programs construct this experience in many different ways (Ohrt et al., 2013; Shumaker, Ortiz, & Brenninkmeyer, 2011), including using professors who are not connected to evaluation or more experienced counselors (e.g. doctoral students) to facilitate the growth groups. As cited in Ohrt (2013), some programs even break down the experience into structured or unstructured process groups that involve pre-service counselor self-disclosure or satisfy the experiential group member requirement through implementation of role plays. Following these experiences, pre-service counselors often have opportunities to practice facilitating groups with accompanying feedback provided by university faculty. As pre-service counselors reach the final stages of their group leadership training, they have additional opportunities to lead or co-lead groups under supervision in practicum and internship sites. These opportunities to observe others running groups and receive feedback specific to group leadership represent two areas of counselor training that have the potential to support the development of group leader self-efficacy.

**Common Practice in Group Leader Training**

Adherence to CACREP (2009) standards results in many graduate programs offering similar training practices for pre-service counselors. For pre-service school counselors, this includes demonstration of developmental knowledge with children and adolescents in individual and group settings (CACREP, 2009, Standard II.G; Standard III.A.6; Standard III.D.2). While there is some uniformity in group leader training with
respect to dissemination of content knowledge, accredited counseling programs have flexibility in the ways that they construct experiential opportunities for pre-service counselors. These programs support the acquisition of group leadership knowledge and skills through a combination of coursework and experiential learning.

**Didactic instruction.** Group counseling involves complex dynamics beyond individual counseling skills that expand the amount of information to cover (Barlow, 2004; Bore et al., 2010, Ohrt et al., 2014) and challenge graduate programs to develop creative ways to support the knowledge and skills needed for successful group leadership. Many CACREP-accredited programs satisfy the didactic portion of group leadership training with one course devoted to group counseling at the master’s level (Bore et al., 2010; Furr & Barret, 2000; Shumaker et al., 2011). According to the CACREP (2009) standards, pre-service counselors are exposed to group theory and dynamics, group leadership, counseling methods, ethics, and research. Additionally, it is important for students to be social justice advocates and approach group facilitation from a “diversity-sensitive perspective” (Ohrt et al., 2014, p. 98). This includes facilitating interventions that address intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group as a unit dynamics (Gladding, 2012).

To supplement didactic instruction, some graduate programs also provide opportunities during coursework for pre-service counselors to observe different types of group leaders, practice group leader skills with specific populations under supervision, and engage in mock group sessions (e.g. fishbowls) to hone in on particular group leader challenges. By incorporating academics, observation, and supervised experiential activities within coursework, counselor training programs may be structuring valuable experiential and
vicarious learning opportunities that promote the development of self-efficacy in group facilitation.

In a study by Ohrt et al. (2014), trainees expressed enthusiasm for the didactic portion of group leadership development. Some participants even shared desires to take a second course. This is consistent with Furr and Barret’s (2000) and ASGW’s (2000) recommendations that suggest the importance of extending group leadership training over two semesters. While research has clearly suggested the importance of didactic instruction in group leadership, this knowledge may only give students an intellectual understanding of process-oriented interactions. It is therefore suggested that for pre-service counselors to begin to develop beliefs about their abilities to be successful in their group leadership skills, they need opportunities to take their knowledge, be able to see it in action, and apply it during experiential portions of their training (Barbee, Scherer, & Combs, 2003; Ohrt et al., 2013). This includes supervised group counseling observation, facilitation and experiential group membership.

**Group membership.** The experiential components of group leadership are thought to have significant influence on group leader training and self-efficacy (Merta, Wolfgang, & McNeil, 1993; Shumaker et al., 2011; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Kottler (2004) suggests that without the opportunity to participate in a group, pre-service counselors will find it hard to ask their future clients to engage in interventions that create such vulnerability. Likewise, Barlow (2004) posits that skills are developed only after graduate students experience group affectively before intellectually. Despite some debate in the literature about the benefits of group membership during graduate training (Fall &
Levitov, 2002; Shumaker et al., 2011), CACREP (2009) standards require a minimum of 10 hours of participation in a training group. Many accredited programs infuse personal growth groups and/or psycho-education groups into pre-service group leader training to satisfy this minimum requirement (Ieva, Ohrt, Swank & Young, 2009; Ohrt et al., 2013).

Studies have suggested that pre-service counselors have found these training group membership opportunities to be beneficial to their overall learning (Furr & Barret, 2000; Ieva et al., 2009; Kline, Falbaum, Pope, Hargraves, & Hundley, 1997; Ohrt et al., 2013; Ohrt et al., 2014). Ieva and colleagues (2009) conducted a qualitative study that examined master’s level students’ perspectives of their membership in an experiential training group. Their participants indicated that the personal growth group experience afforded them opportunities to gain self-awareness, develop empathy for future clients, and observe more experienced group facilitators. Students also noted that they experienced greater interpersonal learning and deeper understanding of group dynamics. Overall, it was reported that these experiences contributed to participants feeling more confident in their group leadership abilities. Similarly, a significant finding in Ohrt et al.’s (2013) quantitative study found that students’ group leader self-efficacy increased with experiences participating in both psycho-education and personal growth training groups. The pre-service counselors in both studies participated in group as members, and highlighted the importance of observational learning as a potential key component to the development of their growth and confidence as group leaders.

**Group observation.** Yalom and Leszcz (2005) posit that effective group leader training occurs when students have opportunities to learn alongside experienced group
leaders. In these cases, pre-service counselors acquire knowledge in an apprentice role (Gladding, 2012). Opportunities to watch respected counselors utilize important skills and at times struggle with the intricate group dynamics themselves can be a validating experience for novice counselors that influence their self-efficacy (Barlow, 2004). Additionally, group leader observation can help pre-service counselors to privately compare their own skills with those of “experts” and be able to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses (Barlow, 2004).

Beginning counselors naturally experience some angst, especially as they recognize the complexities of group work (Erford, 2011; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). Opportunities to observe groups may minimize anxiety by allowing supervisees to obtain these experiences without feeling fully responsible for the progress of the group (Bore et al., 2010). Managing anxiety in this way may in turn have implications for increased self-efficacy around group leadership. The process of acquiring facilitation skills, observing them in action, and then applying them to their own groups under supervision is consistent with counselor development literature that suggests that pre-service counselors need to “move from factual knowledge to procedural knowledge” (Furr & Carroll, 2003, p. 483). Thus, didactic instruction combined with observational learning can be an important way to scaffold group leadership training and perhaps foster greater confidence in group facilitation.

Ohrt et al.’s (2014) qualitative study demonstrates some of the ways in which graduate programs provide opportunities for observational learning. Whether trainees were watching videos, observing professors during experiential exercises in the
classroom, learning from doctoral students who were leading their process groups, or co-leading groups in the field with more experienced group leaders, most participants appreciated opportunities to learn how others handled challenging events in the group process. Akos (2004) suggested that one of the ways to make these observational learning experiences most meaningful was to offer pre-service counselors opportunities to rotate leadership during experiential activities, so that students could also learn from each other. This has the potential to increase students’ self-efficacy by allowing for more facilitation and greater opportunities for connection through shared experiences.

Luke and Hackney (2007) discuss several co-leadership models and suggest that the junior-junior model, which includes two novice counselors working together under faculty supervision, is most prevalent during graduate coursework training. Benefits of the junior-junior pairing may include providing pre-service counselors with the comfort of sharing responsibilities of group leadership as well as opportunities to observe their peers practicing group leadership interventions. A junior-senior pairing, often used during internship placement, may likewise provide benefits, including allowing the pre-service counselor to observe and discuss interventions modeled by more experienced group counselors. These examples suggest that there may be multiple opportunities for group leader self-efficacy to develop through observational learning at various points in group leader training.

**Group leadership.** Opportunities to practice group leadership skills during training are thought to enhance the performance of group facilitation among pre-service counselors (Page et al., 2001; Rubel & Kline, 2008). In fact, some researchers (e.g. Bore
et al., 2010; Kottler, 2004) suggest that this is the most powerful aspect of group leader training. This is consistent with Bandura’s (1986) research that suggests that successful experiences are likely to be the greatest predictors of self-efficacy. Leadership experiences may therefore be most likely to enhance the confidence with which pre-service counselors run groups.

Bore et al. (2010) and others (e.g. Barlow, 2004; Kottler, 2004) specifically suggest that group facilitation is important because it helps pre-service counselors to understand the dynamics of group work outside of classroom instruction. These findings have been previously supported by Rubel and Kline’s (2008) qualitative study that indicated that experience leading groups helped participants to develop trust in group process while giving them more confidence in their group leadership abilities. These participants also felt that running groups afforded them opportunities to gain greater trust in their own abilities to manage future group member challenges. Ohrt et al.’s (2014) phenomenological study explored the training experiences of group leaders and similarly found that most participants highly valued opportunities to lead groups in the “real world” (p. 105). Many of their participants specifically mentioned appreciation for their overall experiential training, which included leading, co-leading, and participating in a group as a member. During coursework, pre-service counselors often have opportunities to practice leading or co-leading groups with peers as part of experiential class activities. This may occur as an extension of the personal growth group experience, where students begin to facilitate a small group of their peers or through mock counseling groups performed as fishbowl activities for the entire class. For many pre-service counselors,
class activities often represent their first experiences leading or co-leading groups. The amount and quality of these experiences may likewise impact the confidence with which pre-service counselors begin running groups in their practicum and internship fieldwork placements.

**Variability in Pre-Service School Counselor Group Training**

Research suggests that while there exists much support for group counseling in the schools (Akos, 2004; Balkin & Leddick, 2005; Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Shechtman, 2002), “its effectiveness and optimum utilization can only be realized if school counselors receive adequate pre-service training” (Bore et al., 2010, p. 6). According to studies with pre-service counselors (e.g. Al-Darmaki, 2004; Daniels & Larson, 2001), training can help to mitigate anxiety and provide the knowledge and feedback that may foster counselor self-efficacy. Inadequate training may therefore result in less confident counselors and subsequently, less motivation to offer groups in practice.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) competencies have generally addressed this concern by defining a set of school counselor competencies that are suggested for use by graduate training programs (ASCA, 2012b). This document posits that school counselor preparation programs provide students with the knowledge and skills to effectively initiate group counseling interventions. It also highlights the importance of students understanding various small-group counseling theories and techniques relevant to the K-12 population. For some graduate programs, the developmental needs of children and adolescents may be infused into all coursework, while other programs may offer developmental counseling courses for children and
adolescents as separate classes. Nevertheless, students who graduate from CACREP-accredited programs are expected to have gained knowledge of group dynamics and different types of groups offered in the school setting. CACREP standards also specify that school counselors should be able to work with K-12 students and “understand the effects of atypical growth and development” (CACREP, 2009, p. 40). Both ASCA competencies (2012b) and CACREP standards (2009) allude to the expectation that school counselors understand the developmental needs of all students in a K-12 population for which school counselor certification is offered; however, they do not explicitly define how graduate programs go about providing opportunities for students to gain this knowledge. Research has suggested that this may have implications for group counselor training (Bore et al., 2010; Steen et al., 2008). For instance, Bore et al. (2010) and Steen et al.’s (2008) studies reported that experiential opportunities with children and adolescents may be limited for some students. Given that experience is one of the strongest predictors of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986), these studies not only suggest variability in pre-service school counselor training but identify an area of training that may negatively impact the development of counselor self-efficacy.

Furthermore, according to Steen et al.’s (2008) study, there may be consequences for limited group work training with children and adolescents. Participants in their study “cited inadequate or no training as the reason they did not utilize group counseling in their schools” (Steen et al., 2008, p. 260). Thus, with limited access to group counseling observation and leadership, pre-service school counselors may feel less confident designing and initiating groups in practice. The importance of supervision during
internship in the training of group counselors as a way to support any and all group observation and leadership experiences becomes even more significant.

**Supervision**

Counseling supervision is defined as an intervention provided by a more seasoned professional to a junior member of the profession (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). This relationship is hierarchical, extends over time and integrates both formative and summative evaluation. Supervision is used to support the professional development of supervisees and to ensure the welfare of their respective clients. As such, it includes a gate-keeping responsibility and is intended to support ethical practice and professionalism.

One of the many benefits of supervision is that it can encourage counselor growth and confidence through feedback and support (Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001). As supervisees process their experiences, supervision provides opportunities to translate knowledge and skills into practice. As counselors experience mastery, process these experiences through feedback, and manage their emotional responses, they are likely to gain a greater sense of self-efficacy (Al-Darmaki, 2004; Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Daniels & Larson, 2001). Supervision is therefore an opportune time to help supervisees develop the efficacy needed to perform various counseling skills (Cashwell & Dooley, 2001).

Norcross, Hedges, and Castle (2002) compiled data that suggest that supervision is one of the highest endorsed activities of mental health professionals. Bernard and Goodyear (2009) examined many aspects of the supervisory experience and its
relationship to counselor development. In their review of the supervision literature, they concluded that competent supervisors help to merge classroom theoretical instruction with practice. Clinical supervisors accomplish this by focusing on counseling skills and professional development through the evaluation of supervisee performance (Studer, 2005). During this process, supervisors promote self-awareness and assist with the management of ambiguity often accompanying counselor development (Levitt & Jacques, 2005; Luke & Goodrich, 2012). As anxiety lessens, counselors likely become more confident as they approach new tasks (Al-Darmaki, 2004).

At the beginning of the supervisory experience, it is recommended that the supervisor initiate a “good faith” contract that details the evolving supervisory process (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). In addition to contact information and guidelines that outline the experience, the contract usually includes goals, tasks, expectations, roles, and evaluation methods that are discussed, agreed upon, and signed by both the supervisor and supervisee (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Studer, 2005). Specific attention is focused on fostering the knowledge and skills that meet the developmental needs of the supervisee (Furr & Carroll, 2003; Studer, 2005). Stoltenberg et al. (1998) found that this is especially important in working with pre-service counselors who may experience anxiety as they begin integrating knowledge and practice. Al-Darmaki’s (2004) research with pre-service counselors supported Stoltenberg et al.’s (1998) findings and suggested that with increased supervision, counselors-in-training were able to manage their anxiety more effectively and likewise experience an increase in counselor self-efficacy.
Supervisee development is also impacted by the roles taken on by the supervisor throughout the relationship. Bernard’s (1979) Discrimination Model highlights the value of supervisors as teachers, counselors, and consultants. At certain times, supervisors may need to provide more instruction or process supervisees’ emotional reactions to their clients, whereas later in supervisees’ development, they may provide more guidance and resources. Within each role, supervisors focus on specific skills related to counseling interventions, supervisees’ abilities to conceptualize the process, and their awareness of how their affect impacts their clients. Based on the individual needs of the supervisee, supervisors then choose strategies such as case discussion, role playing, journaling, and modeling to support counselor development (Studer, 2005). This process may be beneficial for both practicing counselors as well as counselors-in-training. Both may experience opportunities to further conceptualize cases and reflect on their own reactions to their clients. Depending on the situation, some pre-service counselors may initially need the supervisor to spend more time in the role of the teacher, while practicing counselors may require less directive intervention and more consultation. Both are equally likely to benefit from the supervisor in the role of counselor as they process their emotional reactions and reflect on their confidence in managing various client situations. Feedback associated with these experiences may be particularly important in the development of counselor self-efficacy.

**Supervision of Pre-Service School Counselors**

Pre-service school counselors are likely to receive various types of supervision throughout their training from both professors and site supervisors. Within individual
and group counseling coursework, students may be engaging in role plays, recorded counseling sessions with peers, or other experiential activities. Professors and/or more seasoned counselors (e.g., doctoral students) may provide clinical supervision of their knowledge and skill development during or outside of class time. These supervision practices embedded in coursework have the potential to enhance the development of counselor self-efficacy by providing pre-service school counselors with constructive feedback and a forum to discuss anxiety that surfaces from these new experiences.

Pre-service school counselors are likely to receive other forms of supervision during fieldwork training as well. Studer (2005) outlines the clinical and administrative supervision that is often provided to pre-service school counselors. In addition to focusing on clinical skill development, Studer (2005) suggests that administrative supervision should include discussions about the logistics of the school environment, record keeping, school culture, program delivery, and the development of a positive work ethic. Receiving feedback specific to the various school counselor roles may equally support school counselor identity development and the self-efficacy needed to initiate these tasks in the future.

Aside from Studer’s (2005) recommendations, most literature about school counseling supervision has been applied to practicing school counselors. Dollarhide and Miller (2006) identify different forms of supervision available to practicing school counselors: administrative, focused on organizational issues; developmental, centered on programmatic support; and clinical, involving discussion about counseling knowledge and skills. While each of these types of supervision is important to the success of a
school counselor, clinical supervision, thought to be particularly integral in the
development of counselor competence and self-efficacy (Cashwell & Dooley, 2001), is
least likely to be received (Herlihy, Gray, & McCollum, 2002). This may have
implications for practicing school counselors’ clinical skills as well as the amount, type,
and quality of supervision they provide to their interns. For instance, if supervision for
individual and group counseling skills becomes secondary to administrative and
programmatic support, pre-service school counselors may either not receive adequate
skills training or undervalue the development of their clinical knowledge during
practicum and internship. This may in turn have consequences for students’ clinical skill
development and the confidence they may need to initiate particular interventions.

