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Donald R. Ferree Jr.
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PRINCIPALS’ AND SCHOOL COUNSELORS’ PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL COUNSELOR LEADERSHIP ROLES

By

Donald R. Ferree, Jr.

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Dr. Kay A. Keiser

Omaha, Nebraska

April, 2022

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ABSTRACT

PRINCIPALS’ AND SCHOOL COUNSELORS’ PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL COUNSELOR LEADERSHIP ROLES

Donald R. Ferree, Jr., Ed.D.
University of Nebraska, 2022
Advisor: Dr. Kay A. Keiser

The complexity school counselors’ many roles can conflict with one another. Conflict also stems from how building principals perceive the roles of school counselor. This dysfunctional role conflict and ambiguity may lead to organizational stresses that negatively impact the ability to serve students well. Therefore, the purpose of this cross-sectional quantitative study was to explore and compare the perceptions that school counselors and administrators have about the roles of the counselor. This cross-sectional study focused upon the variance of perceptions and beliefs that school counselors and school administrators recognized as optimal for the role of school counselors.

The Roles of School Counseling Questionnaire (ROSCQ) was created and used to measure topics that were recognized by the professional organizations for school counselors, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and secondary school administrators, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). The questionnaire measured the comparison of perceptions that school counselors and principals had about the roles of the counselor.

Results were analyzed for the groups of counselors and principals and the levels of elementary and secondary schools. The findings suggest that both school counselors and school administrators considered these topics highly positive. The results also
indicated that despite the different occupations in the building, school counselors and administrators agreed in what the essential topics are for school counselors. Spearman’s rank correlation found a strong positive correlation relationship between school counselors and administrators \( r_s (164) = 0.99, p < .001 \). Finally, analyses of variance (ANOVAs) found statistical significances in the areas of bullying, career development, closing the gap, college admissions, and trauma and crisis. Recommendations for school leaders, school counselors, and future research were discussed for improved communication and effective performance.
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To my parents, Nancy and Don Ferree Sr., for providing me such a strong foundation throughout my life. There were so many times I thought I accomplished things by myself, but your care and support were always behind it. To my sister, Suzanne, you’ve shown me unconditional love and been a constant support to me. To my aunt, Carol Zieres, you have inspired me since as long as I can remember: whether it was fitness, learning, or following your dreams. To my mother-in-law and father-in-law, Joyce and Ron Stranglen, your unwavering love and welcoming me to your amazing family has broadened my view of what love and laughter is all about.

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Finally, I want to thank the many school counselors and administrators that made this study possible. I have lived in both these worlds during my educational career and recognize how demanding and yet fulfilling each of these roles are. While I am proud that school counselors are my official tribe, I will always value my experiences in administration and have great admiration for all the hardships and sacrifices they make for the school community in order to provide safety and a conducive learning environment on a daily basis. I will never forget the many lessons and never see the world the same again.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

While school counselors have a national model that lays out the specific roles and tasks to accomplish their jobs (American School Counselor Association, 2019b; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Myrick, 2003), discovering what it takes for each individual student to experience success in school is a dynamic process. The role of the school counselor is complex and can lead to tasks which can be in conflict with one another. The perspective of the counselor determines what tasks are undertaken.

There are many responsibilities a school counselor takes in a school, and the prioritization of tasks has direct impact on students’ welfare and learning. Roles vary from school to school for a variety of factors. Some scholars view school counseling as a “one-size-fits-all” kind of approach due to the high student ratios and that there is little time to focus on supporting individual pathways for students (Blake, 2020; Rosenbaum, et al., 1996; Rosenbaum, 2001; Smith, 2011). Some other differences occur due to tight budgets (Chandler, et al., 2018), grade level differences (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Hardesty & Dillard, 1994; Partin, 1993), and geographic settings (Chandler, et al., 2018). School counselors also perform a wide array of duties. Some of these duties are student centered (e.g., individual counseling, group counseling, classroom lessons, consultation), and many clerical or operational (e.g., master schedule, clerical records, filing paperwork) (Burnham & Jackson, 2000). School counselors also find themselves dealing with a lot of issues that schools and students are dealing with outside of the school setting, such as alcohol, drug use, divorce, poverty, homelessness, violence, bullying, and
suicidal ideation (Davis & Mickelson, 1994; DeKruyf, et al., 2013; Lambie & Sink, 2011).

**Conflict Between Student Support and Other Roles**

Students bring their personal lives when they enter the school and many of their physical, social, and emotional needs may hinder their ability to be successful academically and develop personal/social competencies (Kelly, 2013). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model (2019b) and ASCA Mindset and Behaviors (2021) recognizes student growth through the utilization of three domain areas: academic development, career development, and social/emotional development. While this framework is helpful, school counselors experience a high demand from students and staff and a low amount of control throughout their day because of the complex and diverse nature of their jobs (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Bluestein, 2001; Borders, 2002; Casey-Cannon, et al., 2001; Dahir, et al., 1998; Falls & Nichter, 2007; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Israelashvili, 1998; Parr, et al., 1998).

In addition to student complexities, counselors also experience challenges because other staff members may not understand the role of the school counselor. This has led counselors to be assigned clerical or non-counseling duties (Coll & Freeman, 1997; Hardesty & Dillard, 1994; Myrick, 2003; Nelson, et al., 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Sink, 2005). These frustrations and confusion of appropriate tasks show up in the form of role conflict and role ambiguity. According to Um and Harrison (1998) role conflict is the “incongruity of the role expectations associated with the role” (p.103) and role ambiguity is when the “expectations for adequate role performance for a given position are unclear or incomplete.” (p.103). Role conflict and role ambiguity are organizational factors that
are associated with burnout and decrease of job satisfaction (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011) and place counselor at risk of chronic job stress (Falls & Nichter, 2007; Herlihy, et al., 2002; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Wilkerson, 2006).

