School Counselor Advocacy for Transgender and Intersex Students

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Abstract

One-thousand-one-hundred-and-ninety-one school counselors completed an online survey regarding advocacy for and with transgender and intersex (TI) students (i.e., school counselor TI advocacy competence). School counselors completed three competency-based assessments to assess their levels of gender identity counselor competence, intersex counselor competence, and school counselor TI advocacy competence. Further, in light of Identity Behavior Theory, they completed a demographic form so that competency levels could be examined with demographic variables. Attitudes, school level, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity counselor competence, and intersex counselor competence were significantly related to advocacy for and with TI students. These findings have implications for training practices and future research with school counselors and genderqueer students whose experiences vary from those of TI students.

Keywords: competency-based assessment, counselor education, intersex, school counselor, transgender

Limited research exists on school counselor transgender intersex advocacy competence. That is, there is a paucity of research on the extent to which school counselors effectively advocate for and with transgender and intersex (TI) students (Simons, Beck, Asplund, Chan, & Byrd, 2018). Of the related research, however, that does exist, the voice of the school counselor is noticeably absent, along with the voices of transgender people of color, intersex students, and genderqueer students. As such, more research is needed in this research area. Further, as historically marginalized groups, current and former TI students continue to report negative school experiences (McGuire, Anderson, Toomey, & Russell, 2010; Simons, Grant, & Rodas, 2020; Simons, Gonzalez, & Ramdas, 2020). This is concerning because, according to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), respect and equal opportunity should be promoted for all students, including TI students (Simons & Beck, 2020).

The aim of this quantitative study was to assess the school counselor role in regard to advocating for TI students using the School Counselor Transgender Intersex Advocacy Competence Scale (SCTIACS; Simons, 2019), the Intersex Counselor Competence Scale (ICCS; Simons, 2019); the Gender Identity Counselor Competence Scale (GICCS; O'Hara, Dispenza, Brack, & Blood, 2013), and a demographic form. At present, very few measurements such as these exist to measure school counselor advocacy competence for TI students; however, use of them has offered a starting point to inform school counseling practices, educational policy, and directions for future research.

School Counselor TI Advocacy

Although researchers have studied advocacy for transgender students independently from advocacy for sexual minorities (Jones, Smith, Ward, Dixon, Hillier, & Mitchell, 2016; Lloyd-Hazlett, & Foster, 2013; Luke, Goodrich, & Scarborough, 2011; McGuire et al., 2010; Riggs &

Bartholomaeus, 2015), few to none have studied advocacy for intersex students, either together with or separate from advocacy from transgender students (Simons, Beck, Asplund, Chan, & Byrd, 2018). Additionally, researchers have not studied advocacy for TI students among a sample of school counselors in relation to intersex counselor competence and gender identity counselor competence. Studies, however, by Jones et al. (2016), McGuire et al. (2010), Riggs et al. (2015), and Simons et al. (2018) do shed some light on this research area. Jones et al. (2016) assessed mixed research data to learn more about the experiences and identities of both transgender and intersex students in Australia. The sample consisted of 189 gender diverse students who were between 14 and 25 years old. All were surveyed and 16 participated in interviews. Findings indicated that the needs of the participants varied widely and their identities were not fixed. Transgender students, in particular, reported that they did not display gender(s) congruent with what others expected. The students, therefore, valued learning about human development and sexuality. As a result, it appears that school counselors should prioritize having discussions with students concerning these areas.

McGuire et al. (2010) analyzed mixed data; however, these data were gathered solely from transgender students. The students reported that it was common for them to experience harassment and feel unsafe unless they were enrolled in schools with gender-inclusive curricula. As compared to cisgender students, they were less likely to have adequate academic and familial support, and some thought about suicide. The authors concluded that transgender students benefitted from having teachers who were knowledgeable about transgender issues and who could effectively advocate by running transgender student groups and promoting policies to help transgender students to transfer schools if needed. Riggs et al. (2015) analyzed survey data retrieved from cisgender school counselors, psychologists, and parents about their experiences.