**Supervision models.** Luke and Bernard’s (2006) School Counselor Supervision
Model (SCSM) is an adaptation of Bernard’s (1979) discrimination model designed to
support a comprehensive school counseling program. In addition to viewing counselors’
conceptualization, intervention, and personalization skills from one of three roles -
teacher, counselor, or consultant - the SCSM adds additional areas aligned with the
ASCA National Model (2012a). These may include large group classroom
developmental lessons and parent presentations, individual conferences with parents, and
counseling or consultation support for individual and group interventions. Supervision
may also address other school counseling responsibilities such as supporting the design of
a needs assessment for academic and career student planning or support for resource
referrals or other areas of the school system that can impact child and adolescent
development. This model suggests that focusing on counselor development within the
context of a comprehensive school counseling program can help supervisors support practicing school counselors and pre-service counselors with the specific skills needed to be successful in the school environment. Site supervisors need relevant training to provide these levels of supervision with fidelity.

Wood and Rayle (2006) developed a supervision model specific to pre-service school counselors that includes focusing on the goals of supervision, functions of a school counselor, role designations, and systems that influence the supervisory experience. Integrating Bordin’s (1983) working alliance model of supervision with Bernard’s (1979) discrimination model, there are five identified roles (evaluator, adviser, coordinator, teacher, and mentor) highlighted that support school counselor specific duties pertaining to administrators, parents, academic planning, program implementation, teaching, and school counselor advocacy (Wood & Rayle, 2006). In the evaluator role, the site supervisor must provide constructive feedback to support the professional development of the supervisee. In the advising role, the supervisor provides guidance and support for decision making. As a coordinator, the supervisor may need to arrange internship activities specific to the needs of the school, and in the roles of teacher and mentor, a supervisor may disseminate information or support the supervisee with resources and networking connections. Each of these areas is impacted by the school system. This requires the site supervisor to explicitly understand these roles in the context of the environment in order to differentiate their supervision to meet the individual needs of each supervisee. While many aspects of the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor are covered within these supervision models, attention to group
facilitation is not specifically addressed. This may have implications for the future initiation of group counseling interventions and the confidence needed to support their advocacy and maintenance in practice.

**Site supervision training.** Dollarhide and Miller (2006) suggest that school counselors are likely to become supervisors and that graduate preparation should include coursework in supervision training. Unfortunately, several researchers suggest that this training has not occurred for many practicing school counselors, which potentially leaves them with minimal supervision preparation (DeKruyf & Pehrsson, 2011; Murphy & Kaffengerber, 2007; Studer, 2005). Several researchers have suggested focusing on specific supervisory practices to help ensure that site supervisors receive “relevant training.” Studer (2005) emphasizes the development of supervisees and discusses the roles, expectations, and types of supervision (e.g. clinical, developmental, and administrative) needed to support pre-service school counselors throughout their training. Accompanying strategies such as role-playing, live supervision, and journaling are examples of suggested interventions. Opportunities to receive feedback through these supervisory experiences may be likely to support the development of counselor self-efficacy (Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Daniels & Larson, 2001).

Bernard and Goodyear (2009) suggest that the “relevant training of supervisors” outlined in the CACREP (2009) standards (III.C.4) should include both didactic information about models, counselor development, supervision, the supervisory relationship, evaluation, executive skills, ethical, legal, and professional regulatory issues and accompanying experiential exercises. Site supervisory training for pre-service school
counselors, however, is not further specified in the CACREP (2009) standards or the ASCA School Counselor Competencies (2012b), leaving training to the discretion of each graduate program. Without further accountability, this may result in inconsistent clinical site supervision in the schools (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Studer, 2005; Swank & Tyson, 2012). Furthermore, Herlihy et al. (2002) suggest that with poor modeling, this pattern may become cyclical when pre-service school counselors take on supervisees themselves. This may have detrimental implications for the confidence with which these students practice as well as the supervision they may provide to others. With research suggesting that observational learning is an important predictor of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986), pre-service counselors who experience poor modeling may be missing opportunities to further develop confidence running groups as well as providing group counseling supervision to future pre-service school counselors.

One way to increase the fidelity of supervision is to provide instruction within master’s level coursework. While some current graduate programs offer supervision courses to master’s level pre-service school counselors, many programs only provide supervision training at the doctoral level (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006). To date, CACREP (2009) standards for masters level school counseling programs do not focus on supervision training, which according to Dollarhide and Miller (2006) may result in supervisory skills being considered an afterthought. Consequently, site supervisors who have not received training beyond the information provided by their supervisees’ graduate programs may lack the supervisory skills to provide adequate clinical supervision. Without mandates for supervisory training during continuing education
hours for practicing school counselors, it is possible that site supervisors will continue to train pre-service school counselors throughout their careers without the knowledge and skills needed to promote competent and ethical practice. The focus of site supervision may therefore have a significant impact on clinical skill development and the self-efficacy needed to support the performance and maintenance of these skills in practice.

**Supervision of Group Counseling**

Many pre-service counselors receive group leader supervision from faculty or advanced doctoral students during the experiential aspect of training. The amount of supervision may vary depending on the counseling department. Additional group leader supervision is provided during fieldwork experiences. CACREP (2009) standards indicate that fieldwork must include opportunities for pre-service counselors to experience both individual and group counseling under trained supervisors. This implies that students will likewise receive supervision for both of these clinical interventions. According to research, however, many pre-service counselors have not been satisfied or desire additional supervision in group counseling (Bore et al., 2010; Ohrt et al., 2014; Steen et al., 2008). Not only can this have implications for current practice, but it also may convey implicit messages about the superiority of individual work over group counseling. Without specific attention given to group facilitation, pre-service counselors could feel that group counseling interventions are less important or that supervision is not needed in developing competence around group leadership. Furthermore, without feedback specific to these experiences, pre-service counselor self-efficacy may equally suffer.
Yalom and Leszcz (2005) have expressed similar concern with the inferior training for group leadership, especially because researchers have found that supervision specific to group work is particularly important for the acquisition of group leader knowledge and skills (Bore et al., 2010; Granello & Underfer-Babalis, 2004; Rubel & Okech, 2006; Soo, 1998). This is especially true for pre-service counselors, as Granello and Underfer-Babalis (2004) explicitly note that “supervision is an essential component of training for group leaders because of the complexity in running a group, especially for the novice counselor” (p. 159). More specifically, other researchers have found that supervision of group work provides opportunities to increase self-awareness (Rubel & Kline, 2008) and manage anxiety that may impact performance (Christensen & Kline, 2001). This is important as the dynamics of group process can present many challenges, even for pre-service counselors who demonstrate competence and confidence in their individual counseling skills (Erford, 2010).

**Group counselor supervision models.** While research suggests the importance of supervision for group leadership (Bore et al., 2010; Granello & Underfer-Babalis, 2004; Rubel & Okech, 2006), challenges associated with the complexities of group leadership skill development are equally noted (e.g. Rubel & Okech, 2006). Not only do pre-service counselors need to refine their basic counseling skills, learn to manage group dynamics, and gain awareness of their own emotional reactions to the process, Rubel and Okech (2006) suggest that they also need to develop accurate conceptualization and intervention skills over three group interaction levels: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group as a system. Furthermore, Rubel and Okech (2006) suggest that pre-service
counselors may experience even more complex personalization, or reactions to the dynamics between group members, which can impact their group leadership development and confidence. As an extension of the Discrimination Model (Bernard, 1979), Rubel and Okech (2006) proposed a Supervision of Group Work (SGW) model that provides supervisors with a structure to address each of these areas of group leadership development. Based on a 3x3x3 matrix, intervention, conceptualization, and personalization skills are explored at each of the three interaction levels. During supervision, this might include the supervisor encouraging the facilitator to identify members who continually change the conversation to a lighter discussion (conceptualization skill). Through the supervisory discussion, the facilitator might choose to share this feedback (intervention skill) with the group members at their next meeting while identifying its impact on the group’s process. In another instance, supervisors may help group leaders to identify their own personal reactions to members who continually interrupt each other (personalization skills). During the next group, they may encourage them to share these personal reactions to help model appropriate ways to share feedback. Within the (SGW) model, supervisees’ development is continually assessed, and the supervisor will spend time in the teacher, counselor, and consultant roles, depending on the amount of structure needed.

Granello and Underfer-Babalis (2004) offer a developmental approach to group leadership supervision. Their model focuses on supervisees’ cognitive complexity through application of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Bloom’s Taxonomy represents a model of cognitive development that describes the process by which people conceptualize
There are six positions (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) arranged in order of complexity. Supervisees learn to make meaning of their experiences in more complex ways as they develop knowledge and comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation skills related to their group leadership. Supervisors are encouraged to pose questions and engage supervisees through role plays and other experiential exercises to assess and support growth in more complex ways. For instance, as supervisees gain more experience running groups, the supervisors’ expectations may go from asking the supervisee to define the group leader’s role in designing and initiating a group intervention (knowledge) to initiating an evaluation that measures how the goals of the group were established (evaluation; Granello & Underfer-Babalis, 2004). Using Bloom’s Taxonomy, the supervisor can assess development at various points in the supervisory process and employ specific strategies (e.g. modeling, role-playing) that meet the needs of each group member.

Specific attention to the supervision of group work is especially important for the development of pre-service school counselors. Bore et al. (2010) posit that “while trainees are leading real children’s groups, they would benefit from regular supervision from their instructors, mentors, or other experienced group facilitators” (p. 10) to help connect theory with practice and allow for greater development of group counseling skills. According to CACREP (2009), group facilitation skills need to be assessed throughout graduate training, including during fieldwork supervision. Practicing school counselors often work very closely with their supervisees throughout their fieldwork
placements as they model navigation of the roles and responsibilities of their current positions. For pre-service school counselors, this may allow for additional opportunities to observe and co-facilitate senior-junior run groups during fieldwork. Valuable observational learning and consultation opportunities may exist in these scenarios. While there are no models specific school counseling supervision of group counseling to date, junior-senior co-leadership, whereby the pre-service counselor co-facilitates with the practicing school counselor site supervisor (Luke & Hackney, 2007), seems to be one practical model that has the potential to increase both competent and confident practice. More opportunities for pre-service school counselors to experience and observe others successfully running groups may likewise result in students experiencing greater group leader self-efficacy.

While there are many avenues through which pre-service school counselors can obtain supervision during coursework and throughout their fieldwork placements, research suggests that adequate supervision specific to group leadership may not always occur (Bore et al., 2010). With the potential for such variability in site supervision (Ohrt et al., 2014), it is plausible that students’ beliefs about their abilities to be successful running groups may waver as a result. Examining aspects of the site supervisory experience that can support self-efficacy may help to highlight important areas in which pre-service school counselors can further develop confidence in their group leadership skills.

**Group counselor site supervision and self-efficacy.** Previously researched connections between counselor self-efficacy and supervision provide an impetus to
further examine site supervisory practices in relation to pre-service school counselors’ group leader self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1977/2009), self-efficacy is fostered through performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. Aspects of the internship supervision experience that include each of these areas are therefore likely to impact graduate students’ motivation and performance of group leadership. The following section will address each of these aspects as they appear within the experiences of group leadership training during site supervision.

Internship represents one aspect of training in which pre-service school counselors receive on-going supervision. Observation and supervised practice of individual and group counseling experiences are expected of pre-service school counselors who attend CACREP-accredited counseling programs. Steen et al.’s (2008) findings indicate that the internship experience was “highly valued” (p. 262) by participants as they reflected on their group leadership training. More specifically, internship allowed many respondents some of their first opportunities to design and conduct groups with children and adolescents and do so within the context of the school environment. Steen and colleagues suggested that this was particularly important, as pre-service school counselors need to learn how to navigate school culture. Participants noted the importance of having opportunities to receive supervision on school-specific contextual factors such as dialoguing with staff, managing student schedules, and navigating other logistical issues such as the length of each session and communication with stakeholders. Performance mastery is closely connected to the development of self-
efficacy (Bandura, 1986), and these supervised experiences seem to be a valuable part of pre-service school counselor development.

Steen et al.’s (2008) study also highlighted the importance of observation in the training of pre-service school counselors. This literature has been supported by Rubel and Kline (2008) and Ohrt and colleagues (2013) whose studies each found that observing an experienced facilitator in practice gave pre-service counselors more confidence in their abilities. These researchers and others (e.g. Ohrt et al., 2014) also found that many participants especially appreciated opportunities to co-lead groups because it allowed them to manage the process more smoothly and also afforded them opportunities to observe more seasoned counselors handling challenging group dynamics in the here and now. This is important, as developing efficacy through vicarious learning may provide increased motivation for pre-service school counselors to initiate groups and persist when faced with future challenges.

Counseling success and mastery are often tied into the feedback pre-service counselors receive regarding their leadership experiences (Daniels & Larson, 2001). As such, verbal persuasion is an important aspect of supervision connected to the development of counselor self-efficacy. Research suggests that opportunities to process experiences of leading, co-leading, and observing groups helps pre-service school counselors to develop their leadership skills (Ohrt et al., 2014; Steen et al., 2008). During this time, pre-service counselors also have opportunities to process anxiety that arises after performing group leader interventions. According to Bandura (1986), one’s ability
to manage physiological responses (anxiety) is important in the development of self-efficacy.

The relationship between supervisor and supervisee is also likely to be an important factor in pre-service counselors’ abilities to manage emotions that arise during group leadership. Worthen and McNeill (1996) conducted a phenomenological study in which participants indicated more confidence in their overall counseling abilities with a good supervisory relationship. Specifically, they felt that the supervisor’s willingness to self-disclose helped to normalize their experiences, take risks, and manage disappointments. Supervisees’ comfort to disclose their own vulnerabilities, such as their experience with anxiety during group leadership, may therefore be influenced by the supervisory relationship. While the natural development of supervisees’ decision-making from more dependent to more self-assured can also explain supervisees’ growth in confidence and abilities to manage anxiety (Stoltenberg et al., 1998), supervision received during internship has the potential to include many specific experiences that can support the development of their counselor self-efficacy.

**Site supervision and group leader self-efficacy.** Research has suggested that the supervision of group counseling for many pre-service counselors may be lacking (Bore et al., 2010; Steen et al. 2008; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). In two studies that examined perceptions of supervision specific to group leadership training, participants either expressed general dissatisfaction with their supervisory experiences (Bore et al., 2010) or specifically discussed desires for more effective supervision (Ohrt et al., 2014). This is particularly concerning for pre-service school counselors who might be leading
groups with children and adolescents for the first time and who may not receive much clinical supervision in their future practices. Lack of experiences running groups with younger populations and/or minimal opportunities to receive feedback about these experiences may have implications for students’ group leader self-efficacy. Therefore, exploring pre-service school counselors’ perceptions of their supervisory experiences, including feedback specific to group leadership, group leader observation, and the management of anxiety may help to understand aspects of site supervision that impact group leader self-efficacy.

Chapter Summary

In CACREP-accredited counseling programs, most supervisees are expected to engage in group leadership planning, observation, and practice throughout their fieldwork experiences. In order to do so competently and confidently, they need to develop self-efficacy in their group leadership skills. The preparation of group leadership represents an important aspect of counselor training that can foster self-efficacy. While most graduate counseling programs afford students opportunities to develop and reinforce group counseling knowledge, skills, and attitudes through course work and experiential group membership and practice, much of this learning may likely be with adults. This may have consequences for the confidence with which pre-service school counselors begin to lead groups during fieldwork. If the supervised practice of group counseling skills with children and adolescents during fieldwork is also limited or the focus of supervision includes only minimal group leadership, pre-service school counselors may
lack the necessary skills to lead groups with confidence. This may have further implications for supervisees’ developing group leader self-efficacy.

While counselor self-efficacy has been explored in relation to clinical supervision and general counseling skills (Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Daniels & Larson, 2001; Larson, 1998; Larson & Daniels, 1998; Larson et al., 1992), there is a paucity of research that has examined pre-service counselors’ group leader self-efficacy as it relates to their internship supervisory experiences. Higher self-efficacy specific to group leadership may lead to more efforts to plan, initiate, and conduct group counseling, consistent with research connecting self-efficacy with performance outcomes (Daniels & Larson, 2001). Identifying factors related to the site supervisory experience that may predict group leader self-efficacy enables further understanding of the development of group counselors and supports the identification of future training needed to foster confident practice. The following chapter will detail the methodology and procedures used to understand site supervisory factors that impact pre-service school counselors’ group leader self-efficacy.
Chapter Three

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate site supervisory experiences that predict group leader self-efficacy. This study explored four aspects of pre-service school counselors’ site supervisory experiences specific to group counseling: (1) leading/co-leading and designing group counseling sessions with children and adolescents, (2) observing group counseling sessions with children and adolescents, (3) receiving feedback specific to group leadership with children and adolescents, and (4) managing anxiety specific to group leadership with children and adolescents. The methods outlined in this chapter were designed to answer the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. What aspects of the site supervisory experience predict group leader self-efficacy?
   a. Does experience leading/co-leading and designing groups with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training predict group leader self-efficacy?
   b. To what extent is observation of group counseling with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training associated with group leader self-efficacy?
   c. To what extent is receiving feedback specific to group leadership with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training associated with group leader self-efficacy?
d. To what extent are supervisees’ abilities to manage anxiety specific to group leadership with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training associated with group leader self-efficacy?

e. Controlling for the others, which of these aspects of the site supervisory experience is most strongly associated with group leader self-efficacy?

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested:

**H1**: There is a relationship between group leader self-efficacy for pre-service school counselors and the amount of experience these counselors have had leading/co-leading and designing group sessions with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training.

**H2**: There is a relationship between group leader self-efficacy for pre-service school counselors and the amount of observed group sessions these counselors have had with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training.