Values, personal experiences, and skills of counselors themselves lead to variety within schools. Professional identity and development are factors that shape a counselor’s values (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). For example, the ASCA Mindset Standards encourages counselors to believe several characteristics about students, ranging from student development of whole self to establishing self-confidence to succeed (ASCA, 2021). Depending on a counselor’s school or student population, the interventions that will be used to accomplish these values may vary. Organizational culture within a school will also have an impact as well (Carlson, 1989; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sutton Jr & Fall, 1995). Cooperation between school counselors, administration, and other staff members are important components of organizational culture and may impact the practices of school counselors (Sutton Jr & Fall, 1995). Professional years of experience has mixed reviews in the literature. While some researchers state that professional years of experience may be a factor that impacts school counselors within schools (Brott & Myers, 1999; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001), other researchers believe years of experience was not a significant variable to school counselors performing activities (Carter, 1993; Mustaine, et al., 1996). Finally, another factor that counselors find themselves doing within a school are overcommitting to indirect services and non-counseling tasks instead of direct services with students (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994).

What other members of leadership, especially building principals, perceive the role of counselor may or may not align with a counselor’s vision. When conflict occurs,
the results can be negative for school culture, student success, and counselor self-efficacy. Leaders have differing perspectives of how their leadership team functions. While there are a multitude of different theories in education, several characteristics can be grouped together. Some theories express that leaders are born with the inherit qualities either as a person, “Great Man” Theory (Amanchukwu, et al., 2015; Ololube, et al., 2012), or possessing certain qualities or traits, Trait Theory. In contrast, some theories believe that leaders are made and not born, Behavioral Theory, or acquire knowledge or abilities, Skills Theory. Other theories focus on occurrences in the moment as to changes in the environment, Contingency Theories (Amanchukwu, et al., 2015; Cherry, 2012) or best actions based on pending circumstances (Amanchukwu, et al., 2015). Finally, some theories revolve around a shared experience where leaders either encourage group members to be involved, Participative Theory, have a system of rewards and punishments, Transactional/Management Theory, or focus on the connections between leaders and group members, Relationship/Transformational Theory. A principal’s theoretical approach to education may impact the way they utilize their school counseling department to support students.

Schools have different resources and staff available to them. These can be categorized in three different areas: 1) human resources; 2) material resources; and 3) financial resources (Resources | Educate a Child, n.d.). Human resources can differ by the culture and climate of a building. This may be exhibited by the connections between staff and students, the level of negativity expressed by staff and students, the staff’s awareness of students’ needs, and staff’s desire to understand a student’s point of view. Material resources can differ by basic materials that students are provided, such as
notebooks, textbooks, technology, equipment for sports and activities, and other items that increase the chances of educational opportunities. Finally, financial resources may differ depending on the population of the school, the individual decisions schools make to fund programs, and the formulas for providing funding on a local, state, and federal level.

**Conceptual Framework**

School counselors and principals view education differently because these two roles utilize different problem-solving paradigms when supporting a school (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). According to Spady (1978), school systems must balance two concepts of dualism in order to maintain successful operations: 1) system productivity; and 2) maintenance and preservation of the organization.

Systems productivity focuses on individual student achievements. School counselors use this type of support and their preparation of adaptability, flexibility, and responsiveness to changing demands and technologies in order to support individual students (Spady, 1978). School counselors also support individual students through many bottom-up approaches to make sure each student receives support and acquires skills for success. The mindsets listed in the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies is centered around the beliefs that school counselors should have for every student (ASCA, 2019). Because systems productivity focuses on each individual student, it requires more divergent thinking to accommodate for each person’s individuality.

Maintenance and preservation of organizations focus on the school as a whole and group achievement. The literature recognizes administrators for maintaining order, routines, and stabilizing activities and procedures (Spady, 1978). This top-down approach
makes sure that their systems are in place to support the student body and maintain stability at a school.

Both perspectives are necessary for student success; however, often times there may be conflicting attributes when looking through each lens. When the administrator’s expectations of how tasks should be handled do not align with the professional training school counselors have received during their master’s program or professional organizations, it can result in role confusion and additional work tasks needing to take place (Chandler, et al., 2018; Culbreth, et al., 2005; Fried, et al., 1998). These unrelated tasks take time away the counselor would be using for counseling duties (Astramovich, et al., 2013; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Chandler, et al., 2018; Gysbers & Stanley, 2014; Lieberman, 2004).

**Purpose of the Study**

While much is known about the various tasks and roles of a school counselor, better understanding of the counselor’s vision and alignment with administration would suggest ways for improved communication and effective performance. Therefore, the purpose of this cross-sectional quantitative study is to explore and compare the perceptions that school counselors and administrators have about the roles of the counselor.

**Research Question**

To gain insights into the prioritization of school counselor roles from the perspective of counselors and administrators, the following research question: How strong is the relationship between the perspectives of Midwest school counselors and of building administrators on the roles and priorities undertaken by counselors?
Data will be analyzed for these questions:

Research Question #1: What are school counselors’ and administrators’ perceptions of school counseling roles as designated by items of Roles of School Counseling Questionnaire (ROSCQ)?

Research Question #2: How do the perspectives of school counselors and administrators compare regarding areas of counselor specialization?

Research Question #3: How strong is the interaction between the perspectives of secondary and elementary school counselors and principals?

**Significance of the Study**

This research will contribute to the knowledge of school counselor roles and responsibilities in school and student success. While it is imperative that school counselors understand best practices in school counseling, it is critical that they can incorporate these beliefs and skills while developing a plan with their building administrators. Understanding zones of common differences of perceptions or misunderstanding can lead to avoidance of conflict, negotiation for team leadership, and improvement of interpersonal faculty and leadership relationships.

In addition, studying perceptions of school counselors and administrators through appropriate topics for school counseling professional development may eliminate barriers toward productive conversations. Many previous studies (Blake, 2020; Karataş & Ismet, 2015; Lane et al., 2020; Mason & Perera-Diltz, 2010; Stone, 2017) place emphasis on whether tasks assigned to counselors are appropriate or inappropriate, where this study will focus on topics that are not only considered appropriate for school counselors, but topics that their professional organization, American School Counselor Association,
offers online professional development where school counselors have an opportunity to earn specialist designations in specific areas.

