ABSTRACT

Multicultural & Social Justice Competence and Leadership in Student Affairs: A Structural Model

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This study aims to provide a framework for understanding the development of student affairs professionals' self-perception of leadership ability through the improvement of multicultural/social justice competencies. The model set forth in this study provides a framework for understanding the relationship between student affairs professionals' perceptions of multicultural, social justice, and leadership competencies, and examines differences in the strength of these relationships relative to racial identity.

Analysis of data collected from the second iteration of the National Survey of Student Affairs Professionals (NSSAP 2.0) revealed a causative relationship between self-perceived multicultural/social justice competence and leadership. Additional analyses indicated multicultural/social justice competency consisted of multiple subcomponents, with causative relationships existing between them. The relationship between various analyzed components differed for respondents of differing racial identities. Further research is needed to explore the complexity of these differences, and additional relationships between competency areas of student affairs professionals.

Multicultural & Social Justice Competence and Leadership in Student Affairs: A Structural Model

by

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A Thesis

Approved by the Department of Educational Leadership

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all those who supported me on this journey. To my family and friends for their constant support throughout graduate school, my cohort, without whom I would have never completed a project of this magnitude, and to especially to my committee.

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Finally, thank you to all those who have loved, supported, and been patient with me throughout this process. You are cared for and appreciated dearly.

DEDICATION

To Sarah and Caitlin, who began this journey with me, and to Martin, who didn't get to see how it ended.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Recent publications on higher education have advocated for the necessity of multiculturally aware staff and faculty to buttress institutional efforts focused on increasing diversity, access, equity, and inclusion (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2019; Pope et al., 2019; Santamaría, 2014). The *2019 CAS General Standards for Higher Education* state that the advancement of institutional diversity, inclusion, equity, and access goals is a requisite component of any leadership role (2019), which is consistent with other scholarship examining the relationship between effective educational leadership and multicultural competence (Jackson & Hardiman, 1994; Pope et al., 2004; Roberts, 2001; Shields, 2010; Williams, 2013). The expanding roles of student affairs professionals as institutional leaders (Sandeen, 2004) has created a need for greater examination into the relationship between the leadership ability and multicultural competence of staff at every level (O'Brien, 2018).

A consequent area of analysis when examining this relationship is determining what factors have the potential to affect the developmental processes associated with the cultivation of acceptable levels of multicultural competence, social justice skills, and leadership ability. Historically, racial identity has had significant bearing on the experiences of students, faculty, and staff on college campuses. Numerous studies have documented disparate experiences within and differing perceptions of institutions of higher education between White constituents and People of Color (Hurtado et al., 1999).

Additionally, within the workplace, racial minorities are paid less, offered less opportunities for promotion, and are subject to both explicit and more subtle forms of individual, systemic, and structural racism relative to their White counterparts (Pager & Shepard, 2008). The collegiate institution's role in facilitating the professional development of staff, as well as its potential to sustain or promote an inhospitable racial climate forms an important area of inquiry for student affairs research and scholarship. An examination of student affairs professionals' development of multicultural, social justice, and leadership competencies, as well as the ways in which this is affected by racial identity, is of great benefit to the field.

Purpose

This study aims to provide a framework for understanding the development of student affairs professionals' self-perception of leadership ability through the improvement of multicultural/social justice competencies. Additionally, this research is intended address the scarcity of quantitative research on the relationship between various professional competency areas of student affairs professionals. This research was motivated by the need for further research into how multicultural and social justice knowledge and skills relate to self-perceived leadership ability, and the extent to which the character of this relationship is affected by race. The model set forth in this study provides a framework for understanding the relationship between student affairs professionals' perceptions of multicultural, social justice, and leadership competencies, and examines differences in the strength of these relationships relative to racial identity.

The Competency Movement and Multiculturalism

Competence as defined by Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2019), is the "essential awareness, knowledge, and skills needed for effective and efficacious practice" (p. 29). The competency movement, born out of a desire to reach consensus on the standards for professional preparation (Eaton, 2016), is not unique to student affairs. Other professional and educational fields have made similar efforts to standardize the optimal attitudes, values, and beliefs to succeed in a particular vocation (Eaton, 2016; Pope et al., 2019). Despite concerns about the potential for competency approaches to oversimplify and fragment core developmental areas (Eaton, 2016), scholars and practitioners use competencies in conjunction with multicultural and student affairs scholarship in a variety of capacities (Herdlein et al., 2013; Lovell & Kosten, 2000; Pope & Reynolds, 1997, 2004; Pope et al., 2019). Early conceptualizations of multicultural competencies in student affairs borrowed heavily from the field of counseling psychology (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). The work of Sue et al. (1982, 1992) and others (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; Sue, 2001) put forth a tripartite model describing necessary knowledge, awareness, and skills for successful multicultural competency development in counseling psychology. This model was instrumental in the development of similar competencies within student affairs.

Though numerous scholars advocated for the field of student affairs to become more sensitive to multicultural issues (Barr & Strong, 1988; Cheatham, 1991; Howard-Hamilton et al., 1998; Manning & Coleman-Boatwright, 1991; Pope, 1995), the early competencies suggested by Pope and Reynolds (1997) were distinct in their portrayal as a necessary component for effective and ethical work in student affairs (Pope et al., 2019).

The *Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence*, set forth by Pope and Reynolds in 1997 and further refined in 2004, described seven core areas of student affairs competence, including a "multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills" competency (1997, p. 269). This model served as both the first explicit call for all student affairs professionals to develop multicultural competence, and the first set of broader, universal competency areas for student affairs professionals (Pope et al., 2019). Updated again in 2019, the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence remains unique for its imperative that multicultural and social justice considerations be infused throughout all additional competency areas (Pope et al., 2019).