**H3**: There is a relationship between group leader self-efficacy for pre-service school counselors and receiving feedback specific to group leadership with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship site supervision.

**H4**: There is a relationship between group leader self-efficacy for pre-service school counselors and the management of anxiety around group leadership with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship supervision.

In addition to the dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy and the identified independent variables, experience leading/co-leading and designing groups, observing
groups led by others, receiving feedback specific to group leadership, and the management of anxiety, a number of control variables including demographic information (i.e. age, gender, and teaching experience) and general self-efficacy were initially chosen. Demographic information (i.e. age, gender, and prior teaching experience) were examined as control variables in an effort to understand the unique contributions of each of the four aspects of the site supervisory experience (i.e. experience, observation, feedback, and anxiety) on group leader self-efficacy. These variables were specifically chosen because of their previously identified relationships to the construct of self-efficacy. For example Bodenhorn and Skaggs (2005) found that gender and teaching experience impact self-efficacy for school counselors and Larson and Daniels (1998) reported studies that found a small relationship between counselor age and self-efficacy.

General self-efficacy was another control variable examined in this study. In the development of *The Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory*, Larson et al. (1992) measured respondents’ self-concept and found that those who reported having higher counseling self-efficacy had moderately higher self-concepts as well. This suggests that how participants feel about themselves may impact their counselor self-efficacy. As such, the researcher chose to measure and control for general self-efficacy as it related to the dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy. By examining general self-efficacy and each of the demographic variables discussed above (i.e. age, gender, and prior teaching experience), the researcher attempted to address some of the confounding variables, which could influence the regression model and subsequently, the researcher’s
understanding of the true relationships between experience, observation, feedback, and the management of anxiety and group leader self-efficacy.

Confounding variables potentially impact the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (Field, 2009). For instance, some pre-service school counselors may be trained in a school counseling program, whereas others may be trained in a program that also offers other counseling concentrations (e.g. mental health counseling). This could potentially influence the amount of focus on child and adolescent development and/or the amount of focus on group counseling. In these cases, students may be attending and processing their school counseling internship experiences in the accompanying internship class with only pre-service school counselors or with pre-service counselors from other counseling backgrounds. As such, the development of group leader self-efficacy working with children and/or adolescents may also be influenced by the nature of feedback received during the internship course. While each of the four initial control variables (age, gender, teaching experience, and general self-efficacy) were considered in an effort to address some of the potential confounding variables, upon examination of the correlation matrix, the researcher determined that there was no statistically significant relationships between age, gender, teaching experience, and the dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy. As a result, general self-efficacy was the only control variable added to the regression models.

**Method**

The researcher conducted descriptive research with a group of pre-service school counselors who were concurrently enrolled in internship and an accompanying
counseling internship course. Descriptive research studies involve collecting observational self-report data from a pre-existing group (Gay et al., 2011). For this dissertation, a descriptive study with a correlational research design was chosen because the researcher was interested in describing the relationship between related variables (i.e. leadership/design experience, observation, feedback, and anxiety) as they impacted group leader self-efficacy of a pre-existing group of pre-service school counselors. Correlational research is considered non-experimental because there is no variable manipulation (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) and no comparison group. The researcher examined naturally occurring events during participants’ internships, without influencing their experiences in any way.

Correlational research, however, does have its limitations, including lack of ability to establish causality (Field, 2009). For instance, although this study suggests that there is a significant relationship between receiving feedback specific to running groups with children and/or adolescents and group leader self-efficacy, it cannot be determined that these experiences have caused the difference in group leader self-efficacy scores; rather, the results indicate that receiving feedback has an impact on group leader self-efficacy.

**Sample**

The sample for this study included pre-service school counseling students from CACREP-accredited counseling programs participating in a school counseling internship under approved site supervision. Students who attend CACREP-accredited programs have been trained to facilitate groups and are required to have experiences leading groups
during internship (CACREP, 2009, Standard III.G.1). Additionally, students’ internship site supervisors are required to understand the counseling programs’ expectations and requirements and have received relevant supervision training (CACREP, 2009, III.C.3; III.C.4). Limiting the sample to students from CACREP-accredited programs may have helped to standardize some of the variables associated with counselor training and site supervisory practices.

Developmentally, Stoltenberg et al. (1998) suggest that supervisees seek more autonomy as their skills and confidence develop throughout their training. Internship was chosen because it represented the culminating training experience for pre-service school counselors and as such, site supervisors may provide more opportunities for pre-service school counselors to independently design and facilitate group counseling interventions with children and/or adolescents in the school setting. This study examined students who were in varying stages of their internship training, including those who had just started working in their sites and others who were in their last semesters of their program. Participants were initially recruited using convenience sampling from CACREP-accredited school counseling programs in the greater New Jersey area. Convenience sampling is a statistical method used to elicit easily accessible participants. Heppner, Wampold, and Kivlighan (2008) posit that convenience sampling is not necessarily representative of the population, which for this study, limits the generalizability of the results. This sample was also limited to programs who allowed for research to be conducted during academic time and to students who chose to participate.
In order to address some of the limitations of convenience sampling, the researcher chose to design parameters around participants in this study. For instance, the researcher chose to limit her sample to CACREP-accredited counseling programs in an effort to ensure that all participants have been trained under the same minimum school counseling preparation standards. Limiting the sample to accredited programs may also have helped to ensure that the sample population accurately reflected the intended target population. The majority of the sample was initially collected from the eastern United States. In addition, there were also a few schools solicited from the midwestern and western parts of the country.

**Sample Size.** The researcher considered the statistical significance level to determine how much risk she was willing to take that the results were due to an actual effect. To minimize the chances of rejecting the null hypothesis when it was actually true (Type 1 error), the researcher set the level of significance to $\alpha = .05$, meaning that she was willing to take a 5% risk that any effect found in the study may be inaccurate. A level of $\alpha = .01$ represents a more conservative risk because it decreases the chances of making a Type I error to 1%, yet increases the risk of making a Type II error. It is important to keep the probability of accepting the null hypothesis when it is actually false (Type II error) to a reasonable minimum because otherwise, the researcher may report that there is no relationship between variables when one actually exists. Because this study was exploratory and seeking to examine relationships, rather than causality, $\alpha = .05$, the most commonly used significance level, was an acceptable level of risk and used in this study (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).
The accepted level for a Type II error is no more than \( \beta = .20 \) (Cohen, 1992). This indicates that the researcher was willing to take a 20% chance that she would find that the predictor variables have no effect on group leader self-efficacy when in fact they do. Statistical power is the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is false. In examining statistical power for this study, \( 1 - \beta = .80 \) was used to determine the number of participants needed to detect an effect when one exists (Cohen, 1992).

The effect size is the standardized difference between the population mean given by the null hypothesis and the actual population mean (Field, 2009). In this case, the effect size is the difference between these two population means divided by the population standard deviation. This concept of effect size can be extended to more complex statistical models. For multiple regression analyses, the effect size is given by the coefficient of determination (\( R^2 \)). \( R^2 \) is the percentage of the variation in the dependent variable that is explainable by the regression model. In this study, the researcher chose to examine the adjusted \( R^2 \) contribution for each predictor variable. This decision was made because adjusted \( R^2 \) more accurately reflects the intended population, as it only increases when a new variable improves the model. In this case, a larger adjusted \( R^2 \) demonstrated that group leader self-efficacy was more highly impacted by the various predictor variables utilized in the analysis.

There is an interdependency between the significance level \( \alpha \), the effect size, the sample size, and the power level of the statistical analysis. When designing a statistical study, the researcher used her selections regarding the significance level \( \alpha \) and the power level as well as an assumption regarding the effect size in order to determine the required
sample size for the study. In doing so, the researcher used the G*Power tool to compute the sample sizes needed to achieve a power of .80, assuming various small, medium, and large effect sizes of $R^2 = .01$, $R^2 = .06$, and $R^2 = .14$ respectively. In each of these runs, an alpha of .05 was assumed. The resulting required sample sizes were as follows:

- small effect size $n = 1558$
- medium effect size $n = 254$
- large effect sizes $n = 105$

Based on this information, the researcher initially attempted to collect at least 260 completed participant responses for her study, indicating a medium effect size. Due to missing survey data, the researcher also targeted several CACREP-accredited school counseling programs outside of the northeastern portion of the United States to ensure that an adequate sample size was reached. Including participants from multiple universities also increased the representativeness of the sample and helped to minimize the risk of the results of the study being skewed by the nuances of a particular school’s program.

**Instrument**

A 67-item survey was employed, which included the 37-item adapted *Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory* (COSE; Larson et al., 1992), two items that formed a composite measure of group leadership/design experience, a question specific to the number of group counseling sessions observed by each participant, three questions which formed a composite item related to the frequency, specific discussions, and meaningfulness of the feedback participants received specific to group leadership, and a 6-item adapted short
state anxiety scale (S-STAI; Marteau & Bekker, 1992). The Generalized Self-Efficacy instrument (GSES; Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) and demographic questions that aligned with the other three control variables in the study (e.g., gender, age, teaching experience) were also included. Participants had the option of responding to the gender variable with “female” or “other.” The researcher chose to provide those choices assuming that the majority of participants would identify as women based on the demographics of the counseling field and also to ensure that participants who identify as transgender would be included in this sample.

Measures

The Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE). The Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory (Larson et al., 1992) was created to measure a “counselor’s beliefs or judgments about his or her capabilities to effectively counsel a client in the near future” (p. 180). It is the most widely used tool to measure counselor self-efficacy and is the only measure of this kind to report adequate reliability and validity estimates (Larson & Daniels, 1998). The COSE has been used frequently with trainees to measure counselor self-efficacy as it relates to several of the variables of interest in this study, including: training and supervision, performance feedback, and anxiety. For example, using the COSE, Kozina et al. (2010) found an increase in counseling students’ self-efficacy following instruction and supervision of students’ understanding and mastery of microskills. This study and others (e.g. Al-Darmaki, 2004) suggest the impact of different aspects of training on counselor self-efficacy. Daniels and Larson (2001) measured the impact of performance feedback and counselor self-efficacy using the
Cose with pre-service counselors. Their pre/posttest results suggested that negative performance feedback negatively impacted participants’ counselor self-efficacy. Similarly, Al-Darmaki (2004) used the COSE as a pre/post assessment to measure students’ self-efficacy in relation to their levels of anxiety. The COSE has been translated into other languages (e.g. Arabic) and equally shown to demonstrate adequate reliability and validity scores (Al-Darmaki, 2004).

The dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy, was measured by adapting this tool and requesting that participants consider their group leadership experiences during practicum and internship when answering each of the questions. Additionally, the word “group” was either added to appropriate statements or substituted for the word “client” as it appeared throughout the measure. The author obtained permission to adapt this tool accordingly.

In this instrument, participants rated 37 items on a Likert Scale from (1) “strongly disagree” to (6) “strongly agree.” Examples of some of the questions included, “I feel that I have enough fundamental knowledge to do effective group counseling,” and “I feel that I will not be able to respond to the group in a non-judgmental way.” Both positive and negative statements were included and randomly placed throughout the measure.

A factor analysis yielded five domains: microskills, attending to process, difficult client behavior, cultural competence, awareness, and values (Larson et al., 1992). Microskills include 12 items whose factor loadings ranged from .41 to .64. These items focus on skills obtained in pre-practicum courses. The process domain included 10 items with factor loadings from .43 to .58. This domain centers on the way counselors use
skills with their clients. The third domain includes Difficult Client Behaviors. This factor has 7 items with factor loadings ranging from .46 to .63 and focuses on the way counselors manage challenging clients. The fourth domain involves Cultural Competence and contains four items with factor loadings from .51 to .66. These questions include working with clients from different racial/cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. The fifth domain, Awareness and Values, is measured with four items with factor loadings of .42 to .64. These questions reflect the counselors’ awareness of their own values and biases.

Even though this scale incorporated five factors, Larson and colleagues suggested that a total score should be used, rather than subscales due to the lower reliability coefficients for each factor. Therefore, the researcher chose to use one composite score as a measure of her dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy. According to the authors, items that were worded negatively on the COSE should be reversed scored, so that higher scores indicate a greater sense of efficacy. Possible scores could range from 37 to 222, with higher scores reflecting greater counselor self-efficacy. A composite score for group leader self-efficacy was obtained by adding up each item on the survey.

**Reliability and validity.** Overall, Larson et al. (1992) found that there is a high degree of internal consistency on the COSE scale, as evidenced by a Cronbach’s alpha of .93. This high degree of internal consistency was confirmed by Meyer’s (2012) study, which produced an alpha for the overall COSE of .94. In addition, Larson et al. (1992) calculated Cronbach’s alpha for each of the five factor scores of the COSE. These are as follows: microskills .88, process .87, difficult client behaviors .80, cultural competence
.78, and awareness of values .62. Even though the alphas for the first three factors (microskills, process, and difficult client behaviors) are considered good, the alphas for the last two may suggest a questionable level of internal consistency. In light of this, Larson et al. (1992) recommend only using a composite score. Using an adapted version of the COSE measure and the suggested composite score, the researcher calculated an $\alpha = .91$ for the present study, which falls in the range of previous studies who have used this measure.

For the composite COSE scale, test-retest reliability over three weeks was $r = .99$. Individually, microskills was $r = .98$, process $r = .99$, difficult client behaviors $r = .97$, cultural competence $r = 1.00$, and awareness of values, was $r = .94$. These test-retest correlations are all very high (Larson et al.).

Larson et al. (1992) also examine the relationship that the COSE scores have to several other behaviors, aptitudes and abilities. They found that the COSE scores have no significant correlation with academic aptitude/achievement, personality, and self-criticism/attitudes. While the COSE scores have a strong statistically significant correlation with the positive portion of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS), its correlation with the self-criticism portion of the TSCS was non-significant. On the other hand, COSE scores have statistically significant positive relationships with problem solving ability and self-concept and to a lesser degree, social desirability. Lastly, the COSE composite score has been found to have a statistically significant relationship with both the state and trait components of anxiety. These relationships suggest that counselor self-efficacy has convergent validity with self-concept, problem solving ability, and to
some degree social desirability, while counselor self-efficacy has discriminant validity with self-criticism and anxiety.

To ensure that the COSE accurately measures what it is intended to measure, it is also important to consider predictive validity analyses for this instrument. Larson et al. (1992) analyzed three measures for this purpose: the Satisfaction with Course Performance (SCP), the Mock Interview Outcome Expectations (MOE), and the Behavioral Rating Form (BFR). The SCP is a three question survey about the participants’ own views of their performance in their counseling course. The MOE is a one question assessment about the students’ anticipated performance on a mock interview experience. The BFR is an 18 item assessment of students’ performances on the mock interview covering various microskills. Graduate students serve as the raters of the participants’ performance on the BFR. All three of these scales had statistically significant positive correlations with the composite COSE scores. Both the SCP and the MOE had a strong relationship with the COSE scores, while the BFR had a moderate relationship. Since both the SCP and the MOE are self-reports of the students’ perceptions of their abilities, it is expected that they would have a strong relationship with the COSE scale. On the other hand, since the BFR is a measure of the students’ actual performances as viewed by outside raters with experience in the field, the fact that this measure has a moderate relationship to the COSE demonstrates the predictive power of the COSE scale related to counselor performance.

Adapted Short Form of the State Scale of the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). Bandura (1986) suggests that fears are often associated with a lack of
confidence in managing events that seem uncontrollable and unpredictable. According to Page et al. (2001), the ambiguity and complexities of group counseling have the potential to create anxiety in counselor trainees. As such, trainees’ abilities to manage this anxiety may have implications for the development of self-efficacy specific to group leadership.

Larson and Daniels’ (1998) review of the counselor self-efficacy literature suggested that Spielberger’s original *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory* (STAI; 1983) is significantly correlated with counselor self-efficacy; a well validated short version of the state scale of the *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory* (S-STAI; Marteau & Bekker, 1992) was thus used in this study to measure participants’ state anxiety related to group leadership. According to Tluczek, Henriques, and Brown (2009), “the state scale was designed to measure the transient state of arousal subjectively experienced as anxiety” (p. 20). In other words, this measure captures the amount of anxiety experienced in the present moment; higher scores indicate less anxiety, either due to the absence of anxiety entirely or participants’ abilities to manage it effectively.

The six item short form of the state scale of the Spielberger *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory* (S-STAI; Spielberger, 1983) was accompanied with directions for participants to focus their responses on feelings related to their experiences with group leadership. Three of the questions referred to anxiety-present emotions (i.e. tense, upset, worried) and the other three inquired about anxiety-absent feelings (i.e. calm, relaxed, content). This scale included reliability and validity scores consistent with Spielberger’s (1983) *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory*. In order to address group leadership experiences, the researcher adapted items on the scale to focus participants on how they feel specifically
thinking about their group leadership experiences during practicum and internship. Examples of questions on this instrument included, “When I lead or co-lead a group session, I am tense,” and “When I lead or co-lead a group sessions, I am relaxed.” Participants were asked to describe themselves in relation to their feelings around group leadership using a four-point Likert scale: 1 = Not at all, 2 = Somewhat, 3= Moderately, 4 = Very Much. A composite score was calculated by first reverse scoring the three anxiety-present items and then averaging all six items to create a score used to reflect the presence of anxiety when leading/co-leading group sessions. Higher scores on this measure indicate either the absence of state anxiety or a person’s ability to manage it while leading groups.

