Bartın University Journal of Faculty of Education
BUEFAD Volume 15, Issue 1
113-123
dergipark.org.tr/buefad
DOI: 10.14686/buefad.1726140

Social Justice Ally Development: Application of Three Critical Frameworks for School Counsellors

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Research Article
Received: 24.06.2025
Revised: 22.12.2025
Accepted: 25.12.2025

Abstract

Social justice is a theoretical concept that values human dignity and affirms the rights of individuals to decide their own destiny. The term ally refers to the members of dominant social groups who commit themselves to ending systemic oppression and discrimination. The purpose of this study was to introduce three ally identity development frameworks to help school counselors understand the process of becoming an ally. Bishop (2002), Edwards (2006), and Waters (2010) ally identity development theoretical conceptions were selected through PsycINFO, ERIC, and Google Scholar based on three criteria: (1) a clear emphasis on social justice as a developmental process, (3) recognition within the fields of counseling scholarship, and (3) their ability to highlight various complementary dimensions of identity development, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. These frameworks are critically analyzed, and their limitations are discussed. Recommendations for school counselors on how to use these frameworks to promote their own, as well as their students', ally identity development are provided.

Keywords: social justice, ally, school counselor, school counseling, multiculturalism.

Sosyal Adalet Destekçiliği Bilincinin Gelişimi: Okul Psikolojik Danışmanları için Üç Önemli Kuramsal Çerçevenin Uygulanması

Öz

Sosyal adalet, insan onurunu temel alan ve bireylerin kendi kaderlerini belirleme hakkını onaylayan kuramsal bir çerçevedir. Destekçi (ally) terimi ise, ayrıcalıklı sosyal grupların üyelerinden olup sistematik baskı ve ayrımcılığı sona erdirmeye kendini adamış kişileri ifade eder. Bu çalışmanın amacı, okul psikolojik danışmanlarının bir destekçi olma sürecini daha iyi anlayabilmeleri için üç destekçi kimliği gelişim teosini tanıtmaktır. Bishop (2002), Edwards (2006) ve Waters (2010) tarafından geliştirilen destekçi kimlik geliştirme sürecini açıklayan teoriler üç kritere dayanarak PsycİNFO, ERİC ve Google Scholar aracılığıyla seçildi. Bu kriterler (1) sosyal adaletin gelişimsel bir süreç olarak ele alınması, (2) okul psikolojik danışmanlık alanında tanınırlık ve (3) bilişsel, duygusal ve davranışsal yönlerden kimlik gelişiminin çeşitli tamamlayıcı boyutlarını vurgulama yeteneğidir. Ardından, bu kimlik gelişimi teorileri tartışılarak güçlü ve yetersiz yönleri değerlendirilmiştir. Ayrıca, okul psikolojik danışmanlarının hem kendi destekçi kimlik gelişimlerini hem de öğrencilerinin kimlik geliştirme süreçlerini desteklemek amacıyla bu teorileri nasıl kullanabileceklerine dair öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: sosyal adalet, destekçi, okul psikolojik danışmanı, okul psikolojik danışmanlığı, çokkültürlülük.

To cite this article in APA Style:

Dogan, S. (2026). Social Justice Ally Development: Application of Three Critical Frameworks for School Counsellors. *Bartın University Journal of Faculty of Education, 15*(1), 113-123. https://doi.org/10.14686/buefad.1726140

INTRODUCTION

School counselors are certified/licensed educators who improve student achievement by implementing comprehensive school counseling programs (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2019). They are crucial members of the school staff who support promoting positive student outcomes. School counselors follow the ASCA (2019) ethical and professional standards, and provide services in four areas: define, deliver, manage, and assess. The duties and responsibilities of school counselors include direct services to students like instruction, consultation, and counseling as well as indirect services such as consultation, collaboration, and referrals that are given on behalf of students. In addition, school counselors regularly work on issues such as academic achievement, scheduling, planning for post-secondary options, fostering emotion regulation and healthy interpersonal skills, crisis management, and providing bullying interventions (ASCA, 2019; Gysbers & Henderson, 2014; Myrick, 2003; Stockton & Dogan, 2019).