The findings suggested that counselors were uniquely situated in schools to advocate for transgender students but needed more training. A majority of the parents of transgender youth reported having poor experiences with school counselors whose gender and religious affiliation appeared to influence their levels of transgender advocacy competence. Those who had higher levels of religious affiliation had lower levels of acceptance and competence, and males were less likely to accept transgender youth (Riggs et al., 2015).

Competency-Based Assessment

The practice of training school counselors to advocate more effectively for TI students can be facilitated by use of competency-based assessments (CBAs). According to Lurie (2011), CBAs illustrate models of competency that can be developed and refined by scholars and public policy officials using empirical data that inform best practices. CBAs have been used as part of educational practices, including accreditation, and to globalize expectations of professionalism (e.g., advocating for TI students as school counselors). Individuals who effectively develop and modify CBAs to use in training others about TI students consider historical, current, and future trends as well as try to strike a balance between use of prescriptive and descriptive language. In order to norm CBAs, Lurie (2011) has recommended framing constructs in terms of data-based hypotheses, multiple situations, and reliability so that results from CBAs can be compared. Researchers and counselor educators have used CBAs to teach about multicultural counseling, group counseling, and internship, just to name a few. More recently, counselor competencies concerning gender have been identified, assessed, and taught using the SCTIACS, the GICCS, and ICCS, three CBAs normed with a national sample of K-12 school counselors.

Identity Behavior Theory

Simons (2020) proposed Identity Behavior Theory (IBT) as an alternative to the Theory

of Planned Behavior (TPB). The TPB was developed approximately 30 years ago but few changes have been made to model despite its limitations in predicting behaviors such as health behaviors, food choices, educator effectiveness, and knowledge sharing among school counselors (Simons, 2020). IBT posits that individuals enact or try to enact behaviors by asserting their personhood and personal values. That is, identity serves as a foundation for preparing to enact behaviors, trying to enact behaviors, and possibly succeeding in following through with behaviors such as by helping oneself and others. In this paper, while we examine the underpinnings of school counselor TI advocacy in relation to intersex counselor competence and gender identity counselor competence, we also examine how school counselor TI advocacy is related to the personhood measured by several demographic items (see Appendix A). The research questions were:

- Is gender identity counselor competence related to school counselor TI advocacy competence?
- Is intersex counselor competence related to school counselor TI advocacy competence?
- Are school counselor characteristics (i.e., age, attitudes, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and school level) related to school counselor TI advocacy competence?

Given the tenets of CBAs and IBT, we hypothesized that school counselor TI advocacy competence would be related to gender identity counselor competence, intersex counselor competence, and school counselor characteristics (age, attitudes, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and school level). In addition, we believed that data would show the following: (a) a significant positive relationship between intersex counselor competence and school counselor transgender intersex competence; (b) a significant positive relationships between gender identity counselor competence and school counselor TI advocacy competence; and (c) significant

differences between school counselors' characteristics (age, attitudes, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and school level) on school counselor TI advocacy competence.

Participants and Method

A national survey study was conducted with a sample of school counselors. A nonprobability sample was sought in order to increase the likelihood of response. The college's institutional review board approved the study, and we recruited school counselors throughout the United States (U.S.) by distributing a study announcement using publicly available email addresses, contacts at certification departments and counseling associations located in each state, the South Dakota School Counselors Listserv, and social media platforms: Facebook, LinkedIn, and ASCA Scene. The demographic form and CBAs (SCTIACS, ICCS, and GICCS) were self-administered among 1,191 school counselors during the 2018-2019 school-year. Data gathered from school counselors were downloaded from REDCap survey platform. Thereafter, data were cleaned and reliable simulated values were created to impute missing data. Most data that were missing were missing completely at random (MCAR); however, some data were missing based on sexual orientation. The average mean was used to replace all missing data in order to sufficiently conduct analyses.