Reliability and validity. There are two forms of Spielberger’s original 40 item (STAI) questionnaire divided into 20 item State and 20 item Trait questionnaires. Several researchers (e.g. Foa, McNally, & Murdock, 1989; McNally, Foa, & Donnell, 1989; Smith, Ingram, & Brehm, 1983, as cited in Marteau & Bekker, 1992) have used a non-validated 10 item short version when time did not permit usage of the original instrument. Marteau and Bekker (1992) sought to validate a six item form using two studies. An initial study was conducted to examine correlations between anxiety-present and anxiety-absent traits. Results indicated that correlations between subsets of four and six items on the STAI were above $r = .90$ (Marteau & Bekker, 1992). A second study examined the reliability and validity of the six item instrument. Internal reliability results indicated acceptable internal reliability $\alpha = .82$ and no differences in the mean scores of the six item short-form and the 20 item form of the STAI. This suggests that the six item
form also demonstrates concurrent validity. These studies indicate that the six item short form, which has retained the 2 factor model from the original STAI is comparable to the 20 item form of the STAI across various levels of anxiety. Additionally, according to Tluczek et al. (2009) who compared two six item versions of Spielberger’s STAI (1983), the Marteau and Bekker (1992) version appears to have “favorable internal consistency reliability and validity when correlated with the parent 20-item state scale” (p.23). This suggests that Marteau and Bekker’s (1992) version, with the added language specific to group counseling, may be a good measure of participants’ anticipated anxiety leading groups. As such, the Marteau and Bekker (1992) version of the six item short form STAI was used in this study to measure participants’ current anxiety related to their perceived abilities to run groups with an internal reliability of $\alpha = .85$.

**Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale.** According to Rimm and Jerusalem (1999), “general self-efficacy refers to a global confidence in one’s coping ability across a wide range of demanding or difficult situations and reflects a broad and stable confidence in dealing effectively with rather diverse stressful situations” (p. 330). The Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale, originally released in Germany in 1979, was created to measure the perceived self-efficacy of coping skills related to every day events and particularly stressful activities (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). This instrument has since been translated into many different languages (Scholz, Dona, Sud, & Schwarzer, 2002) and used in over 1,000 studies. In its current form, this scale includes ten items to be responded to on a four point scale. Examples of questions on this measure include: “I always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough,” and “I am confident that
I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.” The range of responses includes “not at all true” to “exactly true.” The composite score for General Self-Efficacy was simply a sum of the scores for the 10 individual items comprising this measure.

**Reliability and validity.** The *Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale* is a one factor scale that has been assessed beyond its original German origin. According to Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995), psychometric properties were collected over 23 nations. They found that the *Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale* had acceptable reliability across cultures. Schwarzer and Jerusalem’s (1995) results demonstrated Cronbach’s alpha range from .76 – .90. The researcher found similar results in the current study, $\alpha = .78$. Criterion-related validity was also found through positive correlations with many favorable emotions including optimism and work satisfaction and negative correlations with depression, anxiety, and stress. Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1999) also conducted a research project in Germany involving 3,514 high school students and 302 teachers. This study found evidence of validity through positive correlations with optimism and proactive coping and negative correlations with procrastination and dimensions of teacher burnout. Studies (e.g. Scholz et al., 2002) have also examined whether this instrument can be used as a universal construct. Scholz et al. (2002) found that the construct of self-efficacy is unidimensional and can be adapted for use in many languages with acceptable reliability and validity as well.

The *Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale* was used to assess participants’ general self-efficacy to help differentiate this from their perceived group leader self-efficacy. The measure of general self-efficacy acted as a moderating variable, which means that it was
likely to influence the strength between independent and dependent variables. Controlling for participants’ general self-efficacy has helped the researcher to understand the unique contributions of each independent variable on group leader self-efficacy.

**Experience, Observation, and Feedback**

**Experience.** For the purposes of this study, experience was measured by combining the number of group leadership/co-leadership experiences with the number of opportunities to design group sessions. According to previous research measuring teacher self-efficacy (e.g., Fives & Buehl, 2010), prior teaching experience has been calculated to capture “mastery experiences,” which according to Bandura (1977) are most predictive of efficacy beliefs. These experiences were further broken down into various skillsets (Fives & Buehl, 2010). Using this model, the researcher quantified prior group facilitation experiences, using the skillsets that included designing and performing leadership responsibilities to capture the “experience” variable. One item of the measure asked participants to state the number of small group sessions they had experienced leading or co-leading with children and adolescents. The other item asked participants to state the number of small group sessions they have designed or co-designed for children and adolescents. The measure of leadership experience was the sum of these two values. The reliability coefficient associated with these items was $\alpha = .82$, which suggests acceptable internal consistency for this measure.

**Observation.** For the purposes of this study, observation was defined as opportunities to witness group counseling sessions with children and adolescents led or co-lead by a school-based mental health professional (e.g. school counselor, school
psychologist, or school social worker). According to Bandura (1977), vicarious learning, an important potential predictor of self-efficacy, is defined by live or symbolic modeling. In other words, people who watch others perform with success may be more likely to develop efficacy beliefs themselves. In order for these observations to be meaningful, however, the source needs to be credible (Bandura, 1977). The school-based mental health professionals mentioned in this variable were chosen as the most likely individuals to have been trained to lead mental health small groups in the school setting. This measure asked the participants to state the number of sessions they had observed with children and adolescents. For analysis purposes, this variable was transformed into a nominal variable with four categories: zero sessions observed, 1-5 sessions observed, 6-15 sessions observed, and 16 or more sessions observed. A separate category for zero sessions was used since 25% of the participants reported no observation experience. The other categories were selected since they captured the shape of the distribution.

The researcher chose to transform this continuous variable into a nominal variable after observing that its original distribution was non-normal. In an effort to further understand the impact of group observations on group leader self-efficacy, she chose to categorize sessions in this way to determine any differences between groups. In order to include a nominal variable in a regression model, a set of dummy variables needs to be created. A dummy variable is a dichotomous variable, which takes on a value of 1 if the participant belongs to a particular category and 0 if he/she does not belong to the category. There is always one less dummy variable than the number of categories for a particular nominal variable. By using dummy variables, there is a unique sequence of 0
and 1 codes for each possible category of the nominal variable. For the purposes here, dummy variables were created for the 0 sessions observed, 1-5 sessions observed and 6-15 sessions observed categories. No dummy variable was created for the remaining 16 or more sessions category, and this group is known as the reference category.

**Feedback.** Bandura (1977) suggests that verbal persuasion includes suggestion and/or exhortation. Similarly, Lehrman-Waterman and Ladany (2001) define verbal persuasion in the form of feedback as follows: “feedback is the process in which the supervisor verbally shares his or her thoughts regarding the supervisees’ progress” (p. 168). Formative feedback is on-going and occurs throughout the process to help the supervisee progressively make changes. Summative feedback usually occurs at the midpoints and ends of each internship semester and is a time where the supervisor compares the supervisee’s performance with the established standards. According to CACREP (2009), pre-service counselors should experience leading groups during internship (Standard III.G.1), experience a variety of professional activities and resources during internship (Standard III.G.IV), and receive an evaluation of their counseling performance at the end of internship (Standard III.G.VI). Based on these standards, the researcher chose to quantify formative feedback, as this may demonstrate the most variability in students’ supervisory experiences. Furthermore, similar to vicarious observation, “The impact of verbal persuasion on self-efficacy may vary substantially depending on the perceived credibility of the persuaders, their prestige, trustworthiness, expertise, and assuredness” (Bandura, 1977, p. 202).
The researcher therefore chose to limit this variable to verbal feedback obtained during site supervision from a school counseling supervisor. Three items were asked in order to capture students’ experiences with feedback specific to group counseling with children and adolescents. The items asked how often students received feedback specific to group counseling, how often they discussed knowledge and skills specific to group counseling, and how often they received specific examples for improvement of group leadership skills. Students had the opportunity to answer never, occasionally, often, or I have not led groups. The reliability coefficient was calculated to determine the internal consistency of these items and found to be acceptable, α = .84.

**Procedures**

Following approval from Montclair State University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), the investigator sent an initial contact email to all CACREP-accredited master’s program coordinators in New Jersey and other states with whom she had previously established relationships with faculty. This email explained the study and invited their internship students to participate. The purpose and procedures of the study were outlined in an attached cover letter and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was indicated. The email included asking the coordinators for help in encouraging internship course instructors to allow the researcher or the instructor’s designee to administer an in-person survey to their pre-service school counseling internship students. The researcher then requested contact information for the internship course instructor to provide additional information about survey administration.
Following agreement from the coordinators, emails were initiated to the internship course instructors of each of these schools with the cover letter and details about the purpose and length of the survey provided. The instructors were then informed that the survey would include questions pertaining to aspects of students’ site supervision and their experience with group leadership, as well as demographic information. Upon hearing from the internship course instructor, the researcher coordinated times with each instructor to either personally administer surveys at mutually convenient times or request that a delegate do so and send the completed surveys and consent forms in a provided postage-paid return envelope.

While the researcher initially collected in-person data, she also obtained IRB approval through an amendment to offer an online survey option. The online version of the survey was created and distributed through Survey Monkey. This website is commonly used for survey distribution and incorporates privacy protection safeguards (Waclawski, 2012). The researcher contacted CACREP-accredited school counseling program coordinators across the country to similarly request contact information for internship course instructors. Following approval, these internship instructors received an email to forward onto their pre-service school counselors outlining the purpose of the research study, the time it would take to complete the survey, and the procedures for data collection. The email included a statement of informed consent, where participants could agree to engage in the study. This statement said “By clicking on this link, you are giving your consent to participate in this research study.” Below the statement, there was an embedded link to take the survey. Participants remained anonymous throughout this
process. Survey data was kept confidential through the password protected website and the researcher’s personal password protected computer. The paper and online versions of the survey were identical except for an additional question on the online survey regarding whether students were attending a CACREP-accredited counseling program. This question was used to safeguard against any participants who were not studying in a CACREP-accredited program but who may have received a link to this study in another way. For example, a student could have forwarded this information to a friend or colleague studying in another school counseling program.

**Data Collection**

The targeted sample included pre-service school counseling internship students from CACREP-accredited counseling programs. Data was collected over a two month period from February to March 2015. Initially, 16 universities were contacted through email about the possibility of providing in-person surveys to their students. At this time, the researcher offered to administer or appoint a delegate to administer the survey during students’ internship courses at each of their respective universities. At the time designated, the researcher or designee met with pre-service school counselors in their internship courses to begin the process of collecting data. The researcher provided explicit directions to each designee who administered the surveys in her absence. Initially, pre-service school counselors were informed about the nature of the study and were provided with informed consent. A copy of the informed consent was given to each participant. The students were asked to participate in a study that examined their internship site supervisory experiences in relation to group counseling. The informed
consent also included discussion about the benefits and risks associated with this study. The informed consent emphasized the voluntary nature of this experience and discussed that participation would not have any bearing on evaluation in students’ internship courses. Participants were also informed that surveys would be kept by the researcher in a confidential place and appropriately discarded upon completion of the study.

Students were then asked to place their completed responses in one designated manila envelope and their informed consent in a separate envelope. Students were told that the researcher or designee would be available outside of the room to answer any additional questions. The researcher or designee chose to be available outside of the room to help maintain confidentiality and limit the possibility of social desirability bias, or the possibility that participants would select answers based on the way they believe the researcher would approve, rather than their true feelings. A selected student was asked to inform the researcher or designee when all voluntary surveys were completed, placed in the manila envelope and sealed by this student. A total of nine of these universities from five states provided 136 in-person survey responses.

Upon receiving IRB approval to administer an online version of the survey, the researcher expanded her outreach to include CACREP-accredited programs across the United States. A total of 109 additional universities were contacted. Of the 109 additional universities, the researcher received affirmative email responses from 36 program coordinators who agreed to allow their internship course instructors to provide the surveys to their students. In total, the researcher received 51 online survey entries.
Data Analysis

As data were collected, the researcher initially input the information into an excel spreadsheet. Equations were set in order to ensure that composite variables were added with the appropriate reverse scoring. As the researcher prepared to analyze the data, she contextualized this information within the framework of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). For instance, Bandura (1986) suggests that certain variables may be greater predictors of self-efficacy. The researcher considered this literature when screening the data and preparing regression models to test for predictors of group leader self-efficacy.

Data Screening

After recording the survey data in an Excel database, the researcher examined her data for missing values. She observed that of the 185 original survey entries, 61 records had at least one missing value. Examining these specific records more closely, the researcher concluded that these surveys did not likely differ from records with complete data. This conclusion was made for the following reasons: 1) 20 of the 61 surveys were missing the dependent variable (COSE) entirely. The researcher suspected that given its placement at the end of the survey, this may have been due to participant fatigue. 2) 25 additional online surveys were eliminated due to researcher error in accidently omitting a question for a period of time during data collection. 3) Of the remaining 16 eliminated surveys, the researcher observed that four participants completed the beginning demographic information on the survey and did not continue filling out the measures; the researcher suspects that this may have been due in part to participants’ lack of time after becoming aware of the length of the survey. 4) The additional 12 eliminated surveys
appear to have missing items at random with no recognizable patterns. This is important because if the researcher had eliminated records with identifiable patterns, these surveys may have reflected a subgroup of the sample with unique characteristics; eliminating them would have potentially biased the sample towards a certain population of participants (e.g. those more comfortable disclosing their true feelings about a particular item).

After analyzing missing data in this way, the researcher ultimately decided to eliminate all paper and pencil and online surveys with any missing data in order to compare all surveys equally. This commonly used method of managing missing data is known as listwise deletion, whereby any participant with a missing value on one or more items is excluded from the analysis (Sweet & Grace-Martin, 2011). This process resulted in 124 completed surveys; 123 of them were provided in-person, and only one additional survey was complete and used from the pool of online participants. Upon further review, an additional survey was eliminated due to the presence of an outlier (one reporting 120 group counseling sessions led, co-led, or designed), leading to the following analyses run on a sample of n = 123 participants.

**Analytic Procedures**

After cleaning the data, the researcher input the data into SPSS, a data analysis software program. The researcher first created a composite variable (using the SPSS Transform Compute Variable command) for group experience by adding together the number of group sessions led or co-led with the number of group sessions designed. She then similarly created a composite variable for feedback by adding together the three
items that referred to the frequency, knowledge and skills, and meaningfulness of feedback received specific to group leadership. The feedback variable is an ordinal variable with a value of 1 for a response of never, 2 for a response of occasionally, and 3 for a response of often. If the participant responded that he/she has never led or co-led a group session, the response will be treated the same as if he/she never received feedback. The dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy, as well as most of the predictor variables (leading/designing, observing, anxiety, teaching experience, and age) used in this study are numerical (i.e., interval/ratio) variables. The only exception to this was the gender variable. The gender variable is a dichotomous nominal variable with valid responses of 1 for female and 0 for other.

After the data was coded appropriately in SPSS, the researcher began preparing to run multiple regression analyses in order to determine the model that best described the relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variable (Field, 2009). Multiple regression is “a set of statistical procedures used to explain or predict the values of a dependent variable based on the values of one or more independent variables” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 472). In this study, the researcher examined the unique contributions of each predictor variable: (1) experience leading/co-leading and designing group counseling sessions with children and adolescents, (2) observing group counseling sessions with children and adolescents (3) receiving feedback specific to group leadership with children and adolescents, and (4) managing anxiety around group leadership on a dependent variable of interest, group leader self-efficacy. Interpreting multiple regression analysis helped the researcher to measure and explain the proportion of
variance in the dependent variable that is explainable by each predictor variable (Field, 2009). In other words, examining the contributions of each predictor variable on group leader self-efficacy allowed the researcher to build a statistical model that best explained the occurrence of group leader self-efficacy in pre-service school counseling internship students.

In conjunction with running each of the multiple regression models, the researcher checked the assumptions needed to ensure that the regression models were valid. The following assumptions were considered for this study:

(1) There is a significant linear relationship (as measured by a statistically significant Pearson correlation coefficient) between the dependent variable and each of the predictor variables.

(2) There are no major multicollinearity issues between the predictor variables. Multicollinearity refers to high correlations among variables. This is problematic because if two variables are too highly correlated, it would not be possible to detect their independent contributions to the model (Field, 2009). To measure this, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for each possible pair of predictor variables. Any pair of variables which exhibited a strong correlation ($r > .50$ or $r < -.50$) were eliminated from the analysis. In addition, any predictor variables with a significant variance inflation factor (VIF) value were eliminated from the analysis, since a significant value indicates that this variable is highly correlated with one or more other predictor variables. As cited in Field (2009), if the VIF is greater than 1, multicollinearity may be impacting
the regression equation. As such, predictor variables with a VIF greater than 2 were considered for possible elimination from the study.

(3) The regression residuals (i.e., the differences between the actual values of the dependent variable and the predicted value of the dependent variable for each of the participants) need to be approximately normally distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk statistic was used to assess normality of the regression residuals.

(4) There should be no autocorrelation between the regression residuals. Autocorrelation refers to the degree of influence that the value of the regression residual has on the values of the regression residuals adjacent to it when the residuals are ordered in terms of their predicted values (Field, 2009). The Durbin-Watson statistic is used to measure the degree of autocorrelation. The values of the Durbin-Watson statistic can range between 0 and 4. Values close to 2 indicate little or no autocorrelation among residuals, while values closer to 0 or 4 represent significant positive or negative autocorrelation, respectively (Field, 2009).

(5) There should be homoscedasticity of variance among the regression residuals. In other words, the residuals or errors should have equal variance (Field, 2009). This item is examined by ordering the residuals in terms of their predicted dependent variable values and plotting them on a graph. If the graph has a funnel or other irregular shape, the homoscedasticity of variance assumption is violated.