School counselors used traditional approaches, where school counselors were supposed to provide individual counseling in mostly their office environments (Ratts, 2009). This approach was not enough to meet the needs of all students. As a result, a progressive approach for school counselors is proposed (Bailey et al., 2007; Goodman et al., 2004; Ratts, 2009). Within this new approach, school counselors are "*expected to take a leadership role in team activities, create a collaborative environment, and advocate for systematic change*" (Stockton & Dogan, 2019, p. 320). This reflects an expectation that school counselors go beyond individual-level interventions and engage in counseling activities that create systemic changes (Goodman et al., 2004; Ratts, 2009).

Racism, achievement and attainment inequalities, bullying, discrimination, safety and security concerns, unequal opportunities, and inadequate preparation for real-world challenges are all problems that many school systems face. Scholars believe that many of these problems exist because societies do not provide the same opportunities to all (Bailey et al., 2007). School counselors may be able to assist decreasing this existing gap. They must do more social justice efforts in order to close this gap (Elbedour, et al., 2020).

Research shows that school counselors who employ a social justice-based services are more likely to become successful in promoting equity and inclusion within their schools (Jaffer, 2022; Harlow et al., 2019). Social justice-oriented school counselors are more likely to address systemic barriers, advocate for marginalized populations, and provide culturally sensitive practices. Such efforts are essential for promoting academic achievement, closing the achievement gap, enhancing social-emotional well-being and resilience, and promoting sense of belonging.

They should provide appropriate resources and opportunities to all students. It is likely that members of underrepresented groups would appreciate this approach because it is well known that providing underprivileged students with equitable opportunity increases their chances of realizing their academic, professional, and social/emotional potential. (Educational Trust, 2003). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to introduce three important ally identity development frameworks developed by Waters (2010), Bishop (2002) and Edwards (2006) for counselors. These frameworks could facilitate counselors' understanding at the process of becoming an ally, which may lead to better services for all students.

Definition of Social Justice and Ally

Although it is not easy to define social justice, it can be understood as a theoretical concept that upholds human dignity, affirms the rights that everyone has to autonomy, and emphasizes and respects the right of each person to pursue their destiny (Dollarhide et al., 2018; 2023; Lewis, 2011). Social justice prioritizes healthy development of individuals and places more emphasis on their strengths than their weaknesses. According to Kalkan (2018), an ideal social justice system "*does not tolerate the advancement of the few at the sacrifice of the many*" (p. 147). According to Dogan (2023), school counselors ought to exhibit a commitment to social justice based on eight principles: including constant self-examination, appreciating students' worldviews and life experiences, focus on strengths, liberatory consciousness, sharing power reciprocal collaboration, taking action, and leaving students with tools. Social justice is "*a source of resilience*" that could sustain counselors' persistence (Dollarhide et al., 2018, p. 14).

Social justice-minded school counselors believe that virtually every student can perform at high levels and that school counselors need to be constructive participants in reducing the existing disparity in academic performance (Qorib, 2024; Stockton & Dogan, 2019). Most scholars in the counseling field define social justice as the endeavor to eliminate obstacles and alter the status quo through culturally sensitive methods. For example, Ratts (2009) believes that social justice counseling "*uses social advocacy and activism as a means to address*

inequitable social, political, and economic conditions that impede the academic, career, and social/emotional development of individuals, families, and communities" (p. 160). In addition, according to Lewis et al. (2011), ensuring that no one faces unnecessary obstacles in their pursuit of their academic, professional, and social/emotional potential is the main aim of social justice.

Social justice-oriented counselors think that having a good life is not only a personal responsibility but is a right that needs to be actively protected (Lewis, 2011). Incorporating social justice into the work of a school counselor means acknowledging that racism, privilege, oppression, and prejudice all exist and have a detrimental impact on students' lives. (Chang et al., 2010). This obligates school counselors to actively eliminate these barriers to the best of their abilities (Dollarhide et al., 2016).

An ally is one of the central concepts of social justice phenomena. Allies are defined as "*members of dominant social groups (e.g. male, Caucasian, heterosexuals) who are working to end the systematic oppression that gives them greater privilege based on their social-group membership*" (Broido, 1997, p. 3). Ally is described as a person who is actively devoted to interrupting and putting an end to unfair cycles (Collier-Spruel & Ryan, 2024; Sumerau et al., 2021; Waters, 2010). Both target identity and agent identity can exhibit acts of allyhood. While target identity refers to people who are disadvantaged and subordinated, agent identity means privileged dominant group members (Waters, 2010). Waters (2010) argued that many identities intersect across target and agent lines; for example, a white, queer man is capable of acting to end the injustices of people of color and disabled identities.