Instruments

The demographic form included items on age, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and school level. It was completed along with the ICCS, GICCS, and SCTIACS, a 77-item scale comprising a 17-item attitudes subscale, a 30-item knowledge subscale, and a 30-item skills subscale. The SCTIACS is a CBA used by individuals to self-assess the degree to which they effectively advocate for TI students. Sample items include: (a) I have reflected over my own attitudes, beliefs, and TI advocacy practices, (b) I have knowledge of the transgender identity

developmental models, and (c) I am knowledgeable of the American School Counselor Association's (2016) position statement on counseling transgender and gender non-conforming students. The ICCS, another CBA, is a 27-item scale that measures how competent one is to provide traditional individual counseling services to intersex people. Sample items include: (a) I have experience counseling female-to-male transgender clients, (b) I have been to in-services, conference sessions, or workshops, which focused on transgender issues in counseling, and (c) There are different psychological/social issues impacting transgender men versus transgender women. The GICCS is a 29-item CBA that measures how competent one is to provide traditional individual counseling services to individuals concerning gender identity. Sample items include: (a) Currently, I do not have the skills or training to do a case presentation or consultation if my client was intersex (b) I feel that gender differences between counselor and client may serve as an initial barrier to effective counseling of intersex individuals, and (c) Being born a non-intersex person in this society carries with it certain advantages. Information about the psychometric properties of these SBAs and the characteristics of participants in this study may be found in Simons (2019) and Simons and Bahr (2020).

Data Analysis

We analyzed data that were gathered from participants who were full time employees, indicated working at a particular school level, were at least 18 years of age, and who reported gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. We conducted analyses with a high level of confidence despite using a nonrandom sample because approximately 95% of the response data were completed in full by the participants. Data were analyzed using Spearman's correlations, MANOVAs, ANOVAs and post hoc tests. Spearman's correlations were calculated to assess the strength and direction of the monotonic associations between ordinal variables. MANOVAs were

run to measure the associations between two or more dependent variables at the continuous level. This was done after confirming (a) there were not any relationships between the observations in each group of the independent variables or between the groups themselves, (b) outliers were not related to data entry or measurement error, (c) multivariate normality was met and multicollinearity was not present, (d) linear relationships existed between the dependent variables for each group of the independent variables, and (e) homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices and variances were present (Laerd Statistics, 2018). If, however, this last assumption was not met, follow-up ANOVAs were conducted.

Results

To test hypotheses one to three, bivariate correlation analyses were utilized to assess the relationships between ordinal variables and levels of school counselor TI competence: attitudes, gender identity counselor competence, and intersex counselor competence. Spearman's bivariate correlations were calculated and significant strong positive relationships were found between school counselor TI competence and (a) attitudes toward TI students, (b) gender identity counselor competence, and (c) intersex counselor competence. To further test hypothesis three, MANOVAs, ANOVAs, and post hoc tests were used to examine the relationships between school counselor TI advocacy competence and age, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and school level. Race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and school level were found to significantly relate to TI advocacy competence (see Appendix B). However, no relationship was found to exist between age and TI advocacy competence, meaning that age was not related to advocacy for and with TI students.

Analyses for Hypothesis Testing

Attitudes were found to have a large positive relationship with TI advocacy competence, meaning that more positive attitudes were related to more competence to advocate for TI students. School counselors' levels of gender identity counselor competence were found to have a large positive relationship with TI advocacy competence, meaning that more gender identity counselor competence was related to more competence to advocate for TI students. School counselors' levels of intersex counselor competence were found to have a large positive relationship with TI advocacy competence, meaning that more intersex counselor competence was related to more school counselor TI advocacy competence. Additionally, a large significant correlation existed between intersex counselor competence and gender identity counselor competence ($r = .63$). Thus, more intersex counselor competence was related to more gender identity counselor competence.

Correlations between Three Continuous Variables and TI Advocacy Competence

Variable	TI Advocacy Competence	N
Attitudes Toward TI Students	.58**	1191
Gender Identity Counselor Competence	.71**	1191
Intersex Counselor Competence	.54**	1191

** $p < .01$

MANOVA Analysis for Age

Responses were assigned to five categories: (a) 20 to 29, (b) 30 to 39, (c) 40 to 49 (d) 50 to 59, and (e) 60 to 69. One-hundred-fifteen school counselor were between 20 and 29 years old, 359 were between 30 and 39 years old, 390 were between 40 and 49 years old, 243 were between 50 and 59 years old, and 84 were between 60 and 69 years old. Significant differences, however, were not found between the five groups of school counselors' mean scores on age, $F(4, 1191) = 1.549$, $p = .186$, $\omega^2 = .482$. These results suggest that age is not related to TI advocacy

competence, and school counselors can become more effective in advocating for TI students at any age.

