

12-19-2008

School Counselors' Perceptions of Their Academic Preparation in their Roles as Professional School Counselors

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School Counselors' Perceptions of Their Academic Preparation in
their Roles as Professional School Counselors

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Counselor Education

by

Libby A. Schayot

B.S., University of New Orleans, 1979
M.Ed., University of Southern Mississippi, 1994

December 2008

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DEDICATION

To The Women of My Journey

Mothers of the River

I hasten to join my people,
Women close to the earth, who know secrets of the river...
The Keepers of Tradition,
Tribal women, we are, bound by an eternity of songs.
Consumed with the ageless dance;
Feeding, cleaning, picking berries from the banks,
We sing with one voice, making the personal sacred.
Our children play around our legs and laundry,
While golden songs rise, harmonious with the river.
Straining to be heard above the din of the water,
Our melodies call tentatively to one another
“I come to the river to share the longings of my heart.”
Of dreams for our life, of birth and children, of caring for the living,
And honoring the dead, of planting, of daily work and harvest.
We are the keepers of tradition.
We are the mothers of the river,
Our songs...
Ancient and Enduring.

Joan Archer

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“We all create the person we become
by our choices as we go through life.” Eleanor Roosevelt

These words have always inspired me in my life, and I have been blessed with many people to model to make good choices. They have cheered, encouraged, coached, challenged, and lifted me up during this long and arduous journey. I am so very grateful to my committee members for the time they have devoted to me and this work and their thoughtful feedback for improving this dissertation - Dr. Dawn Romano, Dr. Carmen Riedlinger, Dr. Louis Paradise, and Dr. Roxane Dufrene. I am especially grateful to Dr. Dufrene, my chair, who unselfishly devoted many hours, days, weeks, and months to this manuscript and challenged me to be and become a person of high integrity. I cherish the time we worked together. It has been a unique privilege. I am also grateful to all of my UNO professors, Dr. Ted Remley, Dr. Diana Hulse, Dr. Terry Christianson, Dr. Barbara Herlihy, and Dr. Zarus Watson, who have engaged me in conversations that changed my life. I will never be the same again. I am truly grateful to all of my colleagues at UNO especially Dr. Christine Ebrahim, Michelle De la Paz, Kathryn Henderson, and Lorraine Dinkel. I could not have completed this process without each of you checking in with me, encouraging me, and assisting me with this manuscript.

To Dr. Carmen Riedlinger and Dr. Debbie Nastasi, both played an important role at the onset of this journey. Your passion for your professions inspired me and challenged me to step up in mine. The choices that each of you have made since I have known you, Debbie since high school, and Carmen, since early adulthood, have become a part of me as you model being and becoming the persons God intended. To Father Greg Barras, I am thankful for your reminder of the meaning of the story “The Little Engine That Could.” It is so nice to be able to say – I

thought I could. I am grateful to two groups of women – the Magnolias for getting me to the beginning of my research journey and the Spoons for getting me to the end. All of you are a part of this final product. I am also indebted to my family at Pope John Paul II Catholic High School, particularly Dick Berkowitz my principal and mentor, Jane Reynolds, my colleague and friend, and Peggy Doucet, Annemarie Furphy, and Michelle Dufour. You lived with me every day and shared all of my disappointments and celebrated all of my successes. I could not have completed this process without your encouragement and support.

I am most grateful to my children, grandchildren, and parents – Ashley, Scott, Samuel, Andrew, Benjamin, Adam, Lori, Destiny, Raegan, Michael, Ann, and Gregory. I love you all deeply. You have been understanding of my occasional absences in your lives. You gave me permission to put myself first during this process. You have been my best cheerleaders. Each of you is a precious gift to me. And last of all, to my Mom and Daddy, Will and Jewel, who so often believed in me more than I believed in myself. You helped me see the Dulcinea inside of me when I could only see Aldonza.

I hesitated to write an Acknowledgement page because of my fear of omitting someone. There have been many people and events in my life that have formed me. If I have done this, please forgive me. But no words of gratitude would be complete without giving thanks to the One who has led me on this journey. I am in awe of God's love for me. Life is such a beautiful and wonderful mystery! And, like Fr. Richard Rohr, I too, believe in mystery.

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was perceptions of professional school counselors' (PSC) graduate preparation in their roles as school counselors. The relationships examined were PSCs' roles and the number of hours completed in the school counselors' graduate programs, PSCs' roles and the level of their professional identity, and PSCs' roles and the number of school counseling specialty courses completed in their school counseling graduate programs.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2005) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2001) have established standards for school counselors to master in their programs. These standards were used to develop the 30 roles identified in this study. Graduate programs referred to the number of hours PSCs completed in their graduate school counseling programs. Professional identity was defined as the certifications and licensures, the memberships in professional organizations, and the number of professional conferences and workshops PSCs attend. Specialty courses included school counseling courses taken by PSCs in their school counseling graduate programs.

PSCs perceived themselves to be somewhat prepared in their overall preparation in their roles as school counselors. Results of the correlations between PSCs' perceptions of their preparation in their roles and the number of hours completed in the school counseling graduate programs, the professional identity of PSCs, and the number of specialty courses completed were statistically significant but not practically significant. PSCs perceived themselves to need additional preparation in serving students with learning differences, seeking funding sources, and using technology. The factor analysis supported the construct validity of the survey instrument. It validated the roles of PSCs as outlined by ASCA standards (2005) and CACREP standards (2001). The factors included (a) Factor 1, *Tasks/Advocacy/Professional Identity*, (b) Factor II,

Personal/Social/Career, (c) Factor III, Academics, and (d) Factor IV, Cultural/Legal/Ethical Issues.

In conclusion, PSCs need additional training in student learning differences, seeking funding sources for school counseling programs, and on-going training in technology. PSCs want the term “educator” to be included in their description of their professional identity. PSCs also want additional specialty courses added to their curricula. They believe that the focus should be on the specialty of school counseling rather than a mental health focus.

Keywords: Professional school counselor preparation, perception, roles, professional identity, specialty courses.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Scheduling, completing paperwork, testing and ordering tests, filing, individual counseling, group counseling, educating parents, interpreting transcripts, responding to transcript requests, making 504 adjustments, completing paperwork, writing letters of recommendation, inputting data, using various software applications, meeting deadlines, filling out college admission applications, organizing award ceremonies, attending dances, football, basketball, baseball, softball, and soccer games, and pep rallies and district rallies and state rallies, to mention just a few activities, all describe the duties of school counselors. Many of these duties may jeopardize counselors' abilities to perform specific school counseling roles such as individual and group counseling, consulting, and developing and implementing comprehensive guidance programs. With this myriad of activities to master, are school counseling graduates adequately prepared to provide all of the services and roles expected of professional school counselors (PSCs)?

Paisley and Borders (1995) referred to school counseling as "an evolving specialty" (p. 150). They used the term, evolving specialty, to describe the changes that the school counseling profession experienced from its inception which has been well documented in the literature (Baker, 2001; Gysbers, 2001; Herr, 2003; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Myrick, 2003; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Sabella, 2006; Sheeley, 2002; Whiston, 2002). In the beginning of the late 19th century, the school counseling profession focused on career development. Over the years, the focus of the profession changed based on the needs of the students, the communities,

and the nation. In the late 20th century, the focus became comprehensive developmental programs which addressed the academic, career, and personal/social development of students.

In the most recent years, the profession has evolved in the area of educational reform and how this reform impacts the preparation, as well as the practice of, PSCs (Sabella, 2006). Considering the numerous changes the school counseling profession has experienced, Perusse, Goodnough, and Noel (2001) questioned whether counselor educators were changing their preparation programs to meet the increasing and changing needs of their school counseling students. The present research focused on PSCs' perceptions of their graduate preparation.

Overview

Since its inception, the profession of school counseling has undergone numerous changes. In 1935, the American Council of Guidance and Personnel Association (ACGPA) was established. It is the foundation for many of the present counseling associations (Beale, 2006; Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Sabella, 2006). Over the years there have been many name changes and role functions due to the political climate and needs of students. In the infancy stages of the school counseling profession, the emphasis was on the *roles* of the school counselor rather than the *programs* provided to students (Campbell & Dahir). Since the 1980s, the trend in school counseling has changed from individual student response to a proactive and preventative program for all students. Despite the wide acceptance and advocacy for this trend in preventative counseling proposed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), Campbell and Dahir noted the significant variance in school counseling programs across school districts, states, and the nation. Several researchers have stated that there is not a universally

accepted description of a comprehensive school counseling program (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Schmidt, 1999).

In the December 2001 issue of the *Professional School Counselor*, Baker identified several common themes in the school counseling profession. He concluded that the majority of PSCs are concerned with the inconsistencies in their job descriptions, the challenges of increasing diverse student populations, the growing needs of all students, the utilization of technology in guidance programs, the professional development of school counselors, the collection of data in the school guidance program, and the future of the school counseling profession. Most students, on the other hand, are concerned with their present academic success and how their education impacts their future careers. They believe education is the key to a successful career.

In order to address the roles and professional identity of PSCs, ASCA developed a national model for PSCs emphasizing the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students (ASCA, 2005; Borders, 2002; Campbell & Dahir, 1997). ASCA also developed national standards for the school counseling profession (see Appendix A and G). These standards provided PSCs with two important structures which include (a) a framework to assist students in achieving specific skills and learning opportunities and (b) the organizational tools to assist PSCs in developing a quality school counseling program. These standards transformed the school counseling profession from the exclusivity of providing individual student services to developing and implementing comprehensive school counseling programs to meet the needs of the entire student body (Campbell & Dahir). These school counseling programs also included the opportunity for collaboration, coordination, and consultation between all of the stakeholders in school communities.

In addition to the ASCA National Standards, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) also established curriculum standards in school counseling programs to assist counselor educators in the preparation of PSCs (CACREP, 2001; Appendix B & G). The CACREP standards required counselor education programs to include the eight core courses which are (a) professional identity, (b) social and cultural diversity, (c) human growth and development, (d) career development, (e) helping relationships, (f) group work, (g) assessment, and (h) research and program evaluation. CACREP standards also required enrollment in life-long continuing education programs since no professional preparation program is ever complete. Minimum standards for the preparation of PSCs were defined in the CACREP Standards.

In addition to the eight core courses, CACREP standards included (a) foundations of school counseling, (b) contextual dimensions of school counseling, (c) knowledge and skill requirements, and (d) clinical instruction. In the first standard, school counseling students enrolled in a foundations of school counseling course must demonstrate their knowledge in school related topics such as the history of the profession, student services, professional identity, leadership, curriculum, legislation, diversity, technology, ethics, and opportunities that contribute to success and barriers to academic, career, and personal/social development. The contextual dimensions of school counseling courses provides an awareness of the coordination of the total comprehensive counseling program and how such a program relates to all stakeholders. The third standard, knowledge and skill requirements, includes (a) development, (b) implementation and evaluation of developmental comprehensive counseling programs, and (c) demonstration of counseling, guidance, and consultation skills. The last standard consists of clinical instruction

for counseling students which includes both a 100-hour practicum course and two 300-hour internships in a school setting under supervision at the site (CACREP, 2001).

The Problem

Are PSCs prepared in their roles to advocate for all students, to advocate for themselves and their profession, and to develop and implement comprehensive school counseling programs? Will PSCs continue to allow others, such as school administrators and politicians, to define their roles and how they serve their school communities? Are PSCs educators or mental health professionals, and how does the answer to this question affect the professional identity of PSCs? How will counselor educators develop school counseling curriculums that blend CACREP and ASCA standards with the ever-changing needs of future PSCs?

Roles of Professional School Counselors

Leaders in the field of school counseling agree that one of the biggest issues facing PSCs is the continuing discussion concerning the roles of PSCs (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Borders, 2002; Chata & Loesch, 2007; Dahir, 2004; House & Martin, 1998; Keys & Lockhart, 1999; Kuranz, 2002; Lazovsky & Shimoni, 2007; Lieberman, 2004; Ross & Herrington, 2006). In their research, Ross and Herrington referred to the administrative tasks that principals oftentimes ask of counselors as “counselor role drift” (p. 1). Role drift occurs when principals ask PSCs to perform duties unrelated to counseling. If PSCs comply with principals’ requests and embrace the roles determined by principals rather than counselors, “counselor role drift” occurs. It is easy to understand how role drift occurs.

Sears and Granello (2002) stated that PSCs fail to exert themselves due to their style of being “people pleasers” (p. 165). As people pleasers, PSCs tend to say yes before they weigh the

consequences. This style of PSCs contributed to role drift as Ross and Herrington described. Ross and Herrington stated that role drift causes PSCs to align more with administration rather than the counseling profession. Counselors' time and value as specialized professionals are diminished due to their obedience to their administrators rather than their regard for students and other stakeholders as they drift further away from their roles as PSCs. Ross and Herrington also reported that unless both principals and counselors understand the roles of counselors in schools, students would continue to be underserved.

Burnham and Jackson (2000) concluded that PSCs spend an inordinate amount of time involved in non-counseling related activities that distract them from providing direct services to students put forth by ASCA. According to Hutchinson, Barrick, and Grove (1986), PSCs perform non-professional tasks such as record-keeping, scheduling, duty, and data input. This role drift compromises counselors' abilities to address key responsibilities of PSCs such as individual and group counseling, consultation, coordination, collaboration, and implementation of school wide comprehensive guidance programs (Ross & Herrington, 2006).

Paisley and McMahon (2001) stated that PSCs still struggle with role identification and that role identification is one of the most significant challenges facing PSCs. They suggested that the current trend of focusing on counseling programs rather than counseling services causes counselors to struggle with setting priorities. They also suggested that our national leaders present agendas and pass legislation shifting the emphasis in school counseling to at-risk students, school violence, and more recently academic achievement and standardized testing. For example, the federal government passed legislation entitled *No Child Left Behind* (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) which addresses academic achievement. Other important federal legislation affecting PSCs included the *School Dropout Prevention and Basic Skills*

Improvement Act (U.S. Department of Education, 1990), *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (U.S. Department of Education, 1994), *Safe Schools Act* (U.S. Department of Education, 1994), *Charter School Expansion Act* (U.S. Department of Education, 1998), and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act* (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

According to Lambie and Williamson (2004), role ambiguity also contributed to the different perceptions of PSCs by administrators, teachers, parents, and other groups. Sears and Granello (2002) raised the question of whether counselor educator programs teach counseling students how to implement their roles as PSCs. Their concern stemmed from the significant portion of time that is spent on non-counseling duties by PSCs. Sears and Granello pointed to two different views concerning the future of school counseling; counseling *roles* versus counseling *programs*. The first school of thought believed that PSCs served all students by offering a huge variety of services. Such services included career awareness, crisis counseling, referrals, and analysis and interpretation of test data. According to Gysbers and Henderson (1997), many administrators and teachers perceived the roles of PSCs based on their interactions stemming from the traditional organizational pattern of the school counseling profession, which focused on PSCs as service, process, and duty oriented. In the traditional organizational pattern, PSCs performed administrative tasks such as scheduling, official record keeping, and administering standardized tests. These traditional patterns emphasized the position or *roles* of PSCs rather than school counseling *programs*.

The second school of thought focused on the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs (Gysbers, 2001). Gysbers and Henderson's (1997) model consisted of three elements including content, organizational framework, and resources. These researchers defined content as the competencies of the organizational structure, the organization framework

as the parts of the comprehensive counseling program, and the resources as people, money, and the community. This model included structured guidance activities and group experiences for the entire student body beginning on the first day of school and ending on the last day of school. It required PSCs to focus on student academic, career, and personal/social development while diminishing the focus of administrative and clerical tasks.

Green and Keys (2001) like Gysbers and Henderson (1997) also suggested that counselors shift from direct services to indirect services by engaging in more consultation, collaboration, advocacy, and program coordination with all of the stakeholders involved. Stakeholders include administration, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community resources. Unlike the 1970s through the 1990s when PSCs were used as dumping grounds by principals, Green and Keys found that some of today's PSCs work together with administrators to set and implement goals for school communities.

The development of the ASCA National Model (2005) emphasized the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. The first standard, academic development is emphasized by three areas which include skills for life-long learning, academic preparation for numerous post-secondary options, and awareness of the relationship between academics and career. The second standard, career development, is emphasized by three areas which include skills to make informed career choices, skills to employ career strategies, and skills to understand the relationship between themselves and their careers. Finally, the third standard, personal/social development, is emphasized by three areas which include the Kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students' abilities to know who they are, the abilities to make decisions and achieve goals, and the abilities to understand life skills. This model created an expanded and proactive

role for PSCs as they communicated, collaborated, and coordinated with all of the stakeholders in school communities.

Professional Identity of Professional School Counselors

Remley and Herlihy (2001) defined professional identity as the level at which PSCs identify with the profession of school counseling and take pride in being PSCs. They suggested several criteria that define a profession. Some of these criteria include ethics and standards of practice, credentialing, licensing, and development of professional identity. Remley and Herlihy also stated that the counseling profession must promote and support the profession and establish a professional identity. The school counseling profession has achieved these criteria but this achievement has done little to promote the professional identity of school counselors or to make the distinction between PSCs and other mental health professionals (Gale & Austin, 2003).

The first challenge for the professional identity of PSCs is whether school counselors are educators with mental health expertise or mental health professionals working in school settings (Webber & Mascari, 2006). There are differences between the roles of administrators, teachers, and PSCs. Administrators' roles are that of leader, assessor, moderator, manager, and disciplinarian. Teachers' roles are that of instructor, content developer, and evaluator. PSCs' roles are that of helper, goal-setter, confidant, and change agent. PSCs provide counseling services to students to facilitate academic success. However, they also respond to personal issues that may involve crises in the school such as suicide, death, substance abuse, school shootings, and other tragedies or disasters (Webber & Mascari).

In the ASCA policy, Campbell and Dahir (1997) noted that PSCs are certified professional educators who help students with their academic success by working with all stakeholders within school communities. ACA emphasizes the development of counseling skills,

supports a wellness model, takes a developmental viewpoint, inclines toward preventative action, and sets as a goal the empowerment of clients (Remley & Herlihy, 2001). Simply put, ACA believes that PSCs are mental health professionals working in school settings and ASCA believes that PSCs are educators with mental health expertise. If PSCs take on the role of mental health providers, they may be seen as clinicians lacking in classroom management skills, teaching skills, and knowledge of school systems. If PSCs take on the role of educators, they may be seen as administrators or teachers lacking mental health skills. This conflict seems to be at the center of the counseling education preparation dilemma. Perusse, Goodnough, and Noel (2001) suggested that the professional identity of PSCs needs to be defined first in order for universities to prepare counseling students for school settings. Further, this conflict in the professional identity of PSCs may contribute to the variations in school counseling curriculums at the university level as well as the variations in job descriptions of PSCs. Stone and Dahir (2004) focused on the word counseling as defining PSCs' work. In their research on professional identity of PSCs, they wrote that it is the counselors themselves who cannot decide if they are mental health professionals working in school settings or educators with mental health expertise.

As stated in the beginning of this section, the second challenge for professional identity of school counselors is in the area of credentialing (Brown & Kraus, 2003; Remley & Herlihy, 2001; Webber & Mascari, 2006). For a time, it was thought that CACREP and ASCA standards and licensure laws would cement the professional identity of school counselors. But the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), an organization whose focus is the education profession, proposed a credentialing process through certification with their organization, which directly opposes the basic philosophy of the already-established standards by CACREP and NBCC (Baker, 2001). This new and additional credentialing process resurrected

and reignited the argument of whether or not PSCs are educators first with mental health expertise or mental health professionals working in school settings.

There lies the second challenge. The establishment of a consistent credentialing process that supports the professional identity of school counselors is imperative. With this new credentialing process from the NBPTS, many PSCs believed that it looked as though teachers controlled the school counseling profession. Many felt that this additional certification process diminished the professional identity of school counselors as mental health providers (Baker, 2001). If this problem is viewed from different professional perspectives, it is easy to see the conflict. Gale and Austin (2003) stated that if PSCs aligned themselves with educators then the need for PSCs would diminish or the identity of PSCs would mirror administrators and teachers rather than mental health professionals with school counseling as a specialty.

Wong (2002), Executive Director of the ASCA, and Sparks, President of ASCA (2007), do not believe that the question of educator versus counselor is relevant in the counseling profession today. Wong wrote that it is more important for PSCs to note the effectiveness of comprehensive school counseling programs in achieving PSCs' goals of promoting the academic, career, and personal/emotional development of all students. School counseling programs must be seen as integral components of the educational system rather than ancillary departments. Sparks (2007) stated that the professional identity question distracts PSCs from the real issue, which is PSCs' effectiveness in assisting students experience academic success and translating that into their future success in life. But unlike Sparks, previous presidents of ASCA saw the certification of counselors by the NBPTS as an opportunity to provide a framework for the professional identity of PSCs and promote an agreement between PSCs and educators.

CACREP standards clearly defines PSCs as counselors first and specialists second. This definition conformed to the NBCC standards in that NBCC offers a counseling credential with a school counseling specialty credential. On the other hand, NBPTS's philosophy is that PSCs are educators first who use their counseling training to promote the academic, career, and personal/social development of students. NBPTS does not require a master's degree. These two conflicting philosophies also contribute to the problem of professional identity for the school counseling profession.

Yet, despite these efforts to unify the school counseling profession within the counseling profession, there still exists two schools of thought within this standardization and certification process. The first school of thought follows the ASCA National Model (2005), which states that PSCs develop and implement a comprehensive developmental program directed toward the academic, career, and personal/social development of all K-12 students. The second school of thought is that if PSCs did not provide mental health services to students then other mental health providers such as school psychologists and social workers would provide these mental health services (Brown & Trusty, 2005).

In addition to the conflict of educator versus mental health professional and the challenge of a consistent credentialing process, PSCs face a third challenge contributing to the professional identity of school counselors. This challenge is in the membership of the professional organizations by PSCs. Among the membership in the counseling organizations, ASCA (2007) has one of the largest at 18,654 members. Of the 60,000 members of the ACA, membership of PSCs stands at about 13,000. This statistic indicates that only a small percentage of PSCs belong to ACA and represents only a small percentage of PSCs working in elementary, middle, and high schools (ASCA). It is difficult for the school counseling profession to establish a clear identity

without PSCs joining the organizations that provide leadership and public recognition for the school counseling profession (Schmidt, 1999).

