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Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Value of Elementary School Counselor Roles

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STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE
VALUE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR ROLES

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmothers, Dorothy McGaha Self and in memory of Retta Norwood Wellman. Your wisdom and example have shaped my life and helped me define who I am and who I can become.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the value and comparative value that stakeholders placed on elementary school counselors' roles. Participants in this study were elementary school counselors, elementary school principals, elementary school teachers, and counselor educators (N=353). All participants completed the *School Counselor Role Survey* that was designed to assess stakeholders' perceptions of the importance of the school counselor roles advocated by the Education Trust and ASCA. The instrument combined the domains of TSCI and the content areas of the National Standards.

ANOVAs were computed to compare the overall and each subscale mean for each of the stakeholder groups. Significant differences were found between stakeholder groups on four of the five TSCI domains: Advocacy, Teaming and Collaboration, Counseling and Coordination, and Assessment and Use of Data. Significant differences were also found on two of the three content areas: Career and Personal/Social. Significant differences for the domains and content areas were found most often between counselor educators and principals and between counselor educators and teachers.

All groups believed the TSCI domains to be *Somewhat Important*. The results for the content areas indicated that the academic role should be included in school counselor training, but not at the expense of the personal/social role. The results of this study indicate that all stakeholder groups view elementary school counselors as mental health professionals first and foremost. This has implications for school counselors, counselor educators, and professional leaders.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

An overview for this study is presented in nine sections in this chapter. The first section provides an introduction to the current status of school counseling and describes how several initiatives have influenced school counselors' roles and functions. The statement of the problem and the conceptual framework are discussed in the second and third sections, respectively. The fourth section describes the purpose of the study and the fifth section presents the significance of the study. The research questions are introduced in section six. The final three sections present the assumptions, limitations and delimitations, and definitions of terms.

The Transformation of School Counseling

Accountability and school reform efforts govern today's educational system. The primary goal of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) is to close the achievement gap between minority and disadvantaged youth and their peers. Academic achievement is now the priority of schools across the nation, shifting the educational focus from "input" to "outcome." All school personnel, including school counselors, are considered to be responsible for student achievement.

As a result of school reform efforts, the 21st century has become the age of accountability for school counselors (Hughes & James, 2001; Myrick, 2003; Whiston & Sexton, 1998). According to Myrick, school counselors are now being held more accountable than at any previous time in history. Dahir and Stone (2003) claimed that school counselors must share accountability for student success in order to transform and reframe the practice of school

counseling. Counselor roles are undergoing transformations so counselors that are viewed as "key players" (Dahir & Stone) and "leaders and change agents" (Bemak, 2000).

The mission of schools targets effective teaching and learning, and alignment with this aim has become mandatory for school counseling to survive (Martin, 2002). Martin asserted that improving student achievement is the most important item on the list of what school counselors will have to know and be able to do. Academic/student achievement focus also was the primary recommendation made by House and Hayes (2002) for the "new vision" of school counselors. House and Hayes stated, "In fact, if school counselors do not relate their work and programs to the mission of schools and document success, they are at risk of extinction" (p. 7).

Recently, the school counseling profession has attempted a transformation from a mental health to an academic achievement focus (Bemak, 2000; Dahir & Stone, 2003, Martin, 2002). It appears that leaders in the profession believed there was a "discrepancy between educational values and outcomes affecting themselves…" (Fullan, 1982, p. 13) and sought to transform the profession in order to align themselves more closely with the prevailing educational values. For example, Paisley and Borders (1995) accused educational administrators, legislators, and school reformers of failing to include school counselors in their decision making. Similarly, Herr (1984) concluded that school counselors have been neglected in the reform movement. Dahir (2001) noted that none of the "widely distributed reports or more recent proposals for school reform suggested by various organizations mentioned school counseling as integral to improving student success in school…and school counseling programs were ignored as a means to improve student achievement and help students prepare for the future" (p. 2). However, House and Hayes, advocates of the "new vision," acknowledged that there is limited research to suggest that students are more academically successful in schools because of school counselors. Other

researchers have concurred that there is a lack of data to validate the idea that school counselors are impacting students' academic success (Borders & Drury, 1992; Whiston & Sexton, 1998).

In response to these oversights and omissions of school counselors from the reform agenda, a number of major initiatives (e.g., National Standards and Transforming School Counseling Initiative) were developed in an attempt to move the profession from an ancillary to a leadership position in school reform efforts. The American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Standards targeted practicing school counselors, aiming to change the way they delivered their school counseling programming. The Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) sought to change the way school counselors were trained.

Sharing the Vision: The National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) was "designed to connect school counseling to the current school reform agenda" (Dahir, 2001, p. 324). The Standards propose that counseling programs offer a proactive focus in three content areas: (1) academic development, (2) career development, and (3) personal/social development. The Standards delineate the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that students should acquire. Also, the Standards provide competencies which gauge student achievement in the content areas.

While the National Standards sought to transform school counseling practice, the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) from the Education Trust sought to transform school counselor preparation. To assist all students in achieving academic success, school counselors are advised to address five domains: (1) Leadership, (2) Advocacy, (3) Teaming and Collaboration, (4) Counseling and Coordination, and (5) Assessment and Use of Data (The Education Trust, 2005; Sears, 1999). TSCI requires that school counselors adopt the New Vision and shift their focus from mental health to an academic/student achievement focus; from

individual student's concerns to whole school and system concerns; from record keepers to users of data to effect change; and from guardians of the status quo to agents for change, especially for educational equity for all students (House & Martin, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

The American School Counselor Association's National Standards for School Counseling Programs and The Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative emphasized the belief that every student should benefit from the school counseling program. Furthermore, school counselors are expected to adopt an academic focus on whole school and system issues rather than a mental health, personal/social focus with individuals and small groups. Martin (2002) endorsed the need to "move school counseling from an ancillary service-oriented profession to one that becomes a critical player in accomplishing the mission of schools, academic success and high achievement for *all* students" (p. 6).

On the other hand, Guerra (1998) observed opposition from some school counselors and counselor educators to the shift from a mental health focus to an academic achievement focus. In order to better understand the proponents and opponents of the transformed school counselor, it becomes critical to focus on which counselor roles stakeholders value.

Conceptual Framework

Fullan (1982) offered "three broad ways in which pressure for educational policy change may arise: (1) through natural disasters, (2) through external forces such as imported technology and values, and immigration, and (3) through internal contradictions, such as when indigenous changes in technology lead to new social patterns and needs, or when one or more groups in a society perceive a discrepancy between educational values and outcomes affecting themselves or

others in whom they have an interest" (p. 13). The researcher seeks to examine school counseling in terms of the final element of Fullan's theory of educational change.

According to Guerra (1998), the recent transformation of school counselors' roles and functions from a mental health to an academic achievement orientation has not been welcomed or adopted by all school counselors and counselor educators. Therefore, through the lens of Fullan's theory of educational change, the researcher seeks to identify stakeholders' perceptions of the "new vision" school counselor to better understand the barriers to this innovation.

Fullan (2001) proposed that educational change requires a shift in practice. In this process of change, goals, skills, philosophy or beliefs, and values can be threatened. "Change must always be viewed in relation to the particular values, goals, and outcomes it serves" (Fullan, 1982, p. 9). Therefore, for an innovation (i.e. the "new vision" of school counseling) to be adopted, it must be consistent with an individual's values. Similarly, Rogers (1995) posited that one of the attributes of adoption of an innovation is the individual's perception of its fit with his/her existing needs, values, and past experiences. Fullan (1982) asserted that changes in what "*people do and think* determine the outcome of change" (p. 35). In other words, for change to occur, individual's beliefs and behaviors must change. However, a person's beliefs and behaviors are determined by their values.

Fullan (2001) described eight factors that influence decisions to adopt or reject changes in programs, policies, and directions, depending on their absence or presence. They are: (1) existence and quality of innovations, (2) access to information, (3) advocacy from central administrators, (4) teacher pressure/support, (5) consultants and change agents, (6) community pressure/support/apathy/opposition, (7) availability of federal or other funds and new central legislation or policy, and (8) problem-solving incentives for adoption and bureaucratic incentives

for adoption. Three of these eight factors address the study's identified stakeholders, and their support, or lack thereof, is crucial in determining whether change will occur. These factors and stakeholder positions are: (1) advocacy from central administrators (i.e., principals), (2) teacher pressure/support, and (3) consultants and change agents (i.e., counselors and counselor educators).

Purpose of the Study

According to Fullan (2001), stakeholders' support is central in determining the rejection or adoption of innovations. It is important to note that adoption or acceptance of an innovation partly depends on its consistency with individuals' values, and values are central in guiding individuals' actions and attitudes toward ideas and situations. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to examine the value and comparative value that stakeholders placed on elementary school counselors' roles.

Significance of the Study

Although the National Standards from the American School Counselor Association and the domains from the Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) promote the transformation of school counseling, mandates from leadership alone will not transform school counselors' roles or counselor education programs (Perusse & Goodnough, 2001; Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004). Therefore, the significance of the study lies in its exploration of the perceptions of the major stakeholders. It was hoped that this study will provide useful data to leaders within the counseling and school counseling professions, counselor educators, principals and school boards, and school counselors themselves. For example, insights gained in the study could validate current practices or suggest new ways counselor education programs can help school counselors meet the needs of those they serve.

Additionally, the study could help identify some areas of stakeholders' support for or opposition to the implementation of the "new vision" of school counseling.

Research Questions

In this study, stakeholders' (i.e., school counselors, counselor educators, principals, and teachers) perceptions regarding the value of school counselor roles were examined. Quantitative research methodologies were used to answer the following questions: (1) What value do stakeholders place on elementary school counselors' roles? and (2) Do the perceptions of stakeholder groups differ on the values they place on elementary school counselor roles?

Assumptions

According to Gay and Airasian (2000) an assumption "is any important 'fact' presumed to be true but not actually verified" (p. 108). The following assumptions were made for this study:

1. Participants will respond to the survey instrument honestly and objectively.
2. Participants who represent the population for school counselors, counselor educators, principals, and teachers will be "computer literate."
3. The subject will be of interest to the population.
4. The accuracy of results will be related to the number of respondents.

Limitations and Delimitations

Gay and Airasian (2000) posited that a limitation "is some aspect of the study that the researcher knows may negatively affect the study but over which he or she has no control" (p. 108). For this study, each respondent's personal opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences at that particular moment in time represented a potential limitation. The study sought to examine stakeholders' perceptions of the value of school counselor roles. Although value is one of the

most stable affective characteristics (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1999), it is possible for an individual to alter his/her beliefs. In addition, responses were assumed to represent the respondent's values, but the data was self-reported. Any limitations associated with this type of response are potential limitations of the study.

Delimitations for the study were:

1. This study was delimited to four elementary stakeholder groups (elementary school counselors, counselor educators, elementary school principals, and elementary school teachers).

2. This study was delimited to the counselor roles included in the survey instrument.

3. Members of the sample which represented elementary school counselors, counselor educators, elementary school principals, and elementary school teachers included only participants with access to the internet and working e-mail addresses.

Definitions of Terms

Elementary Schools

Elementary schools were defined as any combination of pre-kindergarten through sixth grade.

Innovation

According to Rogers (1995), an innovation is "an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption…if the idea seems new to the individual, it is an innovation" (p. 11). Therefore, for the purposes of this study the idea of school counselors' role shift from a mental health to an academic achievement focus will be viewed as an innovation.

Role

For the purposes of this study, a role was defined as the set of expectations placed on school counselors by themselves, by those within the school system (school boards, principals, and teachers), and by those outside the system (federal and state legislators, organization leaders, and counselor educators) (Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, & Solomon, 2005).

Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity was defined as a lack of clearly defined responsibilities or performance expectations (Coll & Freeman, 1997; Culbreth et al., 2005).

Role Conflict

Role conflict was defined as a situation in which the school counselor has conflicting demands from two or more role senders (administrators, other counselors, teachers, counselor educators) or different expectations about his/her job (Culbreth et al., 2005).

Role Incongruence

Role incongruence was defined as a situation in which: (1) the school counselor has conflicting expectations from two or more groups, or (2) the school counselor has too many role duties and a lack of needed support (Culbreth et al., 2005).

Role Stress

Role stress is comprised of the three related constructs of role ambiguity, role conflict, and role incongruence (Culbreth et al., 2005).

School Counselor

For the purposes of this study, a school counselor was defined as an individual who has obtained a master's degree or higher from a counselor education program and has the required state certification in school counseling (ASCA, 2005).

Stakeholders

For the purposes of this study, stakeholders were defined as school counselors, counselor educators, principals, and teachers. Numerous studies indicated that these groups have an influence on the school counseling program (Beesley, 2004; Clark & Amatea, 2004; Dahir, 2000; Ginter & Scalise, 1990; Muro & Kottman, 1995, Myrick, 2003; Neukrug et al., 1993; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994; Vaught, 1995). This definition also is consistent with Fullan's (2001) factors which impact the acceptance or rejection of innovations: (1) advocacy from central administrators (principals), (2) teacher pressure/support, and (3) consultants and change agents (school counselors and counselor educators). More specifically, these stakeholders were defined as those who are currently employed in or have an interest (e.g., training concerns) in counselor roles in public elementary schools and who hold the position of school counselor, counselor educator, school principal, or school teacher.

Value

A value was defined as an idea or belief which is preferable and determines and directs interests, attitudes, satisfaction, and behavior. This is consistent with Krathwohl's (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1999) three-tiered value taxonomy: (1) acceptance of a value (i.e., beliefs and attitudes), (2) preference for a value (i.e., preference for interests or values over others), and (3) commitment (i.e., motivation to act out the behavior).

Organization of Remaining Chapters

This chapter has provided an introduction of the research problem and presented a framework for this research. The second chapter reviews existing literature on the impact of educational reform and legislation on school counselor role definition, the influence of professional organizations, the transformation of school counselor practice and preparation, and

research relevant to stakeholders' perceptions. The third chapter presents the research methodology that was used for this study. The fourth chapter provides a description of the participants and the statistical results of the data analyses for each of the research questions. The fifth chapter offers an interpretation of the findings and their synthesis with the conceptual framework and prior research, implications for school counselors, counselor educators, and school counseling leaders, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the research and literature related to the role and function of school counselors. The chapter is organized into five sections which build a framework for an examination of the ever-changing roles of school counselors and the subsequent shifts in school counselor practice and training programs. The first section provides an overview of the historical roots of school counseling and describes how educational reform has shaped school counselors' roles and functions. The main forces behind the transformation of school counseling practice are discussed in section two. The transformation of school counseling preparation and the major influences on this paradigm shift are discussed in section three. The fourth section offers research relevant to stakeholders' perceptions, and the last section provides conclusions drawn from the review of the literature.

Educational Reform and Legislation

Historically, changes in the profession of school counseling have paralleled trends in educational reform and legislation. To understand the development of school counseling in the United States, it is necessary to view it as part of a larger educational system that is constantly being affected by other factors. The shifts in school counselors' roles and functions reflect the profession's efforts to respond to social, economic, and political trends. Therefore, the following historical information is presented in a chronological manner while integrating a systems perspective.

Although guidance programs date back to the late 1800s, many view the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 as the beginning of modern school counseling programs. For the purpose of this study, the examination of the historical roots of counseling will begin with this act.

The launch of Sputnik by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) created a national furor, and the United States Congress responded by passing the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958. The NDEA provided funds for school counseling services in all high schools and for developing school counselor preparation programs (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). As defined by this legislation, the role of school counselors was to identify and foster the development of high school students who showed promise in the subjects of math and science. Six years later, this search for students with high aptitudes in math and science was expanded to the elementary level. The 1964 amendments to the NDEA allotted funds for elementary school counseling programs. One year later, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 provided funds for guidance and counseling at both levels (Lambie & Willamson). During these years, school counselors were considered key personnel in nurturing the growth of future generations of innovators. In the latter part of the decade there was a slight change in the mission of school counseling programs. With the Vocational Education Act Amendments of 1968, the focus of career guidance was extended to students with disabilities, students with disadvantages, and to elementary school students (Herr, 2003).