Insights into counselor role perceptions will be of interest to those training potential counselors and school leaders, to those providing ongoing professional development, and to those who recruit and retain a qualified and satisfied workforce in counseling and leadership.

**Outline of the Study**

Chapter Two of this study includes a review of professional literature related to the historical background of role conflict and role ambiguity of school counselors and a school counselor’s current role. Chapter Three outlines the methods for this cross-sectional quantitative study and how the data was collected and analyzed. Chapter Four provides the findings of this study and Chapter Five includes a summary, conclusions, and recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Evolution of School Counseling

Since the early beginnings of the school counseling role, assigned duties for counselors have lacked clarity and consistency within the schools (Murray, 1995). The continual changes in educational reforms, society, economics, and political conditions have shaped the role in how it looks today (Borders & Drury, 1992). As new topics continue to arise and shape the school counseling profession, many groups, including administrators, have experienced confusion as to what the main purposes are for a school counselor (Ballard & Murgatroyd, 1999). While role conflict and ambiguity have been addressed in school counseling publications for over 55 years (Astramovich et al., 2013; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Dahir, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012), the profession has not always been included in the conversations about educational reform (Herr, 1984; House & Martin, 1998; Taylor & Adelman, 1996). Historically, the job duties of school counselors have been defined by other organizational models and not counseling models (Sink & MacDonald, 1998). To have an understanding the current challenges with the school counseling role, one must understand how the profession has evolved since its inception during the early 20th century.

Pre-1900s-1910s: Not only are the histories of school counselors and principals intertwined, but the individual that is credited for creating the first guidance program was a Detroit principal, Jesse Davis. After the increased need for skilled workers due to the Industrial Revolution (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017), Davis created his guidance program and infused it into his high school English classes (Coy, 1999; Herr & Erford, 2003;
Myrick, 2003; Sink, 2005). The lessons were created to address misbehavior, character, and connecting academic lessons with career interests (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017; Schmidt, 2003). Shortly after this, a lawyer named Frank Parsons created the Vocation Bureau of Boston due to concerns about the lack of training provided at this time of the industrial movement (Gysbers, 2010). Parsons advocated for vocational guidance to be delivered by trained professionals in all high schools, which lead to Boston elementary and secondary schools to hire vocational counselors (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). By 1913, The National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) was established, which was an organization whose purpose was to promote vocational guidance (Gysbers, 2010). The first “guidance counselors” were administrators and teachers (Gladding, 2013). In addition to their regular duties, they began to take on more tasks and duties that created an overlapping list of duties and role confusion (Gysbers, 2010). These guidance activities had no standardization and were typically delivered in a manner that was disconnected and lacked organization from the typical school structure (DeVoss & Andrews, 2006; Gysbers & Moore, 1981; Wittmer, et al., 2007).

1920s-1930s: The mental hygiene movement took place in the mid-1920s (Rudy, 1965), which shifted the focus from economic concerns to concerns about how psychological and social factors impact behavior and mental illness (Plante, 2010). This new paradigm helped validate vocational guidance as an important aspect in education (Johnson, 1972). A challenge that was still permanent was an abundance of terms, such as vocational, educational, recreational, health, civic-social-moral, and personal that were used by many different authors while describing guidance (Gysbers, 2010). Different
uses of terminology will continue to be a theme that reoccurs throughout the many decades to come.

The school personal responsible for delivering guidance activities during the 1930s were still mostly administrators and teachers (Gysbers, 2010). A few schools were beginning to employ counselors, a new full-time position that specialized in guidance activities (Reavis & Woellner, 1930). While there was no continuity from school to school regarding the list of roles and responsibilities for counselors, several of the roles at that time contained what are considered appropriate activities for school counselors today defined by ASCA (counseling individual students, consultation with teachers, etc.), as well as several that are considered inappropriate activities (testing, record keeping, etc.) (Lee, 1934; Reavis & Woellner, 1930). During the infancy of this position, there were concerns about a lack of standardization from city to city for the purpose of counselors, what group gets to set the standards for counselors, and the fear of being viewed as a “handyman” of unwanted tasks that no one else had time to complete (Department of Education, 2002).

There were several events at this time that validated the profession of school counseling. During 1938, the United States government expressed the importance of vocational guidance and recognized a need for occupational information services at a national level as well as more continuity of guidance services for a quality vocational education program (Gysbers, 2010). The federal government created the George-Dean Act, which created the Vocational Education Division (Aubrey, 1977; Gladding & Batra, 2007). This event provided the funding for states to have a state guidance supervisor, which increased from two to twenty-eight between 1938 to 1942 (Wellman, 1978).
**1940s-1970s:** More clarity in the role was also beginning to take place. At one point, the NVGA recognized the 1,565 school guidance workers had 53 unique titles to their position (Polmantier, 1950). During 1941, the NVGA used the term “school counselor” for the first time in the literature to recognize the professional that received the proper training as an undergraduate to perform the tasks necessary for the role (Jones, 1941). The NVGA also discussed the importance of a school counselor organization, which in 1952 lead to the foundation of the organization that is now called the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) (Odell, 1972).