A significant milestone for the competency movement in student affairs was a joint publication by NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, and ACPA—College Student Educators International—in 2010, which defined a core set of competencies for the profession. The initial 2010 publication included 10 competency areas, further categorized into basic, intermediate, and advanced levels of proficiency (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). These areas included: (a) advising and helping; (b) assessment, evaluation, and research; (c) equity, diversity, and inclusion; (d) ethical professional practice; (e) history, philosophy, and values; (f) human and organizational resources; (g) law, policy, and governance; (h) leadership; (i) personal foundations; and (j) student learning and development (2010). In 2015, an updated version of the competencies was released, with the most significant changes involving the equity, diversity, and inclusion competency (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). Other changes included the consolidation of the ethical professional practice and personal foundations

competencies into a single competency—called personal and ethical foundations—and the addition of a new competency: technology (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Citing a desire to shift from awareness paradigms to a more action-oriented depiction of multicultural work, the equity, diversity, and inclusion competency was renamed "social justice and inclusion" (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 4). The descriptions of professional growth in this competency area are intertwined with the ability to affect change within campus environments towards more equitable outcomes (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). An included model of the interactions between various competencies reflects the interrelated nature of various developmental outcomes, accompanied by the acknowledgement that "professional development work in any one competency area is related to work in multiple other areas" (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 9). Within this visual representation of the competency area interactions, social justice and inclusion competence is noted as being most closely associated with the leadership and technology competency areas. This placement reflects a common sentiment regarding the relationship between leadership and multicultural competence: that contemporary effective leadership requires some degree of multicultural and social justice competence (Astin & Astin, 2000; Colby et al., 2003; Santamaría, 2014; Wagner, 2006; Wilson, 2013). The ACPA/NASPA descriptions of the competency areas reflect this relationship to some degree, noting the necessity of including the voices of underrepresented or marginalized groups in decision making processes as a desirable outcome for leadership competency development (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). Such descriptions are accompanied by a call to use one's position of influence to make equitable decisions in hiring, planning, and programming practices (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Validation of the ACPA/NASPA Competencies

Despite their popularity and frequent usage in student affairs training and professional development programs, few attempts have been made to measure the ACPA/NASPA competencies, or the relationships between them (Sriram, 2014). Though there have been other attempts to measure other frameworks for higher education and student affairs competencies, both quantitatively (Burkard et al., 2005; Kuk et al., 2008; Waple, 2006) and qualitatively (Chapman, 2014; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Smith & Wolverton, 2010), there is a significant gap in research analyzing ACPA/NASPA competencies from a quantitative perspective. Sriram and Oster (2012) echoed calls for student affairs practitioners to engage in more research, and in a subsequent work, Sriram (2014) argued for student affairs professionals to increase their understanding of and engagement with quantitative research methods. Consistent with these sentiments, Sriram's (2014) publication of the National Survey of Student Affairs Professionals provided the first means of a psychometric measurement of all of the ACPA/NASPA competency areas. Sriram's (2014) research validated nine of the 10 original competencies, with the "personal foundations" competency failing to demonstrate construct validity. Other notable features of this study included the fact that the equity, diversity, and inclusion competency area split into two separate factors, which Sriram labeled as equity, diversity, and inclusion "skills" and "attitudes," respectively (2014, p. 357). Similarly, the assessment, evaluation, and research competency area split into three unique factors, yielding a total of 15 discrete factors determined by statistical analysis. Building on Sriram's (2014) research that presented two dimensions of the equity, diversity, and inclusion competency area of the NASPA/ACPA professional

competencies, now referred to as the Social Justice and Inclusion competency area (SJI), this study attempts to model the relationship between the NASPA/ACPA multicultural/social justice and leadership competency areas. The following variable definitions were created after analyzing the language used for each survey item to which participants responded.

Definitions

Multicultural Awareness (MA) – Borrowing heavily from Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller's model for Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs, multicultural awareness is defined in this context as the extent to which an individual's values, attitudes, and motivations reflect a desire for equitable treatment and intentional consideration of all peoples as an area of primary professional concern (2019).

Applied Multicultural Knowledge (AMK) – Our analysis of items associated with what was formerly known as the "equity, diversity, inclusion skills" construct revealed language that was consistent with both the "multicultural knowledge" component of multicultural competency (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2019) and contemporary understandings of social justice skills (Iverson, 2012). The resulting label, *Applied Multicultural Knowledge*, captures the essence of both components without regulating the construct to either purely cognitive or behavioral domains. Subsequently, *Applied Multicultural Knowledge* is defined as the various ways of knowing, understanding, and applying knowledge about systemic inequality and structural barriers to equality to specific contexts, as well as one's comfortability with applying knowledge to design, create, and adjust specific practices and interventions

Leadership (LEAD) – In the context of this study, leadership is defined using its associated description listed in the NASPA/ACPA professional competencies (2015) and is understood at a fundamental level as "the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of a leader, with or without positional authority," including the ability ". . . to envision, plan, and affect change in organizations and respond to broad-based constituencies and issues" (p. 13).

CHAPTER TWO

Methods

Structural Model

Collectively, the relationships between MA, ASK, and LEAD, as well as the

associated mediating and moderating effects, are represented by the structural model

depicted in Figure 1. I utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) methods to evaluate

the proposed model. Structural equation modeling is a psychometric research approach

that seeks to explain relationships between various factors and determine the extent to

which these factors affect and predict human behavior (Davcik, 2014). This explanatory

process utilizes a combination of various statistical techniques, including confirmatory

factor analysis, path analysis, and multiple regression methods (Abu-Alhaija, 2019).