Most PSCs belong only to teacher organizations such as the NEA (Baker, 2001). This fact, coupled with the push for a national certification process sponsored by the NBPTS, an educator-oriented organization, only diminishes the incentive for PSCs to join and relate with professional counselor organizations devoted to improving programs, skills, and acknowledgment for counselors, such as ACA and ASCA. According to Baker, many PSCs remain indifferent to membership in their professional organizations and ignorant of the efforts to promote and improve the profession. Many seem disinclined to invest their time or knowledge in trying to make changes within school systems. Instead, they become trapped in a response mode rather than a proactive and preventative approach. This weakness in the membership in professional organizations by PSCs only adds to the problem of establishing a professional identity (Baker).

Preparation of Professional School Counselors

Campbell and Dahir (1997) stated that there has been little research in the area of effectiveness of PSCs' performance based on their preparation as master's counseling students. Paisley and McMahon (2001) stated that effective school counseling programs include preparation and knowledge in professional identity, counseling skills, in addition to the roles and functions of PSCs. Today, preparation programs are influenced by a number of factors including accrediting bodies, professional organizations, licensure requirements, and certification requirements. ASCA's National Standards stressed the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. However, ASCA did not specify how counselor education programs should address the standards in their graduate programs. ASCA and the Association

for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) joined together to explore and promote the use of national standards in school counseling preparation programs (Paisley & McMahon).

According to much of the research (Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Sears & Granello, 2002), PSCs provided several services in the comprehensive counseling model. These services included (a) individual and group counseling services, (b) parenting education, (c) consultation with stakeholders, (d) in-service programs, (e) referrals to community resources, (f) academic and career guidance to students and parents, (g) maintenance of a career and post-secondary library, and (h) participation in committees. The inclusion of these eight services in the comprehensive counseling model impacted K-12 students' academic, career, and personal/social development.

Sears and Granello (2002) stated that preparation of PSCs includes individual and group counseling, and guidance skills for academic, career, and personal/social development. They also suggested that training of PSCs included preparation in skills in (a) leadership, (b) collaboration, (c) coordination, (d) technology, and (e) advocacy. These changes also reflected the shift in school counseling from service oriented to program oriented. The future of PSCs as program implementers conflicts with the description of PSCs as service providers. Given this conflict, how do universities prepare graduate students for the school counseling profession?

Many university curriculums meet CACREP (2001) standards which include instruction in the core courses including (a) human growth and development, (b) social and cultural foundations, (c) helping relationships, (d) group work, (e) career and lifestyle development, (f) appraisal, (g) search and program evaluation, and (h) professional orientation. Also, counseling students enrolled in CACREP programs complete a 100-hour practicum and two 300-

hour internships. During these core courses and field experiences, school counseling students are required to demonstrate knowledge in the areas of foundations of school counseling, contextual dimensions, school counseling, knowledge and skills for the practice of school counseling, and clinical instruction.

A study by Romano (2006) indicated that of the PSCs who implement the ASCA model, few PSCs have full credentials outlined by the association's model. A majority of counselors had little or no training and reported feeling inept in addressing educationally-based tasks such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) adjustments for students with learning differences. Guerra (1998) suggested that PSCs are overwhelmed by paperwork and non-counseling tasks and lack the training regarding taking a proactive posture in defining their roles and professional identity related to 504 adjustments and learning differences. Perusse, Goodnough, and Noel (2001) stated that even though preparation programs included practicum and internships, these researchers questioned the inconsistent expectations of site supervisors and variations in student experiences. These authors found that very few PSCs' experiences during practicum and internship involved 504 adjustments for students with learning differences.

Another contributing factor to the problem of school counselor preparation is the limited experience of faculty members with school counseling experience in the university setting (Perusse, Goodnough, & Noel, 2001). Clark and Horton-Parker (2002) suggested that counselor educators have been criticized for providing training that is too theoretical and lacking in practicality. They also suggested that rather than develop a national agenda for PSCs, the school counseling profession might be better served by developing outstanding school counselor graduate preparation programs. Sometimes not having faculty with experience in school

counseling resulted in PSCs not being prepared to best meet the educational needs of today's students (Paisley, 2001). Bemak (2000) stressed the importance of the practicum experience for school counseling students in school settings in the absence of counselor educators with recent school counseling experience.

It is critical according to Brott (2006) that counselor educators assist counseling students in the development of their professional identity. Therefore, it is essential for counselor educators to be firmly rooted in the training of counseling students for these students to become PSCs. He stated that this occurs when faculty connect with graduates of their programs in order to stay informed of the issues facing PSCs. Conversations between faculty and graduates assist counselor educators in training future school counseling students to be effective practitioners.

Paisley and McMahon (2001) provided a picture of ideal PSCs. All PSCs would complete programs accredited by CACREP and be knowledgeable in the field of counseling and in their school counseling specialty. They would be knowledgeable in educational leadership, motivation, and learning styles. PSCs would be engaged in personal and professional lifelong learning and would be employed in school systems that provided opportunities for their continued personal and professional growth. They would be rooted in the ASCA National Model and integrate the mission of their schools with their comprehensive counseling programs based on data driven assessments. PSCs would understand the importance of all of the stakeholders and take leadership roles in their entire school systems. PSCs would be culturally and technologically competent. They would focus on assessment, improvement, and accountability of themselves and counseling programs; and share this with all stakeholders (Paisley & McMahon).

Significance of the Study

Professional school counselors need to develop their skills in individual and group counseling for academic, career, and personal/social development in their roles as school counselors. In addition to these skills, PSCs must develop skills in order to lead in the implementation of change in school systems, to collaborate with stakeholders in school communities, to coordinate programs designed to improve student achievement, to use data and technology to promote changes, and to advocate for *all* students (Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Sears & Granello, 2002). In order to advocate for all students in their roles as school counselors, PSCs need knowledge in (a) producing and implementing comprehensive developmental guidance programs, (b) brief counseling, (c) learning differences, (d) classroom management, (e) school laws, and (f) student learning styles. It is time for PSCs and counselor educators to transform the profession of school counseling.

Research Questions

1. Do school counselors perceive they are prepared in their roles as professional school counselors?
2. Do professional school counselors who have a greater number of hours completed in their school counseling graduate programs perceive they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?
3. Do professional school counselors who have a stronger professional identity (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities) believe they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?

4. Do professional school counselors who have completed three or more school counseling specialty courses in their school counseling graduate programs perceive they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?

Research Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to assess data concerning the perceptions of professional school counselors' academic preparation in their profession. The research hypotheses derived from the research questions include:

1. Professional school counselors perceive themselves to be prepared in their roles as school counselors.
2. Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to the number of hours completed in their school counseling graduate programs.
3. Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to their professional identity (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities).
4. Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to their completion of three or more specialty school counseling courses in their school counseling graduate programs.

Assumptions of the Study

A basic assumption of this research is that the membership in ASCA is an appropriate group of participants to assess the perceptions of PSCs' graduate preparation. Another assumption is that PSCs who complete the survey will respond honestly and willingly.

Delimitations of the Study

The focus of this study centered on PSCs' perceptions of their academic preparation. The variables that were examined included roles of PSCs which were based on ASCA National Standards and CACREP accreditation requirements, the professional identity of school counselors, and the number of specialty courses completed in the school counseling graduate programs. The researcher used an expert panel to evaluate the survey.

Definition of Terms

American Counseling Association (ACA): A not-for-profit, professional, and educational organization that is dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession. Founded in 1952, ACA is the world's largest association exclusively representing professional counselors in various practice settings (ACA, 2005).

American School Counselor Association (ASCA): A professional organization that supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, personal/social and career development (<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/>).

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP): An independent agency that accredits master's degree programs in career counseling, college counseling, community counseling, gerontological counseling, marital, couple, and family

counseling/therapy, mental health counseling, school counseling, student affairs, doctoral degree programs, and counselor education and supervision (<http://www.cacrep.org/>).

Collaboration: A process that encompasses numerous activities that PSCs perform to communicate with all stakeholders about school counseling programs and to recruit their cooperation and support (Loesch & Ritchie, 2005).

Consultation: A deliberation between two stakeholders about a student or students regarding their academic, career, or personal/social development (Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

National Standards for School Counseling: A national standard based on a developmental approach used by school counselors to work with students to achieve success in three areas of learning and development – academic, career, and personal/social (Schmidt & Ciechalski, 2001).

Professional Identity of School Counselors: The level at which school counselors identify with the profession of school counseling and take pride in being PSCs (Remley & Herlihy, 2001).

Professional School Counselors (PSCs): Counselors who work in school settings, have master's degrees in school counseling, and are certified or licensed (Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

Roles of Professional School Counselors: The various duties PSCs execute for all students through individual and group counseling, consulting, coordinating, and developing and implementing comprehensive counseling programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter Two summarizes the research and literature related to PSCs' perceptions of their training and preparation to work in school settings. Researchers have discussed roles, professional identity, and preparation of PSCs (ASCA, 2005; Baker, 2001; Borders, 2002; Dahir, 2001; Education Trust, 1990; Gysbers, 2001; Hermann, 2005; Herr, 2003; Sink, 2002). This chapter consists of three areas of the literature in school counseling including PSCs' roles, professional identity, and graduate preparation in their master's level school counseling programs.

Section One, *Brief History of the School Counseling Profession*, includes a brief history of the school counseling profession in order to understand the impact of certain historical events on the school counseling profession as well as the profession's evolution. The first section includes a discussion from a historical perspective of the various roles of PSCs and the problems they might face in school settings in the implementation of their roles. A discussion on counselor role drift is presented, a term coined by Ross and Herrington (2006) and reasons for role drift to occur within the school counseling profession.

Section Two, *Roles of the Professional School Counselor*, includes the definition of the professional identity of school counselors and the attempts made by ASCA to assist the profession in developing a unified identity. This section contains difficulties and obstacles facing the profession as PSCs attempt to develop a consistent and acceptable professional identity throughout the entire school counseling profession.

Section Three, *Professional Identity of Professional School Counselors*, includes research related to the preparation of PSCs and the CACREP standards for counselor education programs. This section identifies some of the variations in the educational processes and curriculums in the training of PSCs. The problems with certification are discussed because of the numerous variations in the certification process for PSCs between states and how those variations might affect counselor education curriculums. This section also includes the vision for school counselor preparation programs promoted by ASCA, CACREP, and the Education Trust.

Brief History of the School Counseling Profession

Lambie and Williamson (2004) thought it was critical to understand the *history* of the school counseling profession so that one can understand where the profession originated and why PSCs perform various activities. Rosenthal (2002) suggested that the counseling profession officially began when Frank Parsons, the “Father of Vocational Guidance” (p. 21) published the book, *Choosing a Vocation*, and founded the Vocational Guidance Bureau of Boston in 1909. Parsons focused on vocational placement as he matched the aptitudes and abilities of an individual with the requirements and environment of an occupation or vocation. Thus, the term vocational guidance was first used in the 1920s primarily to assist students in finding employment, which is similar to present day career counseling (Rosenthal).

During World War I, the U.S. Army developed a test based on the psychometric work of Alfred Binet. This alliance of the United States military and the psychometric test of Alfred Binet gave birth to the first professional organization of counselors called the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA). NVGA combined education, social work, and psychometrics with vocational guidance (Super, 1955). In the 1930s, guidance counseling

evolved into a few main components including (a) education, (b) vocation, and (c) personal-social services. These three guidance components included the counseling service, the counseling process, and the duties of the counselor (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). These components became the philosophical foundation for counseling services in schools highlighting the *roles* of PSCs rather than the *services* delivered by PSCs.

During the 1940s, the NVGA merged with several other professional organizations including the American College Personnel Association, the National Association of Guidance Supervisors and Counselor Trainers, and the Student Personnel Association for Teacher Education which became the American Personnel and Guidance Association (Super, 1955). Today this organization is known as the American Counseling Association (ACA). Because of ACA's early history and rootedness in assessment, vocational planning, and education, it seems obvious that PSCs became involved with testing and scheduling as one of their roles.

For more than 50 years, the terms guidance and counseling have been used interchangeably. Stone (2003) stated that the use of these two terms is one of the contributing factors of role confusion and lack of a strong professional identity for PSCs. The term developmental guidance appeared in counseling literature in 1949 by Robert Mathewson who described school guidance counseling as a developmentally-sequenced process that advanced with students until graduation (Stone). The word guidance sometimes created confusion because of its vague meaning and numerous usages. In school settings, many personnel, including principals and custodians, oftentimes offered guidance to students as they gave advice, information, or direction. The word counseling also has numerous meanings. There are camp counselors, credit counselors, legal counselors, to name a few. The broad use of both of these

terms contributes to the confusion of PSCs in their roles and professional identity (Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

In an attempt to clarify the confusion of PSCs in their roles and professional identity, ASCA branched off from ACA in the early 1950s. ASCA (2005) provided PSCs with professional development strategies, research, resources, and advocacy through their publication of the *Professional School Counselor*. The early training of PSCs in master's programs centered on the development of one-to-one relationship skills, record keeping, information dissemination, placement, follow-up, and evaluation (Baker, 2001). In 1956 as the United States began its race into space, the *National Defense Education Act* (NDEA) contributed monies to schools to increase the numbers of secondary PSCs. The NDEA intended counselors to be skilled in college admissions as well as therapeutic skills that supported students in all areas in order to overcome any barriers to academic success. This shifted the roles of PSCs from vocational placement after high school to post-secondary education and personal support services (Baker).

In 1974, the comprehensive guidance program model was published (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997). This model contained three areas including curriculum-based functions, individual functions, and on-call functions. Previously, PSCs followed a traditional organizational pattern including services, processes, and duties. This change significantly impacted the school counseling program taking it from its earliest stages of vocational placement to developing comprehensive developmental counseling programs to meet the needs of all students. According to Gysbers and Henderson, another shift occurred in the early 1970s. The reduction in enrollment in public schools led to diminished funding for PSCs. As a result of this reduction in funding, PSCs had to add administrative duties to their job descriptions to assist administrators and promote and maintain PSCs visibility on school campuses. For example,

PSCs were required to do scheduling, administer standardized tests, and perform yard duty. For the next 30 years, additional legislation influenced the roles of the PSCs. Federal and state regulations defined the roles and functions of PSCs. For example, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004* (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) required educators to provide accommodations for students with learning differences. Many states expanded the duties and responsibilities to include career development, identification of students with special needs, attendance intervention, and academic counseling. About that time, the *National Commission of Excellence* (U.S. Department of Education, 1983) was established to promote the accountability and testing movement in schools as a result of *A Nation at Risk* (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). Legislation such as the *School to Work Opportunities Act* (2004) reinforced the importance of career guidance to assist students in their transition from school to work (Herr, 2003). Legislation such as *No Child Left Behind* (2001) continues to impact the roles of PSCs even now.

Today, the term professional school counselor reflects the latest changes in the profession. The roles of PSCs have evolved from vocational placement in the 1930s to college admissions in the 1950s, to individual developmental needs in the 1960s, to development of comprehensive counseling programs for all students in the 1990s. As early as 1972, Dietz noted that of all the various professionals working in the school system, PSCs were the most poorly defined and the most likely to change.

Roles of the Professional School Counselor

In a perfect world where PSCs implemented the ASCA model, the academic, career, and personal/social development of students would determine the roles of PSCs (Campbell & Dahir,

1997). Because PSCs are in a position to identify the unique issues that impact students' learning and achievement in their individual school communities, PSCs stand at the core of school planning, school programs, and school environments. They are in the best position to coordinate and administer comprehensive school counseling programs which meet the needs of all students. In this perfect world, PSCs develop school calendars that include activities to enhance the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students, including those with learning differences and multicultural backgrounds. PSCs investigate all avenues of funding to implement calendars, which include orientation activities and adjustment and crisis interventions. They use the latest technology available in their schools to enhance their roles. This technology also plays an important role as a tool for all students and especially for those with learning differences. Technology assists PSCs in writing and implementing 504 plans for students with learning differences. PSCs who develop and implement comprehensive counseling program are collaborators, coordinators, and consultants between students, teachers, administrators, families, and members of the communities in order to assist students in experiencing academic, career, and personal/social success. Valuable counseling programs are vital to school environments and key factors in improving school achievement (Paisley & McMahan, 2001).

Confusion continues to persist in the school counseling profession today. Numerous authors have written about PSCs' search for structure defined by statements and goals, theory to guide their work in school systems, and ancillary services to support their academic goals (Gerler, 1992; Mathewson, 1992; Ryan & Zeran, 1972). Along with these criticisms, PSCs contributed to this confusion by developing and sustaining piecemeal programs, refusing to advocate for the profession, and sustaining poorly defined roles. School administrators

contributed to the confusion by diminishing the value of the profession and oftentimes treating PSCs as administrative assistants (Dahir, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Hart & Jacobi, 1992). Clearer evidence of role confusion of PSCs was demonstrated in 1987 when ACA made several recommendations in a report titled *School Counseling: A Profession at Risk* (ACA, 1987) and several years later made several proposals to PSCs that included activities and functions to establish their roles in school systems (Dahir, 2004). ASCA (2005) also advocated for the roles of PSCs but because of the lack of responses from educators and legislators, responses to the recommendations remained within individual school counselors' communities.

PSCs oftentimes assumed inappropriate activities such as scheduling of classes, discipline, and clerical duties, which compromised their effectiveness in key areas of their work such as counseling, coordinating, consulting, and collaborating (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). Burnham and Jackson (2000) stated that many factors contributed to the inconsistencies in the roles of PSCs. Stakeholders viewed PSCs' roles from their own perspectives which can be a variety of different views. Clark and Stone (2000) believed that there has been a recent shift in perceptions of PSCs to educational leaders, student advocates, and social change agents. Due to the emphasis in academic achievement, government legislation has also affected the roles of PSCs since achievement scores are declining and students are not meeting college readiness standards. Lieberman (2004) suggested that the ultimate responsibility for the roles of PSCs lies with principals as leaders of school communities in their effective utilization of all school personnel. Lieberman's point of view coincided with Ross and Herrington's (2006) belief in that both agreed that leadership of the school may contribute to the ambiguity of the roles of PSCs. Burnham and Jackson (2000) found that stakeholders want PSCs to provide data that demonstrates the positive impact of PSCs on student achievement and success in school. Even

though much research has been conducted on the impact of PSCs on children at risk and positive affects that PSCs contributed in this area, most stakeholders insisted on more research in the areas of prevention rather than remediation and intervention (Whiston & Sexton, 1998).

Little research exists about the perceptions of teachers concerning the roles of PSCs. In the research conducted by Clark and Amatea (2004) several themes emerged concerning teacher perceptions and expectations of PSCs. One theme was the roles of PSCs, which Clark and Amatea defined as counselor-teacher communication, collaboration, and teamwork. A second theme focused on the importance of PSCs' roles in taking a developmental, proactive, and preventive approach with services provided by PSCs. The third major theme that emerged from the work of Clark and Amatea was the importance of the small and large group counseling roles. In small groups teachers perceived counselors as assisting students with their development of life skills, social relationships, peer mediation, and family issues which may be preventing K-12 grade students from experiencing academic success. In large groups, teachers expressed their need for counselors to assist them with problem solving and decision making, dealing with aggression, accepting of differences, character education, and establishing positive learning environments. The final major theme of role identification in Clark and Amatea's work focused on counselor's visibility and school wide involvement. They described this concept as counselors being an integral part of school communities; approachable and warm. Teachers want counselors to provide them with information that bridges gaps between students' homes and school in order to help teachers help students experience success in their classrooms. The findings in this research supported the ASCA model for PSCs.

An additional factor contributing to the variations in the PSCs' roles is legislation. The Education Trust (1997) and the *No Child Left Behind Act* (U.S. Department of Education, 2001)

required accountability of PSCs. The Education Trust wanted data that indicated an increase in students' academic preparation, career awareness, and personal/social skills to make career choices that includes college as an option for all students. The *NCLB Act* required schools to provide safe, drug-free learning communities and to ensure that all students graduate from high school. Goals from both initiatives centered on the roles of PSCs as advocates for all students as students experience academic, career, and personal/social success (Paisley & Hayes, 2003).

Lieberman (2004) researched the functions of PSCs and how school leadership impacted their roles as school counselors. He stated that role ambiguity has been a problem for the profession for many years and is currently the target of a money conscience leadership, which assesses the value of the counseling profession in school settings. Lieberman felt strongly that since principals are ultimately responsible for all personnel decisions then it is imperative for leaders to understand the roles and functions of PSCs as well as to assist PSCs in determining those roles in their school communities. Murray (1995) suggested that the changing roles of PSCs are due in part to the changing needs of students and that it is the responsibility of PSCs to assess the needs of students and to adjust their counseling programs to meet students' needs. These responsibilities continually added to the roles and duties of PSCs. Lieberman believed that these responsibilities must be addressed by school leaders. The dilemma for principals became clear as principals tried to determine the roles and functions of counselors within schools. PSCs must educate principals in their roles and functions. Yet, how much clarity can principals be given from PSCs who struggle with role confusion as well?

Finally, research by Ross and Herrington (2006) referred to the fluctuation in PSCs' assignments and duties as counselor role drift. The purpose in their research was to compare attitudes and beliefs of counselors and principals to the roles of PSCs in school settings. They

found that there was a significant difference in attitudes between principals and PSCs as PSCs viewed their roles as autonomous professional specialists. Their research noted that there was a greater variation among PSCs' responses than responses of principals and that the roles of PSCs in shaping the learning climate of schools were often not even discussed.

