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# A Comparative Analysis of School Counselors' and School Principals' Perceptions of School Counselors' Activities

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Deborah K Buchanan entitled "A Comparative Analysis of School Counselors' and School Principals' Perceptions of School Counselors' Activities." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Counselor Education.

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A Comparative Analysis of School Counselors' and School Principals' Perceptions of School  
Counselors' Activities

A Dissertation Presented for the Doctorate of Philosophy Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Deborah K. Buchanan

December 2011

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### **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Dr. James L. Hoerner, for his loving and constant support. For teaching me to be passionate about what I believe in, never forgetting where I came from, and that I can make a difference. He is not only my father, but my greatest fan, mentor, and friend. Thank you, Dad.

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A big "Thank you" goes to Dr. Janna Scarborough at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee for allowing me to adapt her survey instrument, the *School Counselor Activity Rating Scale* (SCARS) to meet the needs of my research.

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### Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative, cross-sectional survey study was to compare school counselors' and principals' perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors perform activities that align with the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) and those activities that do not, as measured by the *School Counselor Activity Rating Scale* (SCARS) (Scarborough, 2005). Results indicate that the school counselors and principals that participated in the study agreed that school counselors are spending most of their time engaged in activities that align with the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005). Significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) appeared on 10 items in which five were related to counseling activities, primarily as they relate to small group counseling. Principals indicated their school counselors were conducting small group activities related to academic and substance abuse issues more frequently than the school counselors indicated. Other areas that showed significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) between school counselors' and principals' responses included conducting classroom guidance lessons on substance abuse issues, consulting with school staff regarding students' behavior, and such coordination activities as professional development and school counseling advisory teams. School counselors indicated they engaged in the non-counseling activity of substituting/covering classes more frequently than principals indicated ( $p = .032$ ). Implications for school counselors, principals, and counselor education and education administration faculty are discussed.



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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Principals and school counselors are educational leaders in today's schools. Both of these professionals are accountable for enhancing the academic achievement of all students in their care (Jackson & Lunenburg, 2010; Lyons & Algozzine, 2006; Perea-Diltz & Mason, 2010; Sink, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2002, 2010). Principals are considered the "chief educational accountability officer" (p. 2) responsible for student outcomes and academic achievement (Lyons & Algozzine, 2006). School counselors are also held accountable for their contribution to schools' educational reform agendas. They are challenged to demonstrate how their school counseling programs positively impact students and their academic achievement (Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2010; Sink, 2009).

The American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model provides an operational framework for school counseling programs (ASCA, 2005). School counselors are trained to perform activities that align with the ASCA National Model and effectively contribute to students' academic success (ASCA, 2005; Gerler, 1985; Littrell & Peterson, 2001; Sink, 2009). They apply their professional knowledge and skills to best serve every student, so that all students will achieve success in academics, personal/social growth, and career planning pursuits (ASCA, 2005). Comprehensive, developmental school counseling (CDSC) programs guide school counselors' efforts to effect positive change and growth in students (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997). They are put in place to ensure that school counseling programs reach all students, that the guidance curriculum is a program with specific content, and that school

counseling programs are judged by measureable results (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997). When CDSC programs are in place, school counselors make a significant contribution to student academic achievement, resulting in improved graduation rates (Littrell & Peterson, 2001; Sink & Stroh, 2003).

Research (Littrell & Peterson, 2001; Sink & Stroh, 2003) suggests that CDSC programs have a positive effect on creating classroom climates that are conducive to learning and improving academic achievement. However, school counselors are also accountable to principals who ultimately dictate the activities in which school counselors engage on a daily basis (Zalaquett, 2005). As a result, school counselors are often assigned non-counseling related tasks (Zalaquett, 2005). When much of school counselors' time is consumed with performing non-counseling duties, they are unable to perform the activities that contribute to and support students' personal/social growth and academic achievement.

The discussion in this chapter focuses on principals' influence on defining and determining the activities in which school counselors engage, the transformation of the school counseling profession, and a brief overview of the school counseling programs in North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, the states in which this study was conducted. Finally, a problem statement, explanation of the significance of the study, research questions, description of the ASCA National Model that provided the framework for this study, definition of terms, and discussion of delimitations and limitations that define the parameters of the study are discussed.

### **Principals' Influence on School Counselors' Roles**

Principals are responsible for the day-to-day administration and activities of the school. As such, they are in the powerful position of identifying, selecting, and hiring staff and, ultimately, deciding how school-based personnel will be utilized most effectively, including school counselors (Chata & Loesch, 2007; Lieberman, 2004; Zalaquett, 2005). These educational leaders set the tone of the school environment, and what they value most influences their behavior and decisions as well as the values and behaviors of other school personnel (Chata & Loesch, 2007). Because of their powerful position, principals have the ability to initiate or impede change (Amatea & Clark, 2005). When schools function in an ineffective and inefficient system, the potential for discontent, lack of progress, and frustration among employees exists (Buchanan & Studer, 2011). School counselors often report role confusion as a result of principals' expectations that conflict with the duties that school counselors are trained to perform (Brott & Meyers, 1999; Lieberman, 2004). Much of this confusion is in part related to the evolution of the profession and the lack of clarity regarding the roles and functions of the school counselor (Lieberman, 2004).

### **Transformation of the School Counselor**

The school counseling profession has undergone significant transformations throughout its history that have not only shaped the profession, but have also created confusion regarding the roles and functions of school counselors (Schimmel, 2008). The sociological, political, and economic changes that the United States underwent during the 20<sup>th</sup> century influenced the school counseling profession and the activities in which school counselors participated. The first school



counselors were teachers who played the dual role of teacher and vocational counselor (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). The responsibilities of school counselors during the early part of the century centered on vocational guidance, assessment, academic placement (Lambie & Williamson, 2004), and preparing students for the world of work (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). Efforts were made to standardize the profession by including school counselors in the service-driven, responsive “pupil personnel services model” (Studer, 2005). However, there were two major problems with this model: (1) the focus of school counselors’ activities was not suitable for any school setting other than secondary schools, and (2) the model did not specify how school counselors should spend their time (Schimmel, 2008). Testing and student scheduling are school counseling duties that have carried over from the “pupil personnel service model” and are non-counseling activities in which school counselors struggle today (Lambie & Williamson, 2004).

During the middle of the century, developmental models for school counseling evolved, and the focus of school counselors’ activities shifted to “promoting students’ holistic development” (Lambie & Williamson, 2004, p 126) through vocational, academic, and personal/social counseling. At this time, states began to develop and implement counseling certification standards, and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) was formed to legitimize the profession (Bauman et al., 2003). Special education services, consultation, coordination, and accountability duties were integrated into the professional role toward the end of the century (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Though several developmental school counseling

models emerged at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, none really took hold until the ASCA developed *The ASCA National Model* in 2005.

The ASCA National Model was developed in a strong effort to standardize the school counseling profession. It provides a framework for the development and maintenance of comprehensive, developmental school counseling (CDSC) programs (ASCA, 2005). Not only does it provide the foundation for developing a school counseling program, but it also outlines the components of a CDSC program and its maintenance and accountability measures. Furthermore, the ASCA National Model includes a set of curriculum standards that highlight what all students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a CDSC program (ASCA, 2005).

Despite the ASCA's efforts, role confusion continues to exist within the school counseling profession, and the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor continue to be debated. However, as the merits of CDSC programs have become recognized, states across the country are embracing statewide comprehensive school counseling models that align with the ASCA National Model to conform to state and federal educational reform agendas.

### **States' Comprehensive Developmental School Counseling Models**

Many state departments of education and state school counseling associations have redesigned and improved their program guidelines to support the ASCA National Model (Dahir, Burnham, & Stone, 2009). Today, 36 states have implemented statewide comprehensive school counseling program standards intended to drive the development of and adherence to CDSC programs in all schools (ASCA, *State Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*, 2010).

North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee are three such states in the Southeastern region of the United States that have implemented statewide CDSC programs that align with the ASCA National Model (North Carolina Department of Education, 2008; South Carolina Department of Education, 1999; Tennessee Department of Education, 2005). These states are representative of the efforts ASCA is making at state levels to inform and educate people about the roles and functions of the school counselor. In addition, they have strong state school counseling associations that are heavily involved in advocating for the school counseling profession. These states were selected for this research study because each has implemented statewide CDSC programs that align with the ASCA National Model.

### **North Carolina**

North Carolina established statewide professional school counseling standards in 2008. The *North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards* are reflective of the ASCA National Model. These standards outline the competencies school counselors in North Carolina should possess in order to implement a fully developed CDSC program and the means by which it will be delivered. It emphasizes the need for school counselors in North Carolina to function as leaders, advocates, and collaborators, and function as members of a multidisciplinary team in supporting students' academic achievement and personal development (North Carolina Department of Education, 2008).

### **South Carolina**

South Carolina first established its statewide comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program model in 1999. The *South Carolina Comprehensive, Developmental*

*Guidance and Counseling Program Model* mirrors the ASCA National Model and details the components of a CDSC program, the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor, the program development cycle, the guidance curriculum standards for student development, and evaluation and accountability practices required by the state. It emphasizes the importance of the CDSC program as an essential element of the total instructional program that provides students with the opportunity for optimal academic and personal development (South Carolina Department of Education, 1999).

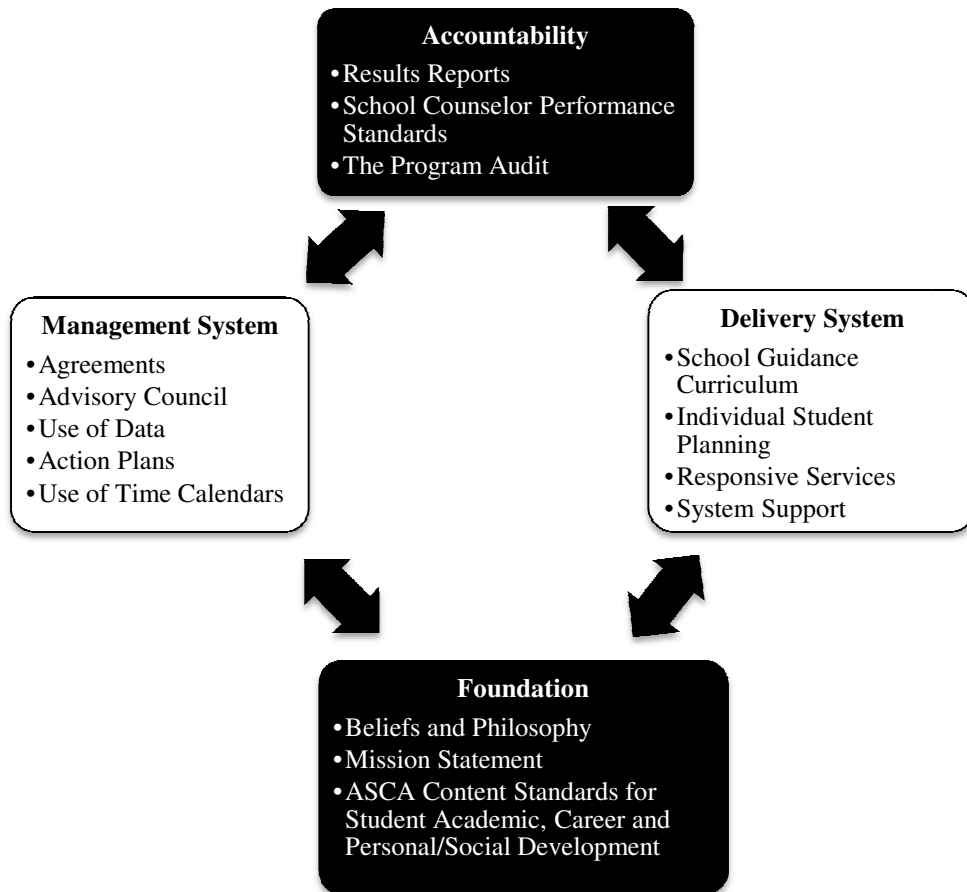
### **Tennessee**

Tennessee's Department of Education created its first model for comprehensive school counseling programs in 1997. It was revised in 2005, in accordance with the newly published ASCA National Model. The *Tennessee Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs* outlines a plan for delivering school counseling services to all Tennessee public school children. It is based on a developmental, comprehensive, systematic, sequential, and accountable school counseling program model endorsed by the ASCA (Tennessee Department of Education, 2005).

### **ASCA National Model**

The researcher used *The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* (ASCA, 2005) as a framework for this study. The model is comprised of four major components in which each influences the other in a "building-block" fashion. The skills and attitudes of leadership, advocacy, and collaboration that lead to systemic change encompass the components, which are depicted in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.1. The ASCA National Model Components of a School Counseling Program**



*Figure 1.1. The four components of the ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 2005).*

These components are the core of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program.

The ASCA National Framework requires that school counselors implement their programs to reflect the themes of leadership, advocacy, collaboration and teaming, and systemic change (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1

*ASCA National Model Themes*

Theme	Counselor Responsibility
Leadership	Serve as a leader engaged in system-wide change to ensure student success and implement school reform.
Advocacy	<p>Advocate for students' educational needs and ensure they are addressed at every level.</p> <p>Work proactively with students to remove barriers to learning.</p> <p>Advocate for the removal of systemic barriers that impede the academic success of any student.</p>
Collaboration & Teaming	<p>Work with all stakeholders inside and outside the school system to develop and implement responsive educational programs that support the achievement of the identified goals for every student.</p> <p>Create effective working relationships among students, support staff, parents/guardians, and community members.</p>
Systemic Change	<p>Assess the school for systemic barriers to academic success.</p> <p>Use data to advocate for every student, ensuring equity and access to a rigorous curriculum, which maximizes post-secondary options.</p>

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*Note.* ASCA National Model (2005)

Other rationale for choosing the ASCA National Model as the framework for this study include that it is the foundation of a CDSC program, and it provides the framework for the competencies, attitudes, and behaviors from which school counselors are to operate their program. Furthermore, it is the foundation in which the *School Counselor Activity Rating Scale*

(SCARS) was created (Scarborough, 2005), and the framework from which the data were analyzed and results were reported for this study.

There are 46 activities that make up the items on the SCARS instrument (Scarborough, 2005). Thirty-six of these align with the components of the ASCA National Model and its themes. The remaining 10 items are activities that are not congruent with the ASCA National Model, but are activities that school counselors often engage in. The matrix in Appendix A shows how the SCARS instrument reflects the components of the ASCA (2005) National Model and its themes.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Currently, many principals and school counselors have different perceptions of school counselors' roles in the school environment (Leuwerke, Walker, & Shi, 2009). The principal and other stakeholders largely determine the roles and functions of the school counselor (Hardy, 2008; Zalaquett, 2005), often without a complete understanding of this professional's role. School counselors receive specialized training in the implementation and delivery of a CDSC program that aligns with the ASCA National Model (2005) to standardize the role of the school counselor, and to transform traditional school counseling programs into those that are comprehensive and developmental in nature (ASCA, 2005).

Although both the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) endorse the ASCA National Model, it is not unusual for school counselors to perform administrative tasks and other activities unrelated to school counseling that deter them from performing the duties that appropriately

reflect their training (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Chata & Loesch, 2007; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Pérusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). This situation has resulted in the misappropriation of school counselors' time and efforts (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000) and has led to role ambiguity.

Frustration often results when school counselors are required to perform duties that impede their progress in instituting and carrying out a CDSC program (Ponec & Brock, 2000). The result is twofold. First, practicing school counselors often adopt and internalize non-counseling related responsibilities, which results in a traditional, status quo school counseling program that compromises the school counselor's role (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Fitch, Newby, Ballestero, & Marshall, 2001). Second, when school counselors are unable to perform the activities they were trained to do, students' academic, career, and personal/social achievement suffer (Sink & Stroh, 2003). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that, "ignoring the influence of a principal can negatively impact the implementation and maintenance of [school] counseling programs" (Zalquett, 2005, p. 451) and that, "fully integrated, implemented, and functioning school counseling programs...enhance student performance and preparation for the future, [and] promote a more positive and safe learning environment" (Monteiro-Leitner, Asner-Self, Milde, Leirner, & Skelton, 2006, p. 248).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to measure school counselors' perceptions of the frequency they engage in activities that align with the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) and those that do not. It also measured principals' perceptions of the frequency in which school counselors



engage in ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) activities and those activities that do not. Finally, this study compared school counselors' and principals' perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors perform activities that align with the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) and those activities that do not.

### **Significance of Research**

Although there is relatively recent literature on principals' perceptions of school counselors' roles (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Chata & Loesch, 2007; Dodson, 2009; Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007; Fitch et al., 2001; Zalaquett, 2005) and literature related to school counselors' perceptions of their own roles within the school setting (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Vaughn et al., 2007), the researcher of this study found only three studies that compared school counselors' and principals' perceptions of school counselors' roles. One study (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000) was conducted prior to the inception of the ASCA National Model. The other two studies (Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; PÉrusse et al., 2004) are over five years old. A current analysis of school counselors' and principals' perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors perform activities that align with the ASCA National Model and those that do not may provide a better understanding of these two educational leaders' current views on school counselors' roles. Principals, teachers, and school counselors are being held accountable for demonstrating how their work positively impacts student success (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). As such, it is important that school counselors be aware of principals' perceptions regarding their role (Fitch et al., 2001). It is also important for principals to understand school counselors' perceptions of the activities they perform within the school. Also,

educational reform has brought school counselors into the field of education as educational leaders. Thus, it is imperative that an alliance between school counselors and administrators be founded on common goals for the benefit of student growth (Stone & Clark, 2001).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. At what frequency do school counselors perceive they perform counseling and non-counseling activities as measured by the *School Counselor Activity Rating Scale* (SCARS)?
2. At what frequency do principals perceive that school counselors perform counseling and non-counseling activities as measured by the SCARS?
3. What are the differences in perceptions between school counselors and principals regarding the frequency with which school counselors perform counseling and non-counseling activities as measured by the SCARS?

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms and definitions apply to this study:

1. *ASCA National Model*. A framework for school counseling programs that “provides the mechanism with which school counselors and school counseling teams will design, coordinate, implement, manage and evaluate their programs for students’ success” (ASCA, 2005, p. 9)
2. *ASCA National Standards*. Standards for school counselors that guide them in their efforts and provide implementation strategies for a comprehensive, developmental

school counseling program that supports and maximizes the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students (Campbell & Dahir, 1997)

3. *Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP)*. An independent body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation for accrediting master's degree programs in counseling fields (CACREP, 2009)
4. *Non-counseling activities*. Activities that do not fit into the ASCA National Model. Non-guidance activities can be identified as administrative, clerical, instructional, or student supervision activities (e.g., administering school-wide testing, tutoring students, or covering classes for teachers). (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). Also referred to as "Other" Activities in the survey instrument used in this study.
5. *Principal*. A person who has the controlling authority or is in a leading position in an educational institution (Merriam-Webster, 2011)
6. *School counselor*. A certified/licensed educator with a minimum education of a master's degree in school counseling, which qualifies them to address all students' academic, personal/social, and career development needs. ASCA replaced the term "guidance counselor" to "school counselor" to more accurately reflect this professional's role in the school (ASCA, *Who are school counselors?*, 2008).
7. *School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS)*. A survey instrument designed to collect "process data required to analyze the important aspects of school counselor practice and effectiveness" (Scarborough, 2005, p. 276)
8. *Transforming School Counselor Initiative (TSCI)*. A proposal by Education Trust

for school counselors to demonstrate through the use of data how comprehensive, developmental school counseling programs impact academic achievement (Pérusse, et al., 2004)

### **Delimitations**

The following delimitations reflect the utilization of cross-sectional research and survey research designs. First, the study focused on the measure of perceptions held by school counselors and principals in regards to school counselors' activities as measured by the *School Counselor Activity Rating Scale* (SCARS) (Scarborough, 2005). The scores are a measure of school counselors and principals who self-elected to participate. The study was limited to school counselors in three Southeastern states who provided email addresses to the ASCA Member Directory, and to school principals whose email addresses were listed with the department of education in the same three Southeastern states—North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. These states were selected because they have statewide CDSC program standards. Furthermore, Tennessee is the home state of the researcher and the institution supporting her research, and North Carolina and South Carolina are two contiguous states. Other factors that may influence the results were not examined, because they were beyond the scope and stated purpose of this research.

### **Limitations**

As with all studies, there are limitations that can impact the study. This study was limited to three states within the Southeastern region of the United States, therefore limiting the degree of generalizability of the results that can be made. The researcher surveyed current

members of the American School Counselor Association; therefore, their perceptions may not be representative of school counselors who are not members. The researcher solicited participants from two different sources and used random sampling to create the two sample populations for this study. As a result, the number of school principals solicited to participate was significantly greater than the number of school counselors solicited to participate. Though the response rate from the two groups was relatively equal, the percentage of the total population represented by the two individual groups, school counselors and principals, is significantly different.

Additionally, because the sample populations for both groups were randomly selected, there is no way of knowing if school counselors and principals from the same school responded to the survey. Therefore, outcomes were affected, and generalizations beyond that of the groups represented in this study, cannot be made. Furthermore, the response rate was significantly lower than was hoped for, further affecting any possibilities of generalizing results to a larger population.

The researcher used a web-based survey that was sent in the summer when school was not in session; thus, participants may not have had access to computers or they may not have responded to email as frequently as they may during the school year. In addition, some limitations to survey research require consideration. Survey research is used to measure a specific characteristic, attitude, or behavior of a population (Creswell, 2005). As such, responses are subjective, and respondents may not answer truthfully or accurately. Although the instrument used for this study was fully tested for reliability and validity with school counselors, it was not tested with principals prior to this research study. It was assumed that the instrument

would be a reliable measure of principals' perceptions of school counselors' roles because they are educational professionals who work in a K-12 school setting, but the possibility that it might not still exist. Lastly, no other form of data collection was used to gather information beyond the completion of the SCARS (Scarborough, 2005) survey. Future research should include other methods of data collection beyond self-report.