Understanding allyship from this perspective offers a unique advantage to school counselors to actively challenge the status quo and advocate for underserved populations. Culturally competent school counselors have critical self-awareness, knowledge, and skills that enable them to empower and advocate for their students (Crethar & Ratts, 2008; Dollarhide et al., 2018). Self-awareness includes counselors' awareness of their attitudes and beliefs about race, ethnicity, and culture, as well as their biases and stereotypes related to cultural groups with regards to privilege, discrimination, and oppression (). Knowledge is focused on a counselor's knowledge of many worldviews, including their own, history of oppression for various groups, and cultural values with the possible influence of sociopolitical factors. The skills component of multicultural competence pertains to certain skills, intervention methods, and tactics that are culturally sensitive and address the needs of underprivileged and oppressed groups (Constantine et al., 2007; Simons et al., 2022).

Overall, social justice and allyship provides important perspectives for school counselors to become agents of change by promoting equity and equality. These concepts not only equip counselors to effectively advocate for their students but also empower them to disrupt systemic barriers, leading to better student outcomes and the closing of the achievement gap.

The Relationship Between Social Justice and Counseling

School counseling has a strong connection with social justice (Clark et al, 2021). Chang et al. (2010) emphasize this connection by stating that social justice and therapy are inextricably linked, as the promotion of students' healthy development and well-being cannot be separated from their social and cultural contexts. School counselors have the power and privilege to advocate on behalf of students who have been traditionally oppressed and disadvantaged, which should make social justice an essential element of counseling (Crethar & Ratts, 2008). In addition, Holcomb-McCoy (2007) believes that social justice and school counseling are deeply connected because social justice focuses on reducing the impact of inequality on students and enhancing equality and access to education.

Social justice has a significant effect on shaping the school counseling profession (Ratts, 2009). Some scholars have suggested that social justice advocacy should be the fifth force in counseling (Crethar & Ratts, 2008). This fifth force would help explain human behavior complementary to psychodynamic, cognitive behavioral, existential-humanistic, and multicultural counseling forces (Crethar & Ratts, 2008; Ratts, 2009; Ratts et al., 2004).

Bemak and Chung (2008) argue that school counselors are change agents and have ethical and moral obligations for advocacy and systemic change (Bemak & Chung, 2008). Similarly, ASCA established a position statement on the responsibilities of professional school counselors to promote amplified understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity: Professional school counselors are expected to demonstrate cultural sensitivity by partnering with others to build school and community environments that support cultural diversity and allow all students to achieve academic, career and social/emotional success. Additionally, school counselors are also expected to "*teach tolerance and address the issues of nonviolence and social justice on a regular basis*" through their curriculum and comprehensive school counseling programs (ASCA, 2015).

Despite the necessity for school counselors to act as allies, it is not uncommon to see some of them staying silent when witnessing an unjust situation because they might be afraid of creating conflict with others, especially with individuals in a position of power. Bemak and Chung (2008) define this silence as Nice Counselor Syndrome, which means good-hearted, well-meaning professionals who are seen as nice people to be around and interact with in school environment.

It has been documented that students of color have a higher probability to fulfill their academic, career, and social/emotional potential when they have equal opportunities (Educational Trust, 2003). One way to enhance the provision of equal opportunities to all is embracing a social justice approach. The purpose of this study is to introduce and discuss three ally identity development theories and connect them to the professional practice of school counselors. While these theories are largely addressed at a theoretical level in the existing literature, no studies have yet been found that offer concrete suggestions for how school counselors can use them to support both their own social justice identity development and the developmental processes of their students. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this article offers a unique contribution to the field of school counseling strengthening their social justice-based services and support.

METHODOLOGY

This theoretical article follows a structured approach to identify three key theories that underpin the analysis. The primary focus is on understanding how individuals develop their social justice identity. The selection of these theories was guided by three criteria: (a) a clear emphasis on social justice as a developmental process, (b) recognition within the fields of counseling scholarship, and (c) their ability to highlight various complementary dimensions of identity development, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects.