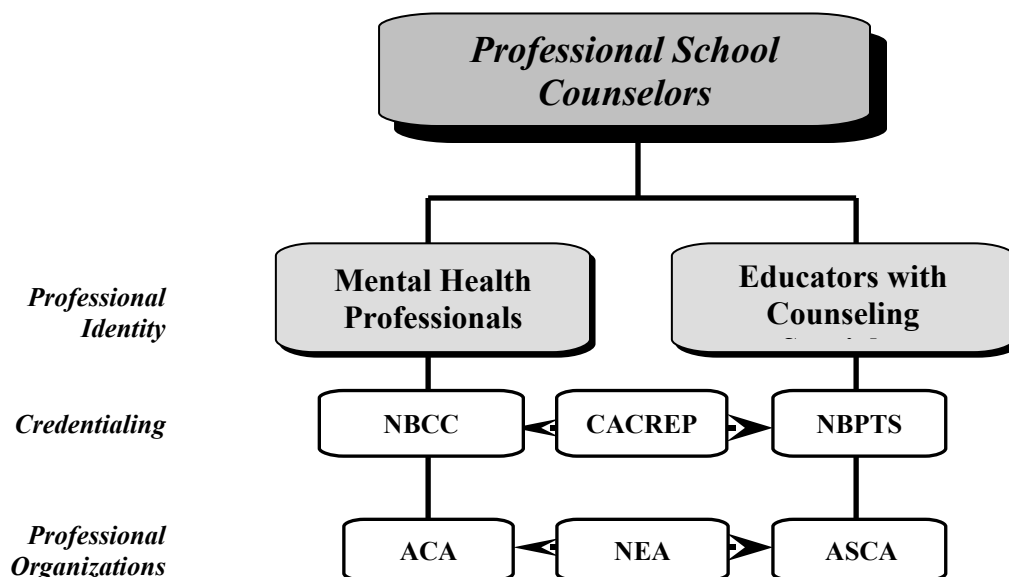
Professional Identity of Professional School Counselors

The history of the school counseling profession looked like a profession searching for its identity (Brott & Myers, 1999). Throughout its history, PSCs have been viewed as second-class members of the mental health profession rather than mental health professionals with a specialty in school counseling (Gray & McCollum, 2003). The school counseling profession has continued to be interested in the development of a professional identity. Brott and Myers defined professional identity as a context for implementing professional roles, making significant professional decisions, and emerging as a professional. Remley and Herlihy (2001) defined the professional identity of school counselors as the level at which counselors identify with the profession of school counseling and take pride in being PSCs. Ethics and standards of practice, credentialing, licensing, and development of professional organizations contribute to the definition of a profession. In spite of the school counseling profession's best efforts in achieving success in the areas of ethics, standards of practice, credentialing, licensing, and professional organizations, little has been accomplished to promote the professional identity of PSCs (Gale & Austin, 2003). Milsom and Akos (2007) noted recent trends in school counseling in supporting and promoting greater efforts in establishing the professional identity of PSCs. However, this is easier said than done and there are several reasons for this difficulty.

One reason for the lack of a strong professional identity is the on-going identity crisis of PSCs. Are PSCs educators with mental health expertise or mental health professionals working in schools? Professional identity remains an issue today for PSCs partly because of the school counseling profession's inability to choose and use a consistent language in describing who they are and what they do (Schmidt, 1999). Baker (2001), Brown and Kraus (2003), Remley and Herlihy (2001) and Webber and Mascari (2006) suggested that the challenges faced by the school counseling profession are threefold: (a) which self-perceptions as a professional describes PSCs, mental health professionals working in a school setting or educators with mental health expertise; (b) which credentialing body best establishes the professional identity of school counselors, CACREP, NBPTS, or National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC); and (c) which professional organizations do PSCs typically support, ACA, ASCA, or National Education Association (NEA) The following chart illustrates the challenges faced by the school counseling profession.

Chart 1

PSCs' Self-Perceptions, Professional Identity, Credentialing, and Professional Organizations



Johnson (2000) stated that it is time for PSCs to put aside the identity crisis and redefine their existence by reviewing their stated purpose, function, and relationship within school systems. Johnson also stated that PSCs must articulate their identity as highly trained mental health providers with a specialty in school counseling to all stakeholders. Another goal of PSCs noted by Johnson was to assist students in achieving academic, career, and personal/social development through the development and implementation of comprehensive guidance programs. Johnson also suggested that PSCs become an integral component of school systems. In order for PSCs to accomplish this, Johnson suggested that PSCs demonstrate to stakeholders how they assist students. She suggested that PSCs might be recognized as valid members of the educational system if they use principles of academic relevancy, market representation, and accountability.

Borders (2002), Remley and Herlihy (2001), and Gray (2003) looked at other professions and how they dealt with professional identity. Remley and Herlihy used the medical profession as an example and remarked how they are all medical doctors first with different specialties. Baker and Gerler (2004) suggested that from the profession's beginning no one devised a plan to identify who PSCs were, but rather an evolution of the profession occurred as it responded to new educational philosophies, social agendas, economics, and various pieces of legislation. Gray stated other reasons for a lack of a concrete professional identity of PSCs, including the continued uncertainty about their roles in school settings and the lack of agreement among PSCs concerning their specific roles and functions. Schmidt (1999) stated that counselors in other specialty areas are reluctant to view PSCs as equally skilled mental health providers. As long as other professionals in school communities believe that PSCs are less than professional, and these beliefs are perpetuated within school environments, then PSCs may never achieve their goal of

becoming an integral part in the academic, career, and personal/social achievement of every student (Gray).

The professional identity of PSCs is a haunting problem among professionals and counseling organizations. NBCC provided PSCs with national credentialing. Additionally in 2001, CACREP developed standards for counselor education programs which firmly established school counseling as a counseling specialty. The training standards provided by CACREP focus on core areas related to counseling. In 1997, ASCA also developed standards for comprehensive school counseling programs, shifting the focus of PSCs from professional *roles* to comprehensive guidance *programs*, and provided PSCs with an organizational framework.

Paisley and McMahon (2001) noted in their research that PSCs were oftentimes a families' only experience of a mental health provider. Kuranz (2002), former president of ASCA, suggested that PSCs provide counseling services within school environments that mirror the mission statement of schools. But if students and families needed any extensive or long-term counseling services then PSCs should refer them to counselors or mental health agencies in communities.

Brott and Meyers (1999) believed that professional identity is a journey rather than a destination and that counselor educators would be better able to provide training for PSCs when everyone understands the process and the development of school counselors' professional identity. They also stated that professional identity begins to develop during graduate training of PSCs if students keep the following three things in mind which include (a) preparing for change and growth in their professional identity, (b) acknowledging factors that impact their professional development, and (c) developing and implementing school counseling programs in school settings. Brott and Meyers indicated that the professional identity of PSCs is a maturation

process and that it begins during counseling students' preparation. Schmidt (1999) stated that the professional identity of school counselors impacts the preparation of school counseling students. In order to develop a strong professional identity, PSCs must be prepared in the knowledge of who they are and what they do. PSCs must be able to articulate to other professionals and stakeholders of their individual school communities this cohesive belief and theory of who they are and what they do (Gray, 2003).

The debate about national certification from NBPTS or NBCC is also a debate about professional identity (Milsom & Akos, 2007). Because NBPTS originated from a teacher organization and NBCC originated from a counselor organization, this too, feeds into the age-old debate of whether or not PSCs are educators or mental health professionals. Also, the wide variance in state requirements is detrimental to how PSCs can communicate a consistent identity. For example, 42 states require a master's degree in school counseling while the remaining states do not require a master's degree (ASCA, 2005). The number of graduate hours in counselor preparation programs range from 18 to 60 hours and some require graduate work in specific content areas such as special education or technology. Twenty-one states require counseling or teaching experience and eight states require a teaching license. Also, 22 states require PSCs to pass standardized tests and 45 require criminal background checks. States with similar or identical licensure and certification requirements may not offer reciprocity (Milsom & Akos). Milsom and Akos acknowledged that choosing one certification agency, NBPTS or NBCC, over another may cause a fracture in the profession but they believed that the choice seemed necessary in order for PSCs to obtain a clear professional identity. They stated that national certification can promote the professional identity of PSCs by creating a uniform criteria based on a common knowledge of specific skills. Perusse and Goodnough (2005) wrote that a unified

vision for the training and education of PSCs might positively affect the professional identity of school counselors.

Preparation of Professional School Counselors

Ross and Herrington (2006) in their research of PSCs and principals on the perceptions of PSCs' roles, believed that counselor educators have a very real opportunity to prevent the breakdown of the school counseling function. They stated that counselor education preparation programs should include educating counseling students to expect situations that may lead to role drift, evaluate the presence of counselor role drift, and alter behaviors that possibly contribute to role drift. They also suggested that principals and counselors make a concerted effort to maintain the integrity of the counseling department in order to better serve students. Their research revealed that there is a greater variation among PSCs than administrators in their perceptions PSCs' roles. Their findings indicated that counselor educators would better serve school counseling students by focusing on the importance of preserving counselor integrity.

Paisley and Hayes (2003) studied the current trends in education and noted that PSCs and counselor educators have been, for the most part, missing from school improvement efforts. Globalization has necessitated significant reform in school counselor preparation and practice in order for all K-12 grade students to meet high academic standards that prepare them to be effective participants in the emerging global society of the future. Collison, Osborn, Gray, House, Firth, and Lou (1998) observed that the majority of counselor education programs have adopted a mental health direction that does not address how PSCs speak to the academic development of students.

The Education Trust (2000) also found little change in counselor education programs other than adding on additional school counseling courses rather than changing the philosophy of the direction of school counseling programs. In the 1990s, significant efforts were made in transforming school counseling by The Education Trust. Due to a 14-month assessment, the Education Trust reached several conclusions about current counselor education programs. First, there was little evidence of a correlation between theory and practice. Second, school counseling curriculums added courses that were not specific to the school counseling profession. Third, PSCs were trained outside of educational disciplines. Fourth and finally, there was an absence of coursework in leadership, advocacy, and collaboration skills.

PSCs have been involved in promoting the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students (Baker, 2001; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Herr, 2003; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). But, counselor educators have been largely absent in school transformation (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). The majority of counselor education programs have adopted a mental health orientation rather than an education orientation (Education Trust, 2000). The Education Trust proposed that counselor educators commit to teaching school counseling students how to engage in leadership and advocacy roles that help all students experience academic success and diminish existing achievement gaps. They listed the following components to include in changing counselor education programs: (a) writing a school counseling mission statement, (b) teaching the use of technology, (c) recruiting quality candidates, (d) developing a curriculum that reflects current school counseling practices, (e) incorporating school field experiences and practices, (f) inducting new school counseling students into the profession, (g) developing working relationships with all stakeholders, (h) providing professional development for

counselor educators, (i) developing collaborative working partnerships with universities and school districts, and (j) developing partnerships with state departments of education.

Sears and Granello (2002) also agreed that if the school counseling profession is to change in any significant manner then counselor preparation programs must also adjust. They believed that it is necessary to train PSCs in individual and group counseling skills for academic, career, and personal/social development of students. They stated that counseling skills are not enough. They suggested that counselor education programs develop collaborative training opportunities with all stakeholders including (a) advocacy, (b) systems, and (c) questioning the status quo. They suggested that counselor educators be selective and inclusive in admission procedures. They also suggested that counselor educators integrate theory and practice, emphasize skills and knowledge around academic, career, and personal/social development, and include national educational reform initiatives in the curriculum. Finally, Sears and Granello challenged the counseling education profession to transform school counseling.

CACREP (2001) defined minimum standards for the preparation of counselors as (a) a 48-hour program, (b) a program with three core faculty members, (c) a curriculum that includes eight common core areas, (d) a program with nine accreditation areas including school counseling, (e) an accredited educational institution, (f) a supervised practicum and internship experience, (g) a program with enrolled students, and (h) a program with a mission statement. The eight core areas mentioned above are professional identity, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, career development, helping relationships, group work, and assessment and research and program evaluation. CACREP acknowledged that no professional preparation program is ever complete and that all counselors require life-long continuing

education programs. In addition to these core courses mentioned previously, CACREP standards for PSCs are listed in Appendix B.

Research conducted by Perusse and Goodnough (2005) of PSCs' perceptions of graduate preparation programs concluded with many questions remaining unanswered. Should counselor educators design a course of study around what PSCs consider important, what ASCA considers important, what the literature indicates important, or some other option? Universities that are CACREP-accredited offer doctoral programs in counselor education and master's programs in school counseling. However, these programs vary in their school counseling curriculum. As noted in the table below eight universities from different parts of the country are listed. All offer school counseling degrees at the master's level and doctoral degrees in counseling education. All are CACREP-accredited (Duquesne University (DU), 2007; Northern Illinois University (NIU), 2007; University of Arkansas (UA), 2007; University of New Orleans (UNO), 2007; University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC), 2007; University of Southern California (USC), 2007; University of Virginia (UVA), 2007; and Washington State University (WSU), 2007).

Table 1

Universities with School Counseling Programs and Doctoral Programs in Counselor Education

Area	University	Hours	# of Electives
North	Duquesne University (DU)	60	2
Mid-West	Northern Illinois University (NIU)	48	4
Deep South	University of New Orleans (UNO)	60	2
Deep South	University of Arkansas (UA)	48	7
South	University of Virginia (UVA)	48	2

Table 1 cont.

South	University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC)	60	6
West	University of Southern California (USC)	60	9
West	Washington State University (WSU)	60	5

Some of the elective courses from these eight universities included School Counseling: Programs, Issues, and Practices, Consultation and Management in Developmental School Counseling Programs, Program Organization and Information Management, Consultation Theory and Methods, Profession of School Counseling, Advocacy in School Counseling, Using Tests in Counseling, Behavior Management in the Classroom, Counseling and Collaborative Consultation in the School Setting, Development, Administration, and Evaluation of Pupil Personnel Services, and Learning and Individual Differences.

One of the commonalities shared by these CACREP-accredited universities is practicum and internship. Many researchers believed that there are numerous opportunities to train PSCs in school settings (Arman & Sherer, 2004; Clark & Horton-Parker, 2002; Clark & Stone, 2000; Coker & Schrader, 2004; Hayes, Dagley & Home, 1996; Paisley, 2001). Arman and Sherer and Coker and Schrader agreed that practicum and internship integrated theory and practice for students. They proposed a service-learning model for counselor preparation while Coker and Schrader proposed a collaborative model for counselor preparation. Results of the research of both studies indicated that both models are effective in integrating theory and practice of school counseling. The service-learning model combined course content with hands-on experience from the initial entry into the graduate program. The collaborative model assisted counselor educators in developing new ways to prepare PSCs to effectively address the changing needs of

students. Both models resembled practicum and internship courses required by all eight universities cited in this study.

ACES encouraged counselor educators to engage in collaboration with schools to develop new models for school counselor preparation. Counselor educators were advised to include in their models the current social, economic, educational, and political realities while responding to the ever-changing needs of multicultural school communities (Arman & Scherer, 2004; CACREP, 2001; Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Schmidt, 1999). Rather than create a national agenda for school counselor preparation, Hayes, Dagley, and Home (1996) challenged the profession to establish exemplary school counselor preparation programs. These researchers encouraged collaboration and the use of existing resources in the process of developing a program. They believed that collaborative partnerships with schools in school counselor preparation met the needs of PSCs, counselors-in-training, and students in the schools. PSCs needed training in preventative and proactive services, education in the classroom, early intervention, program coordination and consultation, and counseling skills. They believed that this combination of preparation and service delivery provided trained PSCs to meet the changing needs of all the stakeholders in school communities.

Recent revisions in the ASCA National Standards (2005), the Education Trust's (2000) Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI), and the school reform movement, *NCLB* (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) inspired changes in the school counseling profession. These reforms promoted educating PSCs to become leaders, advocates, consultants and collaborators, and key stakeholders in the education reform movement. In a like manner, the most recent school reform movement focused on achievement and academic success for all students. Unfortunately, PSCs historically lacked training in skills to promote academic success

and educational development of all students (Clark & Stone, 2000). In a study by Dollarhide and Lemberger (2006), PSCs in North Carolina discussed the negative impact of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. Because of the incorporation of high-stakes testing, PSCs cited less time to provide services to students, less accessibility to students, and greater misunderstandings about the roles of PSCs. Another negative effect of *NCLB*'s legislation on PSCs was the perceptions of the roles of PSCs as test administrators.

Coordination, advocacy, collaboration, and evaluation skills are usually omitted from school counselor preparation programs as well as skills to enhance academic achievement for all K-12 students. According to Bemak (2000) and the Education Trust (2000), school counselor preparation programs remained unchanged for many years even though the needs of the students they work with are increasingly changing. Most preparation programs included a general core curriculum with an addition of one or two school counseling courses (Perusse, Goodnough, & Noel, 2001). Many students experienced school settings during their internship. According to Perusse, Goodnough, and Noel, 32% of all school counselor programs they researched did not have a practicum, which means that students enter school settings in internships for the first time with minimal content knowledge and little practical experience.

Coker and Schrader (2004) agreed that PSCs in training who are heavily exposed to school environments viewed themselves as leaders and advocates, and were better prepared for the school counseling profession. They suggested that counselor educators move from a clinical model to an educational model of training PSCs. In their research, 61% of the counselor educators who responded to their survey preferred field-based school settings in preparing school counseling students. School counseling students do need training in mental health counseling experiences. However, school counseling students entering internships felt overwhelmed and at

a loss dealing with large caseloads, short counseling time-frames, and various other roles (i.e., parent conferences, classroom guidance, teaming, and collaboration). Coker and Schrader wanted to adapt school-based practicum experience required by CACREP to incorporate leadership and collaborative roles emphasized by TSCI (Education Trust, 2000) and ASCA National Standards (2004). Besides keeping individual and group counseling as a key skill, Coker and Schrader advocated for consulting with teachers and parents, attending and participating in team meetings, and advocating for student academic, career, and personal/social development. Through their research they identified the following positive results of the school-based practicum experience which included (a) acquiring the number of hours for CACREP, (b) gaining realistic counseling experiences, (c) identifying a concrete counseling approach through supervision, and (d) experiencing a variety of school counselors' roles including collaborator, advocate, consultant, and leader. Coker and Schrader believed that developing school-based practicum experiences better prepared PSCs for the roles of the profession.

In the research by Clark and Amatea (2004), they found program and planning implications for counselor educators. They encouraged counselor educators to teach and model collaboration and interdisciplinary cooperation through various assessments and supervision. In their research, they listed examples of this collaboration to include seminars with PSCs, teachers, and administrators sharing their expertise in various topics. Clark and Amatea stated that seminars created an opportunity for each of the key personnel in school settings to offer clear perspectives of their roles in school systems. These seminars also created the beginning of communication, collaboration, leadership, and advocacy for students. *No Child Left Behind* (2001) and ASCA National Standards (2004) created the foundation for establishing this

interdisciplinary collaboration which will ultimately help students experience academic, career, and personal/social success (Clark & Amatea).

Milsom and Akos (2007) studied the differences in scores on the NCE and found a significantly higher score for those counseling students graduating from CACREP accredited programs than those counseling students graduating from non-accredited programs. Specifically, they found that 86% of the counseling graduate students of CACREP-accredited programs passed the NCE as opposed to 77% of counseling graduate students from non-accredited programs. This research indicated that there is a relationship between CACREP-accredited programs and performance on the NCE. Milsom and Akos also noted in their research that nearly four times as many graduate students from CACREP-accredited programs took the NCE as compared to students graduating from non-accredited programs.

Summary

This chapter includes a summary of the literature pertaining to the brief history of school counseling, the roles of PSCs, the professional identity, and the preparation programs of PSCs. The history of school counseling began early in the 20th century and has continued to evolve to its present form. Because of its reactionary personality, the school counseling profession continues to ask the age-old question: are PSCs educators with mental health expertise or are PSCs mental health providers working in school settings?

The roles of PSCs addressed in this study included the development and implementation of comprehensive counseling programs that addressed the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students modeled from the ASCA national Standards (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). In order to be successful in their roles as PSCs, researchers recommended that PSCs

include all stakeholders and resources in school communities in incorporating a comprehensive developmental program that meets the needs of all students. The roles were defined as the actual tasks or responsibilities that PSCs do for students to experience success in these areas of development.

The professional identity of PSCs addressed in this study remains vague even though the elements that define the profession exist (Brott & Meyers, 1999; Remley & Herlihy, 2001). These defining elements of professionalism as suggested by Remley and Herlihy include ethics and standards of practice, credentialing, licensing, and the development of professional organizations. But in spite of all of these efforts to concretize their professional identity, the school counseling profession has continued to struggle in this area (Brott & Meyers).

Because school counseling is sometimes seen as an ancillary service and oftentimes principals determine job descriptions, the school counseling profession has remained in flux according to the research of school systems (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Counselor educators considered the input of ASCA, CACREP, TSCI, and feedback from PSCs as they designed their school counseling graduate programs. PSCs created a new vision as leaders in school systems and serving as advocates for all students. PSCs remain committed to the academic, career, and personal/social development of every student in experiencing academic success.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The sections of this chapter include the purpose of the study, the general research question, hypotheses, participant selection criteria, survey and survey development, data collection plan, and data analysis procedures.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess school counselors' perceptions of their roles, professional identity, and academic preparation in their graduate counseling programs as PSCs. The literature suggested a number of factors that contribute to PSCs' perceptions of their academic preparation. Some of these factors included the numerous roles of school counselors; which vary from school to school, district to district, and state to state; the confusion of PSCs professional identity; and the differences in the graduate preparation of PSCs (Perusse, Goodnough, & Noel, 2001).

After studying much of the literature, Brott and Meyers (1999) discovered PSCs do not always adhere to the positions stated by their professional organizations, or CACREP and other accrediting bodies, or their academic preparation program teachings. Rather, they oftentimes are involved in various activities that are assigned to them by their principals. Research by Perusse, Goodnough, and Noel (2001) also indicated that there are many questions that still need to be answered in the school counseling profession. What are the roles of PSCs? What is the professional identity of PSCs? How do counselor educators design their school counseling

preparation programs? Should they design their programs according to what current practitioners believe are important, what CACREP believes is important, what ASCA believes is important, what a combination of these three perspectives would suggest, or perhaps another option. By examining PSCs' perceptions of their academic preparation, the results of this study provided valuable information for counselor educators as they plan and implement curricula to meet the changing needs of school counseling students.

General Research Question

Do school counselors perceive they are prepared in their *roles* as professional school counselors?

Research Questions

The research questions considered in this study include the following:

1. Do school counselors perceive they are prepared in their roles as professional school counselors?
2. Do professional school counselors who have a greater number of hours completed in their school counseling graduate programs perceive they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?
3. Do professional school counselors who have a stronger professional identity (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities) believe they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?
4. Do professional school counselors who have completed three or more school counseling specialty courses in their school counseling graduate programs perceive they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?

Research Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to examine the data collected from ASCA members concerning their perceptions of their academic preparation during their school counseling graduate programs to become PSCs. The hypotheses derived from the research questions included the following:

1. Professional school counselors perceive themselves to be prepared in their roles as school counselors.
2. Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to the number of hours completed in their school counseling graduate programs.
3. Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to their professional identity (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities).
4. Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to their completion of three or more specialty school counseling courses in their school counseling graduate programs.