### **Summary**

Recent studies of school counselors' and principals' perceptions of school counselors' roles are limited. The research that compares school counselors' and principals' perceptions of school counselors' activities is over 5 years old. ASCA has taken an active role in promoting the ASCA National Model to standardize the school counselor's role in a CDSC program that is over 10 years old. Due to these efforts, it is possible that principals will be better informed about how school counselors are integral to the growth of all students. Current research on school counselors' and principals' perceptions of school counselors' activities will provide a better understanding of these two educational leaders' current views on school counselors' roles. The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) was used as the framework for this study. The purpose and significance of this study are discussed, along with the limitations and delimitations of the study.

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

The discussion in this chapter provides a review of literature related to the historical influences on the school counseling profession including how standards were established for school counseling programs. In addition, the paradigmatic and philosophical differences between school counselors and principals, and the literature surrounding the activities school counselors perform and how school counselors perceive these activities are discussed. Finally, the researcher includes research surrounding continued school counselor role ambiguity despite the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) reforms.

With greater emphasis placed on accountability for increasing academic achievement, and the existence of current research that indicates CDSC programs have a direct and positive effect on students' academic achievement, it is possible that perceptions surrounding the school counselors' role have changed (ASCA, 2005; Monteiro-Leitner et al., 2006; Perea-Diltz & Mason, 2010; Sink, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Zalquett (2005) suggests that more research on principals' perceptions of school counselors' roles and functions is needed. It is also possible that since the implementation of the ASCA National Model, there is greater awareness of the school counselor's training and the ways in which this professional is an integral part of a school's educational mission.

School counselors play an essential role in contributing to student growth (Gerler, 1985; Littrell & Peterson, 2001; Monteiro-Leitner et al., 2006; Perea-Diltz & Mason, 2010; Sink, 2009). Yet, school counselors express frustration when they are unable to perform the duties for

which they were trained (Brott & Meyers, 1999; Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, & Solomon, 2005; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). Although the school counseling profession is over 100 years old, the discussion relating to the activities in which school counselors are to engage is as old as the profession itself. There are several factors that contribute to school counselors' inability to perform tasks related to their training. These include, but are not limited to, the history of the profession including the development of the ASCA National Standards and Model, the philosophical lenses through which principals operate, and the perceptions principals have about the roles and functions school counselors should carry out.

### **Historical Influences on the School Counseling Profession**

Herr and Erford (2007), George and Cristiani (1995), Gysbers (2001), and Gysbers and Henderson (2001) have studied the historical influences on the school counseling profession. There is no one single date that identifies the beginning of the counseling movement; however, researchers have suggested that it may have started in a high school in Detroit in 1889, when Jesse B. Davis provided vocational counseling to students (George & Cristiani, 1995). As the United States and other countries underwent social change in the late 1800s, the utility and quality of the educational process came under question, spurring educational reform and the school counseling profession (Herr & Erford, 2007). Frank Parsons was one of the most influential educators in the development of the counseling movement. In 1908, he founded the Vocational Bureau in Boston. Vocational counseling in schools was initiated when Boston schools partnered with Parsons' Vocational Bureau (George & Cristiani, 1995). In 1913, Parsons founded the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA), the forerunner of the



ASCA. Other schools across the country became interested in the practice of counseling and began to experiment with school guidance programs (George & Cristiani, 1995).

At this time, teachers served as vocational counselors who had the additional responsibility of counseling students, with no relief from their teaching duties (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). Their primary role was to prepare students for the world of work (Gysbers, 2001). Although the work of these “guidance or vocational counselors” was recognized as “commendable and promising” (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001, p. 246), the profession lacked unity and centrality. Without a centralized and unified vocational guidance program, school counselors would continue to be given duties unrelated to their role, and little counseling could be done (Gysbers and Henderson, 2001).

In an attempt to unify and centralize educational specialists such as school counselors, a “pupil personnel services model” designed as a service-driven, responsive model was developed. School counselors were the fastest expanding group of specialists supported by this model (Studer, 2005). Under this model, school counselors provided students with educational and vocational support as well as assistance with personal and social issues. However, there was no clearly defined process for meeting student needs until 1939, when Dr. E.G. Williamson from the University of Minnesota developed and outlined a “directive approach” to counseling students (Studer, 2005). Despite this effort to unify and centralize the functions of the school counselor, their goals, purposes, and functions continued to be inconsistent and varied across school systems and among counselors themselves (Gysbers, 2001). During WWII, the counseling field grew when new psychological theories and techniques emerged with Carl

Rogers and the development of psychodynamic methods of therapy that focused on self-determination (Aubrey, 1983). This was a radical transformation from the psychodynamic approach, which was the primary psychotherapeutic view at this time (Herr & Erford, 2007).

During the early 1950s several events that contributed to the growth of the school counseling field occurred. The American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) was founded in 1952 (Aubrey, 1983) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) became a division of the APGA in 1953. The formation of the ASCA strengthened the identity of the school counseling profession (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). By the mid-1950s, the development and implementation of state counseling standards reflected the importance of school counselors and by 1965, there were nearly five times more school counselors employed in United States' schools (Bauman et al., 2003) than in previous years. The Soviet Sputnik crisis in 1957 caused the passing of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958. This legislation gave the newly legitimized school counseling profession a boost as it provided funds for "expanding school testing programs and for training institutes for school counselors, both novice and experienced" (Bauman et al., 2003, p. 79). Additional education for school counselors focused on teaching them how to identify and nurture students gifted in the math and science fields to pursue these areas in post-secondary institutions (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Additionally, school counseling certification programs began to crop up throughout the country (Bauman et al., 2003; Niebuhr & Niebuhr, 1999).

In the 1960s, school counseling experienced dynamic changes that still affect the field today (Aubrey, 1983). The Civil Rights and Equal Rights movements brought about further

changes in educational reform, and due to the nature of these events, an emphasis was placed on individual counseling as opposed to vocational guidance (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). In 1965, Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) authorized funding for supplementary educational centers and services. In the 1970s, elementary school guidance counseling programs emerged as a result of Title III (Bauman et al., 2003). In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published the “Nation at Risk” report in response to the concerns about the troubling state of American education. The report criticized educators for the lack of planned programming for all students, and more accountability was demanded of all educational personnel, including school counselors (Niebuhr & Niebuhr, 1999).

In 1994, the Goals 2000 Educate America Act was enacted to provide a framework for national educational reform. The emphasis of Goals 2000 was to promote the development and adoption of a national voluntary system of skills standards and certification with the intent to ensure equitable educational opportunities and higher levels of education for all students. Goals 2000 encouraged schools to promote partnerships with parents to encourage the social, emotional, and academic growth of all children (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). As a result, school counselors were faced with taking on a wide range of responsibilities, including not only the educational and vocational needs of students, but also their personal and social needs (Niebuhr & Niebuhr, 1999). Yet, despite these initiatives, school counselors continued to struggle with role conceptualization. The service-driven, responsive model, as depicted in the pupil personnel service model, did not meet the needs of all students, and the school counseling program continued to be set apart from schools’ educational mission (Hart & Jacobi, 1992)

In 1997, the ASCA National Standards were developed to identify the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that all K-12 students need to know as a result of participating in a school counseling program (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). These competencies were developed within the academic, career, and personal/social domains. In 2002, the ASCA developed the ASCA National Model that incorporated these standards into an organizational structure. This model serves as a resource for identifying how school counselors are to perform activities that are integral to the entire school mission. It also serves as a prototype for school counselors to use in developing their own CDSC programs (ASCA, 2005). Both the ASCA National Standards (1997) and the ASCA National Model (2002) helped lay the foundation for and defined the profession as it is understood in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In order to better understand how the historical events influenced the development of the ASCA National Model, a summary of how the standards for school counselors were established are provided below.

### **Setting the Standards for School Counselors in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The ASCA National Model defines the components by which practicing school counselors are to serve as leaders in a CDSC program. The ASCA also has a code of ethics that school counselors are to uphold and use to guide their practice. These guidelines outline school counselors' ethical responsibilities to students, parents/guardians, the school and community, colleagues and professional associates, the profession, and self (ASCA, 2005). The ASCA's National Model and code of ethics are taught and reinforced in master's level school counseling programs. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), a national accrediting body for counselor education programs, accredits many

school counseling programs. CACREP programs are required to adhere to standards established by this council to assure that preprofessional school counselors possess the behaviors, attitudes, and skills required of effective school counselors (CACREP, 2009). Each of these governing entities is discussed below.

### **The ASCA National Standards and ASCA National Model**

The ASCA National Standards, developed in 1997, defined the elements of an effective comprehensive, developmental school counseling program focused on what “all students, from pre-kindergarten through grade 12, should know, understand, and be able to do” (Campbell & Dahir, 1997, p. 5) as a result of participating in the school counseling program. The Transforming School Counselor Initiative (TSCI), established by Education Trust and sponsored by DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, was developed to address the broadening achievement gap between economically advantaged and disadvantaged youth (Péresse et al., 2004). This initiative encourages the use of data to demonstrate how comprehensive, developmental school counseling programs impact academic achievement (Péresse et al., 2004).

The ASCA National Model was developed to enhance the ASCA Standards and to serve as a template for school counselors to follow in developing their own CDSC programs. The Model also incorporated the Educational Trust themes of collaboration, systemic change, leadership, and advocacy (ASCA, 2005). The established standards and competencies aided in the implementation of data-driven, standards-based school counseling programs (Williams & Wehrman, 2010) that reflect No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. The current NCLB

reauthorization requires accountability practices for all federally funded educational programs (Hatch & Bowers, 2002) including school counseling programs.

The Model is comprised of four integral, interrelated components comprised of specific elements. These components are Foundation, Delivery System, Management, and Accountability. The elements of the Foundation component include (1) the beliefs and philosophy of the program, (2) a mission statement that states the purpose of the program, (3) three domains that facilitate student development and enhance the learning process, and (4) the student competencies that define the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of participation in a CDSC program (ASCA, 2005).

The Delivery component includes the guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and systems support that are at the core of the program. As part of a delivery system, school counselors engage in activities such as teaching a guidance curriculum and counseling students in individual and small-group settings to address academic, career, and personal/social developmental needs that impact academic achievement. School counselors work with students to set goals and determine strategies to reach these goals. Finally, school counselors collaborate with teachers, parents, and other stakeholders and work to advocate for students and systemic change (ASCA, 2005).

The Accountability and Management components provide the means by which the school counselor can use data to plan, monitor, report, and audit their school counseling program (ASCA, 2005). As part of the Management component, school counselors use data to monitor students' progress, identify discrepancies between current and desired results, and develop action

plans for the school counseling program to ensure that the program serves every student. School counselors also use data to monitor the effectiveness of the school counseling program and make changes as needed. Within the Accountability component, school counselors report the results of their programs to stakeholders, self-evaluate their performance based on competencies associated with the ASCA National Model, and provide evidence that their programs are aligned with the Model (ASCA, 2005). School counselors take on the roles of the consultant, counselor, collaborator, and advocate while serving as a leader in a CDSC program based on the ASCA National Model. In these roles school counselors take on a variety of activities including, but not limited to, (1) consulting with stakeholders to meet the students' immediate needs, (2) collaborating with stakeholders to promote educational equity and success for every student, (3) providing individual counseling for students' academic, career, and personal/social development, and (4) advocating for the school counseling profession and encouraging administrators to use evaluation instruments that support the job description (ASCA, 2005). Furthermore, a code of ethics by which school counselors are to operate from and uphold are integral to the operation of the ASCA National Model.

### **ASCA Ethical Standards**

The American School Counselor Association has a clearly defined code of ethics in which school counselors are to uphold and use to guide their practice. These ethics include, but are not limited to (1) advocating for the student, as a primary stakeholder (2) delineating and promoting the roles and functions that meet the needs of the students, (3) informing appropriate officials when conditions limit or curtail their effectiveness in providing a CDSC program, and

(4) functioning within the boundaries of their professional competency, avoiding activities that may lead to providing inadequate services to students (ASCA, 2010). School counselors receive training in the ASCA Code of Ethics through their master's level training programs.

### **CACREP and School Counselor Training**

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is the accrediting body that establishes specific standards for the training and development of school counselors (CACREP, 2009). These standards mirror the philosophy inherent in the ASCA's National Model for school counseling programs (ASCA, 2005). Master's level school counselor training programs use CACREP to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to support a CDSC program. There are currently 214 CACREP accredited school counseling programs in the United States (CACREP, *Finding a CACREP program*, 2011). Similar to other educational programs, school counseling programs have specific characteristics that focus on the activities, interventions, and competencies that contribute to the knowledge, attitudes, and skill competencies that students should achieve (Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Both ASCA and CACREP outline the components of the school counseling program, offer suggestions for its implementation, and provide guidelines for balancing time spent in four areas of intervention—counseling, curriculum, consultation, and coordination (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). In addition, CACREP programs support the four themes of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change that are integrated into the ASCA National Model framework. Some of the CACREP



standards school counselors-in-training need to master that align with the four themes are as follows:

- 1) **O.1** Knows the qualities, principles, skills, and styles of effective leadership
- 2) **F.3** Advocates for school policies, programs, and services that enhance a positive school climate and are equitable and responsive to multicultural student populations.
- 3) **N. 3** Consults with teachers, staff, and community-based organizations to promote student academic, career, and personal/social development.
- 4) **H. 4** Assesses barriers that impede students' academic, career, and personal/social development.

ASCA and CACREP support the implementation of CDSC programs because they (1) improve students' classroom performance, (2) increase collaboration between parents and school staff, (3) promote accountability, (4) and meets the needs of academically at-risk students, and (5) provide clear role and function responsibilities of the school counselor (ASCA, 2005). Despite the fervent efforts of ASCA and CACREP to standardize the training and professional norms of the school counseling profession, and the research that indicates a fully implemented comprehensive, developmental school counseling program improves student academic achievement, differing opinions continue to exist on the role of the school counselor among principals, as well as school counselors themselves (Scarborough, 2005; Zalaquett, 2005).

The historical development of the school counseling profession and the development of standards for school counselors has played a major role in how principals view counselors, yet

training differences also play a role in how school counselors are perceived. School counselors and principals also operate from different paradigms related to issues of confidentiality, discipline and advocacy that often create conflict between the two.

### **School Counselor and Principal Philosophical Differences**

School counselors and principals have different philosophical views about the purposes and goals of their interactions with students and the school setting in general. These differing views result in paradigm differences that govern their actions. Some of the conflicting paradigms between school counselors and principals are related to issues of confidentiality, discipline, and advocacy. A study by Shoffner and Williamson (2000) illuminates these differences in school counselors-in-training, and principals-in-training.

Shoffner and Williamson (2000) conducted studies with preservice principals regarding their perceptions of school counselors' activities. These researchers studied preservice school counselors and school principals who participated in an interprofessional seminar at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Participants included six school counselors-in-training, four counselor education doctoral students, and several principals-in-training. Counselors and administrators met together in four biweekly seminars and separately in four biweekly seminars. These groups discussed the following: (1) roles, expectations, and perspectives, (2) identification of areas of potential conflict, (3) standards, and (4) collaborative problem solving of case studies. Confidentiality, school rules, potential substance abuse, and discipline were some of the areas of potential conflict that arose from the discussion groups. The preservice principals believed that they had a right to know information that the preservice

counselors deemed confidential. In addition, the primary areas of concern for principals were obtaining enough information to deliver consequences for breaking school rules and potential drug abuse. Conversely, school counselors focused on the process of maintaining a trusting relationship with students.

The differences in training school counselors and principals receive lead to juxtaposed paradigms. The paradigm differences are necessary and justifiable for each of the different professions. However, conflict often arises between school counselors and principals as a result of these differing viewpoints, particularly as they related to confidentiality, discipline, and advocacy.

### **Paradigm Differences**

Principals are responsible for the environment of the school with an expectation of immediate, concrete results in efforts to improve student achievement, whereas counselors focus on the mental health of students as essential for improving academic, career, and personal/social decisions (Kaplan, 1995). School counselors often see their work as increasing students' academic success indirectly, whereas principals see the school counselor's role as "working with students to build skills that have a direct effect on school-related work and functioning" (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000, p. 128). Often, the work of school counselors does not result in immediately visible results (Kaplan, 1995). These differing paradigms lead to perceptual differences as to how issues of confidentiality, discipline and advocacy should be handled within the school.

**Confidentiality.** Confidentiality is the “bedrock” on which the school counseling profession is built (Kaplan, 1995). Without confidentiality, it is impossible for school counselors to develop a trusting relationship with counselees. School counselors are held to ethical codes in which information disclosed by a student is kept confidential unless the student indicates the desire to harm self and/or others (ASCA, 2005). Principals are responsible for being aware of what is happening in the school environment and to act upon information that may potentially be disruptive to the school and students (Buchanan & Studer, 2011). These perspectives often result in a collision between school counselors’ ethical standards and administrators’ expectations (Lazovsky, 2008). Discipline may also be an area of contention between principals and counselors.

**Discipline.** Counselors view discipline as an opportunity to learn appropriate ways of behaving through the acceptance of personal responsibility and consequences behind the behavior (Kaplan, 1995). Administrators, however, view discipline as identifying and enforcing punishment for inappropriate behavior in order to establish a safe and orderly learning environment (Kaplan). When counselors are asked to take on a disciplinary role, it erodes their relationship with students and directly conflicts with their role as a trusting advocate for students.

**Advocacy.** Administrators make rules and procedures to ensure a productive learning environment, and make an effort to enforce these policies equally and systematically for all students. School counselors are charged with the responsibility to advocate and collaborate for systemic change (ASCA *Executive Summary*, 2005). As change agents, counselors have an obligation to transform traditional procedures, which may mean confronting administrators about

policies that could create unfairness and inequity for some students (Bemak & Chung, 2005). Conflict may occur when counselors challenge school policies on behalf of improving the school environment for the benefit of individual students (Bemak & Chung, 2005). Conversely, administrators may believe that a culture of inequity is created when one student is given permission to do something that other students are not (Kaplan, 1995). Philosophical views contribute to principals' perceptions of the school counselor's role, and these beliefs compound the differing perceptions of how the school counselor is a part of the academic mission.

### **Principals' Perceptions of School Counselor Roles**

As discussed earlier, principals are responsible and accountable for providing an effective learning environment that is conducive to students' academic success. Several studies (Dollarhide et al., 2007; Zalaquett, 2005) show that although principals value and appreciate school counselors' roles that align with the ASCA National Model, they also view administrative activities such as test administration, record keeping, and scheduling as equally important school counselor functions.

Zalaquett (2005) examined elementary school principals' perceptions of school counselors' roles and functions. He used a 140-item questionnaire to determine how elementary school principals in the state of Florida viewed their school counselors. Of the 500 respondents, 92% reported being "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with the overall job performance of their school counselors. Ninety-two percent also agreed that their school counselors contributed to a positive school environment. When ranking priority of job responsibilities, principals' rankings reflected the primary activities endorsed by the ASCA National Model. Respondents

gave duties such as individual and small-group counseling and classroom guidance the highest priority rankings. However, there were significant differences in the actual and ideal times that school counselors performed these high priority activities. The mean priority ranking for individual counseling was 3.6 (on a scale of 1 through 4 where 1=low and 4=very high), and the mean actual time ranking was 2.3 (on a scale of 1 through 4, where 1=sometime and 4=most of his/her time). Small-group counseling received a mean priority ranking of 3.5 and a mean actual time ranking of 2.2, and classroom guidance was given a mean priority ranking of 3.4 and actual time ranking of 2.1. Other areas that received high priority rankings and demonstrated significant differences between the actual and ideal time spent were consulting with parents and teachers, coordinating intervention services, and crisis counseling. Despite these positive results, the study also revealed that much of school counselors' time is spent engaged in scheduling, test administration, and discipline—duties that are not related to their training and professional roles. These results are similar to a 2005 study by Amatea and Clark, who looked at principals' perceptions of the school counselor's role.

Amatea and Clark's (2005) qualitative study used grounded theory methodology to assess the perceptions 26 principals held about school counselors' roles. Six open-ended face-to-face interview questions related to the perceptions of school life and the expectations of school counselors. Questions included information on how school counselors spent their time, the services and work activities they performed in the school, and whether or not these services and work responsibilities were different from the principals' perceived needs. Additionally,

principals were asked to comment on the most significant challenges facing their schools, and their counselors' skills that contributed to facing these challenges successfully.

Four role activities were highly valued by the participants, which included (1) innovative school leader, (2) collaborative case consultant, (3) responsive direct service provider, and (4) administrative team player. As an innovative school leader, one third of the participants expected the counselor to work closely with other school staff in "formulating a program of services that were not just responsive to individual student needs" (Amatea & Clark, 2005, p. 22), thus allowing them to spend only a portion of their time on individual student needs. One participant indicated that school counselors should spend only 20% of their time in direct counseling with students. One-third of the participants expected the school counselor to act as a collaborative case consultant. Although these respondents expected their counselors to be knowledgeable about and directly intervene with students, they noted that the most effective use of the counselors' time would be spent working with key adults (e.g., parents, teachers). One third strongly believed that the primary role of the counselor should be to provide direct services to students through individual and small group counseling and classroom guidance activities. In contrast, one fourth of the participants believed that the school counselor's role as an administrative team player was the most important.

According to Amatea and Clark (2005), the administrative activities that participants relied upon their counselors to perform as part of the administrative team were class scheduling, coordinating standardized testing, coordinating special education, acting as disciplinarian, substituting as a teacher when necessary, and providing lunch and bus duty supervision.