The 1970s ushered in an era of declining school enrollment and budgetary cuts that had an impact on the role and functions of school counselors (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Several important milestones within the arena of educational reform occurred during this decade. First, in March of 1970 President Nixon gave his "Message on Education Reform" which is credited with

"having ushered in a new era of accountability" (Hansen, 1993, p. 13). During that same year, nationwide testing began for the first National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). In the early 1970s, Lessigner advocated for the use of engineering principles to measure educational process (Hansen). Also during this time, the effective schools research movement provided characteristics of effective schools and effective teacher practices. School counselors, in their struggle to survive in the face of a changing educational environment, began to perform administrative, noncounseling roles to increase their visibility. Later, in 1975, the Educational Act for All Handicapped Children (PL 94-142) brought school counselors in contact with special education services. This legislation made school counselors responsible for appropriate placement services, consultation with parents and teachers of children with special needs, collaboration in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process, and record-keeping (Humes, 1978).

In the early 1980s, the crisis situation of public education came to the forefront of public awareness, generating dialogue about the need for school reform. According to Schwallie-Giddis, ter Maat, and Pak (2003), *A Nation at Risk* "became the most quoted and read national publication, not only by educators, but by business and community people from the private and public sector as well" (p. 170). In 1989 President Bush organized the Governor's Education Summit which "led to a new wave of education reform driven by accountability and undergirded by a set of general educational goals for the nation" (Hansen, 1993, p. 15). In the late 1980s the language changed from "reform" to "restructuring," introducing such concepts as site-based management, collaborative decision making, teacher empowerment, and increased community involvement (Hansen). Throughout the 1980s, school counselors were affected by these changes, and their functions extended into school-wide testing and accountability practices.

Several important initiatives and publications advocating for educational reform occurred in the 1990s. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 provided six national education goals. In 1990 the National Center on Education and the Economy published *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages*, iterating the need for workers to obtain high skills in order to compete with low wage workers in other countries. The next year, 1991, the reports of the Secretary's Commission on Necessary Skills (SCANS), produced *What Work Requires of School* and *Learning a Living*. These reports drew attention to future workers' needs for interpersonal skills and personal qualities to bridge the gap between school learning and practical application (Perry, 1992). These reports highlighted the need for career guidance, especially school to work transitioning, and the School to Work Opportunities Act of 1994 came about as a result (Lambie & Williamson, 2004).

The 21st century ushered in the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) with its main goal of closing the achievement gap between minority and disadvantaged youth and their peers. The focus has shifted from "input" to "outcome," rendering all school personnel responsible for student achievement.

School Counselor Role Definition

History

The changing role of the school counselor has reflected legislative and societal trends. The literature indicates that a lack of role definition has haunted the school counseling profession. Drury (1984) offered this censure of the profession:

> Because they have let the system define their role, counselors have ended up doing the same things that everyone else does, thus obscuring the need for a separate counseling staff. By accepting every extraneous task that they are assigned, counselors limit their available time to help students clarify their personal and career choices. Counselors have contributed to their own extinction by not fighting to spend their time doing what they are uniquely trained to do. (p. 235)

Similarly, Morse and Russell (1988) concluded that elementary school counselors were not defining their roles: rather, they were accepting those roles that had been thrust on them by other school personnel. This criticism of the school counseling profession has existed for decades, seemingly since its inception.

In the 1960s, Berlin (1963) and Lortie (1965) suggested that role confusion was prevalent in the school counseling profession. Throughout the past decades many authors have decried the profession's inconsistency and lack of definition, reporting rampant role confusion and role conflict. Recently, Beesley (2004) concluded that role ambiguity continues to plague a profession already deficient in professional identity.

Role Stress

Lamdie and Williamson (2004) contended that the expansion of school counseling services throughout the profession's history has resulted in role ambiguity. They noted that, while responsibilities were constantly being added, none were being taken away. Gerler (1992) concluded that the number of functions and duties school counselors have been asked to shoulder is partially responsible for their role ambiguity. Specific to elementary counseling, Coll and Freeman (1997) suggested that funding shortages, a more challenging population, and the pressures of accountability could result in role conflict for counselors. Similarly, Kameen, Robinson, and Rotter (1985) reported a discrepancy between the ideal and actual role and functions of elementary counselors. Coll and Freeman observed more role conflict for elementary counselors when compared to middle and high school counselors, suggesting that the variety of roles and functions elementary counselors fulfill, along with the "newness" of their positions, contributed to role confusion. However, a more recent study which extended the work of Coll and Freeman found that elementary school counselors reported less role conflict and

16

incongruence than high school counselors (Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, & Solomon, 2005). Culbreth et. al suggested that recent reform efforts on the national level to transform the practice and training of school counselors at all levels may be at the heart of their difference in findings. However, these authors noted that role conflict, incongruence, and ambiguity are still very evident within the profession.

Consequences of Role Stress

The consequences of role confusion and conflict for school counselors are far-reaching and encompass many levels of the profession. Role conflict and confusion can result in high absenteeism (Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981), low job effectiveness (Miles & Perrault, 1976), and low productivity (Van Sell et al.). Furthermore, counselors themselves can suffer both personally and professionally (Coll & Freeman, 1997). Role conflict has been linked with job-related tension and fatigue (Beehr, Walsh, & Taber, 1976), job dissatisfaction (Beehr et al., 1976), feeling overwhelmed (Lamdie & Williamson, 2004), feelings of helplessness (Wells & Ritter, 1979), and feelings of powerlessness (Kottkamp & Mansfield, 1985).

Another result of role stress for school counselors is the broader issue of lack of professional identity. According to Johnson (2000), "there is little that tangibly can prepare newly credentialed school counselors for what lies ahead in terms of the professional identity struggle they are likely to face in the schools…" (Electronic version, second paragraph). Brott and Myers (1999) suggested that dissonance between theory and practice has contributed to the lack of identity. Other authors have contended that overwhelming expectations in terms of responsibilities, roles, and functions contribute to school counselors' weakened professional identity (Anderson & Reiter, 1995; Gysbers, 1990; Johnson, 1993). Yet Johnson (2000) cautioned that counselors themselves are also to blame for poor professional identity, because

17

they have not resisted others' role definitions and have acceded to the demands being placed on them.

Professional Organizations

Although educational reform and legislation have shaped the school counseling profession, several professional organizations also have influenced the profession. Among these are the American Counseling Association (ACA), the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), the National Career Development Association (NCDA), and, perhaps the most influential, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA).

ASCA

In 1952 the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) was formed, bringing a measure of identity to a profession that was weakened by an alliance among educators, social workers, and psychologists. This alliance has continued to plague school counselors today, because it was the source of duties such as testing and scheduling. The development of ASCA provided resources such as professional development strategies, research, and the promotion of professional identity. In 1953, one year after its formation, ASCA began to publish its professional journal, The School Counselor, which further contributed to the professional identity of the profession (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). ASCA has charted the course of the profession and has influenced the "direction and shape of school counseling as it is known today" (Paisley & Borders, 1995, Electronic Version, p. 2) through publications such as role statements, national standards, ethical standards, and position statements (Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Dahir, 2001; Dahir & Goldberg, 2000; Paisley & Borders).

ACA

In 1953 ASCA became the fifth division of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA), which is now the American Counseling Association (ACA). The APGA was formed when four founding divisions merged (i.e., National Vocational Guidance Association, American College Personnel Association, Student Personnel Association for Teacher Education, and National Association of Guidance and Counselor Trainers). ASCA remained a division of the ACA until 1995, when the members voted for independence from ACA. At that time ACA began to restructure in order to accommodate ASCA's change in division status. Despite ASCA's pullout, ACA has continued to remain a force within school counseling by supporting "think tanks" and sponsoring conferences related to the profession (e.g., 20/20 Conference and special interest networks).

ACES

The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) also has collaborated with ASCA throughout its history. ACES has continued to express interest in the training of school counselors, the development of programs, and the need for supervision. Recently, ACES has partnered with other professional organizations in sponsoring and developing interest networks (e.g., ACES School Counseling Interest Networks at national and regional levels), roundtable discussions (e.g., Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Roundtable on School Counseling Preparation Programs), and program sessions (Paisley & Borders, 1995).

NCDA

Lastly, the National Career Development Association (NCDA) has promoted the profession of school counseling. The association has backed federal legislation related to school-

to-work transitions. Also, the NCDA has continued to recognize the vital role that school

counselors play in supporting career education and program development (NCDA, 2005).

Transformation of School Counselor Practice

ASCA

As advocated by ASCA, the role and function of school counselors have attempted to

follow the recent shift into accountability practices, making the improvement of student

achievement the mission of school counseling programs (House & Hayes, 2002; Martin, 2002).

School counselors are now being asked to share accountability for student achievement and to

become leaders and change agents (Bemak, 2000) within schools.

It appears that school counseling leaders believed there was a "discrepancy between

educational values and outcomes affecting themselves…" (Fullan, 1982, p. 13) and sought to

transform the profession in order to align themselves more closely with the perceived

educational values. Paisley and Borders (1995) stated that educational administrators, legislators,

and school reformers have failed to include school counselors in their decision making.

Similarly, Dahir (2001) indicated that school counseling programming has not been recognized

in educational reform proposals "as a means to improve student achievement and help students

prepare for the future" (p. 2). Herr (1984) suggested that school counselors have been overlooked

in the school reform movement. For example, school counseling was omitted from the

educational reform agenda of the 1980s and was not recommended as a possible solution to the

obstacles in schools (Dahir). Similarly, school counselors were not mentioned in the Goals 2000

(Perry, 1992).

As a result of these oversights, the counseling profession adopted several initiatives in an

attempt to move the profession from "a marginalized, ancillary support service" (Lapan, 2001,

Electronic Version, First Paragraph) to a key player in school reform efforts. In response to the omission of school counselors from the 80s reform agenda, school counseling leaders "called for a revitalization and transformation of school counseling programs" (Dahir, 2001, p. 2). An American Association of Counseling and Development publication entitled *School Counseling: A Profession at Risk* (1987) "presented a series of recommendations considered imperative for the survival of the profession" (Dahir, p. 2).

In 1991, the American School Counseling Association adopted the following definition of school counselors:

> School counselors are specifically credentialed professionals who work in school setting with students, parents, educators, and others within the community. They design and manage comprehensive developmental guidance programs to help students acquire skills in the social, personal, education, and career areas necessary for living in a multicultural society. School counselors accomplish this by employing such interventions as guiding and counseling students individually or in small groups, by providing information through group guidance, by contributing to the development of effective learning environments, through student advocacy, and through consulting with others. (p. 1)

In 1993, the American Counseling Association (ACA) brought counseling leaders together to better define the role of the school counselor. Later, the ASCA Governing Board adopted this revised definition:

> Counseling is a process of helping people by assisting them in making decisions and changing behavior. School counselors work with all students, school staff, families, and members of the community as an integral part of the education program. School counseling programs promote school success through a focus on *academic achievement*, prevention and intervention activities, advocacy, and social-emotional and career development. (ASCA, 1997)

National Standards. In 1994, as a result of the omission of school counseling from Goals 2000, ASCA promoted an effort to develop national standards (Dahir, 2001). In order to demonstrate that school counselors were vital personnel who contributed to the total education

for each child, the focus for these national standards was on establishing what students needed to know and be able to do by the time they graduated from high school.

Sharing the Vision: The National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) served as a foundation for school counselors to individualize their counseling programs to meet the specific needs of their schools and school districts. Dahir (2001) stated, "the publication was designed to connect school counseling to the current school reform agenda" (p. 324). The National Standards emphasized a proactive orientation centered around three content areas: (1) academic development, (2) career development, and (3) personal/social development. The nine standards, three in each content area, describe the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that students should gain through an array of educational experiences and provide competencies to measure student achievement in the content areas.

Two years later, ASCA leadership determined that school counseling programs still were not being efficiently and effectively managed and sought, once again, to assist school counselors. As a result of hours of consideration by about 15 school counselors and counselor educators, the new framework for a national model reflected a comprehensive approach to program foundation and service delivery, management, and accountability. A key change in the model was the manner in which school counselors spend their time: "the majority of the school counselor's time [is to] be spent in direct service to all students to maximize student academic success" (Campbell & Dahir, p. 170).

Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP). The ASCA National Model has integrated the National Standards as well as the Transforming School Counseling Initiative's domains. The four elements of the National Model include Foundation, Delivery System, Management Systems, and Accountability. According to Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, and Jones (2004),

"While the National Standards are part of the foundation of the model, ASCA collaborated with The Education Trust in order to include concepts from TSCI within the four themes of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change" (p. 152). Also included in the model is the recommendation that schools counselors are users of data.

A draft of the new model was introduced at ASCA's national convention in June 2002, and the final version of the model, the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP), was adopted in late 2003. Since that time, schools that meet the program standards have been able to apply for the RAMP designation for their school counseling program. Although comprehensive school counseling program models have been developed by at least 24 states (Sink & MacDonald, 1998), and over 400 schools or districts in the United States have program models based on the National Standards (Dahir, 2001), only 13 school counseling programs gained the RAMP designation in the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 school years (ASCA, 2006).

Education Trust's MetLife National School Counselor Training Initiative (NSCTI)

In February 2002, The Education Trust instituted the National School Counselor Training Initiative (NSCTI). This initiative, funded by MetLife Foundation, provided professional development for school counselors who were already in the field to help them serve as advocates of school-wide success for all students. The primary focus of these workshops was to "make the practice of school counseling essential to the mission of schools and education reform by equipping school counselors with the skills and knowledge necessary to help all groups of students meet high academic standards" (Education Trust, 2005, Online). It is the belief of the Education Trust that school counselors are key personnel in eliminating social injustice and helping students gain access to a rigorous, quality education. The intended result of the National School Counselor Training Initiative is that increased numbers of low-income students and

students of color will attain the academic preparation needed for entrance into and success in post-secondary education.

The Education Trust advocates for school counselors, who are in key positions to assess the school for systemic barriers that hinder academic success, to become a part of the accountability system. According to the Trust, "Issues of equity, access and lack of supporting conditions for success come to rest at the counselor's desk in the form of data, files and reports of whole school and individual student progress or failure" (Education Trust, 2005, Online). School counselors are expected to affect student achievement by: (1) influencing attitudes and beliefs regarding all groups of students' abilities to achieve high standards, (2) improving access and success in rigorous academic courses for underrepresented students, (3) providing attention to equity, access, instructional programs and support services, (4) managing resources designed to improve learning success for students experiencing difficulty with rigorous academic programs, (5) developing high aspirations in students rather than just attending to aspirations as they emerge, and (6) influencing systemic change so that practices and procedures support student achievement for all groups of students.

A workshop series provided by this initiative was intended to aid professional school counselors in connecting their mission to school reform, and thereby becoming an "integral part in creating an equitable education system" (Education Trust, 2005, Online). The professional development workshop series focuses on five issues: (1) Working as leaders to promote access and equity for all groups of students, (2) Using data to change policy and practice, (3) Advocacy for systemic change, (4) Taking action to help all groups of students meet high standards, and (5) Using results to drive next steps.

The Coalition to Improve Student Achievement through School Counseling (CISASC)

In addition to promoting the TSCI and NSCTI, The Education Trust has also joined with ASCA, the College Board, and the National Association for College Admissions Counseling to form the Coalition to Improve Student Achievement through School Counseling (CISASC). The purpose of the CISASC was to form a united national force for advancing the academic agenda for all students through the work of school counselors. The CISASC views school counselors as responsible for ensuring, promoting and supporting all students, especially the most vulnerable, for college readiness. At this time the Coalition aims to promote and support the following three areas: (1) research that focuses on the value of school counselors encouraging college readiness, (2) professional development for the transformation of school counselors into leaders and catalysts for change within schools, and (3) policy changes and legislative efforts to secure support for professional development and increased recognition of the contribution that school counselors make to students' school success (The Education Trust, 2005)

Transformation of School Counselor Preparation

Changes in school counselors' roles and functions reflect the profession's efforts to respond to social, economic, and political trends, and these changes have prompted shifts in graduate training programs. According to Bemak (2000), school counselors are prime examples of how changes in education over the years have "affected the very core of the principles and values on which school-related professionals are trained and practice" (p. 323). Several organizations have greatly influenced the education and training of school counselors, including the Education Trust, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), and the Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES).

Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI)

In 1997, The Education Trust, underwritten by the DeWitt-Wallace Reader's Digest Fund, presented the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) and defined the New Vision School Counselor. The focus of this initiative was on changing how counselor education programs prepared school counselors, by identifying the knowledge and skills that professional school counselors needed to help all students achieve academic success (Education Trust, 2005). Perusse et al. (2004) explained that this work underwent additional development with the implementation of the MetLife National School Counselor Training Initiative (NSCTI). Although the main focus of the New Vision School Counselor continues to be on academic achievement, the definition also includes assisting students in their social, emotional, and personal development. Additionally, school counselors are to play a crucial part in advocating for educational equity, removing the barriers to academic success, and closing the achievement gap for poor and minority youth. To achieve these goals, school counselors are required to address five domains: Leadership, Advocacy, Teaming and Collaboration, Counseling and Coordination, and Assessment and Use of Data (The Education Trust; Sears, 1999). The Education Trust's TSCI requires that school counselors embrace the New Vision. This entails a shift from functioning as mental health providers toward an academic/student achievement focus; from individual students' concerns to whole school and system concerns; from record keepers to users of data to effect change; and from guardians of the status quo to agents for change, especially for educational equity for all students (House & Martin, 1998).

Six universities and their K-12 school district partners were chosen to redesign their school counselor education programs. The goal was to transform their preparation programs in order to train school counselors to be advocates and leaders who support students' academic

success. The universities redesigned their programs by using the following eight essential elements as a guide: (1) Criteria for selection and recruitment of candidates for counselor preparation programs, (2) Curricular content, structure and sequence of courses, (3) Methods of instruction, field experiences and practices, (4) Induction process into the profession, (5) Working relationships with community, (6) Partners in professional development for counselor educators, (7) University/School district partnerships, and (8) University/State department of education partnerships.

CACREP Standards

In addition to the Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) also has had an effect on school counselor training programs. Established in 1981 as a result of the work of CACES, ACES, and ASCA (CACREP, 2005), the mission of CACREP centered around developing preparation standards, supporting quality program development, and accrediting professional preparation programs to "promote the professional competence of counseling and related practitioners" (CACREP).

In 2001, CACREP developed standards, including standards for school counseling graduate programs, to promote the development of students' professional identity and mastery of specific knowledge and skills. The introduction to the Standards acknowledges the evolution of counseling to meet societal needs, but states, "It is imperative that programs explicitly prepare students to be counselors first and counseling specialists second" (Online Introduction).

The 2001 Standards require curricular experiences and demonstrated knowledge in eight common core areas for all students in the counseling program, regardless of their specific track. These eight core areas include: (1) Professional Identity, (2) Social and Cultural Diversity, (3)

Human Growth and Development, (4) Career Development, (5) Helping Relationships, (6) Group Work, (7) Assessment, and (8) Research and Program Evaluation. Beyond these core areas, students in CACREP-accredited school counseling programs are required to have curricular experience and demonstrated knowledge and skills in the following four school counseling areas: (1) Foundations of School Counseling, (2) Contextual Dimensions of School Counseling, (3) Knowledge and Skill Requirements for School Counselors, and (4) Clinical Instruction.

Within the area of school counseling foundations, students study content pertaining to the profession of school counseling (school counseling history, philosophy, and recent developments; school counselors' roles, functions, and professional identity; school counseling legislation; policy; and ethical and legal considerations) as well as to the larger educational system in which school counselors work (such as roles of professional and support personnel, school setting, learning environments, and curriculum). In addition to learning about educational and school counseling issues, concerns that effect students and families are also explored (e.g., diversity and equity, barriers that impede academic and career success and personal/social development). School counseling students are instructed in the application of technology to better assist the populations they will serve by connecting them with resources that will aid in decision making.

The goal of curricula within the second area of contextual dimensions of school counseling is to provide students with the means to effectively coordinate counseling program components. Learning within this area is directed towards advocacy; collaboration; referral; and program planning, development, implementation, and evaluation. Students are also instructed in strategies to enhance positive and safe school climates, crisis prevention and intervention, and

integration of the counseling program into school curriculum to promote academic success, career awareness, and personal/social development.

Within the curricular experience of knowledge and skill requirements for school counselors, there are three subcategories: (1) Program Development, Implementation, and Evaluation, (2) Counseling and Guidance, and (3) Consultation. As its name implies, the first subcategory, program development, implementation, and evaluation, presents students with strategies in order to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs through means such as technology, action plans, alternative funding, and identification of student needs and competencies.

Learning within the subcategory of counseling and guidance deals with individual, group, and classroom guidance approaches which promote school success through academic, career, and personal/social development. Students also learn about systems theories, issues that may impede student functioning, identification of students using or being exposed to substance abuse, and the importance of building partnerships to enhance student success.

Last, learning within the third subcategory of consultation centers around the importance of building networks within the school and the community. Specific strategies and methods to work with school personnel, empower families, and conduct programs that enhance student success are offered, as well as the theoretical underpinnings of the process of change.

The fourth and final area required by CACREP for curricular experience and demonstration of knowledge and skills is clinical instruction. Under supervision, students must participate in a 600 clock hour internship in a school counseling setting and a minimum of 240 of the hours must be in direct service to the population they serve.

ACES

The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) has been the driving force in graduate preparation for all counselors. The self-stated purpose of ACES "is to advance counselor education and supervision in order to improve guidance, counseling and student development services in all settings of society" (ACES, 2005, Online Purpose) through quality education and supervision of counselors in all work settings. The vision statement of ACES recognizes the following four areas of commitment: (1) advancement of pedagogy related to the education and training of counselors, supervisors, and counselor educators, (2) affirmation and delivery of education and supervision related to counseling in a culturally diverse society, (3) promotion of a unified professional identity for counselors, supervisors, and counselor educators, and (4) provision and dissemination of premier research and scholarship (ACES).

The commitment of ACES to quality education and supervision of all counselors is longstanding. In 1973 ACES developed standards for a master's degree in counseling and put forth guidelines for doctoral training in counseling. Five years later, in 1978, the ACES Commission on Standards Implementation proposed that the organization begin counselor education program accreditation. This task eventually would fall to CACREP, three years later. The ACES standards have had far-reaching implications. They have been used as the basis for graduate program accreditation by CACREP, as well as by the National Board of Certified Counselor's (NBCC) National Counselor Examination (NCE) to delineate content areas.

ASCA/ACES Task Force. As part of its commitment to counselor training and supervision, ACES has collaborated with ASCA specifically concerning school counselors and graduate-level school counseling programs. In 1997 ASCA and ACES formed a Task Force/Working Group in response to the ASCA's publication of National Standards for School

Counseling Programs (Dahir & Goldberg, 2000). This Task Force studied how to integrate the National Standards into graduate training and how to provide ongoing professional development for school counselors.

The joint ASCA/ACES Task Force recognized four core objectives related to school counselor development (Dahir & Goldberg, 2000). The objectives, which ranged from graduate training to professional development, are: (1) to determine which skills are needed by school counseling students to work in the schools of the future, (2) to ensure that school counselor education students are prepared to develop comprehensive school counseling programs that align with the National Standards, (3) to assist counselor educators in transforming the existing school counseling curriculum into a more comprehensive curriculum, and (4) to promote professional development for school counselors in the field.

ASCA-ACES Research Summit. In June of 2003 the two associations hosted the ASCA-ACES Research Summit in St. Louis, Missouri, billed as A Delphi Study of Critical School Counseling Research Questions (Carey & Dimmit, 2003). Delphi research has been recognized as being "especially appropriate for identifying approaches to complex problems in areas with multiple constituencies" (Carey & Dimmit).

Participants at the Summit contributed in three phases: (1) identification of the purposes of school counseling research, (2) identification of specific research questions for each purpose, and (3) prioritization of research questions and identification of criteria for determining importance. The Summit "determined the need for the establishment of a National Panel for Evidence-Based School Counseling in order to conduct continuous reviews of the evidence base for the profession, identify needed research studies, and document the consistency of school

counseling practice with the *No Child Left Behind* Standards for Evidence-Based Practice"
(Carey et al., 2005).

ACES National Conference. ACES, in addition to collaboration with ASCA, has worked with the Education Trust. At the national conference in October 2005, ACES hosted a program concerning the Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative. Participants in this four-hour session learned about the ten elements being used to create change and were given the chance to examine their own school counselor training programs through a program audit (ACES, 2005).

Research Relevant to Stakeholders' Perceptions of School Counselor Roles

Studies have examined the perceptions and expectations of school counselors (Elmore & Ekstrom, 2003; Hentsch, 1996; Miles-Hasting, 1997; Perusse & Goodnough, 2005; Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004), counselor educators (Elmore & Ekstrom; Hentsch, 1996; Perusse & Goodnough, 2001), school principals (Fitch et al., 2001; Hentsch, 1996; Miles-Hasting, 1997; Perusse et al.), and school teachers (Clark & Amatea, 2004) concerning the role of school counselors. These studies, as well as others, have identified these stakeholders as individuals who impact and influence the role of school counselors. However, there is a surprising dearth of literature which examines stakeholders' perceptions of the current transformation of counselor roles emphasized by ASCA and the Education Trust. Most of the studies which relate to the National Standards and the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) are the work of Perusse and Goodnough, and their studies have directly influenced the present study.

Counselor Educators and Counselors

Generally, school counselors and counselor educators have not been actively involved in school reform efforts (House & Martin, 1998; Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Currently, most school

counselor education programs emphasize a mental health orientation that ignores how school counselors should attend to the academic achievement of students (Collison et al., 1998; Education Trust, 1997; Paisley & Hayes). The Education Trust's national assessment of school counselor preparation and practice suggested that very few modifications were being made by programs to align with the educational reform movement. The assessment cited as evidence of counselor educators' disregard of the reform efforts a lack of vision for transforming the profession; "added on" courses to comply with suggested curricular changes; counselor educators' lack of experience as school counselors; lack of contact with practicing school counselors; and generic, core counselor preparation curriculum.

Perusse and Goodnough (2001) surveyed 185 chair-persons or school counseling coordinators of school counselor preparation programs at the master's level or higher. Their results suggested that, although counselor educators perceived the Education Trust's five domains (Leadership, Advocacy, Teaming and Collaboration, Counseling and Coordination and Assessment and Use of Data) as important, they continued to rate school counselor preparation for brief counseling with individuals, families, and groups at the highest levels and items with the phrase *schoolwide* at the lowest levels. Also, teaching about interpreting student data for use in schoolwide planning for change and using data to promote access and equity for all students received low ratings from counselor educators. Of the Education Trust's eight essential elements, three received low ratings from counselor educators: (1) Induction Process into the Profession, (2) University/School District Partnerships, and (3) University/State Department of Education Partnerships.

A study conducted by Perusse et al. (2004) of elementary and secondary school counselors and principals (218 elementary school counselors, 376 secondary school counselors,

207 elementary school principals, and 231 secondary school principals) examined the degree of emphasis that should be given ideally to the five Education Trust's domains. These researchers found that both school counselors and principals rated items with the word "data," "school-wide," or "whole school" at the lowest levels. They concluded that the systemic whole school goals were not perceived as important to the school counselor's role by school counselors themselves or by principals.

In a survey study conducted by Elmore and Ekstrom (2003) concerning assessment skills, over 65 % of their sample of school counselors (n=179) and counselor educators (n=63) rated the following ten skills as essential:

1. Referring students to other professionals, when appropriate, for additional assessment or appraisal

2. Interpreting scores from tests or assessments and using the information in counseling

3. Communicating and interpreting test or assessment information to students and helping them use it for educational and career planning

4. Making decisions about the types of assessments to use when counseling groups or individual students

5. Communicating and interpreting test or assessment information to parents

6. Reading about and being aware of ethical issues in assessment

7. Communicating and interpreting test or assessment information to teachers, school administrators, and other professionals

8. Making decisions about the types of assessments to use in planning and evaluating counseling programs

9. Synthesizing and integrating testing and nontesting data to make decisions about individuals

10. Reading about and being aware of current issues involving multicultural assessment, the assessment of individuals with disabilities and other special needs, and the assessment of language minorities.

The following four assessment skills were considered nonessential by at least 25% of the school counselors and counselor educators: (1) Scheduling testing or assessments, (2) Administering individual standardized tests for diagnostic purposes, (3) Conducting nonstandardized testing and assessments, and (4) Using assessment information to place or group students in classes. The last item, using assessment information for student placement, seems to reflect Perusse and Goodnough's (2001) results, that interpreting student data for use in schoolwide planning for change and using data to promote access and equity for all students received low importance ratings by counselor educators.

A survey conducted by Perusse and Goodnough (2005) of ASCA members (218 elementary school counselors, 352 secondary school counselors, and 33 working at more than one level) examined the importance of graduate-level training for 24 course content areas. Although in a slightly different rank order, the top five course content areas were the same for both elementary and secondary school counselors, and both groups rated individual counseling (including crisis intervention) as the most important. The top five content areas, in order of importance, for elementary school counselors were: (1) individual counseling, (2) small group counseling, (3) consultation with parents and teachers, (4) understanding child growth and development, and (5) legal/ethical issues in counseling.

In addition to rating the top five areas the same, elementary and secondary counselors also rated four of the five lowest ranked items the same. These included: (1) curriculum and instruction, (2) psychopathology, (3) couple and family counseling, and (4) writing, research, and grant proposals. The school counselors were dissimilar in that computer and related technology was in the bottom five for elementary counselors, while play therapy was in the bottom five for secondary counselors.

According to Perusse and Goodnough, "the current reform movements emphasize course content areas that school counselors rated as relatively lower in importance" (p. 116). The authors pointed to school counselors' ratings of the course content areas which align with the four elements (foundation, delivery system, management systems, and accountability) included in the *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs*. Public relations, computer technology, and writing and research skills, ASCA's "essential and inextricable elements" (Perusse & Goodnough, p. 116) of programming, were rated among the lowest in importance. Additionally, course content areas rated lowest in importance were "among the essential skills needed for school counselors to provide accountability to stakeholders and advocacy for students, both of which are elements of the ASCA National Model" (Perusse & Goodnough, p. 117). The authors noted that the highest rated course content areas reflected what is being taught, and the lowest rated areas reflected what is not being taught in a majority of school counseling programs. The two exceptions to this were consultation, which was highly rated and was taught in only 20% of programs, and research, which was the lowest ranked content area and was taught in over 96% of programs. Perusse and Goodnough questioned whether school counselor education programs should implement curricula that reflect "what professional school counselors deem as important, what ASCA deems as important, what the

literature shows, a combination of these, or some alternate option" (p. 117). Regardless of how counselor educators choose to answer this question, it is apparent that there is disagreement between ASCA members and ASCA leaders over which course content areas should be emphasized.

Principals

While accountability may govern school systems, school building administrators and local school boards often govern the role of the school counselor (Dahir, 2000; Muro & Kottman, 1995, Ponec & Brock, 2000). Essentially, although there are exceptions, the principal has determined the role and function of the counselor within the school (Dahir; Ponec & Brock; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994). Historically, there has been very little agreement between principals and school counselors concerning roles (Perusse et al., 2004; Podemski & Childers, 1982; Remley & Albright, 1988), and principals traditionally have ignored professional associations' role definitions in favor of their own (House & Martin, 1998; Paisley & Borders, 1995; Perusse et al., 2004). Over thirty years ago Hart and Prince (1970) questioned whether counselor education programs should strive to prepare graduates to meet the "real" job demands of principals. Similarly, in the mid-80s Myrick (1984) suggested that "administrators and the general public are openly critical and are beginning to question the value of counselor positions" (p. 213). However, recent studies have indicated some reconciliation between elementary school counselors and principals (Perusse et al., 2004) and future school administrators (Fitch, Newby, Ballestero, & Marshall, 2001) in terms of role definition.

Fitch et al. (2001) surveyed 86 graduate students in two Kentucky educational administration graduate programs. The students believed the counselor role defined by the

state's professional standards was important, and they rated the five noncounseling duties of registration, testing, special education assistance, record keeping, and discipline as the least important duties of the counselor. However, Fitch et al. warned that many misperceptions were still present. For example, approximately one third of the participants viewed discipline as an important or highly important duty of the school counselor.