Participants

Participants for this study included ASCA members and were identified through the membership directory (ASCA, 2007). The membership directory is available on the ASCA website with various pieces of personal information including email addresses, home addresses, telephone numbers, and work settings of its members. All ASCA members were contacted through a bulk email communication system called SurveyMonkey™. The ASCA membership

was selected to clearly define the target population and to assist in duplicating and generalizing the results to the broader population of school counselors (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Jaeger, 1997). Also, ASCA members were chosen because they represent all regions of the country. Of the 18,654 members, 11,907 listed their email addresses. Of the 11,907 contacted through emails, 4,039 emails were returned as undeliverable. Of the 7,868 participants, 2,513 responded representing a 32% of the return rate. Of the 2,513 participants, 400 were eliminated from this research study because of incomplete data or lack of experience. Participants considered as lacking experience (17.20%) were employed as a school counselor for less than one year and were eliminated from this study.

Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (1998) discussed the value of selecting a suitable sample size and its implications on a research plan and analysis of the findings. They presented a reliable method for determining the suitable sample size to use in a study. The key factors used in determining an appropriate sample size included level of significance, power, effect size, and number of participants in the sample. The level of significance, or alpha level, was set at .05 for the data analyses of this study and is typical for most studies in behavioral research.

Variables

The independent variables associated with this study included (a) school counseling graduate program, (b) professional identity as a school counselor, and (c) number of specialty school counseling courses. The school counseling graduate program referred to the number of hours of coursework PSCs were required in their training. The professional identity referred to the various certifications and licensures participants received as well as their professional organization affiliations and their regular participation at professional workshops and

conferences. The researcher set the criterion that PSCs participating in four or more professional activities would have a stronger professional identity than PSCs participating in three or less professional activities. Specialty courses referred to the additional school counseling courses that participants completed beyond the CACREP requirements. The researcher set the criterion that PSCs completing three or more specialty courses would perceive themselves to be better prepared in their roles than PSCs completing less than three specialty courses.

The dependent variable was school counselors' perceptions of how they were academically prepared in 30 roles as PSCs and overall preparation as measured by a researcher developed survey. The roles included numerous tasks PSCs perform for K-12 students to experience academic success and further their career and personal/social development in addition to the roles that include advocacy and various tasks to promote the professional identity of school counselors. All 30 roles were determined by reviewing ASCA (2005) and CACREP (2001) standards.

Survey Development

Numerous other studies have examined the roles of school counselors (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Borders, 2002; Brott & Meyers, 1999; Chata & Loesch, 2007; Dahir, 2004; Keys & Lockhart, 1999; Lazovsky & Shimoni, 2007; Lieberman, 2004; Ross & Herrington, 2006), but some of the instruments used in previous studies were not applicable for this study. Specifically in Ross and Herrington's study, their survey entitled *Public School Counselor Role Ambiguity Questionnaire* (PSCRAQ) measured the perceptions of PSCs' responses as part of the administration whose time and resources may be changed by principals as school problems surface or situations evolve. Another survey instrument, the *Counseling Profession Scale* (CPS)

developed by Gray and Remley (2000) was not used because it measured only the level of professional identity and was not limited to school counselors. In order to determine the perceptions of PSCs' academic preparation of their roles, a survey was developed for this study; the *School Counselors' Perceptions of Preparation (SCPP)*, see Appendix C) for this study.

The *SCPP* was created specifically for this study with the purpose of determining school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as PSCs. The *SCPP* is divided into five sections which include: Section I, *Personal Information*, Section II, *Roles of Professional School Counselors*, Section III, *Professional Identity*, Section IV, *Graduate Program Preparation*, and Section V, *Additional Comments*.

Section I, *Personal Information*, contains demographic information including sex, ethnicity, age, state of residence, work setting, counseling degree, year of graduation, type of counseling accreditation program, and number of years of work experience as PSCs.

Participants indicated sex by checking female or male. Ethnicity was indicated as African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Native American, Caucasian/European American, Pacific Islander, or Other. Participants' specific age and state of residence was indicated. School counselors' work setting included elementary, middle, secondary, post-secondary, other and public, private or parochial. Counseling degree was indicated by participants checking 36-hour master's program, 48-hour master's program, 60-hour master's program, 61 plus-hour or more master's program, and doctorate program. In the next question, participants indicated the year they graduated from their school counseling graduate program. Participants were asked if they graduated from a CACREP accredited program. Finally, participants indicated the number of years of experience they have had as PSCs.

Section II, *Roles of the Professional School Counselor*, participants responded to 30 statements concerning the roles of school counselors and one statement about their overall preparation by indicating their perceptions of their preparation in their graduate counseling programs. Participants indicated their level of perceptions by rating each statement using a 6-point Likert type scale, where 1 = *Strongly Unprepared*, 2 = *Unprepared*, 3 = *Somewhat unprepared*, 4 = *Somewhat Prepared*, 5 = *Prepared*, and 6 = *Strongly Prepared*. Sears and Granello (2002) concluded that graduate level training should prepare counselors to assume roles as advocates, leaders, and academic, career, and personal/social advisors and that these roles in addition to counseling skills are essential for PSCs in the 21st century. Campbell and Dahir (1997) acknowledged and promoted the implementation of comprehensive developmental counseling programs to meet the needs of every student. They stated that these programs should focus on the academic, career, and personal/social needs of students and are designed and implemented by PSCs.

Each of the 30 roles listed in Section II included a set of skills defined by ASCA (2005) and the national standards defined by CACREP (2001). These roles provided a framework to evaluate the perceptions of PSCs' level of preparation provided in their master's level programs. The roles of PSCs were divided into six parts including (a) academics, (b) personal/social, (c) academic/career/personal/social, (d) tasks/advocacy, (e) professional identity, and (f) overall preparedness (ASCA, 2005; CACREP, 2001). Part A, Academics, included six items that list various roles and responsibilities of school counselors surrounding the academic development of students. The roles included analyze standardized test data, consult with and provide access to all stakeholders of data to assess student outcomes, assist in identification of students with learning differences, establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes resulting from

the implementation of the comprehensive counseling program, implement and monitor 504 adjustments of students by teachers, and collaborate with all school stakeholders on instructional intervention strategies. Part B, Personal/Social, included four roles of PSCs. The roles included facilitate classroom guidance and psychoeducational groups, develop orientation activities for students, develop and implement methods to assist students and parents at points of transition, and develop and implement crisis intervention strategies. In Part C, Academic/Career/Personal/Social, there were six roles including facilitate group counseling with students; develop peer facilitation programs; conduct brief counseling sessions with individual students and families; assess and interpret student academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs; collaborate with all stakeholders in development of staff training to respond to all students' academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs; and give presentations to all stakeholders on various topics. In Part D, Tasks/Advocacy, there were six roles which included develop a school counseling calendar, seek funding sources for school counseling program, advocating for students' placement and school support for rigorous preparation for all students, advocate for students at Individual Educational Plan meetings, advocate for the professional identity of school counselors, and advocate for the roles of school counselors. Part E, Professional Identity, addressed eight roles of PSCs. These roles included assess and address cultural issues; assess and address legal and ethical issues; develop a positive school environment; promote the school and counseling department through various forms of media; use various forms of technology; plan, lead, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a comprehensive guidance programs based on ASCA standards; evaluate and implement current trends in school counseling and educational systems; and utilize community resources to affect change in school community. Part F, Overall Preparedness, contained only one question concerning the perceptions of PSCs overall

preparedness to be a school counselor.

Section III, *Professional Identity*, Part A included 15 statements that described participants' professional identity. Remley and Herlihy (2001) defined professional identity of school counselors as the level at which a counselor identifies with the school counseling profession and takes pride in being a school counselor. Ethics and standards of practice, credentialing, licensing, and development of professional organizations also define a profession. With this in mind, this section listed 15 professional identity activities including certified teacher, certified school counselor in your state, certified national school counselor, registered play therapist, national certified counselor, employed as a school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, licensed professional counselor, working towards state licensure, ASCA member, ACA member, state counseling association member, regularly attend professional development activities, and regularly attend professional conferences. Part B included participants' perceptions of themselves as a mental health professional working in a school setting, an educator with mental health expertise, or a mental health professional and educator.

In Section IV, *Graduate Program Preparation*, participants indicated the courses completed in their school counseling graduate programs. There were six parts included in section four. In Part A, participants indicated each of the eight CACREP core courses completed (i.e., professional identity, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, career development, helping relationships, group work, assessment, research and program evaluation). In Parts B, C, and D, participants indicated the site of their practicum, their first internship, and their second internship courses completed in their school counseling graduate program. In Part E, participants indicated each additional required course completed in their school counseling graduate program (i.e., child and adolescent development, substance abuse, ethics, social systems

in counseling, social foundations in education, and psychological foundation in education). Part F included a listing of 11 school counseling specialty courses and two options for participants to choose none or other. Specialty courses included (a) school counseling: programs, issues, and practices; (b) consultation and management in developmental school counseling programs; (c) program organization and information management; (d) consultation, theory, and methods; (e) profession of school counseling; (f) advocacy in school counseling; (g) using tests in counseling; (h) behavior management in the classroom; (i) counseling and collaborative consultation in the school setting; (j) development, administration, and evaluation of pupil personnel services; (k) learning and individual differences, (l) none, and (m) other (i.e., for courses not listed). The list of specialty school counseling courses was retrieved from the courses established by CACREP and from eight universities from different areas of the United States including: Duquesne University (2007), Northern Illinois University (2007), University of New Orleans (2007), University of Arkansas (2007), University of North Carolina at Charlotte (2007), University of Virginia (2007), University of Southern California (2007), and Washington State University (2007). These universities were chosen because each offers doctoral degrees in counselor education as well as master's degrees in school counseling.

In the final section, Section V, *Additional Comments*, participants had the opportunity to include comments regarding their perceptions of their academic preparation in school counseling in two open-ended questions. The first question asked participants to describe their relationship with all stakeholders (administration, faculty, staff, parents, community, etc.). The second question asked participants to provide comments regarding their perceptions of their school counseling preparation program.

An expert panel of five school counseling professionals evaluated the *SCPP* for content and face validity. Evaluation by an expert panel established the validity of the instrument and helped the researcher improve the format and questions of the instrument (Creswell, 1994). They were asked to review and complete the *SCPP* on their own and then come together to answer specific questions related to the face validity of the survey. Experts were also asked to recommend additions, deletions, and/or modifications to the *SCPP*.

The five professionals reviewed the *SCPP* to make recommendations for revisions. All five professionals were provided with a statement of the goals of this study and the purpose of the *SCPP*. The researcher chose the expert panel members based on their professional credentials and experience in the field of school counseling. Each member of the expert panel earned a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling. The first panel member earned a Ph.D. and an LPC and worked more than 30 years in the school counseling profession. The second member, a teacher and LPC, worked as a school counselor for more than 20 years. The third panel member, an LPC and doctoral candidate in counselor education, worked as a school counselor for five years. The fourth member, an LPC intern and a school counselor, worked as a school counselor for two years. The fifth member was a newly graduated school counselor, an LPC intern, and a doctoral student in counselor education. All members evaluated the *SCPP* for content and face validity in each of the five different sections of the *SCPP*. In addition to the five expert panel members, the four dissertation committee members made suggestions for revisions of the *SCPP* during the proposal defense. The following summary includes the suggestions made by all nine professionals.

In Section I of the *SCPP*, *Personal Information*, one of the committee members suggested using drop down menus whenever possible especially for the questions concerning

state of residence and age. Three of the expert panel members suggested keeping all answers in a vertical format for ease of reading by participants. In Section I, question 5 referring to the type of school setting, one committee member suggested dividing this question into two questions allowing participants to answer “Other” for both the level of the educational setting in which they were working as well as the type of setting. Level refers to elementary, middle, secondary, and post-secondary. Type of setting refers to public, private, parochial, or other. In the question regarding the highest counseling degree earned, three members requested it be moved to Section IV, *Graduate Program Preparation*, and eliminate the words “highest and earned.” The year of graduation was added as a question in Section I at the request of four expert panel members and two committee members since most of them felt that participants who graduated recently might answer very differently from participants who graduated many years ago.

In Section II, *Roles of Professional School Counselors*, two expert panel members suggested a 6-point rather than a 7-point Likert type scale using 1 = *Strongly Unprepared*, 2 = *Unprepared*, 3 = *Somewhat Unprepared*, 4 = *Somewhat Prepared*, 5 = *Prepared*, and 6 = *Strongly Prepared*. Initially, the 7-point Likert scale included a middle response which would equate to no response nor contribute to the research and two expert panel members thought that seventh scale was unnecessary. These same two members suggested dividing this section into five parts to assist participants in reading of the *SCCP*. In Part A, Academics, one member suggested eliminating the word “write” and replace it with “monitor.” There were no suggestions for Part B, Personal/Social, Part C, Academic/Career/Personal/Social, and Part D, Tasks/Advocacy. In Part E, Professional Identity, two expert panel members strongly suggested removing questions 17 and 19 since both “tasks, scheduling students, and administering standardized tests” are not part of the ASCA model and negated the progress that ASCA has

made in the profession in this area. A typographical error was noticed by two expert panel members and two committee members in numbers 23 and 24. There were no suggestions for any changes in Part F, Overall Preparedness.

In Section III, *Professional Identity*, one committee member suggested dividing the section into two parts. This member suggested including an additional question asking participants if they were a mental health professional working in a school setting, an educator with mental health expertise, or a mental health professional and an educator. Two expert panel members and two committee members noticed another typographical error in question 10. One expert panel member and one committee member wanted “registered play therapist” added to the list of professional areas. A duplication of questions 11 and 12 was noticed by three of the committee members.

In Section IV, *Graduate Program Preparation*, four expert panel members and two committee members thought that this section should also be divided into six parts for ease of reading. In Part A, CACREP Core Courses, question 1, two expert panel members suggested adding the words, “helping relationships and techniques”, to question 5 instead of “Counseling Theory” to better describe the course and include the words “testing and psychometrics” in parentheses in question 7, “Assessment.” There were no suggestions for the questions regarding practicum and internships in Parts B, C, and D. In Part E, Required Courses, it was suggested by three expert panel members to add the word “development” behind “child and adolescent”. There were no suggestions for Part F, Additional School Counseling Specialty Courses.

In Section V, *Additional Comments*, one committee member suggested adding one question asking participants to describe their relationships with all stakeholders. Two expert

panel members suggested giving examples in this question of the word “stakeholder” such as administrators, faculty, staff, parents, and community members.

Data Collection

The researcher contacted the Human Subjects Review Board at the University of New Orleans to obtain permission for the study upon approval of the proposal. The researcher retrieved email addresses of members of ASCA through the membership website. These email addresses are available to all members of ASCA free of charge. Potential participants for this study were contacted by mass electronic email messages requesting voluntary participation via SurveyMonkey™ (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>). The survey was anonymous.

The *SCPP* was developed for use as an on-line survey through SurveyMonkey™. Participants accessed the survey through a secure electronic link. Although ASCA members were identifiable by their email addresses, the *SCPP* did not contain questions that revealed the identity of individual participants. Only the email addresses were entered into a generic electronic mailing list titled *SCPP* and this list contained no other identifying information. Each member received the first email (see Appendix D) describing the study and its purpose in addition to an informed consent form stating participation in this study was anonymous and voluntary. SurveyMonkey™ was used because of its cost effectiveness and convenience in data collection. The email message also provided directions for accessing the secure link to *SCPP*, thus ensuring anonymity.

After the participants accessed their email notice of the study, they were asked to read the informed consent and then complete the *SCPP*. Following the initial email request, the researcher sent a follow-up letter with a second bulk email (see Appendix E) requesting that

participants complete the *SCPP* if they had not already done so and thanked them for completing the survey. At the end of the fourth week, the third and final generic mass message (see Appendix F) was sent indicating that data collection was completed. This final message thanked everyone for participating in this study and informed them of the opportunity to request an email copy of the final results of the study. One week following the third and final email message, the survey was closed. The entire data collection period lasted one month.

Data Analysis Procedure

To identify variables that can impact perceptions of school counselors' graduate preparation, the data analysis procedure that was used in this study included descriptive statistics and correlations. Additionally a factor analysis was conducted with the *SCPP*. All statistical procedures for this study were performed using SPSS 16.0 statistical package. Listed below is a review of the research questions and hypotheses as well as the analyses that were performed.

Research Question 1

Do school counselors perceive they are prepared in their roles as professional school counselors?

Hypothesis 1

Professional school counselors perceive themselves to be prepared in their roles as school counselors.

Data Analysis

Data for this research hypothesis were analyzed and presented using descriptive statistical measures of central tendency based on the results from Section Two of the *SCPP* survey (i.e.,

academics, personal/social, academic/career/personal/social, tasks/advocacy, professional identity roles, and overall preparedness).

Research Question 2

Do professional school counselors who have a greater number of hours completed in school counseling graduate programs perceive they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?

Hypothesis 2

Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to the number of hours completed in their school counseling graduate programs.

Data Analysis

Using Pearson correlations, the data for this research hypothesis were analyzed to determine if there were relationships between PSCs who have completed a greater number of hours in school counseling programs and PSCs' perceptions of their preparation in their roles. Data included responses from participants to question 7 of Section I and responses to each of the 30 roles in Section II of the *SCPP* (a) academics, (b) personal/social, (c) academic/career/personal/social, (d) tasks/advocacy, (e) professional identity, and (f) overall preparedness.

Research Question 3

Do professional school counselors who have a stronger professional identity (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities) believe they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?

Hypothesis 3

Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to their professional identity (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities).

Data Analysis

Using Pearson correlations, the data for this research hypothesis were analyzed to determine if there are relationships between PSCs with a stronger professional identity (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities listed in Section III of the *SCPP*) and their perceptions of their preparation in their roles. Data included responses from participants to Section III Part A of the *SCPP* (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities) and responses to each of the 30 roles and overall preparation in Section II of the *SCPP*.

Research Question 4

Do professional school counselors who have completed three or more school counseling specialty courses in their school counseling graduate programs perceive they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?

Hypothesis 4

Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to their completion of three or more specialty school counseling courses in their school counseling graduate programs.

Data Analysis

Using Pearson correlations, the data for this research hypothesis were analyzed to determine if there are relationships between PSCs who have completed three or more school counseling specialty courses and PSCs' perceptions of their preparation in their roles. Data included responses from participants to Section IV, Part F (i.e., three or more specialty courses) and responses to each of the 30 roles in Section II of the *SCPP*.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine professional school counselors' (PSCs) perceptions of their graduate preparation to work in school settings. This research focused on the roles of PSCs and their relationships between the number of hours in degree programs, their professional identity, and the number of specialty courses completed in their school counseling graduate programs. Roles of PSCs included all tasks that school counselors perform in their daily work involving academics, personal/social, academic/career/personal/social, tasks/advocacy, and professional identity. Degree programs included a 36-hour program, a 48-hour program, a 60-hour program, a 61 plus-hour program, or a doctoral program. Professional identity included acquired certifications and licenses, memberships in professional organizations, and participation in professional development activities. The number of specialty courses included additional school counseling coursework completed as requirements or electives in participants' degree programs. As noted in Chapter 1, specific names of specialty courses were retrieved from the curricula of eight universities across the United States that offered both master and doctoral degrees in school counseling and counseling education. This chapter includes the results of the survey instrument, *SCPP* that was used to assess PSCs' perceptions of their preparation for their roles as school counselors.

Survey Instrument: *SCPP*

Section I: Personal Information

The personal information of participants in this study included sex, ethnicity, age, state of residence, present work setting (elementary, middle, secondary, post-secondary or private, parochial, public, and other), counseling degree, year of graduation, counseling program (CACREP accreditation), and number of years of work experience as a school counselor.

Descriptive data for participants' sex can be found in Table 2. Results from the first question of Section I: *Personal Information*, indicated that the vast majority of participants were female, 83.40% ($n = 1,762$) while 16.20% ($n = 342$) were male participants. Participants' responses to the question regarding sex mirrors that of the population of ASCA (2007), which has an 80% female membership and a 20% male membership. Some of the participants, .40% ($n = 9$) chose not to answer this question.

Table 2

Frequencies of Participants' Sex - Section I, Q #1 (N = 2,113)

Sex	<i>f</i>	Percent
Female	1762	83.40
Male	342	16.20
Missing	9	.40

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

In question 2 of Section I: *Personal Information*, participants were asked to identify their ethnicity (see Table 3). Most of the participants, 84.50%, ($n = 1,786$) identified themselves as Caucasian/European. African American made up the second largest participant population at 7.00% ($n = 148$). The remaining categories included Hispanic, 4.20% ($n = 89$), Native American, 1.30% ($n = 27$), Asian American, .90% ($n = 18$), and Pacific Islander, .40% ($n = 9$).

The category labeled other included less than 1.30% ($n = 28$) of the participants. Other included the following self-described ethnicities: Portuguese, Iranian, Egyptian, Middle-Eastern, Persian, Lebanese, Indian, Guyanese, and Multi-Racial. The number of participants not answering this question equaled .30% ($n = 8$).

Table 3

Frequencies of Participants' Ethnicity – Section I, Q #2 (N = 2,113)

Ethnicity	<i>f</i>	Percent
Caucasian/European American	1786	84.50
African American	148	7.00
Hispanic	89	4.20
Native American	27	1.30
Asian American	18	.90
Pacific Islander	9	.40
Other	28	1.30
Missing	8	.30

Note. Other included self-described nationalities of Portuguese, Iranian, Egyptian, Middle-Eastern, Persian, Lebanese, Indian, Guyanese, and Multi-Racial.

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of SPSS.

In question 3 of Section I, participants indicated their ages, which ranged from 21 to 75 (see Table 4). The average age of the participants was 40.85. Some participants, .50% ($n = 11$), chose not to answer this question.

Table 4

Frequencies of Participants' Age – Section I, Q #3 (N = 2,113)

Age	<i>f</i>	Percent
21	1	.00
22	2	.10
23	11	.50
24	47	2.20
25	73	3.50
26	79	3.70
27	88	4.20
28	90	4.30
29	72	3.40
30	98	4.60
31	73	3.50
32	49	2.30
33	61	2.90
34	48	2.30
35	61	2.90
36	53	2.50
37	45	2.10
38	65	3.10
39	65	3.10
40	50	2.40
41	39	1.80
42	40	1.90
43	41	1.90
44	37	1.80
45	30	1.40
46	33	1.60
47	45	2.10
48	40	1.90
49	60	2.80
50	53	2.50
51	47	2.20
52	46	2.20
53	44	2.10
54	64	3.00

55	58	2.70
56	52	2.50
57	43	2.00
58	39	1.80
59	44	2.10
60	34	1.60

Table 4 cont.

61	22	1.00
62	15	.70
63	12	.60
64	10	.50
65	9	.40
66	5	.20
67	3	.10
68	1	.00
71	2	.10
75	3	.10
Missing	11	.50

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of SPSS.