As far as the first assumption is concerned, all of the control and independent variables utilized in the regression analyses had significant linear relationships with the dependent variable (the three demographic variables - age, gender, and teaching
experience - initially proposed as control variables were excluded from the analysis since they did not have significant relationships with the dependent variable). While there were a few statistically significant correlations between some of the predictor variables, none of them were considered strong relationships (r > .50 or r < -.50). In some of the regression analyses, the distribution of the regression residuals was significantly different from normal. Due to the size of the sample and the fact that the regression analyses were not being used for predictive purposes (rather, they were being used to establish relationships and contributions of the predictor variables with the dependent variable), the researcher concluded that these normality violations were not a hindrance to the validity of the regression models. In all of the regression models, the regression residuals did not exhibit any significant autocorrelation nor did they show any meaningful heteroscedasticity.

The next steps were to address each hypothesis using a hierarchical regression analysis in an effort to predict group leader self-efficacy from significantly related variables. For each of the predictor variables, the p-value associated with the t-test statistic for that predictor variable’s regression coefficient was used to determine whether that variable was statistically significant. Predictor variables that were not statistically significant or with collinearity issues were eliminated from the analysis. Collinearity occurs when two predictor variables are highly correlated (Chatterjee & Hadi, 2013). This can result in a lack of differentiation between the two variables. This resulted in age, gender, and teaching experience being eliminated from subsequent analyses. In order to limit endogeneity, the remaining control variable, general self-efficacy, was
added to each model to help determine the unique contribution of each independent variable.

The next steps included running a baseline simple linear regression model. The researcher first examined the control variable, general self-efficacy, in relation to the dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy. This was performed in order to determine the amount of variance in group leader self-efficacy that was explainable by general self-efficacy alone. The following variables in each research question were measured by running multiple regression analyses. Following the baseline model, the researcher performed step two of the model adding the composite variable of experience, which included questions related to students’ experiences with leading/co-leading and designing small group sessions to the control variable, general self-efficacy. The researcher then added the three categorical dummy variables (dummy 1: zero group sessions observed, dummy 2: 1-5 group sessions observed, and dummy 3: 6-10 group sessions observed) to the control variable, general self-efficacy, and the experience composite variable to determine the unique contribution of observation on group leader self-efficacy. In step four, the researcher then input the composite variable associated with receiving feedback to the model with general self-efficacy, experience composite, and the three observation dummy variables. The composite feedback variable included three questions related to students’ perceptions of the frequency, specific knowledge and skills discussed, and the meaningfulness of the feedback. In the fifth step, the researcher added the composite anxiety variable to general self-efficacy, experience composite, the three observation dummy variables, and feedback composite to identify the unique contribution of anxiety
on group leader self-efficacy and to determine which independent variable, above and beyond the influence of self-efficacy, was the greatest predictor of group leader self-efficacy.

The researcher determined the order in which to test these models based on self-efficacy theory. According to Bandura (1977), efficacy beliefs appear to be most influenced by the direct performance of given tasks. As a result, the researcher chose experience as the first model to test. While each of the three other efficacy expectations do not appear to impact self-efficacy as strongly (Bandura, 1986), modeling, feedback paired with experiences, and the management of emotional arousal (anxiety) together have been found to impact self-efficacy beliefs and were put into subsequent models to determine the unique contributions of each on group-leader self-efficacy.

**Chapter Summary**

From the lens of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) the research design and analysis plan were chosen to reflect established research surrounding predictors of self-efficacy. This chapter included research questions and hypotheses, rationale for selected sample, analysis of the psychometric properties of previously established measures of group leader self-efficacy, general self-efficacy, anxiety, and design and analysis procedures that were used to predict an outcome variable (group leader self-efficacy) from several predictor variables (leadership/design experience, observation, feedback, and anxiety). The next chapter will detail the analytic results from the obtained sample of pre-service school counseling internship students.
Chapter Four

Introduction

The present study looked at aspects of site supervision as predictors of group leader self-efficacy for pre-service school counselors. Bandura (1986) posits that there are four identified predictors of general self-efficacy (i.e., mastery experience, vicarious observation, verbal persuasion, and management of emotional arousal). For the purposes of this study, each of these previously researched predictors was operationalized similarly in order to examine relationships between (1) experience, (2) observation, (3) feedback, and (4) the management of anxiety as they relate to students’ group leader self-efficacy. Additional control variables including age, gender, teaching experience, and general self-efficacy were also considered based on previously established connections to other domain specific measures of self-efficacy. The research questions under investigation were as follows:

What aspects of the site supervisory experience predict group leader self-efficacy?

1. Does experience leading/co-leading and designing groups with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training predict group leader self-efficacy?

2. To what extent is observation of group counseling with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training associated with group leader self-efficacy?
3. To what extent is receiving feedback specific to group leadership with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training associated with group leader self-efficacy?

4. To what extent are supervisees’ abilities to manage anxiety specific to group leadership with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training associated with group leader self-efficacy?

5. Controlling for the others, which of these aspects of the site supervisory experience is most strongly associated with group leader self-efficacy?

This chapter includes descriptive statistics for the reported sample, a correlation analysis, and analytic results for the inferential statistical analyses used to answer each of the five research questions. For purposes of the correlational and inferential statistical analyses performed in this study, a significance level of $\alpha = .05$ was utilized. Commonly used in similar exploratory studies (e.g. Johnson & Christensen, 2012), this significance level indicates that the researcher was willing to accept a 5% risk that the results of her findings were due to chance. In the current study, $p < .001$, $p < .05$, and $p < .10$ levels are indicated to differentiate the reported degrees of significance.

**Sample**

A total of 123 completed surveys were included in this sample. Eighty-four percent of the participants ($n = 103$) identified as female while 16% ($n = 20$) identified as “other”. These percentages are similar to other studies that have examined pre-service and practicing counselors. Daniels and Larson’s (2001) study examined pre-service
counselors with a sample that was 87% female and 13% male. Cinotti’s (2012) sample of practicing school counselors reported 80% female and 20% male. As discussed previously, the researcher chose the categories “female” and “other” in an effort to collect an inclusive sample that represented participants who identified as female, male, and transgender.

In this study, 81.3% of the population identified as White or Caucasian, 8.9% as Black or African American, 4.8% as Hispanic or Latino, .8% as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 4.0% as Other. The average age of the participants was 27 years old (SD = 5.29) with participants ranging from ages 21 to 46 years old. More than three quarters of the participants (77%) reported having fewer than two years of teaching experience in the schools with a range of 0 to 20 years inclusive (M = 1.76, SD = 3.79). These demographics are consistent with other similar studies. Cervoni and DeLucia-Waak (2011) reported that 88.6% of their sample of 175 practicing counselors identified as Caucasian, 6.9% Black and the rest other. Daniels and Larson (2001) reported that their sample of 45 pre-service counselors similarly identified as 83% Caucasian and 13% as African American. The average age of pre-service school counseling interns in Lazovsky and Shimoni’s (2007) study was 34.2 years old. Similarly, Protivnak and Davis’ (2008) study of 97 school counseling interns reported a mean age of 31 years old. In addition, 54.6% of Protivnak and Davis’ (2008) sample reported having previous teaching experience, while only 33% of participants in the current study reported having previously taught. These differences in mean scores of age and teaching experience can be attributed to the changing requirements of school counselors. Most states no longer
require teaching experience as a prerequisite for school counselors. This change in requirements may help to explain why current school counseling interns in this study are on average younger and have less teaching experience than do interns studied in years past.

Results

Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE; Larson et al., 1992)

This scale was adapted and used to measure a composite score related to group leader self-efficacy. The mean COSE composite score for this sample was 169.14 (SD = 21.34) with scores ranging from 37 to 222. This indicates that the scores for this sample of pre-service school counselors fell in the higher range. The COSE composite score was calculated by adding the scores on 37 six-point Likert-type items. This calculation reflected the reverse scoring of 19 of the 37 items. A mean composite score of 169.14 equates to an average score of 4.57 per item, which suggests that the average participant in this study had a slight to moderate positive belief about his/her ability to feel successful leading counseling groups. The mean scores from the current study are slightly above the range of mean scores from other studies that have utilized this measure. Kozina et al. (2010) report a posttest mean scores of 155.35 for their sample of 25 pre-service counseling psychology masters students. Similarly, Daniels and Larson (2001) report a posttest mean score of 154.68 for their counseling psychology graduate students. The current study used an adapted COSE composite score to reflect group leader self-efficacy, which may account for the differences in mean scores between the current sample and other studies that have used the COSE in its original form.
**Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES; Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995).**

The mean of the GSES composite score was 33.68 (SD = 2.95) with scores ranging from 27 to 40. This indicates that the scores for this sample of pre-service school counselors fell in the higher range. Similar to the COSE composite score, the GSES composite score was obtained by adding the scores on 10 four-point Likert-type items. This mean composite score equates to an average score of 3.37 per item, which suggests that participants in this study had a moderate to strong belief about their abilities to handle difficult life situations. Other studies using the GSES have an average mean score of 29 (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). This average score is slightly lower than the mean average for the current study but similarly falls in the moderate belief range.

**Experience Composite and Observation**

For the experience variable, the mean number of group sessions led/co-led or designed was 19.42 (SD = 18.29) with scores ranging from 0 to 80 group sessions. This large standard deviation relative to the mean was due to the fact that the distribution of experience scores had a distinctive positive skew. This indicates that the distribution of the sample is asymmetrical with a greater number of scores in the lower range. This is due to the fact that several participants reported noticeably high numbers of group sessions led, co-led, or designed for this item, even after removing the outlier who reported 120 sessions. Sixteen of the participants reported 40 or more sessions, eight of whom reported between 50 and 80 sessions. In light of this significant skew, a better measure of central tendency would be the median. The median number of sessions led, co-led, or designed was 13, which is noticeably lower than the mean. This is illustrated
by the fact that 35% of the participants reported nine or fewer sessions led/co-led or
designed.

The observation variable in the survey asked participants to report the number of
group counseling sessions they had observed. Table 1 below shows the relative
frequencies of participants in each of the three categories, corresponding to the three
dummy variables (Dummy Variable 1: 0 group sessions observed, Dummy Variable 2: 1-
5 group sessions observed, and Dummy Variable 3: 6-10 group sessions observed) used
to include observation in the regression analysis. Twenty-five percent of the participants
reported observing no group counseling sessions, while 42% reported observing between
1 and 4 sessions and 20% reported between 6 and 15 sessions. The remaining 13%
observed 16 or more sessions.

Table 1

| Means and Standard Deviations for Group Leader Self-Efficacy and Predictor Variables by Gender |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Characteristics                  | Female (n = 103) | Other (n =20) | Total (n = 123) |
|                                 | M          | SD       | M          | SD       | M          | SD       |
| COSE                            | 168.16     | 22.26    | 174.20     | 15.27    | 169.14     | 21.34    |
| Teaching Experience             | 1.82       | 3.93     | 1.45       | 3.02     | 1.76       | 3.79     |
| Age                             | 27.01      | 5.45     | 28.10      | 4.38     | 27.19      | 5.29     |
| General Self-Efficacy           | 33.41      | 2.96     | 35.05      | 2.56     | 33.68      | 2.95     |
| Experience                      | 19.31      | 17.11    | 19.95      | 24.04    | 19.42      | 18.29    |

Observation:

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<th>Frequency</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
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<td>35%</td>
<td>.49</td>
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<td>.41</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feedback | 6.57 | 1.99 | 6.15 | 2.11 | 6.50 | 2.01  
Anxiety   | 19.50| 2.98 | 20.40| 3.15 | 19.64| 3.01  

Note: Observation Dummy Variables correspond to the following categories:
- Dummy Variable 1 = 0 group sessions observed
- Dummy Variable 2 = 1-5 group sessions observed
- Dummy Variable 3 = 6-15 group sessions observed
- Reference Category = 16 or more group sessions observed

**Feedback Composite**

The composite feedback variable is the sum of scores on three separate questions. Each of these questions addressed a specific aspect regarding feedback, including frequency, specific skills associated with group leadership, and recommendations for improvement. Each question in relation to receiving feedback is answered as either never, occasionally, or often. There was also a fourth question response available for participants who had never previously led groups. Point values of 1, 2, and 3 were assigned to responses of never, occasionally, and often respectively. Participants who reported never having run groups were also assigned a point value of 1. The possible scores for the composite feedback variable ranged from 3 to 9, inclusive. The mean composite feedback score of 6.50 (SD = 2.01) suggests that on average, participants occasionally received feedback specific to the frequency, knowledge and skills, and meaningfulness of the discussion. An examination of the frequency distribution of these scores shows that the scores were more or less evenly spread out in the 3 through 9 possible range, indicating little variance in scores.
Short Form of the State Scale of the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (S-STAI; Marteau and Bekker, 1992).

The mean STAI composite score for this sample was 19.64 (SD = 3.01) with a range of scores from 16 to 24. The STAI composite score was calculated by reverse scoring the three anxiety-present emotions (i.e. tense, worried, upset) and then averaging the scores of all 6 four-point Likert-type items. A mean composite score of 19.64 indicates that participants’ reported a higher absence of anxiety leading groups. This mean score equates to an average score of 3.27 per item, which suggests that the average participant in this study did not report a high level of state anxiety or experienced a moderate to strong ability to manage it while leading/co-leading groups.

Women had slightly more years of teaching experience, group counseling sessions observed, and reported incidents of receiving feedback specific to group leadership than participants in the “other” category. The “other” gender category was slightly older and had slightly higher mean COSE composite scores, GSES composite scores, and STAI composite scores. This latter group also had a slightly higher experience score. The meaningfulness of these results may be questionable as the “other” gender category represented a very small sample size (n = 20).

Correlation Analysis

Before running any regression models, it was necessary to examine the correlations between each pair of variables, including the dependent variable (group leader self-efficacy COSE composite), the control variables (age, gender, teaching experience, and GSES Composite), and the independent variables (Experience composite,
Observation, Feedback composite, and STAI Composite). This was important for two reasons: 1) The researcher needed to identify and potentially eliminate predictor variables that were too highly correlated with each other because they might impact the regression results; 2) The researcher needed to ensure that each predictor variable had a statistically significant correlation with the dependent variable before including them in the analyses. Table 2 provides the corresponding output of correlations.

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<th>7b</th>
<th>7c</th>
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<td>3. Gender</td>
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<td>.06</td>
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<td>6. Experience</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.12</td>
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<td>.33**</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.06</td>
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<td>9. STAI Composite</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n = 123. +p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01.

Observation Dummy Variables correspond to the following categories:
- Dummy Variable 1 = 0 group sessions observed
- Dummy Variable 2 = 1-5 group sessions observed
- Dummy Variable 3 = 6-15 group sessions observed
- Reference Category = 16 or more group sessions observed

Examining the correlations between each pair of predictor variables resulted in the exclusion of the age, gender, and teaching experience variables from the regression analyses due to their lack of relationship with the dependent variable. As noted in Table 2, General Self-Efficacy (GSES composite) had a statistically significant moderate positive correlation with Anxiety (STAI composite; r = .27, p < .001) as well as a marginally significant weak negative correlation with the Observation dummy 3 variable (r = -.13, p < .10). The experience variable had a statistically significant weak negative
correlation with Observation dummy variable 2 (r = -.20, p < .05), and a marginally significant weak positive correlation with Observation dummy variable 3 (r = .14, p < .10). Experience composite also had a statistically significant moderate positive correlation with feedback composite (r = .33, p < .001) and a marginally significant weak positive correlation with Anxiety (STAI composite; r = .15, p < .10). Finally, the composite Feedback variable had a statistically significant moderate negative correlation with the Observation dummy variable 1 (r = -.29, p < .001) as well as a significant weak positive correlation with Observation dummy variable 2 (r = .16, p < .05).

Since none of these correlations were strong (greater than r = .50 or less than r = -.50) the researcher decided to retain all of these predictor variables in her regression analyses. Many of the correlations between predictor variables were to be expected. For example, one would expect a participant with higher general self-efficacy to be less anxious when running counseling groups (Al-Darmaki, 2004; Barbee et al., 2003). In addition, a participant with more experience running/designing group counseling sessions would tend to receive more feedback than someone with less experience. The marginally significant positive relationship between experience and anxiety also makes sense since people who have led or designed more counseling sessions tend to be less anxious when asked to run subsequent groups. Lastly, the statistically significant moderately negative relationship between feedback and the first Observation dummy variable is likely due to the fact that people who have not observed any sessions are less likely to receive feedback because many of them have also not led or designed any sessions.
The next step included the researcher examining the significance of each predictor variable on the dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy. When the researcher examined the significance of the control variables age, gender, and teaching experience, she found none of them to be statistically significant. The only control variable with a significant correlation to the dependent variable was GSES composite ($r = .38, p < .001$), which was subsequently used in the regression analyses. With the exception of observation, each of the independent variables also had a statistically significant correlation with the COSE Composite. For observation, dummy variable 1 had a marginally significant (.05 < $p < .10$) correlation with the COSE composite, while the other two dummy variables had no significant correlations. This means that participants’ observation experience had some effect on their group counseling self-efficacy scores, but the number of sessions observed had no meaningful impact on this score. Despite these marginally significant findings, the researcher chose to include all three dummy observation variables in the regression analyses in order to answer research question number two (To what extent is observation of group counseling with children and/or adolescents during practicum and internship training associated with group leader self-efficacy?). The predictor variables included in the regression analyses were the following: GSES composite, Experience composite, the three Observation dummy variables, Feedback composite, and STAI composite.