The study conducted by Perusse et. al (2004) examined elementary and secondary school counselors' and principals' perceptions concerning the ideal degree of emphasis that should be given to the National Standards and TSCI domains. Elementary school counselors and principals ranked "Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others" as the highest stem item, and "Students will employ strategies to achieve future career success and satisfaction" was ranked as the lowest stem item. There were no significant differences between elementary school counselors and principals on the ideal degree of emphasis that should be given to the National Standards.

Comparisons between elementary school counselors and principals on the ideal degree of emphasis that should be given to the TSCI domains showed significant differences on six items. However, the top three stem items were the same:

1. Play a leadership role in defining and carrying out guidance and counseling functions

2. Brief counseling with individual students, groups, and families

3. Promote, plan, and implement school-wide prevention programs, career/college activities, course selection and placement, social/personal management and decision making activities.

Elementary school counselors and principals also agreed on two of three of the lowest rated stem items:

1. Provide data snapshots of student outcomes, show implications, achievement gaps, and provide leadership for school to view

2. Make available and use data to help the whole school look at student outcomes

Elementary school counselors included "Use data to affect change, utilizing resources from school and community" in the bottom three, while elementary principals included "Coordinate staff training initiatives to address students' needs on a school-wide basis" in the lowest three. Perusse et al. (2004) considered the amount of agreement between elementary school counselors and principals on the National Standards and TSCI domains encouraging but cautioned that school administrators' endorsement does not necessarily translate into implementation.

Perusse et al. warned that "agreement among school counselors and school principals regarding whole school intervention and use of data to effect change may not necessarily be in the direction of TSCI" (Electronic Version, p. 8). These authors echoed Hart and Prince's question, "given the lack of agreement from professional school counselors, school principals, and counselor educators vis-à-vis the National Standards and TSCI, how should the future direction of the school counseling profession be determined?" (Electronic Version, p. 8) However, there is no question that principals' expectations continue to influence the development and implementation of school counseling programs as well as school counselor roles (Clark & Amatea, 2004; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Vaught, 1995).

Teachers

School counselors and counseling programs have always been closely associated with teachers. The first vocational guidance counselors were teachers (Gysbers, 2001; Myrick, 2003), and until recently, many states still required school counselors to hold teaching certificates. Although teachers' influence on school counseling programs is often overlooked (Clark & Amatea, 2004), they are major stakeholders in ensuring quality programming (Beesley, 2004; Clark & Amatea, 2004; Ginter & Scalise, 1990; Myrick; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Vaught, 1995). According to Clark and Amatea, who interviewed 23 teachers across all grade levels regarding their perceptions and expectations of school counselors and counseling programs, "teachers' expectations of counselors and their knowledge of counselor performance can have great impact on students, parents, and administrators and therefore on counseling programs" (p. 132). The new ASCA model (2003) for school counseling programs promoted collaborating with teachers through consultation, coordination, and program evaluation and development. Beesley suggested that teachers were in a "unique position to provide insight and meaningful feedback to school counselors as how to maximize counseling service provision" (260). Teachers are an integral unit in helping counselors provide services which are both available and effective, and "comprehensive developmental guidance programs cannot survive without the continued support and commitment of teachers" (Beesley, p. 269). As a teacher interviewee of Clark and Amatea stated, "A counselor cannot successfully help students without the help of teachers" (p. 136).

Comparative Studies of Stakeholder Groups

In 1997 Miles-Hasting examined counselor and principal perceptions of middle school counselor roles in Colorado. She studied the perceived importance of the roles as well as the extent to which the roles were performed. Three hundred and forty two (342) participants (130

principals and 212 counselors) responded to a questionnaire based on role activities established by the American School Counselor's Association Role Statement and the work of Norm Gysbers.

Miles-Hasting found that counselors perceived individual counseling for students with personal and educational concerns and striving for personal and professional growth as their most important roles. Similarly, principals perceived individual counseling with students for personal and educational problems as well as group counseling for students with personal concerns as the most important counselor roles. However, significant differences were found between counselors and principals' ratings. Overall, principals believed the roles of supervision, scheduling, and testing to be more important than did counselors.

Hentsch (1996) examined school counselors', counselor educators', and school principals' perceptions of the importance of secondary school counselors' roles and functions. His findings indicated there were significant differences among the groups in 41 of the 70 items (p<.01). However, the groups were in agreement concerning the importance of being a school counseling professional, being open-minded, conferring with teachers, and working with students to resolve problems. Also, all three groups were in accordance in assigning low importance to counselors performing such functions as supervising corridors, study halls, and cafeterias; disciplining students; planning/engaging in school social activities; and carrying out attendance functions.

<div align="center">**Conclusions**</div>

According to Guerra (1998), the shift from mental health to an academic achievement focus has not been welcomed or adopted by all school counselors and counselor educators, who believe the Education Trust's Initiatives diminish school counselors' mental health role (deHaas,

<div align="center">41</div>

2000). House and Martin (1998), advocates of the initiatives, concede that academic

achievement has become the primary focus but insist this does not completely negate mental

health counseling. A study conducted by Perusse and Goodnough (2001) suggested that

counselor educators continued to rate school counselor preparation for brief counseling with

individuals, families, and groups at the highest levels and items with the phrase *schoolwide* at the

lowest levels.

The question remains: educators first and counselors second, or counselors first and

educators second? In the early 90s, Hoyt (1993), frustrated with the change from the term

guidance counselor to school counselor, reported that approximately one of three ASCA leaders

viewed school counselors as educators first. Yet, it seems the current trend of the "transformed"

school counselor being endorsed by ASCA is leading back to the traditional idea of the

"guidance counselor" and placing greater value on the role of educator rather than counselor.

However, ASCA's devaluing of the counselor role seems to be at odds with ACES's call for a

unified professional identity for all counselors and CACREP's "counselors first, counseling

specialists second" requirement. While the National Standards and Transforming School

Counseling Initiative (TSCI) advocate for the transformation of school counseling, mandates

from leadership alone will not transform the way in which counselors practice or the way in

which they are trained (Perusse & Goodnough, 2001; Perusse et al., 2004). Hence, the

significance of this study lies in its examination of the major stakeholders' perceptions of the

value of elementary school counselors' roles. It was hoped that the study would provide useful

data and insight to further identify areas of stakeholders' support or opposition to the

implementation of the "new vision" of school counseling.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study is presented in six sections in this chapter. The purpose of the study and the research questions are described in the first and second sections respectively. The third section describes the participants and the fourth section presents the instrumentation. The pilot study utilizing the instrument developed for this study is discussed in section five. The final section establishes the procedures for data collection and analysis.

Purpose

Although some school counselors have opposed the shift in their roles from a mental health focus to an academic achievement focus (Guerra, 1998), there is a lack of information on how stakeholders (i.e., counselors, counselor educators, principals, and teachers) perceive this transformation. Stakeholders' support is an important factor in determining rejection or adoption of an innovation (Fullan, 2001), and adoption or acceptance of an innovation depends partly on its congruency with individuals' values. Therefore, it was critical to determine which counselor roles stakeholders value. The purpose of this study was to examine the value stakeholders place on elementary school counselors' roles.

Research Questions

This study sought to address two primary research questions. Nine sub-questions are associated with each primary question and were intended to explore stakeholders' perceptions of the value of school counselor roles.

1.	What value do stakeholders place on elementary school counselors' roles?

    1.1	What value do stakeholders place on leadership roles?

    1.2	What value do stakeholders place on advocacy roles?

    1.3	What value do stakeholders place on teaming and collaboration roles?

    1.4	What value do stakeholders place on counseling and coordination roles?

    1.5	What value do stakeholders place on assessment and use of data roles?

    1.6	What value do stakeholders place on counselors' academic roles?

    1.7	What value do stakeholders place on counselors' career roles?

    1.8	What value do stakeholders place on counselors' personal/social roles?

    1.9	What value do stakeholders place overall on counselors' roles?

2.	Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the values placed on elementary school counselor roles?

    2.1	Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of leadership roles?

    2.2	Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of advocacy roles?

    2.3	Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of teaming and collaboration roles?

    2.4	Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of counseling and coordination roles?

    2.5	Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of assessment and use of data roles?

    2.6	Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of counselors' academic roles?

2.7   Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of counselors'

career roles?

2.8   Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of counselors'

personal/social roles?

2.9   Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the overall value of

counselors' roles?

Participants

Population

For the purposes of this study, the population of stakeholders was defined as those who

are currently employed in or have an interest (e.g., training concerns) in counselor roles in public

elementary schools (any combination of pre-kindergarten through sixth grade) and who hold the

position of teacher, principal, school counselor, or counselor educator.

The most basic consideration involved in selecting participants is the identification of a

group that has the desired information (Mertens, 1998). The accessible population, also known as

the sampling frame, is the obtainable list or record of individuals who belong to the population.

Cresswell (2002) warned that researchers sometimes have problems in acquiring a record of

individuals in the accessible populations. A large sample is needed to reflect the characteristics

of the population.

The accessible population for this study was obtained from MGI Lists, a division of

Marketing General Inc., and the American Counseling Association (ACA) directory.

MGI Lists is full-service list management and brokerage service company and was referenced by

Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones (2004) as the source of their participants for their survey

of elementary and secondary school counselors and school principals on the role of school

counselors. MGI Lists identified elementary school counselors, elementary school principals, and elementary school teachers. ACA identified counselor educators. The e-mail addresses of potential participants were obtained from the respective organizations.

Sampling

Participants were selected through non-proportional, stratified random sampling. Because this is a type of probability sampling, it increases the credibility of the researcher's generalizations (McMillan & Schumaker, 2006). The subgroups, or strata, for the study were as follows: (1) elementary school counselors, (2) elementary principals, (3) elementary teachers, and (4) counselor educators. The researcher selected equal numbers of participants to include in each stratum of the sample (non-proportional sampling) to ensure equal representation (McMillan & Schumaker).

Eight hundred (800) participants were selected: 200 elementary school counselors, 200 elementary school principals, 200 elementary school teachers, and 200 counselor educators. The anticipated return rate was 50%, with an estimated sample size of 400 participants. This sample met the criteria for a large sample size (200 or more) set forth by McMillan and Schumaker (2006).

Electronic mail addresses were purchased from MGI Lists and ACA. MGI Lists was responsible for all contact with school counselors, principals, and teachers. The e-mail addresses obtained from ACA were entered into a generic electronic mailing list. Participants were contacted directly by e-mail through a mass e-mail message. Participant demographic information was gathered to provide descriptions of the participants and to assist in future research related to the study.

External Validity

The study utilized a probability sampling technique and an adequate sample size (Fowler, 1988; McMillan and Schumacher, 2006) which increases the credibility of the researcher's generalizations (Cresswell, 2002). The extent to which the results can be generalized to other groups is dependent on the characteristics of the sample.

The study used an anonymous survey to collect information. Therefore subject effects which threaten external validity (McMillan & Schumaker, 2006) were not expected to be a problem. Generalizations concerning stakeholders' perceptions of the value of counselor roles was limited to the specific roles described in the *School Counselor Role Survey*.

Instrumentation

This study utilized a researcher-developed, online questionnaire that was intended to measure stakeholders' perceptions of the value of elementary school counselors' roles. The same survey instrument was completed by all stakeholders. The questionnaire combined the three content areas of the American School Counseling Association's (ASCA) National Standards and the five domains of the Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI).

School Counselor Role Survey

The *School Counselor Role Survey* was an online, 40-item survey developed by the researcher to assess stakeholders' perceptions of the importance of the school counselor roles advocated by the Education Trust and ASCA. As was discussed in chapter two, the ASCA National Model, RAMP, has integrated the National Standards and the Transforming School Counseling Initiative's (TSCI) domains. In keeping with this precedent, the researcher chose to develop an instrument that would intertwine these two constructs – the five domains of the TSCI and the three areas of the ASCA National Standards. The five domains of the TSCI are: (1)

Leadership, (2) Advocacy, (3) Teaming and Collaboration, (4) Counseling and Coordination, and (5) Assessment and Use of Data. The three areas of the National Standards are: (1) Academic Development, (2) Career Development, and (3) Personal/Social Development.

Of the 40 items on the survey, 37 items related to the importance of school counselor roles, and three items requested the following demographic data: (1) stakeholder position, (2) sex, and (3) primary descent group. A five-point semantic differential response scale was used to rate the importance of each of the counseling roles. Response choices for all questions related to the roles ranged from *Not Important At All* to *Extremely Important*.

Content Validity

The *School Counselor Role Survey* was developed with the assistance of the researcher's methodologist and committee chair. Over the course of several months, meetings were held to discuss how to appropriately integrate the TSCI domains and the National Standards content areas in a format that would be easily understood and used by participants. Items were examined for conciseness, ease in interpretation, and bias.

Each of the activities under the five domains was placed into one of the three content areas of academic, career, or personal/social. If a certain activity was generic and could apply to any of the three areas it was rewritten specifically for each content area. The following table depicts how the domains and content areas intersect and the number of questions for each.

Table 3.1

Domains and Content Area Questions

Content Area	Leadership	Advocacy	Teaming/ Collaboration	Counseling/ Coordination	Assessment/ Use of Data	Total
Academic	4	3	2	4	4	17
Career	1	2	1	2	2	8
Personal/Social	4	1	3	2	2	12
Total	9	6	6	8	8	37

A sample question with response scale is listed below.

How important is it for elementary school counselors to coordinate resources for students and staff to improve academic achievement?

Not Important At All: __ __ __ __ __ : Extremely Important

This question is an example of the intersection of the domain of Counseling and Coordination and the Academic content area.

Of the domains, Leadership contained the most questions with nine. Counseling and Coordination and Assessment and Use of Data each consisted of eight questions, while Advocacy and Teaming and Collaboration each consisted of six questions. For the content areas, the Academic area contained the most questions with 18. The Personal/Social content area consisted of 12 questions, and the Career content area had eight.

The demographic items were chosen to provide a description of the sample and to allow the researcher to conduct secondary analyses of the data.

Reliability

The reliability for the *School Counselor Role Survey* was examined as data were compiled and analyzed. Cronbach's Alpha for the overall survey (total of 37 items) was .950. The reliability statistics for each subscale are reported in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Reliability Statistics for Subscales

Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Leadership	0.745	9
Advocacy	0.842	6
Teaming/Collaboration	0.793	6
Counseling/Coordination	0.798	8
Assessment/Use of Data	0.865	8
Academic	0.942	17
Career	0.950	8
Personal/Social	0.870	12

Administration

The *School Counselor Role Survey* was available online for three weeks. Participants were able to complete the survey anonymously at their convenience.

Scoring and Interpretation

Each item, as well as the overall score, on the *School Counselor Role Survey* was scored on a 5-point scale. Nine types of scores were computed for the instrument: one global score and eight subset scores. The global score was the average overall score from the five subset scores. The five subset scores were calculated as the average score for the items in each of the five domains. The five domains were further analyzed on the three subsets of the content areas. These scores were computed for each of the four stakeholder groups. Table 3.3 provides the interpretations for the score ranges.

Table 3.3

Score Range Interpretation for the School Counselor Role Survey

Scale	Range	Interpretation
Importance	1.00-1.50	Not Important at All
	1.51-2.50	Not Very Important
	2.51-3.50	Neutral
	3.51-4.50	Somewhat Important
	4.51-5.00	Extremely Important

The difference between the highest value (5) and the lowest value (1) for the instrument was four. The researcher chose to make the range of the extreme values on the scale one-half of a point (i.e., 0.5) rather than a full point (i.e., 1.0). This interpretation reflected the researcher's desire to ensure that the extreme values accurately represent extreme beliefs. The range for all other interpretations was one point (0.99 to eliminate overlap between levels).

For a participant's survey to be scored, the participant had to provide his or her stakeholder group and answer at least 75% of the questions for each subscale. Subscale scores were computed on the basis of the average of all non-missing items on a scale provided these criteria were met.

Two demographic questions were optional: (1) sex and (2) primary descent group. Table 3.4 provides the number of questions for each subscale, the number of required responses for the survey to be scored, and the percentage of responses for each subscale.