In question 4 of the personal information section, participants indicated their state of residence (see Table 5). California had the greatest response rate with 8.30% ($n = 176$), while Wyoming and North Dakota had the least .30% ($n = 7$) response rate. This coincides with the small population of these states according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2006).

Table 5

Frequencies of Participants' State of Residence – Section I, Q #4 (N = 2,113)

State	<i>f</i>	Percent
AK	8	.40
AL	17	.80
AR	12	.60
AZ	38	1.80
CA	176	8.30
CO	55	2.60
CT	36	1.70
DE	14	.70
FL	87	4.10
GA	100	4.70

HI	16	.80
IA	39	1.90
ID	9	.40
IL	84	4.00
IN	33	1.60
KS	14	.70

Table 5 cont.

KY	10	.50
LA	40	1.90
MA	47	2.20
MD	44	2.10
ME	16	.80
MI	36	1.70
MN	41	1.90
MO	58	2.70
MS	20	.90
MT	11	.50
NC	92	4.40
ND	7	.30
NE	18	.90
NH	18	.90
NJ	71	3.40
NM	16	.80
NV	23	1.10
NY	105	5.00
OH	87	4.10
OK	20	.90
OR	22	1.00
PA	134	6.30
RI	6	.30
SC	39	1.80
SD	13	.60
TN	39	1.80
TX	67	3.20
UT	24	1.10
VA	103	4.90
VT	17	.80
WA	40	1.90
WI	48	2.30
WV	11	.50
WY	7	.30
Missing	25	1.20

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of *SPSS*.

Tables 6 and 7 include information regarding the work setting of participants (questions 5 and 6). In Table 6, participants indicated their work setting by the school's level which included elementary, middle, secondary, or post-secondary settings. The number of PSCs working in elementary and middle schools were similar with 23.90% ($n = 505$) and 22.80% ($n = 481$) respectively. A large number of participants, 44.50% ($n = 941$) worked in secondary school settings. A few participants, 6.20% ($n = 132$) worked in a post-secondary setting. A small percentage of participants, 2.50% ($n = 54$) did not answer this question.

Table 6

Frequencies of Participants' School Level – Section I, Q #5 (N = 2,113)

Setting	<i>f</i>	Percent
Elementary	505	23.90
Middle	481	22.80
Secondary	941	44.50
Post-Secondary	132	6.20
Missing	54	2.50

Note. Missing = the number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of SPSS.

A second characteristic of the school setting was the type of school system in which participants work (see Table 7). Participants described their work setting by the type of school which included private, public, parochial, or other. Of the 2,113 participants, 5.80% ($n = 123$) indicated that they worked in private schools, 87.90% ($n = 1,857$) worked in public school settings, 3.20% ($n = 67$) worked in parochial school settings, and 1.00% ($n = 22$) indicated they were unemployed or working in private practice. Some participants, 2.00% ($n = 44$), chose not to answer this question.

Table 7

Frequencies of Participants' Types of School – Section I, Q #6 (N = 2,113)

Type	<i>f</i>	Percent
Private	123	5.80
Public	1857	87.90
Parochial	67	3.20
Other	22	1.00
Missing	44	2.00

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of *SPSS*.

In question 7 of Section I: *Personal Information*, participants indicated the number of hours in their school counseling degree which included a 36-hour program, a 48-hour program, a 60-hour program, a 61 plus-hour program, a doctoral program, or other (see Table 8). The majority of participants, 39.40% ($n = 832$), indicated that they graduated from a 48-hour program. The fewest number of participants, 4.20% ($n = 89$), indicated that they graduated from doctoral programs. The 36-hour program, 60-hour program, and 61 plus-hour programs all had close participation rates. The 36-hour program included 13.70% ($n = 290$) participants, the 60-hour program included 19.80% ($n = 419$), and the 61 plus-hour program included 16.60% ($n = 350$). A small percentage of participants, 6.80% ($n = 144$), chose not to answer this question.

Table 8

Frequencies of Participants' Number of Hours in Degree Programs--Section I, Q #7 (N = 2,113)

Program	<i>f</i>	Percent
36-Hour	290	13.70
Table 8 cont.		
48-Hour	832	39.40
60-Hour	419	19.80
61 Plus-Hour	350	16.60
Doctoral	89	4.20
Other	106	5.10
Missing	27	1.30

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of SPSS.

The results of question 8 of Section I: *Personal Information*, indicated the year of graduation of participants (see Table 9). Graduation years ranged between 1960 through 2007. The average year of graduation was 1999 and the largest group of graduates was in 2007 at 21.00% ($n = 444$). The percentage of participants who chose not to answer this question was 5.70% ($n = 121$).

Table 9

Frequencies of Participants' Year of Graduation – Section I, Q #8 (N = 2,113)

Year of Graduation	<i>f</i>	Percent
1960	1	.00
1961	1	.00
1965	1	.00
1968	1	.00
1969	1	.00
1970	5	.20
1971	3	.10
1972	11	.50

1973	6	.30
1974	11	.50
1975	15	.70
1976	9	.40
1977	18	.90

Table 9 cont.

1978	13	.60
1979	6	.30
1980	16	.80
1981	16	.80
1982	26	1.20
1983	12	.60
1984	8	.40
1985	15	.70
1986	18	.90
1987	28	1.30
1988	23	1.10
1989	31	1.50
1990	26	1.20
1991	46	2.20
1992	33	1.60
1993	31	1.50
1994	37	1.80
1995	65	3.10
1996	46	2.20
1997	47	2.20
1998	61	2.90
1999	63	3.00
2000	78	3.70
2001	73	3.50
2002	79	3.70
2003	108	5.10
2004	128	6.10
2005	141	6.70
2006	191	9.00
2007	444	21.00
Missing	121	5.70

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of SPSS.

Question 9 of Section I: *Personal Information*, required participants to indicate if they graduated from a CACREP accredited school counseling program (see Table 10). The majority,

59.00% ($n = 1,248$) responded that they graduated from CACREP accredited school counseling programs. Many participants, 35.00% ($n = 739$) responded that they had not graduated from a CACREP accredited program. A small percentage of participants, 6.00% ($n = 126$) chose not to respond to this question.

Table 10

Frequencies of Participants CACREP Programs – Section I, Q #9 (N = 2,113)

CACREP	<i>f</i>	Percent
Yes	1248	59.10
No	739	35.00
Missing	126	6.00

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

In question 10 of Section I: *Personal Information*, of the *SCPP*, participants indicated their number of years of work experience as a school counselor (see Table 11). The largest percentage of participants, 17.20% ($n = 363$), worked one year or less. The percentage of school counselors with 16 or more years was 13.90% ($n = 294$). A small percentage, 2.30% ($n = 49$), of participants chose not to answer this question.

Table 11

Frequencies of Participants' Years of Experience – Section I, Q #10 (N = 2,113)

Years	<i>f</i>	Percent
1	363	17.20
2	181	8.60
3	201	9.50
4	158	7.50
5	128	6.10
6	110	5.20
7	75	3.50
8	82	3.90
9	106	5.00

10	65	3.10
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Table 11 cont.

11	81	3.80
12	44	2.10
13	56	2.70
14	43	2.00
15	37	1.80
16+	294	13.90
Missing	49	2.30

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of SPSS.

Section II: Roles of Professional School Counselors

In Section II of the *SCPP*, participants responded to 31 questions, which were divided into six parts regarding their roles and their overall preparedness as PSCs. Part A, *Academics*, contained six questions. Part B, *Personal/Social*, contained four questions. Part C, *Academic/Career/Personal/Social*, contained six questions. Part D, *Tasks/Advocacy*, contained six questions. Part E, *Professional Identity*, contained eight questions. Part F, *Overall Preparedness*, participants were asked to respond to their perceptions of their overall preparedness of their school counseling graduate program. Participants responded by using a 6-point Likert type scale where 1 = *Strongly Unprepared*, 2 = *Unprepared*, 3 = *Somewhat Unprepared*, 4 = *Somewhat Prepared*, 5 = *Prepared*, and 6 = *Strongly Prepared*. Results of this section will be discussed in detail in the hypothesis one section of Chapter 4.

Section III: Professional Identity

In Section III: *Professional Identity*, Part A, participants identified the number of acquired certifications and licenses, memberships in professional organizations, and participation in various professional development activities. The largest percentage of participants indicated

that they were members of ASCA, 92.7% ($n = 1,959$) and the smallest percentage of participants indicated that they were Registered Play Therapists, .60% ($n = 13$) (see Table 12). The *SCPP* included 15 possible professional identity areas and of those 15 the results indicated that the minimum number of professional identity areas identified by participants equaled one and the maximum number equaled 12 (see Table 13).

Table 12

Frequencies of Participants' Professional Identity Areas – Section III, Part A

Area	<i>f</i>	Percent
Certified Teacher	887	42.00
Certified School Counselor in state	1805	85.40
Certified National School Counselor	189	8.90
Registered Play Therapist	13	.60
National Certified Counselor	324	15.30
Employed as a School Counselor	1467	69.40
School Psychologist	19	.90
Social Worker	54	2.60
Licensed Professional Counselor	250	11.80
Licensed Professional Counselor Intern	287	13.60
ASCA Member	1959	92.70
ACA Member	503	23.80
State Counseling Association Member	1243	58.80
Attend Professional Development Activities	1563	74.00
Attend Professional Conferences	1319	62.40

Note. ASCA = American School Counselor Association

Note. ACA = American Counseling Association

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of *SPSS*.

Table 13

Frequencies of Participants' Total Number P I Areas - Section III, Part A (N = 2,113)

Number of PI Areas	<i>f</i>	Percent
0	7	.30
1	62	2.90
2	93	4.40
3	165	7.80
4	246	11.60

5	368	17.40
6	415	19.60
7	437	20.70

Table 13 cont.

8	186	8.80
9	78	3.70
10	41	1.90
11	13	.60
12	1	.00
13	0	.00
14	0	.00
15	0	.00
Missing	1	.00

Note. PI = Professional Identity

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of SPSS.

In Part B of Section III: *Professional Identity*, participants responded to their professional self-perceptions as (a) a mental health professional working in school settings, (b) an educator with mental health expertise, or (c) both mental health professional and educator (see Table 14). Responses indicated that 39.00% ($n = 824$) identified themselves as educators with mental health expertise while 44.00% ($n = 930$) identified themselves as mental health professionals and educators, a 5.00% difference. Only 13.10% ($n = 276$) identified themselves as mental health professionals working in school settings.

Table 14

Frequencies of Participants' Professional Self-Perceptions – Section III, Part B (N = 2,113)

Professional Self-Perceptions	<i>f</i>	Percent
Mental Health Professional Working in a School Setting	276	13.10
Educator with Mental Health Expertise	824	39.00
Mental Health Professional and Educator	930	44.00
Missing	83	3.90

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Section IV: Graduate Program Preparation

In Section IV of the *SCPP*, participants responded to six questions concerning their preparation in their school counseling graduate programs. Part A regarded the amount of CACREP core courses participants completed in their school counseling graduate programs. In Parts B, C, and D, participants indicated the site where they completed their practicum and internships. Parts E and F inquired about any additional required courses participants completed or any specialty school counseling courses they completed in their school counseling graduate programs.

In Part A of Section IV, the course on group work included the largest percentage of participants' responses at 89.50% ($n = 1,892$), while professional identity received the lowest percentage at 44.20% ($n = 934$). The missing values indicated the number of participants choosing not to answer this question or not completing this coursework (see Table 15).

Table 15

Frequencies of Participants' Completed CACREP Core Courses - Section IV, Part A (N=2,113)

Course	<i>f</i>	Percent
Professional Identity	934	44.20
Missing	1179	55.80
Social and Cultural Diversity	1689	79.90
Missing	424	20.00
Human Growth and Development	1771	83.80
Missing	342	16.14
Career Development	1834	86.80

Missing	279	13.11
Helping Relationships	1794	84.90
Missing	319	15.00

Table 15 cont.

Group Work	1892	89.50
Missing	221	10.36
Assessment	1791	84.80
Missing	322	15.14
Research and Program Evaluation	1531	72.50
Missing	582	27.54

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer or not completing coursework.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of *SPSS*.

Part B of Section IV required participants to indicate the site where they completed their practicum course in their school counseling graduate program. A large majority of participants 79.40% ($n = 1,678$), completed their practicum in either elementary, middle, or secondary school settings as school counselor interns, while 7.40% ($n = 156$), completed their practicum in a college setting as college counselors (see Table 16). The setting with the smallest number of participants, .30% ($n = 6$), was a gerontological setting with a senior citizen population. The community setting served as a practicum site for 5.40% ($n = 115$) of participants. A small percentage, 4.10% ($n = 86$), indicated that they did not complete a practicum.

Table 16

Frequencies of Participants' Practicum Site - Section IV, Part B (N = 2,113)

Site	<i>f</i>	Percent
School	1678	79.40
College	156	7.40
Community	115	5.40
Gerontological	6	.30
None	86	4.10

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. School = elementary, middle, and secondary.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of *SPSS*.

Part C of Section IV required participants to indicate the site of their first internship course completed in their school counseling graduate program. A large majority of participants 81.60% ($n = 1,724$), completed their first internship in either elementary, middle, or secondary school settings as school counselor interns, while 2.50% ($n = 53$), completed their first internship in a college setting as college counselors (see Table 17). The setting with the smallest number of participants, .00% ($n = 1$), was a gerontological setting with a senior citizen population. The community setting served as a first internship site for 4.20% ($n = 89$) of participants. An additional 6.70% ($n = 141$), indicated that they did not complete an internship.

Table 17

Frequencies of Participants' First Internship Site – Section IV, Part C (N = 2,113)

Site	<i>f</i>	Percent
School	1724	81.60
College	53	2.50
Community	89	4.20
Gerontological	1	.00
None	141	6.70
Missing	105	5.00

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. School = elementary, middle, and secondary.

Part D of Section IV required participants to indicate the site of their second internship course completed in their school counseling graduate program. A large majority of participants 66.60% ($n = 1,407$), completed their first internship in either elementary, middle, or secondary school settings as school counselor interns, while 2.40% ($n = 51$), completed their second internship in a college setting as college counselors (see Table 18). The community setting

served as a second internship site for 3.50% ($n = 74$) of participants. The number of participants indicating that they did not complete a second internship was 18.30% ($n = 386$).

Table 18

Frequencies of Participants' Second Internship Site – Section IV, Part D (N = 2,113)

Site	<i>f</i>	Percent
School	1407	66.60
College	51	2.40
Community	74	3.50
None	386	18.30
Missing	195	9.20

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. School = elementary, middle, and secondary.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of SPSS.

In Part E of Section IV: *Graduate Program Preparation*, participants indicated which, if any, of the six additional required courses they completed in their school counseling graduate program. A large majority, 75.20% ($n = 1,588$), indicated that they took child and adolescent development courses in their school counseling graduate programs (see Table 19). The number of participants completing substance abuse courses was 31.00% ($n = 655$). Another large majority, 72.00% ($n = 1,521$), indicated that they took an ethics course in their school counseling graduate program. The number of participants completing social systems in counseling coursework was 29.40% ($n = 621$). Participants completing coursework in social foundations in education was 31.30% ($n = 661$). The final course, psychological foundations in education, was completed by 40.90% ($n = 865$).

Table 19

Frequencies of Participants' Additional Required Courses - Section IV, Part E

Course	<i>f</i>	Percent
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Child and Adolescent Development	1588	75.20
Substance Abuse	655	31.00
Ethics	1521	72.00
Table 19 cont.		
Social Systems in Counseling	621	29.40
Social Foundations in Education	661	31.30
Psychological Foundations in Education	865	40.90

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of *SPSS*.

In Part F of Section IV: *Graduate Program Preparation*, participants indicated which, if any, of the 11 additional school counseling specialty courses they completed in their school counseling graduate programs. Over half the participants, 58.30%, ($n = 1,232$) indicated that they took School Counseling: Programs, Issues, and Practices in their school counseling graduate programs (see Table 20). A small percentage of participants, 6.50%, ($n = 138$) indicated that they did not take any specialty courses in their school counseling graduate programs.

Table 20

Frequencies of Participants' Specialty Courses – Section IV, Part F

Course	<i>f</i>	Percent
School Counseling	1232	58.30
Management in School Counseling	594	28.10
Program Organization	351	16.60
Consultation	777	36.80
Profession of School Counseling	610	28.90
Advocacy in School Counseling	194	9.20

Using Tests in Counseling	769	36.40
Behavior Management in Classroom	413	19.50
Counseling and Collaborative Consultation Table 20 cont.	579	27.40
Development, Administration, and Evaluation of Pupil Personnel Services	259	12.30
Learning and Individual Differences	551	26.10
None	138	6.50

Note. List of specialty courses from eight universities.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of *SPSS*.

Additional information regarding the number of school counseling specialty courses completed in school counseling graduate programs is included in Table 21. These specialty courses were selected from eight universities across the country, and were required for successful completion of their school counseling graduate programs. This study presumed that PSCs completing three or more school counseling specialty courses will perceive themselves to be more prepared in their roles as school counselors. The data indicated that 7.30% ($n = 155$) of participants did not take any additional school counseling specialty courses and .90% ($n = 20$) of participants took at least 11 school counseling specialty courses. Half of the participants, 51.40% ($n = 1,087$), took less than three specialty courses in their school counseling graduate programs and slightly less than half, 48.50% ($n = 1,025$) took three or more specialty courses in their school counseling graduate programs.

Table 21

Frequencies of Participants' Number of Specialty Courses Completed – Section IV, Part F

Number	<i>f</i>	Percent
0	155	7.30
1	510	24.10

2	391	18.50
3	311	14.70
4	243	11.50
5	172	8.10
6	130	6.20
Table 21 cont.		
7	88	4.20
8	56	2.70
9	24	1.10
10	13	.60
11	20	.90
<3	1087	51.40
≥3	1025	48.50
Missing	1	1.00

Note. Missing = number of participants choosing not to answer.

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding of *SPSS*.

Section V: Additional Comments

Section V of the *SCPP* included two open-ended questions. The first question asked participants to describe their relationships with all stakeholders. The second question asked participants to express any additional comments they had regarding their perceptions of their school counseling graduate programs. Of the 2,113 participants who completed the *SCPP*, 81.00% ($n = 1,711$) responded to the first open-ended question and 69.00% ($n = 1,360$) responded to the second open-ended question. Through the use of a grounded research method, responses were analyzed resulting in the identification of one theme for question one and six themes for question two.

In question one, 92% ($n = 1,574$) of the participants answering this question described their relationships with stakeholders (students, faculty, administrators, parents, family, and members of the community) as positive. They used words such as “positive,” “collegial,” “productive,” “collaborative,” “supportive,” “professional,” and “resourceful.” A small number of participants answering this question, 8.00% ($n = 136$), reported that their relationships with

stakeholders was an area for growth and used words such as “fair,” “inconsistent,” “indifferent,” “discouraging,” “strained,” “limited,” and “poor.”

In the second open-ended question of Section V, 69.00% ($n = 1,360$) responded by writing additional comments concerning their school counseling graduate programs. The results grouped together into six themes including (a) school counselor versus mental health professional, (b) theory versus application, (c) limited internship experience, (d) on-the-job training, (e) educators before counselors, and (f) limited special education coursework. The number of participants who expressed their need for the focus of their preparation to be on school counseling rather than the focus on mental health counseling was 28.00% ($n = 378$) (see Table 22). The second theme, too much theory rather than application, was identified by 14.00% ($n = 189$) of the participants. The third theme, limited internship experience, was mentioned by 12.00% ($n = 160$) of the participants answering this question. Another 7.00% ($n = 96$), indicated that on-the-job training was invaluable in their development as PSCs. A number of participants 6.00% ($n = 84$) mentioned the value of being educators before they became PSCs. Participants mentioning that they received little or no special education coursework in their school counseling graduate programs were 2.00% ($n = 26$).

Table 22

Frequencies of Open-Ended - Section V, Q # 2 (N = 1,360)

Comment/Theme	<i>f</i>	Percent
School Counselor versus Mental Health Counselor	378	28.00
Theory versus Application	189	14.00
Limited Internship	160	12.00
On-Job-Training	96	7.00
Educators before Counselors	84	6.00
Limited Special Education Coursework	26	2.00

Note. Comments receiving less than 25 responses were not included in this table.

Results of Hypothesis Testing Using Correlations

Research Question 1

Do school counselors perceive they are prepared in their roles as professional school counselors?

Test of Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1: Professional school counselors perceive themselves to be prepared in their roles as school counselors. This hypothesis was tested by examining descriptive data of the participants' perceptions of their academic, personal/social, academic/career/ personal/social, tasks/advocacy, and professional identity roles and their overall preparation. Participants responded by using a 6-point Likert type scale where 1 = *Strongly Unprepared*, 2 = *Unprepared*, 3 = *Somewhat Unprepared*, 4 = *Somewhat Prepared*, 5 = *Prepared*, and 6 = *Strongly Prepared*. The mean for the first six academic roles ranged from 3.15 to 4.16 indicating that participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat unprepared* to *somewhat prepared* in their academic roles (see Table 23).

In the first academic role, analyze standardized test data, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* in this role ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 1.28$). In the second academic role, consult with and provide access to all stakeholders of data to assess student outcomes, participants also perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* in this role ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.26$). The third academic role, assist in identification of students with learning differences, participants' responses indicated that they perceived themselves to be *somewhat unprepared* ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 1.29$). In the fourth academic role, establish and assess measurable goals for

student outcomes resulting from the implementation of the comprehensive counseling program, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.37$). In the fifth academic role, implement and monitor 504 adjustments of students by teachers, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat unprepared* ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.45$). In the last academic role, collaborate with all school stakeholders on instructional intervention strategies, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* in their roles ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.36$).

Table 23

Means and Standard Deviations of PSCs' Roles (N = 2,113)

Academic Roles	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Analyze standardized test data	2103	4.12	1.28
Consult with and provide access to all stakeholders of data to assess student outcomes	2105	4.16	1.26
Assist in identification of students with learning differences	2107	3.94	1.29
Establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes resulting from the implementation of the comprehensive counseling program	2106	4.05	1.37
Implement and monitor 504 adjustments of students by teachers	2108	3.15	1.45
Collaborate with all school stakeholders on instructional intervention strategies	2101	4.05	1.36

The mean for the four personal/social roles ranged from 4.44 to 5.00 indicating that participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* to *prepared* in these roles (see Table 24). In the first personal/social role, facilitate classroom guidance and psychoeducational

groups, participants indicated that they perceived themselves to be *prepared* ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.06$). In the second personal/social role, develop orientation activities for students, participants indicated that they perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 1.19$). In the third personal/social role, develop and implement methods to assist students and parents at points of transition, participants indicated that they perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.20$). In the fourth and final personal/social role, develop and implement crisis intervention strategies, participants indicated that they perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.21$).