To identify relevant sources, database searches were conducted mostly using PsycINFO, ERIC, and Google Scholar, employing keywords such as "social justice identity," "identity development," "ally," "ally identity development," "advocacy," "multicultural counseling," and "school counseling." After reviewing a wide range of identity development theories, I selected Bishop (2002), Edwards (2006), and Waters (2010) because they offer a conceptual framework sufficiently addressing the process of formation an ally identity as a developmental process, they are foundational in the multicultural counseling and social justice identity literature and frequently cited by researchers, and they successfully address the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of identity development. Together, they offer a comprehensive lens for examining how individuals come to understand, internalize, and enact social justice in both their personal and professional lives.

The literature was critically synthesized and analyzed through the frameworks of multicultural counseling and social justice theories, which provided the conceptual foundation for the arguments presented in this paper. In the following sections, Bishop's (2002), Edwards' (2006), and Waters' (2010) models of ally identity development are summarized and recommendations for school counselors and counselor educators are provided.

1. **Bishop's (2002) Framework**

Bishop (2002) provided a framework of ally development consisting of six stages. According to Bishop (2002), the ally development process starts with understanding oppression. At this stage, it is essential to recognize one's own oppression and his or her role in being an oppressor. The central idea in this step is to comprehend how oppression originates and how it is systemically recreated and maintained. Bishop expressed that oppression is woven into many social structures making it both self-sustaining and hard to eliminate (Broido & Reason, 2005).

The second step of the framework focuses on understanding different types of oppression, their similarities and differences, and how they influence each other. In other words, it is important to be aware that many types of oppression exist, and that they can take different forms. Some of the forms of oppression may include stereotyping, violence, hierarchy, and sexuality. At this stage, social justice allies are more impactful when they are aware of the interactions between different forms of oppression.

The third step in this model is consciousness and healing. Bishop (2002) believes that to become an ally for others, one must first become "*a worker for his or her own liberation*" (p. 100). According to Bishop, the process of understanding our role in oppression is usually painful. However, experiencing this pain might lead to a release of energy that facilitates the process of becoming an ally. Bishop believes that releasing this pain may result in relief, because facing our own role in oppression may eventually help us overcome fears and connect with others.

Working to achieve one's own liberation is the fourth step in this model. In this step, allies are aware of how oppression impacts them and that they take action to correct this. The fifth stage, becoming an ally, is about

developing new skills based on the exploration of our own experiences as oppressors. In this stage, Bishop emphasises that allies must actively listen to the oppressed and support them, rather than acting on behalf of them without any consultation. Educating people of the dominant group is something allies should do at this level. The final stage of Bishop's model is maintaining hope. Working towards systemic change as an ally is difficult and stressful. Therefore, it is crucial to constantly remind ourselves that change is a process and takes time. Allies should take steps to maintain their hope and idealism in order to be effective social change agents (Broido & Reason, 2005).

2. Edwards' (2006) Framework

Edwards (2006) provided a conceptual model for explaining social justice identity development. According to Edwards, social justice ally development takes place through three levels: Ally for self-interest, aspiring ally for altruism, and ally for social justice.

Aspiring Allies for Self-Interest. The main motivation of the allies for self-interest is to protect people who they have connections with, rather than protecting groups of oppressed or changing the system that creates oppression. They tend to act on behalf of the people they care about to protect them from being hurt, mostly without consulting with them. These people do not necessarily identify themselves as allies; they may consider themselves a good friend, for example. They consider the world a fair and just place and they might even be shocked when they witness unjust incidents, which are done by only bad or immoral people according to them. Although they consider oppressive behaviors to be horrible and terrible, they may not be able to "*acknowledge their unintentional oppressive behaviours and role in perpetuating the system of oppression*" due to their limited view of oppression (Edwards, 2006, p. 48).

They can see acts of discrimination but are not able to comprehend the systemic dynamics that cause this discrimination. Therefore, their main motivation is to stop bad people, rather than changing the system, which eventually contributes to maintaining the status quo. Aspiring allies for self-interest are not aware of existing privilege and want to maintain the status quo. Edwards illustrated this idea with the example of a man who, despite his genuine intention to help a woman secure a job, recommends her to dresses nicely for the interview. However, despite his good intention, he ignores the sexism regarding employment and unintentionally demeans and objectifies her by telling her to dress nicely.