MANOVA Analysis for Gender

Responses were assigned to three categories: (a) male, (b) female, and (c) other comprising transgender and nonbinary respondents. One-hundred-sixty-one school counselors identified as male, 1,025 school counselors identified as female, and five identified as transgender or nonbinary. Significant differences on gender were found, $F(20, 2360) = 4.265$, $p < .0005$; Pillai's Trace = .070; partial $\eta^2 = .035$. Subsequently, ANOVAs were calculated. School counselors who identified as female ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.85$) and male ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.85$) scored lower on TI advocacy competence than school counselors who identified transgender and nonbinary ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 0.55$). These results suggest that gender is related to TI advocacy competence. School counselors who identified as transgender and nonbinary reported the highest levels of TI advocacy competence.

MANOVA Analysis for Race/Ethnicity

Responses were assigned to four categories: (a) African American, (b) European American, (c) Hispanic, and (c) Multiracial. Sixty-four counselors identified as African American, 1,043 identified as European American, 30 identified as Hispanic, and 54 identified as Multiracial. Significant differences were found on race/ethnicity, $F(30, 3540) = 2.613$, $p < .0005$; Pillai's Trace = .065; partial $\eta^2 = .022$. Subsequently, ANOVAs were calculated. School counselors who identified as African American ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.79$) scored lower on TI advocacy competence than school counselors who identified as European American ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.86$) and Multiracial ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.85$). These results suggest that race/ethnicity is related to TI advocacy competence. School counselors who identified as African American

reported lower levels of TI advocacy competence than those who identified as European American and Multiracial.

MANOVA Analysis for Sexual Orientation

Responses were assigned to four categories: (a) exclusively heterosexual, (b) mostly heterosexual, (c) exclusively lesbian and gay, and (d) other. Nine-hundred-ninety-seven school counselors identified as exclusively heterosexual, 99 identified as mostly heterosexual, 47 identified as exclusively lesbian or gay, and 48 identified as other. Significant differences were found on sexual orientation, $F(30, 3540) = 9.633, p < .0005$; Pillai's Trace = .226; partial $\eta^2 = .075$. Subsequently, ANOVAs were calculated. School counselors who identified as exclusively heterosexual ($M = 3.88, SD = 0.84$) scored lower on TI advocacy competence than school counselors who identified as mostly heterosexual ($M = 4.35, SD = 0.75$) and exclusively lesbian or gay ($M = 4.49, SD = 0.75$). These results suggest that sexual orientation is related to TI advocacy competence. School counselors who identified as exclusively heterosexual indicated having lower levels of TI advocacy competence than those who identified as either mostly heterosexual or exclusively lesbian or gay.

MANOVA Analysis for School Level

Responses were assigned to seven categories: (a) kindergarten and elementary school, (b) elementary school, (c) middle school, (d) high school (e) middle and high school, (f) all levels, and (g) other categories. Thirty-seven school counselors reported working at the kindergarten and elementary school levels, 214 reported working at the elementary school level, 248 reported working at the middle school level, 506 reported working at the high school level, 18 reported working at all school levels, and 130 reported working at a combination of all other levels. Significant differences were found, $F(60, 7080) = 2.597, p < .0005$; Pillai's Trace = .129; partial

$\eta^2 = .022$. Next, ANOVAs were calculated. School counselors who were working in middle ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.82$) and high schools ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.83$) scored higher on TI advocacy competence than school counselors who were working in elementary schools ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.83$). These results suggest that school level is related to TI advocacy competence. School counselors who worked at the elementary school level did not perceive themselves as being as competent concerning TI advocacy as middle and high school counselors.