Table 24

Means and Standard Deviations of PSCs' Roles (N = 2,113)

Personal/Social Roles	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Facilitate classroom guidance and psychoeducational groups	2103	5.00	1.06
Develop orientation activities for students	2099	4.62	1.19
Develop and implement methods to assist students and parents at points of transition	2100	4.44	1.20
Develop and implement crisis intervention strategies	2098	4.45	1.21

The mean for the six academic/career/personal/social roles ranged from 4.34 to 5.29 indicating that participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* to *prepared* in these roles (see Table 25). In the first academic/career/personal/social role, facilitate group counseling with students, participants indicated that they perceived themselves to be *prepared* ($M = 5.23$, $SD = .84$). In the second academic/career/personal/social role, develop peer facilitation programs, participants indicated that they perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.23$). In the third academic/career/personal/social role, conduct brief counseling

sessions with individual students and families, participants perceived themselves to be *prepared* ($M = 5.29, SD = .88$). In the fourth academic/career/personal/social role, assess and interpret student academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs, participants perceived themselves to be *prepared* ($M = 5.00, SD = .92$). In the fifth academic/career/personal/social role, collaborate with all stakeholders in development of staff training to respond to all students' academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.46, SD = 1.19$). In the sixth academic/career/personal/social role, give presentations to all stakeholders on various topics, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.39, SD = 1.30$).

Table 25

Means and Standard Deviations of PSCs' Roles (N = 2,113)

Academic/Career/Personal/Social	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Facilitate group counseling with students	2110	5.23	.84
Develop peer facilitation programs	2106	4.34	1.23
Conduct brief counseling sessions with individual students and families	2109	5.29	.88
Assess and interpret student academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs	2105	5.00	.92
Collaborate with all stakeholders in development of staff training to respond to all students' academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs	2107	4.46	1.19
Give presentations to all stakeholders on various topics	2104	4.39	1.30

The mean for the six tasks/advocacy roles ranged from 2.86 to 4.64 indicating that participants perceived themselves to be *unprepared* to *somewhat prepared* in these roles (see

Table 26). In the first tasks/advocacy role, develop a school counseling calendar, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.22, SD = 1.37$). In the second tasks/advocacy role, seek funding sources for counseling program, participants perceived themselves to be *unprepared* ($M = 2.86, SD = 1.30$). In the third tasks/advocacy role, advocate for students' placement and school support for rigorous preparation for all students, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.10, SD = 1.31$). In the fourth tasks/advocacy role, advocate for students at IEP meetings, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.02, SD = 1.43$). In the fifth tasks/advocacy role, advocate for the professional identity of school counselors, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.51, SD = 1.36$). In the sixth tasks/advocacy role, advocate for the roles of school counselors, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.64, SD = 1.33$).

Table 26

Means and Standard Deviations of PSCs' Roles (N = 2,113)

Tasks/Advocacy Roles	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Develop a school counseling calendar	2105	4.22	1.37
Seek funding sources for counseling program	2101	2.86	1.30
Advocate for students' placement and school support for rigorous preparation for all students	2105	4.10	1.31
Advocate for students at IEP meetings	2102	4.02	1.43
Advocate for the professional identity school counselors	2097	4.51	1.36
Advocate for the roles of school counselors	2098	4.64	1.33

The mean for the eight professional identity roles ranged from 4.23 to 4.94 indicating that participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* in these roles (see Table 27). In the first professional identity role, assess and address cultural issues, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.88, SD = 1.00$). In the second professional identity role, assess and address legal and ethical issues, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.91, SD = .96$). In the third professional identity role, develop a positive school environment, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.94, SD = .98$). In the fourth professional identity role, promote the school counseling department through various forms of media, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.25, SD = 1.30$). In the fifth professional identity role, use various forms of technology, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.36, SD = 1.52$). In the sixth professional identity role, plan, lead, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a comprehensive guidance program based on the ASCA standards, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.23, SD = 1.50$). In the seventh professional identity role, evaluate and implement current trends in school counseling and educational systems, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.29, SD = 1.26$). In the eighth professional identity role, utilize community resources to affect change in the school community, participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* ($M = 4.24, SD = 1.23$).

Table 27

Means and Standard Deviations of PSCs' Roles (N = 2,113)

Professional Identity Roles	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Assess and address cultural issues	2105	4.88	1.00
Assess and address legal and ethical issues	2105	4.91	.96

Develop a positive school environment	2090	4.94	.98
Promote the school counseling department through various forms of media	2106	4.25	1.30
Use various forms of technology	2100	4.36	1.52
Table 27 cont.			
Plan, lead, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a comprehensive guidance program based on the ASCA Standards	2103	4.23	1.50
Evaluate and implement current trends in school counseling	2104	4.29	1.26
Utilize community resources to affect change in school community	2086	4.24	1.23

The results of the final descriptive data analyzed, overall preparation, indicated that participants perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* in all 30 of their roles ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 1.01$). See Table 28 for the result of the participants' perception of their overall preparedness in their roles as PSCs.

Table 28

Means and Standard Deviations of PSCs' Roles (N = 2,113)

Roles	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Overall Preparation	2092	4.56	1.01

Research Question 2

Do professional school counselors who have a greater number of hours completed in their school counseling graduate programs perceive they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?

Test of Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2: Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to the number of hours completed in their school counseling graduate programs. Pearson r was used to analyze these relationships. Guilford's interpretations were used (as cited in Sprinthall, 2003) in determining the levels of the relationships. Guilford indicated that no relationship exists when $r < .10$. A slight relationship exists when r equals .10 to .20, a low relationship exists when r equals .20 to .40, a medium relationship exists when r equals .40 to .70, and a high relationship exists when r equals .80 to 1.0.

This hypothesis was tested by examining correlation data of participants' scores of their perceptions in their academic, personal, academic/career/personal/social, tasks/advocacy, and professional identity roles and the overall preparedness with the number of hours they completed in their counseling degree (see Table 29). The counseling degree included a 36-hour program, a 48-hour program, a 60-hour program, a 61 plus-hour program, or a doctoral program. Many of the correlations are significant due to the large number of participants in the study. The results of these correlations indicated that 20 of the 30 roles as well as the overall preparation were significant at the $p \leq .01$ level. Six of the 30 roles were significant at the $p \leq .05$ level and four of the roles were not significant. The value of r for all 30 roles and the overall preparation ranged from .02 to .09 indicating that there were no relationships according to Guilford's levels ($r < .10$, η^2 ranging .00 - .03).

Table 29

Correlations of Counseling Roles with Degree (N = 2,113)

Academic Roles	r	p	n	η^2
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Analyze standardized test data	.07**	.00	2076	.01
Consult with and provide access to all stakeholders	.05*	.02	2078	.00
Assist in identification of students with learning differences	.05*	.04	2080	.00
Establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes resulting from the implementation of the comprehensive counseling program	.05*	.02	2079	.01
Table 29 cont.				
Implement and monitor 504 adjustments of students by teachers	.05*	.02	2081	.01
Collaborate with all school stakeholders on instructional intervention strategies	.06**	.00	2074	.01
<hr/>				
Personal/Social Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
<hr/>				
Facilitate classroom and psychoeducational groups	.04	.11	2076	.02
Develop orientation activities	.06**	.01	2072	.01
Develop and implement methods to assist students and parents at points of transition	.08**	.00	2073	.01
Develop and implement crisis intervention strategies	.06**	.00	2071	.01
<hr/>				
Academic/Career/Personal/Social Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
<hr/>				
Facilitate group counseling with students	.06**	.01	2083	.01
Develop peer facilitation programs	.06**	.01	2079	.01
Conduct brief counseling sessions with individual students and families	.05*	.02	2082	.01
Assess and interpret student academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs	.05**	.01	2078	.01
Collaborate with all stakeholders in development	.09**	.00	2080	.02

of staff training to respond to all students' academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs

Give presentations to all stakeholders on various topics (college, financial aid for postsecondary options, psychoeducational topics etc.)	.08**	.00	2077	.01
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Tasks/Advocacy Roles

	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Develop a school counseling calendar	.07**	.00	2078	.01
Seek funding sources for school counseling program	.06**	.01	2074	.01
Advocate for students' placement and school support for rigorous preparation for all students	.07**	.00	2078	.01
Advocate for students at IEP meetings	.07**	.01	2075	.01
Advocate for the professional identity of school counselors	.04	.06	2079	.01
Advocate for the roles of school counselors	.03	.17	2071	.01

Professional Identity Roles

	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Assess and address cultural issues	.05*	.02	2078	.02
Assess and address legal and ethical issues	.08**	.00	2078	.02
Develop a positive school environment	.06**	.00	2064	.01
Promote the school counseling department through various forms of media	.07**	.00	2079	.01
Use various forms of technology	.02	.46	2073	.03
Plan, lead, develop, implement, monitor, and implement, monitor, and evaluate a comprehensive guidance program based on the ASCA Standards	.06**	.01	2076	.02
Evaluate and implement current trends in school counseling and educational systems	.06**	.00	2077	.01

Utilize community resources to affect change in the school community	.08**	.00	2060	.01
Overall Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Overall Preparation	.08**	.00	2065	.01

Research Question 3

Do professional school counselors who have a stronger professional identity (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities) believe they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?

Test of Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3: Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to their professional identity (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities). Pearson *r* was used to analyze these relationships. This hypothesis was tested by examining correlation data of participants' scores of their perceptions of their preparation in the 30 roles and overall preparedness with the number of professional identity activities participants indicated as their level of professional involvement (see Table 30). Some of the correlations were significant due to the large number of participants in the study. Three of the roles were significant at the $p \leq .01$ level. Five of the roles were significant at the $p \leq .05$ level. Twenty-two of the roles and overall preparation were not significant. The value of *r* for 29 roles and the overall preparation ranged from .00 to .07 which is less than .10. This indicated that there were no relationships according to Guilford's levels ($r < .10$, η^2 ranging .00 - .01). One of the roles, the use of various forms of technology, ($r = .11$) indicated a slight relationship according to Guilford's levels ($r = .10$ to $.20$, $\eta^2 = .01$).

Table 30

Correlations of Four or More Professional Identity Activities with Roles (N = 2,113)

Academic Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Analyze standardized test data	.07**	.00	2103	.01
Consult with and provide access to all stakeholders	.00	.86	2105	.00
Assist in identification of students with learning differences	-.01	.73	2107	.00
Establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes resulting from the implementation of the comprehensive counseling program	-.04	.05	2106	.00
Table 30 cont.				
Implement and monitor 504 adjustments of students by teachers	-.05*	.02	2108	.00
Collaborate with all school stakeholders on instructional intervention strategies	-.00	.98	2101	.00
Personal/Social Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Facilitate classroom and psychoeducational groups	.05*	.02	2103	.00
Develop orientation activities	.01	.58	2099	.00
Develop and implement methods to assist students and parents at points of transition	.01	.74	2100	.00
Develop and implement crisis intervention strategies	.01	.65	2098	.00
Academic/Career/Personal/Social Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Facilitate group counseling with students	.06**	.01	2110	.00

Develop peer facilitation programs	-.02	.34	2106	.00
Conduct brief counseling sessions with individual students and families	.02	.34	2109	.00
Assess and interpret student academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs	.02	.30	2105	.00
Collaborate with all stakeholders in development of staff training to respond to all students' academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs	-.03	.12	2107	.00
Give presentations to all stakeholders on various topics (college, financial aid for postsecondary options, psychoeducational topics etc.)	-.01	.54	2104	.00

Tasks/Advocacy Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
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Develop a school counseling calendar	.05*	.03	2105	.00
Seek funding sources for school counseling program	-.05*	.02	2101	.00

Table 30 cont.

Advocate for students' placement and school support for rigorous preparation for all students	.03	.21	2105	.00
Advocate for students at IEP meetings	-.00	.87	2102	.00
Advocate for the professional identity of school counselors	.01	.61	2097	.00
Advocate for the roles of school counselors	-.00	.94	2098	.00

Professional Identity Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
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Assess and address cultural issues	-.02	.33	2105	.00
Assess and address legal and ethical issues	.00	.99	2105	.00

Develop a positive school environment	.01	.64	2090	.00
Promote the school counseling department through various forms of media	-.03	.15	2106	.00
Use various forms of technology	-.11**	.00	2100	.01
Plan, lead, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a comprehensive guidance program based on the ASCA standards	-.05*	.01	2103	.00
Evaluate and implement current trends in school counseling and educational systems	-.04	.10	2104	.00
Utilize community resources to affect change in the school community	-.03	.15	2086	.00
Overall Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Overall Preparation	.02	.33	2092	.00

Research Question 4

Do professional school counselors who have completed three or more school counseling specialty courses in their school counseling graduate programs perceive they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors?

Test of Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4: Professional school counselors' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to their completion of three or more specialty school counseling courses in their school counseling graduate programs. This hypothesis was tested by examining correlation data of participants' scores of their perceptions of their preparation in their roles with their completion of three or more specialty courses in their school counseling graduate programs. Pearson *r* was used to analyze the relationships. The correlations between all of the 30 roles and the overall preparation with the completion of three or more specialty school

counseling courses were significant because of the large number of participants in the study at the $p \leq .01$ level. According to Guilford's interpretation of r , one role had no relationship ($r = .09, \eta^2 = .01$). Nine roles had a slight relationship ($r = .10$ to $.19, \eta^2$ ranging $.01 - .04$). Twenty roles had a low relationship ($r = .20$ to $.25, \eta^2$ ranging $.04 - .06$). Overall preparation had a low relationship ($r = .29, \eta^2 = .08$) to the number of specialty courses taken by the participants (see Table 31).

Table 31

Correlations of Three or More Specialty Courses with Roles (N = 2,113)

Academic Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Analyze standardized test data	.18**	.00	2102	.03
Consult with and provide access to all stakeholders	.23**	.00	2104	.05
Assist in identification of students with learning differences	.24**	.00	2106	.06
Establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes resulting from the implementation of the comprehensive counseling program	.21**	.00	2105	.05

Table 31 cont.

Implement and monitor 504 adjustments of students by teachers	.23**	.00	2107	.05
Collaborate with all school stakeholders on instructional intervention strategies	.24**	.00	2100	.06
Personal/Social Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Facilitate classroom and psychoeducational groups	.17**	.00	2102	.03
Develop orientation activities	.19**	.00	2098	.04

Develop and implement methods to assist students and parents at points of transition	.21**	.00	2099	.04
Develop and implement crisis intervention strategies	.17**	.00	2097	.03
Academic/Career/Personal/Social Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Facilitate group counseling with students	.13**	.00	2109	.02
Develop peer facilitation programs	.22**	.00	2105	.05
Conduct brief counseling sessions with individual students and families	.14**	.00	2108	.02
Assess and interpret student academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs	.15**	.00	2104	.02
Collaborate with all stakeholders in development of staff training to respond to all students' academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs	.21**	.00	2106	.05
Give presentations to all stakeholders on various topics (college, financial aid for postsecondary options, psychoeducational topics etc.)	.23**	.00	2103	.05

Table 31 cont.

Tasks/Advocacy Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Develop a school counseling calendar	.21**	.00	2104	.04
Seek funding sources for school counseling program	.21**	.00	2100	.05

Advocate for students' placement and school support for rigorous preparation for all students	.21**	.00	2104	.05
Advocate for students at IEP meetings	.23**	.00	2101	.05
Advocate for the professional identity of school counselors	.20**	.00	2096	.04
Advocate for the roles of school counselors	.20**	.00	2097	.04
Professional Identity Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Assess and address cultural issues	.09**	.00	2104	.01
Assess and address legal and ethical issues	.13**	.00	2104	.02
Develop a positive school environment	.22**	.00	2089	.05
Promote the school counseling department through various forms of media	.22**	.00	2105	.05
Use various forms of technology	.10**	.00	2099	.01
Plan, lead, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a comprehensive guidance program based on the ASCA standards	.21**	.00	2102	.04
Evaluate and implement current trends in school counseling and educational systems	.25**	.00	2103	.06
Utilize community resources to affect change in the school community	.22**	.00	2085	.05
Overall Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Overall Preparation	.29**	.00	2091	.08

Additional Results of Correlations

In addition to the four research questions in this study, correlations were conducted on the five remaining independent variables included in (a) Section I question 5, work setting (elementary, middle, secondary, post-secondary) and question 6 work setting (private, public, parochial, other), (b) Section I question 8, year of graduation, (c) Section I question 9, CACREP program, and (d) Section I question 10, years of experience as PSCs. Also, the fifth correlation was conducted on self-perceptions of PSCs (Section III, Part B). Pearson r was used to analyze the relationships. Guilford's interpretations were used (as cited in Sprinthall, 2003) in determining the levels of the relationships.

Work Setting

In the first set of correlations between the work setting (i.e., elementary, middle, secondary, and post secondary) and the roles, results indicated that one of the roles was significant at the $p \leq .05$ level. However, according to Guilford's criteria, there were no relationships ($r \leq .10$, $\eta^2 \leq .02$) between any of the roles or the overall preparation and the work setting with r falling between .00 and .05. For the correlations of the second work setting question (i.e., private, public, parochial, other) the results indicated that two roles were significant at the $p \leq .01$ level and five roles at the $p \leq .05$ level. However, the results indicated that there were no relationships between all of the roles or overall preparation ($r < .10$, $\eta^2 < .02$) and the work setting.

Year of Graduation

The second set of correlations included the year participants graduated from their school counseling graduate programs and PSCs' perceptions of their preparation in the 30 roles and overall preparedness. Correlations were significant for 27 of the roles and the overall preparation at the $p \leq .01$ level. Guilford's level of the relationships ranged between $r = .01$ to .

51. Using Guilford's levels, results indicated that there were no relationships between 13 of the 29 roles, the overall preparation, and the year participants graduated from their school counseling graduate programs ($r < .10$, $\eta^2 = .00$). Results for eight of the roles indicated slight relationships ($r = .11$ to $.14$, $\eta^2 = .04$ to $.06$). Eight of the roles indicated low relationships ($r = .21$ to $.35$, $\eta^2 = .08$ to $.18$), and one role indicated a medium relationship ($r = .51$, $\eta^2 = .32$) to the year of graduation. For the purpose of this study the low and medium relationships are represented in Table 32.

Table 32

Correlations of Year of Graduation with Roles (N = 2,113)

Academic Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes resulting from the implementation of the comprehensive counseling program	.21**	.00	1985	.10
Tasks/Advocacy Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Advocate for the professional identity of school counselors	.22**	.00	1977	.09
Advocate for the roles of school counselors	.22**	.00	1980	.09
Professional Identity Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Assess and address cultural issues	.29**	.00	1984	.12
Assess and address legal and ethical issues	.21**	.00	1984	.08
Promote the school counseling department through various forms of media	.22**	.00	1985	.08
Use various forms of technology	.51**	.00	1982	.32

Table 32 cont.

Plan, lead, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a comprehensive guidance program based on the ASCA standards	.35**	.00	1983	.18
Evaluate and implement current trends in school counseling and educational systems	.22**	.00	1983	.09

CACREP Programs

The third set of correlations included participants graduating from a CACREP program and their perceptions of their preparation in the 30 roles and the overall preparation. Results indicated significant correlations between four roles at the $p \leq .05$ level but the level of the relationships were less than slight ($r = .00$ to $.09$, $\eta^2 = .00$ to $.03$) according to Guilford's interpretation of r . Results indicated significant correlations between 17 roles and overall preparation at the $p \leq .01$ level but according to Guilford's interpretation of r the level of the relationship was less than slight ($r = .00$ to $.09$, $\eta^2 = .00$ to $.03$). Results indicated that 25 of the roles and the overall preparation had no relationships ($r = .00$ to $.09$, $\eta^2 = .00$ to $.03$) according to Guilford's interpretation of r . Five of the roles had slight relationships ($r = .10$ to $.14$, $\eta^2 = .02$ to $.03$) with participants graduating from a CACREP program. Because there were no low or medium correlations a table was not used for this variable.

Years of Experience

The fourth set of correlations included participants' years of experience and the 30 roles and overall preparation. The results indicated that there were significant correlations ($p \leq .01$) between 21 of the roles, the overall preparation and the number of years of experience of PSCs. There were also significant correlations at the $p \leq .05$ level for three of the roles. According to Guilford's interpretation of r , there were no relationships for 14 of the roles and the overall

preparation. Slight relationships existed between eight of the roles and the number of years of experience with r ranging from $-.12$ to $-.19$ and η^2 ranging from $.02$ to $.04$. Six roles had low relationships with r ranging from $-.22$ to $-.35$ and η^2 ranging $.06$ - $.12$ and one role ($r = .52$, $\eta^2 = .28$) had a medium relationship with the year of graduation (see Table 33).

Table 33

Correlations of Number of Years of Experience with Roles (N = 2,113)

Academic Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes resulting from the implementation of the comprehensive counseling program	-.22**	.00	2057	.06
Tasks/Advocacy Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Advocate for the professional identity of school counselors	-.23**	.00	2050	.06
Advocate for the roles of school counselors	-.23**	.00	2049	.06
Professional Identity Roles	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	η^2
Assess and address cultural issues	-.27**	.00	2057	.09
Promote the school counseling department through various forms of media	-.22**	.00	2058	.05
Use various forms of technology	-.52**	.00	2053	.28
Plan, lead, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a comprehensive guidance program based on the ASCA standards	-.35**	.00	2055	.12

PSCs' Self-Perceptions

Finally, the fifth set of correlations included participants' self-perceptions as PSCs and the 30 roles and overall preparation. Participants responded to the question of self perception as either (a) mental health professionals working in school settings, (b) educators with mental health expertise, or (c) both mental health professionals and educators. Only one role had a significant correlation ($p \leq .05$ level). The value of r ranged from -.00 to -.05 for all 30 roles and the overall preparation, indicating that there were no relationships between participants' self-perceptions as PSCs and the roles. Because there were no low or medium correlations a table was not used for this variable.