**Analytic Results**

A series of regression models were run in order to understand the unique contributions of each predictor variable on the dependent variable of interest, group
leader self-efficacy. The first model known as the baseline model was a simple linear regression using the group leader self-efficacy COSE composite score as the dependent variable and the GSES composite control variable as the sole predictor variable. The second regression model was a multiple regression using the COSE composite score dependent variable and both GSES composite and Experience composite as the predictor variables. In the third model, the three Observation dummy variables were added to GSES composite and Experience composite for a total of five predictor variables. In the fourth model, the feedback composite score was added to the set of predictor variables. Finally, the fifth model utilized all of the predictor variables, including Anxiety (STAI composite).

Table 3 shows the results from the five regression models run in this study. The results of the baseline model are shown in the column entitled Step 1. General self-efficacy (GSES composite) had a statistically significant positive relationship with the dependent variable COSE composite, as evidenced by its standardized beta of .38, p < .001. In addition, the adjusted R² change of .14 indicates that general self-efficacy explained 14% of the variance in the dependent variable. The significant F change statistic for this first model means that this baseline regression was statistically significant.
To address Research Question 1, the researcher added the composite experience variable to the initial baseline model to obtain a model with two predictor variables (GSES composite and Experience composite). The results of this regression are shown in the column labeled Step 2. Experience had a statistically significant but weak positive relationship with the COSE composite dependent variable, as evidenced by its standardized beta of .19, p < .05. The adjusted $R^2$ change of .03 for this step indicates that the experience composite variable explained 3% of the variability in the dependent variable. This adjusted $R^2$ contribution was considered statistically significant, as indicated by the significant F change statistic. From these results, one can conclude that experience does have a statistically significant and small meaningful impact in predicting group leader self-efficacy.

With regards to Research Question 2, the researcher added the three Observation dummy variables to the previous regression model in order to obtain a model with five
predictor variables (GSES composite, Experience composite, and the three Observation dummy variables). As shown in the column labeled Step 3, Observation dummy variables 2 and 3 had no statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable, while dummy variable 1 had a statistically significant moderate negative relationship with the dependent variable with a standardized beta of \(-.28, p < .05\). Thus, participants who have not observed any group sessions reported slightly more confidence in leading and designing future group sessions. The adjusted \(R^2\) change of .01 for this step indicates that the three Observation dummy variables together explained only 1% of the variability in the COSE composite. This adjusted \(R^2\) contribution was not statistically significant, as indicated by the non-significant F change statistic. From these results, one can conclude that Observation does not have a statistically significant impact in predicting group leader self-efficacy. It should be noted that when Observation is added to the model, the Experience composite variable is no longer statistically significant as evidenced by its standardized beta. This is largely due to the fact that there is a high correlation between sessions observed and sessions led/co-led or designed, which can create a lack of differentiation between these two variables.

For Research Question 3, the researcher added the composite feedback variable to the previous regression model to obtain a model with six predictor variables (GSES composite, Experience composite, the three dummy observation variables, and the composite feedback variable). The results of this regression are shown in the column labeled Step 4. Feedback had a statistically significant moderately positive relationship with the dependent variable, as evidenced by its standardized beta of .27, \(p < .001\). The
adjusted $R^2$ change of .05 for this step indicates that the feedback variable explained 5% of the variability in the dependent variable. This adjusted $R^2$ contribution was considered statistically significant, as indicated by the significant F change statistic. From these results, one can conclude that feedback does have a statistically significant impact in predicting group leader self-efficacy. It also should be noted that when feedback is added to the regression model, all of the observation dummy variables become non-significant as evidenced by their standardized betas. This occurrence is due to the fact that two of the observation dummy variables had statistically significant correlations with the feedback variable.

To address Research Question 4, the Anxiety (STAI composite) variable was added to the previous model to obtain a regression with seven predictor variables (GSES composite, experience composite, the three dummy observation variables, the composite feedback variable). The results of this regression are shown in the column labeled Step 5. Anxiety had a statistically significant moderately positive relationship with the dependent variable, as evidenced by its standardized beta of .26, $p < .001$. The adjusted $R^2$ change of .06 for this step indicates that the STAI composite variable explained 6% of the variability in the dependent variable. This adjusted $R^2$ contribution was considered statistically significant, as indicated by the significant F change statistic. From these results, one can conclude that Anxiety does have a statistically significant impact in predicting group leader self-efficacy.

The adjusted $R^2$ change line on Table 3 reveals that the control variable General Self-Efficacy (GSES composite) is the greatest predictor of group leader self-efficacy,
since its adjusted $R^2$ of .14 is the largest among all predictor variables. Above and beyond the influence of general self-efficacy, Anxiety contributed the second most to group leader self-efficacy (6%), followed by Feedback (5%), Experience (3%), and Observation (1%) respectively. With the exception of Observation, all of these predictor variable contributions to the variation in the dependent variable were statistically significant. Overall, the control variable and the independent variables together explain 30% of the variance in the dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy COSE composite.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter shows that of the four control variables considered for this study, only General Self-Efficacy had a significant relationship with the dependent variable, Group Leader Self-Efficacy. None of the three demographic control variables - age, gender, and teaching experience - had a meaningful relationship with the dependent variable and hence were not included in the subsequent regression models. The series of linear regressions performed revealed that general self-efficacy as well as the independent variables of experience, feedback, and anxiety were together statistically significant predictors of group leader self-efficacy. General self-efficacy contributed the most to the regression model followed by anxiety, feedback, and experience. Observation did not have a statistically significant contribution to variation in the dependent variable. The implications for the results of the study will be discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter Five

Introduction

Group counseling is an important avenue through which practicing school counselors support all students within a comprehensive school counseling program. Groups, as microcosms of the larger social context, can provide many benefits to children and adolescents within the academic, personal/social, and career domains outlined in the ASCA National Model (2012). The interconnectedness between personal factors, the environment, and behaviors, as researched in relation to Bandura’s theory of reciprocal determinism, suggests that there likely exists both predictors of and outcomes associated with people’s beliefs about their abilities to perform given tasks. Examining counselor internship training specific to group leadership is one way to understand how school counselors develop the preparedness and confidence to ultimately lead groups in their practices.

According to Bandura (1986), the development of self-efficacy, a closely related construct to confidence (Erford, 2010), may be impacted by several predictor variables, including mastery experiences, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, and the management of emotional arousal. As pre-service school counselors enter their experiential internship training, each of these four areas is likely to exist within the context of the site supervisory experience. The purpose of this study was to examine the following related predictors (i.e. experience, observation, feedback, and anxiety) inherent in site supervision as they impact pre-service school counselors’ group leader self-efficacy.
Data was collected through surveys from pre-service school counseling internship students using both in-person and online data collection methods. Participants completed a 67 question survey that measured group leader self-efficacy, group leadership experience, group leadership observation, group leadership feedback, anxiety specific to leading groups, general self-efficacy, previously established predictors of counselor self-efficacy (i.e. age, teaching experience, and gender), and relevant demographic characteristics. The researcher initially examined each of the eight predictor variables along with the dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy, using a correlation matrix. The determination of non-significant relationships between age, teaching experience, and gender and the dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy, resulted in only five predictor variables (general self-efficacy, experience, observation, feedback, and anxiety) used in the ensuing multiple regression analysis. This chapter discusses the results of this analysis in relation to each of the five proposed research questions. The implications for site supervision and school counselor preparation as well as limitations and suggestions for future research are included within this chapter.

**Discussion**

The sample of 123 pre-service school counselors was drawn from multiple states and is comparable to similar studies that have examined characteristics of pre-service and practicing school counselors (Cinotti, 2012; Daniels & Larson, 2001). The majority of respondents were female (84%) and identified as White/Caucasian (81.3%). The average age of each participant was 27 years old, with over 50% of participants reporting ages 23 to 25. The average number of years of teaching experience was under two (1.76) with
67% of this sample indicating that they had no teaching experience at all. The average age of participants and their overall limited teaching experience may be the result of the changes in school counseling admissions requirements. Most states no longer require teaching experience as a prerequisite to becoming a school counselor. As a result, more pre-service school counselors may be beginning graduate school counseling coursework training directly from or relatively soon after completion of their undergraduate degree programs. The following sections will discuss the analytic results of each of the variables of interest in relation to this sample.

**Group Leader Self-Efficacy (GLSE) and General Self-Efficacy (GSES)**

The COSE measure is currently the most validated instrument for measuring counselor self-efficacy (Larson & Daniels, 1998). While Page and colleagues (2001) created a domain specific group leader self-efficacy instrument, there are limited studies validating the psychometric properties of this scale. As a result, the researcher chose to adapt the COSE scale in order to measure group leader self-efficacy. The measure was adapted by substituting “group members” or similar wording in place of the original word, “client.” For instance, one of the items on this measure asked participants to rate themselves on a scale of one (strongly disagree) to six (strongly agree) on the following statement: “I am afraid that I may not understand and properly determine probable meanings of [group members’] nonverbal behaviors.” The author of this scale discussed the results of prior validation studies and suggested to the researcher that the COSE should be interpreted using one total score due to lower reliability coefficients on individual factor scores (L. Larson, personal communication, November 24, 2014).
Higher scores on this adapted measure therefore represent stronger feelings of group leader self-efficacy.

The overall mean score for participants in this study is slightly higher than other reported COSE mean scores in similar samples (e.g. Daniels & Larson, 2001; Kozina et al., 2010). Higher mean scores may suggest that participants in the current sample may differ from the typical population or feel more self-efficacious specific to their group leadership abilities. Alternatively, research suggests that self-efficacy is domain specific, whereby participants may feel more or less efficacious performing different skills (Bandura, 2006). Measuring group leader self-efficacy using an adapted counseling self-efficacy tool may thus be capturing different information that is not truly comparable to other studies that have used the original version of the COSE.

Notably, examining the COSE scores by gender, females had a lower mean value than the “other” category. The author has not found comparable studies that have examined group leader self-efficacy across genders; however, gender has been parceled out in relation to studies that have examined general self-efficacy. In the current study, slightly higher general self-efficacy mean scores were also associated with the “other” gender category. This is consistent with research that used the Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995) across cultures and genders and found small mean differences with males reporting slightly higher general self-efficacy (Scholz, Dona, Sud, & Schwarzer, 2002; Schwarzer, Bäßler, Kwiatek, Schröder, & Zhang, 1997). Scholz et al. (2002) hypothesize that this could be due in part to culturally defined gender role
socialization or the consistently reported underrepresentation of responses from non-female participants.

Examining both female and non-female groups together, the mean general self-efficacy score fell in the higher range. With limited variability in individual participant responses, this score indicates that on average, participants felt that they could handle challenging situations moderately to very well. Scholz et al. (2002) report mean scores for 25 different countries using the same Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale and found a similar distribution of scores but with a lower overall mean composite score. The higher mean scores in this study may indicate that this sample does in fact differ from other populations, which is also supported by the higher reported mean scores for the Group Leader Self-Efficacy measure.

**Relationship between GSES and GLSE scores.** General self-efficacy represents the only control variable that had a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy. Age, gender, and teaching experience, chosen because of small previously established relationships with general or counselor self-efficacy, were not shown to have statistical significance in the current study. While domain specific self-efficacy and general self-efficacy are related, as suggested by the moderate statistically significant correlations between the two variables, research suggests that a “one size fits all” measure is not appropriate when studying a particular domain specific construct of interest like group leader self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006). The researcher chose to therefore control for GSES in the first step of the hierarchical regression model in order to account for these related constructs in understanding the
unique relationships between each of the independent variables and group leader self-efficacy.

When measured in a simple linear regression baseline model, general self-efficacy contributed to the most amount of variance in group leader self-efficacy. This suggests that participants’ general self-efficacy is particularly influential in the development of self-efficacy specific to group leadership. While general self-efficacy may be more challenging to foster specifically, similar predictors related to mastery experiences, observation of others, verbal persuasion, and the management of emotional arousal have been found to support this universal construct (Scholz et al., 2002).

**Independent Predictor Variables and Group Leader Self-Efficacy (GLSE)**

**Experience and GLSE.** The second step of the multiple regression analysis added the experience variable to the control variable, general self-efficacy. The experience variable in this study was measured with a composite score that reflected the number of group counseling sessions students led/co-led and designed for children and adolescents; the quality of these experiences, however, was not assessed. The results of this study indicate that above and beyond the influence of general self-efficacy, experience leading/co-leading and designing group counseling sessions has a moderate statistically significant relationship to students’ group leader self-efficacy. This suggests that in addition to personal factors that influence general self-efficacy, pre-service school counselors who have opportunities to lead/co-lead and design group counseling sessions with children and adolescents could be more likely to feel confident running future groups in practice.
More than half of the sample reported having completed at least 300 hours of internship training. Of these participants, 18% reported leading/co-leading and designing four or fewer group sessions at the time of survey administration. This may be the result of the fact that there is no requirement for group leadership experience in practicum and no specification for the amount of experience students should be receiving in group leadership during internship. There are many reasons why engaging students in group leadership during internship training is challenging (e.g. academic schedule, administrative support, student availability). However, the small, yet meaningful impact of leading/designing groups on participants' group leader self-efficacy suggests that counselor educators should reinforce the need for pre-service school counselors to be receiving as many opportunities as possible to lead groups during site supervision training.

**Observation and GLSE.** The third step of the multiple regression analysis included adding observation to the general self-efficacy and experience variables. Group counseling observation was measured by asking participants to recall the number of group counseling sessions they observed led by other mental health professionals (e.g. school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers) with children and adolescents in the schools. Using a categorical measure of the observation variable, the researcher found a small statistically significant relationship between students who had never observed group counseling sessions with children and adolescents in the schools and group leader self-efficacy. The other categories, however, were not statistically significant and in subsequent steps, this first dummy variable similarly lost its predictive
value in the overall model. These results suggest that there is not a meaningful relationship between observation and group leader self-efficacy.

**Feedback and GLSE.** The fourth step of the multiple regression analysis added the composite feedback variable to the model that included general self-efficacy, the composite experience variable, and the three observation dummy variables. The feedback variable included three questions that asked students to reflect on the frequency of feedback received specific to group leadership, the frequency with which they discussed knowledge and skills specific to group leadership (e.g. bringing out silent members, therapeutic factors), and the frequency that this feedback helped them to improve their group counseling skills. Participants responded on a four-point scale, which included the options of “never,” “occasionally,” “often,” or “I have never run group sessions before.” Results of this fourth step indicate that receiving feedback specific to group leadership is statistically significant and predicted an additional 5% of the overall variance in the dependent variable, group leader self-efficacy. This suggests that above and beyond the influence of general self-efficacy, group leadership experience (to a very small degree), observation, and receiving feedback specific to group leadership has a meaningful and important impact on participants’ sense of self-efficacy leading groups.

The results of step four also indicated that when the feedback variable was added to the model, both the composite experience variable and each of the three observation dummy variables were no longer statistically significant predictors of group leader self-efficacy. Upon examination of the correlation matrix, the researcher noted that there was
a moderate statistically significant relationship between the feedback composite variable and the experience composite variable. This is not surprising as students who were exposed to more group leadership opportunities were also the ones more likely to be receiving feedback specific to group counseling. The impact on statistical significance was therefore likely a result of the fact that feedback and experience are related constructs. To receive feedback specific to group leadership, students need to be performing and/or observing groups. These results imply that it is not entirely sufficient for students to be given opportunities to experience and observe groups; they need to be receiving feedback specific to their experiences of performing group leadership skills.

**Anxiety and GLSE.** The fifth step in the regression analysis added the composite anxiety variable to general self-efficacy, experience, observation, and the feedback variables. On average, this sample, exhibiting limited variability in individual participant responses, felt that they could handle challenging situations moderately to very well. These results are meaningful given that above and beyond the influence of self-efficacy, experience, observation, and feedback, the anxiety variable explained an additional 6% of the variance in group leader self-efficacy. This suggests that while group leadership experiences, observation, and the accompanying feedback are important to the development of group leader self-efficacy, people who do not experience anxiety leading groups or who are able to manage it during group leadership appear to feel particularly confident leading future groups.
Implications

This study informs counselor training programs about the perceived site supervisory practices that can influence group leader self-efficacy. Framed from the lens of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), these results suggest that there is a relationship between the context within which students are working (the site supervisory environment) and their beliefs (group leader self-efficacy) about their abilities to perform (behavior) particular skills. Specifically, general self-efficacy represents a construct that symbolizes people’s abilities to influence their environments, rather than be passive recipients of chance (Bandura, 2009). The results in this study suggest that general self-efficacy has the most substantial impact on group leader self-efficacy. Generally speaking, graduate programs might choose to focus their attention on assessments and experiential learning that promotes openness and self-awareness. These opportunities may help to empower students with the knowledge and skills needed to personally direct their future growth as counselors.

More specifically, given that research suggests that mastery experiences are often the greatest predictor of general self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986), counselor educators may consider not only offering a variety of experiential learning opportunities across the counseling curriculum but continually assess the quality of these experiences. Likewise, with respect to other previously established predictors of general self-efficacy, counselor educators may want to be mindful of the impact of vicarious learning (Bandura, 1986; Larson & Daniels, 1998), as the relationships students have with each other and professors may have an important impact on the development of their counselor self-
efficacy. For example, in addition to articulating and demonstrating knowledge and skills, counselor educators may want to be especially cognizant of demonstrating the appropriate demeanor (e.g. openness to feedback, managing relational conflict) expected of professionals in the field with both students and colleagues (Safran, Muran, Stevens, & Rothman, 2007).