Structural equation modeling is unique for its ability to examine relationships between

different latent constructs—those that cannot be directly observed and measured—as well

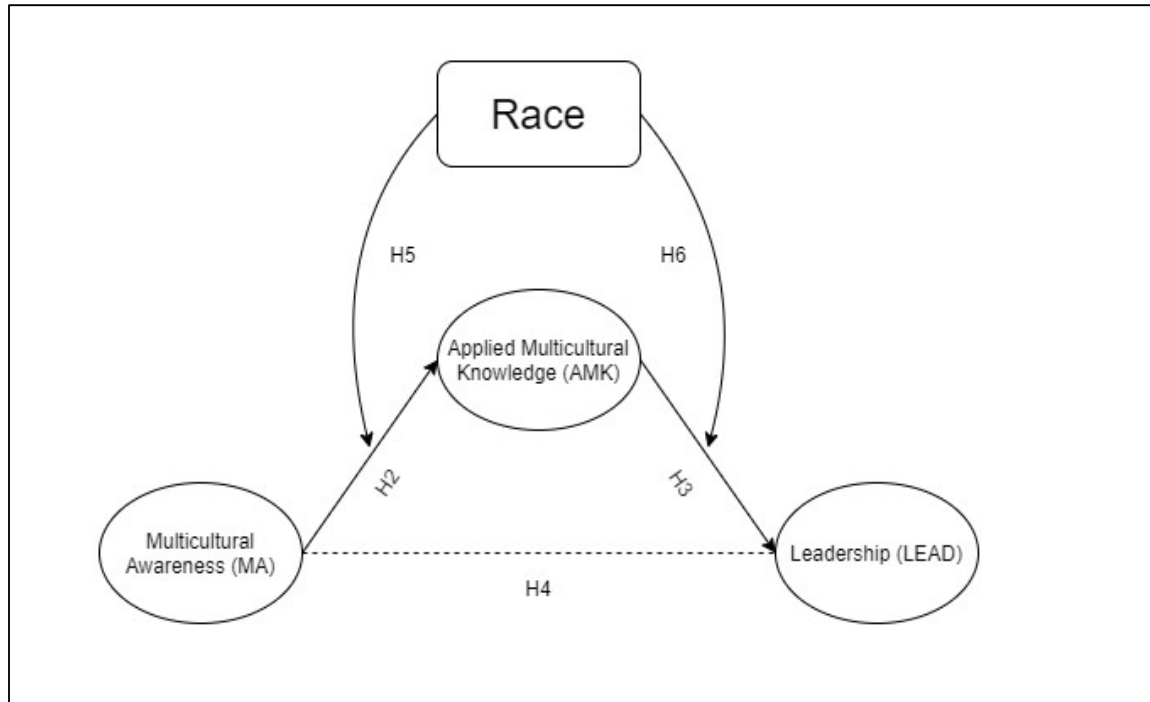as factors that can be measured directly (Hair et al., 2010).

Figure 1. Theoretical model with hypotheses: Latent factors are represented by ellipses, while the categorical moderated of race is represented by a square. *H1* is not represented in theoretical framework, as it is tested within the measurement model.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

Awareness and Applied Knowledge

Frameworks and scholarship from various disciplines have affirmed the notion that having an awareness of various social issues increases the likelihood of participation in efforts to ameliorate such issues (Funke, 2017; Kite et al, 2018). Paulo Freire, in his discussion of the critical consciousness, posited that true transformational change could only be enacted through the development of both knowledge regarding inequitable systems and the will to see them dismantled (1970). Numerous studies of human behavioral theory outline a relationship between attitudes and behaviors, a conceptually similar notion to the proposed relationship between multicultural awareness and applied

multicultural knowledge (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). In essence, despite the acknowledgement that knowledge and awareness do not invariably lead to the application of these concepts, I posit the existence of a meaningful, causative relationship between self-perceived awareness of multicultural and social justice issues and the application of such knowledge to student affairs practice. In essence, I theorize that awareness of social issues is a strong predictor for whether one perceives themselves as being capable of addressing such issues in professional practice. Subsequently, hypothesis two reads as follows:

H2. Multicultural Awareness will strongly predict Applied Multicultural Knowledge.

Applied Knowledge and Leadership

Various contemporary frameworks of leadership, including the Social Change Theory of Leadership, have discussed the necessity of leaders to engage in acts of institutional transformation (Komives & Wagner, 2016). This transformation is argued to occur due to purposeful action that helps achieve a more just, equitable society. The depiction of "action" is consistent with my definition of Applied Multicultural Knowledge, in which agents directly intervene through the application of specialized knowledge to specific contexts. Furthermore, scholarship within the field of student affairs has emphasized the development of specific social justice skills and multicultural competencies as a means to improves one's ability to "lead." The NASPA/ACPA competencies list the ability to "ensure that decision making processes include the perspectives of various groups on campus, particularly those who are underrepresented or marginalized" and the ability to "advocate for change that would remove barriers to student and staff success" as desired outcomes of leadership development in student

affairs (2015, p. 28). This social-justice oriented language provides the basis for my third hypothesis:

H3. Self-perception of applied multicultural knowledge will demonstrate a partial, causative relationship with self-perception of leadership competency.

Awareness and Leadership

Given the discourse that transformational leadership requires specific skills and the capacity for action (Thompson, 2012), I theorize that self-perception of multicultural awareness will have little direct effect on self-perception of leadership competency. Indeed, some research has demonstrated that the presence of mere "attitudes" and "empathy" toward certain social issues, absent the presence of specific behaviors and action, may actually decrease the likelihood in "activism behaviors," tantamount to the embodiment of transformative leadership ideals (Jones & Brewster, 2017). Thus, hypothesis four is as follows:

H4. Any causative relationship between Multicultural Awareness and Leadership will be largely explained by Applied Multicultural Knowledge, demonstrating a mediated relationship.