Factor Analysis Results

Additionally, a principal component factor analysis was conducted to establish construct validity based on participants' ratings of the 30 roles in Section II: *Roles of Professional School Counselors* (see Table 34). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a statistically significant value ($p = .00$) and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample adequacy was high (.95). These indices implied that the matrix was well suited for a factor analysis. Following the preliminary analysis, the factor analysis was conducted using SPSS 16.0. To identify a set of latent common factors, the factor analysis selected for this study was a principal component method of extraction followed by a varimax rotation. A principal component analysis and varimax was chosen based on the research of Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998) to reduce the number of variables and assist in maximizing the sum of variances for the factors. A principal component analysis reduces the number of observed variables to a smaller number of components which accounted for most of the variances of the observed variables.

The 30 items included in the *SCPP* were examined using the principal component analysis followed by a Cattell's scree test, which indicated a four factor solution. The threshold for declaring an item loading to be salient was set at .50 or greater for the four factors. A brief description of the four factor solution follows. Factor I, *Tasks/Advocacy/Professional Identity* indicated 21.52% of the variance contained a grouping of 11 roles related to tasks/advocacy and professional identity. Along Factor I, the loadings ranged from .55 to .77. Factor I was related to the roles used in developing and implementing comprehensive guidance programs. Examples of these roles include developing a school counseling calendar, developing a positive school environment, and evaluating and implementing current trends in school counseling and educational systems.

Factor II, *Personal/Social/Career* indicated 17.43% of the variance. Along Factor II, the loadings ranged from .53 to .72 and contained a grouping of 10 roles related to the personal/social and career development of students. Factor II was related to roles promoting students' personal, social, and career development. Examples of these roles include facilitating classroom guidance and psychoeducational groups, developing and implementing crisis intervention strategies, and facilitation group counseling with students.

Factor III, *Academics* indicated 14.30% of the variance and contained a grouping of 7 roles related to the academic development of students. Factor III was related to roles promoting students' academic development such as assisting in the identification of students with learning differences, implementing and monitoring 504 adjustments of students by teachers and collaborating with all stakeholders on instructional intervention strategies.

Factor IV, *Cultural/Legal/Ethical Issues* indicated 8.05% of the variance and contained a grouping of two roles related to cultural/legal/ethical issues. Along Factor IV, the loadings

ranged from .71 to .73. Factor IV was related to roles used by PSCs in dealing with cultural, legal, and ethical issues including assessing and addressing cultural issues and assessing and addressing legal and ethical issues. Overall, the factor analysis supported the construct validity of the survey instrument, *SCPP*.

Table 34

Principal Components and Varimax Rotation of PSCs' Roles (N = 2,113)

Role	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV	Communalities
1			.68		.50
2			.71		.63
3			.79		.68
4			.53		.60
5			.69		.60
6			.63		.61
7		.66			.56
8		.72			.72
9		.69			.70
10		.57			.56
11		.64			.58
12		.69			.58
13		.56			.57
14		.58			.60
15		.57			.64
16		.53			.52
17	.64				.64
18	.57				.53
19	.55				.61
20			.58		.58
21	.76				.70
22	.77				.71
23				.71	.67
24				.73	.68

25	.54				.61
26	.70				.63
27	.64				.49
28	.74				.67
29	.68				.68
30	.55				.56

21.52	17.43	14.30	8.05
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Note. Loadings lower than $|.50|$ were omitted from the table.

Summary

This chapter presented the results of this research which focused on the relationships between the roles of PSCs and the number of hours in degree programs, the professional identity of PSCs, and the number of specialty courses completed by PSCs. The roles of PSCs included daily tasks involving academics, personal/social, academic/career/personal/social, tasks/advocacy, and professional identity.

The first research hypothesis stated that PSCs perceive themselves to be prepared in their roles as school counselors. The responses of 2,113 participants to the *SCPP* indicated that they perceived themselves to be *somewhat prepared* to *prepared* in 27 of their roles. There were three roles, however, that participants perceived they were *unprepared* and *somewhat unprepared*. These roles included (a) assist in identification of students with learning differences, (b) implement and monitor 504 adjustments of students by teachers, and (c) seek funding sources for counseling program.

The second hypothesis stated that PSCs' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors were related to the number of hours completed in their school counseling graduate programs. Using Guilford's interpretations for r , there were no relationships between PSCs' perceptions of their roles and the number of hours they completed in their school counseling graduate programs. PSCs graduating from a 36-hour program perceived themselves

to be as prepared in their roles as school counselors as those school counselors graduating from a 48-hour, 60-hour, 61 plus-hour, and doctoral program.

The third hypothesis stated that PSCs' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to their professional identity (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities). Using Guilford's interpretations for r there were no relationships between PSCs' perceptions of 29 of their roles and their professional identity. The results indicated that one role, the use of various forms of technology, did have a slight significance ($r = .11$). The fourth hypothesis stated that PSCs' perceptions of their preparation in their roles as school counselors are related to their completion of three or more specialty school counseling courses in their school counseling graduate programs. Using Guilford's interpretations for r there were slight to low relationships between PSCs' perceptions of their roles and the number of school counseling specialty courses taken in their school counseling program.

The set of correlations between the number of years of experience and the year of graduation and the role of using various forms of technology indicated a medium relationship. Other sets of correlations including work setting, graduating from a CACREP program, and participants' self perceptions as PSCs did not indicate a significant relationship between these variables and the 30 roles.

In addition to the correlations, a factor analysis was conducted. The four factors extracted included (a) tasks/advocacy/professional identity, (b) personal/social/career, (c) academics, and (d) cultural/legal/ethical issues. The results detailed in this chapter are discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The following research questions guided this study: Do professional school counselors perceive they are prepared in their roles as professional school counselors? Do professional school counselors who have a greater number of hours completed in their school counseling graduate programs perceive they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors? Do professional school counselors who have a stronger professional identity (i.e., participate in four or more professional activities) perceive they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors? Do professional school counselors who have completed three or more school counseling specialty courses in their school counseling graduate programs perceive they are better prepared in their roles as school counselors? In addition to the research questions, the following independent variables were assessed: work setting, year of graduation, completion of CACREP programs, years of experience, and self-perception of professional identity. Because there were no significant findings in number of hours in a degree program, work setting, and type of accredited counseling program (i.e. CACREP or not), the findings related to these variables will not be discussed. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, implications for PSCs and counselor educators, and recommendations for future research

Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine PSCs' perceptions of their roles, professional identity, and academic preparation in their graduate school counseling programs. This research was developed from a combination of earlier research. Amatea and Clark (2005), Bemak (2000),

Burnham and Jackson (2000), Chata and Loesch (2007), Dahir (2004), Foster, Young, and Hermann (2005), and Lieberman (2004) addressed roles of PSCs in their research. Several researchers, (Baker, 2001; Brott & Meyers, 1999; Gale & Austin, 2003; Gray & McCollum, 2003; Johnson, 2000; Milsom & Akos, 2007; and Webber & Mascari, 2006) specifically addressed professional identity of PSCs. Various research (ASCA, 2005; Brott 2006; CACREP, 2001; Clark & Horton-Parker, 2002; Education Trust, 2000; Paisley & Borders, 1995; Perusse & Goodnough, 2005; and Perusse, Goodnough, & Noel, 2001) addressed preparation of PSCs. The difference between this research and previous research is that the *SCPP* surveyed PSCs who are ASCA members across the United States on their perceptions of the 30 academic, personal/social, academic/career/ personal/social, tasks/advocacy, and professional identity roles based on ASCA (2005) and CACREP (2001) standards.

Discussion of Roles of PSCs

Leaders in the field of school counseling agree that one of the biggest issues facing PSCs is the on-going discussion concerning the roles of PSCs (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Borders, 2002; Chata & Loesch, 2007; Dahir, 2004; House & Martin, 1998; Keys & Lockhart, 1999; Kuranz, 2002; Lagovsky & Shimoni, 2007; Lieberman, 2004; Ross & Herrington, 2006). One of the main objectives of this study was to examine the results of descriptive and correlational data of PSCs' perceptions of their preparation in 30 roles. The 30 roles for this study were identified from ASCA (2005) and CACREP (2001) standards which target skills that PSCs need to master in order to assist K-12 students experience success in their academic, career, and personal/social development. Additionally, ASCA (2008) recently formed a task force to develop school counselor competencies that support the ASCA National Model. The competencies identified by the ASCA task force coincide with the roles identified in this study.

The results of this study indicated that PSCs perceived themselves to be somewhat prepared to prepared in 27 of the 30 roles. This result seems understandable because more than half of the participants indicated that they graduated from CACREP approved programs. CACREP accredited programs ensure that school counseling graduate students master the knowledge and skills needed to perform the roles of PSCs. These 27 roles included all aspects of analyzing test data and collaborating, consulting, and implementing goals for K-12 students with all stakeholders. The roles also included conducting individual and group counseling; advocating for students and themselves to all stakeholders; addressing cultural, legal, and ethical issues; and developing and implementing comprehensive school counseling programs that meet the needs of all K-12 grade students.

The areas PSCs perceived that they were somewhat unprepared included two academic roles, both of which center on skills needed by PSCs when working with students with learning differences. PSCs' perceptions of lack of preparation in working with students with learning differences parallels the results of the research conducted by Guerra (1998), Milsom (2002), and Romano (2006). Their research indicated that a majority of counselors reported feeling inadequate in addressing educationally-based tasks such as implementing and monitoring 504 adjustments for students with learning differences. The results of the present research suggested that PSCs' perceptions are that they may not receive enough training in the area of learning differences in addressing K-12 needs. ASCA's (2005) national model emphasizes the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. Students with learning differences are part of all student bodies. In examining the curricula of eight school counseling graduate programs identified in this research, only one of the eight universities offered one course in learning and individual differences. This finding suggests that counseling students may have

limited training opportunities in identifying, implementing, and monitoring students with learning differences.

Another area that PSCs perceived that they were unprepared in is the task/advocacy role when seeking funding sources for counseling programs. Seeking funds for counseling programs is identified in the CACREP (2001) national standards and ASCA (2005) standards as a requirement that PSCs have knowledge and skills in program development, implementation, and evaluation. PSCs need knowledge and additional skills in seeking funding sources to grow and maintain their counseling programs.

Based on a factor analysis, the results of this study indicated that PSCs perceived the 30 roles included in the *SCPP* as valid roles of PSCs. The ASCA (2005) and CACREP (2001) standards encompassed the 30 roles used in the *SCPP*. The 30 roles coincide with the four factors extracted from the factor analysis which included (a) Factor I, *Tasks/Advocacy /Professional Identity* (21.52%); (b) Factor II, *Personal/Social/Career* (17.43%); (c) Factor III, *Academics* (14.30%), and (d) Factor IV, *Cultural/Legal/Ethical Issues* (8.05%).

In summary, the overall result that emerged from this study was that most PSCs perceived themselves to be somewhat prepared in their roles as professional school counselors. One area of growth for PSCs is addressing the needs of students with learning differences. Another area for growth centered on the task/advocacy role of seeking funding sources for school counseling programs. With the current trend in school counseling toward the development and implementation of comprehensive guidance programs, PSCs need knowledge, skills, and attitudes to ascertain funds to expand their programs. Finally, PSCs confirmed that the roles included in the *SCPP* which were established by ASCA (2005) and CACREP (2001) were roles of PSCs. The 30 roles mirror the four factors extracted from this research.

Discussion of Professional Identity of PSCs

The results of the *SCPP* were used to examine relationships between PSCs' perceptions of their roles as school counselors and their professional identity. Many researchers (Baker, 2001; Brott & Myers, 1999; Gale & Austin, 2003; Remley & Herlihy, 2001; Schmidt, 1999; Webber & Mascari, 2006) believe there is a conflict in the perceptions of PSCs' professional identity as mental health professionals or as educators with mental health expertise. Sparks (2007) stated that the conflict of professional identity distracts PSCs from the real issue of whether PSCs' are effective in assisting K-12 students in achieving academic success and translating that into their future success in life.

In this study, many of the 30 roles and overall preparation related to professional identity were significant, while most of the roles were not in Guilford's high level range of reporting significance. However, the results from the descriptive data indicated that 84% of PSCs were involved in four or more professional identity activities such as certifications, licensures, and professional memberships. According to Brott and Myers (1999), professional development is a lifelong process and research was needed in the participation of professional identity activities of PSCs. Additional results from this study indicated that 83% of PSCs perceived themselves to be "educators" with mental health expertise or both educators and mental health experts while 13% of PSCs perceived themselves to be mental health professionals working in school settings. One interesting finding was that 42% of PSCs indicated they were also certified teachers. Regardless of how PSCs describe themselves professionally, many researchers (Schmidt & Cierchalski, 2001; Sparks, 2007; Wong, 2002) maintain that a consensus is needed from all mental health professionals including PSCs regarding PSCs' professional identity.

Additional results included written responses to two open-ended questions from 64% of the PSCs. In one open-ended question, 14% of PSCs expressed their desire for the focus of their training to be in the area of school counseling rather than mental health counseling. PSCs described in another open-ended question their relationships with all stakeholders as positive. They indicated that they easily collaborated, coordinated, and consulted with all stakeholders. Many researchers (Baker, 2001; Brott & Meyers, 1999; and Milsom & Akos, 2007) included these skills as part of the professional identity of PSCs. ASCA (2005) and CACREP (2001) also included these skills in their national standards.

In summary, the issue of professional identity is not unique to the school counseling profession. Years ago, John Kruk, first baseman for the Philadelphia Phillies, told reporters in the 90s that he was a baseball player, not an athlete. Of course, he is an athlete, just like a psychiatrist is a medical doctor, and like school counselors are counselors. But John's point resonates in a similar way to the conflict PSCs have in their professional identity. PSCs' specialty is counseling K-12 students in school settings. The results of this research suggested that while the majority of PSCs have indeed agreed they are professional school counselors they also want the term "educator" to be a part of their professional identity.

Discussion of Specialty Courses of PSCs

This study examined correlations of PSCs' perceptions of their roles as school counselors and their completion of three or more specialty school counseling courses. Results indicated that all of the correlations were significant; however, there were slight to low relationships between PSCs' perceptions in 29 of the 30 roles and completion of three or more school counseling specialty courses. In the descriptive data, a little over half of the PSCs (51.40%) reported that they completed less than three specialty courses in school counseling. Previous researchers

(Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006; House & Martin, 1998; Kuranz, 2002; Milsom, 2002; & Schmidt, 1999) strongly suggest that adding more school counseling specialty courses to curricula is important.

Written responses to an open-ended question indicated that PSCs wanted more of a focus on school counseling specialty areas rather than a mental health focus. PSCs described their need for specific coursework related to school counseling. Some of their suggestions included training in learning styles and differences, classroom behavior management, curriculum and instruction, student assessment, and student achievement. These responses echo the standards of ASCA (2005) which requires that PSCs have training in student learning styles, classroom behavior management, curriculum and instruction, student assessment, and student achievement. Overall, the results of this study indicated that PSCs perceived they are prepared; however, they also requested additional specialty courses.

Discussion of Professional Experience of PSCs

In this study additional research findings indicated relationships between PSCs' perceptions of one role (i.e. use of technology) and year of graduation. In recent years, the use of technology has cemented its position in the workplace of school counselors. In this study, PSCs with fewer years since graduate school perceived themselves to be prepared in the use of various forms of technology. In contrast, PSCs with longer years since graduate school perceived themselves to be unprepared in the use of various forms of technology. This result is not surprising. Personal computers were invented in the late 70s. PSCs with longer years since graduating were enrolled in school counseling graduate programs before the widespread use of computers. Therefore, these PSCs may perceive themselves to be unprepared in the use of technology.

Another additional finding from this study, years of professional experience, was related to the role of using various forms of technology. PSCs with fewer years of experience perceived themselves to be prepared in this role. In contrast, PSCs with many years of experience perceived themselves to be unprepared in this role. This is understandable because PSCs with many years of experience as school counselors graduated many years before technology became an integral part of the school counseling profession.

In summary, the results that emerged from this area of the study was that the use technology seems to be an area that needs to be revisited for practicing PSCs. While this result seems understandable, CACREP (2001) maintains that PSCs should possess knowledge and skills to utilize current and developing technology to assist K-12 students with academic, career, and personal/social development. One important area of growth for PSCs would be addressing technology needs.

Limitations

Miller (2003), Davis (1997), and Pryczak and Bruce (1998) defined limitations as peripheral restrictions that are outside the control of the researcher that may potentially diminish the validity of the results. Possible limitations for this study included sampling bias, participant differences, and data collection through surveys. Sampling bias occurred since only ASCA members participated in the study. ASCA members differ in their level of education, their certifications and/or licensures, and in their professional identity. SurveyMonkey™ was used to distribute the instrument electronically through email. This type of data collection generally has a smaller return rate than traditional collection methods such as interviews.

The first possible limitation of this research involved the sampling bias of participants. The ASCA members who responded to the *SCPP* may not have been representative of the national population of school counselors. Thus, PSCs in this study may not be representative of the entire population of PSCs. Additionally, the limited percentage (32%) of ASCA members participating in the study may not be representative of the ASCA members who chose not to participate in the study. The second possible limitation of this study is PSCs' differences between those who chose to respond and those who chose not to respond to the survey. Not all PSCs are members of ASCA and not all ASCA members responded. The third possible limitation of this study involved the distribution of the survey. SurveyMonkey™ was used to distribute the survey electronically through email. With this type of data collection there is generally a smaller return rate which may have been a possible limitation (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Email addresses could be incorrect or non-deliverable. Because of the self-reporting nature of surveys, another limitation could be that some PSCs may have feared that their anonymity could be compromised and therefore may have hesitated to be completely honest in their responses. Others may have believed that the researcher had an idea of the “correct” responses to the items and may have answered with socially desirable responses.

Implications for PSCs and Counselor Educators

The results of this study were intended to bring greater awareness to both PSCs and counselor educators in preparing PSCs. In this study 30 roles of PSCs were identified based on ASCA (2005) and CACREP (2001) standards and correlated with PSCs' perceptions of their preparation of those roles.

Implications for Roles of PSCs

The first implication centers on PSCs' perceptions of their preparation in the 30 roles. Leaders in the field of school counseling agreed that one of the biggest issues facing PSCs is the continuing discussion concerning the roles of PSCs (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Borders, 2002; Chata & Loesch, 2007; Dahir, 2004; House & Martin, 1998; Keys & Lockhart, 1999; Kuranz, 2002; Lagovsky & Shimoni, 2007; Lieberman, 2004; Ross & Herrington, 2006). In this study, it was clear that PSCs perceived that they are prepared in the majority of their roles as school counselors which was also confirmed by the factor analysis. In their research, Ross and Herrington (2006) referred to the administrative tasks that principals oftentimes ask of counselors as "counselor role drift". Both PSCs and school administrators contribute to role drift which causes PSCs to align more with administration rather than the counseling profession. The literature (Dahir, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Hart & Jacobi, 1992) indicated that school administrators contributed to this role drift by using PSCs as administrative assistants. Paisley and McMahon (2001) stated that PSCs contributed to this role drift by assuming inappropriate activities such as scheduling of classes, discipline, and clerical duties. These activities compromised PSCs' effectiveness in key areas such as counseling, coordinating, consulting, and collaborating.

A remedy for eliminating role drift could be accomplished if administrators and PSCs were both aware of the roles of PSCs. Ross and Herrington reported that students continue to be underserved when both principals and counselors misunderstand the roles of PSCs in schools. A method to diminish this misunderstanding would be for both principals and school counselors to collaborate by taking coursework together. Future principals would learn firsthand who PSCs

are and what they do in all of their roles. PSCs would also benefit by understanding their position in assisting principals in achieving the mission of the schools.

Implications for Professional Identity of PSCs

In this study, most PSCs were certified school counselors, employed as school counselors, members of ASCA, and participants in professional development activities. An implication of professional identity centers on the area of being a mental health professional working in a school setting versus an educator with mental health expertise. The two professional organizations that support PSCs, ACA and ASCA, disagree in their definitions of professional identity. Who are PSCs? PSCs in this study seemed to establish the fact that they, too, disagree on who they are as professionals. The majority of PSCs responded to “educator” within their description of their professional identity. Their responses also implied that they would be better prepared as school counselors if the focus of their coursework had been school counseling rather than mental health counseling.

Implications in the Completion of Specialty Courses of PSCs

ASCA (2005) maintains that school counselor graduate programs include coursework in learning styles, classroom management, curriculum and instruction, assessment, and achievement. An implication for PSCs and counselor educators is in the area of specialty courses in school counseling graduate programs. PSCs suggested adding courses focusing on school counseling rather than mental health. The Education Trust (2000) also suggested adding school counseling courses to curricula that are specific to the school counseling profession such as developing skills in leadership, advocacy, and collaboration.

As noted earlier, another implication is the addition of a specialty course that would assist PSCs in serving the needs of all students with learning differences. The results of this study

indicated that PSCs perceived that they were ill-equipped in this area. The ASCA National Standards require PSCs to provide opportunities for *all* students that promote academic, career, and personal/social development (ASCA, 2005). ASCA also encourages PSCs to serve on committees to assist in developing education plans for students to achieve success. According to Milsom and Akos (2003) and the results of this study, most counselor education programs do not include courses on students with learning differences. Yet, PSCs work with all students to assist in eliminating obstacles that prevent access to a quality education. K-12 students would benefit from PSCs who have knowledge and skills in both working with students with various learning differences and implementing and monitoring strategies that assist these students in achieving success in school. Another specialty course to assist the preparation of PSCs should involve skills of how to seek alternative funding sources for the expansion of their counseling programs. PSCs and K-12 students would benefit if school counseling graduate programs included additional coursework or training in funding school counseling programs.

Implications of Experience of PSCs

One area that seemed to reflect differences for PSCs was in technology. As noted earlier, personal computers were invented in the 70s. An implication suggested from this study was that some PSCs are in need of technology skills. ASCA (2005) and CACREP (2001) require that all counselors use various forms of technology. PSCs with little technology experience would benefit from collaboration with other PSCs or stakeholders to learn and fine-tune technology skills to assist K-12 students in their academic, career, and personal/social development. Continuing education credits in various forms of technology would be another method to increase PSCs technology skills in assisting K-12 students.

Recommendations for Future Research

Because this study was intended to bring a greater awareness to both PSCs and counselor educators, future research might include a qualitative study investigating PSCs' perceptions of their preparation in school counseling graduate programs. Results from one of the open-ended questions suggested that PSCs are passionate about their profession and have a great desire to contribute in this area. Also in this study, the 30 roles that PSCs perceived as being prepared in were confirmed through the factor analysis. Future research might include using the new CACREP (2009) standards to determine PSCs' perceptions regarding these new standards and if there are differences in their perceptions especially if they are long time graduates. Future research might also include duplicating this study using non-ASCA members. Due to the high level of professionalism maintained by ASCA members, it would be interesting to compare the responses of non-ASCA members to ASCA members. Because PSCs are divided in their perceptions of their professional identity as is ASCA and ACA, a research study specifically addressing professional identity could be conducted. Defining what PSCs mean when the term educator is used in comparison to mental health provider would be beneficial regarding the conflicting question of professional identity.