Table 3.4

Number and Percentage of Required Responses for Each Subscale

Subscale	Subscale Questions	Required Responses	Percentage
Leadership	9	7	77%
Advocacy	6	5	83%
Teaming/Collaboration	6	5	83%
Counseling/Coordination	8	6	75%
Assessment/Use of Data	8	6	75%
Academic	17	13	76%
Career	8	6	75%
Personal/Social	12	9	75%

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted (Cresswell, 2002; Johnson & Christensen, 2000) by asking selected experts and a small group of participants to complete and evaluate the questionnaire. The pilot group provided written feedback on the survey, allowing the researcher to gain the individuals' thoughts on clarity, preciseness, conciseness, and interpretations of the questions (Calder, 1998; Cresswell; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1999; Neuman, 2000; Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). Faulty questions were revised (Cresswell; Gall, Gall, & Borg; Neuman). Members of the pilot group were not included in the final sample for the study (Cresswell).

Procedures

Research Design

Survey research designs utilize surveys to determine opinions, attitudes, behaviors, preferences, perceptions, and characteristics of a given population (Cresswell, 2000; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1999; Neuman, 2000). Marshall and Rossman (1999) posited, "Survey research is the appropriate mode of inquiry for making inferences about a large group of people from data drawn on a relatively small number of individuals from that group" (p. 130). Wallen and

52

Fraenkel (2001) described a survey research design as a study in which "a survey, a written questionnaire, test, or interview is administered, either by mail or in person, to one or more groups of subjects" (p. 377). Unlike experimental research designs, no treatment is involved for the participants (Cresswell, 2002; Wallen & Fraenkel).

A cross-sectional survey design was used in this study. This type of survey gathers data once, rather quickly, from the sample population (Cates, 1985; Cresswell, 2002; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). Cross-sectional designs "measure many variables, test multiple hypotheses, and infer temporal order from questions about past behavior, experiences, or characteristics" (Neuman, 2000, p. 250), and "are used to collect data that reflect current attitudes, opinions, or beliefs" (Cresswell, p. 397). The advantage of the cross-sectional survey is that it "is a one-shot survey for the purpose of describing the characteristics of a sample at one point in time…and information is collected in a shorter period of time" (Mertens, 1998, p. 108). Cresswell identified several types of cross-sectional studies, including those which examine current attitudes, beliefs, opinions or practices, or compare two or more educational groups in terms of attitudes, beliefs, opinions or practices. In this study, four educational groups were compared in terms of their beliefs.

Variables. The variable for this study was the stakeholders' perceptions of the value of specific counselor roles. This was measured by the overall and subscale scores on the *School Counselor Value Survey*.

Data Collection Procedures

The goal of the data-collection tools used in survey research is to obtain standardized information from all subjects in the sample (Neuman, 2000). This study made use of the most

53

commonly utilized instrument in survey data collection - the questionnaire, a form on which the participants supply basic demographic information and record answers to questions.

The total population of potential participants was identified by using the databases of the organizations previously described. Electronic mail addresses from ACA were gathered and entered into a generic electronic mailing list. The mailing list did not include any identifying information. MGI Lists was responsible for all communication and for maintaining the confidentiality of persons within their database.

Potential participants were contacted via a generic mass electronic message to request participation. The electronic message provided a brief description of the study, a statement about participant anonymity and consent to participate in the study, and directions for accessing the instrument via the secure electronic link generated by *SurveyMonkey.com*. Participation in the study was completely voluntary and anonymous. No identifying data was collected from participants, and responses were not assigned identifying characteristics. When participants accessed the on-line instrument, they were asked to provide basic demographic information and complete the instrument. After approximately two weeks a generic mass electronic follow-up message was sent to all potential participants thanking survey respondents and reminding those who had yet to complete the instrument of the timeframe.

To avoid the appearance of "junk" e-mail, the researcher used a UNO e-mail account for all e-mail interactions. Participants' e-mail addresses remained confidential and data remained in the researcher's password-protected personal computer.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Surveys

There are several major advantages of using an online survey: (1) reduced time and cost, (2) immediate respondent feedback, (3) easy follow-up, and (4) ability to survey a large

population (McMillan & Schumaker, 2006). Other advantages include increased accuracy, direct participant entry of data, increased convenience, and enhanced presentation (McMillan & Schumaker). The main disadvantages of online surveys include: (1) low response rate, (2) security and confidentiality, and (3) limited sampling (McMillan & Schumaker). Each of these disadvantages is addressed in the following discussion.

Obtaining a high response rate is necessary in order to generalize the results of the study to the target population. According to Cresswell (2002), the response return rate, defined as the percentage of questionnaires returned, "will fluctuate depending on proper notification, adequate follow-up procedures, respondent interest in the study, the quality of the instrument, and the use of incentives" (p. 410). To address this concern, the researcher attempted to examine a significant and timely problem so individuals would be motivated to respond (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). Follow-up procedures were established, and instrument construction recommendations were followed.

Security and confidentiality were not expected to be problems in the study. Data were collected anonymously through *SurveyMonkey.co*m (http://www.surveymonkey.com), an on-line survey and data collection and analysis tool. Participants were able to access the survey through a secure electronic link which was created. Participation in the study was completely anonymous. There was no way of identifying participants through SurveyMonkey.com, and the instrument did not include questions that ask participants to disclose revealing information. Additionally, because the topic is professional rather than personal, confidentiality was less of a concern for participants (McMillan & Schumaker, 2006).

The last concern, sampling only those with computer access, is "less serious when the samples are Internet savvy, such as teachers, principals, and college faculty" (McMillan &

Schumaker, p. 239). Given the group of stakeholders being surveyed, this was not expected to be a disadvantage for the study.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by calculating simple descriptive analyses (i.e., measures of central tendency and variability) and inferential statistical analyses (Cresswell, 2002; Neuman, 2000).

Descriptive statistics were reported for the demographic variables of stakeholder position, sex, and primary descent group. Descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, standard deviation) were used to interpret each stakeholder group's overall score and subset scores relative to the response scale.

Two types of inferential statistical analyses were utilized. The overall score for all stakeholders was compared to the "neutral" value of 3.0 by using a one sample t-test. This statistic was computed to determine if stakeholders' perceptions of the value of school counselors' roles were positive or negative. Similar analyses were used to examine whether the average score for all stakeholders for each subscale was statistically different from 3.0. ANOVAs were computed to compare the overall and each subscale mean for each of the stakeholder groups. A Scheffé post hoc analysis was conducted to determine significant pairwise comparisons for significant F-statistics. The Scheffé post hoc analysis was a conservative post-hoc procedure which could be conducted with an unbalanced design.

Statistical Conclusion Validity

Alpha. Alpha was set at .05, because the researcher was not overly concerned about making either a Type I or Type II error. The researcher chose an accepted alpha level of .05 to reflect a reasonable balance between these concerns.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to examine the value and comparative value that stakeholders placed on elementary school counselors' roles. The goals were to (1) provide useful data to leaders within the counseling and school counseling professions, counselor educators, principals and school boards, and school counselors themselves; and (2) identify areas of stakeholders' support for or opposition to the implementation of the "new vision" of school counseling. This chapter presents a description of the participants and the statistical results of the data analyses for each of the research questions.

Description of the Sample

Eight hundred (800) participants were randomly selected to participate in the study. Of these, 200 elementary school counselors, 200 elementary school principals, and 200 elementary school teachers were selected from MGI Lists, a division of Marketing General Incorporated. Another 200 counselor educators were selected from an American Counseling Association list.

An e-mail was sent to all 800 participants inviting them to complete the *School Counselor Role Survey* described in Chapter 3. Seventy-six (76) of the e-mails were returned as undeliverable, bringing the sample size to 724. Two hundred fifty-six (256) surveys were completed on SurveyMonkey.com within two weeks. Two weeks after the first e-mail, a second e-mail was sent to participants. An additional 146 surveys were returned, bringing the total number of responses to 402. Forty-nine (49) of these were discarded because only the

demographic questions had been answered. The number of usable returned surveys was 353, representing a return rate of 48.7%.

Descriptive statistics were calculated to describe the sample in terms of the stakeholder's position, sex, and primary descent group. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the characteristics for the overall sample.

Table 4.1

Overview of Sample

Characteristics	Overall Sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Stakeholder Group		
School Counselor	124	35.1%
School Principal	83	23.5%
School Teacher	65	18.4%
Counselor Educator	82	22.9%
Total	353	100.0%
Sex		
Female	268	75.9%
Male	85	24.1%
Total	353	100.0%
Primary Descent Group		
African-American	27	7.6%
Anglo-American	294	83.3%
Asian-American	2	0.6%
Bi/Multiracial	6	1.7%
Hispanic-American	7	2.0%
Native-American	10	2.8%
Non-respondents	7	2.0%
Total	353	100.0%

Stakeholder Position

For a survey to be included in the analysis, the participant had to indicate the stakeholder position he or she held. Of the 353 total participants, over one-third of the sample (124)

represented school counselors. Approximately one-quarter (83) were principals and one-quarter (81) were counselor educators. The smallest stakeholder group was teachers, representing a little over one-sixth (65) of the sample size.

Sex

The demographic question requesting participants indicate their sex was optional, but all 353 participants responded. About three-fourths of the sample (75%) were female, while one-fourth were male.

Primary Descent Group

The demographic question requesting participants indicate their primary descent group was optional as well, and 346 of the 353 participants responded. The majority of the sample (83%) was comprised of Anglo-Americans. Each of the other primary descent groups represented less than 10% of the total sample. African-Americans comprised about 8% of the sample, Native Americans about 3%. About two percent (2%) of the sample indicated Hispanic or Bi/Multiracial as their primary descent group. Asian-Americans accounted for less than 1% of the sample. In total, approximately 15% of the total sample was nonwhite.

The demographic characteristics for each stakeholder group are presented in Table 4.2

Table 4.2

Characteristics of Stakeholder Groups

Characteristics	School Counselors		School Principals		School Teachers		Counselor Educators	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex								
Female	111	89.5%	54	65.1	55	84.6%	48	59.3%
Male	13	10.5%	29	34.9	10	15.4%	33	40.7%
Total	124	100.0%	83	100.0	65	100.0%	81	100.0%
Primary Descent Group								
African-American	10	8.1%	4	4.8	8	12.3%	5	6.2%
Anglo-American	101	81.5%	73	88.0	54	83.1%	66	81.5%
Asian-American	2	0.0%	2	2.4	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Bi/Multiracial	2	1.6%	0	0.0	0	0.0%	4	4.9%
Hispanic	4	1.6%	0	0.0	0	0.0%	5	6.2%
Native-American	119	3.2%	4	4.8	1	1.5%	1	1.2%
Nonrespondents	5	4.0%	0	0.0	2	3.1%	0	0.0%
Total	124	100.0%	83	100.0	65	100.0%	81	100.0%

Demographic Data for Elementary School Counselors

One-hundred twenty-four (124) of the 353 participants indicated they were elementary school counselors. Of the stakeholder groups, school counselors had the highest female to male ratio, with 90% (111) of the sample comprised of females and 10% (13) of males.

The percentages for primary descent group were very similar to the percentages for the overall sample. Most of the participants were Anglo-American (82%). The second largest primary descent group represented was African American with slightly less than 10% (10), and the third largest was Native Americans with 3% (4). Each of the other groups had less than 2%.

Demographic Data for Elementary School Principals

Of the 353 total participants, 83 indicated they were elementary school principals. Almost two-thirds of the school principals were female (54), and approximately one-third (29) were male.

The elementary school principal stakeholder group had the highest percentage of all of the stakeholder groups of Anglo-Americans (88%) and Native Americans (5%). Two other primary descent groups, African-Americans (5%) and Asian-Americans (2%), were represented.

Demographic Data for Elementary School Teachers

Sixty-five (65) of the 353 participants indicated they were elementary school teachers. Like elementary school counselors, over 80% (55) of the elementary teachers were female, the second highest percentage of all of the stakeholder groups. Only 15% (10) of the elementary teachers were male.

The percentages for primary descent group were somewhat similar to the percentages for the overall sample. Most of the participants were Anglo-American (83%). The second largest primary descent group represented was African-American with a little over 10% (8), the highest percentage of all of the stakeholder groups. The third largest was Native Americans with a little over 1% (1).

Demographic Data for Counselor Educators

Of the 353 total participants, 81 indicated they were counselor educators. Counselor educators had a higher ratio of male subjects when compared to other stakeholder groups. However, the counselor educator group was still predominantly female, with approximately 60% (51) consisting of females and approximately 40% (35) comprised of males.

The percentages for primary descent group varied slightly for counselor educators when compared to the overall sample. Although counselor educators had the lowest percentage of Anglo-Americans when compared to the other stakeholder groups, the overwhelming majority of participants were Anglo-American (82%). The second largest primary descent groups represented were African-American and Hispanic, both with a little over 5% (5). The fourth and fifth largest groups were Bi/Multiracial (4) and Native American (1).

Summary of the Demographic Data

In summary, school counselors comprised slightly more than one-third of the sample. The samples of school principals and counselor educators each represented slightly more than 20% of the total sample. School teachers represented slightly less than 20% of the total sample. The overwhelming majority of each group was female. All groups were predominantly Anglo-American, with minorities representing collectively about 15% of the total sample.

Inferential Analyses

This study sought to address two primary research questions. Nine sub-questions were associated with each primary question and were intended to explore stakeholders' perceptions of the value of school counselor roles.

Participants' scores could range from 1 to 5 (i.e., Not Important At All to Extremely Important). Each item as well as the overall score on the *School Counselor Role Survey* was scored on this 5-point scale. Nine scores were computed for the instrument: one total score and eight subscale scores. The total score was the average overall score from the five subset scores. The five subset scores were calculated as the mean of the non-missing items in each of the five domains. The five domains were further analyzed on the three subsets of the content areas. Table 4.3 provides narrative interpretations for the score ranges.

Table 4.3

Score Range Interpretation for the School Counselor Role Survey

Scale	Range	Interpretation
Importance	1.00-1.50	Not Important at All
	1.51-2.50	Not Very Important
	2.51-3.50	Neutral
	3.51-4.50	Somewhat Important
	4.51-5.00	Extremely Important

Analysis of Question 1

The first research question asked, "What value do stakeholders place on elementary school counselors' roles?" The overall mean score (M=3.84) of the stakeholder groups as a whole indicated that they find the roles set forth in the instrument to be *Somewhat Important*.

Of the five domains advocated by the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI), stakeholders scored Teaming and Collaboration the highest (M=4.19) and Leadership (M=3.81) as the second highest. Assessment and Use of Data (M=3.77) and Counseling and Coordination (M=3.76) were very close in their mean scores and comprised the middle ranks of the five domains. The lowest scored domain was Advocacy (M=3.67). When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the overall means for each of the domains indicate that these roles are *Somewhat Important*.

Of the three content areas advocated by the American School Counseling Association's (ASCA) National Standards, stakeholders scored the Personal/Social content area as the highest (M=4.45). The Personal/Social area received the highest mean ratings of all the domains or content areas. Academic was the second highest content area with a mean of 3.61. The content area of Career received the lowest ratings (M=3.35) of all the content areas and domains. When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the means for the content areas of

Personal/Social and Academic indicate that these roles are *Somewhat Important*. Personal/Social almost met the range interpretation criteria for *Extremely Important* (4.51-5.0), falling short by .06 of a point. The mean for stakeholders as a group indicated that they are *Neutral* concerning the importance of career roles.

Descriptive summaries for the nine sub-questions for Question 1 are presented in Table 4.4. A brief description organized by the research sub-questions is provided below for each stakeholder group's mean scores for the domains, content areas, and total score.

Table 4.4

Mean and Standard Deviation for the TSCI Domains

Area	Subscale	Statistics	School Counselors	Principals	Teachers	Counselor Educators	Total Sample
Domains	Leadership	M	3.82	3.72	3.78	3.91	3.81
		SD	0.56	0.58	0.66	0.50	0.58
		N					
	Advocacy	M	3.72	3.51	3.39	3.97	3.67
		SD	0.80	0.84	0.85	0.68	0.82
		N					
	Teaming/Collaboration	M	4.23	4.18	3.95	4.33	4.19
		SD	0.63	0.66	0.74	0.54	0.65
		N					
	Counseling/Coordination	M	3.67	3.66	3.73	4.02	3.76
		SD	0.71	0.72	0.72	0.55	0.69
		N					
	Assessment/Use of Data	M	3.80	3.51	3.62	4.10	3.77
		SD	0.80	0.84	0.74	0.62	0.79
		N					
Content Area	Academic	M	3.60	3.55	3.55	3.76	3.61
		SD	0.79	0.84	0.78	0.71	0.79
		N					
	Career	M	3.24	3.07	3.19	3.95	3.35
		SD	1.07	1.18	1.09	0.81	1.09
		N					
	Personal/Social	M	4.56	4.33	4.26	4.54	4.45
		SD	0.46	0.50	0.61	0.37	0.50
		N					
Total	Total Score	M	3.85	3.71	3.69	4.07	3.84
		SD	0.62	0.64	0.67	0.51	0.63
		N					

1.1   What value do stakeholders place on leadership roles?

School counselors and counselor educators gave leadership roles the highest mean ratings (M=3.82 and M=3.91 respectively), and elementary school principals and school teachers gave leadership roles the lowest mean ratings (M=3.72 and M=3.78 respectively). When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the means for all of the stakeholder groups indicate that leadership roles are *Somewhat Important*.