Furthermore, intentionally providing consistent formative verbal feedback across the curriculum may also help to foster general and counselor self-efficacy. Larson and Daniels (1998) cite studies that discuss the importance of consistent positive performance feedback in predicting counselor self-efficacy. Counselor educators may therefore want to be especially intentional about how they frame feedback to students (e.g. balancing positive with constructive dialogue) in order to help foster self-efficacy throughout the counseling program.

The relationship between general self-efficacy and group leader self-efficacy may also suggest that the interconnectedness between the environment and students’ general beliefs may dually impact the future performance and motivation to lead groups in practice. Counselor educators may want to assess the context of the practicum and internship school environments and their potential impact on the experiences and self-efficacy of pre-service school counselors. For instance, if administrators in a particular school are not consistently affording their school counseling employees opportunities to implement aspects of a developmental counseling program, these counselors, who may become site supervisors, may be unable to provide valuable experiential learning, observation, and related supervision to pre-service school counselors. This may in turn
impact both pre-service school counselors’ general and counselor self-efficacy and their motivation and abilities to provide important counseling interventions in future practice. Helping students to find meaningful fieldwork placements and where possible, supporting site supervisors with the knowledge and skills needed to provide appropriate and valuable supervision throughout students’ site supervisory experiences may help to foster both general and group leader self-efficacy.

**Experience and Group Leader Self-Efficacy**

The results of this study suggest that opportunities to lead/co-lead and design counseling groups with children and adolescents have a small influence on students’ beliefs about their abilities to run groups in practice. The quality of these experiences and related feedback, not measured in this study, may further support opportunities for students to obtain mastery experiences. Intentionally designing more quality opportunities for students to facilitate groups with these populations during course work may thus be particularly meaningful in supporting students’ future motivation to design and lead groups with clients. For instance, students might benefit from an opportunity to take a group counseling course at the same time they are participating in their practicum experiences. This may afford students an opportunity to design group counseling sessions within their course work and where appropriate, potentially lead/co-lead them concurrently in their practicum. University course instructors may also use training clinics and/or previously established community and school district partnerships to offer group counseling facilitation opportunities to students under university supervision. Providing opportunities for students to receive feedback specific to these recommended
experiences combines leadership with the benefits of supervision, which is likely to further support students’ development as group leaders.

**Supervision and Group Leader Self-Efficacy**

Findings in this study also highlight the strength of the relationships between receiving feedback and managing anxiety specific to group leadership and group leader self-efficacy; both of these areas are particularly important in the supervision of pre-service school counselors. These findings are consistent with Larson’s (1998) Social Cognitive Model of Counselor Training (SCMCT), which highlights the importance of supervision throughout the learning process. Inherent in this model is a focus on personal agency (counselor self-efficacy) as it influences and is influenced by the environment and behavior. Self-efficacy specific to group leadership can likely be understood by further examining the nature and quality of this supervision.

In the current study, results suggest that students on average are occasionally receiving feedback specific to group leadership during their site supervisory experiences. This may be reflective of the way site supervisors are prepared to support pre-service school counselors. CACREP (2009) standards indicate that accredited counseling programs need to provide supervisors with “relevant training.” The indication that students are only on occasion receiving feedback specific to group leadership may reflect the lack of specificity around supervisory expectations and the resulting variability in students’ site supervisory experiences.

According to Larson (1998), “…counselor trainers and supervisors need direction as to which counselor variables to attend to given the limited time they have and the sheer
number of therapist variables that are present” (p. 220). Results of this study suggest that site supervisors should be particularly aware of the need to provide feedback specific to group leadership knowledge and skills as well as inquiry and recommendations that lead to group leadership improvement; examining the quality of this feedback, not measured in this study, may be especially important. This may be explicitly supported during site supervision training as well as through the regular communication requirements between site supervisors and university supervisors.

**Site supervisor training.** “Counselors produce more effective actions with clients, in part, because of the quality of their supervision experience and the nature of their clients” (Larson, 1998, p.220). Historically, many site supervisors lack adequate supervision training and “rely on their own intuition, experience, and communication skills,” (Granello & Underfer-Babalis, 2004, p. 161) to support pre-service counselors. Not only does this have the potential to impact overall counselor self-efficacy, but with increased challenges that often surface within the practice of group work, students’ group leader self-efficacy may likewise be affected. At a time where pre-service counselors are receiving hands on experiences, appropriate, meaningful, and on-going feedback specific to various skills (e.g. group leadership) is essential to their development. Tailoring site supervisor training to include group counseling in the school environment may be especially important. The quality of this training as well as its implementation should be further assessed.

**Supervision models.** Site supervisor training for pre-service school counselors might consider using Luke and Bernard’s (2006) school counselor supervision model to
help frame the supervision provided to internship students. Structured around a comprehensive school counseling program, Luke and Bernard’s (2006) model encourages the supervisor to consider the different supervisory roles and the specific focus of supervision. In doing so, supervisors may be supported in highlighting their roles as the teacher, counselor, and consultant in relation to supervisees’ developmental needs. For instance, supervisees who have not led groups with children and adolescents initially may feel more anxious and need more directed support. This may necessitate the supervisor to spend time in the teacher and counselor roles to provide on-going directive feedback and opportunities to help supervisees process affective reactions to their experiences. Highlighting the importance of supervision specific to group leadership knowledge and skills is recommended in the training and formative and summative evaluations provided to and expected of site supervisors.

Other training models may likewise encourage the development of pre-service school counselors. Murphy and Kaffenberger (2007) suggested a half day in-person training provided by two counselor educators. The five training goals include: (a) training practicing school counselors to be on-site supervisors and to supervise student counselors, (b) informing onsite supervisors about practicum and internship assignments, (c) outlining basic field experiences required of the student counselors, (d) briefly reviewing a pre-K-12 practicum/internship manual, and (e) introducing the ASCA National Model. Discussion is also intended to focus on the integration of Bernard’s (1979) discrimination model with the ASCA National model as it relates to the university’s expectations for supervision. Counselor educators may highlight the
importance of providing supervision specific to group leadership and include rubrics that help site supervisors to track specific group leadership skills throughout students’ experiences.

Swank and Tyson (2012) proposed a third avenue to support the training of school counseling site supervisors. Using a web-based model, site supervisors were provided information surrounding 1) expectations of supervisors 2) characteristics of supervision and accompanying relationships 3) models and theories 4) methods and techniques, 5) and ethics and legal issues. Each of these areas is recommended to support the site supervisor in developing confidence around their supervisory practice and thus supporting the developing identify of the pre-service school counselor. Trainers can use this model to include web-based clips that demonstrate the supervision of both individual and group counseling skills. Discussion regarding legal and ethical issues might also be intentionally differentiated into individual and group counseling discussions in order to bring additional awareness to the importance of supervised group leadership practice.

The meaningful relationships between feedback, the management of anxiety and group leader self-efficacy in this study highlight the need for counselor educators to intentionally provide training to site supervisors that incorporates supervision specific to group counseling. Assessing the quality of supervision specific to group leadership may help to further understand the impact of feedback and management of anxiety on group leader self-efficacy. Adapting any one of these school counselor supervision models to include a specific focus on group leadership may be one way to ensure that site supervisors are receiving supervision training specific to group leadership in the context
of the school setting. While summative assessments are very likely to include questions related to group leadership, university supervisors are further encouraged to formatively inquire about students’ group leadership development throughout the duration of their supervisory experiences.

**University supervision.** Counselor educators may be encouraged to incorporate experiential group counseling exercises and assessments into other classes, beyond the group counseling course(s) (e.g. career counseling, multicultural counseling). Providing on-going feedback around these experiences may help students to continue to develop confidence in their abilities to lead group interventions before they begin working directly with clients.

Additionally, counseling programs are encouraged to examine the amount of focus on group counseling occurring in students’ university-led group supervision classes. Developmental supervision models suggest that students may experience more anxiety at the onset of their experiential fieldwork (Stoltenberg et al., 1998). The group supervision class is therefore an especially important time for students to process some of their first experiences working with clients. Counselor educators can be encouraged to focus specific efforts on group leadership in the schools throughout these classes. Providing students with feedback from both instructors and peers and allowing space for them to process emotional reactions to group leadership across the counseling curriculum may help to further the development of group leader self-efficacy.
Limitations

The findings in this study suggest meaningful implications for pre-service school counselors, counselor educators and site supervisors; however, there are a number of limitations that should be considered as the results are interpreted. The research design included gathering information about the perceived experiences of pre-service school counselors using survey data. Self-reports are limited to participants’ self-awareness, transparency, and memory and do not necessarily accurately reflect reality. Aside from the research design, social desirability bias is another limitation that should be considered when interpreting the results. Social desirability bias concerns the tendency of participants to respond in a way that they feel the researcher expects or that may present themselves in a more favorable light (Paulhus, 1984). Despite reassuring all participants who took the survey in person that their results would remain confidential and that their answers would not have any bearing on their course grades, consciously or not, students may have still felt the need to please the researcher and/or the professor with their answers. This has the potential to misrepresent the realities of their supervisory experiences.

The characteristics of the specific universities and the pre-service school counseling sample should also be further examined. The researcher contacted 125 of the 247 CACREP-accredited school counseling masters programs in the United States. Although an exact participant response rate cannot be obtained because the number of students exposed to the in-person and online survey was not specified, the 36 counseling programs that agreed to administer or pass along the link to their school counseling
internship students represents 29% of the programs initially contacted. Some programs did respond but provided feedback that they would not accept research inquiries. Other program coordinators responded with feedback that required the researcher to gain additional research approval from those respective universities. Programs that did not provide this feedback may have shared these commonalities as well.

Upon further examination of the useable surveys, the researcher found that only one of them included an online participant. There may be several reasons for this incomplete data, including the fact that one of the questions from the anxiety measure was missing from the online instrument during part of the data collection period. Additionally, despite the high number of university correspondences, only 51 surveys were even started online; on the other hand, the researcher received 134 in-person surveys with and without missing data. It is possible that students who were given the in-person survey option may have felt more compelled to participate in the study, which could evidence some inadvertent coercion, social desirability bias, and potentially have biased the results towards programs with which the researcher had a particular connection. These factors should be considered with respect to the generalizability of this sample.

The sample’s demographics also represent a limitation of this study and its generalizability to larger populations. Gender and racial/cultural diversity is limited, as 84% of respondents identified as female and 81% as White/Caucasian. CACREP (2009) suggests that the school counseling profession needs to continue to focus on recruiting a more diverse population of practitioners and Cinotti (2012) advocates for more attention
to cross cultural counseling skills across the counseling curriculum; although limited, these demographic results are consistent with other similar studies that examined practicing and pre-service school counselors and self-efficacy (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Cinotti, 2012; Daniels & Larson, 2001). Nevertheless, challenges associated with homogeneity include an inability to generalize these results to more diverse populations.

As far as the measures themselves, students were asked to recall and record information that previously occurred in their training; this included among other information, the numbers of groups students led/design and observed. The accuracy of these numbers may have been impacted by participants’ memory and/or interpretation of the directions, and the quality of these experiences may likewise have had more of an impact on group leader self-efficacy than the numbers themselves.

Furthermore, the standardized measures in this study included, with permission, two adapted scales: (1) short form of the state scale of the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI; Marteau & Bekker, 1992) and (2) The Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE; Larson et al., 1992). Specific to the STAI, while adding language that referred to students’ group leadership experiences (e.g. When I lead or co-lead group sessions, I feel calm), some participants may have struggled to differentiate their overall feelings of anxiety related to becoming a counselor from their specific feelings towards running groups. Likewise, the researcher’s directions to “Read each statement and then circle the most appropriate number to indicate how you feel now thinking about your group leadership experiences during practicum and internship” may have been confusing
for students who indicated prior that they had not yet run groups in their practicum and internship with children and adolescents. Additionally, this scale measured the presence of anxiety specific to leading/designing groups. While the overall mean score was relatively high on this measure, the researcher cannot be sure whether this indicated that participants managed their anxiety leading/designing groups or it never existed in the first place.

Measuring group leader self-efficacy using an adapted version of The Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE; Larson et al., 1992) may have also limited our true understanding of the full impact of these results. Adding language that refers participants to consider their experiences leading groups may not have fully accounted for their group leader self-efficacy performing skills specific to group facilitation. Additionally, of the 185 surveys started both in-person and online, 20 were fully missing the COSE measure. The length of this particular measure and the survey itself as well as participants’ interest in the topic may also have contributed to a smaller sample size. Caution needs to be taken in interpreting these results, as they could reflect participants who have a greater desire to run groups or who have more stamina taking assessments.

Finally, this study is also limited to the perceptions of the supervisees. Without information from their accompanying site supervisors, the results indicate only one angle of the site supervisory relationship and experience. As such, students’ perceptions of their supervisory experiences may not fully or accurately reflect the reality of the relationship dynamic and/or the skills discussed throughout the process. Supervisors’ supervision training specific to group work, attitudes towards supervision, group
counseling, or the perceptions of their supervisees’ as well as their own group leader self-efficacy are important factors likely to impact students’ group leader self-efficacy.

Similarly, supervisors’ self-efficacy around their supervision might be yet another factor influencing students’ development. Each of these aspects limits the findings and application of this study’s results and as such, generalizations beyond the current sample should be met with some caution.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

This study focused on the relationships between site supervisory factors and students’ beliefs about their abilities to successfully lead groups in practice. Very little prior research has examined factors associated with self-efficacy specific to group leadership. The results of this exploratory study can thus serve to highlight future research projects that warrant further investigation.

Above and beyond the influence of general self-efficacy, leading/designing small groups, along with receiving feedback and managing anxiety specific to group leadership, were, to varying degrees, all found to have a meaningful impact on group leader self-efficacy. Considering Bandura’s theory of reciprocal determinism, whereby the environment, personal factors, and behaviors mutually influence decision-making, future research may seek to understand students’ lived experiences leading/designing and receiving supervision specific to group counseling within the context of a particular school or across varying grade levels. These environmental factors, not examined within the context of this study, may be further understood through future phenomenological
studies and used as additional predictors in relation to alternative quantitative projects that examine group leader self-efficacy.

Future studies might also examine the nature of group leader supervision more closely using other qualitative research methods such as discourse analysis. Identifying pertinent themes within qualitative interviews may help researchers to construct more meaningful and accurate experience and feedback composite variables, which may reflect the quality of the experiences and feedback, rather than just the amount of opportunities to engage in or receive these opportunities.

Additional variables concerning supervision not examined may include students’ satisfaction with supervision, the supervisory working alliance, and experiences in students’ faculty-led internship group supervision courses. Researchers might consider adding these specific variables along with additional contextual variables not measured (e.g., administrative support for group counseling/supervisor’s implementation of the ASCA National Model, supervisor’s perceptions of role-conflict/role-ambiguity) into future models that examine group leader self-efficacy.

The measurements of experience and observation may also be further investigated quantitatively. Above and beyond the influence of general self-efficacy, the experience composite variable was statistically significant and added a small increase in variance in group leader self-efficacy. This suggests that running groups are meaningful to the development of pre-service school counselors’ group leader self-efficacy. Measuring the quality of these experiences may in fact better represent “mastery experiences,” and lead to more statistically significant and meaningful results for this variable. Similarly, future
research may examine whether the number and quality of groups led/co-led in a given school year has an impact on practicing school counselors’ group leader self-efficacy. Furthermore, with literature suggesting that higher levels of self-efficacy can predict performance outcomes (Bandura, 1986), it may be advantageous to examine whether pre-service or practicing school counselors’ group leader self-efficacy may impact the effectiveness of a particular group; collecting this data on practicing school counselors may help to provide more information with which to use in advocating for group counseling interventions in the schools.

Additionally, when the researcher chose to categorize the observation variable during analysis, she did find a small statistically significant relationship between group leader self-efficacy and the students who had never had opportunities to observe groups with children and adolescents. Future research might consider further examining experience and observation categorically or elicit comparative information from the accompanying site supervisors. This may be especially important, as according to Bandura’s research (1986), experience appears to be the greatest predictor of self-efficacy. While initially significant in the model, when controlling for general self-efficacy, experience and observation’s loss of statistical significance highlights collinearity issues with each of the other predictor variables. This may indicate that variables such as experience and observation might have actually been measuring similar information. Operationalizing experience and observation to include the quality of these opportunities might yield more reliable results and ultimately help to explain a greater percentage of variance in domain specific, group leader self-efficacy.
Finally, future research might also measure supervisors’ group leader self-efficacy and its overall influence on supervisee group leadership development and/or the actual performance outcomes of their respective groups. Using the results of many of these studies, researchers may choose to further examine the measurement of group leader self-efficacy. The current lack of acceptable reported validation studies for the Group Leader Self-Efficacy Instrument (GLSI; Page et al, 2001) necessitated the researcher to adapt a previously established counselor self-efficacy instrument. Future research may thus consider further validating the psychometric properties of the GLSI or creating a new measure to capture people’s beliefs about their abilities to conduct group counseling sessions.