Several events lead to the increase in numbers of the school counseling profession as well as an expansion of responsibilities in the role. After World War II, the Vocational Education Act of 1946 also increased the use of federal funding for guidance and counseling in the following four areas: 1) supervision in state programs; 2) salaries of counselor-trainers; 3) research in the field of guidance; and 4) salaries of local guidance supervisors and counselors (Smith, 1951). According to Herr (2001), another federal education reform that impacted the school counseling profession was the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA). This resulted due to the Soviet Union launching Sputnik and the concerns that the United States needed to maintain the ability to compete with them in the areas of science and technology. Because of the concerns about the security of the nation, there was a need to recognize students needed that were talented in mathematics and science and motivate them to attend college. Within NDEA, Title V funds were used to created school counseling within the schools, counselor training programs, and expand statewide testing (Myrick, 2003; Schmidt, 2003). At this time, the number of school counselors quadrupled (Aubrey, 1977). Other legislation that impacted
the school counseling profession at this time were the Vocational Education Act of 1963, which expanded the services of career guidance in school counseling (Gysbers, 2010), Amendments to the NDEA in 1964, which provided funds for gifted students at the elementary level (Lambie & Williamson, 2004), the Vocational Education Act of 1968 that set aside funds specifically for guidance and counseling (Lambie & Williamson, 2004), and also the Vocational Education Act Amendments of 1968, which extended the support of career guidance programs to disadvantaged students and students with disabilities (Herr & Erford, 2003; Lambie & Williamson, 2004).

Conversations during the 1960s and 1970s continued regarding the search for their professional identity. An ideology coming from some professionals was for school counselors to become psychologists and that a counseling psychologist model should be adopted (Brammer, 1968; Stefflre, 1964). Other professionals felt strongly that the guidance model for school counseling should stay the same. There was also an increased interest by some for counselors to implement career development activities through the school curriculum (Aubrey, 1979). The conversations also started to shift from the use of different educational movements to the need to develop a comprehensive approach to school counseling. Programs were being developed around outcomes locally (McDaniel & Bowers, 1970), on a state level (McKinnon, 1974), as well as on a national level (Gysbers, 2010). Norman Gysbers was awarded a grant to assist each state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to develop and implement models and provided a manual for states to develop their own guides (Gysbers & Moore, 1974).

1980s-1990s: The 1980s and 1990s were decades to move towards a common voice for school counselors. The publication, “A Nation at Risk: The Imperatives for
Reform” (Education, 1983), highlighted the decline in student achievement. A renewed focus on educational reform viewed educational systems, including school counselors, as needing more standards and accountability. School counseling programs were needing to be more proactive instead of reactive, which lent to the continued focus on comprehensive school counseling programs (Loveless, 2010). In addition to focusing on prevalent concerns in society, new education standards in counseling were developed by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) through the American Counseling Association (ACA) in order to increase professionalism and quality of education received at colleges (Schweiger, et al., 2013).

During this time, the topics of gender equity, multiculturalism, diversity, sexual orientation, social class, chemical dependency, changing family structures, child abuse, and violence were educational focuses across the country and in school counseling (Gysbers, 2010; Herr, 2001). Debates continued regarding the role of school counselors. Several different facets of the counseling job and focus emerged, such as human development specialists (Hays, 1980), change agents (Podemski & Childers, 1980), and behavior contract with principals (Boy & Pine, 1980). It was recognized that services in school counseling should not be limited to only a few students but to all students (Herr, 2001). Comprehensive school counseling programs began to emerge across the country, including frameworks and models from many states, which differed significantly (T. A. Hatch, 2008).

In the efforts to move towards one specific voice, reform work was continued in the mid-90s to early 2000s. In 1997, the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI), acquired feedback from counselor educators, school counselors, principals,
teachers, and counseling professionals across the country (Beesley & Frey, 2006). This lead to the development of the National Standards of School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), which was defined by school counselors for the first time of the history of the profession and not external groups, individual school buildings, and administrative needs (Dahir, 2004). These standards helped challenge the nation’s principals to view school counseling through a lens of comprehensive programs and delivery models (Dahir, et al., 2019).

2000s-Today: The passage of the “No Child Left Behind Act” (Department of Education, 2002) aligned school counselors with programs that supported student achievement (Stone & Dahir, 2011) and closed the achievement gap (Dahir, 2004). This legislation provided an opportunity for principals and counselors to work together to meet the needs of students academically, intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally (McCarty, et al., 2014; Stone & Clark, 2001). Based on the National Standards for School Counseling Programs, ASCA developed the first National Model in 2003, which expanded upon these standards and provided a framework of consistent identity and legitimize the school counseling profession (Hatch, 2008). This model provides school counselors with professional guidelines to deliver comprehensive, preventative, and developmental programs that increase student achievement (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Gysbers & Stanley, 2014; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). There have been a few revisions in the model over the last few years. In 2005, the second edition of the ASCA National Model was released, which placed more focus on data and accountability (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). In 2013, the third edition of the ASCA National Model was released, which encouraged more goal setting using actions plans,
mission statements, use of school data to create new counseling activities, identifying student competencies, data to acknowledge student success, and data to measure results of the school counseling program (Hatch, et al., 2015). As of 2019, school counselors are using the fourth edition of the ASCA National Model. This model, which will be described in the next section. Despite these many steps to define the programs and standards for school counselors, there still remains inconsistency in the school counseling role that challenge the field today (Astromovich, et al., 2010; Culbreth, et al., 2005).

**Role of School Counselor**

ASCA states that the role of a school counselor is to “design and deliver school counseling programs that improve student outcomes (School Counselor Roles & Ratios - American School Counselor Association, n.d., p. 2). School counselors accomplish this by connecting their school’s mission statement and school improvement plan and to their school counseling program. While each school counseling program will be unique based on the specific needs of their school, there are four components within ASCA National Model that create the a successful program: 1) define; 2) manage; 3) deliver; and 4) assess (2019a). This framework allows school counselors to determine and organize their tasks based on how they impact student success. (Fye, et al., 2020).

**Define.** Define is the first component of the ASCA National Model and it allows school counselors to develop, implement, and assess their program by using three sets of standards: 1) ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors; 2) ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies; and 3) ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (School Counselor Roles & Ratios - American School Counselor Association, n.d.). The ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors are researched-
based standards that describes the knowledge, attitude, or skills that students should obtain from a comprehensive school counseling program. These standards encompass six strengths-based mindsets standards for students to help them develop a positive self-efficacy toward school success (ASCA, 2021). There are also thirty behavioral standards that are grouped into categories of learning strategies, self-management skills, and social skills that are often identified in successful students. School counselors use these standards to create learning objectives and activities to focus on the developmental needs for students.