Although the study revealed that administrators value the school counselor's role as a collaborative case consultant, direct service provider, and school leader, respondents also noted that the non-counseling responsibilities in which school counselors engage as administrative team players are equally as important.

The studies discussed above show that many of the school counselor activities that principals' value support CDSC programs. The ASCA awards special recognition to schools that have fully implemented CDSC programs (ASCA, *Learn about RAMP*, 2008). Schools that are recognized by ASCA are awarded Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) designation. This program models the philosophy of a CDSC program that delivers services to meet the needs of all students and provides data to prove the effectiveness of their counseling programs (ASCA *Learn about RAMP*, 2008; Dodson, 2009).

Dodson (2009) investigated administrators' perceptions of high school counselors' roles in RAMP schools and administrators' perceptions of high school counselors in schools that were not designated RAMP schools. Sixty principals from RAMP schools and 41 principals from non-RAMP schools participated in this quantitative survey research study. The study revealed a significant difference in administrators' perceptions of appropriate school counselor roles between RAMP schools and non-RAMP schools. Fifteen appropriate roles were included in the survey. The RAMP school principals rated activities such as conducting individual student academic planning, interpreting student records, and providing small- and large-group counseling activities higher than their non-RAMP counterparts. Principals of RAMP schools responded that their school counselors were performing classroom guidance lessons more



frequently than those in non-RAMP schools. Principals from RAMP schools also perceived that their counselors were “counseling students who have disciplinary problem[s],” “providing teachers with suggestions for better management of study hall,” and “interpret[ing] student records” (p. 483) more often than their non-RAMP school counterparts. Regardless of the program, all principals perceived that their counselors were working to improve students’ academic, personal/social, and career development. This study revealed that principals of schools that have a fully implemented CDSC program that is aligned with the ASCA National Model rate their school counselors as performing appropriate activities more frequently than school counselors who work at schools that do not have a CDSC program.

Though some recent studies (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Dodson, 2009; Zalaquett, 2005) have revealed that principals are learning about and endorsing the development of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program, other evidence indicates that principals continue to want school counselors to engage in activities that are not congruent with the ASCA National Model.

Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) illuminated principals’ and counselors’ beliefs about appropriate school counselor roles. The participants of this quantitative study were 23 school counselors and 42 principals who had previously participated in a Leadership and School Transformation course at a university in the Northwestern region of the United States. Results from this study revealed that both school counselors and principals endorsed statements consistent with the ASCA National Model. However, there was also a strong correlation between the role-incongruent statements by principals regardless of grade level or program

affiliation. Furthermore, years of experience “also correlated positively with the tendency to endorse role incongruent statements” (p. 12). Principals continue to endorse school counselors’ involvement in administrative roles such as scheduling and test administration.

Fitch et al.’s 2001 study showed results similar to Kirchner and Setchfield’s (2005). The researchers surveyed graduate students in educational administration programs at two Kentucky universities with the goal of investigating how preservice educational administrators perceived the role of the school counselor. A total of 86 out of 100 students responded to the survey developed by the authors. The inventory design was based on ASCA’s (1997) professional standards for school counselors and those of the Kentucky Educational Professional Standards Board (1996). The 20-item 5-point Likert scale measured respondents’ beliefs about the significance of school counselors’ roles in three areas—counseling, coordination, and consultation (15 items)—and five non-counseling activities in which school counselors frequently engage. Results from this study revealed that preservice principals felt that the five most significant school counselor duties included offering direct crisis response, providing a safe setting for students to talk, communicating empathy, helping teachers respond to crisis, and helping students with transitions. These activities are consistent with the ASCA National Model. Furthermore, although participants rated non-counseling activities such as registration, testing, and discipline as the least important duties of school counselors, over one fourth of the respondents (27.9%) indicated that discipline was a significant/highly significant school counselor task. In addition, 57% expressed that record keeping and registration were significant/highly significant activities for school counselors. Testing and assisting with special

education services beyond referral were the other non-counseling duties that preservice principals rated as significant/highly significant. This survey indicated that although principals-in-training appropriately prioritized school counselors' duties that are relevant to a CDSC program, they also rated non-counseling activities such as discipline (30%), and record keeping and registration (57%) as significant.

As explained in this literature review, the principals' perceptions of the school counselor's role often conflict with the school counselor's perceptions of their role, preventing school counselors from serving their students effectively. However, one important study by Rambo-Igney and Smith (2005) suggests that with training and knowledge of appropriate school counseling activities, principals can change their thinking and become more supportive of CDSC programming.

Rambo-Igney and Smith (2005) studied the effects of a collaborative effort between the school counseling department and the educational leadership department at a middle Tennessee university. Preservice school counselors and principals were brought together in a four-hour collaborative session. Participants were given a pre and posttest (*Principal and School Counselor Attitude Survey*) to examine how their attitudes about school counselors' roles and responsibilities had changed as a result of participating in the session. The results of the collaborative session warranted a significant decrease ( $p = .036$ ) in the mean level of principals' perceptions concerning "the appropriateness of designating responsibility for the preparation of the master schedule" (p. 31) and a significant decrease ( $p = .053$ ) in the mean level of principals' perceptions of tasks such as registration and scheduling new students as appropriate activities for

school counselors. The preservice principals in this study shifted their expectations of school counselors' performance of non-counseling activities. Whereas initially they indicated that taking responsibility for the master schedule and registering/scheduling students were appropriate school counselor activities, the posttest revealed that preservice principals no longer believed that school counselors should perform these non-counseling activities. As a result of the four-hour collaborative session, preservice principals reported that learning about the training and expectations of school counselors and the ASCA National Model were "...beneficial, and would continue to be in the future" (p.33).

Historical influences, paradigm differences, and principal perceptions of the school counselor's role have all contributed to the lack of understanding regarding how the school counselor is to function within the school setting. Although training programs teach preservice school counselors about their role in a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program to prepare for the profession in today's schools, school counselor activities and perceptions of their role are not always compatible with the philosophy of the ASCA National Model. Research surrounding school counselor activities and their perceptions of their roles are discussed below.

### **School Counselor Activities and Perceptions of Roles**

Foster et al. (2005) conducted a national survey using the Job Analysis Survey (JAS) to identify the activities in which school counselors were engaged that promoted students' academic, career, and personal/social development. A total of 526 nationally certified school counselors and counselor educators who represented a wide range of educational and experiential backgrounds responded to the survey. Over 70% of the respondents indicated that they were

currently working in, or had previously worked in, primary through high school settings. Respondents rated how frequently they performed activities that promoted students' development in three areas (academic, career, and personal/social development) on a 5-point Likert scale (1=never and 5=routinely). For the sake of brevity, only the top four activities in each area are discussed below.

The top four activities most frequently performed by school counselors that were deemed to promote students' academic, career, and personal/social development were (1) provide general school counseling (academic  $M = 4.6$ , personal/social  $M = 4.6$ ), (2) facilitate students' development of decision-making skills (academic  $M = 4.4$ , career  $M = 4.4$ , and personal/social  $M = 4.4$ ), (3) identify students' support systems (academic  $M = 4.2$ , career  $M = 4.2$ , and personal/social  $M = 4.2$ ), and (4) plan and conduct classroom guidance activities (career  $M = 4.0$ ). The school counselors in Foster et al.'s (2005) study indicated that they performed tasks that support students' holistic growth on a frequent basis. However, this study only focused on those activities that are congruent with a CDSC program that were in accordance with the ASCA National Model. Other studies have investigated the activities that school counselors perform that are supportive of a CDSC program as well as those activities that are not.

Rayle and Adams (2007) found that middle school counselors spent less time on counseling duties than did high school counselors in their recent study focusing on school counselors' responsibilities. However, they also indicated that school counselors who implemented comprehensive school counseling programs were engaged in more counseling activities than those who had not implemented comprehensive school counseling programs.

Their exploration of 21<sup>st</sup> century school counselors' work responsibilities included 133 elementary school counselors, 99 middle school counselors, and 156 high school counselors across the United States. Fifty-nine percent of those surveyed had put into place comprehensive school counseling programs (CSCP) that aligned with the ASCA National Model, and 41% had not. The researchers investigated the CSCP and non-CSCP activities in which school counselors regularly participated. Only six of the 15 CSCP activities listed on the survey were consistent with the ASCA delivery component. These activities and the percentages of school counselors at various grade levels who performed them are listed below.

1. Individual counseling/planning with students (66.9% elementary; 100% middle; 39.7% high)
2. Responsive crisis counseling (24.8% elementary; 94.9% middle; 86.5%; high)
3. Small group counseling with students (61.7% elementary; 87.9% middle; 76.3% high)
4. Large group/classroom guidance lesson delivery (97.7% elementary; 54.5 % middle; 97.4% high)
5. Consultation/collaboration with administrators (75.9% elementary; 91.9% middle; 85.9% high)
6. School counseling program evaluation (66.2% elementary; 51/5% middle; 48.1% high)

The percentages of non-counseling activities in which school counselors at various grade levels regularly participated included:

1. Writing and planning IEPs/504s (98.5% elementary; 91.9% middle; 77.6% high)
2. School-wide testing (97% elementary; 84.8% middle; 62.8% high)

3. Teacher classroom coverage (65% elementary; 47.5% middle; 24.4% high)
4. School bus duties (73.7% elementary; 61.6% middle; 14.1% high)
5. Cafeteria duties (83.5% elementary; 72.7% middle; 19.9% high)

Although Rayle and Adams (2007) did not provide the percentage of time school counselors regularly engaged in these activities, their results highlighted the fact that most school counselors participated in both CSCP and non-CSCP tasks. Other studies (Kolodinsky, Draves, Schroder, Lindsey, & Zaltev; Montiero-Leitner, et al., 2006; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Vaughn, Bynum, & Hooten, 2007) mirror Rayle and Adams' (2005) results, and provide additional insight into how school counselors perceive their various roles.

Monteiro-Leitner et al. (2006) investigated the perceptions of 49 school counselors, 20 school counselors-in-training, and principals about the rural school counselor's role. The study measured participants' perception of the activities in which school counselors were currently engaged and those in which they should not engage. Results indicated that school counselors and trainees spent 6.7 and 6.2 hours per week, respectively, consulting with teachers, staff and parents about students' developmental needs. They also reported that they spent an average of 2.3 and 1.7 hours per week, respectively, on referring students for severe mental illness, and they spent no time working on Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Respondents in this study were given an opportunity to comment on any important aspects of their work that were not addressed in the survey. School counselors and counselors-in-training noted that the school counselor's role in providing responsive services although consultation was far more time consuming than they imagined. They revealed that they

consulted routinely with parents, teachers, principals, school nurses, students, and community counselors. Participants also expressed that they regularly participated in “non-guidance” activities, such as secretarial, administrative, disciplinary, and substitute teaching duties. One respondent stated that he/she participated in “many, many duties [that] are administrative in nature (10 hours a week for developing the master schedule, 25 hours a week to maintain permanent records and handle transcripts)” (Monteiro-Leitner et al., 2006, p. 250). Another respondent reported that he/she spent approximately 10 hours per week supervising the hall, cafeteria, restroom, and bus loading/unloading. Although this respondent indicated that these were good opportunities to “get to know the students,” he/she also felt that these activities “put [him/her] in the position to discipline” (p. 250) and that he/she did not believe school counselors should be put in the position of disciplinarian. Another respondent expressed frustration at taking on the duties of “coordinator of special services” (p. 250). School counselors and trainees in Monteiro-Leitner et al.’s (2006) study indicated that they spent an inordinate amount of time on ASCA endorsed responsive consultation activities and “non-guidance” activities. Preventative and proactive activities such as classroom guidance, small-group counseling, and individual student planning were not addressed in this study.

In another study of school counselor role perceptions, Vaughn, Bynum, and Hooten (2007) studied 52 school counselors in 21 Southeastern Alabama school districts. *The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale* (SCARS) (Scarborough, 2005) and *The School Counselor Survey* developed by Vaughn et al. (2007) were used. Participants indicated that they frequently/routinely performed the ASCA endorsed function of providing “faculty and



administrators information regarding conditions and factors that impact teaching and learning” (p. 12). Participants also noted that they were not spending as much time as they would like in individual and small-group counseling activities and consulting with community, school agencies, and parents about student developmental concerns. School counselors also believed that they were not spending enough time presenting classroom guidance lessons, and they were also performing several other duties that were unrelated to a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program. Twelve respondents reported that they routinely performed hall, bus, and cafeteria duty; 15 respondents stated that they routinely enrolled and withdrew students; and 19 responded that they routinely spent their time maintaining and completing student records. These activities are unrelated to best practices in school counseling and could easily be handled by clerical staff. Overall, Vaughn et al.’s study (2007) provided strong evidence that participants were not involved in ASCA endorsed activities as frequently as they should have been.

A study that examined discrepancies between actual and preferred practices of school counselors (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008) found several predictors that contributed to the incongruence between actual and preferred practices. Three hundred and sixty-one school counselors representing all grade levels completed the *School Counselor Activity Rating Scale* (SCARS). The SCARS is intended to measure the frequency with which school counselors actually perform and would prefer to perform activities associated with the four major interventions of counseling, consultation, coordination, and curriculum. Results revealed that school counselors preferred to spend their time in activities related to a comprehensive,

developmental counseling program and not in non-guidance activities such as clerical and administrative activities and “fair share” activities such as bus, lunch, and hall duties.

Grade level, years of experience, and self-efficacy accounted for the discrepancy between actual and preferred activities. The greatest differences were found among high school counselors who had a desire to perform tasks that were supportive of a comprehensive, developmental counseling program but perceived that a significant amount of time was spent participating in non-counseling activities. Elementary school counselors, on the other hand, reported practicing as they preferred. Scarborough and Culbreth’s (2008) study also revealed that years of experience had an impact on the school counselors’ performance of preferred tasks. Those with more years of experience reported that they were performing preferred school counseling activities more frequently than their counterparts who were newer to the profession. Those school counselors who attempted to incorporate the ASCA National Model in their practices were more likely to practice as they preferred and in accordance with best practices. Furthermore, this study showed a direct correlation between the degree to which school counselors took part in preferred duties that were in accordance with the ASCA National Model and the belief that their efforts had positive effects on student outcomes. A more recent study investigated school counselors’ levels of job satisfaction and frustration.

Kolodinsky, Draves, Schroder, Lindsey, and Zaltev (2009) studied job satisfaction among Arizona school counselors. A total of 155 Arizona school counselors participated in this survey research study. Results of the study indicated the majority of participants (82%) were overall “mostly satisfied” or “satisfied almost all of the time” with their job, as indicated on a 5-point

Likert scale ranging from “not very satisfied” to satisfied almost all of the time”. Variables that positively impacted job satisfaction included time spent counseling students ( $r = .21, p < .01$ ) and time spent working with teachers ( $r = .28, p < .01$ ), whereas time spent responding to crises ( $r = -.17, p < .05$ ), providing system support ( $r = -.19, p < .05$ ), and performing non-guidance activities ( $r = -.22, p < .05$ ) had a significantly negative impact on job satisfaction. An open-ended portion of the survey allowed participants to comment on their greatest job satisfaction and their greatest job frustration. Most of the satisfaction comments (69%) fell into the subscale of directly serving students. Other activities that led to job satisfaction included: (a) working with parents and families (7%), (b) individual intervention (6%), (c) group intervention (6%), (d) working with administrators and other teachers (6%), (e) working with students with exceptional education (2%), and (f) being afforded autonomy and creativity, and the ability to work within the state’s comprehensive school counseling model. The greatest job frustration expressed by respondents was being “overwhelmed by duties” (61%). Other areas that caused job frustration for respondents were disharmony with administrators (15%), and difficulties with parents and family support (14%). Respondents in the Kolodinsky et al. (2009) study indicated that though only 20% spent more than half of their time actually counseling students, working with students provided the greatest degree of job satisfaction. Engaging in an excessive amount of daily duties unrelated to a CDSC program (e.g. documentation, non-counseling activities) that took them “away from reaching children in significant ways” (p.197) created the greatest job frustration (2009).

These studies (Kolodinsky, Draves, Schroder, Lindsey, & Zaltev; Montiero-Leitner, et al., 2006; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Vaughn, Bynum, & Hooten, 2007) demonstrate that school counselors prefer to perform activities that are related to and in support of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program. School counselors express greater satisfaction with their work and have less role conflict, confusion, and frustration when they work in a CDSC program. Factors that contribute to school counselors' satisfaction with their current roles include collaboration and supervision during training and early years in the profession, years of service, task congruency with the ASCA National Model, and the belief that their role has a positive effect on student outcomes (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Research on school counselors' perceptions of their role also show that elementary school counselors appear to have less role stress than their high school counterparts because they participate in activities that are consistent with their training (Vaughn et al., 2007). All school counselors seem to want to perform more duties that are indicative of best practices and fewer non-counseling activities that are often required of them (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

As previously discussed, when principals' and school counselors' expectations of the roles and activities in which school counselors should engage differ, school counselors are often frustrated and often experience role ambiguity and role confusion. This is partially a result of the isolation school counselors experience in the school setting.

### **Role Ambiguity and Confusion among the Profession**

The responsibilities that school counselors carry out in their schools are highly dependent on the principals' and faculties' perceptions of their role. Because there are significantly fewer

school counselors per school than teachers, those who work in isolation are at risk of affiliating with principals and teachers who do not support best practices (Mathes, 1992); this conflicts with school counselors' training and may lead to role confusion. Role confusion and the lack of clarity around the roles and functions of school counselors have been problems for years (Lieberman, 2004).

Role [confusion and] ambiguity exists when (a) an individual lacks information about his or her work role, (b) there is a lack of clarity about work objectives associated with the role, or (c) there is a lack of clarity about peer expectations of the scope and responsibility of the job. (Lambie & Williamson, 2004, p. 124)

Counselors, teachers, and administrators operate from different perspectives within the same organizational context (Bemak & Chung, 2008). Moreover, school counselors often function alone within the school setting and can easily fall prey to role confusion. As Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) point out, "School counselors are expected to maintain their identity, and perform their role in an environment in which their colleagues and administrators operate from different philosophical and methodological approaches" (p. 447).

Mathes (1992) conducted a study to develop an understanding of the induction process for new school counselors, the problems they faced, and the kind of support they received in solving these problems. Forty new school counselors participated in the study. Results indicated that school counselors were expected to perform in isolation as seasoned professionals without guidance or mentorship and under the supervision of a principal who had neither formal preparation for working with school counselors nor an understanding of the profession. Novice

school counselors' experiences were characterized as "sink or swim". This study sheds light on the fact that new school counselors within their first year of work often adopt teachers and administrators as their primary referents. Principals and teachers traditionally viewed school counselors' roles as "primarily supportive of" and "supplemental to" their own work (Bemak & Chung, 2008, p. 375). Role stress ensues when school counselors experience role incongruence due to performing roles and functions that do not reflect their training (Brott & Myers, 1999; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001).

In 2005, Culbreth et al. surveyed 512 practicing school counselors at all grade levels to determine factors contributing to role stress. Results revealed that elementary school counselors experienced less role incongruence and role stress than their high school colleagues. School counselors across all three grade levels who participated in peer consultation and/or received supervision reported lower levels of role incongruence and role stress. Additionally, the congruence between actual and perceived job responsibilities and perceptions of adequate training were key predictors of reduced role stress among all grade level participants. Interestingly, the participants with teaching experience reported lower levels of role ambiguity.

The various needs of the school, the perceptions of the school principal, the changing definition and roles since the inclusion of school counselors in the school system, and the incongruence between training and actual job performance aggravate role confusion among school counselors (Culbreth et al., 2005; Dodson, 2009; Ponec & Brock, 2000). Other variables including years of experience, number of students per caseload, the organizational structure of the school, and the amount of time spent in non-counseling related activities are also factors that

influence the roles and functions of the school counselor (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). School counselors themselves report having differing views on their role in the school environment (Lambie & Williamson 2004). In schools that support a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program, school counselors tend to have a more solidified professional identity. Culbreth et al. (2005) found that school counselors' "perceived match between initial expectations of the job and actual experiences as a school counselor was the single most predictor of lower role stress" (p. 64).

The previous studies show that the conceptualization of role identity determines the programs that school counselors implement and how they spend their time (Clemens, Milsom, & Cashwell, 2009). Those schools that embrace the ASCA National Model and those that do not, require vastly different responsibilities of their school counselors. School counselors whose school counseling programs are based on the ASCA National Model tend to experience less role confusion than those who do not operate in programs based on the ASCA National Model (Dodson, 2009).

### **Summary**

Numerous studies (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Dodson, 2009; Dollarhide et al., 2007; Fitch et al., 2001; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Zalaquett, 2005) show that principals, while endorsing their school counselors' engagement in activities that support best practices, also advocate for school counselors' involvement in activities that are non-counseling related, such as coordinating school-wide testing, program scheduling/changes, and record keeping (Amatea & Clark, 2005). These non-counseling duties "absorb much of a school counselor's time" (Amatea & Clark,

2005, p. 89) and prevent school counselors from performing activities that are associated with their training (Fitch et al., 2001). When school counselors are asked to perform these inappropriate tasks, they neglect activities such as individual and group counseling, classroom guidance, and other ASCA endorsed best practices (Fitch et al., 2001). However, Rambo-Igney & Smith's 2005 study suggests that collaborative training programs between preservice principals and preservice school counselors can have a positive impact on principals' perceptions of the appropriate tasks that school counselors should perform.

The methodology that was used in this study is discussed in Chapter Three. The researcher will outline the methodology used for this research including the participants and the instrument used to collect data. The methods of data collection and data analysis will also be detailed in the following chapter.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

The methodology used for this study is discussed in this chapter. The participants of the study, the instruments used for data collection, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures are described.