1.2   What value do stakeholders place on advocacy roles?

When compared to other stakeholders, counselor educators gave advocacy roles the highest mean ratings (M=3.97), and elementary school teachers gave advocacy the lowest mean ratings (M=3.38). When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the mean for teachers indicate that they are *Neutral* concerning the importance of advocacy roles for elementary school counselors. The mean for elementary school principals (M=3.51) placed them at the border between *Neutral* (2.51-3.50) and *Somewhat Important* (3.51-4.50). School counselors and counselor rated the advocacy roles as *Somewhat Important.*

1.3   What value do stakeholders place on teaming and collaboration roles?

As with advocacy roles, when compared to other stakeholders, counselor educators gave teaming and collaboration roles the highest mean ratings (M=4.33), and elementary school teachers gave teaming and collaboration roles the lowest mean ratings (M=3.95). When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the means for all of the stakeholder groups indicate that teaming and collaboration roles are *Somewhat Important*.

1.4   What value do stakeholders place on counseling and coordination roles?

In comparison with other stakeholders, counselor educators gave counseling and coordination roles the highest mean ratings (M=4.02), and elementary school principals and

66

school counselors gave counseling and coordination roles the lowest mean ratings (M=3.66 and M=3.67 respectively). When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the means for all of the stakeholder groups indicate that counseling and coordination roles are *Somewhat Important*.

1.5   What value do stakeholders place on assessment and use of data roles?

As with leadership, advocacy, teaming and collaboration, and counseling and coordination roles, when compared to other stakeholders, counselor educators gave assessment and use of data roles the highest mean ratings (M=4.10). Of the stakeholders, principals rated these roles the lowest, and, as with advocacy, the mean for elementary school principals (M=3.51) placed them at the border between *Neutral* (2.51-3.50) and *Somewhat Important* (3.51-4.50). Teachers rated assessment and use of data somewhat higher than principals (M=3.62), and school counselors had the second highest rating for these roles (M=3.80). When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the means for all of the stakeholder groups indicate that assessment and use of data roles are *Somewhat Important*.

1.6   What value do stakeholders place on counselors' academic roles?

Of the stakeholders, counselor educators gave academic roles the highest mean ratings (M=3.76). Principals (M=3.55) and teachers (M=3.55) gave these roles the lowest mean ratings when compared to counselor educators and school counselors. When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the means for all of the stakeholder groups indicate that academic roles are *Somewhat Important*.

1.7   What value do stakeholders place on counselors' career roles?

When compared to other stakeholders, counselor educators gave career roles the highest mean ratings (M=3.95). Of the stakeholders, principals gave these roles the lowest mean ratings

(M=3.07). Teachers and school counselors rated career roles somewhat similar to principals (M=3.19 and M=3.24 respectively). When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the means for school counselors, principals, and teachers indicate they are *Neutral* concerning that importance of career roles. However, the mean for counselor educators suggests they believe career roles to be *Somewhat Important*.

      1.8   What value do stakeholders place on counselors' personal/social roles?

When compared to other stakeholders, school counselors gave personal/social roles the highest mean ratings (M=4.56), followed closely by counselor educators (M=4.54). Of the stakeholders, teachers gave personal/social roles the lowest mean ratings (M=4.25) and principals had a similar mean rating (M=4.33). When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the means for school counselors and counselor educators indicate they find personal/social roles to be *Extremely Important*. The means for principals and teachers suggest they believe personal/social roles to be *Somewhat Important*.

      1.9   What value do stakeholders place overall on counselors' roles?

In comparison with other stakeholders, counselor educators gave higher ratings than all other stakeholder groups to seven of the eight domains of roles. This is reflected in the mean of their overall score (M=4.07), the highest of the stakeholders. In comparison with other stakeholders, teachers' overall mean score was the lowest (M=3.69), followed closely by principals' overall mean score (M=3.71). The overall mean score for school counselors (M=3.85) was slightly closer to counselor educators than to principals and teachers. When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the means for all stakeholder groups suggest they believe overall that elementary school counselor roles are *Somewhat Important*.

Summary of the Results for Question 1

Several trends emerged from comparing the means for the domains, content areas, and total score across all stakeholder groups. Counselor educators rated all five of the domains and two of three content areas the highest in comparison with other stakeholder groups. The exception to this was the content area of Personal/Social, in which they were different from school counselors by only two-hundredths of a point. School counselors were consistently second-highest in rating the domains and content areas with two exceptions. The first, as previously mentioned, was the Personal/Social content area where they were they highest stakeholder group. The second exception was for the domain of Counseling and Coordination where they were the third-ranked group, only marginally ahead of principals, the last group. Overall, principals and teachers were generally the bottom two groups in terms of their means. Teachers had six of nine of the lowest scores and one "tie" with principals for the lowest score.

Analysis of Question 2

The second research question asked, "Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the values placed on elementary school counselor roles?" The nine subquestions for Question 2 are answered below. A brief summary of each ANOVA and post-hoc results for all domains, content areas, and the total score is presented.

2.1   Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of leadership roles?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the leadership means for each of the stakeholder groups. The assumptions of randomness, independence of observations, and normalcy were assumed true; homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene's Test of Equality ($F_{3, 349} = 1.01$, $p = .386$) and found to be non-significant. The computed F-statistic for the ANOVA was $F_{3,349} = 1.76$ ($p = 0.16$). The estimate of effect size using Partial Eta Squared was

.015, indicating a low effect size. Power was estimated at .458, which is considered low. Results from this analysis indicated that no significant differences existed in stakeholders' perceptions of the value of leadership roles. Table 4.5 provides a summary of the ANOVA results for leadership.

Table 4.5

ANOVA Results for Leadership Roles

Source	SS	df	MS	F	*p*
Between Groups	1.76	3	.58	1.76	.160
Within Groups	115.45	349	0.33		
Total	117.19	352			

The overall mean for the Leadership subscale (M=3.81) was significantly higher than the neutral value of 3.0 (t_{352}=26.43, *p*=.000).

2.2   Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of advocacy roles?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the advocacy means for each of the stakeholder groups. The assumptions of randomness, independence of observations, and normalcy were assumed true; homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene's Test of Equality ($F_{3, 349}$ = 0.69, *p* =.561) and found to be non-significant. The computed F-statistic was $F_{3,349}$ = 7.87 (*p=.000*). Using Partial Eta Squared, the estimated effect size was .063, indicating a moderate effect size. Power was estimated at .989, which is considered high. Results from this analysis indicated that significant differences existed in stakeholders' perceptions of the value of advocacy roles. Table 4.6 provides a summary of the ANOVA results for advocacy.

Table 4.6

ANOVA Results for Advocacy Roles

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	14.94	3	4.98	7.87	.000
Within Groups	220.89	349	0.63		
Total	235.83	352			

Scheffé's post hoc analysis revealed that significant differences existed between counselor educators and principals and between counselor educators and teachers. No significant differences existed between the other groups.

The overall mean for the Advocacy subscale (M=3.67) was significantly higher than the neutral value of 3.0 (t_{352}=15.33, *p*=.000).

> 2.3   Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of teaming and
>
>   collaboration roles?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the teaming and collaboration means for each of the stakeholder groups. The assumptions of randomness, independence of observations, and normalcy were assumed true; homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene's Test of Equality ($F_{3, 349}$ = 1.08, p =.356) and found to be non-significant. The computed F-statistic was $F_{3,349}$ = 4.49 (*p=.004*). Using Partial Eta Squared, the estimated effect size was .037, indicating a low effect size. Power was estimated at .879, which is considered high. Results from this analysis indicated that significant differences existed in stakeholders' perceptions of the value of teaming and collaboration roles. Table 4.7 provides a summary of the ANOVA results for teaming and collaboration.

Table 4.7

ANOVA Results for Teaming and Collaboration Roles

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	5.54	3	1.85	4.49	.004
Within Groups	143.78	349	0.41		
Total	149.32	352			

Scheffé's post hoc analysis revealed that significant differences existed between counselor educators and teachers. No significant differences existed between the other groups.

The overall mean for Teaming and Collaboration subscale (M=4.19) was significantly higher than the neutral value of 3.0 (t_{352}=34.32, p=.000).

2.4   Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of counseling and coordination roles?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the counseling and coordination means for each of the stakeholder groups. The assumptions of randomness, independence of observations, and normalcy were assumed true; homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene's Test of Equality ($F_{3, 349}$ = 2.34, p =.074) and found to be non-significant. The computed F-statistic was $F_{3,349}$ = 5.30 (*p=.001*). Using Partial Eta Squared, the estimated effect size was .044, indicating a moderately low effect size. Power was estimated at .930, which is considered high. Results from this analysis indicated that significant differences existed in stakeholders' perceptions of the value of counseling and coordination roles. Table 4.8 provides a summary of the ANOVA results for counseling and coordination.

Table 4.8

ANOVA Results for Counseling and Coordination Roles

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	7.36	3	2.45	5.30	.001
Within Groups	161.72	349	0.46		
Total	169.08	352			

Scheffé's post hoc analysis revealed that significant differences existed between counselor educators and school counselors and between counselor educators and principals. No significant differences existed between the other groups.

The overall mean for Counseling and Coordination subscale (M=3.76) was significantly higher than the neutral value of 3.0 (t_{352}=20.52, *p*=.000).

2.5   Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of assessment and

use of data roles?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the assessment and use of data means for each of the stakeholder groups. The assumptions of randomness, independence of observations, and normalcy were assumed true; homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene's Test of Equality ($F_{3, 349}$ = 2.60, *p* =.052) and found to be non-significant. The computed F-statistic was $F_{3,349}$ = 9.30 (*p=.000*). Using Partial Eta Squared, the estimated effect size was .074, indicating a moderately high effect size. Power was estimated at .997, which is considered high. Results from this analysis indicated that significant differences existed in stakeholders' perceptions of the value of assessment and use of data roles. Table 4.9 provides a summary of the ANOVA results assessment and use of data.

Table 4.9

ANOVA Results for Assessment and Use of Data Roles

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	16.20	3	5.40	9.30	.000
Within Groups	202.63	349	0.58		
Total	218.83	352			

Scheffé's post hoc analysis revealed that significant differences existed between counselor educators and between principals and counselor educators and teachers. No significant differences existed between the other groups.

The overall mean for the Assessment and Use of Data subscale (M=3.77) was significantly higher than the neutral value of 3.0 (t_{352}=18.31, p=.000).

2.6   Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of counselors' academic roles?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the academic means for each of the stakeholder groups. The assumptions of randomness, independence of observations, and normalcy were assumed true; homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene's Test of Equality ($F_{3, 349}$ = 0.63, p =.595) and found to be non-significant. The computed F-statistic was $F_{3,352}$ = 1.24 (p = 0.29). Using Partial Eta Squared, the estimated effect size was .294, indicating a low effect size. Power was estimated at .333, which is considered low. Results from this analysis indicated that no significant differences existed in stakeholders' perceptions of the value of academic roles. Table 4.10 provides a summary of the ANOVA results for academic roles.

Table 4.10

ANOVA Results for Academic Roles

Source	SS	df	MS	F	*p*
Between Groups	2.30	3	0.77	1.24	.290
Within Groups	215.09	349	0.62		
Total	217.39	352			

The overall mean for the Academic subscale (M=3.61) was significantly higher than the neutral value of 3.0 (t_{352}=14.70, *p*=.000).

2.7 Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of counselors' career roles?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the career means for each of the stakeholder groups. The assumptions of randomness, independence of observations, and normalcy were assumed true; homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene's Test of Equality ($F_{3, 349}$ = 4.67, *p* =.003) and found to be significant. This significance resulted in a conservative F statistic, because large variances for this content area were associated with the large group sizes (Stevens, 2002). This was not determined to be a problem, because it did not cause a significant decrease in power (Stevens). The computed F-statistic was $F_{3,349}$ = 11.88 (*p=.000*). Using Partial Eta Squared, the estimated effect size was .093, indicating a large effect size. Power was estimated at 1.00, which is considered very high. Results from this analysis indicated that significant differences existed in stakeholders' perceptions of the value of career roles. Table 4.11 provides a summary of the ANOVA results for career roles.

Table 4.11

ANOVA Results for Career Roles

Source	SS	df	MS	F	*p*
Between Groups	39.05	3	13.02	11.88	.000
Within Groups	382.33	349	1.10		
Total	421.37	352			

Scheffé's post hoc analysis revealed that significant differences existed between counselor educators and school counselors, between counselor educators and principals, and between counselor educators and teachers. No significant differences existed between the other groups.

The overall mean for the Career subscale (M=3.35) was significantly higher than the neutral value of 3.0 (t_{352}=6.09, *p*=.000).

2.8   Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the value of counselors' personal/social roles?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the personal/social means for each of the stakeholder groups. The assumptions of randomness, independence of observations, and normalcy were assumed true; homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene's Test of Equality ($F_{3, 349}$ = 2.55, *p* =.055) and found to be nonsignificant. The computed F-statistic was $F_{3,349}$ = 8.18 (*p=.000*). Using Partial Eta Squared, the estimated effect size was .066, indicating a moderate effect size. Power was estimated at .992, which is considered high. Results from this analysis indicated that significant differences existed in stakeholders' perceptions of the value of personal/social roles. Table 4.12 provides a summary of the ANOVA results for personal/social roles.

Table 4.12

ANOVA Results for Personal/Social Roles

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	5.77	3	1.92	8.18	.000
Within Groups	82.09	349	0.24		
Total	87.86	352			

Scheffé's post hoc analysis revealed that significant differences existed between school counselors and principals and between school counselors and teachers. Significant differences also existed between counselor educators and teachers. No significant differences existed between the other groups.

The overall mean for the Personal/Social subscale (M=4.45) was significantly higher than the neutral value of 3.0 (t_{352}=54.42, p=.000).

2.9   Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the overall value of

counselors' roles?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the overall means for each of the stakeholder groups. The assumptions of randomness, independence of observations, and normalcy were assumed true; homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene's Test of Equality ($F_{3, 349}$ = 1.23, p =.297) and found to be nonsignificant. The computed F-statistic was $F_{3,349}$ = 6.11 (*p=.000*). Using Partial Eta Squared, the estimated effect size was .050, indicating a moderate effect size. Power was estimated at .960, which is considered high. Results from this analysis indicated that significant differences existed in stakeholders' perceptions of the overall value roles. Table 4.13 provides a summary of the ANOVA results for the overall roles.

Table 4.13

ANOVA Results for Overall Value of Roles

Source	SS	df	MS	F	*p*
Between Groups	6.89	3	2.30	6.11	.000
Within Groups	131.22	349	0.38		
Total	138.12	352			

Scheffé's post hoc analysis revealed that significant differences existed between counselor educators and principals and between counselor educators and teachers. No significant differences existed between the other groups.

The overall mean for the total score (M=3.84) was significantly higher than the neutral value of 3.0 (t_{352}=25.16, *p*=.000).

Summary of the Results for Question 2

Significant differences were found between stakeholder groups on four of the five TSCI domains: Advocacy, Teaming and Collaboration, Counseling and Coordination, and Assessment and Use of Data. Leadership was the only domain where no significant differences between groups were found. Significant differences were found between stakeholder groups on two of the three content areas: Career and Personal/Social. No significant differences were found between groups for the Academic content area.

In general, significant differences for the domains and content areas were found most often between counselor educators and principals and between counselor educators and teachers. Significant differences were found between counselor educators and school counselors for the domain of Counseling and Coordination and the Career content area. School counselors differed significantly with principals and teachers in the Personal/Social content area. However, school counselors, principals and teachers did not differ significantly on any of the domains.