Future research could investigate the curricula of different universities to determine how these programs of study meet the needs of counseling students regarding the four factors that were formed using the 30 roles in the factor analysis. Practicum and internship courses in addition to specialty courses seem to be the logical courses to include the content defined by the four factors found in this study. Collaboration between school principals and PSCs is an important part of PSCs' roles. It may be beneficial to promote collaboration between school principals and PSCs by adding a specialty course as well as in professional development

activities that would benefit both principals and school counselors as well as all K-12 students. Also, the Education Trust (2000) identified school counseling graduate programs as an area for growth, specifically in the area of required coursework. Research should focus on documenting whether courses such as technology, funding sources, student learning differences, and collaboration with all stakeholders are being included in curricula and professional development activities.

Conclusions

Overall, the conclusions from this study are that PSCs perceived they are somewhat prepared in their roles as school counselors. PSCs perceived that they are prepared in 30 roles including assisting in identification with learning differences; facilitating classroom guidance and psychoeducational groups; assessing and interpreting student academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs; seeking funding sources for school counseling programs; using various forms of technology; and planning, leading, developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a comprehensive guidance program based on the ASCA standards. Another conclusion indicated by the results of this study is that PSCs possess a strong professional identity. This conclusion is evident by the large majority of PSCs who indicated that they are involved in many of the professional activities such as certifications, licensures, memberships in professional organizations, and participation in professional development activities.

As the literature and the results from this study indicated, PSCs continue to disagree on how they are defined as professionals. A small number of PSCs described themselves as mental health experts working in school settings. A larger percentage described themselves as educators with mental health expertise. While, a still larger percentage of PSCs described themselves as

both educators as well as mental health professionals. The final conclusion indicated is that PSCs requested more specialty courses in their school counseling graduate programs. PSCs indicated that courses in classroom management, learning differences, and curriculum and instruction would be very helpful in their preparation to be professional school counselors.

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Appendix A
ASCA National Model

ASCA National Model

I. Academic Development

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

Standard B: Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college.

Standard C: Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.

II. Career Development

Standard A: Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

Standard B: Students will employ strategies to achieve future career success and satisfaction.

Standard C: Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education and training, and the world of work.

III. Personal/Social Development

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills. (p. 17)

Note. Permission granted from ASCA.

Appendix B
2001 CACREP Standards

2001 CACREP Standards

A. Foundations of School Counseling

1. history, philosophy, and current trends in school counseling and educational systems;
2. relationship of the school counseling program to the academic and student services program in the school;
3. role, function, and professional identity of the school counselor in relation to the roles of other professional and support personnel in the school;
4. strategies of leadership designed to enhance the learning environment of schools;
5. knowledge of the school setting, environment, and pre-K-12 curriculum;
6. current issues, policies, laws, and legislation relevant to school counseling;
7. the role of racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage, nationality, socioeconomic status, family structure, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual beliefs, occupation, physical and mental status, and equity issues in school counseling;
8. knowledge and understanding of community, environmental, and institutional opportunities that enhance, as well as barriers that impede student academic, career, and personal/social success and overall development;
9. knowledge and application of current and emerging technology in education and school counseling to assist students, families, and educators in using resources that promote informed academic, career, and personal/social choices; and
10. ethical and legal considerations related specifically to the practice of school counseling (e.g., the *ACA Code of Ethics* and the *ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors*).

B. Contextual Dimensions of School Counseling

1. advocacy for all students and for effective school counseling programs;
2. coordination, collaboration, referral, and team-building efforts with teachers, parents, support personnel, and community resources to promote program objectives and facilitate successful student development and achievement of all students;
3. integration of the school counseling program into the total school curriculum by systematically providing information and skills training to assist pre-K-12 students in maximizing their academic, career, and personal/social development;
4. promotion of the use of counseling and guidance activities and programs by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate;
5. methods of planning for and presenting school counseling-related educational programs to administrators, teachers, parents, and the community;
6. methods of planning, developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating comprehensive developmental counseling programs; and
7. knowledge of prevention and crisis intervention strategies.

C. Knowledge and Skill Requirements for School Counselors

1. Program Development, Implementation, and Evaluation
 - a. use, management, analysis, and presentation of data from school-based information (e.g., standardized testing, grades, enrollment, attendance, retention, placement), surveys, interviews, focus groups, and needs assessments to improve student outcomes;
 - b. design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of comprehensive developmental school counseling programs (e.g., the *ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs*) including an awareness of various systems that affect student, school, and home;

- c. implementation and evaluation of specific strategies that meet program goals and objectives;
 - d. identification of student academic, career, and personal/social competencies and the implementation of processes and activities to assist students in achieving these competencies;
 - e. preparation of an action plan and school counseling calendar that reflect appropriate time commitments and priorities in a comprehensive developmental school counseling program;
 - f. strategies for seeking and securing alternative funding for program expansion, and
 - g. use of technology in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a comprehensive school counseling program.
2. Counseling and Guidance
- a. individual and small-group counseling approaches that promote school success, through academic, career, and personal/social development for all;
 - b. individual, group, and classroom guidance approaches systematically designed to assist all students with academic, career and personal/social development;
 - c. approaches to peer facilitation, including peer helper, peer tutor, and peer mediation programs;
 - d. issues that may affect the development and functioning of students (e.g., abuse, violence, eating disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, childhood depression and suicide);
 - e. developmental approaches to assist all students and parents at points of educational transition (e.g., home to elementary school, elementary to middle to high school, high school to postsecondary education and career options);
 - f. constructive partnerships with parents, guardians, families, and communities in order to promote each student's academic, career, and personal/social success;
 - g. systems theories and relationships among and between community systems, family systems, and school systems, and how they interact to influence the students and affect each system; and
 - h. approaches to recognizing and assisting children and adolescents who may use alcohol or other drugs or who may reside in a home where substance abuse occurs.
3. Consultation
- a. strategies to promote, develop, and enhance effective teamwork within the school and larger community;
 - b. theories, models, and processes of consultation and change with teachers, administrators, other school personnel, parents, community groups, agencies, and students as appropriate;
 - c. strategies and methods of working with parents, guardians, families, and communities to empower them to act on behalf of their children; and
 - d. knowledge and skills in conducting programs that are designed to enhance students' academic, social, emotional, career, and other developmental needs.

D. Clinical Instruction - 600 direct hours in a school setting

Note. Permission granted from CACREP.

Appendix C

School Counselors' Perception of Preparation (SCPP)

SCHOOL COUNSELORS' PERCEPTIONS OF PREPARATION

SECTION I: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please indicate the following personal information.

1. Sex: Female Male

2. Ethnicity:

<input type="checkbox"/> African American	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian American	<input type="checkbox"/> Native American
<input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian/European American	<input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

3. Age _____

4. State of Residence: _____

5. Present Work Setting:

Elementary Middle Secondary Post Secondary

6. Present Work Setting:

Private Public Parochial Other

7. Counseling Degree:

<input type="checkbox"/> 36-hour Master's	<input type="checkbox"/> 48-hour Master's	<input type="checkbox"/> 60-hour Master's
<input type="checkbox"/> 61 plus-hour Master's	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate	

8. Year of Graduation: _____

9. Counseling Program:

Did you graduate from a CACREP program? Yes No

10. Number of Years of Work Experience as a School Counselor: _____

SECTION II: ROLES OF PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS

On a scale of 1 to 6, (1=*Strongly Unprepared*, 2=*Unprepared*, 3=*Somewhat Unprepared*, 4=*Somewhat Prepared*, 5=*Prepared*, 6=*Strongly Prepared*) indicate your perception of the level of academic preparation you had by your graduate counseling program of each of the following:

*Strongly
Unprepared*

*Strongly
Prepared*

1 2 3 4 5 6

A. Academics

1. _____ Analyze standardized test data.
2. _____ Consult with and provide access to all stakeholders of data to assess student outcomes.
3. _____ Assist in identification of students with learning differences.
4. _____ Establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes resulting from the implementation of the comprehensive counseling program.
5. _____ Implement and monitor 504 adjustments of students by teachers.
6. _____ Collaborate with all school stakeholders on instructional intervention strategies.

B. Personal/Social

7. _____ Facilitate classroom guidance and psychoeducational groups.
8. _____ Develop orientation activities for students.
9. _____ Develop and implement methods to assist students and parents at points of transition (e.g., home to elementary school, elementary to high school, high school to postsecondary and career options).
10. _____ Develop and implement crisis intervention strategies (substance abuse, cutting, eating disorders, suicide, depression, etc.).

C. Academic/Career/Personal/Social

11. _____ Facilitate group counseling with students.
12. _____ Develop peer facilitation programs, including peer helper, peer tutor, and peer mediation programs.
13. _____ Conduct brief counseling sessions with individual students and families.
14. _____ Assess and interpret student academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs.
15. _____ Collaborate with all stakeholders in development of staff training to respond to all students' academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs.
16. _____ Give presentations to all stakeholders on various topics (college, financial aid for postsecondary options, and psychoeducational topics).

D. Tasks/Advocacy

- 17. _____ Develop a school counseling calendar.
- 18. _____ Seek funding sources for school counseling program.
- 19. _____ Advocate for students' placement and school support for rigorous preparation for all students.
- 20. _____ Advocate for students at IEP meetings.
- 21. _____ Advocate for the professional identity of school counselors.
- 22. _____ Advocate for the roles of school counselors.

E. Professional Identity

- 23. _____ Assess and address cultural issues.
- 24. _____ Assess and address legal and ethical issues.
- 25. _____ Develop a positive school environment.
- 26. _____ Promote the school and counseling department through various forms of media.
- 27. _____ Use various forms of technology (i.e. software, PowerPoint, internet, etc)
- 28. _____ Plan, lead, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a comprehensive guidance program based on the ASCA standards.
- 29. _____ Evaluate and implement current trends in school counseling and educational systems.
- 30. _____ Utilize community resources to affect change in school community.

F. Overall Preparedness:

- 31. _____ Overall preparation to be a school counselor.

SECTION III: PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

A. Indicate each of following professional areas that describes you.

1. _____ Certified Teacher.
2. _____ Certified School Counselor in your state.
3. _____ Certified National School Counselor.
4. _____ Registered Play Therapist.
5. _____ National Certified Counselor.
6. _____ Employed as a School Counselor.
7. _____ School Psychologist.
8. _____ Social Worker.
9. _____ Licensed Professional Counselor (i.e. LPC, LPCMH, LACMH, LMHC, ALPC, LCPC, LPCC, LLPC, LCMHC, CCMH, etc.).
10. _____ Working towards state licensure
11. _____ American School Counseling Association Member.
12. _____ American Counseling Association Member.
13. _____ State Counseling Association Member.
14. _____ Regularly attend professional development activities.
15. _____ Regularly attend professional conferences.

B. How do you perceive yourself as a Professional School Counselor? Mark the statement that identifies you.

1. _____ Mental health professional working in a school setting.
2. _____ Educator with mental health expertise.
3. _____ Mental health professional and educator.

SECTION IV: GRADUATE PROGRAM PREPARATION

A. Indicate each of the CACREP core courses you completed in your graduate counseling program.

1. _____ Professional Identity
2. _____ Social and Cultural Diversity
3. _____ Human Growth and Development
4. _____ Career Development
5. _____ Helping Relationships (Theory, Techniques)
6. _____ Group Work
7. _____ Assessment (Testing, Psychometrics)
8. _____ Research and Program Evaluation

B. Indicate the site of the practicum course (100 hours) you completed in your graduate counseling program.

1. _____ School
2. _____ College
3. _____ Community
4. _____ Gerontological
5. _____ None
6. _____ Other _____

C. Indicate the site of the first internship course (300 hours) you completed in your graduate counseling program.

1. _____ School
2. _____ College
3. _____ Community
4. _____ Gerontological
5. _____ None
6. _____ Other _____

D. Indicate the site of the second internship course (300 hours) you completed in your graduate counseling program.

1. _____ School
2. _____ College
3. _____ Community
4. _____ Gerontological
5. _____ None
6. _____ Other _____

E. Indicate each of the additional required courses you completed in your graduate counseling program.

1. _____ Child and Adolescent
2. _____ Substance Abuse
3. _____ Ethics
4. _____ Social Systems in Counseling
5. _____ Social Foundations in Education
6. _____ Psychological Foundations in Education

F. Indicate the additional School Counseling Specialty courses you completed in your graduate counseling program.

1. _____ School Counseling: Programs, Issues, and Practices
2. _____ Consultation and Management in Developmental School Counseling Programs
3. _____ Program Organization and Information Management
4. _____ Consultation Theory and Methods
5. _____ Profession of School Counseling
6. _____ Advocacy in School Counseling
7. _____ Using Tests in Counseling
8. _____ Behavior Management in the Classroom
9. _____ Counseling and Collaborative Consultation in the School Setting
10. _____ Development, Administration, and Evaluation of Pupil Personnel Services
11. _____ Learning and Individual Differences
12. _____ None
13. _____ Other _____

SECTION V: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1. Describe your relationship with all stakeholders (administration, faculty, staff, parents, community, etc.)

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2. Please use the space below for any comments you may have regarding your perceptions of your school counseling preparation program.

—

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Appendix D

First Electronic Message

First Electronic Message

Dear Professional School Counselor,

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Roxane L. Dufrene in the Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling, and Development in the College of Education at the University of New Orleans. I am conducting my dissertation study for the purpose of assessing School Counselors' Perceptions of Their Academic Preparation in Their Roles as Professional School Counselors.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve completing a survey entitled School Counselors' Perceptions of Preparation (SCPP). The SCPP will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. All information that you provide is anonymous; there will be no way to identify you once you submit your answers. The results of this study may be published, but your name will not be used. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation is to use the data from the survey to assist counselor educators as they educate future school counselors. As in most internet communication, there may be a record of exchange in a cache somewhere on your computer system or internet service provider's log file. As a precaution, I suggest that you clean out your temporary internet files and close your browser after submitting your survey.

If you are willing to assist me with this important part of my study, please click the following link to connect to the SCPP:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

If you are not connected automatically, then you can cut-and-paste the link into the address box on your web browser and then press enter.

Completion of the electronic submission of the SCPP will indicate your consent for participation in this study. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw your consent and terminate participation at any time without consequence. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you would like to discuss any discomforts you may experience, please contact Libby Schayot, at lschayot@pjp.org. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Roxane L. Dufrene, by email at rdufren1@uno.edu or by telephone, 504-280-7434.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Libby Schayot, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
University of New Orleans
348 Bicentennial Education Building
University of New Orleans, Lakefront Campus
2000 Lakeshore Drive
New Orleans, LA 70148

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com>

Appendix E
Second Electronic Message

Second Electronic Message

Dear Professional School Counselor,

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Roxane L. Dufrene in the Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling, and Development in the College of Education at the University of New Orleans. I am conducting my dissertation study for the purpose of assessing School Counselors' Perceptions of Their Academic Preparation in Their Roles as Professional School Counselors. If you have already participated in this study by completing the School Counselors' Perceptions of Preparation (SCPP), thank you again for your participation.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve completing a survey entitled School Counselors' Perceptions of Preparation (SCPP). The SCPP will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. All information that you provide is anonymous; there will be no way to identify you once you submit your answers. The results of this study may be published, but your name will not be used. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation is to use the data from the survey to assist counselor educators as they educate future school counselors. As in most internet communication, there may be a record of exchange in a cache somewhere on your computer system or internet service provider's log file. As a precaution, I suggest that you clean out your temporary internet files and close your browser after submitting your survey.

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Completion of the electronic submission of the SCPP will indicate your consent for participation in this study. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw your consent and terminate participation at any time without consequence. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you would like to discuss any discomforts you may experience, please contact Libby Schayot, at lschayot@pjp.org. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Roxane L. Dufrene, by email at rdufren1@uno.edu or by telephone, 504-280-7434.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Libby Schayot, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
University of New Orleans
348 Bicentennial Education Building
University of New Orleans, Lakefront Campus
2000 Lakeshore Drive
New Orleans, LA 70148

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com>

Appendix F

Third Electronic Message

Third Electronic Message

Dear Professional School Counselor,

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Roxane L. Dufrene in the Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling, and Development in the College of Education at the University of New Orleans. I am conducting my dissertation study for the purpose of assessing School Counselors' Perceptions of Their Academic Preparation in Their Roles as Professional School Counselors. If you have already participated in this study by completing the School Counselors' Perceptions of Preparation (SCPP), thank you again for your participation.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve completing a survey entitled School Counselors' Perceptions of Preparation (SCPP). The SCPP will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. All information that you provide is anonymous; there will be no way to identify you once you submit your answers. The results of this study may be published, but your name will not be used. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation is to use the data from the survey to assist counselor educators as they educate future school counselors. As in most internet communication, there may be a record of exchange in a cache somewhere on your computer system or internet service provider's log file. As a precaution, I suggest that you clean out your temporary internet files and close your browser after submitting your survey.

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If you are not connected automatically, then you can cut-and-paste the link into the address box on your web browser and then press enter.

Completion of the electronic submission of the SCPP will indicate your consent for participation in this study. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw your consent and terminate participation at any time without consequence. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you would like to discuss any discomforts you may experience, please contact Libby Schayot, at lschayot@pjp.org. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Roxane L. Dufrene, by email at rdufren1@uno.edu or by telephone, 504-280-7434.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Libby Schayot, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
University of New Orleans
348 Bicentennial Education Building
University of New Orleans, Lakefront Campus
2000 Lakeshore Drive
New Orleans, LA 70148

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com>

Appendix G
Copyright Permission Letters



POPE JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

1901 JAGUAR DRIVE
SLIDELL, LOUISIANA 70461
PHONE (985) 649-0914

May 8, 2008

Dr. Joan Archer
St. Tammany Parish School Board
227 North Jefferson
Covington, LA 70433

Dear Dr. Archer:

This letter will confirm our informal conversation at the Inaugural Ball for the Parish Council in January. I am completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of New Orleans entitled "School Counselors' Perceptions Of Their Academic Preparation In Their Roles As Professional School Counselors". I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation your poem entitled "Mothers of the River".

Many years ago I attended your workshop and received a copy of the poem. It touched me deeply and I kept it these years with similar treasures. I want to incorporate your poem in the dedication section of my dissertation. If this request meets with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed return envelope. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Libby Schayot
School Counselor

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

Joan Archer
Date



POPE JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

1901 JAGUAR DRIVE
SLIDELL, LOUISIANA 70461
PHONE (985) 649-0914

June 17, 2008

Ms Kathleen Rakestraw
801 N. Fairfax Street
Suite 310
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Ms. Rakestraw:

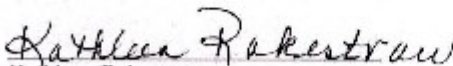
I am a member of ASCA and am currently completing my dissertation entitled "School Counselors' Perceptions of Their Academic Preparation in Their Roles as Professional School Counselors". I am writing this letter for permission to include in my appendices the *National Standards for School Counseling Programs* in my appendices.

If this request meets with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me by fax or mail. My fax number is 985-649-5495 and my address is 1901 Jaguar Dr., Slidell, LA 70461. Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Libby Schayot
Professional School Counselor

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:


Kathleen Rakestraw

6/17/08
Date



POPE JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

1901 JAGUAR DRIVE
SLIDELL, LOUISIANA 70461
PHONE (985) 649-0914

June 17, 2008

Mr. Robert Urofsky
Director of Accreditation
CACREP
1001 North Fairfax
Suite 510
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mr. Urofsky:

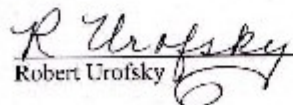
I currently completing my dissertation entitled "School Counselors' Perceptions of Their Academic Preparation in Their Roles as Professional School Counselors". I am writing this letter for permission to include in my appendices the *2001 CACREP Standards* in my appendices.

If this request meets with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me by fax or mail. My fax number is 985-649-5495 and my address is 1901 Jaguar Dr., Slidell, LA 70461. Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Libby Schayot
Professional School Counselor

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:


Robert Urofsky

6/17/08
Date

Appendix H
IRB Approval Letter

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

Campus Correspondence

Principal Investigator: Roxane Dufrene
Co-Investigator: Libby Schayot
Date: February 1, 2008
Protocol Title: "School Counselors' Perceptions of Their Preparation in
Their Roles as Professional School Counselors"
IRB#: 04FEB08

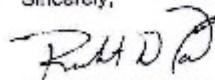
The IRB has deemed that the research and procedures described in this protocol application are exempt from federal regulations under 45 CFR 46.101(b) category 2 as a benign study of (anonymous) elementary school counselors' perceptions of their roles as professional counselors.

To ensure anonymity, potential participants should be informed in your message to participants that there will be a record of exchange in a cache somewhere on their system or saved in their internet service provider's server's log file should they decide to participate in the survey. They should be informed of this and you should suggest that they clean out their temporary internet files and close their browser after submitting the survey to ensure anonymity.

Exempt protocols do not have an expiration date; however, if there are any changes made to this protocol that may cause it to be no longer exempt from CFR 46, the IRB requires another standard application from the investigator(s) which should provide the same information that is in this application with changes that may have changed the exempt status.

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.

Best wishes on your project.
Sincerely,



Robert D. Laird, Ph.D., Chair
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research

VITA

Libby Schayot was born in San Diego, California, and lived the majority of her childhood life in Chalmette, Louisiana, a small community east of New Orleans, Louisiana. She attended the University of Louisiana at Lafayette for three and a half years but completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Education in 1979 from the University of New Orleans. Later she earned a Master of Education degree in School Counseling from the University of Southern Mississippi. She earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Counselor Education in December 2008 from the University of New Orleans. She is a certified school counselor and is currently receiving supervision to become a Licensed Professional Counselor in Louisiana.

Libby taught business education subjects for 14 years in the public school system as well as the Catholic school system in the greater New Orleans area and has been a school counselor for the past 14 years. As a business education teacher, Libby had the additional responsibilities of coordinating the School to Work program for her high school. This provided her with opportunities to present at conferences and to give workshops and presentations to the community. While earning her master's degree and her doctorate, Libby has balanced school with work. She has presented at local, state, and regional conferences on various school counseling topics.