The researcher collected data through cross-sectional survey research methodology. In using a cross-sectional survey research design the researcher collects data about participants' attitudes, opinions or beliefs at one point in time (Creswell, 2005). This method was used to address the purpose of the study which was to measure school counselors' and principals' perceptions of school counselors' roles from a sample population. Survey research allows the researcher to make inferences from the data collected (Creswell, 2005). Furthermore, survey research is an advantageous method of collecting data because it is economical to design, it usually allows for a rapid turnaround in data collection, and it provides the researcher with the ability to identify attributes of a population from a small group of individuals (Creswell, 2005). A web-based instrument was used to conduct the research. *MrInterview* was the survey tool used to create and house the survey data.

### **Participants**

The researcher used random sampling to select participants for this study. Random sampling is a method of selecting participants from a population at random, providing each individual in the sample with an equal probability of being selected (Creswell, 2005). It is more

rigorous than other sampling methods and gives the researcher more flexibility to generalize across a large population (Creswell, 2009).

The researcher solicited a random sample of school counselors and principals in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee for this study. These states were selected because (1) Tennessee is the home state of the researcher and the institution supporting her research, and North Carolina and South Carolina are two contiguous states, (2) the states' Departments of Education mandate CDSC programming for all K-12 schools, and (3) the state school counseling associations are actively involved in advocating for and supporting CDSC programming. The researcher identified participants for this study through two sources: a list of school counselors' email addresses who are members of the American School Counselor Association and a list of principals' email addresses through the North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee Departments of Education.

The researcher chose a random sample of school counselors who presently work in a K-12 school setting and who had provided email addresses to the ASCA Membership Directory. There are an estimated 1,045 ASCA members in the three states, and 921 members had their email addresses listed in the directory. Approximately 80% of the school counselors were sampled ( $N = 745$ ). This method was chosen for selecting school counselors because the states' Departments of Education selected for this study do not have a statewide list of school counselors. An estimated total of 4,968 principals' email addresses are included on their respective states' email lists. The researcher selected a random sample of approximately 20% of

the population ( $N = 1,003$ ). A random number generator provided in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19 identified the sample populations for this study.

### **Instrument**

Janna Scarborough (2005) developed the *School Counselor Activity Rating Scale* (SCARS) for the purpose of processing data on activities of school counselors. The SCARS contains a 50-item verbal frequency scale to measure school counselors' activities in two dimensions: the frequency with which school counselors actually perform activities, and the frequency with which they would prefer to perform activities in five areas: counseling, consulting, curriculum, coordination, and other activities (Scarborough, 2005; Vaughn et al., 2007). Some items on this scale reflect school counselor activities that are congruent with those of the ASCA National Model, whereas other activities are those that school counselors commonly perform but are more reflective of a traditional school counseling program. The researcher used an adapted version of this instrument to collect data from both school counselors and principals. The original SCARS instrument is discussed below, followed by the adaptations made to the instrument for the purpose of this study.

**Instrument design.** Scarborough (2005) constructed the SCARS instrument "in a way that participants could identify their actual frequency rating and preferred frequency rating for each activity before moving on to the next item" (p. 276). On the first dimension of "Actually Perform," respondents rate the school counselor's actual performance on a 5-point frequency scale where 1=*I never* do this activity, 2 = *I rarely* do this activity, 3=*I occasionally* do this activity, 4=*I frequently* do this activity, and 5=*I routinely* do this activity. On the second

dimension of “Prefer to Perform,” participants rate the frequency with which they would prefer the school counselor to perform the same activities where 1=I would prefer *never* to perform this activity, 2=I would prefer to *rarely* perform this activity, 3=I would prefer to *occasionally* perform this activity, 4=I would prefer to *frequently* perform this activity, and 5=I would prefer to *routinely* perform this activity.

**Reliability and validity of the SCARS instrument.** Scarborough performed a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to assess construct validity by examining group differences and correlations between selected demographic variables and activity categories (Scarborough, 2005). A principal components factor analysis identified the underlying factors structure of the instrument to further assess construct validity. Next, the internal consistency reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach’s coefficient alpha. Results of the alpha tests yielded a reliability coefficient of .85 for the Actual and a .83 on the Preferred frequencies of the counseling activities category, while a coefficient of .84 for Actual and .85 for the Preferred frequencies were yielded from the coordination activities category. The curriculum activities category produced a reliability coefficient of .93 for Actual and .90 for Preferred. The consultation activities category Actual and Preferred frequencies generated .75 and .77 coefficients respectively. Lastly, the “other” activities category yielded alpha reliability coefficients of .53 for Actual and .58 for Preferred (Scarborough, 2005).

Results of Scarborough’s study support the “utility of the SCARS to be a measure of process data reflecting how school counselors actually may spend their time versus how they would prefer to spend their time in job-related activities” (Scarborough, 2005, p. 279) with

respect to the components of the ASCA National Model. The activities reflected competencies addressed in the ASCA National Standards of School Counseling (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) as well as the four components of the ASCA National Model.

### **Adaptations to the SCARS Instrument**

The researcher obtained consent from the author of the SCARS instrument to alter it for the purposes of this study (see Appendix B). The researcher only used the first dimension of the SCARS to measure activities actually performed by school counselors. Other adaptations to the SCARS instrument included (1) eliminating the second dimension of the survey (changing “prefer” to “perform”), (2) adding directions to the survey for principals, and (3) changing the scale directions to reflect principals’ responses (see Appendix C). The researcher created a web-based version of the SCARS using *MrInterview*. Appendix B provides an example of the Web-based version of the SCARS.

In addition to the SCARS questionnaire, participants were asked to provide demographic information. Bosnjak and Tuten (2001) found that dropout rates were significantly lower in web-based surveys when demographic questions were collected at the beginning of the survey; therefore, demographic information was requested before participants began the SCARS questionnaire. The demographic questions (see Appendix C) included in the instrument related to (1) gender, (2) ethnicity, (3) profession, (4) years of experience in the profession, (5) grade level, (6) knowledge of, and training in the ASCA National Model, and (7) degree of adoption and adherence to a CDSC program consistent with the ASCA National Model.

## **Data Collection**

Once the Institutional Review Board approved the study (see Appendix D), the researcher sent 1,748 participants (school counselors = 745; principals = 1,003) an email explaining the research study and requesting their participation. The link to the survey was provided along with the researcher's contact information. When respondents opened the link to the survey, they were given more detailed information about the study, details on confidentiality, informed consent (see Appendix E), and instructions for completing the survey. Respondents could choose to participate in the survey by indicating their consent to participate or they could exit the survey link, indicating their decision not to participate. To increase response rate, two reminder emails were sent to participants at 1- and 2-week intervals after the initial email was sent. An incentive to participate was included in the survey to increase response rate. Participants who completed the survey were given the opportunity to participate in a drawing for two \$100 Visa gift cards (one for school counseling participants and one for principal participants).

## **Data Analysis**

The data collected from this survey were analyzed using the SPSS version 19. SPSS was designed specifically for the purpose of facilitating data management and data analysis in social science research (Fielding & Gilbert, 2000). Descriptive statistical analyses were performed to determine the means and frequency distributions of school counselors' activities. School counselors' perceptions and principals' perceptions were analyzed separately. A comparative analysis of means was performed using an Independent Samples *t*-test for equality of means and a Levene's test for equality of variance. Frequency distributions were performed to determine

the distribution of responses across each activity. Statistical significance was assumed at a  $p < .05$  level. Additionally, a Pearson chi square analysis was performed to determine demographic equivalence between the two sample groups.

### **Summary**

This study was conducted using a random sample of principals and school counselors in three Southeastern states. The researcher randomly selected school counselors who were current members of the American School Counselor Association. The researcher also randomly selected principals through their email addresses provided by the Departments of Education in the North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. The data was collected using a revised web-based version of the SCARS (Scarborough, 2005), and the SCARS survey instrument was altered to include instructions and scale dimensions for principals. Descriptive statistics were analyzed using SPSS version 19.0 and included frequency distributions, an Independent Samples  $t$ -test, and a Pearson chi square distribution. The results and findings that emerged from analyzing the data are in Chapter four.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

The researcher of this study investigated the frequency with which school counselors perceive that they perform identified activities and the frequency with which principals perceive that school counselors perform these same activities. The study also compared school counselors' and school principals' perceptions of the activities that support a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program (CDSC) aligned with the American School Counselor Association's National Model (ASCA) and those activities that do not. The results of this study are presented as follows:

#### **Demographics**

Seventeen hundred forty-eight surveys were sent out through an email address attachment. Of these, 1,003 were sent to principals, and 745 were sent to school counselors. Of the 1,748 surveys sent out, 1,604 are considered as the net sample size (Babbie, 1990) for several reasons. First, early in the data collection period, the researcher was notified by two school departments that the school counselors and principals in their counties who received a request to participate could not do so because the study had not been approved by the county administration first. As a result, these email addresses were deleted from the participant lists, reducing the initial sample size by 82 potential responses. In addition, 30 email addresses were returned "undeliverable," 26 came back with an auto reply indicating that the recipients were "out of the office" for the summer, and six respondents replied directly to the email, stating that they were no longer school counselors or building level administrators and, therefore, did not participate.



Of the net 1,604 sample size, 373 completed surveys were returned, producing a 23.25% overall response rate. Forty-six percent ( $n = 155$ ) of the respondents were school counselors, which represented 21% of the school counselors surveyed. One hundred eighty-two principals responded to the survey, representing 18.14% of the principals surveyed and 54% ( $n = 182$ ) of the total sample population.

One hundred fifty-eight (46.9%) respondents indicated that they were currently working in North Carolina, 58 (17.2%) were currently working in South Carolina, and 121 (35.9%) stated that they were currently working in Tennessee. African Americans (16.3%) and White non-Hispanics (79.5%) comprised the majority of the sample. Other ethnicities represented included Asian-Americans (.6%), and 1.5% indicated “other” (American-Indian/American-Indian mix = 3; White-Hispanic = 1). Seven respondents (2.1%) preferred not to respond to the race/ethnicity question.

Male participants comprised 30.9% ( $n = 104$ ) of the sample, and 69.1% ( $n = 233$ ) were female. Regarding number of years of experience, among school counselors, 31.6% ( $n = 49$ ) indicated having less than 5 years of experience; 38.7% ( $n = 60$ ) indicated 6 to 10 years; 7.7% ( $n = 12$ ) indicated 11 to 15 years; 7.7% ( $n = 12$ ) indicated 16 to 20 years; and 8.4% ( $n = 13$ ) indicated having more than 20 years of experience in the profession. Among principals, 6% ( $n = 11$ ) had less than 5 years of experience; 16.5% ( $n = 30$ ) had 6 to 10 years; 17% ( $n = 31$ ) had 11 to 15 years; 18.1% ( $n = 33$ ) had 16 to 20 years; and 42.3% ( $n = 77$ ) indicated having over 20 years of experience in the profession.

Participants were asked to specify the grade level that most closely represented the school

setting in which they currently worked. School counselors' responses revealed that 51.6% ( $n = 80$ ) worked in K-5 or K-8 elementary schools; 17.4% ( $n = 27$ ) worked in a middle/junior high school (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades) setting; and 30.3% ( $n = 47$ ) worked in a high school (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades) setting. One (.6%) school counselor responded that he/she was currently working in an alternative school setting. Principals' responses revealed that 60.4% ( $n = 110$ ) worked in K-5 or K-8 elementary school settings; 17.6% ( $n = 32$ ) worked in middle/junior high schools (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades); and 19.2% ( $n = 35$ ) worked in a high school (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades) setting. Five (2.7%) of the principals reported that they worked in an alternative school setting.

**Comparison of demographic data.** The demographic data for the two groups, school counselors and principals, was compared to establish whether or not they could be considered equivalent. Results of a Pearson chi square distribution analysis indicated that the two groups were relatively equal in their race/ethnicity with the majority identifying as White-non-Hispanic (school counselors = 81.9%; principals = 78.2%). The grade level in which the two groups currently worked also showed nearly equivalent results with the majority of school counselors (69%) and principals (78%) working in elementary and middle school settings. North Carolina was the state most represented in this study by both groups with 44% of the school counselors and 50% of principals reporting that they currently worked in North Carolina. There were nearly equivalent representation by school counselors (16%) and principals (18%) working in South Carolina and nearly equivalent representation of the groups working in Tennessee (school counselors = 40%; principals = 32%). Significant differences ( $p < .001$ ) between the two groups occurred in the gender represented between the two groups with 13% of the school counselors

reporting as male and 46% of the principals reporting as male. Eighty-seven percent of the school counselors reported as female and 54% of the principals reporting as female. Another significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) between the two groups appeared to be in their years of experience. Seventy-one percent of the school counselors indicated they had 10 years of less in their profession, and 60% of the principals indicating they had 16 to over 20 years experience of experience in their profession. Refer to Appendix F for an analysis of demographic data.

In addition to basic demographic questions, participants were asked three questions that related to the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model. Principals were asked to indicate the degree of knowledge they had about the ASCA National Model, and school counselors were asked to indicate if they were trained in the ASCA National Model and, if so, how they received their training. All participants were asked to indicate the degree to which their schools had adopted and adhered to a comprehensive, developmental school counseling (CDSC) program that aligned with the ASCA National Model. The responses to these questions are discussed in the following subsections.

**School counselors' training in the ASCA national model.** One hundred fifty-three (98.7%) of the 155 school counselor respondents received training on the ASCA National Model in some form. School counselors who received training during their master's degree programs comprised 49.7% ( $n = 77$ ) of the sample, whereas 5.8% ( $n = 9$ ) learned about it during their Ed.S. degree training programs. School counselors who learned about the ASCA National Model through continuing education, conferences, or other professional development activities represented 29.7% ( $n = 46$ ) of the school counselor respondents, and 13.5% ( $n = 21$ ) stated that

they had no formal training but had trained themselves through professional readings, research, etc. Two participants (1.3%) responded that they were not familiar with the ASCA National Model.

**Principals' knowledge of the ASCA national model.** Principals' responses revealed that 4.4% ( $n = 8$ ) had a great deal of knowledge about the ASCA National Model. Thirty-seven percent ( $n = 67$ ) of the principals surveyed had some knowledge, whereas 30.8% ( $n = 56$ ) had little knowledge, and 28.0% ( $n = 51$ ) had no knowledge of the ASCA National Model. Of the 131 principals who reported having knowledge of the ASCA National Model, 51.1% ( $n = 67$ ) stated that they learned about it from their school counselors, and 30.5% ( $n = 40$ ) learned about it from professional development activities (such as conferences and inservice training). Administrative degree training programs provided 5.3% ( $n = 7$ ) of the principals with information about the ASCA National Model, whereas 9.9% ( $n = 13$ ) learned about it from colleagues, and 3.1% ( $n = 4$ ) learned about it from other sources.

**Degree of adoption and adherence to a CDSC program.** School counselors' and principals' responses to this question were very similar, with the exception of the "I don't know" response. Approximately 9.7% ( $n = 15$ ) of the school counselor participants revealed that their schools had completely adopted and adhered to a CDSC program that aligned with the ASCA National Model, whereas 29.7% ( $n = 46$ ) indicated that their schools had mostly adopted and adhered to a CDSC program. Forty-nine percent ( $n = 76$ ) responded that their schools had somewhat adopted and adhered to a CDSC program, and 8.4% ( $n = 13$ ) reported that their schools had not adopted or adhered to a CDSC program. Five (3.2%) of the school counselors

disclosed that they did not know if their schools had adopted a CDSC program.

Of the 182 principals who participated in the survey, 2.7% ( $n = 5$ ) indicated that their schools had completely adopted and adhered to a CDSC program that aligned with the ASCA National Model. Twenty-eight percent ( $n = 51$ ) stated that their schools had mostly adopted and adhered to a CDSC program, whereas 31.9% ( $n = 58$ ) responded that their schools had somewhat adopted and adhered to a CDSC program. Eleven percent ( $n = 20$ ) indicated that their school had not adopted or adhered to a CDSC program, and 26.4% ( $n = 48$ ) of the principals did not know if their school had adopted and adhered to a CDSC program that aligned with the ASCA National Model.

### **School Counselors' Perceptions**

The SCARS survey includes five categories of activities. Four are related to a CDSC program (counseling, consultation, curriculum, and coordination), and the fifth category addresses “other” activities that are not related to a CDSC program. The data are reported by activities category. Tables associated with each category are shown below. Table 4.1 (see Appendix G) provides a comprehensive list of mean responses for all 46 items. Table 4.2 (Appendix H) depicts the frequency distributions of school counselors' responses to each item.

**Counseling activities.** Nine items on the survey address counseling activities (see Table 4.3). School counselors reported that they frequently to routinely counseled individual students regarding the following: (a) personal/family concerns ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = .785$ ); (b) school behavior ( $M = 4.32$ ,  $SD = .820$ ); and (c) relationship concerns ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = .836$ ). They frequently to occasionally ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = .910$ ) counseled individual students regarding

crisis/emergency issues. School counselors occasionally conducted small group counseling activities addressing relationship/social skills ( $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ), while they occasionally to rarely conducted small group counseling activities that addressed academic issues ( $M = 2.76$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ) and family/personal issues ( $M = 2.69$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ). They rarely to never facilitated small group counseling activities related to substance abuse issues ( $M = 1.57$ ,  $SD = .756$ ). School counselors frequently followed up with individual and group counseling participants ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) at the conclusion of the activities.

Table 4.3

*Counseling Activities Mean Responses of School Counselors' Perceptions*

Counseling Activity	Mean	SD
Counsel(s) with students regarding personal/family concerns	4.39	.78
Counsel(s) with students regarding school behavior	4.32	.82
Counsel(s) with students regarding crisis/emergency issues	3.68	.91
Counsel(s) with students regarding relationships (e.g. family, friends, romantic)	4.19	.84
Provide(s) small group counseling for academic issues	2.76	1.35
Provide(s) small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	3.12	1.37
Conduct(s) small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g. divorce, death)	2.69	1.32
Conduct(s) small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (one or family/friend use)	1.57	.76
Follow(s) up on individual and group counseling participants	4.10	1.01

**Consultation activities.** Seven items on the survey address consultation activities (see Table 4.4). Of these, school counselors frequently consulted with school staff concerning student behavior ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = .770$ ). They frequently to occasionally engaged in consultation with community and school agencies concerning individual students ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = .963$ ) and with parents regarding child/adolescent developmental issues ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = .884$ ). School counselors frequently to occasionally coordinated referrals of students and/or families to community or educational professionals ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = .949$ ), and they frequently to occasionally provided consultation for administrators ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ). School counselors frequently to occasionally participated in team/grade level/subject team meetings ( $M = 3.45$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) and occasionally assisted in identifying exceptional children ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ).

Table 4.4

*Consultation Activities Mean Responses of School Counselors' Perceptions*

Consultation Activity	Mean	SD
Consult(s) with school staff concerning student behavior	4.41	.77
Consult(s) with community and school agencies concerning individual students	3.50	.96
Consult(s) with parents regarding child/adolescent developmental issues	3.55	.88
Coordinate(s) referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g. mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	3.61	.95
Assist(s) in identifying exceptional children( special education)	3.24	1.29
Provide(s) consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)	3.52	1.20
Participate(s) on team / grade level / subject team meetings	3.45	1.32

**Curriculum activities.** Eight items on the survey comprise the curriculum activities category (see Table 4.5). All of these items refer to school counselors' engagement in classroom guidance activities. School counselors indicated that they most frequently conducted classroom activities to introduce themselves and explain the counseling program to students ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ). They frequently to occasionally conducted classroom lessons regarding (a) various personal and/or social traits ( $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ); (b) career development and the world of work ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ); and (c) relating to others ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ). They occasionally presented classroom lessons on personal growth and development ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ) and conflict resolution ( $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ). School counselors also occasionally to rarely facilitated classroom lessons on personal safety issues ( $M = 2.96$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) and substance abuse ( $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ).

Table 4.5

*Curriculum Activities Mean Responses of School Counselors' Perceptions*

Curriculum Activity	Mean	SD
Conduct(s) classroom activities to introduce yourself/themselves and explain the counseling program to students	4.22	1.11
Conduct(s) classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	3.60	1.32
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g. responsibility, respect, etc.)	3.72	1.43
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on relation to others (family, friends)	3.58	1.44
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on personal growth and developmental issues	3.32	1.38
Conduct(s) lessons on conflict resolution	3.37	1.43
Conduct(s) lessons regarding substance abuse	2.53	1.29
Conduct(s) lessons on personal safety issues	2.96	1.32



**Coordination activities.** Twelve items on the survey compose this category (see Table 4.6). School counselors most frequently coordinated and maintained a comprehensive school counseling program ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ) and attended professional development activities ( $M = 3.99$ ,  $SD = .950$ ). The next most frequent Coordination Activities in which school counselors engaged included informing parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of school counselors within the context of the school ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) and keeping track of how time was spent on the functions they performed ( $M = 3.48$ ,  $SD = 1.34$ ). School counselors occasionally engaged in formally evaluating student progress as a result of participating in individual/group counseling from students', teachers', and/or parents' perspectives ( $M = 3.09$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ) and occasionally conducted needs assessments and counseling program evaluations with parents, faculty, and/or students ( $M = 3.08$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ). They occasionally to rarely (a) coordinated school-wide response for crisis management and intervention ( $M = 2.73$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ); (b) conducted or coordinated parent education classes or workshops ( $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ); (c) coordinated with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs ( $M = 2.48$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ); and (d) conducted or coordinated teacher inservice programs ( $M = 2.41$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ).