In order to impact student growth, the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success is organized into three broad domains: 1) academic development; 2) career development; and 3) social/emotional development (2019b). Academic achievement provides an opportunity for school counselors to measure outcomes for individual students, groups, and the entire school by aligning counseling outcome goals with the building’s school improvement plan (Dahir & Stone, 2003; The School Counselor and Academic Development - American School Counselor Association, n.d.). Data can be used to determine counseling lessons and how to target individual groups in order to close the achievement, opportunity, and information gaps and remove barriers so all student achieve success (Stone & Dahir, 2011). Career development provides an opportunity for students K-12 to learn about the world of work and different types of careers that exist and are in high demand (The School Counselor and Career Development - American School Counselor Association, n.d.). Many students require additional postsecondary education beyond a high school degree in order to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for most jobs in the workforce (Gysbers, 2013).
Social/emotional development includes skills for students to manage their emotions and also interpersonal skills for effective communication and interacting with others (ASCA, 2019a). School counselors need to take the age and development level of the student into consideration while providing strengths-based supports in the areas of personality, emotional, social, and character development (Galassi, et al., 2008; Park & Peterson, 2008).

The second set of standards, the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies, allows for the exploration and improvement of mindsets and behaviors for school counselors and the ability to prepare a professional development plan for their growth (2019). Similar to the ASCA Student Standards, the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies include seven strengths-based mindsets regarding beliefs of students; ability to be successful and achieve success. There are twenty-four behavioral standards that demonstrate a school counselor’s ability to create a comprehensive school counseling program, which are grouped into the categories of professional foundation, direct and indirect student services, and planning and assessment.

The final set of standards, the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors, are a guide to the ethical practice of school counselors (2016). In addition to working with students, the ASCA Ethical Standards assist school counselors in navigating their responsibilities with several other groups, such as parents/guardians, administrators, school faculty, school counselor administrators/supervisors, and also the needs of the practicing school counselor. These standards also inform groups outside of school
counseling of the best ethical practices and behavioral expectations of what it means to be a professional school counselor.

Manage. Manage is the second component of the ASCA National model, which allows school counselors to determine their program focus and program planning (2019a). During the program focus, school counselor will be able to apply the information they acquired during the Define component and establish their beliefs, mission statement, and vision statement. School counselors will also use their school’s data in order to develop student outcome goals and action plans to support the needs of their school’s population. The planning also consists of using lesson plans, calendaring events, an advisory council of stakeholders, and an annual conference with the administrator in charge of the school counseling program to go over the plan.

Another important area within the Manage component is the school counselor’s use of time. There are four areas counselor should be spending their time: 1) direct student services; 2) indirect student services; 3) program planning and school support; and 4) non-school-counseling duties (ASCA, 2019b).

Deliver. According to ASCA, it is recommended that a counselor spend a minimum of 80% of their time on the third component of the ASCA National Model, Deliver, which consists of direct and indirect services (2019a). Direct student services are defined as interactions that school counselors have in person with students and indirect student services are services provided on a student’s behalf as the result of the school counselor working with other people (ASCA, 2019b). Direct services may be accomplished in several different categories. The first way may be through instruction, where school counselors teach information in the most effective and appropriate settings.
through large groups in classrooms, small-groups, or individual instruction. The second way may be through Appraisal and Advisement. Appraisal provides counselors and opportunity to administer tests or inventories in order to analyze a student’s skills, interests, or abilities. Advisement takes the information that was pointed out from Appraisal and the school counselor empowers the student to make decisions regarding their future. Finally, the third way is through Counseling. Counseling is a service that is offered when students are experiencing barriers with their success at school due to some type of change, stressor, or crisis they are experiencing (ASCA, 2019b). These sessions should be short term with the focus on supporting through academic, career, and social/emotional development.

Indirect student services are services that benefit the student; however, involve cooperation with other people or organizations (e.g. parent/guardians, teachers, social workers, etc.) to provide additional support (Mullen & Gutierrez, 2016). School counselors can accomplish this through three different strategies: 1) consultation; 2) collaboration; and 3) referrals (ASCA, 2019b). The first method of consultation entails school counselors either providing or receiving information, opinions, or recommendations from another person or organization to support the needs of students or receiving expertise on student competencies. Some of the frequent consultees for school counselors are parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and students (Baker, et al., 2009). The second process of collaboration allows multiple people to partner together and set goals to help support students (ASCA, 2019b). Finally, the last process, referral, allows school counselors to refer a student to another school or community resource when the student’s need go beyond what the counselor can provide (ASCA, 2019b).
While school counselors want to be able to assist their students, it is just as important to recognize their own limitations. This could be either the school counselor is not as well versed in an area the student needs or that the additional supports that the student needs extends beyond the short-term supports that the counselor can provide (ASCA, 2016). Some frequent referrals regard issues pertaining to emotional disturbances, family, drug and alcohol abuse, and suspected child abuse (Ritchie & Partin, 1994).

After direct and indirect supports, the remaining 20% of time should be spent on program planning and school support and non-school-counseling duties (ASCA, 2019a). Program planning allows school counselors to revisit their school’s comprehensive counseling program to make sure it is providing the appropriate support through tasks and the analysis of data and their effectiveness. Regarding school support, a small portion of this time on should be spent accomplishing “fair-share” responsibilities, which are the responsibilities of where many educators have to take turns to make sure the school runs efficiently (ASCA, 2019b; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

A challenge many school counselors experience is being asked to complete non-school-counseling duties that are considered by ASCA to be inappropriate for school counselors. To distinguish the difference between fair-share responsibilities and inappropriate responsibilities, fair-share responsibilities should not interfere with school counselors’ application of a comprehensive school counseling program. Fair-share responsibilities should still allow school counselors to focus on supporting the academic, career and social/emotional needs of the student (The School Counselor and School Counseling Programs - American School Counselor Association, n.d.). On the other hand, non-school counseling responsibilities are considered inappropriate because they
do not contribute to the design, application, or assessment of a comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2019b).