Discussion

By having utilized CBAs to measure school counselor TI advocacy competence, gender identity counselor competence, and intersex counselor competence in light of IBT, we found that attitudes toward TI students, gender, sexual orientation, and school level significantly related to either higher or lower levels of school counselor TI advocacy competence. The findings have implications for school counselors, counselor educators, researchers and public policy officials. The findings provided corroborating evidence to support findings from earlier studies. School counselor TI advocacy competence was found to relate to positive attitudes and race/ethnicity (Schmidt et al., 2011), and minority sexual orientation (Shi & Doud, 2017). Sexual orientation and gender were also associated with attitudes. School counselors who identified as exclusively gay or lesbian or mostly heterosexual had more favorable attitudes and perceived higher levels of TI advocacy competence than school counselors who identified as exclusively heterosexual. School counselors who identified as transgender and nonbinary indicated having the highest levels of TI advocacy competence which suggest that these individuals might serve as valuable resources and role models to school counselors who aim to make their school settings more inclusive for gender minorities.

Educators who offer TI advocacy training should include elementary school teachers in their training as well. Training should allow time to complete the SCTIACS self-assessment followed by time to self-reflect over the results and discuss them with others who report having higher levels of TI advocacy competence. Thus, while reflection over and discussion of SCTIACS self-assessment results may be easy for some, it may be difficult for others who have not been exposed to or trained regarding transgender and intersex people. Research findings suggest that when school counselors try to help themselves and others, they may come to empathize more (e.g., with TI students) (Carkhuff, 1969). They may also report higher levels of both intersex and gender identity counselor competence. This suggests that in addition teaching about TI advocacy competence, educators should teach current and future school counselors about intersex counselor competence and gender identity counselor competence. This is relevant for two reasons: (1) delivering a comprehensive form of TI advocacy is different from delivering counseling services to TI students within a traditional one-on-one model, and (2) delivering counseling services to TI students, whether within a traditional one-on-one model or a comprehensive form, varies depending on if one is counseling intersex students, transgender students, or genderqueer students (Simons et al., 2018). For example, unlike transgender students, intersex students may be more likely to undergo a series of genital surgeries. Resultantly, in the future, hopefully we will see a greater number of school counselors self-identify as advocates for TI students, so they are more likely to enact TI advocacy activity. This outcome supports the tenets of IBT and increases the likelihood that more school counselors will outwardly identify as TI advocates. In turn, they may be perceived by TI students as proactive, inclusive, and effectively supportive. Examples of this include talking about being TI or a TI ally

to students, using proper gender pronouns when communicating with students, and consulting with others TI students' needs (Simons et al., 2020a; Simons et al., 2020b).

Training Implications

Findings inform training implications because school counselors may indicate higher levels of TI advocacy competence if they perceive TI students favorably, identify as sexual and gender minorities, work with older youth, and indicate higher levels of gender identity and intersex counselor competence. Thus, trainers should have school counselors compete the GICCS and ICCS, along with the SCTIACS. Scores on the GICCS and ICCS significantly correlate with scores on the SCTIACS. Therefore, by teaching school counselors how to provide counseling services to both intersex and gender minority students more effectively at a traditional, one-on-one level, the training may positively affect how school counselor advocate for TI students in school settings when implementing comprehensive model counseling. Additionally, in light of CBAs and IBT, trainers may ask school counselors the following: (1) How do you believe your attitudes toward TI students influence your willingness to help these students? (2) What knowledge do you need to become more effective at meeting the needs of TI students? (3) What skills do you need to improve to become more effective at meeting the needs of TI students? (4) How and to what extent do you assert yourself in your position as a school counselor to ensure that you are recognized as an effective advocate for TI students? (5) Which aspects of your personhood as a school counselor relate to your TI advocacy efforts?