Aspiring Ally for Altruism. Aspiring allies for altruism often feel guilty as a part of the process of comprehending the nature of privilege and oppression. Therefore, to transcend this guilt, they often seek to engage in ally behavior. They adopt the role of "*rescuer or hero*" to help the victims of oppression as a way of managing the guilt (Edwards, 2006, p. 48). Edwards (2006) stated that feeling guilty is beneficial for the members of the dominant group who have privileges because this guilt helps them move "*from an intellectualization of oppression to an emotional connection*" (p. 49).

Aspiring allies for altruism manifest ally behaviors for the members of the subordinate group, who are the true victims of oppression. Edwards (2006) see this approach of ally work as "*paternalistic nature of altruism,"* which may bring short-term benefits but in the long term, it will help maintain the status quo by making these allies an *"exceptional helper to the victims of oppression*" (p. 48). It is not easy for aspiring allies for altruism to admit their oppressive behaviors; they may become defensive when confronted with their own mistakes because they consider themselves to be exceptional people of their dominant group. They may also suffer burnout as a result of their effort to maintain their status.

Ally for Social Justice. Allies for social justice believe that everyone is a victim of oppression, and everybody suffers. In other words, they believe that members of the dominant group are also harmed by oppression. Therefore, their goal is not only to free the oppressed but also to liberate themselves. They focus on the system (e.g., classism, racism, ageism, superiority) rather than groups or individuals (e.g., friend, sister, brother, classmate) and collaborate with the oppressed to end the system of oppression.

Allies for social justice embrace a holistic approach to oppression and believe that oppression may not be fully addressed in isolation. Edwards (2006) stated that these allies approach oppression with spiritual and moral principles and aim to "*restore individual and collective humanity and spiritual liberation*" (p. 52). Contrary to aspiring allies for altruism, the motivation of allies for social justice for systemic change does not rely onreaffirmation from the oppressed, which promotes their effort to be effective and sustainable. These allies intentionally seek feedback concerning their behaviors because they want to be better allies and humans.

3. Waters' (2010) Framework

Waters based his model on previous work done by Broido (1997). Broido (1997) proposed a model that explains the process of ally development among college students. This model includes five critical factors, including pre-college egalitarian values, learning new information, engagement in meaning-making, increased self-confidence, and finding opportunities to put new attitudes into action. Waters (2010) provided a developmental allyhood model that broadens Broido's (1997) model by including culturally oppressed or subordinate individuals as people who can equally contribute to advocacy efforts.

Waters' (2010) student development model was developed using a contemporary perspective on ally motivation, development, attitudes, and behavior. According to this perspective, the process of ally development progresses through initial, intermediate, and mature stages, and the development takes place across domains of cognitive knowledge, intrapersonal awareness, and interpersonal skills. According to Waters (2010) the stages of ally development are not sequential, and people may display behaviors, attitudes, and actions pertaining to several dimensions at once. The following is a brief explanation of the tasks at each stage of Waters' (2010) model.

The Initial Stage of Ally Development. People in the initial stage of ally development possess characteristics of an essentialist stance (Waters, 2010). An essentialist stance consists of having minimal exposure with diverse peers, receiving minimal information about diversity, trusting external sources, and relying on information from media, texts, and authority figures (e.g. teachers, parents, religious figures). Individuals at this stage also struggle to consider multiple and conflicting views. They cannot "*make meaning internally and justify ones' own worldview, beliefs, opinions, and actions*" (Waters, 2010, p. 4). They structure their worldviews based on their experiences and the prevailing social and cultural standards, and their experiences are framed as they confirm these beliefs. They have homogenous social networks because they perceive individuals who differ from dominant norms as a threat to the "*social order*" (Cooper et al., 2014, p. 347). Over time, as individuals are exposed to frameworks that question and examine privilege, they feel more comfortable challenging the authority and assumptions about differences and privilege. In other words, they start to understand how the system they are members of is capable of shaping their perspectives (Waters, 2010). Once they begin to view themselves as change agents, they are ready to enter the next stage, the intermediate stage.