Table 4.6

*Coordination Activities Mean Responses of School Counselors' Perceptions*

Coordination Activity	Mean	SD
Coordinate(s) special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g. career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	3.85	1.08
Coordinate(s) and maintain(s) a comprehensive school counseling program	4.11	1.08
Inform(s) parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of the school	3.56	1.09
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) parent education classes or workshops	2.53	1.11
Coordinate(s) school-wide response for crisis management and intervention	2.73	1.33
Inform(s) teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of the school	3.31	1.13
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) teacher inservice programs	2.41	1.15
Keep(s) track of how time is being spent on the functions that you/they perform	3.48	1.34
Attend(s) professional development activities (e.g. state conferences, local inservices)	3.99	.95
Coordinate(s) with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	2.45	1.39
Formally evaluate(s) student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher, and/or parent perspectives	3.09	1.23
Conduct(s) needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students	3.08	1.21

**“Other” activities.** Ten items on the survey relate to the other activities in which school counselors engage that are not related to a CDSC program (see Table 4.7). The most frequent non-CDSC program activity in which school counselors participated was serving on committees within the schools ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ). They reported frequently serving on these committees. They routinely to occasionally performed hall, bus, and cafeteria duty ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ) and occasionally (a) organized outreach to low-income families ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ );

(b) coordinated the standardized testing program ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ); (c) responded to health issues ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ); and (d) maintained/completed educational records/reports ( $M = 2.99$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ). School counselors reported occasionally to rarely scheduling students for classes ( $M = 2.78$ ,  $SD = 1.87$ ) and enrolling students in and/or withdrawing them from school ( $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ). The least frequent non-CDSC program activities in which school counselors engaged rarely were handling student discipline issues ( $M = 1.93$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ) and substitute teaching and/or covering classes for teachers at their schools ( $M = 1.81$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ).

Table 4.7

*“Other” Activities Mean Responses of School Counselors’ Perceptions*

“Other” Activity	Mean	SD
Participate(s) on committees within the school	4.35	1.01
Coordinate(s) the standardized testing program	3.23	1.77
Organize(s) outreach to lower income families (Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)	3.39	1.41
Respond(s) to health issues (e.g. check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	3.23	1.48
Perform(s) hall, bus, cafeteria duty	3.59	1.61
Schedule(s) students for classes	2.78	1.87
Enroll(s) students in and/or withdraw(s) students from school	2.67	1.72
Maintain(s)/Complete(s) educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)	2.99	1.73
Handle(s) discipline of students	1.93	1.17
Substitute teach(es) and/or cover(s) classes for teachers at your school	1.81	1.04

Eight items elicited an “I don’t know” response from a few school counselors. One item appeared under the Curriculum Activities category, four appeared under the Coordination Activities category, and three appeared under the “Other” Activities category (see Appendix H Table 4.2).

## Principals' Perceptions

Principals' perceptions of school counselors' activities are reported in congruence with the five categories discussed in the above section on school counselors' perceptions. Tables associated with each category are show below. A comprehensive table of all mean responses can be found in Appendix G Table 4.1. The frequency distribution of principals' responses can be found in Appendix I Table 4.8.

**Counseling activities.** Principals were asked to identify, to the best of their knowledge, the frequency with which their school counselor(s) participated in nine counseling activities (see Table 4.9). Principals indicated that their school counselors frequently counseled students in the following: (a) personal/family concerns ( $M = 4.39, SD = .87$ ); (b) school behavior ( $M = 4.15, SD = .89$ ); and (c) relationships ( $M = 4.06, SD = .85$ ). Principals reported that their school counselors frequently to occasionally counseled students regarding crisis/emergency issues ( $M = 3.93, SD = .89$ ) and provided small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills ( $M = 3.65, SD = 1.07$ ). According to principals, their school counselors occasionally provided small group counseling related to academic issues ( $M = 3.31, SD = 1.08$ ) and family/personal issues ( $M = 3.28, SD = 1.15$ ), and they occasionally to rarely conducted small group counseling related to substance abuse issues ( $M = 2.64, SD = 1.10$ ). Principals indicated that their school counselors frequently followed up with individual and group counseling participants ( $M = 4.05, SD = .97$ ).

Table 4.9

*Counseling Activities Mean Responses of Principals' Perceptions*

Counseling Activity	Mean	SD
Counsel(s) with students regarding personal/family concerns	4.39	.78
Counsel(s) with students regarding school behavior	4.15	.89
Counsel(s) with students regarding crisis/emergency issues	3.93	.89
Counsel(s) with students regarding relationships (e.g. family, friends, romantic)	4.06	.85
Provide(s) small group counseling for academic issues	3.31	1.09
Provide(s) small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	3.65	1.07
Conduct(s) small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g. divorce, death)	3.28	1.15
Conduct(s) small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (one or family/friend use)	2.64	1.10
Follow(s) up on individual and group counseling participants	4.05	.97

**Consultation activities.** Of the seven items on the scale associated with consultation activities (see Table 4.10), principals reported that their school counselors frequently consulted with school staff about student behavior ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ). According to principals, their school counselors frequently to occasionally performed the remaining six consultation activities, including (a) consulting with community and school agencies concerning individual students ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = .95$ ); (b) providing consultation for administrators ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ); (c) coordinating referrals for students and/or families to community or educational professionals ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = .96$ ); (d) consulting with parents regarding child/adolescent developmental issues ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = .96$ ); (e) participating in team/grade level/subject team meetings ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ); and (f) identifying exceptional children ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ).

Table 4.10

*Consultation Activities Mean Responses of Principals' Perceptions*

Consultation Activity	Mean	SD
Consult(s) with school staff concerning student behavior	4.02	1.03
Consult(s) with community and school agencies concerning individual students	3.67	.95
Consult(s) with parents regarding child/adolescent developmental issues	3.59	.96
Coordinate(s) referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g. mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	3.65	.96
Assist(s) in identifying exceptional children( special education)	3.50	1.24
Provide(s) consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)	3.66	1.17
Participate(s) on team / grade level / subject team meetings	3.57	1.21

**Curriculum activities.** Eight items on the survey relate to curriculum activities (see Table 4.11). According to principals, the two most frequently performed curriculum activities in which their school counselors participated were conducting classroom activities to introduce themselves and explain the counseling program to students ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ) and conducting classroom activities on various personal/social traits ( $M = 3.91$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ). Principals perceived that their school counselors frequently to occasionally presented classroom lessons concerning (a) relating to others ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ); (b) conflict resolution ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ); and (c) career development and the world of work ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ). They reported that their school counselors occasionally conducted classroom guidance lessons on personal growth ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ) and personal safety issues ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ) and occasionally to rarely conducted lessons related to substance abuse only ( $M = 2.83$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ).

Table 4.11

*Curriculum Activities Mean Responses of Principals' Perceptions*

Curriculum Activity	Mean	SD
Conduct(s) classroom activities to introduce yourself/themselves and explain the counseling program to students	4.02	1.19
Conduct(s) classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	3.51	1.28
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g. responsibility, respect, etc.)	3.91	1.20
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on relating to others (family, friends)	3.71	1.26
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on personal growth and developmental issues	3.35	1.25
Conduct(s) lessons on conflict resolution	3.67	1.19
Conduct(s) lessons regarding substance abuse	2.83	1.21
Conduct(s) lessons on personal safety issues	3.14	1.21

**Coordination activities.** Of the 12 coordination activities included in the survey (see Table 4.12), principals indicated that their school counselors frequently coordinated and maintained a CDSC program ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ). Principals reported that school counselors frequently to occasionally (a) attended professional development activities ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = .96$ ); (b) coordinated special events and programs for the school ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ); (c) informed parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of the school counselor within the context of the school ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ); and (d) informed teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of the school counselor within the context of the school ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ). Furthermore, school counselors occasionally (a) kept track of how time is being spent on the functions they perform ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ); (b) coordinated with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ); and (c) formally evaluated student progress as a result of participating in individual/small

group counseling from students', teachers', and/or parents' perspectives ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ).

They occasionally to rarely (a) conducted needs assessments and counseling program evaluations with parents, faculty, and/or students ( $M = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ); (b) coordinated school-wide response for crisis management and intervention ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ); (c) conducted or coordinated parent education classes or workshops ( $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ); and (d) conducted or coordinated teacher inservice programs ( $M = 2.59$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ).

Table 4.12

*Coordination Activities Mean Responses of Principals' Perceptions*

Coordination Activity	Mean	SD
Coordinate(s) special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g. career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	3.64	1.15
Coordinate(s) and maintain(s) a comprehensive school counseling program	4.22	1.09
Inform(s) parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of the school	3.55	1.15
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) parent education classes or workshops	2.47	1.13
Coordinate(s) school-wide response for crisis management and intervention	2.92	1.39
Inform(s) teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of the school	3.50	1.21
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) teacher inservice programs	2.59	1.15
Keep(s) track of how time is being spent on the functions that you/they perform	3.27	1.39
Attend(s) professional development activities (e.g. state conferences, local inservices)	3.75	.96
Coordinate(s) with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	3.21	1.31
Formally evaluate(s) student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher, and/or parent perspectives	3.10	1.40
Conduct(s) needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students	2.98	1.32



**“Other” activities.** Nine items on the survey fall under the “Other” Activities category (see Table 4.13). Principals perceived that their school counselors most frequently engaged in the non-CDSC program activities of participating on committees within the school ( $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = .87$ ) and performing bus, hall, and/or cafeteria duty ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ ). Principals also stated that their school counselors frequently to occasionally organized outreach to low-income families ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ). Responses indicated that school counselors occasionally (a) coordinated the standardized testing program ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ); (b) responded to health issues ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ); and (c) maintained/completed educational records/reports ( $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 1.75$ ). Principals also reported that their school counselors occasionally to rarely engaged in scheduling students for classes ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ) and enrolled students in and/or withdrew students from school ( $M = 2.52$ ,  $SD = 1.71$ ). The least frequently performed non-CDSC program activities in which principals revealed that their school counselors rarely or never engaged in were handling discipline of students ( $M = 1.87$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) and substitute teaching and/or covering classes for teachers at the schools where they worked ( $M = 1.55$ ,  $SD = .79$ ).

Table 4.13

*“Other” Activities Mean Responses of Principals’ Perceptions*

“Other” Activity	Mean	SD
Participate(s) on committees within the school	4.40	.87
Coordinate(s) the standardized testing program	3.35	1.81
Organize(s) outreach to lower income families (Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)	3.49	1.24
Respond(s) to health issues (e.g. check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	3.26	1.32
Perform(s) hall, bus, cafeteria duty	3.52	1.47
Schedule(s) students for classes	2.75	1.77
Enroll(s) students in and/or withdraw(s) students from school	2.52	1.71
Maintain(s)/Complete(s) educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)	3.06	1.75
Handle(s) discipline of students	1.87	1.10
Substitute teach(es) and/or cover(s) classes for teachers at your school	1.55	.79

Several activity items on the scale elicited “I don’t know” responses from some principals.

Three items fell under the Counseling Activities category. The Consultation Activities and “Other” Activities categories each contained four “I don’t know” responses, while the Curriculum Activities category contained eight. Lastly, the Coordination Activities category included nine “I don’t know” responses. See Appendix H Table 4.8..

### **A Comparison between School Counselors’ and Principals’ Perceptions**

A comparative analysis was conducted using an independent samples *t*-test to compare and contrast school counselors’ and principals’ perceptions of school counselors’ activities. This was done to seek out significant differences between school counselors’ and principals’ perceptions. Significance was assumed at a  $p < .05$  level.

The SCARS instrument contains 46 items, and, of these, only 10 items (less than 25%)

showed significant differences between school counselors' perceptions and principals' perceptions. Five of the 10 items that revealed a significant difference fell under the Counseling Activities category. One item revealed a significant difference in the Consultation, Curriculum, and "Other" Activities categories, and two items showed significant differences in the Coordination Activities category. All other items revealed no significant differences.

**Counseling activities.** School counselors and principals revealed different perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors performed the majority of counseling activities (see Table 4.14). The greatest significant differences occurred in small group counseling activities. School counselors responded that they occasionally to rarely provide small group counseling for academic issues, while principals perceived that their school counselors occasionally performed this task ( $p < .001$ ). School counselors' responses indicated that they provided small group counseling assessing relationships/social skills occasionally, and principals reported that their school counselors occasionally to rarely engaged in this activity ( $p < .001$ ). School counselors responded that they occasionally to rarely conducted small groups related to family/personal issues, whereas principals perceived that school counselors frequently to occasionally performed this task ( $p < .001$ ). School counselors stated that they rarely to never conducted small groups for students regarding substance abuse issues, and principals indicated that their school counselors occasionally to rarely perform this task ( $p < .000$ ). Counseling with students regarding crisis/emergency issues also elicited differences in perception ( $p = .013$ ). School counselors stated that they performed this task occasionally, and principals reported that this was done frequently to occasionally.

Both school counselors and principals stated that school counselors frequently counseled students regarding (1) personal/family concerns ( $p = .968$ ); (2) school behavior ( $p = .085$ ); and (3) relationships ( $p = .170$ ). According to both school counselors and principals, school counselors frequently followed up on individual and group counseling participants ( $p = .665$ ).

Table 4.14

*Comparison of Means of School Counselors' and Principals' Perceptions of Counseling Activities*

Activity	School Counselors		Principals		<i>p</i> -value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Counsel(s) with students regarding personal/family concerns	4.39	.785	4.39	.777	.968
Counsel(s) with students regarding school behavior	4.39	.820	4.15	.891	.085
Counsel(s) with students regarding crisis/emergency issues	3.68	.910	3.93	.886	.013*
Counsel(s) with students regarding relationships (e.g. family, friends, romantic)	4.19	.836	4.06	.849	.170
Provide(s) small group counseling for academic issues	2.76	1.349	3.31	1.089	.000*
Provide(s) small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	3.12	1.372	2.65	1.075	.000*
Conduct(s) small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g. divorce, death)	2.69	1.317	3.28	1.136	.000*
Conduct(s) small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (Own, or family/friend use)	1.57	.756	2.64	1.020	.000*
Follow(s) up on individual and group counseling participants	4.10	1.011	4.05	.959	.665

*Note:* \*  $p < .05$

**Consultation activities.** School counselors and principals agreed that school counselors frequently to occasionally performed six of the seven consultation activities (see Table 4.15).

These items included the following:

1. Consulting with community and school agencies concerning individual students ( $p = .091$ )

2. Consulting with parents regarding child/adolescent developmental issues ( $p = .671$ )
3. Coordinating referrals for students and/or families to community of education professionals ( $p = .735$ )
4. Assisting in the identification of exceptional children ( $p = .059$ )
5. Providing consultation for administrators ( $p = .251$ )
6. Participating in team/grade level/subject team meetings ( $p = .372$ )

School counselors indicated that they routinely to frequently consult with school staff about student behavior, whereas principals responded that their school counselors frequently did this task ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 4.15

*Comparison of Means of School Counselors' and Principals' Perceptions of Consultation Activities*

Activity	School Counselors		Principals		<i>p</i> -value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Consult(s) with school staff concerning student behavior	4.41	.770	4.02	1.027	.001*
Consult(s) with community and school agencies concerning individual students	3.50	.963	3.67	.927	.091
Consult(s) with parents regarding child/adolescent developmental issues	3.55	.884	3.59	.948	.671
Coordinate(s) referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g. mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	3.61	.949	3.65	.962	.735
Assist(s) in identifying exceptional children (special education)	3.24	1.290	3.50	1.238	.059
Provide(s) consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)	3.52	1.203	3.66	1.167	.251
Participate(s) in team / grade level / subject team meetings	3.45	1.32	3.57	1.198	.372

*Note: \* $p < .05$*

**Curriculum activities.** Of the eight items on the survey that related to curriculum activities, school counselors and principals agreed on the frequency with which school counselors performed seven of these tasks (see Table 4.16). Both groups indicated that school counselors frequently engaged in conducting classroom activities to introduce themselves and explain the counseling program to students ( $p = .108$ ), while they occasionally presented classroom lessons on the following:

1. Career development and the world of work ( $p = .499$ )
2. Various personal and/or social traits ( $p = .393$ )
3. Relating to others ( $p = .577$ )
4. Personal growth and developmental issues ( $p = .957$ )
5. Conflict resolution ( $p = .094$ )
6. Personal safety ( $p = .194$ )

There was a significant difference in how school counselors and principals viewed the frequency with which school counselors conducted classroom lessons related to substance abuse.

Principals reported that they perceived that school counselors were occasionally to rarely engaging in this task, and school counselors revealed that they did this rarely ( $p = .017$ ).

Table 4.16

*Comparison of Means of School Counselors' and Principals' Perceptions of Curriculum Activities*

Activity	School Counselors		Principals		p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Conduct(s) classroom activities to introduce yourself/themselves and explain the counseling program	4.22	1.112	4.02	1.173	.108
Conduct(s) classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	3.60	1.311	3.51	1.272	.499
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on various personal and/or traits (e.g. responsibility, respect, etc)	3.72	1.435	3.90	1.189	.393
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on relating to others (family, friends)	3.58	1.445	3.71	1.241	.577
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on personal growth and developmental issues	3.32	1.381	3.35	1.221	.957
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on conflict resolution	3.37	1.429	3.67	1.183	.094
Conduct(s) lessons regarding substance abuse	2.53	1.291	2.83	1.155	.017*
Conduct(s) lessons on personal safety issues	2.96	1.324	3.14	1.176	.194

Note: \* $p < .05$

**Coordination activities.** Only two of the 12 coordination activities showed a significant difference between school counselors' and principals' responses—attending professional development activities ( $p = .019$ ) and coordinating with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs ( $p < .001$ ) (see Table 4.17). School counselors responded that they attended professional development activities more frequently than their principals originally thought and coordinated with an advisory team less frequently than their principals thought. School counselors and principals agreed that school counselors were rarely to frequently engage in the remaining 10 coordination activities, which included the following:

1. Coordinating special events and programs for the school around academic, career, or personal/social issues ( $p = .098$ )
2. Coordinating and maintaining a comprehensive school counseling program ( $p = .374$ )

3. Informing parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of the school ( $p = .946$ )
4. Conducting or coordinating parent education classes or workshops ( $p = .613$ )
5. Coordinating school-wide response for crisis management and intervention ( $p = .204$ )
6. Informing teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of the school counselor within the context of the school ( $p = .143$ )
7. Conducting or coordinating teacher inservice programs ( $p = .140$ )
8. Keeping track of how time is being spent on the function the perform ( $p = .157$ )
9. Formally evaluating student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from students, teachers, and/or parents perspectives ( $p = .937$ )
10. Conducting needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents', faculty's, and/or students' perspectives ( $p = .476$ )

According to both groups, school counselors participated in these activities rarely to frequently.



Table 4.17

*Comparison of Means of School Counselors' and Principals' Perceptions of Coordination Activities*

Activity	School Counselors		Principals		p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Coordinate(s) special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g. career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	2.85	1.082	3.64	1.146	.098
Coordinate(s) and maintain(s) comprehensive school counselor program	4.11	1.064	4.22	1.063	.374
Inform(s) parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	3.56	1.088	3.55	1.117	.946
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) parent education classes or workshops	2.53	1.107	2.47	1.130	.613
Coordinate(s) school-wide response for crisis management and intervention	2.73	1.283	2.92	1.349	.204
Inform(s) teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of the school counselor within the context of your school	3.31	1.131	3.50	1.195	.143
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) teacher inservice programs	2.41	1.085	2.59	1.130	.140
Keep(s) track of how time is being spent on the functions that you/they perform	3.48	1.340	3.27	1.285	.157
Attend(s) professional development activities (e.g. state conferences, local inservices)	3.99	.950	3.75	.959	.019*
Coordinate(s) with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	2.45	1.363	3.21	1.246	.000*
Formally evaluate(s) student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from students, teacher, and/or parent perspectives	3.09	1.235	3.10	1.217	.937
Conduct(s) needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty, and/or students	3.08	1.209	2.98	1.195	.476

*Note:* \* $p < .05$

**“Other” activities.** Ten items are included on the “Other” Activities category. Of these, school counselors’ and principals’ perceptions differed on only one activity (see Table 4.18).

School counselors responded that they rarely to never substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at their schools, whereas principals reported that they thought their school counselors rarely performed this task ( $p = .032$ ). School counselors and principals agreed on the frequency with which the remaining nine items were conducted. Both groups indicated that school

counselors engaged in the following non-counseling activities frequently to occasionally:

1. Participated on committees within the school ( $p = .652$ )
2. Coordinated the standardized testing ( $p = .539$ )
3. Organized outreach to low income families ( $p = .599$ )
4. Responded to health issues ( $p = .977$ )
5. Performed hall, bus, cafeteria duty ( $p = .658$ )

According to school counselors and principals, school counselors occasionally to rarely (1) scheduled students for classes ( $p = .941$ ); (2) enrolled students in and/or withdrew students from school ( $p = .418$ ); and (3) maintained/completed educational records/reports ( $p = .744$ ). Finally, both groups agreed that school counselors rarely to never handled student discipline ( $p = .061$ ).

Table 4.18

*Comparison of Means of School Counselors' and Principals' Perceptions of "Other" Activities*

Activity	School Counselors		Principals		<i>p</i> -value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Participate(s) on committees within the school	4.40	1.011	4.40	.872	.652
Coordinate(s) the standardized testing	3.23	1.775	3.35	1.807	.539
Organize(s) outreach to low income families (Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)	3.39	1.391	3.49	1.232	.599
Respond(s) to health issues (e.g. check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	3.23	1.468	3.26	1.323	.977
Perform(s) hall, bus, cafeteria duty	3.59	1.603	3.52	1.474	.658
Schedule(s) students for classes	2.78	1.867	2.75	1.754	.941
Enroll(s) students in and/or withdraw(s) students from school	2.67	1.725	2.52	1.695	.418
Maintain(s)/Complete(s) educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance records, drop-out reports)	2.99	1.730	3.06	1.736	.744
Handle(s) discipline of students	1.93	1.168	1.87	1.100	.061
Substitute teach(es) and/or cover(s) classes for teachers at your school	1.81	1.037	1.55	.790	.032*

*Note:* Significance is assumed at  $p < .05$

Refer to Appendix G Table 4.1 for a comprehensive list of means and standard deviations for the

comparative analysis of school counselors' and principals' responses.