Race

As discussed previously, racial identity has the potential to significantly alter experiences in the workplace (Pager & Shepherd, 2008), on campus (Hurtado et al, 1999), and can affect both internal perceptions of self (Hurtado, 1994) and external perceptions of the environment (Hurtado et al., 1999). Subsequently, I posit that the consideration of racial identity will yield statistically significant differences between

White respondents and People of Color along two of the proposed relational pathways—namely, the relationship between MA and ASK, and the relationship between ASK and LEAD. I do not assume a significant relationship between MA and LEAD (*H4*) and therefore do not expect to see any significant differences across racial groups for this relational pathway. Furthermore, I do not believe existing literature merits theorizing as to how the character of the relationship will be altered by the consideration of race, and posit that this change could occur in strength of effect, significance, direction, or some combination thereof. Though a body of literature details the difficulty for White people to develop Multicultural Awareness and the associated skills relative to People of color (Goodman, 2000), Stewart (2019) notes that "having a minoritized identity [is] not itself a pathway to multicultural competence" (p. xi).

Hypotheses five and six, therefore, are written as:

> *H5.* The consideration of dichotomized racial identity (White or POC) will demonstrate differences for the relationship between MA and ASK between the two groups. (Moderating effect)
>
> *H6.* The consideration of dichotomized racial identity (White or POC) will demonstrate differences for the relationship between ASK and LEAD between the two groups. (Moderating effect)

Instrument

The data for this study was collected using the second distribution of the National Survey of Student Affairs Professionals, a continuation of Sriram's (2014) work on the measurement of the ACPA/NASPA competency areas. The competency areas measured by the first and second iterations of the NSSAP are taken from the 2010 ACPA/NASPA

publication of competency areas for student affairs professionals. The latent constructs

utilized for this model, Multicultural Awareness (MA), Applied Multicultural Knowledge

(AMK), and leadership competency (LEAD), were measured using a six-point Likert

scale, and are included in the Appendix. The first iteration of the NSSAP included a nine-

item scale to measure equity, diversity, and inclusion, which resulted in two discrete

factors labeled as attitudes and skills. The second iteration of the NSSAP included two

five-item Likert scales to measure MA and ASK, respectively. The initial distribution of

the NSSAP included a single, nine-item scale to measure LEAD, which was refined to a

five-item scale for the second iteration on the survey. Additional collected data from the

survey utilized for this research includes the various demographic identifiers such as race,

gender, experience level, and education included within the NSSAP. This survey was

completed by 497 student affairs professionals with varying levels of experience from a

variety of institution types and sizes across the U.S. (n = 497).

Sample

For those who provided demographic information, the sample included 314

females (63.2%), 181 males (36.4%), and 2 participants who selected *other gender*

identity. Racial/ethnic representation included: Asian/Asian American/Pacific

Islander/South Asian (N = 10, 2.0%), African American/Black (N = 50, 10.1%),

Hispanic/Latino(a) (N = 26, 5.2%), Multiracial/Multiethnic (N = 13, 2.6%) and

White/Caucasian (N = 393, 79.1%). Additionally, three respondents reported "Other,"

and one respondent identified in the category American Indian/Alaska Native/Native

Hawaiian. Respondents worked in a variety of educational contexts, including public

institutions (N = 306, 61.6%) and private intuitions (N = 182, 36.6%), some of which

were religiously affiliated (N = 78, 15.7%). Institutions included both four-year (N = 451, 90.7%), and 2-year colleges (N = 37, 7.4%). Experience levels were reported as follows: graduate student (N = 10, 2.0%), entry-level (N = 92, 18.5%), mid-manager (N = 122, 24.5%), director-level (N = 132, 26.6%), dean-level (N = 65, 13.1%), senior student affairs officers (N = 8), and 19 respondents who worked in some other capacity. The mean age of respondents was 39.52 (N = 486, SD = 11.97). The mean years working in the field of higher education was 14.56 (N = 196, SD = 10.45), and the mean time spent at current institution was seven years (N = 488, SD = 7.17). In terms of degree, 146 respondents had a master's degree in student affairs (%), 162 respondents had completed a terminal professional or doctoral degree (32.6%), and 319 respondents had completed a master's degree as their highest level of formal education (64.2%).

Treatment of Data

Missing data was assessed using Little's Missing Complete at Random (MCAR) test, the results of which must be nonsignificant in order to establish that data is missing at random (MAR). The results of this test $\chi2 = 326$ (294, N = 497), p = .096 indicate missing data was random. Having established MAR, various treatments of missing data are appropriate, including both listwise deletion, and maximum likelihood estimation of means. One case was removed for its failure to report racial identity. The remaining missing data was estimated using the maximum likelihood estimation of means imputation methods, an appropriate solution for MAR data (Carter, 2006). The final sample size used for analysis was 496. Two post-hoc modifications were applied to the model, both of which were determined due to the rhetorical and conceptual similarity of the wording for the respective associated items. This included one reverse-coded item,

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which can cause respondent confusion at a higher rate than normally coded items (van

Sonderen, Sanderman, & Coyne, 2013). The two modifications correlated sets of error

terms located on two latent factors. A third suggested modification suggested by the

statistical software was rejected due to lack of theoretical justification.

CHAPTER THREE

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Hypothesis 1, tested by the measurement model, posits that the data will sort into three distinct factors, validating Sriram's (2014) earlier research on the competency areas.

    H1. Multicultural Awareness, Applied Multicultural Knowledge, and Leadership will sort into three distinct latent factors.

I utilized SPSS AMOS 27 to perform a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), depicted in Figure 2. I selected the Maximum Likelihood Method for determining estimation parameters and model fit, the most common form of such techniques (Nachtigall et al., 2003). A correlation table with means and standard deviations is displayed in Table 1. As stated previously, I hypothesized a three-factor model consisting of MA, AKK, and LEAD to be confirmed by the evaluation of the measurement model. The CFA model is considered to have excellent model fit as determined by various established measures of fit, including minimum discrepancy to degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF) = 2.562, comparative fit index (CFI) = .958, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .056. These fit measures imply that the three latent factors are distinct and valid constructs, and that it is appropriate to test relationships between the through structural equation modeling.