The Intermediate Stage of Ally Development. Transitioning to more mature intrapersonal development may be a lengthy process, take many pathways, be personally challenging, and create different types of conflict. People in the intermediate stage of intrapersonal development have a sense of agency concerning ally identity and action (Waters, 2010). As they continue their cognitive and intrapersonal development, they manifest a great deal of understanding regarding privilege and oppression, awareness of multiple perspectives, and the construction of personal and unique worldviews. Conflicts may arise while people work to understand, acknowledge, and challenge their own privilege and power. As a result, they may feel angry, resistant to change, or be willing to continue exploration (Waters, 2010). To address this, Waters suggests we provide safe spaces for discussions and addressing feelings (e.g., guilt, shame, anger, anxiety, overwhelmed) regarding past behaviors and feelings of responsibility for the actions of members of the dominant group.

The Mature Stage of Ally Development. As people develop interpersonal maturity, they move from essential learners to constructive learners, which helps individuals understand that they can recreate individual and collective knowledge (Waters, 2010). They will examine and challenge privilege, the impact of identity on their multicultural understanding, the ways in which the system creates and maintains oppression, and the cycle of inequity as they gain their confidence to embody their allyhood identity. As a result, they will construct multifaceted worldviews, multiple perspectives, nonjudgmental manners, and an internal sense of agency from aggregated cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal maturity. Mature allies are capable of engaging in meaningful relationships with marginalized peers, joining others to advocate for social change and developing intercultural competence (Waters, 2010).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND COUNSELOR EDUCATORS

These conceptual models should be considered as tools for "self-reflection and developing more effective allies" (Edwards, 2006, p. 52). By utilizing these frameworks, school counselors are able to critically assess their roles as allies and actively track their progress in ally identity development. It is noteworthy to state that ally identity development may not be a linear process and that applications in real life are likely to be more fluid (Edwards, 2006). This section provides practical examples of how school counselors and counselor educators can integrate these models into their professional practices.

When school counselors, especially those in the early stages of developing their social justice ally identity, begin to understand how privilege and oppression work, they often experience feelings of guilt regarding their past oppressive behaviors (Bishop, 2002; Edwards, 2006; Gibson, 2014; Waters, 2010). For example, a school counselor may feel guilty for having made racist jokes realizing that they might have hurt someone. The counselor's guilt could reach a level where they feel overwhelmed and powerless to manage the feeling. This intense guilt could cause severe suffering as well as put an end to the counselor's efforts to become an ally. At this stage, it is imperative to remind these school counselors that although the feeling of guilt is painful, it is expected, normal, and even necessary for developing a successful ally identity. It is essential for school counselors to understand that they are likely to experience feelings of guilt in the process of becoming an ally. The anticipation of these potential uncomfortable feelings would probably make the experience of guilt less traumatic, short-lived, and easy to overcome.

Similarly, these theories have important implications for understanding and supporting students in their ally identity formation process. For example, students who are in an early stage of ally identity development often require significant social and emotional support due to their intensified vulnerability. Therefore, providing support by school counselors is essential to fostering these students' growth and resilience as they navigate the complexities of allyship. School counselors are encouraged to meet individually and in groups with these students regularly to provide essential support and comfort. To effectively deal with the potential feeling of guilt and to minimize its impact on students, school counselors should create safe spaces in school for discussions, addressing feelings, and supporting each other (Kitchen, 2019). Counselors should encourage students to openly express their emotions, articulate their thoughts, and normalize the challenges inherent in the allyship development process—an essential component of their transformative journey.

Another example could involve a school counselor who identifies as an ally but has unconscious biases or racist beliefs. This counselor might have been involved in many endeavors to bring more resources to the school to support his/her African American students. However, the school counselor might be frustrated by ongoing criticism from his/her African-American students for not doing enough. These models may help this counselor to consider the feedback as a gift, "helping him [or her] to uncover his/her unconscious racism." It might also help him/her become a better ally for his African-American students, and this increased awareness may lead to "liberat[ing] himself [/herself] from his own racist socialization" (Edwards, 2006, p. 55).