**Conclusion**

This study examined the relationships between group leader self-efficacy and four aspects of the site supervisory experience (1) experience leading/co-leading and designing small group counseling sessions with children and adolescents, (2) observation of small group counseling sessions with children and adolescents, (3) receiving feedback specific to group leadership with children and adolescents, and (4) managing anxiety specific to running small group sessions with children and adolescents. Results demonstrated a small statistically significant relationship between experience and group leader self-efficacy. Analysis also revealed that above and beyond the influence of general self-efficacy, the management of anxiety and receiving feedback specific to group leadership, two aspects inherent in the dyadic supervisory relationship, were moderately strong predictors of students’ group leader self-efficacy. In light of these
results, counselor educators may consider identifying students’ general self-efficacy and supporting pre-service school counselors with supervision specific to leading and designing small group counseling with children and adolescents throughout the training process. Providing these opportunities is likely to increase motivation and further support the confidence with which pre-service school counselors approach future group counseling opportunities in practice.
References


doi:10.1037/0022-0167.43.1.25

Appendix A

Demographic Information

1. Program of Study:
   a. School Counseling Concentration
   b. Other

2. Race/Ethnicity
   a. American Indian or Alaska Native
   b. Asian or Asian-American
   c. Black or African American
   d. Hispanic or Latino
   e. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   f. White or Caucasian
   g. Other ______________________

3. Age:
   I am _____ years old (enter a whole number)

4. Gender Identity:
   a. Female
   b. Other

5. How many years of classroom teaching experience do you have in the K-12 setting? _____ (enter a whole number)

6. I have taken ________ number of group counseling courses in my counseling program. (enter a whole number)

7. The setting(s) in which my internship take(s) place is _______________ (enter elementary, middle, and/or high school setting)

8. I have completed how many internship hours?
   a. Less than 100 hours
   b. Between 101 and 300 hours
   c. More than 300 hours
Appendix B

The Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory

(Larson, 1992)
Excerpts from the adapted COSE scale

A. When using responses like reflection of feeling, active listening, clarification, probing, I am confident I will be concise and to the point.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Moderately Disagree
3. Slightly Disagree
4. Slightly Agree
5. Moderately Agree
6. Strongly Agree

B. I am likely to impose my values on group members during the group session.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Moderately Disagree
3. Slightly Disagree
4. Slightly Agree
5. Moderately Agree
6. Strongly Agree

C. When I initiate the end of a group session, I am positive it will be in a manner that is not abrupt or brusque and that I will end the session on time.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Moderately Disagree
3. Slightly Disagree
4. Slightly Agree
5. Moderately Agree
6. Strongly Agree
Appendix C

Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES)

Permission granted
to use the General Self-Efficacy Scale for non-commercial research and development purposes. The scale may be shortened and/or modified to meet the particular requirements of the research context.

http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/selfscal.htm

You may print an unlimited number of copies on paper for distribution to research participants. Or the scale may be used in online survey research if the user group is limited to certified users who enter the website with a password.

There is no permission to publish the scale in the Internet, or to print it in publications (except 1 sample item).

The source needs to be cited, the URL mentioned above as well as the book publication:


Professor Dr. Ralf Schwarzer
www.rafschwarzer.de
## GENERALIZED SELF-EFFICACY SCALE

Name: 

Date: 

Record Number: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all true</th>
<th>Barely true</th>
<th>Moderately true</th>
<th>Exactly true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If someone opposes me, I can find means and ways to get what I want.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. If I am in a bind, I can usually think of something to do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. No matter what comes my way, I'm usually able to handle it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This measure is part of *Measures in Health Psychology: A User's Portfolio*, written and compiled by Professor John Weinman, Dr Stephen Wright and Professor Marie Johnaton. Once the invoice has been paid, it may be photocopied for use within the purchasing institution only. Published by GL Assessment Limited, The Chiswick Centre, 414 Chiswick High Road, London W4 5TF, UK.

Code 0090005090
Appendix D

Adapted Short Form of the State Scale of the Spielberger *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory* (Marteau & Bekker, 1992)

Dear Sarah

You do not need permission to use this scale so do please use it.

Below is a link to a review of the scale which you may find useful:

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2776769/

Kind regards

Theresa Marteau

Professor Theresa M Marteau PhD FMedSci

Director

Behaviour and Health Research Unit

University of Cambridge

Institute of Public Health

Cambridge CB2 0SR

http://www.bhru.iph.cam.ac.uk
Adapted S-STAI Scale

**INSTRUCTIONS**

A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then circle the most appropriate number to indicate how you feel now thinking about your group leadership experiences during practicum and internship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-- Not at all</th>
<th>2 – Somewhat</th>
<th>3 – Moderately</th>
<th>4 – Very Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D. When I lead or co-lead group sessions, I feel calm.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. When I lead or co-lead group sessions, I am tense.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. When I lead or co-lead group sessions, I feel upset.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. When I lead or co-lead group sessions, I am relaxed.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. When I lead or co-lead group sessions, I feel content.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. When I lead or co-lead group sessions, I am worried.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Experience, Observation, and Feedback Questions

Directions:

For the following questions, please enter the answer that best describes your experience during your practicum and internship training. If you are unsure of answer to any of the questions, you please approximate.

How many small group sessions have you led or co-led with children and/or adolescents?

I have led or co-led ______ sessions with children and/or adolescents. 
(Enter a whole number in the blank. If you have not led any sessions, enter zero).

How many small group sessions have you designed or co-designed for children and/or adolescents?

I have designed or co-designed ______ sessions with children and/or adolescents. 
(Enter a whole number in the blank. If you have not designed or co-designed any sessions, enter zero).

How many small group sessions have you observed with children and/or adolescents run by a school-based mental health professional? (e.g. school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist)

I have observed ______ sessions with children and/or adolescents. 
(Enter a whole number in the blank. If you have not observed any sessions with children and adolescents, enter zero).
Directions:

“Feedback is the process in which the supervisor *verbally* shares his or her thoughts regarding the supervisees’ progress” (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001).

*Your site supervisor* is the person in your particular school who provides you with counseling supervision.

**Please use these definitions as you respond to the following question.**

When you have **led or co-led** a group session with children and/or adolescents in your practicum and internship settings, how often have you received feedback about running the group from your site supervisor?

(In answering this question, please consider feedback you receive before, during, and after your group sessions. Please do **not** consider feedback received during midterm and/or final evaluations in answering this question)

Never
Occasionally
Often

I have not led or co-led a group session with children or adolescents

My site supervisor and I discuss knowledge and skills specific to group counseling (e.g. linking members, therapeutic factors, bringing out silent members, stages of group process, etc.).

Never
Occasionally
Often

I have not received feedback specific to group leadership

My site supervisor provides specific examples of how I can improve my group leadership skills.

Never
Occasionally
Often

I have not received feedback specific to group leadership
Appendix F

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approvals

January 28, 2015

Ms. Sarah Springer
20 Irving Avenue
Livingston, NJ 07039

Re: IRB Number: 001612
Project Title: Aspects of Site Supervision as Predictors of Group Leader Self-Efficacy for Pre-Service School Counselors

Dear Ms. Springer:

After an expedited 7 review, Montclair State University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this protocol on November 30, 2014. The study is valid for one year and will expire on November 30, 2015.

Before requesting amendments, extensions, or project closure, please reference MSU’s IRB website and download the current forms.

Should you wish to make changes to the IRB-approved procedures, prior to the expiration of your approval, submit your requests using the Amendment form.

For Continuing Review, it is advised that you submit your form 60 days before the month of the expiration date above. If you have not received MSU’s IRB approval by your study’s expiration date, ALL research activities must STOP, including data analysis. If your research continues without MSU’s IRB approval, you will be in violation of Federal and other regulations.

Please note, as the principal investigator, you are required to maintain a file of approved human subject’s research documents, for each IRB application, to comply with federal and institutional policies on record retention.

After your study is completed, submit your Project Completion form.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB requirements, please contact me at 973-655-5189, reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu, or the Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Katrina Bulkley
IRB Chair

cc: Dr. Dana Heller-Levitt, Faculty Sponsor
Ms. Amy Aiello, Graduate School

montclair.edu
1 Normal Avenue • Montclair, NJ 07043 • An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution
February 18, 2015

Ms. Sarah Springer
20 Irving Avenue
Livingston, NJ 07039

Re: IRB Number: 001612
Project Title: Aspects of Site Supervision as Predictors of Group Leader Self-Efficacy for Pre-Service School Counselors

Dear Ms. Springer:

After an expedited review, Montclair State University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this study’s amendment on February 11, 2015 (submitted on January 30, 2015). It is valid through the current approved period and will expire on November 30, 2015.

Before requesting amendments, extensions, or project closure, please reference MSU’s IRB website and download the current forms.

Should you wish to make changes to the IRB-approved procedures, prior to the expiration of your approval, submit your requests using the Amendment form.

For Continuing Review, it is advised that you submit your form 60 days before the month of the expiration date above. If you have not received MSU’s IRB approval by your study’s expiration date, ALL research activities must STOP, including data analysis. If your research continues without MSU’s IRB approval, you will be in violation of Federal and other regulations.

After your study is completed, submit your Project Completion form.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB requirements, please contact me at 973-655-5189, reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu, or the Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Katrina Bulkley
IRB Chair

cc: Dr. Dana Heller Levitt, Faculty Sponsor
    Ms. Amy Aiello, Graduate School
Appendix G

Recruitment Emails

Hello,

My name is Sarah Springer, and I am a counselor education doctoral candidate at Montclair State University. You are receiving this email as an invitation for your pre-service school counseling students to participate in a study that examines students’ group leader self-efficacy as impacted by their site supervisory experiences.

This initial email is requesting permission to contact your internship course instructor(s) to request that they provide their pre-service school counseling students with an opportunity to participate in my research study. The course instructor will have the option of distributing the survey in paper and pencil form or to provide their pre-service school counseling students with a link to take the survey online. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

While the risks are minimal, there may be some sensitive questions regarding how students feel about themselves and their abilities to perform group leader tasks. I will include my contact information in order to answer any questions or concerns about this survey.

If you are willing, I would appreciate if you could provide me with your faculty internship course instructors’ names and email addresses. I will reach out to them to share some information about the study, and if they are interested in distributing the online survey, I will send them the link.

If I can provide you with any additional information about the nature of the study, please let me know. This study has received IRB approval from Montclair State University as study #001612 on November, 30, 2014.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Sarah I. Springer
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education Ph.D. Program
Montclair State University
Dr. Dana Heller Levitt
Faculty Sponsor
Montclair State University
(In-Person Survey)

Dear Internship Course Instructor:

Your school counseling students have been selected to participate in a dissertation research study that examines their site supervisory experiences in relation to their group leadership with children and adolescents. Your students’ participation in this study will provide valuable insight into issues that affect group counselor training and supervision practices.

I have received your contact information and approval to administer this survey from the director of your program. The survey would be distributed to participating school counseling students during your class period. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Students could complete the survey during class time or immediately after the class is dismissed. Depending upon availability, I will either administer these surveys myself and can pick them up after your class period or send a packet to you directly for distribution.

In the event that you distribute these surveys, it is important to mention to your students that their choice to participate will have no bearing on your course grades and that you as the instructor will not know who is participating. Additionally, for confidentiality purposes, I will ask that you not be present in the room once surveys are distributed and ask a student to seal the envelopes when all materials are returned by students.

I would appreciate if you could please provide me with your availability, so that we can coordinate a mutually convenient time to administer these surveys.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at springers3@mail.montclair.edu or by telephone at (856) 217-9188. Questions for my advisor should be directed to Dr. Dana Heller Levitt by e-mail at levittd@mail.montclair.edu.

Please note that this study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) as study #001612 on 1/29/15 Questions or concerns about research participants’ rights may be directed to the Montclair State IRB Office, Montclair State University, College Hall, room 248. The phone number is 973-655-7583.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Sarah I. Springer
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education Ph.D. Program
Montclair State University
Dr. Dana Heller Levitt
Faculty Sponsor
Montclair State University
(Online Survey)

Dear Internship Course Instructor:

Your school counseling students have been selected to participate in a dissertation research study that examines their site supervisory experiences in relation to their group leadership with children and adolescents. Your students’ participation in this study will provide valuable insight into issues that affect group counselor training and supervision practices.

I have received your contact information and approval to administer either an online or paper and pencil survey from the director of your program. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Students could complete the survey during class time, immediately after the class is dismissed, or at a time that is most convenient for you. If you would prefer a paper and pencil survey, please let me know, and we can coordinate times that are most convenient for you and your students.

It is important to mention to your students that their choice to participate will have no bearing on their course grades and that you as the instructor will not know who is participating. I would appreciate if you could please let me know if you are willing to send your preservice school counseling students this link.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at springers3@mail.montclair.edu or by telephone at (856) 217-9188. Questions for my advisor should be directed to Dr. Dana Heller Levitt by e-mail at levittd@mail.montclair.edu.

Please note that this study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) as study # 001612 on November 30, 2014. Questions or concerns about research participants’ rights may be directed to the Montclair State IRB Office, Montclair State University, College Hall, room 248. The phone number is 973-655-7583.

If you prefer and agree to send out the link to the online version of this survey, please forward this email to your students.

Dear preservice school counselor,

You have been selected to participate in a dissertation research study that examines your site supervisory experiences in relation to your group leadership with children and adolescent. Your participation in this study will provide valuable insight into issues that affect group counselor training and supervision. If you would like to take part in this study, you would complete a brief, anonymous online survey that should take you about
15-20 minutes to complete. All survey responses will remain anonymous, secure, and confidential. By clicking on this link, you are giving your consent to participate in this research study.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GroupLeaderSurveyMSU

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah I. Springer
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education Ph.D. Program
Montclair State University
Dr. Dana Heller Levitt
Faculty Sponsor, Montclair State University
Appendix H

Consent Forms

(In-person survey)

CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you sign this form.

**Study's Title:** Aspects of Site Supervision as Predictors of Group Leader Self-Efficacy

**Why is this study being done?** The purpose of this study is to examine how your confidence in running groups may be impacted by your internship site supervisory experiences.

**What will happen while you are in the study?** If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to fill out a survey that will include demographic questions and items that pertain to how you feel about yourself and your experiences with small group counseling during your internship training.

**Time:** This study will take about 15-20 minutes to complete.

**Risks:** You may experience some discomfort as you reflect on your group counseling and internship experiences. Although we will keep your identity confidential as it relates to this research project, if we learn of any suspected child abuse we are required by NJ state law to report that to the proper authorities immediately.

**Benefits:** You may benefit from this study by contributing to the counseling field’s knowledge of group leadership preparation and supervision. In addition, you may also learn about the research process.

**Compensation** You will not receive any compensation for participating in this study.

**Who will know that you are in this study?** You will not be linked to any presentations. Your participation in this study is confidential. All information will be stored in locked cabinets in the primary investigator’s office. This informed consent will be the only document that will include your name, and it will remain separate from the survey. The data collected will be analyzed without individuals’ names connected to any of the results. The information obtained may be used for further research and publication. Your right to privacy will continue to remain intact. The computer used to input data for statistical analysis will be password protected and only used by the principal investigator.

**Do you have to be in the study?**
You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be in the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Nothing will happen to you. The choice to participate will have no bearing on course grades or in your program and the instructor will not know who is participating.

**Do you have any questions about this study?**
Phone or email the Principal Investigator, Sarah Springer, 1 Normal Avenue Montclair, NJ 07043, (856) 217-9188, springers3@mail.montclair.edu or Faculty Sponsor, Dr. Dana Heller Levitt, 1 Normal Avenue Montclair, NJ 07043, (973) 655-2097, levittd@mail.montclair.edu

**Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?** Phone or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu.

This study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board # 001612 on 1/29/15

I give my permission to use my data in future research. Yes ____ No ____ (Please check)

One copy of this consent form is for you to keep.

**Statement of Consent**
I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and have received a copy of this consent form.

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| Dr. Dana Heller Levitt        |           |      |
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(Online Survey)

Dear School Counseling Student,

You are invited to participate in a study, Aspects of Site Supervision as Predictors of Group Leader Self-Efficacy. I hope to learn about the relationship between pre-service school counselors’ group leader self-efficacy and various aspects of your site supervisory experiences. You were selected to participate in this study because you are currently a school counseling student participating in a school counseling internship.

If you decide to participate, please complete the following set of questions. The survey is designed to measure pre-service school counselor group leader self-efficacy and various aspects of your experiences with site supervision. It will take about 15-20 minutes to complete the survey. The survey will include demographic questions and items that pertain to how you feel about yourself and your experiences with small group counseling during your internship training.

You may experience some discomfort as you reflect on your group counseling and internship experiences. This data will be collected using the Internet. While we cannot guarantee security of data sent on the Internet, the data collected will be analyzed without individuals’ names connected to any of the results. The information obtained may be used for further research and publication. Your right to privacy will continue to remain intact. The computer used to input data for statistical analysis will be password protected and only used by the principal investigator. You may benefit from this study by contributing to the counseling field’s knowledge of group leadership preparation and supervision. In addition, you may also learn about the research process.

If you choose to participate in this research, you can feel free to stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you prefer not to answer.

Please feel free to inquire about this study by contacting me at springers3@mail.montclair.edu or (856) 217-9188 or you can contact my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Dana Heller Levitt at levittd@montclair.edu with any questions regarding this study.

This study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board as study #001612 on November 30, 2014.

Any questions about your rights may be directed to Dr. Katrina Bulkley, Chair of the Institutional Review Board at Montclair State University at reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu or 973-655-5189.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Sarah Springer, Doctoral Candidate
Montclair State University
Department of Counselor Education and Leadership

By clicking to the next page below, I confirm that I have read this form and will participate in the project described. I am aware of its general purpose and the possible risks associated with my participation. These have been outlined to my satisfaction. I understand that I can discontinue participation at any time. My consent also indicates that I am 18 years of age.
Please feel free to print a copy of this consent.

I give my permission to use my data in future research. Yes _____ No _____
(Left Blank Intentionally)