Table 1. Correlation values for CFA and SEM

	AMK	MA	LEAD	L-1	L-2	L-3	L-4	L-5	M-1	M-2	M-3	M-4	M-5	A-1	A-2	A-3	A-4	A-5
AMK	1																	
MA	0.422	1																
LEAD	0.638	0.32	1															
L-1	0.437	0.219	0.685	1														
L-2	0.414	0.207	0.649	0.445	1													
L-3	0.509	0.255	0.797	0.546	0.518	1												
L-4	0.47	0.235	0.736	0.504	0.478	0.587	1											
L-5	0.495	0.248	0.776	0.532	0.504	0.619	0.571	1										
M-1	0.359	0.85	0.272	0.186	0.176	0.217	0.2	0.211	1									
M-2	0.285	0.676	0.216	0.148	0.14	0.172	0.159	0.168	0.574	1								
M-3	0.352	0.835	0.267	0.183	0.173	0.213	0.196	0.207	0.709	0.564	1							
M-4	0.297	0.705	0.225	0.154	0.146	0.18	0.166	0.175	0.599	0.476	0.588	1						
M-5	0.27	0.639	0.204	0.14	0.133	0.163	0.15	0.158	0.543	0.432	0.533	0.594	1					
A-1	0.712	0.301	0.454	0.311	0.295	0.362	0.335	0.353	0.255	0.203	0.251	0.212	0.192	1				
A-2	0.772	0.326	0.493	0.337	0.32	0.393	0.363	0.382	0.277	0.22	0.272	0.23	0.208	0.55	1			
A-3	0.529	0.223	0.338	0.231	0.219	0.269	0.249	0.262	0.19	0.151	0.186	0.157	0.143	0.377	0.409	1		
A-4	0.54	0.228	0.344	0.236	0.223	0.274	0.253	0.267	0.194	0.154	0.19	0.16	0.146	0.384	0.417	0.569	1	
A-5	0.679	0.287	0.433	0.297	0.281	0.345	0.319	0.336	0.244	0.194	0.239	0.202	0.183	0.484	0.524	0.359	0.366	1

Note. $N = 496$; $M = 0$; $SD = 1$

Additional measures of fit are reported in Table 2. Squared multiple correlation values are reported in Table 4. Standardized and unstandardized estimates for both CFA and SEM are reported in Table 3.

Table 2. Measures of fit.

Measure	Bad Fit	Acceptable Fit	Excellent Fit	Measurement Model		Structural Model	
				Estimate	Interpretation	Estimate	Interpretation
CMIN	--	--	--	366.402	--	217.802	--
DF	--	--	--	170	--	85	--
CMIN/DF	5 >	3 >	1 >	2.155	Excellent	2.562	Excellent
CFI	<0.90	<0.95	>0.95	0.939	Acceptable	0.958	Excellent
SRMR	>0.10	>0.08	<0.08	0.057	Excellent	0.053	Excellent
RMSEA	>0.08	>0.06	<0.06	0.048	Excellent	0.056	Excellent
PClose	<0.01	<0.05	>0.05	0.645	Excellent	0.13	Excellent

Note. Source for calculations and reported fit measures: *Gaskin, J. & Lim, J. (2016), "Model Fit Measures", AMOS Plugin. Gaskination's StatWiki.*

Table 3. CFA and SEM results.

Path			B	β	S.E.	P	Hypothesis
AMK	<---	MA	0.5	0.422	0.069	***	H2
LEAD	<---	AMK	0.693	0.612	0.073	***	H3
LEAD	<---	MA	0.082	0.061	0.068	0.23	H4
M-1	<---	MA	1	0.676			H1
M-2	<---	MA	1.219	0.85	0.077	***	H1
M-3	<---	MA	1.125	0.835	0.071	***	H1
M-4	<---	MA	1.186	0.705	0.086	***	H1
M-5	<---	MA	1.806	0.639	0.144	***	H1
A-1	<---	AMK	1	0.712			H1
A-2	<---	AMK	1.051	0.772	0.073	***	H1
A-3	<---	AMK	0.883	0.529	0.085	***	H1
A-4	<---	AMK	0.876	0.54	0.083	***	H1
A-5	<---	AMK	1.15	0.679	0.088	***	H1
L-1	<---	LEAD	0.789	0.649	0.056	***	H1
L-2	<---	LEAD	0.986	0.685	0.066	***	H1
L-3	<---	LEAD	1.03	0.797	0.059	***	H1
L-4	<---	LEAD	1.011	0.736	0.063	***	H1
L-5	<---	LEAD	1	0.776			H1

Note. $N = 496$; $M = 0$; $SD = 1$

Structural Model

A graphic depiction of the structural model is presented in Figure 2, wherein latent constructs are represented by circles and items of which the respective latent factors are composed are represented by squares.
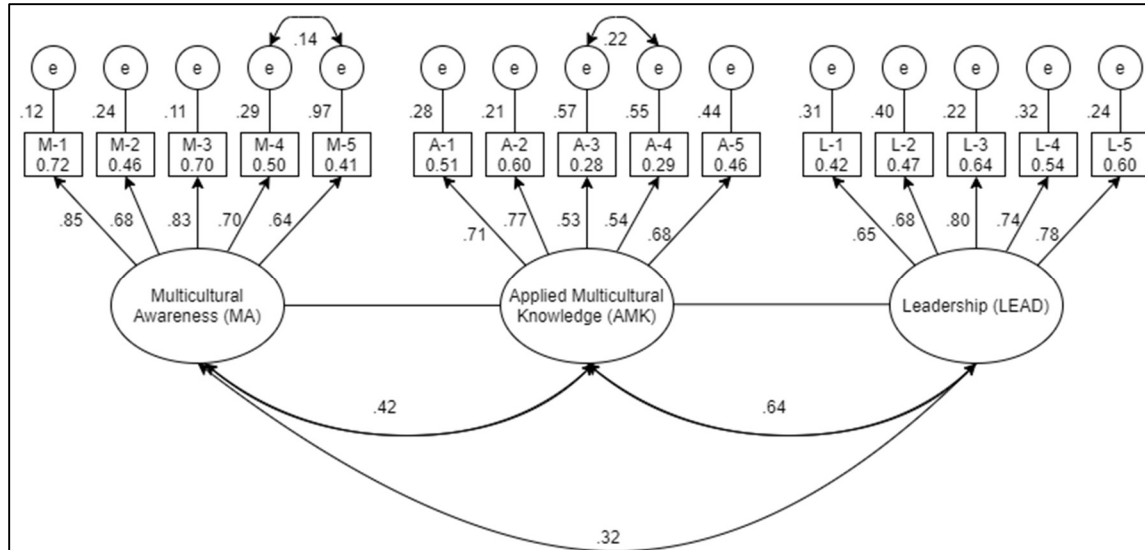