The ally development process starts with cultivating a deep understanding of oppression (Bishop, 2002). Therefore, it is important to comprehend how oppression is systemically constructed, perpetuated, and reinforced, as well as how individual beliefs and actions contribute to its maintenance. First, school counselors should develop this self-awareness as a foundational aspect of their ally development process. Then, they should provide awareness-raising activities about injustices people face daily and the systemic nature of institutional racism, which is designed to fail the oppressed. For example, they may analyze educational statistics to reveal if there is a relationship between educational success and student demographics. This analysis might uncover that certain groups are disproportionately represented in areas such as dropout rates, disciplinary action, and access to Advanced Placement courses (Rivera et al., 2019). In such cases, the school counselor should engage in institutional-level advocacy, involving all stakeholders to raise awareness and provide resources. To achieve this, school counselors should take a proactive role in planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating systemic interventions that address the existing systemic issues.

The presented theories have important applications for counselor educators too. Academic experiences related to content information and meaning-making are crucial for the ally identity development (Broido, 1997). Therefore, counselor educators should develop curricula that discuss diversity, oppression, racism, and intersecting identities and their real-life experiences. In addition to creating dedicated classes, counselor educators could integrate meaning-making discussions with existing courses and encourage counselors-in-training to engage in honest self-reflection on a variety of topics.

In addition, counselor educators should promote their students' ally identity development as well. Because ally development is a process, it is vital to provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for students (Johnson et al., 2022; Waters, 2010). In addition, it is essential to provide the resources students require to advance to the next level. Counselor educators can also utilize these models to provide effective supervision to their students, where students receive the tools they need to advance their knowledge and abilities towards the formation of an effective ally identity. The provision of these opportunities would lead students to become socially conscious citizens who are dedicated to creating a socially just world.

Finally, an ally development concept is needed for school counselors to promote their ally identity development. However, they may face some challenges if the profession and schools do not move in the same direction. For example, those in positions of authority within educational systems typically oppose systemic changes because they believe they might lose their privileges because of advocacy work (Shriberg et al., 2008). In workplaces where advocacy work is not welcomed, it is not easy to find like-minded people to receive support when needed. Limited allies, limited diversity among colleagues, and limited support from co-workers might be a barrier for school counselors to develop ally identity and implement social justice-oriented work (Dollarhide et al., 2014; Dover, 2013; Shriberg et al., 2008). In addition, school counseling training programs should also move in the same direction to promote prospective school counselors' ally identity development. Unfortunately, the majority of school counseling programs offer little training on social justice education. For example, only around 50% of counselor educators teach counselors in training with the kind of resources they will need to implement advocacy work after graduation (Ratts, 2006). The programs providing social justice training mostly focus on micro-level counseling skills such as one-on-one counseling in office settings, scheduling, and testing duties (Goodman et al., 2004; Ratts, 2009). As a result, school counselors may be challenged to form an ally identity development because they need a skill set that goes beyond theoretical knowledge to actual practice and action.

LIMITATIONS OF THE THEORIES

Although these theories adequately address the process of becoming an ally, it is worth mentioning some limitations. First, it is hard to mention ally development solely from an individual transformation perspective without acknowledging the broader systemic context. The theories might more effectively explore how personal transformation could challenge the statue quo for systemic change. Second, the theories claim that ally development is a linear process which takes place step-by-step. However, the process of becoming an ally is not always a linear process and has ups and downs depending on personal experiences and circumstances. Third, the theories describe ally development as a singular journey, the process is usually shaped by the intersecting identities, including race, gender, and class. Fourth, these theories have not been supported by empirical studies, which limits the ability to verify their premises. Fifth, these theories are developed based on Western culture which may limit their ability to be generalized. Sixth, the presented theories are discussed theoretically and their application in real life was not discussed in depth. Finally, the theories minimally discuss the emotional challenges related to the journey to allyship, including burnout and defensiveness, as well as the psychological benefits. They should have presented strategies to address these anticipated emotional difficulties while maintaining commitment to social justice endeavors.

CONCLUSION

Many academic, career, and social/emotional problems exist among students mostly because societies do not provide the same opportunities to all. This review argues that providing adequate and effective school counseling services could address those issues. One thing that school counselors may do is to increase their social justice advocacy work as allies. This review outlined three models of ally identity development created by Bishop (2002), Edwards (2006), and Waters (2010) to help school counselors understand the process of becoming an ally. These frameworks may inspire potential allies to develop successful and sustainable social justice identities.

Statements of Publication Ethics

The ethical principles of the publication process were followed in this study. This study is exempt from ethical review because it is a literature based theoretical study.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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