ASCA explicitly states activities they consider appropriate and inappropriate for school counselors (Figure 1). According to the ethics of ASCA, a responsibility that school counselors have to their school is to advocate for the elimination of activities that are considered inappropriate for school counselors (ASCA, 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors</th>
<th>Appropriate Activities for School Counselors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building the master schedule</td>
<td>Advisement and appraisal for academic planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students</td>
<td>Orientation, coordination, and academic advising for new students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs</td>
<td>Interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent</td>
<td>Providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences</td>
<td>Providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders</td>
<td>Providing short-term individual and small-group counseling services to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covering classes when teachers are absent or to create teacher planning time</td>
<td>Consulting with teachers to schedule and present school counseling curriculum lessons based on developmental needs and needs identified through data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining student records</td>
<td>Interpreting student records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing grade-point averages</td>
<td>Analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervising classrooms or common areas</td>
<td>Consulting with teachers about building classroom connections, effective classroom management and the role of noncognitive factors in student success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping clerical records</td>
<td>Protecting student records and information per state and federal regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting with duties in the principal’s office</td>
<td>Consulting with the principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, student study teams, response to intervention plans, MTSS and school attendance review boards</td>
<td>Advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards, as necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as a data entry clerk</td>
<td>Analyzing disaggregated schoolwide and school counseling program data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1. Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors. Adapted from ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (2019b).*

Because building principals are often the direct supervisors for school counselors, they end up establishing the roles for school counselors in their respective buildings.
Many studies show that school counselors and principals have different views of what roles are appropriate and inappropriate for school counselors (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Bardhoshi, 2012; Bardhoshi & Duncan, 2009; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Monteiro-Leitner, et al., 2006; Ruiz, 2015). In order for a school counselor to maintain a comprehensive school counseling program, they must collaborate and communicate with the building principal to let them know what are appropriate roles and activities for school counselors (Fitch, et al., 2001; Zalaquett, 2005). While there are many duties that take place in a school setting for student achievement, it is critical that the role of the school counselor is not reduced to inappropriate tasks, such as administering tests, clerical work, and disciplining students, which have been tasks the have been historically delegated to school counselors (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). While these tasks are important to running a school, school counselors are often the only mental health employees at the school that can be working in collaboration with administrators, teachers, and other staff members (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017). When school counselors are completing tasks that are not considered appropriate uses of time, they run the risk of diverting to ambiguous tasks and reinforcing perceptions that have caused resistance to the profession for decades (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). These tasks take away from the school counselor’s time to meet directly with students (DeMato & Curcio, 2004) and other activities that have a greater impact on student achievement.

**Assess.** The fourth and final component of the ASCA National Model, Assess, allows counselors to show the effectiveness of their programs through data in order to continuously revamp their programs to improve student achievement through the school counseling program (2019a). The data should show that some type of change occurred for
students due to the activities or tasks asked to be completed by school counselors (ASCA, 2019a).

School counselors will regularly complete a program assessment to see what changes and improvements they can make. This will be done by using two documents: 1) School Counseling Program Assessment; and 2) Annual Results Reports (ASCA, 2019a). The School Counseling Program Assessment will analyze specific components from three of the four ASCA components (Manage, Deliver, and Assess) and ask whether their counseling program contains these components and allow for additional comments (ASCA, 2019b). The Annual Results Reports focuses of two areas: 1) Classroom and group Mindsets & Behaviors results reports; and 2) Closing-the-gap results reports. Both of these documents measure the participation, mindsets & behaviors, and outcomes of their respective of lessons taught to students or activities that reduce the achievement gap between different groups (ASCA, 2019b).

The final documents school counselors use to assess their own abilities. There are two documents that the ASCA Model uses to accomplish this: 1) ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies Assessment; and 2) School Counselor Performance Appraisal Template (2019a). The ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies Assessment allows counselors to check the all the mindsets and behaviors that were introduced in the Define component that allows school counselors to reflect on their personal mindsets and behaviors while working for students (2019b). The School Counselor Performance Appraisal Template allows counselor to evaluate and rate their personal performance from 0-3 (0=Unsatisfactory, 1=Developing, 2=Proficient; and 3=Distinguished).
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This study provided a unique perspective towards the understanding of the working relationship between school counselors and principals. A complex relationship exists between the two groups, and this study explored both of these important perspectives. The professional relationship between school counselors and school principals can have stress because of their different expectations of counselor roles and responsibilities (Lampe, 1985). While groups often feel the need to defend their position, it is important to first lead with listening with the intentions of understanding the other viewpoint.

Also, there are many studies that discuss school counselors being misunderstood by principals (Beesley & Frey, 2006; Bickmore & Curry, 2013; Blake, 2020; Bonebrake & Borgers, 1984; Camadan & Kahveci, 2013; Kaplan, 1995; Kimber & Campbell, 2014; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Leuwerke, et al., 2009; Ruiz, et al., 2018). While the focus of this study related to how both groups perceive the school counseling role, the study was designed to understand the viewpoints of both roles, where they overlap, and how they can work together more efficiently in a school setting. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between what principals and school counselors view the roles of school counseling in important topics shared by both professions.

Design

This cross-sectional study, which collected both descriptive and inferential data, focused upon the variance of perceptions and beliefs that secondary school counselors and school administrators recognized as optimal for the role of school counselors. A self-
administered questionnaire was sent electronically through Qualtrics to 314 possible participants. The Qualtrics program provided anonymity for all the participants, which allowed them to be candid about their answers. According to Creswell (2015), a questionnaire is an appropriate way to collect data in a cross-sectional study as it is useful at capturing the attitudes, opinions, and beliefs of the participants in a timely manner. According to Creswell (2015), a correlational design is appropriate when trying to find out if two or more variables influence each other.