Figure 2. Confirmatory factor analysis of measurement model: Reported measures are standardized estimates.

The same post-hoc modifications from the measurement model were applied to the structural model, yielding excellent model fit by various standards, reported in Table 2. The relationship between MA and AMK, as well as the relationship between AMK and LEAD demonstrated statistical significance ($p < 0.01$). Subsequently, it can be assumed that any observed effects between these variables can be confidently generalized to the broader population. The effect sizes for the relationship between MA and AMK (β =0.42), as well as AMK and LEAD (β =0.61) are considered large (Mayhew et al., 2016). The direct relationship between MA and LEAD did not demonstrate statistical

significance (p = 0.23), and subsequently, any effects cannot be confidently generalized
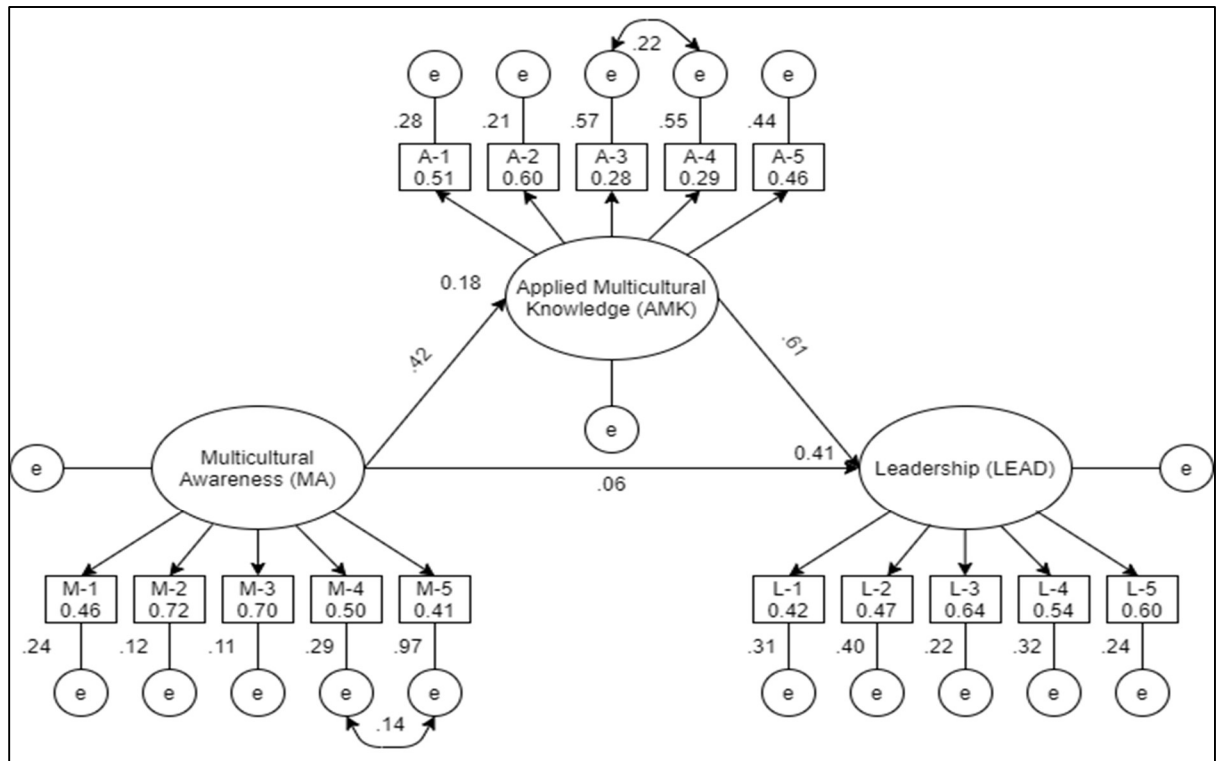
to the broader population.

Figure 3. Combined structural and measurement Model.

Multigroup Analysis

A multigroup analysis was conducted to examine potential differences in the

strength and character of relationships within the model for respondents that identified as

White or POC. In order to conduct the multigroup analysis, self-reported race was

transformed into a dichotomous variable, representing White and POC respondents. The

resulting groups had sample sizes of 393 (White) and 103 (POC) respectively. In order to

conduct a comparative multigroup analysis, Kline (2015) recommends a sample size of at

least 100 for each group. Other recommendations are predicated on the number of

established parameters for the model relative to number of respondents (Bentler & Chou, 1987; Kline, 2015; Schreiber et al., 2006). Given the fact that each of the groups analyzed contained at least 100 respondents, coupled with the absence of established parameters for our model, a multigroup analysis comparing relationships is germane and appropriate domain of exploration. Significance tests, including a critical ratios test and Chi square difference test, revealed significant differences in only one pathway, that of the relationship between AMK and MA. Thus, it is understood that only the differences between White and POC respondents on in regard to this pathway can be generalized onto the broader population. With respective effect sizes differences of 0.352 (White) and 0.697 (POC), it is understood that an increase by 1 standard deviation unit in MA will result in nearly double of an increase in AMK for POC relative to White respondents. Additionally, squared correlation values differed between each group, with a greater percentage of the variance explained for both AMK and LEAD variables for POC (48.6% and 75.0%) relative to White respondents (12.4% and 34.1%). Differences in standardized regression weights and correlations between racial groups are reported in Table 4, though only the pathway between MA and AMK demonstrated statistical significance.