In addition to having school counselors self-administer the SCTIACS, GICCS, and ICCS as part of training, trainers facilitate discussion after administration and scoring by asking the school counselors these aforementioned questions as part of training. This is important because the impact of training might be limited if those who self-administer the scales do not take time to

process the results with others who have more expertise in the area. Our findings support this training recommendation and given that attitudes are also tied to personhood, trainers should debunk myths commonly associated with TI people and topics. Similar to training school counselors about the myths related to the experiences of sexual minority people (Simons, 2018), TI advocacy trainers share accurate information about TI people. Items on the SCTIACS, GICCS, and ICCS that may be reviewed as part of this are: (1) TI students should be accepted completely into our society, (2) TI students should not be allowed to cross-dress at school, (3) TI individuals must choose to live as male or female in order to lead healthy lives, (4) I think that my clients should accept some degree of conformity to traditional gender identities, and (5) It is obvious that a relationship involving an intersex person is not as strong as one involving a non-intersex person. We recommend using these items as a starting point for reviewing baseline attitude scores on the SCTIACS, GICCS, and ICCS. Next, trainers are encouraged to review knowledge about the TI community (Simons et al., 2018), the impact of minority stress on mental health (Jackman, Caceres, Kreuze, & Bockting, 2019), ASCA and SAIGE position statements, and IBT in relation to TI advocacy plans (Simons, 2020).

Trainers should teach elementary school counselors about gender identity development during youth (Bockting & Coleman, 2007). Further, they should be informed that models of intersex identity development and models of identity development among transgender people of color are still in their early stages (Simons et al., 2020). As such, more models are needed to inform practice and policy. This is an area for future research. In addition to the need for more theoretical models, there is also a need for more role models who have demonstrated an ability to promote greater levels of TI advocacy competence in schools. These role models include other educators who identify as advocates (Bahr, Brish, & Croteau, 2000; Valenti & Campbell, 2009)

as well as members from gender minority communities. Part of training homework should include requesting school counselors to observe and help TI individuals and allies, both in- and outside of their schools. This is done to undertake initiatives to promote gender-inclusive education.

In this study, a majority of school counselors were cisgender, European American, females. Trainers, therefore, may find it helpful to build alliances with this group as these individuals are uniquely positioned and possibly the most amenable to participating in ongoing training initiatives related to improving the experiences of the TI student population (Riggs et al., 2015). School counselors may also learn more about TI people by doing volunteer work for the World Professional Organization for Transgender Health, the Intersex Society of North America, El/La Para TransLatinas, Trans Student Educational Resources, the Organisation Intersex International, and interACT Advocates for Intersex Youth. School counselors may also choose to sponsor or participate in events such as Intersex Awareness Day, Intersex Day of Solidarity, and Transgender Days of Remembrance and Solidarity.

Future Research

Today, many TI people report that others, including counseling professionals, tend to interact with them as though they have mental disorders. This is unfortunate, especially for those who experience gender dysphoria. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013), gender dysphoria is a form of incongruent distress that individuals experience because the gender they subscribe to and the gender they were assigned with at birth are not aligned. Thus, effective TI advocacy training includes this as part of discussion. Trainers also teach people about genderqueer people. According to Simons et al. (2018), genderqueer people subscribe to a non-dichotomous gender identity. That is, they claim a gender identity that is not either male or

female, and it may be either fluid or stationary (Killerman, 2017; Marcus, Marcus, Yaxte, & Marcus, 2015). While some have an easy time understanding this, others do not. Future studies, therefore, might explore to degree to which school counselors understand the experiences of genderqueer students and how to most effectively advocate for them. Further, the issues that genderqueer students face are likely similar to but different from those that TI students face. Genderqueer advocacy competencies are needed to serve as a resource that educators, researchers, and public policy officials can reference. This appears to be the next chapter of research in counselor education and school counseling related to sex, gender, and gender identity development. Last, novel research is needed to further refine and strengthen the construct of school counselor TI advocacy. This may involve assessing other demographic variables that might significantly relate to TI advocacy.

Limitations

School counselor genderqueer advocacy was not examined as an independent construct. We also used a nonrandom sample, and the study was conducted online and relied on assistance from presidents of state school counselor associations to recruit participants. Some school counselors, therefore, may not have learned about the opportunity to participate or were not able to access and complete the online survey because they did not have internet access. Another limitation was that counselors might have only participated in the study because they were interested in the topic or they wanted to receive the Amazon gift card. This could have skewed the sample. Last, since correlational data were analyzed, we cannot presume that causation existed between examined variables.