**Research Questions**

To gain insights into the prioritization of school counselor roles from the perspective of counselor and principal, the following question guided the study:

How strong is the relationship between the perspectives of Midwest school counselors and of building principals on the roles and priorities undertaken by counselors?

Data was analyzed for these questions:

Research Question #1: What are school counselors’ and administrators’ perceptions of school counseling roles as designated by items of ROSCQ?

Research Question #2: How do the perspectives of school counselors and administrators compare regarding areas of counselor specialization?

Research Question #3: How strong is the interaction between the perspectives of secondary and elementary school counselors and principals?

**Participants**

This study was conducted in a Midwest urban school district that consists of 63 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, seven high schools, eight alternative programs, and a virtual school, which serves both middle and high school students. The district had
51,914 students, which 78% of the students received free/reduced lunch. 19% of the students were English Language Learners, 18% of the students were receiving special education supports, and 10% of the students were in the gifted program.

All school counselors and school administrators (principals and assistant principals) were asked to participate in this study. Overall, 166 out of 314 possible participants completed the questionnaire in the study, with 90 of the participants reporting to be school counselors (40 elementary and 50 secondary) and 76 were administrators (33 elementary and 43 secondary).

For total years in the role as a school counselor, the mean average was 10.72, standard deviation was 8.01, and the range was 1 to 30 years of school counseling experience. For total years of experience in education for school counselors, the mean average was 18.92, standard deviation was 9.78, the range was 1 to 45 years.

The total years in the current principal role, the mean average was 7.04, standard deviation was 6.16, and the range was 1 to 23 years of experience as a principal. For total years of experience in education for principals, the mean average was 22.48, standard deviation was 7.06, and the range was 10 to 47 years.

The total years in the current assistant principal role, the mean average was 9.72, standard deviation was 6.89, and the range was 1 to 22 years of experience as an assistant principal. For total years of experience in education for assistant principals, the mean average was 24.31, standard deviation was 6.17, and the range was 8 to 42 years.

Participants in this study have been certified by the state and are deemed highly qualified for their roles. For a school counselor to receive an endorsement to practice in the state of this study, a counselor must obtain a master’s degree in counseling with a
specialization in school counseling with a minimum of 36 graduate hours. School counselors may serve in the grade levels of their endorsement, where three different types are issued: 1) PK-12; 2) PK-8; or 3) 7-12. Prior to the school counselor’s internship, they must have a minimum of 100 clock hours of school counseling field experience. The school counselor must complete an internship with a minimum of 450 clock hours in the grade levels of the endorsement. A counselor must already have a teaching certificate or complete at least 12 credit hours in teacher education at a college in the areas of core curriculum design, lesson plan development, classroom management, student assessment, and differentiated instructional strategies. School counselors entering the profession after September 1, 2015, must also take the Praxis for professional school counselors and receive a score of 156 or above.

For principals, which includes assistant principals, to receive an endorsement to practice in the state of this study, a principal must obtain a certification of endorsement in educational administration. The educator must also have two years of teaching experience at an accredited elementary, middle, or high school. If the principal is at the same level, they are seeking endorsement, the endorsement requires 36 graduate hours; however, if the principal is at a different level of the endorsement they are seeking, they will have to complete an addition 9 graduate hours in the specific new level they are seeking. During the program, the educator must complete an internship with a minimum of 250 clock hours. Principals entering the profession after September 1, 2015, must also take the Praxis for educational leadership and supervision and receive a score of 145 or above.
Instrument

The Roles of School Counseling Questionnaire (ROSCQ) is a self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to measure topics that were recognized by the professional organizations for school counselors, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and secondary school administrators, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). The questionnaire measured the comparison of perceptions that school counselors and principals had about the roles of the counselor. Prior to administration of the questionnaire with school counselors and administrators, the ROSCQ questionnaire was edited and validated by sending the questionnaire out to ten retired school counselors and the current district supervisor for school counseling. The group of counselors had over 150 years of combined counseling experience. Some of the revisions based on the feedback of this group were: 1) more concise descriptions to describe the ASCA U Courses; 2) including more continuity in the format of the descriptions and beginning with action verbs while describing the trainings; 3) combining two of the ASCA U topics with two other categories; and 4) changing one of the open-ended questions from “highest and lowest ranks” to “most important and least important rankings.”

In ROSCQ’s first question, school counselors and administrators were asked to mark their perception of ten school counselor roles (1=not part of counselor’s role, 2=not very important for counselor’s role, 3=of limited value for counselor’s role, 4=important for counselor’s role, 5=essential to counselor’s role). The second question asked school counselors and administrators to rank order the counseling topics (1=most important to 10=least important). The third question asked participants to explain how they
determined what their most important and least important rankings were. In the fourth question, participants were asked if they believed counselors and principals have different perspectives on counselor roles and if so, what are those differences. The fifth question gave participants the opportunity to share anything else regarding the topics addressed in the survey. The final four questions were demographic questions asking about their current role in schools, total years in their role, what level they currently worked, and total years in education (see Appendix A).

ROSCQ is a quantitative instrument used to determine the perceived importance of topics in school counseling professional development topics. Items that were included on the ROSCS were determined by cross-referencing the National Association of Secondary School Principal’s Position Statements (NASSP Position Statements, 2017) with the American School Counselor Association’s Specialists Training (ASCA U Specialist Trainings | American School Counselor Association, n.d.). Of the 53 topics listed in the NASSP Position Statements and fourteen topics for ASCA Specialists Training, there were found to be 10 topics that overlapped and determined as beneficial by both professional organizations. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) was also researched; however, there was not a list of position statements to cross reference and not included in the development of the ROSCQ questionnaire.