Table 4. Multigroup analysis, correlations, & critical ratios differences test.									z-score
			Combined		White		POC		z-score
	Path		B	β	B	β	B	β	
AMK	<---	MA	0.5	0.422	0.375	0.352	0.952	0.697	3.22***
LEAD	<---	AMK	0.693	0.612	0.65	0.553	1.032	0.879	1.495
LEAD	<---	MA	0.082	0.061	0.095	0.076	-0.3	-0.019	-0.517
	Variable		R^2						
MA			--		--		--		
AMK			0.178		0.124		0.486		
LEAD			0.41		0.341		0.75		

Note. Combined: *N* = 496; *M* = 0; *SD* = 1 ; *White: N* = 393; *M* = 0; *SD* = 1; *POC: N* = 103; *M* = 0; *SD* = 1;

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Our first hypothesis predicted the reaffirmation of Sriram's (2014) sorting of the

equity, diversity, and inclusion competency area, redefined as the Social Justice and

Inclusion competency area (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) into two discrete components. The

model fit measures of the measurement model, listed in Table 3, confirmed the validity of

both the MA and ASK constructs as being considered discrete entities. This finding is

consistent with the literature regarding the varied composition of multicultural and social

justice competencies as multifaceted, complex developmental areas (Pope, Reynolds, &

Mueller, 2019). Subsequently, practitioners within the field of student affairs, particularly

administrators looking to provide professional development opportunities for staff,

should consider that promoting the development of multicultural/social justice

"competency" requires an acute sensitivity to multiple different areas of self-perception.

Not only do staff members need sufficient knowledge of what it means to serve as an

educator in a multicultural context, but also need to perceive themselves as capable of

being able to apply that knowledge to specific situational contexts within the scope of

their professional role.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 posited a causal relationship from self-perception of MA to AMK. The structural model confirmed this causal relationship, demonstrating a large effect size ($\beta = 0.42$), which accounted for a medium, yet significant amount of variance in AMK ($r^2 = 0.18$). These results can be interpreted as for every increase in one standard deviation for multicultural awareness, applied multicultural knowledge will increase 0.42 standard deviations. Multicultural awareness accounts for 18% of the variance in applied multicultural knowledge, implying that other factors beyond the presence of multicultural awareness affect student affairs professionals' ability to actualize their values related to the promotion of multiculturalism and social justice. However, the fact that multicultural awareness accounts for 18% of the variance in applying relevant knowledge to specific contexts implies that efforts to cultivate empathetic postures toward social justice issues are still a relevant and necessary fixture of any staff developmental program or initiative. In essence, in order to improve a staff member's self-perception that they are capable of applying knowledge about multicultural and social justice issues to specific situations, supervisors should incorporate efforts to improve awareness of multicultural issues.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 described the potentiality of relationship between AMK and LEAD. This relationship was confirmed by the modeling process, with AMK accounting for a substantial percentage of the variance of self-perception of one's leadership ability ($r^2 = 0.41$), and a notably large regression effect size ($\beta = 0.61$). Student affairs professionals' self-perception of their ability to apply multicultural and social justice knowledge to

specific professional contexts accounts for 41% of the variance in their leadership abilities. Furthermore, with each increase by one standard deviation unit for AMK, LEAD is expected to increase by 0.61 standard deviation units. Given the magnitude of this relationship between AMK and LEAD, educational leaders looking to improve staff leadership capabilities, and subsequently increase the likelihood of their engagement in leadership type behaviors (Caldwell & Hayes, 2016), would do well to provide trainings which seek to bolster staff ability to apply multicultural/social justice knowledge to specific educational contexts.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 predicted that any relationship between multicultural awareness and leadership would be largely explained by applied multicultural knowledge. In essence, I posited that AMK played a mediating role in the relationship between MA and LEAD. Mediation describes a process by which an independent variable (MA) causes a mediating variable (AMK) which in turn causes an outcome variable (LEAD) (Sobel, 1990). Analysis of the structural model reveals significant relationships existing between MA and AMK ($\beta = 0.42$, $r^2 = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$), as well as AMK and LEAD ($\beta = 0.61$, $r^2 = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$), and the relationship between MA and LEAD testing as nonsignificant ($p = 0.23$). The only remaining criterion to determine mediation, the prerequisite of a significant, preexisting causative relationship between MA and LEAD prior to the addition of AMK, was satisfied through an additional path analysis ($\beta = 0.32$, $r^2 = 0.10$, $p < 0.001$). With the reduction of this relationship to non-significance and a near-zero value

($\beta = 0.06$, p = 0.230), I can assert that applied multicultural knowledge is a strong mediator between multicultural awareness and leadership.

This degree of mediation has significant implications for student affairs practitioners with supervisory responsibilities at every level. In seeking to foster leadership competency in issues of social justice, it is important to know that the development of multicultural awareness itself does not translate to improved self-perception of leadership ability. Indeed, the data indicates that the near entirety of the relationship between multicultural awareness and leadership is explained by the presence of applied multicultural knowledge. Though MA itself can contribute to the development of AMK, and subsequently, LEAD, it is important to know that efforts designed to specifically foster context-specific intervention skills are likely to exhibit a stronger impact on leadership self-perception. Thus, supervisors seeking to improve the leadership potential of their staff members should ensure that staff trainings include specific training on how to apply knowledge about systemic inequality to specific practices in the professional workforce. Choosing to only focus on improving multicultural awareness and attitudes related to these issues will not help to improve leadership self-perception of staff members.