### **Summary**

The results of the statistical analyses of participants' responses were discussed in this chapter. The mean responses and frequency distributions of school counselors' and principals' perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors engage in five categories of activities, including Counseling Activities, Consultation Activities, Curriculum Activities, Coordination Activities, and "Other" Activities unrelated to a CDSC program that aligns with the ASCA National Model were reported. A comparative analysis of school counselors' and principals' mean responses were then analyzed. The finding and limitations of the study, as well as its implications for school counselors, principals, and counselor education and education administration faculty are discussed in chapter five.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion and Implications

In this chapter the author discussed the major findings of the study. In addition, limitations of the study;, implications for school counselors, principals, counselor educators, and education administrators; and suggestions for future research are discussed.

#### Discussion of Findings

Because this is a comparative analysis, the findings from the data for both school counselors' and principals' responses are reported together. The findings are also reported in subsections that correlate with each activities category of the *SCARS* survey instrument.

Significant findings that emerged from this research are: (a) there were only 10 items that showed significant differences between school counselors' and principals' responses. (b) both school counselors and principals who participated in this study indicated that school counselors spent the majority of their time engaged in activities congruent with a CDSC program aligned with the ASCA National Model (2005), (c) five of the items that showed significant differences fell under the Counseling Activities category, one item fell under the Consultation Activities and Curriculum Activities categories, two were in the Coordination Activities category, and one was in the "Other" Activities category, (d) with the exception of one item where significant differences appeared, principals indicated their school counselors performed these activities more frequently than school counselors indicated. Each of these differences is discussed below.

## **Counseling Activities**

In this task category, school counselors' and principals' perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors engaged in counseling activities differed significantly on five items. Of these, only one item, counsel with students regarding crisis/emergency issues, showed a significant difference in school counselors' and principals' perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors engage in individual counseling activities. The remaining four items related to school counselors' involvement in conducting small group activities (provide small group for academic issues, relationship/social issues, family/personal issues, and substance abuse).

**Counseling with students in regards to crisis/emergency issues.** The school counselors who participated in this study indicated that they occasionally counseled students regarding crisis/emergency issues, whereas the principals who participated in the study perceived that their school counselors frequently to occasionally engaged in this activity. Interestingly, 32.4% of the principals thought that their school counselors participated in crisis/emergency counseling routinely, while only 21.9% of school counselors responded that they engaged in this activity routinely. This finding was surprising in that given the milieu of societal issues that students and families face today it is difficult to understand the reason why school counselors did not engage in this task more frequently. Possibly, this low response is due to a lack of preparation in crisis intervention. In a study by Augur, Seymour, and Roberts (2004), 35% of the surveyed school counselors indicated feeling inadequately prepared for crisis intervention.

This item is also associated with the item within the Coordination Activity subsection pertaining to coordinating school-wide response for crisis management and intervention. In this study, school counselors and principals perceived that they and their school counselors occasionally to rarely were involved in the coordination of school-wide response for crisis management and intervention. The position statement regarding the Professional School Counselor and Crisis/Critical Incident Response (2007) states, “The professional school counselor is a leader and an integral part of the prevention, intervention and post-incident support of school crisis/critical incident responses in both planning and implementation” (para. 4). Research has revealed that when the school counselor assumed a leadership role in a school crisis, a strained relationship with the school principal resulted due to the perception that the school counselor was overstepping his/her authority (Wiger & Harowski, 2003). Future studies should focus on the roles of school counselors and principals in a crisis event and how roles are determined within the critical incident plan.

**Small group counseling activities.** Four items under the Counseling Activities category showed significant differences between school counselors’ and principals’ perceptions related to school counselors’ involvement in small group counseling activities. Principals indicated that their school counselors were engaged in these activities more frequently than school counselors reported, with the exception of one item: providing small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills.

School counselors responded that they occasionally provided small group counseling concerning relationships/social skills. Principals, on the other hand, thought that their school

counselors occasionally to rarely performed this activity. This difference in perception could be due to the fact that many principals do not believe school counselors have the skills to conduct personal counseling. Many community members and educational personnel believe that schools are designed to concentrate on teaching and achievement, and there is a resistance to counseling and intervention that focus on personal concerns (Keys, Bemak, & Lockhart, 1998).

School counselors who facilitated small group activities regarding personal/family issues stated that they occasionally to rarely conducted this activity. In contrast, principals indicated that their school counselors frequently to occasionally performed this task. It would be interesting to determine whether school counselors tend to address these issues with students individually because of the highly emotional nature of these issues, or whether group counseling is primarily done at the elementary school level. This type of counseling as it relates to grade level warrants further investigation due to the variety of family constellations in which students live today.

School counselors and principals differed in their opinions about the frequency with which school counselors were engaged in small group counseling for academic issues. School counselors responded that they conducted this activity less frequently than principals perceived. School counselors reported that they occasionally to rarely addressed academic issues in small group counseling activities. Principals perceived that their school counselors occasionally participated in this activity. It is possible that the principals' viewpoint could be due to education reform mandates that hold principals and school counselors more accountable for students' academic achievement. It is also possible that school counselors perceived that they

deal with academic issues more frequently in classroom guidance activities in which more students can be reached in a more efficient manner. It is also possible that because it is difficult to separate academics from career and personal/social skills concerns, these issues are addressed under the auspice of improving self-understanding, which is associated with academic achievement (Campbell & Brigman, 2005). Steen & Kaffenberger (2007) suggest that school counselors give consideration to academic achievement in small groups as it relates to improving students' behavior that supports academic achievement. Campbell & Brigman (2005) shows that some school counselors may not feel confident in their "ability to lead groups that make a significant difference in student performance" ( p. 79). Because educational reform emphasizes the improvement of students' academic achievement, it is important for school counselors to provide small group counseling activities concerning academic issues more frequently. A benefit to providing more small groups related to academics is that the school counselor can conduct small groups that target specific areas with which certain students may be struggling (e.g., organizational, note taking, and study skills).

Finally, there was a significant difference in school counselors' and principals' perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors facilitated small groups related to substance abuse issues. School counselors indicated that they rarely to never performed this kind of activity. Conversely, most principals surveyed responded that their school counselors occasionally to rarely conducted small groups regarding substance abuse. These results may be due to the fact that elementary school counselors represented slightly more than half of the school counselors who participated in the study. Elementary school counselors may feel



addressing substance abuse issues are not relevant in an elementary school setting. Furthermore, they may feel that school-wide programs such as D.A.R.E. fill the need for addressing substance abuse issues at the elementary school level. In addition, there is some research that indicates school counselors may be reluctant to address substance abuse issue for a couple of reasons. One, school counselors may not wish to deal with this issue in groups because some research (Clark, Ringwalt, Shamblen, & Hanley, 2011) has shown that this type of approach encourages rather than discourages use. Secondly, there is research (Burrow-Sanchez & Lopez, 2009) that suggests that school counselors feel inadequately prepared to address substance abuse issues, mostly because they receive little to no training in this area. Finally, it is possible that substance abuse issues are addressed in individual counseling and/or large group or school-wide activities focused on preventing drug abuse are presented with the assistance of an outside agency (e.g., D.A.R.E, Drug Awareness Week).

It appears from the results related to the Counseling Activities category that principals seem to have an inaccurate view of how frequently school counselors conduct individual and small group counseling activities. This finding is not surprising, because school counselors perform these activities in relative isolation, and other school staff are less likely to be aware of the frequency with which their school counselors engage in counseling activities. School counselors are held to a code of ethics that requires them to maintain confidentiality; therefore, they will neither divulge the contents of their counseling sessions with individual students nor the frequency with which they see their students. Confidentiality also prevents school counselors from revealing to others which students participate in small group counseling activities. Yet, it is

important for principals to have a general idea of the frequency with which school counselors facilitate individual and small group counseling activities. Through data collection, school counselors can inform their principals about the type of individual and small group counseling activities they perform without disclosing their students' names.

### **Consultation Activities**

Consulting with school staff concerning student behavior was the only item under the Consultation Activities category that yielded a significant difference between school counselors' and principals' responses. Eighty-nine percent of the school counselors surveyed reported that they routinely to frequently consult with school staff about student behavior. Seventy percent of the principals revealed that their school counselors frequently performed this task. This difference in perception could be attributed to the fact that counselors probably spent more of their time consulting with teachers, school psychologists, and other support staff than with their principals. Furthermore, this study did not include a sample of assistant principals who typically handle student behavior and disciplinary issues more frequently than school principals. As a result, principals may be less likely to be aware of the frequency with which school counselors performed this task.

Consultation activities are part of the ASCA Delivery System component that addresses responsive services and system support. Through consultation activities, school counselors collaborate and partner with teachers, school staff, parents, and community agencies on a regular basis to help students and families. School counselors also serve as advocates and provide information and support to the school community (ASCA, 2005). Both school counselors and

principals responded that school counselors frequently to occasionally participate in consultative activities, thus indicating support for a CDSC program aligned with the ASCA National Model (2005).

The findings of this study are congruent with other studies (Dodson, 2009; Rayle & Adams, 2007; Vaughn, Bynum, & Hooten, 2007) which revealed that when comprehensive, developmental school counseling (CDSC) programs are in place, school counselors performed activities congruent with the ASCA National Model and their preservice training. The frequency with which school counselors performed these activities is also congruent with the ASCA recommended time distribution for school counselors at different grade levels. For example, the ASCA National Model recommends that school counselors spend 25% to 40% of their time, depending on the grade level to which they are assigned, engaged in activities reflective of the Delivery System component of providing responsive services such as individual and small group counseling, consultation, and providing referrals.

### **Curriculum Activities**

Presenting lessons regarding substance abuse was the only item in this category for which there was a significant difference between the perceptions of school counselors and principals. Principals perceived that their school counselors occasionally to rarely participated in this activity. School counselors indicated that they rarely to never performed this activity. As discussed previously in the Counseling Activities category as it relates to small group counseling, many school counselors may feel that they are not qualified to discuss substance abuse issues with students. Therefore, school counselors may rely on the assistance of outside

agencies to address this topic in large group and school-wide activities. Furthermore, grade level may have some influence over responses to this item, as the majority of participants, both school counselors (52%) and principals (60%), indicated that they worked in elementary school settings where substance abuse issues are likely to be addressed less frequently. This is an issue that deserves future investigation.

The ASCA National Model (2005) suggests that school counselors spend 15% to 45% of their time, depending on the grade level with which they work, on delivering the classroom guidance curriculum (ASCA, 2005). Overall, school counselors' and principals' perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors participate in delivering a school guidance curriculum to their students reflects the ASCA's recommendations.

### **Coordination Activities**

Coordination activities are tasks that involve system support and relate directly to the ASCA National Model Delivery System. Under the System Support component, school counselors participate in activities that enhance the school counseling program and contribute to systemic change for the betterment of students (ASCA, 2005). In this role, school counselors use their advocacy and leadership skills in consulting, collaborating, and teaming with other school personnel, parents, and community members (ASCA, 2005).

Under the Coordination Activities category, there were two items in which school counselors and principals differed in their perceptions of the frequency with which school counselors performed these types of activities. These items included attending professional development activities and coordinating with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school

counseling program needs. Most school counselors (66.4%) perceived that they routinely to frequently engage in attending professional development activities, while 64.9% of principals indicated that their school counselors frequently to occasionally participated in these activities. Often times, school counselors participate in professional development activities that are outside of the school system (e.g., at local counseling organizations, professional conferences) and do not share this information with their principals. Because merit pay is sometimes linked to counselor performance and academic achievement, it is vital that school counselors discuss with principals the professional development activities in which they participate. When principals are aware of the depth and breadth of the training their school counselors receive, it is possible that the principals will have a greater understanding of how school counselors serve as a vital resource for students and other stakeholders.

Coordinating with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs also revealed a significant difference in responses. Nearly half (49.4%) of the school counselors reported that they occasionally to rarely coordinated with an advisory team to support the school counseling program, and 32.9% said that they never performed this activity. Interestingly, .6% ( $n = 1$ ) stated that he/she did not know the frequency with which they performed this activity. This percentage could be related to the 1.3% ( $n = 2$ ) of school counselors who stated that they were unfamiliar with the ASCA National Model and were, therefore, uncertain about what constitutes an advisory team. Ironically, the majority (68.7%) of the principals surveyed perceived that their school counselors occasionally coordinated with an advisory team to support the school counseling program. Again, 2.7% ( $n = 5$ ) did not know with

what frequency their school counselors were doing this. The difference in school counselors' and principals' responses could be related to principals regarding the advisory team as the school-wide planning committee rather than a separate advisory committee assigned to provide support for and maintenance of the school counseling program. Perhaps if school counselors took the time to form their own advisory team, stakeholders would be better informed about the integral role that school counselors play in schools and provide greater support for the CDSC program tasks that they perform.

### **“Other” Activities**

The “Other” Activities category includes all of the indirect tasks in which school counselors engage that are unrelated to, and take away from, CDSC program activities that align with the ASCA National Model (2005). Substituting or covering classes for teachers was the only activity under the “Other” Activities category for which school counselors' and principals' perceptions differed significantly. Though both groups indicated that school counselors rarely to never engaged in this activity, the school counselors' mean response was closer to rarely ( $M = 1.81$ ), and the principals' mean response was rarely to never ( $M = 1.55$ ). Although 49% of the school counselors surveyed indicated that they never substituted or covered classes for teachers, 31.6% said they did this rarely, and 19.3% said they did this routinely to occasionally. Similarly, 56.6% of the principals surveyed reported that their school counselors never engaged in substituting or covering for teachers, and 36.3% stated that their school counselor did this rarely. Though the mean difference between the two responses is quite small, it is likely a significant

difference appeared in the data analysis as a result of the difference between school counselors' and principals' responses in the routinely to occasionally categories.

Though school counselors and principals agreed on the frequency with which school counselors engaged in activities that do not support a CDSC program, the frequency with which school counselors performed most of these tasks fell into the routinely to frequently range. For instance, 40% of the school counselors in this survey frequently to occasionally kept track of how their time was spent, with 32.3% indicating that they did this routinely. Showing how time is spent is a tool that school counselors can use to inform principals about the numerous tasks in which they participate so that task negotiation can occur. If principals see that school counselors spend an inordinate amount of time on "other" activities that detract from their CDSC program, they may be inclined to shift some of these duties to other school staff.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In survey research, it is most desirable to have at least a 50% response rate (Creswell, 2005). However, large response rates do not necessarily ensure generalizability, because response bias is always a possibility. Response bias may be indicative of participants' willingness to participate in the study to differentiate them from nonparticipants. Respondents may either have a particularly negative view about the subject matter of the survey (Creswell, 2005), or they may respond randomly without giving each question thoughtful consideration.

On the other hand, low response rates, as in this case, do not necessarily indicate that responses are not representative of the sample. A wave analysis is a procedure whereby the researcher examines data at various intervals throughout the data collection period (Creswell,

2009). This method allows the researcher to determine if responses vary significantly from one week to the next. In this study, very little variation in average responses throughout the data collection period occurred. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data collected are a relatively accurate representation of the two sample populations that participated in the study.

Generalizations beyond the two groups, school counselors and principals that participated in the study, cannot be made and one must be cautious in doing so.

Additional limitations such as the time of year during which the researcher performed the study and the population chosen for the study need to be considered. Because the study was performed during the summer months when schools were out of session, potential participants may not have accessed their school email as frequently as they would during the school year. Also, only three states in the Southeastern region of the United States were selected for this study. The school counselor sample population was also limited to those school counselors who listed their email addresses with the ASCA Member Directory. Thus, the researcher could not predict how non-members of the ASCA would respond. Although one can assume that the Departments of Education for the states selected listed all principals' email addresses, there is no way of being certain that this is the case or that the listing is current. Finally, the response rate for school counselors and principals was lower than anticipated. Though this study elicited a 23.25% overall response rate, this represents an extremely small percentage of the total school counselors (15%) and principals (4%) in the three states chosen for this study. Therefore, it is essential to remember that no generalizations of the results can be made beyond that of the school counselors and principals who participated in this study.



## **Implications**

The implications of this study for school counselors, principals, and counselor education and education administration faculty are discussed below. Additionally, implications for future research are explored.

### **School Counselors**

There are several implications for school counselors resulting from this research. The most salient implication is that school counselors need to be diligent in keeping track of how they spend their time. The ASCA National Model (2005) emphasizes the importance of accountability, and it is vital in today's educational climate. Educational reform agendas not only hold teachers and principals accountable for students' academic achievement, but they also hold school counselors accountable. As such, it is critical for school counselors to collect and use data to show the effectiveness of their school counseling programs. Keeping a daily, detailed account of how school counselors spend their time is critical data and has numerous advantages for school counselors. First, it allows school counselors to see what activities they perform and the frequency with which they engage in these tasks on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis. School counselors tend to "guess-timate" the amount of time spent on a task or forget what has been accomplished each day. Keeping a record can provide a more accurate account. With this data, school counselors can look for patterns and make changes based on what patterns emerge.

Because principals tend to be results and data driven, they look for results in the form of hard numbers. When school counselors collect and analyze data on how time is spent, they can

more effectively and concretely communicate to their principals the tasks they perform. Furthermore, showing how time is spent is a tool that school counselors can use to inform principals and other decision-makers about the numerous tasks in which they participate, so that task negotiation can occur. It is possible that if principals were more aware of the amount of time their school counselors spend on non-counseling activities and how these activities take time directly away from students, they may be more inclined to shift some of these non-counseling duties to other school staff.

Along with the theme of data collection, school counselors not only need to keep track of how they spend their time, but they also need to frequently and formally evaluate student progress as a result of their participation in counseling from students', teachers', and parents' perspectives. Under the Accountability component of the ASCA National Model (2005), school counselors are required to demonstrate how students change as a result of the school counseling program. As such, it is not enough to merely note the amount of time spent on individual and small group counseling activities. These enumerative data do not indicate how well these activities were performed or the value they added to student growth. School counselors need to collect data on an ongoing basis throughout a counseling activity in order to assess the results of the program, activity, or lesson. Results-based evaluations help school counselors to discover "what worked and what didn't and clarify what needs to be changed or improved" (ASCA, 2005, p. 60). These evaluations need to come from all stakeholders, including students, teachers, and parents.

One of the implications that emerged from this study is how infrequently school counselors conducted small group counseling activities around academic achievement and substance abuse issues. Research indicates that school counselors may not feel confident in their abilities to delivery group counseling activities, particularly as they relate to these two issues (Burrow-Sanchez & Lopez, 2009; Campbell & Brigman, 2005). School counselors need to seek out professional development opportunities to learn more about conducting small group counseling activities as well as effective small group counseling programs that address academic achievement. There are numerous small group counseling program models such as the Student Success Skills (SSS) model that has proven to be effective in addressing the skills needed for academic achievement (Campbell & Brigman, 2005).

Substance use and abuse issues continue to be prevalent among adolescents in our society, and it is one of the most significant contributors to academic failure and drop-out rates in the United States. It is also an issue that school counselors in this study seem to avoid addressing in small group and classroom guidance activities. Research suggests that one reason for this is likely due to school counselors' lack of training and experience in dealing with substance abuse issues (Burrow-Sanchez & Lopez, 2009). The CACREP Standards (2009) requires school counselors-in-training to "know the signs and symptoms of substance abuse in children and adolescents, as well as the signs and symptoms of living in a home where substance abuse occurs" (p. 42). If school counselors are to have the knowledge and skills that allow them to recognize substance abuse, then it is essential that they have the skills to address substance abuse issues in a variety of formats. CACREP (2009) also requires school counselors possess

the skills necessary for designing and implementing prevention and intervention plans related to the effects of several factors that impact student learning and development including health and wellness and “factors of resiliency on students learning and development” (p. 41). Therefore, regardless of the grade level in which a school counselor works, it is essential that they receive the training necessary to address substance abuse concerns.

A school counseling program advisory team is an integral part of the ASCA National Model (2005) Management System component of a CDSC program. This study revealed that this component is lacking in school counseling programs. A school counseling program advisory team composed of counselors, students, parents, school administrators and board members, teachers, and business and community leaders (ASCA, 2005) assists school counselors in establishing and reviewing program goals, competencies, and results and makes program recommendations (ASCA, 2005). Often, school counselors operate in isolation from other school staff, and the question, “What do school counselors actually do?” is answered differently among stakeholders. If school counselors instituted a program advisory team, they would no longer work in isolation, and all stakeholders would be more aware of the integral role of the school counselor.

Finally, this research suggests that principals do not always have an accurate understanding of the frequency with which their school counselors participate in activities that support a CDSC program and those activities that do not. A lack of time seems to be the most cited reason why school counselors and principals do not communicate and collaborate as frequently as they should (Finkelstein, 2009). This has important implications for both school

counselors and principals. School counselors not only need to document how they are spending their time and the results of their efforts with students and the school community, but they must also find time to regularly communicate and collaborate with their school principals. Perhaps scheduling a regular monthly meeting between the two would help to keep principals apprised of the activities and the frequency with which school counselors engage in those activities. It is difficult to gain principals' support for the school counseling program if they are unaware of what the program does and how it affects students. School counselors are responsible for advocating for themselves and their profession.