Chapter 5 presents the relationship between the findings reported in this chapter and the conceptual framework and relevant research. The limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research are also discussed.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Chapter five provides a summary and discussion of findings for this study. The results of the study are reviewed and linked to the conceptual framework and prior research. The limitations of the study are discussed. Implications for school counselors, counselor educators, and school counseling leaders are offered, as are recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Purpose and Procedures

The purpose of the study was to examine the value and comparative value that stakeholders place on elementary school counselors' roles. It was hoped that the study would provide useful data to leaders within the counseling and school counseling professions, counselor educators, principals and school boards, and school counselors. Additionally, it was believed that the study would identify areas of stakeholders' support for or opposition to the implementation of the "new vision" of school counseling.

Eight hundred (800) participants were randomly selected and invited to respond to the *School Counselor Role Survey*: 200 elementary school counselors 200 elementary school principals, 200 elementary school teachers, and 200 counselor educators. Of the 800 surveys sent, 76 were undeliverable. A total of 353 usable surveys were returned of the 724 that were assumed to have been delivered, for a response rate of 48.7%.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Fullan's theory of educational change. Fullan (2001) posited that eight factors influenced decisions to adopt or reject changes in programs, policies, and directions, depending on their absence or presence. They include: (1) existence and quality of innovations, (2) access to information, (3) advocacy from central administrators, (4) teacher pressure/support, (5) consultants and change agents, (6) community pressure/support/apathy/opposition, (7) availability of federal or other funds and new central legislation or policy, and (8) problem-solving incentives for adoption and bureaucratic incentives for adoption. Three of these eight factors addressed the study's identified stakeholders: (1) advocacy from central administrators (i.e., principals), (2) teacher pressure/support, and (3) consultants and change agents (i.e., counselors and counselor educators). Stakeholders' support, or lack thereof, is critical in determining whether change will occur.

School Counseling History

Historically, shifts in school counselors' roles and functions have reflected the profession's efforts to respond to the perceived social, economic, and political needs of the nation. The roots of school counseling lie in the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 in which the perceived need was academic and career counseling. Throughout the 1980s, school counselors' functions extended into school-wide testing and accountability practices, making academic counseling the priority of the day. In the early 1990's, the reports, *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages*, *What Work Requires of School*, and *Learning a Living*, highlighted the supposed need for career guidance. With the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), the perceived need for school counseling once again shifted to an academic focus.

Meanwhile, within the profession of school counseling in the 1990's, the American

School Counseling Association (ASCA) was emphasizing the need for a personal/social stance

within the schools. Their 1991 definition of the role of school counselors stressed the idea that

school counselors were mental health professionals within a school setting who "employ[ed]

such interventions as guiding and counseling students individually or in small groups, by

providing information through group guidance, by contributing to the development of effective

learning environments, through student advocacy, and through consulting with others" (p. 1).

Six years later, ASCA's 1997 definition would change slightly, introducing a focus on

academic achievement. "School counseling programs promote school success through a focus on

academic achievement, prevention and intervention activities, advocacy, and social-emotional

and career development" (ASCA, 1997). ASCA also developed the National Standards which

emphasized a proactive orientation centered around three content areas: (1) academic

development, (2) career development, and (3) personal/social development. At this same time,

the Education Trust presented the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) and defined

the New Vision School Counselor. Although the main focus of the New Vision School

Counselor continued to be on academic achievement, the definition included assisting students in

their social, emotional, and personal development. Later, in response to NCLB, the 2002 MetLife

National School Counselor Training Initiative (NSCTI) of the Education Trust would advocate

for school counselors to become a part of the accountability system and responsible for academic

achievement.

Currently, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and the Education Trust

continue to emphasize an academic achievement orientation, many feel at the expense of a

mental health orientation (Guerra, 1998). There has been resistance from some school counselors

and counselor educators to the shift from a mental health focus to an academic achievement focus (Guerra).

Discussion of the Findings

Participants completed the *School Counselor Role Survey* which assessed stakeholders' perceptions of the importance of the school counselor roles advocated by the Education Trust and ASCA. There were two primary research questions in this study.

The first question asked, "What value do stakeholders place on elementary school counselors' roles?" The second question asked, "Do subgroups of stakeholders' perceptions differ on the values placed on elementary school counselor roles?" Participants' scores on the *School Counselor Role Survey* could range from 1, Not Important At All, reflecting a strongly negative attitude, to 5, Extremely Important, reflecting a strongly positive attitude.

The overall mean for all stakeholders as a group was M=3.84, SD=.63, indicating a somewhat positive attitude toward the Transforming School Counseling Initiative's prescribed roles for elementary school counselors. The highest overall mean score was for counselor educators (M=4.07), followed by counselors (M=3.85), while principals (M=3.71) and teachers (M=3.69) evidenced similarly lower scores. There were significant differences between the means for counselor educators and principals and between the means for counselor educators and teachers. Implications of these results are discussed later, following a discussion of the results for each of the domains and content areas.

TSCI Domains

Teaming and Collaboration. The five domains were Teaming and Collaboration, Leadership, Assessment and Use of Data, Counseling and Coordination, and Advocacy. Of the five domains, Teaming and Collaboration received the highest overall mean score (M=4.19,

SD=.65), suggesting that stakeholders view school counselors as part of the educational team. Teaming and Collaboration received the highest mean rating for each stakeholder group, although significant differences were found between counselor educators and teachers' mean scores. It appears that stakeholders believe that school counselors have important contributions to make to the educational process and are not viewed as isolated personnel who "hide" in their offices.

Leadership. The domain of Leadership (M=3.81, SD=.57) received the second highest overall mean for stakeholders. Of the five domains, Leadership received the second highest mean rating from school counselors, principals, and teachers. Counselor educators rated leadership the lowest of the five domains; however, their mean (M=3.92) for Leadership was the highest of all of the stakeholder groups. No significant differences were found between the means of stakeholder groups, indicating that Leadership is *Somewhat Important* to all stakeholders.

This finding lends support to the work of Perusse et al. (2004), who examined elementary and secondary school counselors' and principals' perceptions concerning the ideal degree of emphasis that should be given to the National Standards and TSCI domains. In Perusse et al.'s study, comparisons between elementary school counselors and principals on the ideal degree of emphasis that should be given to the TSCI domains showed that their top three stem items were the same:

1. Play a leadership role in defining and carrying out guidance and counseling functions

2. Brief counseling with individual students, groups, and families

3. Promote, plan, and implement school-wide prevention programs, career/college activities, course selection and placement, social/personal management and decision making activities.

Stem items one and three are reflected in six of the nine questions which comprise the Leadership domain for the *School Counselor Role Survey.* Thus, the findings of this study are consistent with those of Perusse et al. (2004) with respect to the relatively high importance assigned to Leadership.

    Assessment and Use of Data. Overall, the third highest ranked domain for stakeholders was Assessment and Use of Data (M=3.77). Of the five domains, Assessment and Use of Data received the second highest mean score from counselor educators (M=4.10).This result is somewhat surprising given Perusse and Goodnough's (2001) finding that teaching about interpreting student data for use in schoolwide planning for change and using data to promote access and equity for all students received low ratings from counselor educators. Significant differences were found between the means of counselor educators and teachers and between the means of counselor educators and principals. Assessment and Use of Data tied for the lowest mean score from principals and received the next to lowest mean score for teachers. Perusse et al. (2004) found that both school counselors and principals rated items with the word "data," "school-wide," or "whole school" at the lowest levels. However, in this study, this domain received was the third highest mean score from school counselors. It is important to note that only one of the eight items for the Assessment and Use of Data domain on the *School Counselor Role Survey* used the actual terms "data" and "school-wide," and the domain was not identified as "Assessment and Use of Data."

Stakeholders' rating of *Somewhat Important* is similar to the findings of Elmore and

Ekstrom (2003). Over 65 % of their sample of school counselors and counselor educators rated

ten assessment skills as essential, four of which reflect items found in the Assessment and Use of

Data domain of the *School Counselor Role Survey*: (1) communicating and interpreting test or

assessment information to students and helping them use it for educational and career planning,

(2) communicating and interpreting test or assessment information to teachers, school

administrators, and other professionals, (3) making decisions about the types of assessments to

use in planning and evaluating counseling programs, and (4) synthesizing and integrating testing

and nontesting data to make decisions about individuals.

      Counseling and Coordination. The domain of Counseling and Coordination had the next

to lowest overall mean (M=3.76, SD=.69). It is important to note that this mean is only

fractionally below that of Assessment and Use of Data (M=3.77). While this result might seem

counterintuitive given the fact that "Counseling" is part of the title of the domain, the domain

itself was not identified in any manner. Of the eight questions for this domain on the *School

Counselor Role Survey*, three contained the word "counseling" (one question for each content

area) and five dealt with coordination issues. Significant differences were found between the

means of counselor educators and the means of school counselors and counselor educators and

principals. In light of Perusse et al.'s findings (2004) concerning principals' perceptions of the

ideal degree of emphasis that should be given to the National Standards and TSCI domains, the

comparatively low mean makes a measure of sense. They found that elementary principals

included the phrase "Coordinate staff training initiatives to address students' needs on a school-

wide basis" in the lowest three stem items. Three of the eight questions for this domain on the

School Counselor Role Survey contained that phrase (one question for each content area).

Advocacy. The lowest rated domain was Advocacy (M=3.67, SD=.82), which is consistent with the findings of Perusse et. al (2004). These authors, in examining elementary and secondary school counselors' and principals' perceptions concerning the ideal degree of emphasis that should be given to the National Standards and TSCI domains, found that elementary school counselors included "Use data to affect change, utilizing resources from school and community" in the bottom three. This stem item appeared in three of the six questions under the advocacy domain on the *School Counselor Role Survey*, one time for each content area (academic, career, personal/social). Additionally, Perusse et al. found that both school counselors and principals rated items with the word "data," "school-wide," or "whole school" at the lowest levels, and four of the six advocacy domain questions had one or more of these words.

Of the five domains, Advocacy tied for the lowest mean score from principals and received the lowest mean score from teachers. Significant differences were found between the means of counselor educators and between the means scores of principals and counselor educators and teachers, reinforcing the idea that advocacy may not be valued as highly in practice as it is in theory. School counselors' mean score was between that of counselor educators and principals and teachers. It suggests that dissonance between what is taught in universities and what is expected within the school setting may be forcing school counselors to compromise in order to meet the differences in expectations between "what should be" and "what is."

Of the five domains advocated by the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI), stakeholders scored Teaming and Collaboration the highest (M=4.19) and Leadership (M=3.81) as the second highest. Assessment and Use of Data (M=3.77) and Counseling and Coordination (M=3.76) were very close in their mean scores and comprised the middle ranks of the five

domains. The lowest scored domain was Advocacy (M=3.67). When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the overall means for each of the domains indicate that these roles are *Somewhat Important* for elementary school counselors. Significant differences were found between stakeholder groups on four of the five TSCI domains. These domains included Advocacy, Teaming and Collaboration, Counseling and Coordination, and Assessment and Use of Data. Leadership was the only domain without significant differences between groups.

Content Areas

The five TSCI domains were analyzed on the three subsets of the National Standard's content areas (academic, career, and personal/social). The following sections present a discussion of those results.

Personal/Social. The Personal/Social overwhelmingly the highest overall mean (M=4.45, SD=.50) and the highest mean for each stakeholder group. This suggests that stakeholders view school counselors primarily as mental health specialists. It appears that stakeholders support a mental health emphasis for school counselors, even with No Child Left Behind legislation and educational reform practices. Although significant differences existed between the means of school counselors and principals, school counselors and teachers, and counselor educators and teachers, the average rating for each of the groups was above 4.0; this content area also showed highest mean for any subscale. It seems obvious that school counselors and counselor educators would highly value this content area because most school counselor education programs emphasize a mental health orientation (Collison et al., 1998; Education Trust, 1997; Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Yet, it appears that principals and teachers highly also value the personal/social role and view it as the primary responsibility of the elementary school counselor.

Academic. The Academic content area received the second highest overall mean score (M=3.61, SD=.63) of the three areas. Also, it received the second highest mean score for all stakeholder groups except counselor educators. Counselor educators rated it the lowest in comparison to the other content areas; however, they had the highest mean score for Academic when compared to the other stakeholders. No significant differences were found between the means of stakeholder groups for this content area. In comparison with the Personal/Social content area, it appears that stakeholders place less value on an academic role for school counselors. This finding suggests that school counselors have certainly distanced themselves from the "guidance counselors" of the past, whose primary focus was on academic and career counseling. Given that the role of the first school counselors, "guidance counselors," was to identify and foster the development of students who showed promise in the subjects of math and science (Lambie & Williamson, 2004), the higher valuing of the personal/social component highlights the inroads that have been made in the profession of school counseling since the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958.

Career. Of the three content areas, Career received the lowest overall mean (M=3.35, SD=1.09) from stakeholders. Counselor educators (M=3.95) rated it as the second highest content area and above the Academic content area, but their mean score differed significantly from the means scores of school counselors, principals, and teachers. Relative to the score range interpretation, school counselors, principals, and teachers were *Neutral* concerning the value of career roles while counselor educators found them to be *Somewhat Important*. Overall, the results suggest that stakeholders do not believe career roles for elementary school counselors to be as important as personal/social and academic roles. Like the results for the Academic content

area, this finding further emphasizes the difference between today's school counselor and that defined by the NDEA.

Of the three content areas advocated by the American School Counseling Association's (ASCA) National Standards, stakeholders scored the Personal/Social content area as the highest (M=4.45). The Personal/Social area received the highest mean ratings of all the domains or content areas. Academic was the second highest content area with a mean of 3.61. Lastly, the content area of Career received the lowest ratings (M=3.35) of all the content areas and domains. When compared to the score range interpretation for the instrument, the means for the content areas of Personal/Social and Academic indicate that these roles are *Somewhat Important* for elementary school counselors. Although Personal/Social almost met the range interpretation criteria for *Extremely Important* (4.51-5.0), it fell short by .06 of a point. The mean for stakeholders as a group indicated that they are *Neutral* concerning the importance of career roles for elementary school counselors. Significant differences were found between stakeholder groups on the content areas of Career and Personal/Social. No significant differences were found between groups for the Academic content area.

Implications

Overall, counselor educators consistently rated the domains and content areas higher than the other stakeholder groups. It is important to note that most counselor educators operate from a theoretical viewpoint, and many have not had direct experience as school counselors. Yet, as a group, counselor educators are very aware of the literature and the work of ASCA and the Education Trust. Perusse and Goodnough's study (2001) indicated that counselor educators perceived the Education Trust's five domains as important. Yet, counselor educators have been criticized for lacking the vision needed to transform the profession (Education Trust, 1997). The

Education Trust pointed to "added on" courses to comply with suggested curricular changes; counselor educators' lack of experience as school counselors; lack of contact with practicing school counselors; and generic, core counselor preparation curriculum as evidence of counselor educators' disregard for the current reform movement. The results of this study do not support the Education Trust's criticisms. The findings suggest that counselor educators have bought into the idea of the transformed school counselor advocated by the Education Trust and ASCA, especially in comparison with other stakeholder groups.

Principals and teachers consistently rated the domains and content areas lower than did counselor educators and school counselors. Although most domains and content areas were considered *Somewhat Important* relative to the interpretation range, it appears that some of the domains (i.e., Advocacy and Assessment and Use of Data) are not as highly valued right now for those who practice within schools. While much work has been done to educate principals on the role and functions of school counselors, it appears that more work, especially with teachers, is necessary for complete buy-in. The results suggest that both principals and teachers are open to the Transforming School Counseling Initiative's domains and to the National Standard's content areas, yet before change can occur completely, it seems that more buy-in is needed, especially within the academic and career areas.

School counselors' mean scores consistently fell between those of counselor educators and principals and teachers, resurrecting the question of whether counselor education programs should strive to prepare graduates to meet the "real" job demands of principals (Hart & Prince, 1970). Historically, there has been little agreement between principals and school counselors concerning roles (Perusse et al., 2004; Podemski & Childers, 1982; Remley & Albright, 1988), but the findings of Perusse et al. indicated some reconciliation between elementary school

counselors and principals. The findings of this study support their findings in that the means for school counselors and school principals differed significantly on only one of eight subscales. This difference was in the Personal/Social content area, which school counselors indicated was *Extremely Important* and principals indicated was *Somewhat Important*. However, this difference should be interpreted with caution given that of all of domain and content area means, principals gave this area the highest mean.