Hypotheses 5 and 6

The final two hypotheses predicted that the racial identity of respondents would impact the relationship between MA, AMK, and LEAD in significant capacity. Analysis of the model provides supporting evidence for this claim in the relationship between MA and AMK (H5) (p < .001), but it fails to provide a compelling case for race affecting the

relationship between AMK and LEAD. The strength of relationship as well as the amount of variance in AMK explained by MA differed significantly between White respondents ($\beta = 0.35$, $r^2 = 0.12$) and POC respondents ($\beta = 0.70$, $r^2 = 0.49$). The implications of these differences are that, on average, it can be expected that increases in POC student affairs professionals' self-perceptions of multicultural awareness will yield double the increases in applied multicultural knowledge self-perception relative to their White counterparts. Additionally, nearly 50% of the variance in self-perceived ability to apply multicultural/social justice knowledge can be explained by the self-perceived formation of multicultural attitudes for POC professionals, relative to 12% for White professionals. In essence, it is understood that the development of multicultural awareness leads to a far greater increase in self-perception of one's ability to apply multicultural knowledge to specific situations for POC relative to White people. Additional research should be conducted into the reasons for such drastic differences in these relationships relative to racial identity. Some of the variance in the MA/AMK pathway likely results from the fact that People of Color as a whole are disproportionately affected by social inequity (Pager & Shephard, 2008). Thus, it stands to reason that POC professionals could develop skills to a greater extent than their White counterparts as a result of having a greater personal stake in efforts to advance and champion social justice, though further research is needed regarding this claim. Additionally, further research should be conducted into why there appears to be no statistical difference between racial groups along the AMK/LEAD relational pathway.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include normative concerns about the validity of self-reported data, though extensive research supports the use of such techniques in the social sciences when the data is collected anonymously, and when the questions are clear and well-understood (Brener et al., 2003). Consequently, it should be noted again that all measures of competencies are, in a truer sense, measures of perceived competency, an acceptable standard for the creation and validation of latent variables which can only be indirectly measured or approximated (Sriram, 2017). Additionally, this study has a relatively parochial focus, examining the relationship between two of the 10 ACPA/NASPA areas, which may fail to capture the complexity of some relationships between differing competency areas. Further research on macro-level relationships between all ten of the competency areas is needed, as is a greater theoretical basis for the organization and overlap of the ACPA/NASPA competency areas as proposed in the model of competency interactions. It should also be noted that evolving conceptions of multiculturalism and social justice, as well as the relative fluidity of the terms, could allow for some disparity in self-reported levels of competence related to dealing with such issues in student affairs practice.

Conclusion and Future Directions

The role of student affairs professionals in advancing the cause of social justice has been well-documented and has expanded proportionately to a growing need for the integration of social justice into all spheres of the educational environment (Brennan & Naidoo, 2008). As a result, efforts to improve student affairs professionals' self-

perception of competencies in areas relevant to multiculturalism, social justice, and leadership are of significant interest to those who serve in a supervisory capacity. When structuring professional development opportunities, administrators would do well to consider the ways in which leadership competency self-perception is affected by perception of the ability to apply knowledge, rather than by the cultivation of specific attitudes. Though the cultivation of multicultural awareness self-perception can itself help propagate the development of self-perceived applied multicultural knowledge, the implications from this study are such that effective programs to improve leadership competency will devote a significant proportion of the content to both the development of multicultural awareness and specific, practice-based interventions and strategies.

Having established a clear, significant, causative relationship between the development of self-perceived multicultural awareness (MA) and the development of a perceived ability to apply multicultural knowledge to specific contexts (AMK), as well as a causative relationship between AMK and Leadership self-perception (LEAD), there are several implications for staff development programs designed to improve multicultural, social justice, and leadership competencies. Effective professional development programs would likely include the delivery of content and exercises intended to help generate empathic attitudes in staff members (Lu, Dane, & Gellman, 2005), and also draw from resources created for best multicultural/social justice practices in various spheres of student affairs work (Karunaratne, Koppel & yang, 2016). This research also demonstrated a significant difference in the relationship between MA and AMK for White and POC respondents. Further research is needed to examine the variation of these developmental pathways for members of different racial groups, as well as what other

factors contribute to the development of self-perception of one's ability to apply

multicultural knowledge. As this study only examined the relationship between

multicultural awareness and a combination factor of multicultural/social justice

knowledge and skills, other quantitative research is necessary to validate other conceptual

frameworks, such as the quadripartite model of multicultural competency (Pope,

Reynolds, & Mueller, 2019). This study demonstrates that measuring discrete

components of the multicultural competency is highly beneficial for understanding how

student affairs professionals can develop as leaders.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Competency Scales

All scales were measured on a six-point Likert scale. Options responding to each item included:

1. Strongly Disagree

2. Moderately Disagree

3. Slightly Disagree

4. Slightly Agree

5. Moderately Agree

6. Strongly Agree

Social Justice Attitudes (Five Items)

1. It is vital to integrate my programs with culturally relevant and inclusive services, policies, or practices.

2. Advocating for diversity is important in the student affairs profession.

3. Multicultural and diversity training is vital for all student affairs professionals.

4. It is vital for an institution to actively seek to represent the diversity of its constituents in its staffing.

5. I think colleges are taking this whole diversity thing too far.

Social Justice Skills (Five Items)

1. I am knowledgeable of the diverse cultures and backgrounds of the students on my campus.

2. I know the various diversity and cultural issues facing my campus.

3. I know where my campus fails to be inclusive.

4. I can identify systemic barriers to equality and inclusiveness.

5. I can effectively deal with situations where discrimination has occurred between students.

Leadership (Five Items)

1. I know how to build community among a group of people.

2. I know strategies for facilitating consensus processes where wide support is needed.

3. I know how to motivate others toward a vision.

4. When problems arise, I can imagine creative, unexplored possibilities for solutions.

5. I am good at working with people to push needed change.

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