### **Principals**

As stated in the previous section, the most salient finding that emerged from this study is the fact that though principals and school counselors agreed on the frequency in which school counselors' engaged in most of the activities supportive of, and those that are incongruent to a CDSC program. Communication and collaboration seem to be a key factor in the accuracy of principals' views on the activities that school counselors perform. It is essential that principals require their school counselors to collect data that demonstrate how they spend their time and the effectiveness of the school counseling program. Conversely, principals need to use evaluative tools that are reflective of the school counseling profession and the ASCA National Model when assessing their school counselors and the school counseling program. Principals and school counselors can use evaluative tools such as the *M.E.A.S.U.R.E.* to formulate goals for the school counseling program and assess its effectiveness (Dahir & Stone, 2003). Before an evaluation can occur, principals need to have knowledge of the ASCA National Model (2005), the training that

school counselors receive, and the ASCA job description of the professional school counselor. It is also important for principals to endorse and use performance evaluations that are appropriate to the school counseling profession.

Many states have performance evaluations specific to the school counseling profession, and there are a myriad of examples available through the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, *Resource Center*, 2010). Many states have performance evaluations specific to the school counseling profession, and a myriad of tools are available through the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, *Resource Center*, 2010). Furthermore, with the new educational reform initiatives holding school counselors accountable for students' academic achievement, more states are likely to provide performance evaluation measures specific to the school counseling profession. When principals reach out to their school counselors in a collaborative fashion, a possible outcome is that principals will help school staff and faculty understand the supportive position of school counselors within the school.

### **Counselor Education and Education Administration Faculty**

The results of this study also provide implications for counselor education and educational administration faculty. Principals' views of the frequency in which school counselors engage in counseling and non-counseling activities were not consistent with school counselors' views in several areas. Therefore, more needs to be done to inform principals about the current role of the school counselor in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Research has shown that when school counselors- and administrators-in-training are given the opportunity to participate in interdisciplinary learning environments they gain a greater understanding of each others'

professional role (Kirchner and Setchfield, 2005; Rambo-Igney & Smith, 2005). Therefore, counselor educators and education administration faculty need to work together to ensure that future school principals are aware of the important role of the school counselor (Perusse, Goodnough & Bouknight, 2007). Furthermore, the very act of counselor educators and education administration faculty working together to provide opportunities to instruct pre-service school counselors and pre-service principals about the differences in training and education unique to each of these professionals, models the collaborative relationship that is essential to school counselors and principals in the school setting.

It appears from the results of this research that school counselors rarely provided small group counseling experiences on academic achievement and substance abuse issues. Counselor educators may consider providing additional learning experiences for school counselors during their training, particularly because this is a CACREP learning outcome (G2) (CACREP, 2009). This result is consistent with the research that indicates school counselors do not receive the training that they need in their graduate programs to feel adequately prepared to address substance abuse issues (Burrow-Sanchez & Lopez, 2009).. Therefore, it is imperative that counselor education programs address this need, so that new professionals entering the field will have the self-efficacy and competency they need to be effective in helping students with drug and alcohol use related concerns.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Future research in the area of the perceptions of school counselors and principals on the school counselor's role in the school setting and the frequency with which they perform

counseling activities is needed. A large scale study that encompasses a larger sample population would help to generalize results. Research that includes qualitative data collection through case studies and observations would increase the reliability of responses over that of self-reported survey research. Additional research around the effects of collaborative, interdisciplinary counselor education and education administration training programs would be beneficial in determining how preservice training impacts principals' perceptions of school counselors' roles.

### **Chapter Summary**

This researcher summarized the purpose of the study, the methodology, the participants of the study, and the instrument used to collect the data. In addition, a discussion of the major findings and limitations of the study and the implications for school counselors, principals, and counselor education and education administration faculty were discussed, as was as implications for future research.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated school counselors' and school principals' perceptions of school counselors' activities using the *School Counselor Activity Rating Scale* (Scarborough, 2005). The results suggest that overall school counselors and principals agree on the frequency with which school counselors engage in activities that are congruent with a comprehensive, developmental school counseling (CDSC) program, and the frequency with which they engage in activities that are in opposition to a CDSC program. Though there was some disagreement in each of the five categories, the greatest disagreement between school counselors and principals



occurred in the Counseling Activities category, particularly as it relates to small group counseling.

The findings from this study indicate that school counselors and principals need to make the time to communicate with each other. School counselors can keep their principals informed of the activities they are involved in, and the frequency in which they engage in these activities, by keeping track of their time. It is essential for school counselors to collect data and use it to demonstrate the effectiveness of their counseling program. By doing so, they can advocate for their position in the school. Principals need to understand the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) and the appropriate activities school counselors should engage in that are supportive of a CDSC program. They need to support professional development activities that are specific to the school counseling professional, and increase performance in vital areas such as providing small group counseling and classroom guidance activities that target academic achievement and substance abuse issues. The findings also suggest that greater collaboration among counselor educators and education administration faculty can help to principals on the vital role of the school counselor within the school setting.

Today school counselors and principals are challenged to show how they positively impact the academic success of all students. School counselors are trained to implement a comprehensive, developmental school counseling (CDSC) program that supports the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students by engaging in activities associated with the American School Counselor Association's National Model. Often times, principals do not utilize school counselors' professional training to their fullest extent. This often results in role

confusion and stress, and school counselors' involvement in non-counseling activities that take time away from activities that directly impact students' academic achievement and personal/social development. Part of the misappropriation of school counselors' activities stems from the evolution of the school counseling profession and resulting perceptions based on historical economic, political, and sociological influences.

The National Association for Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals has acknowledged and endorsed the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model for school counseling programs. As greater communication and collaboration occurs, especially as states adopt legislation that requires CDSC program, it is anticipated that principals and others will become better informed as to the vital role school counselors play to support the academic mission and the school-aged youth with whom they work.

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## Appendices

**Appendix A**

**Matrix of SCARS Activities as They Relate to the ASCA National Model and Themes**

*Matrix of SCARS Activities as They Relate to the ASCA National Model and Themes*

SCARS Activities	ASCA Model Components	ASCA Model Themes
<b>Counseling Activities</b>		
Counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns	D	A
Counsel with students regarding school behavior	D	A, C
Counsel with students regarding crisis/emergency issues	D	A
Counsel with students regarding relationships (e.g. family, friends, romantic)	D	A, C
Provide small group counseling for academic issues	D	A
Provide small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	D	A, C
Conduct small groups regarding family/personal issues (divorce, death)	D	A, C
Conduct small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own or family/friend use)	D	A
Follow up on individual and group counseling participants	D, A	C, S
<b>Consultation Activities</b>		
Consult with school staff concerning student behavior	D	L, C
Consult with community and school agencies concerning individual students	D	L, C
Consult with parent regarding child/adolescent developmental needs	D	L, C, A
Coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or educational professionals (e.g. mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	D	L, C, A
Assist in identifying exceptional children (special education)	D	L, C, A
Provide consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)	D	L, C, A, S
Participate in team / grade level / subject team meetings	D	C, A, S
<b>Curriculum Activities</b>		
Conduct classroom activities to introduce yourself and explain the counseling program to students	F, D, M	L, C
Conduct classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	F, D	A, C
Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g. responsibility, respect, etc.)	F, D	A, C
Conduct classroom lessons on relating to others (family, friends)	F, D	A, C



*Matrix of SCARS Activities as They Relate to the ASCA National Model and Themes (cont.)*

Conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and developmental issues	F, D	A
Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution	F, D	A, C
Conduct classroom lessons regarding substance abuse	F, D	A
Conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues	F, D	A
<b>Coordination Activities</b>		
Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g. career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	D	L, A, C
Coordinate and maintain comprehensive school counseling program	F, M, A	L
Inform parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	M, A	L
Conduct or coordinate parent education classes or workshops	D	L, A, C
Coordinate school-wide response for crisis management and intervention	D	L, A, C
Inform teacher/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	M, A	L
Conduct or coordinate teacher inservice programs	D	L
Keep track of how time is spent on the functions that you perform	M, A	
Attends professional development activities (e.g. state conferences, local inservices)	M, A	
Coordinate with an advisory team to analyze and respond to counseling program needs	M, A	L
Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teaches, and/or parent perspectives	M, A	
Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluating from parents, faculty and/or students	F, D, M, A	L, S
<b>“Other Activities</b>		
Participate on committees within the school		
Coordinate the standardized testing		
Organize outreach to low income families (e.g. Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)		
Respond to health issues (e.g. check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)		
Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty		
Schedule students for classes		

*Matrix of SCARS Activities as They Relate to the ASCA National Model and Themes (cont.)*

Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school		
Maintain/Complete educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)		
Handle discipline		
Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school		

*Note:* Under the ASCA National Model Components column – F = Foundation, D = Delivery System, M = Maintenance, A = Accountability. Under the ASCA National Model Themes column – L = Leadership, A = Advocacy, C = Collaboration & Teaming, S = Systemic Change

**Appendix B**

**Author's consent to alter the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS)**

**From:** "Scarborough, Janna Lynn" <SCARBORO@mail.etsu.edu>  
**Date:** May 4, 2011 1:57:44 PM EDT  
**To:** Deborah Buchanan [dbuchan3@utk.edu](mailto:dbuchan3@utk.edu)

**Subject: RE: SCARS survey request**

I think if it addressed the questions you have without the prefer - you could drop it. I know others have done that as well. You would need to note that but you know that ;) Good luck!

Janna L. Scarborough, Ph.D., NCC, NCSC, LMHC  
Acting Associate Department Chair,  
Human Development & Learning  
Associate Professor of Counseling and  
Counseling Program Coordinator  
Human Development & Learning  
East Tennessee State University  
PO Box 70548  
Johnson City, TN 37614-0685  
(423) 439-4191

[www.etsu.edu/coe/hdal/counseling/default.asp](http://www.etsu.edu/coe/hdal/counseling/default.asp)

Show up. Pay attention. Tell your truth. Don't get too attached to the outcome.

-----Original Message-----

From: Deborah Buchanan [mailto:dbuchan3@utk.edu]  
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 1:55 PM  
To: Scarborough, Janna Lynn  
Cc: Jeannine Studer  
Subject: Re: SCARS survey request  
Importance: High

Dr. Scarborough,

I met with my dissertation committee this morning and they are recommending that I drop the "Prefer" column for the SCARS survey for my study and just focus on what school counselors are actually doing. Is it okay, if I drop the "Prefer" column from your instrument for the purposes of my study only? I am under a time crunch, so if you could let me know as soon as possible, I'd appreciate it.

Thank you again,  
 Deborah Buchanan  
 Doctoral Candidate  
 Department of Educational Psychology & Counseling  
 University of Tennessee  
 dbuchan3@utk.edu  
 (865) 405-1345

**From:** “Scarborough, Janna Lynn” <SCARBORO@mail.etsu.edu>  
**Date:** April 23, 2011 5:26:26 PM EDT  
**To:** Deborah Buchanan <dbuchan3@utk.edu>  
**Subject: RE: SCARS survey request**

Deborah – You may adapt as you state in your email. It will be an interesting study.  
 Good luck.  
 -Janna

Janna L. Scarborough, Ph.D., NCC, NCSC, ACS, NYLMHC

Associate Professor and Counseling Program Coordinator  
 Counseling Program  
 Human Development & Learning Department  
 Box 70548  
 Johnson City, TN 37614-1707  
 (423) 439-4191  
 (423) 439-7790 – fax  
 scarboro@etsu.edu<mailto:scarboro@etsu.edu>  
<http://www.etsu.edu/coe/hdal/counseling/default.asp>

---

From: Deborah Buchanan [dbuchan3@utk.edu]  
 Sent: Friday, April 22, 2011 3:51 PM  
 To: Scarborough, Janna Lynn  
 Cc: Jeannine Studer  
 Subject: SCARS survey request

Dr. Scarborough,

I wrote you recently about whether or not you knew of the SCARS being used with principals. Thank you for directing me to Deborah Hardy’s dissertation. Her dissertation was very interesting however, I found that she did not use the SCARS instrument with the school

principals in her study. She used it only with the school counselors and used the School Readiness Inventory with the principals. I have done an extensive literature review and have found no literature that indicates the SCARS has been used with school principals. I would like your permission to use the SCARS instrument with both the school counselors and the principals in my study. Also, I was wondering if I could get your permission to do the following with your survey:

- 1) Put the SCARS paper-pencil survey into a Web-based version
- 2) For the principal's version, change the instructions and responses to reflect principals' perceptions (e.g., 1= "My school counselor never does this activity").

This may give us an opportunity to see how reliable the SCARS instrument is in collecting data from school principals.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Deborah Buchanan  
Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Educational Psychology & Counseling  
University of Tennessee  
dbuchan3@utk.edu<mailto:dbuchan3@utk.edu>  
(865) 405-1345

**Appendix C**  
**School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) Survey**

**School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) Survey**  
**(Scarborough, 2005)**

**Demographics**

Directions: Please mark your response for each question below.

1. Indicate your profession

School Counselor

Principal

2. Indicate your years of experience in your current profession.

Less than 5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16-20 years

More than 20 years

3. Indicate the grade level that **most** closely represents the school setting in which you currently work.

Elementary (K-5 or K-8)

Middle/Jr. High (6-8)

High School (9-12)

Alternative School

Other (Please specify)



4. To what degree has your school adopted and adhere to a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program that aligns with the ASCA National Model?

Completely

Mostly

Somewhat

Not at All

I Don't Know

5. Were you formally trained in the ASCA National Model? (*For School Counselors only*).

Yes, during Master's degree training

Yes, during Ed.S. degree training

Yes, through continuing education, conferences, professional development, etc.

No, not formally trained, but I have trained myself through professional readings, research, etc.

I am unfamiliar with the ASCA National Model

6. What degree of knowledge do you have about the ASCA National Model for school counselors? (*For Principals only*)

A Great Deal

Somewhat

A little

None

7. Where did you learn about the ASCA National Model for School Counselors (*only for Principals who respond as having some degree of knowledge*).

My school counselor

Professional development, conferences, inservice training, etc.

My administrative degree training program (Master's, Ed.S., Ed.D. or Ph.D.)

Colleagues

Other \_\_\_\_\_

### School Counselor Activity Rating Scale

**Instructions:** Below is a list of functions that may be performed by school counselors.

*If you are a school counselor:* Please select the number that indicates the frequency with which you perform each function.

*If you are a principal:* Please select the number that indicates the frequency with which your school counselor performs each function.

***RATING SCALE:***

1 = I never do this / My counselor never does this

2 = I rarely do this / My counselor rarely does this

3 = I occasionally do this / My counselor occasionally does this

4 = I frequently do this / My counselor frequently does this

5 = I routinely do this / My counselor routinely does this

6 = I don't know

COUNSELING ACTIVITIES	Never	Rarely	Occas.	Freq.	Routine	Don't Know
Counsel(s) with students regarding personal/family concerns						
Counsel(s) with students regarding school behavior						
Counsel(s) students regarding crisis/emergency issues						
Counsel(s) with students regarding relationships (e.g. family, friends, romantic)						
Provide(s) small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills						
Provide(s) small group						

counseling for academic issues						
Conduct(s) small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g. divorce, death)						
Conduct(s) small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own use or family/friend use)						
Follow(s)-up on individual and group counseling participants						
<b>CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Occas.</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Routine</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Consult(s) with school staff concerning student behavior						
Consult(s) with community and school agencies concerning individual students						
Consult(s) with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues						
Coordinate(s) referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g. mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)						
Assist(s) in identifying exceptional children (special education)						
Provide(s) consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)						
Participate(s) in team / grade level / subject team meetings						
<b>CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Occas.</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Routine</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Conduct(s) classroom activities to introduce yourself/themselves and explain the counseling program to all students						

Conduct(s) classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work						
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g. responsibility, respect, etc.)						
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on relating to others (family, friends)						
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues						
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on conflict resolution						
Conduct(s) classroom lessons regarding substance abuse						
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on personal safety issues						
<b>COORDINATION ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Occas.</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Routine</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Coordinate(s) special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g. career day, drug awareness week, test prep)						
Coordinate(s) and maintain comprehensive school counseling program						
Inform(s) parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school						
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) parent education classes or workshops						
Coordinate(s) school-wide response for crisis management and intervention						
Inform(s)						

teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school						
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) teacher inservice programs						
Keep(s) track of how time is being spent on the functions that you/they perform						
Attend(s) professional development activities (e.g. state conferences, local inservices)						
Coordinate(s) with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs						
Formally evaluate(s) student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives						
Conduct(s) needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students						
<b>“OTHER” ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Occas.</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Routine</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>
Participate(s) on committees within the school						
Coordinate(s) the standardized testing program						
Organize(s) outreach to low income families (i.e., Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)						
Respond(s) to health issues (e.g. check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)						
Perform(s) hall, bus, cafeteria duty						

Schedule(s) students for classes						
Enroll(s) students in and/or withdraw(s) students from school						
Maintain(s)/Complete(s) educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)						
Handle(s) discipline of students						
Substitute(s) teach and/or covers classes for teacher at your school						

**\* The SCARS survey was created by Janna Scarborough (2005)**

Please include any comments you have in the box below.

Please provide your e-mail address if you wish to be eligible for a \$100.00 Visa gift card.

Should you win we will send you an e-mail requesting an address in which to send your prize.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Your responses are invaluable.

Have a great day!

**Appendix D**

**IRB Approval Letters**





Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research  
1534 White Avenue  
Knoxville, TN 37996-1529  
Phone: 865.974.3466  
Fax: 865.974.7400

May 26, 2011

IRB#: 8564 B

TITLE: A Comparative Analysis of Professional School Counselors' and School Administrators' Perceptions of Professional School Counselors' Roles

Buchanan, Deborah K.  
Educational Psychology & Counseling  
525 Bailey Education Complex  
Campus - 3452

Studer, Jeannine  
Educational Psychology & Counseling  
444 Claxton Education Complex  
Campus - 3452

Your project listed above has been reviewed and granted IRB approval under expedited review.

This approval is for a period ending one year from the date of this letter. Please make timely submission of renewal or prompt notification of project termination (see item #3 below).

Responsibilities of the investigator during the conduct of this project include the following:

1. To obtain prior approval from the Committee before instituting any changes in the project.
2. If signed consent forms are being obtained from subjects, they must be stored for at least three years following completion of the project
3. To submit a Form D to report changes in the project or to report termination at 12-month or less intervals.

The Committee wishes you every success in your research endeavor. This office will send you a renewal notice (Form R) on the anniversary of your approval date.

Sincerely,

  
Brenda Lawson  
Compliances

Enclosure

### Appendix C Informed Consent Form

I need your help and expertise. I am currently collecting data for my dissertation research and your responses are invaluable to help me understand school counselors' and principals' perceptions of the school counselor's role. The focus of this research is to identify your perceptions of the frequency in which the school counselor currently performs activities associated with a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program aligned with the ASCA National Model, and activities that do not. Demographic questions are included in this survey.

You were selected to participate because of your role as a school counselor/principal. Specifically, your participation in this project includes completing an online survey that should take no more than 10 minutes. Should you choose to participate, your responses will remain confidential, and researchers will not be able to connect responses to any individual respondent. Electronic data and documents will be stored on UTK password protected computers in locked offices. Three years following completion of this study, data collected will be destroyed.

This study is considered a human research project; however, the risk to you for being involved is minimal. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this project at any time. It is possible that this study, when completed, will be published or presented in a public forum (e.g., a professional conference). When reporting results, I will not identify anyone by name, either in a presentation or in a paper. By completing the online survey, you are consenting not only to participate in the study, but parts of your responses may be used in a publication or presentation.

At the end of the survey you will be given the option to participate in a random drawing for a \$100.00 Visa gift card. There will be two separate random drawings for a \$100.00 Visa gift card; one for school counselors, and one for principals who choose to participate. Participants who include their e-mail address at the end of the survey will be included in the drawing.

If you have any questions at this time or at any point in the study, you may contact myself or Brenda Lawson at the Institutional Review Board Compliance office at [blawspm@utk.edu](mailto:blawspm@utk.edu) or 865-974-3466.

Deborah Buchanan, M.Ed. 441 Claxton Complex, Knoxville, TN, Telephone:  
865-405-1345.  
[dbuchan3@utk.edu](mailto:dbuchan3@utk.edu)

I have read the above information and consent form and understand that participation in this study constitutes my consent. Click on the SURVEY link to begin the survey.

EXPEDITED APPROVED  
DATE 6-13-2011  
Brenda Lawson  
Compliance Officer & IRB Administrator

**Appendix D**  
**Email letter requesting participation**

Dear School counselor/Principal,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education program at the University of Tennessee and I am conducting research for my dissertation. I am requesting your participation to help me collect data for a comparative analysis study on school counselors' and principals' perceptions of school counselors' roles. The focus of this research is to identify your perceptions of the frequency in which the school counselor currently performs activities associated with a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program aligned with the ASCA National Model, and activities that do not.

By participating in this study your responses will provide essential information regarding the perceptions school counselors and principals the frequency in which the school counselor is engaged in various activities. Furthermore, it can help to bring understanding and clarity to the important role the school counselor plays in our schools.

The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey you will be given the option to participate in a random drawing for a \$100.00 Visa gift card. There will be two separate random drawings; one for school counselors and one for principals who choose to participate. Participants who include their e-mail address at the end of the survey will be included in the drawing.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office of Research at the University of Tennessee has approved this study. Should you have any questions regarding this survey you may contact Deborah Buchanan (865-405-1345) or Brenda Lawson (865-974-3466).

Please take a few minutes and help me with this important project by accessing the survey through the link provided below.

The survey link is:

Thank you so much for your support.

EXPEDITED APPROVED

DATE

6-13-2011

Brenda Lawson

Compliance Officer & IRB Administrator

**Appendix E**  
**E-mail Reminder to Participate**

Dear Principal/School counselor,

I recently sent a request for you to participate in a short survey on school counselors' and principals' perceptions of school counselor's roles. If you have not already done so, please take approximately 10 minutes of your time to participate in this short survey. If you previously accessed the survey but did not complete it, please take a few minutes to finish the survey. If you have already completed the survey, thank you very much for participating.