Conclusion

The aim of this national survey study conducted using CBAs in light of IBT has been to examine gender identity counselor competence, intersex counselor competence, and other demographic variables related to school counselor TI advocacy competence. Findings from this survey study have filled a gap in the literature regarding levels of advocacy for TI students among different school counselors. Our study has garnered more knowledge about the makeup school counselor TI advocacy competence—more specifically, what it looks among a diverse sample of school counselors located throughout the U.S. Findings also suggest that effective training may help school counselors recognize how where they work, along with their backgrounds and personhood, increases the likelihood that they will effectively display higher levels gender identity counselor competence, intersex counselor competence, and TI advocacy competence. Some counselors may benefit for participating in additional training to gain more exposure to the transgender, intersex, and genderqueer communities. They may also benefit from learning how to promote gender-inclusive education by participating in TI events and organizations.

School counselor advocates recognize that TI students benefit from supportive comprehensive counseling services; therefore, they should be taught how their demographic and school characteristics influence their levels of school counselor TI advocacy competence. In addition to examining TI advocacy competence in association with gender identity counselor competence and intersex counselor competence, association with six other variables were examined: age, attitudes, gender, sexual orientation, and school level. These five variables were found to significantly correlate with TI advocacy competence. Seemingly these variables are crucial to understanding and thus may be used in future studies to predict the likelihood of TI advocacy among helpers in light of IBT.

Our study has extended the research area to the experiences of school counselors (Jones et al., 2016; McGuire et al., 2010; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2015). However, despite this, our understanding of school counselor genderqueer advocacy competence remains limited. While school counselor advocacy for TI students and queer students might be similar, they are not always. Therefore, although we examined school counselor TI advocacy competence separate from genderqueer advocacy competence, future researchers should examine the experience of queer students to assess how the experiences are nuanced by different forms of advocacy and gender minority identity. Additionally, researchers should examine school counselor TI advocacy competence in light of IBT; researchers may assess school counselors' attitudes and levels of TI advocacy identity and TI assertiveness (i.e., the extent to which one asserts oneself as a TI advocate) in order to predict the likelihood that of TI advocacy enactment among school counselors. This enactment comprises the degree to which one plans, tries to enact, and successfully enacts TI advocacy in their respective school settings.

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*Appendix A***Demographic Form Items**

1. What is your age? ____
2. What of the following best represents your work setting? (check as many as apply)
☐ Kindergarten School
☐ Elementary School
☐ Junior High School
☐ Middle School
☐ High School
☐ Other _____
3. What is your gender? Please write out your response in the textbox. _____
4. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity? (check as many as apply)
☐ American Indian / Native American
☐ Asian American / Pacific Islander / Asian
☐ African American / Black
☐ Caucasian / White
☐ Hispanic
☐ Latino/a
☐ Latinx
☐ Other _____
5. What is your sexual orientation? (check as many as apply)
☐ Exclusively Heterosexual
☐ Mostly Heterosexual
☐ Bisexual
☐ Mostly Lesbian/Gay
☐ Exclusively Lesbian/Gay
☐ Queer
☐ Pansexual
☐ Asexual, Other _____

Appendix B

Statistically Significant School Counselor Transgender Intersex Advocacy Competence

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender		
Female	3.96 ^a	0.85
Male	4.03 ^a	0.85
Transgender/Nonbinary	5.40 ^b	0.55
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	3.56 ^a	0.79
European American	4.01 ^b	0.86
Multiracial	4.00 ^b	0.85
Sexual Orientation		
Exclusively Heterosexual	3.88 ^a	0.84
Mostly Heterosexual	4.35 ^b	0.75
Exclusively Lesbian/Gay	4.49 ^{bc}	0.75
School Level		
Elementary School	3.69 ^a	0.83
Middle School	4.06 ^b	0.83
High School	4.13 ^b	0.82

Note. TI = transgender and intersex.

Mean values (*M*) that do not have a superscript in common (e.g., x^a and x^b) differ significantly from each other at the $p < .05$ level.