School counselors differed significantly from counselor educators on two of the eight subscales: (1) Counseling and Coordination and the (2) Career content area. School counselors' overall mean of 3.85 suggests that they believe the TSCI domains and ASCA content areas to be important and are open to idea of the transformed school counselor. Yet, as with principals and teachers, it appears that more buy-in within the academic and career areas may be needed in order for the transformation to be implemented.

Limitations

For this study, each respondent's personal opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences at that particular moment in time represented a potential limitation. The study sought to examine stakeholders' perceptions of the value of school counselor roles. Although value is one of the most stable affective characteristics (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1999), it is possible for an individual to alter his/her beliefs. In addition, responses were assumed to represent the respondent's values, but the data were self-reported. Respondents could have answered in a socially desirable manner to appear knowledgeable.

Recommendations for School Counselors, Counselor Educators, and Leaders

The primary role of school counselors has been a matter of considerable debate over the past few years. Educators first and counselors second, or counselors first and educators second?

The results of this study indicate that all stakeholder groups view elementary school counselors as mental health professionals first and foremost.

Counselor Educators

The results of this study suggest there is dissonance between what is valued by counselor educators and what is valued by principals and teachers. In other words, there may be significant differences between those who teach theory (counselor educators) and those who deal with practitioners (principals and teachers).

Over thirty years ago, Hart and Prince (1970) questioned whether counselor education programs should strive to prepare graduates to meet the "real" job demands of principals. The results indicated that counselor educators valued the career content area and three of five TSCI domains (advocacy, counseling and coordination, and assessment and use of data) at significantly higher levels than principals. Similarly, counselor educators valued two content areas (career and personal/social) and three of five TSCI domains (advocacy, teaming and collaboration, and assessment and use of data) at significantly higher levels than teachers. Depending on the answer to Hart and Prince's question, counselor educators essentially have two options: (1) work to educate those who practice in schools on the importance of career roles and the value of school counselors being advocates and users of data, or (2) place less emphasis on these areas within their programs.

Although significant differences existed between the Personal/Social means of school counselors and principals, school counselors and teachers, and counselor educators and teachers, the average rating for each of the groups was above 4.0 and were the highest means received for any subscale. These results suggest that stakeholders place high value on school counselors as mental health specialists. Currently, most school counselor education programs do emphasize a

mental health orientation, and this emphasis appears to be in alignment with the values of those who practice within schools (school counselors, principals, and teachers) and ACES and CACREP. The results of this study indicate that the academic role should be included in school counselor training, but not at the expense of the personal/social role.

Counselor educators are key personnel in shaping future school counselors and, therefore, the future of school counseling itself. The profession is at a crossroads, and counselor educators must determine which groups' directives they will follow, those of ASCA and the Education Trust, or those of ACES, CACREP, and stakeholders as suggested by this study. Their decision will have implications for the future professional identity of school counselors.

School Counselors and Professional Leaders

Drury (1984), lamenting a lack of professional identity and role definition in the mid-80s, accused counselors of performing the same tasks as educators and not "spend[ing] their time doing what they are uniquely trained to do" (p. 235). Brott and Myers (1999) proposed that dissonance between theory and practice contributed to a lack of identity for school counselors. The high value placed on the personal/social content area by the stakeholders of this study points to a strengthening professional identity for the school counselor as a mental health professional as opposed to just another educator within the school system.

School counseling leaders, counselor educators, and school counselors themselves have made a concerted effort to rid the public of the "guidance counselor" image. The stakeholders' valuing of the personal/social area suggests that counselors have indeed been successful in transforming their image. It appears that stakeholders concur regarding the importance of elementary school counselors fulfilling mental health roles and responsibilities.

The valuing of the personal/social roles aligns stakeholders with the Association of Counselor Educators and Supervisors' (ACES) call for a unified professional identity for all counselors and CACREP's "counselors first, counseling specialists second" requirement. However, ASCA and the Education Trust currently are asking school counselors to undergo yet another transformation and to adopt an academic orientation instead of a mental health orientation. For a profession that has traditionally struggled with its professional identity, this mandate could prove detrimental to school counselors. The results of this study suggest that, by de-emphasizing the personal/social component of school counseling ASCA and the Education Trust are not in alignment with the stakeholders who believe the personal/social aspect to be more important than academics. These differing values can set the stage for role incongruence, a situation in which school counselors have conflicting expectations from two or more groups, and role conflict, a situation in which school counselors have conflicting demands from two or more role senders (Culbreth et al., 2005.).

The consequences of this role stress can be far-reaching, potentially encompassing many levels of the profession. School counselors themselves can be affected both personally and professionally (Coll & Freeman, 1997). Role conflict has been linked with job-related tension and fatigue (Beehr, Walsh, & Taber, 1976), job dissatisfaction (Beehr et al., 1976), feeling overwhelmed (Lamdie & Williamson, 2004), feelings of helplessness (Wells & Ritter, 1979), and feelings of powerlessness (Kottkamp & Mansfield, 1985). Role conflict and confusion can result in high absenteeism (Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981), low job effectiveness (Miles & Perrault, 1976), and low productivity (Van Sell et al.). Finally, and arguably most importantly, role stress can result in a weakened professional identity (Anderson & Reiter, 1995; Brott & Myers, 1999; Gysbers, 1990; Johnson, 1993). This weakening of an already fragile professional

identity for school counselors seems counterproductive. To strengthen the profession of school counseling, all groups (ASCA, Education Trust, CACREP, ACES, and stakeholders) must reach a consensus on what comprises the primary role and responsibilities of school counselors.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study suggest several areas for further exploration. While stakeholders greatly value a mental health role for elementary school counselors, it would be useful to know if this mental health role would be as highly valued for middle and high school counselors. This would have implications for training.

Overall, the stakeholders indicated they found the domains of the TSCI to be *Somewhat Important*. The degree school counselors are actually involved in these roles from the domains within their schools could be examined. Future studies could focus on behaviors, as opposed to values and attitudes. Also, it could be valuable to conduct interviews with stakeholders to better understand why they place higher value on certain domains and content areas than others.

This study examined the Transforming School Counseling Initiative and National Standard content areas through the lens of stakeholder support or opposition. Additionally, it could be valuable to evaluate TSCI in light of Fullan's other factors which influence acceptance or rejection of an innovation: (1) existence and quality of innovations, (2) access to information, (3) community pressure/support/apathy/opposition, (4) availability of federal or other funds and new central legislation or policy, and (5) problem-solving incentives for adoption and bureaucratic incentives for adoption.

Conclusion

This study examined the value and comparative value that stakeholders place on the elementary school counselors' roles advocated by ASCA and the Education Trust. The goals of

the study were to (1) provide useful data to leaders within the counseling and school counseling professions, counselor educators, principals and school boards, and school counselors themselves, and (2) identify areas of stakeholders' support for or opposition to the implementation of the "new vision" of school counseling.

Placing the results within the conceptual framework, in order for the "new vision" of school counseling to be adopted, it must be consistent with stakeholders' values (Fullan, 1982). For change to occur, stakeholders' beliefs and behaviors must change, and beliefs and behaviors are determined by values (Fullan). Also, the "new vision" must fit with stakeholders' existing needs, values, and past experiences (Rogers, 1995).

While stakeholders believe the Transforming School Counseling Initiative's domains and ASCA content areas are *Somewhat Important* and seemingly they are open to the roles, the results of this study suggest that stakeholders would be hesitant to adopt the academic roles of school counselors at the expense of the personal/social roles. Yet, the New Vision School Counselor's primary focus and role is academic achievement. Stakeholders believe that school counselors do have a role to play in the area of academics and believe it to be *Somewhat Important*. However, unlike the Education Trust and ASCA, the results indicate that stakeholders do not believe the academic role to be the primary responsibility of elementary school counselors.

According to Fullan's educational change theory, it appears that the Education Trust and ASCA have the support of a key group - counselor educators. In comparison with other stakeholder groups, counselor educators placed the most value and importance on the concepts in the TSCI domains and National Standard's content areas. Yet, they have been accused by the Education Trust (1997) of lacking vision and failing to act on these beliefs.

The other stakeholder groups, elementary school counselors, principals, and teachers, also seem open to the ideas of the Education Trust and ASCA. However, as with counselor educators, a potential barrier to the implementation of the TSCI domains is its primary focus on academic achievement. It appears that either ASCA and the Education Trust will have to modify their stance and make a personal/social focus at least as important as an academic focus, or they will have to continue to work to convince stakeholders of the relative importance of an academic orientation and relative unimportance of a mental health orientation.

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Internal Review Board Approval

University Committee for the Protection
of Human Subjects in Research
University of New Orleans

_____

Campus Correspondence

Barbara Herlihy, PI
Gerra Perkins
ED 348

4/18/2006

RE: The value of elementary school counselor roles: The perceptions of school counselors, principals, teachers, and counselor educators

The IRB has deemed that the research and procedures are compliant with the University of New Orleans and federal guidelines.

Please remember that approval is only valid for one year from the approval date. Any changes to the procedures or protocols must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

If an adverse, unforeseen event occurs (e.g., physical, social, or emotional harm), you are required to inform the IRB as soon as possible after the event.

I will send a signed copy of this letter and your approval form via email. Your project is approved upon receipt of this letter.

Best of luck with your project!
Sincerely,

Laura Scaramella, Ph.D.
Chair, University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research

School Counselor Role Survey

1. Please select your position.
   - ☐ Elementary School Counselor
   - ☐ Elementary School Principal
   - ☐ Elementary School Teacher
   - ☐ Counselor Educator

2. Please select your sex.
   - ☐ Female
   - ☐ Male

3. Please specify your primary descent group.
   - ☐ African-American
   - ☐ Anglo-American
   - ☐ Asian-American
   - ☐ Bi/Multiracial
   - ☐ Hispanic-American
   - ☐ Native American
   - ☐ Please specify if not listed above: _____

Each of the following 37 items will be rated on a five-point semantic differential response scale. Response choices will range from *Not Important at All* to *Extremely Important* (see example below)

Not Important At All: __ __ __ __ __ : Extremely Important

Leadership:
Academic:
1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to be responsible for school wide course selection and placement activities?
2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to arrange in-school mentoring relationships to improve students' academic success?
3. How important is it for elementary school counselors to be responsible for the development and use of data snapshots of student outcomes?
4. How important is it for elementary school counselors to provide data snapshots of achievement gaps?

Career:
1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to be responsible for career/college activities?

Personal/Social:
1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to be responsible for school-wide prevention activities?
2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to be responsible for school-wide social/personal development activities?
3. How important is it for elementary school counselors to teach all students decision making skills?
4. How important is it for elementary school counselors to play a leadership role in defining and carrying out guidance and counselor functions?

Advocacy:
Academic:
1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to be responsible for the development and use of data to help the whole school look at student outcomes?
2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to advocate for rigorous preparation and school support of all students, especially poor and minority youth?
3. How important is it for elementary school counselors to use academic data to affect change, utilizing resources from school and community?

Career:
1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to advocate for student expanding students' career awareness and knowledge?
2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to use career data to affect change, utilizing resources from school and community?

Personal/Social:
1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to use personal/social data to affect change, utilizing resources from school and community?

Teaming and Collaboration:
Academic:
1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to collaborate with school and community teams to encourage academic achievement?
2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to collaborate school staff to develop team responses to students' academic needs?

Career:
  1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to collaborate school staff to develop team responses to students' career needs?

Personal/Social:
  1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to consult with teams of teachers/educators for problem solving?
  2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to consult with teams of teachers/educators to ensure responsiveness to equity and cultural diversity issues?
  3. How important is it for elementary school counselors to collaborate school staff to develop team responses to students' personal/social needs?

Counseling and Coordination:
Academic:
  1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to coordinate resources for students and staff to improve academic achievement?
  2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to serve as a key liaison with students and staff to set and support high aspirations for all students?
  3. How important is it for elementary school counselors to coordinate staff training to address students' academic needs on a school-wide basis?
  4. How important is it for elementary school counselors to provide short-term academic counseling with individual students, groups, and families?

Career:
  1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to coordinate staff training to address students' career needs on a school-wide basis?
  2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to provide short-term career counseling with individual students, groups, and families.

Personal/Social:
  1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to coordinate staff training to address students' personal/social needs on a school-wide basis?
  2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to provide short-term personal/social counseling with individual students, groups, and families?

Assessment and Use of Data:
Academic:
  1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to be responsible for assessing and interpreting student academic needs, with sensitivity to cultural differences?
  2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to assess school conditions that impede students' learning, academic success, and inclusion?
  3. How important is it for elementary school counselors to interpret student data for use in school-wide planning for change?
  4. How important is it for elementary school counselors to establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes from academic counseling activities and interventions?

Career:
1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to assess and interpret student career needs, with sensitivity to cultural differences?
2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes from career counseling activities and interventions?

Personal/Social:
1. How important is it for elementary school counselors to assess and interpret student personal/social needs, with sensitivity to cultural differences?
2. How important is it for elementary school counselors to establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes from personal/social activities and interventions?

APPENDIX C

Email 1 – Sent to Request Participation

Dear Colleague,

I would like to request your assistance with my dissertation study, titled "Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Value of Elementary School Counselor Roles." I have developed a survey (*School Counselor Role Survey*) that asks elementary school counselors, principals, teachers, and counselor educators for their beliefs regarding the importance of certain school counselor roles.

It is hoped that this study will provide useful data to leaders within the counseling and school counseling professions, counselor educators, principals and school boards, and school counselors themselves. For example, insights gained in the study may validate current practices or suggest new ways counselor education programs can help school counselors meet the needs of those they serve.

All information that you provide is anonymous; there will be no way of identifying you after you submit your answers. The survey will take approximately 5-7 minutes to complete.

If you are willing to assist me with this important project, please click the following link to connect to the survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=29201789429

Completion and electronic submission of the survey will indicate your consent for participation in this study.

Please note that if you are not connected automatically to the link, you can paste the link into the address box on your web browser.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw consent and terminate participation at any time without consequence. The risks associated with this study are minimal. Some individuals may tire while answering the questions. If you would like additional information about this study or if you would like to discuss any discomforts you may experience, please send your request to Gerra Perkins at gaperkin@uno.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Barbara Herlihy at the University of New Orleans by email, bherlihy@uno.edu or by telephone, 504-280-3990, for more information regarding this study.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, please contact Dr. Laura Scaramella, the chair of the Institutional Review Board at the University of New Orleans, at 504-416-7099.

Email 2 – Thank You and Follow-up Email Requesting Participation

Dear Colleague,

To those of you who have already participated in this dissertation study by completing the *School Counselor Role Survey*, I extend to you my most sincere appreciation and gratitude. Your perceptions and beliefs are extremely important to this topic. Thank you for sharing your beliefs regarding elementary school counselors' roles.

If you have not had the opportunity to participate, please take approximately 5-7 minutes to read the following information and follow the hyperlink to complete the survey. The survey will be available for only one more week.

I would like to request your assistance with my dissertation study, titled "Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Value of Elementary School Counselor Roles." I have developed a survey (*School Counselor Role Survey*) that asks elementary school counselors, principals, teachers, and counselor educators for their beliefs regarding the importance of certain school counselor roles.

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If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, please contact Dr. Laura Scaramella, the chair of the Institutional Review Board at the University of New Orleans, at 504-416-7099.

VITA

Gerra Wellman Perkins was raised in Leesville, Louisiana. In December 2000 she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Education from Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. She earned a Master's of Education degree in School Counseling in 2002, also from Southeastern Louisiana University, and completed the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Counselor Education at the University of New Orleans in August 2006.

Gerra is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Louisiana and she is also a National Certified Counselor and National Certified School Counselor. She has worked as a full-time school counselor in Livingston Parish since 2002. Gerra has presented at local, state, national, and international conferences on a wide range of counseling topics including school counseling, play therapy, supervision, and counselor educator training.

Gerra has accepted a position as Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Counseling at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana beginning August 2006.