I am a doctoral candidate in the School counselor Education program at the University of Tennessee and I am conducting research for my dissertation. I am requesting your participation to help me collect data for a comparative analysis study on school counselors' and principals' perceptions of school counselors' roles. The focus of this research is to identify your perceptions of the frequency in which the school counselor currently performs activities associated with a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program aligned with the ASCA National Model, and activities that do not.

By participating in this study your responses will provide essential information regarding the frequency in which school counselors and principals perceive the school counselor is engaged in various activities. Furthermore, it can help to bring understanding and clarity to the important role the school counselor plays in our schools.

The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey you will be given the option to participate in a random drawing for a \$100.00 Visa gift card. There will be two separate random drawings; one for school counselors and one for principals who choose to participate. Participants who include their e-mail address at the end of the survey will be included in the drawing.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office of Research at the University of Tennessee has approved this study. Should you have any questions regarding this survey you may contact Deborah Buchanan (865-405-1345) or Brenda Lawson (865-974-3466).

Please take a few minutes and help me with this important project by accessing the survey through the link provided below.

The survey link is:

Thank you so much for your support.

EXPEDITED APPROVED

DATE 6-13-2011

Brenda Lawson  
Compliance Officer & IRB Administrator

**Appendix E**  
**Informed Consent Form**

### **Informed Consent Form**

I need your help and expertise. I am currently collecting data for my dissertation research and your responses are invaluable in helping me understand school counselors' and school administrators' perceptions of the school counselor's role. The focus of this research is to identify your perceptions of the frequency in which the school counselor currently performs tasks associated with a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program aligned with the ASCA National Model, and tasks that do not.

You were selected to participate because of your role as a school counselor/school administrator. Specifically, your participation in this project includes completing an online survey that should take no more than 15 minutes. Should you choose to participate, your responses will remain confidential, and researchers will not be able to connect responses to any individual respondent. Electronic data and documents will be stored on UTK password protected computers in locked offices. Three years following completion of this study, data collected will be destroyed.

This study is considered a human research project; however, the risk to you for being involved is minimal. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this project at any time. It is possible that this study, when completed, will be published or presented in a public forum (e.g., a professional conference). When reporting results, I will not identify anyone by name, either in a presentation or in a paper. By completing the online survey, you are consenting not only to participate in the study, but parts of your responses may be used in a publication or presentation.

At the end of the survey you will be given the option to participate in a random drawing for a \$100.00 Visa gift card. Participants who include their e-mail address at the end of the survey will be included in the drawing.

If you have any questions at this time or at any point in the study, you may contact myself or Brenda Lawson at the Institutional Review Board Compliance office at [blawspm@utk.edu](mailto:blawspm@utk.edu) or 865-974-3466.

Deborah Buchanan, M.Ed.  
441 Claxton Complex,  
Knoxville, TN,  
Telephone: 865-405-1345.  
[dbuchan3@utk.edu](mailto:dbuchan3@utk.edu)

I have read the above Information and Consent form and understand that participation in this study constitutes my consent. I will complete the scale independent of another professional.  
Click on the SURVEY link to begin the survey.

**Appendix F**

**Comparison of Demographic Data between School Counselors and Principals**



Race/Ethnicity	School Counselors		Principals	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
African-American	20	13	35	19
Asian-American	2	1	0	0
White non-Hispanic	126	81	142	78
Other	4	2	1	1
Prefer not to answer	3	2	4	2

Gender	School Counselors		Principals	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Male	20	13	84	46
Female	135	87	98	54

*Note:* There was a statistically significant difference in dispersal of gender across the two groups  $X^2(1, n=337) = 43.38, p < .001$ .

Years of Experience	School Counselors		Principals	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Less than 5 years	49	32	11	6
6 – 10 years	60	39	30	17
11 – 15 years	20	13	31	17
16 – 20 years	12	8	33	18
More than 20 years	13	8	77	42

Grade Level	School Counselors		Principals	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Elementary (K-5 or K-8)	80	52	110	60
Middle/Jr. High (6-8)	27	17	32	18
High (9-12)	47	30	35	19
Alternative school	1	1	5	3

State	School Counselors		Principals	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
North Carolina	68	44	90	58
South Carolina	25	16	33	18
Tennessee	62	40	59	32

Degree of Adoption of a CDSC Program	School Counselors		Principals	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Completely	15	10	5	3
Mostly	46	30	51	38
Somewhat	76	49	58	32
Not at all	13	8	20	11
I Don't Know	5	3	48	26

**Appendix G**

**Comparison of Means between School Counselors and Principals Perceptions**

Table 4.1

*Comparison of Means between School Counselors' and Principals' Perceptions*

Activity	School Counselor		Principal		p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Counsel(s) with students regarding personal/family concerns	4.39	.785	4.39	.777	.968
Counsel(s) with students regarding school behavior	4.32	.820	4.15	.891	.085
Counsel(s) with students regarding crisis/emergency issues	3.68	.910	3.93	.886	.013*
Counsel(s) with students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)	4.19	.836	4.06	.849	.170
Provide(s) small group counseling for academic issues	2.76	1.349	3.31	1.089	.000*
Provide(s) small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	3.12	1.372	2.65	1.075	.000*
Conduct(s) small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)	2.69	1.317	3.28	1.136	.000*
Conduct(s) small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own, or family/friend use)	1.57	.756	2.64	1.020	.000*
Follow up(s) on individual and group counseling participants	4.10	1.011	4.05	.959	.665
Consult(s) with school staff concerning student behavior	4.41	.770	4.02	1.027	.001*
Consult(s) with community and school agencies concerning individual students	3.50	.963	3.67	.927	.091

Table 4.1 (continued)

Activities	School Counselors		Principals		p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Consult(s) with parents regarding child/adolescent developmental issues	3.55	.884	3.59	.948	.671
Coordinate(s) referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	3.61	.949	3.65	.962	.735
Assist(s) in identifying exceptional children (special education)	3.24	1.290	3.50	1.238	.059
Provide(s) consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff, and/or students)	3.52	1.203	3.66	1.167	.251
Participate(s) in team/grade level/ subject team meetings	3.45	1.325	3.57	1.198	.372
Conduct(s) classroom activities to introduce yourself/themselves and explain the counseling program to students	4.22	1.112	4.02	1.173	.108
Conduct(s) classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	3.60	1.311	3.51	1.272	.499
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on various personal and/or traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)	3.72	1.435	3.90	1.189	.393
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on relating to others (family, friends)	3.58	1.445	3.71	1.241	.577
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on personal growth and developmental issues	3.32	1.381	3.35	1.221	.957

Table 4.1 (continued)

Activities	School Counselors		Principals		p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on conflict resolution	3.37	1.429	3.67	1.183	.094
Conduct(s) lessons regarding substance abuse	2.53	1.291	2.83	1.155	.017*
Conduct(s) lessons on personal safety issues	2.96	1.324	3.14	1.176	.194
Coordinate(s) special events and programs for school around academic, career or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	2.85	1.082	3.64	1.146	.098
Coordinate(s) and maintain(s) comprehensive school counseling program	4.11	1.064	4.22	1.063	.374
Inform(s) parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	3.56	1.088	3.55	1.117	.946
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) parent education classes or workshops	2.53	1.107	2.47	1.130	.613
Coordinate(s) school-wide response for crisis management and intervention	2.73	1.283	2.92	1.349	.204
Inform(s) teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of the school counselor within the context of your school	3.31	1.131	3.50	1.195	.143
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) teacher inservice programs	2.41	1.085	2.59	1.130	.140

Table 4.1 (continued)

Activity	School Counselors		Principals		p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Keep(s) track of how time is being spent on the functions that you/they perform	3.48	1.340	3.27	1.285	.157
Attend(s) professional development activities (e.g. state conferences, local inservices)	3.99	.950	3.75	.959	.019*
Coordinate(s) with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	2.45	1.363	3.21	1.246	.000*
Formally evaluate(s) student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from students, teacher, and/or parent perspectives	3.09	1.235	3.10	1.217	.937
Conduct(s) needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty, and/or students	3.08	1.209	2.98	1.195	.476
Participate(s) on committees within the school	4.40	1.011	4.40	.872	.652
Coordinate(s) the standardized testing program	3.23	1.775	3.35	1.807	.539
Organize(s) outreach to low income families (Thanksgiving dinners, holiday families)	3.39	1.391	3.49	1.232	.599
Respond(s) to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	3.23	1.468	3.26	1.323	.977
Perform(s) hall, bus, cafeteria duty	3.59	1.603	3.52	1.474	.658

Table 4.1 (continued)

Activity	School Counselors		Principals		p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Schedule(s) students for classes	2.78	1.867	2.75	1.754	.941
Enroll(s) students in and/or withdraw(s) students from school	2.67	1.725	2.52	1.695	.418
Maintain(s)/Complete(s) educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)	2.99	1.730	3.06	1.736	.744
Handle(s) discipline of students	1.93	1.168	1.87	1.100	.061
Substitute teach(es) and or cover(s) classes for teachers at your school	1.81	1.037	1.55	.790	.032*

*Note:* \* $p < .05$

**Appendix H**

**Frequency Distribution Table for School Counselors' Perceptions**



Table 4.2

*Frequency Distribution of School Counselors' Perceptions (N = 155)*

Activity	Response					I Don't Know
	Routinely	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
Counsel(s) with students regarding personal/family concerns	56.1%	29.0%	12.9%	1.9%		
Counsel(s) with students regarding school behavior	51.0%	32.9%	12.9%	3.2%		
Counsel(s) students regarding crisis/emergency issues	21.9%	32.9%	36.8%	8.4%		
Counsel(s) with students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)	42.6%	36.8%	17.4%	3.2%		
Provide(s) small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	21.9%	18.7%	23.9%	20.0%	15.5%	
Provide(s) small group counseling for academic issues	16.1%	11.6%	25.8%	25.2%	21.3%	
Conduct(s) small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)	13.5%	12.9%	24.5%	27.1%	21.9%	
Conduct(s) small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own use or family/friend use)		1.9%	10.3%	30.3%	57.4%	
Follow(s)-up on individual and group counseling participants	44.5%	30.3%	17.4%	5.8%	1.9%	
Consult(s) with school staff concerning student behavior	54.8%	34.2%	7.7%	3.2%		

Table 4.2 (continued)

Activity	Response					I Don't Know
	Routinely	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
Consult(s) with community and school agencies concerning individual students	17.4%	29.0%	41.3%	10.3%	1.9%	
Consult(s) with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues	15.5%	34.2%	40.6%	9.0%	.6%	
Coordinate(s) referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	21.3%	29.0%	40.6%	7.7%	1.3%	
Assist(s) in identifying exceptional children (special education)	21.9%	19.4%	31.6%	14.8%	12.3%	
Provide(s) consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff, and/or students)	26.5%	25.2%	28.4%	13.5%	6.5%	
Participate(s) in team/grade level/subject team meetings	30.3%	19.4%	25.2%	15.5%	9.7%	
Conduct(s) classroom activities to introduce yourself/themselves and explain the counseling program to all students	58.7%	16.1%	18.1%	2.6%	4.5%	
Conduct(s) classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	36.8%	16.8%	21.3%	18.7%	5.8%	.6%

Table 4.2 (continued)

Activity	Response					I Don't Know
	Routinely	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)	46.5%	14.8%	13.5%	14.8%	10.3%	
Conduct classroom lessons on relating to others (family, friends)	41.3%	14.8%	15.5%	17.4%	11.0%	
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues	28.4%	19.4%	20.0%	20.6%	11.6%	
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on conflict resolution	30.3%	21.9%	16.8%	16.8%	14.2%	
Conduct(s) classroom lessons regarding substance abuse	11.6%	7.7%	30.3%	22.6%	27.7%	
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on personal safety issues	16.1%	19.4%	26.5%	20.6%	17.4%	
Coordinate(s) special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	37.4%	21.3%	32.3%	6.5%	2.6%	
Coordinate(s) and maintain comprehensive school counseling program	47.1%	25.8%	17.4%	4.5%	3.2%	1.9%
Inform(s) parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	25.8%	21.9%	38.1%	11.0%	3.2%	

Table 4.2 (continued)

Activity	Response					I Don't Know
	Routinely	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) parent education classes or workshops	7.1%	11.0%	25.8%	40.0%	16.1%	
Coordinate(s) school-wide response for crisis management and intervention	12.9%	12.3%	29.0%	24.5%	20.0%	1.3%
Inform(s) teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	16.8%	27.1%	32.9%	16.8%	6.5%	
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) teacher inservice programs	4.5%	9.7%	29.7%	32.3%	22.6%	1.3%
Keep(s) track of how time is being spent on the functions that you/they perform	32.3%	19.4%	20.6%	19.4%	8.4%	
Attend(s) professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local inservices)	38.7%	27.7%	27.7%	5.8%		
Coordinate(s) with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	11.0%	13.5%	18.1%	23.9%	32.9%	.6%
Formally evaluate(s) student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives	13.5%	25.8%	31.0%	15.5%	14.2%	

Table 4.2 (continued)

Activity	Response					I Don't Know
	Routinely	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
Conduct(s) needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty, and/or students	17.4%	14.8%	35.5%	22.6%	9.7%	
Participate(s) on committees within the school	63.9%	16.1%	14.2%	3.2%	2.6%	
Coordinate(s) the standardized testing program	43.9%	7.1%	8.4%	9.0%	31.6%	
Organize(s) outreach to low income families (i.e., Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)	31.0%	16.8%	21.9%	17.4%	11.6%	1.3%
Respond(s) to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	28.4%	17.4%	20.6%	14.8%	18.1%	.6%
Perform(s) hall, bus, cafeteria duty	48.4%	9.0%	14.2%	8.4%	19.4%	.6%
Schedule(s) students for classes	38.1%	3.2%	4.5%	7.1%	47.1%	
Enroll(s) students in and/or withdraw(s) students from school	30.3%	1.3%	18.1%	5.8%	44.5%	
Maintain(s)/Complete(s) educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)	36.1%	6.5%	11.6%	12.3%	33.5%	
Handle(s) discipline of students	4.5%	7.1%	16.1%	21.3%	51.0%	
Substitute teach(es) and/or cover(s) classes for teachers at your school	4.5%	1.9%	12.9%	31.6%	49.0%	

*Note.* Frequency distribution based on the SCARS (Scarborough, 2005)

**Appendix I**

**Frequency Distribution of Principals' Perceptions**

Table 4.8

*Frequency Distribution of Principals' Perceptions (N = 182)*

Activity	Response					I don't know
	Routinely	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
Counsel(s) with students regarding personal/family concerns	54.9%	31.3%	11.5%	2.2%		
Counsel(s) with students regarding school behavior	43.4%	33.0%	19.8%	3.3%	.5%	
Counsel(s) students regarding crisis/emergency issues	32.4%	31.3%	33.0%	3.3%		
Counsel(s) with students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)	36.3%	36.3%	24.7%	2.7%		
Provide(s) small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	28.0%	26.4%	29.7%	14.8%	1.1%	
Provide(s) small group counseling for academic issues	18.1%	22.0%	35.2%	22.0%	2.7%	
Conduct(s) small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)	18.1%	22.0%	33.5%	20.9%	4.9%	.5%
Conduct(s) small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own use or family/friend use)	6.0%	10.4%	35.2%	35.7%	11.0%	1.6%
Follow(s)-up on individual and group counseling participants	41.2%	27.5%	24.7%	4.9%	.5%	1.1%
Consult(s) with school staff concerning student behavior	41.2%	29.1%	21.4%	5.5%	2.2%	.5%

Table 4. 8 (continued)

Activity	Response					I Don't Know
	Routinely	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
Consult(s) with community and school agencies concerning individual students	20.9 %	34.1%	35.7%	7.1%	1.1%	1.1%
Consult(s) with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues	18.7%	33.5%	36.8%	8.8%	1.6%	.5%
Coordinate(s) referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	22.5%	30.8%	36.8%	8.8%	1.1%	
Assist(s) in identifying exceptional children (special education)	28.6%	22.0%	26.4%	17.0%	6.0%	
Provide(s) consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)	29.1%	31.3%	20.9%	14.3%	4.4%	
Participate(s) in team/grade level/subject team meetings	29.1%	24.2%	25.3%	16.5%	4.4%	.5%
Conduct(s) classroom activities to introduce yourself/themselves and explain the counseling program to all students	49.5%	15.9%	22.0%	7.1%	3.8%	1.6%
Conduct(s) classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	30.8%	18.7%	27.5%	15.4%	7.1%	.5%



Table 4.8 (continued)

Activity	Response					I Don't Know
	Routinely	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)	46.2%	15.9%	22.0%	13.2%	2.2%	.5%
Conduct classroom lessons on relating to others (family, friends)	39.0%	14.8%	25.3%	16.5%	3.3%	1.1%
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues	24.7%	18.1%	27.5%	24.2%	4.4%	1.1%
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on conflict resolution	33.0%	22.0%	26.9%	13.7%	3.8%	.5%
Conduct(s) classroom lessons regarding substance abuse	11.0%	13.7%	32.4%	29.7%	11.5%	1.6%
Conduct(s) classroom lessons on personal safety issues	18.1%	15.4%	33.5%	25.8%	6.0%	1.1%
Coordinate(s) special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	30.2%	23.6%	30.2%	12.1%	3.8%	
Coordinate(s) and maintain comprehensive school counseling program	53.8%	20.9%	13.2%	6.6%	2.2%	3.3%
Inform(s) parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	23.1%	29.1%	30.2%	11.0%	4.9%	1.6%

Table 4.8 (continued)

Activity	Response					I Don't Know
	Routinely	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) parent education classes or workshops	6.0%	10.4%	30.2%	30.8%	22.5%	
Coordinate(s) school-wide response for crisis management and intervention	18.1%	13.7%	26.4%	23.1%	17.6%	1.1%
Inform(s) teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	25.3%	25.8%	27.5%	14.8%	6.0%	.5%
Conduct(s) or coordinate(s) teacher inservice programs	8.2%	8.8%	33.5%	31.3%	17.6%	.5%
Keep(s) track of how time is being spent on the functions that you/they perform	23.1%	15.9%	29.1%	17.6%	9.3%	4.9%
Attend(s) professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local inservices)	25.8%	33.0%	31.9%	8.8%	.5%	
Coordinate(s) with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	19.8%	18.7%	30.2%	19.2%	9.3%	2.7%
Formally evaluate(s) student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives	14.3%	19.8%	29.7%	18.1%	10.4%	7.7%

Table 4.8 (continued)

Activity	Response					I Don't Know
	Routinely	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
Conduct(s) needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students	14.3%	13.7%	34.1%	23.1%	10.4%	4.4%
Participate(s) on committees within the school	61.5%	21.4%	12.6%	4.4%		
Coordinate(s) the standardized testing program	48.4%	8.8%	3.8%	7.1%	31.9%	
Organize(s) outreach to low income families (i.e., Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)	29.7%	16.5%	31.3%	16.5%	5.5%	.5%
Respond(s) to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	24.2%	18.7%	28.0%	17.0%	12.1%	
Perform(s) hall, bus, cafeteria duty	40.7%	12.1%	18.7%	15.4%	13.2%	
Schedule(s) students for classes	30.8%	8.2%	8.2%	9.9%	42.3%	.5%
Enroll(s) students in and/or withdraw(s) students from school	24.7%	7.7%	9.9%	9.3%	47.8%	.5%
Maintain(s)/Complete(s) educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)	36.3%	9.3%	9.9%	10.4%	33.0%	1.1%
Handle(s) discipline of students	3.8%	5.5%	14.8%	25.3%	50.5%	
Substitute teach(es) and/or cover(s) classes for teachers at your school	1.6%	1.6%	3.8%	36.3%	56.6%	

*Note.* Frequency distribution based on the SCARS (Scarborough, 2005)

## Vita

Deborah Buchanan, was born Deborah Kay Hoerner in Fontana, California in 1960. An only daughter of a university professor, she spent many of her early years ignore her genetic calling. After serving in the United States Air Force for four years, and working in private industry for ten years, Deborah returned to college and earned her Bachelor's of Education degree from Salem State College in Salem, Massachusetts in May of 1996. She worked as a middle school teacher for the Lynn Public Schools in Massachusetts for five years. While teaching she was blessed with the opportunity to work with a diverse student population, but her favorite were her middle school ESL students who represented 12 different countries, speaking 10 different languages.

In 1998, Deborah returned to school, and in May of 2001 earned her Master's of Education with a Concentration in School Counseling from Salem State College in Salem, Massachusetts. Shortly after completing her Master's degree Deborah and her husband moved to Knoxville, Tennessee where she worked as a professional school counselor for eight years. Having finally heard her calling, Deborah began to pursue her Ph.D. in Counselor Education at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville in the fall of 2008. While pursuing her Ph.D. she completed a cognate in Educational Psychology, and a specialization in Psychology. She has taught both undergraduate and graduate students in courses such as Counseling Skills, Foundations in School Counseling, and Educational Psychology, and she's provided supervision for Master's level school counseling students at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee.

Deborah is a certified Middle School Teacher and a certified School Counselor with the State of Tennessee. She has also held teaching and counseling certifications in Massachusetts. She has one professional publication and several professional presentations accrued since starting her Ph.D. program at the University of Tennessee. Most recently, she received a grant from the Association of Counselor

Educators and Supervisors for her research on School Administrators' Perceptions of School Counselors Roles. Deborah presented her research at the American Counselors Association Conference in March of 2010, and has recently been invited to write an article for the *Counseling Today* magazine. Deborah's other research interests include, School Counselors' Experiences with Classroom Management, School Counselor Advocacy, and her most recent interest, Counseling Children of Military Families.

Deborah has recently taken a position as Assistant Professor at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee where she looks forward to her career as a counselor educator.