The terminology from ASCA was used in developing the instrument because the study is based on the perceptions of school counseling. The nine NASSP Position Statements are: 1) Safe Schools; 2) Achievement Gap; 3) Preparing All Students for Postsecondary Success; 4) Culturally Responsive Schools; 5) Racial Justice and
Educational Equity; 6) Ethics for School Leaders; 7) Mental Health in Middle Level and High Schools; 8) Leadership Development for School Leaders; and 9) Trauma-Informed Schools. The ten ASCA Specialist Trainings are: 1) Bullying Prevention; 2) Closing the Achievement Gap; 3) Career Development; 4) College Admissions; 5) Culturally Sustaining School Counseling; 6) Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; 7) Legal & Ethical; 8) Mental Health; 9) School Counseling Leadership; and 10) Trauma & Crisis.

While there are 15 ASCA U Trainings, there were a few categories that were not added to the questionnaire for various reasons. The five ASCA Specialist Trainings that were not added to the questionnaire are: 1) School Counseling Association Leadership; 2) School Counseling Data; 3) Students with Special Needs; 4) Anxiety & Stress Management; and 5) Grief & Loss. The first topic, School Counseling Association Leadership Specialist, was specifically for school counselors that were either currently or planning to participate in their respective state associations. That training would not be an area of interest in conjunction with NASSP and ASCA. The next two topics, School Counseling Data and Students with Special Needs, were not mentioned in the NASSP Position Statements nor would they combine with another topic that was already listed. The final two topics that were not added, Anxiety & Stress Management and Grief & Loss, were viewed as topics that combined with other topics already on the questionnaire. Anxiety & Stress Management fell under to overarching topic of Mental Health and Grief & Loss fell under the overarching topic of Trauma & Crisis.

While there were 53 NASSP Position Statements, 34 of the topics referenced did not correspond to topics that overlapped with school counseling and were not used for the questionnaire. The concepts in one of the NASSP Position Statements, Preparing All
Students for Postsecondary Success, were included between two ASCA Specialists
Trainings, Career Development and College Admissions, so both of them were included in the survey.

Data Collection and Analysis

The Roles of School Counseling Questionnaire (ROSCQ) was sent to all
elementary, middle, and high school counselors, principals, and assistant principals. This
electronic survey noted that consent was voluntary and was sent a total of three times to get the best number of responses.

Results from the Qualtrics questionnaire was divided into two groups: counselors and principals. For research question 1, frequencies as well as means and standard deviations were tabled for each of the first ten items. Item 11 was displayed on a table of frequencies.

Research question 2, which was descriptive, was measured using a two-tailed independent $t$-test. A 0.05 level of significance to help control for Type I errors because multiple statistical tests were conducted.

Item 11 was measured using a Spearman Rank Order Test, $r_s$, and measured the strength of the relationship between school counselors and administrators.

Research question 3 was analyzed by using a 2 x 2 Way ANOVA for the factors of level (elementary, secondary) and role (school counselor, principal/assistant principal). A 0.05 level of significance to help control for Type I errors. Responses to open-ended questions were not analyzed as data results. Once the results were tabled, open-ended responses were utilized to help interpret the results in Chapter 5.
**Assumptions**

The primary assumption in this study was that school counselors and administrators answered the questionnaires with careful thought and intentionality. With the finite amount of time that these professionals had, it was important that they answered the questions thoroughly, especially the open-ended questions that provided understanding to the perspectives of each other’s roles.

The second assumption was that counselors and administrators had a positive vision for their school counseling departments. Depending on whether they could see the big picture of a comprehensive school counseling program and were not limited by perceptions of individual staff members or negative experiences in the past.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

The research of this study was completed in one large urban school district in the Midwest. Thus, further research is needed to how research applies to smaller school districts as well as districts located in different parts of the country.

This cross-section measured one particular moment in time. Because this research was conducted during the COVID 19 pandemic, further research may show that perceptions and immediate resources may be viewed differently than during the pandemic.

Assistant principals were selected for this study to increase the larger sample size in order to provide a larger number for overall validity and reliability. However, the principals were the building leaders who must oversee the entire operation of a school building and were tasked with the responsibility for the vision and culture of the site.
Because of a principal’s ability to see the picture of all items of a school, it may have impacted the data in this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The purpose of this cross-sectional quantitative study was to explore and compare the perceptions that school counselors and administrators have about the roles of the counselor. The Roles of School Counseling Questionnaire (ROSCQ) was completed by 166 out of 314 participants, 40 elementary and 50 secondary school counselors and 33 elementary and 43 secondary administrators.

Research Question #1

What are school counselors’ and administrators’ perceptions of school counseling roles as designated by items of ROSCQ?

School counselors ($n = 90$) indicated highly positive perceptions (5 = essential to counselor’s role, 1 = not part of counselor’s role) on the topics considered optimal for the school counselor’s role ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.55$). Even the lowest mean score of the ten topics was 4.28, which recognizes the topic as important to the school counselor’s role.

The topics that school counselors scored highest were, “Mental Health” ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 0.37$), “Career Development” ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.45$), “Trauma and Crisis” ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.45$), and “Legal and Ethics” ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.48$). All mean averages indicated topics were either important or essential to the counselor’s role.

The topics that school counselors scored the lowest were, “School Counseling Leadership” ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.63$), “Closing the Achievement Gap” ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.64$), and “Culturally Sustaining” ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.64$). Data on school counselors’ Likert responses are displayed in Table 1.
School administrators \((n=76)\) also indicated highly positive perceptions on the topics considered optimal for the school counselor’s role \((M=4.51, SD=0.51)\). The lowest mean score of the ten topics was 4.13, which suggests the topics are important to the school counselor’s role.

Highest topics for school administrators were, “Mental Health” \((M=4.92, SD=0.27)\), “Trauma and Crisis” \((M=4.87, SD=0.34)\), and “Bullying Prevention” \((M=4.68, SD=0.46)\). All ten topics’ mean averages were considered important or essential to the counselor’s role.

The topics that school administrators scored the lowest were, “School Counseling Leadership” \((M=4.13, SD=0.55)\), “Closing the Achievement Gap” \((M=4.21, SD=0.59)\), “Culturally Sustaining” \((M=4.39, SD=0.61)\), and “Career Development” \((M=4.39, SD=0.63)\). Data on school administrators’ Likert responses are also displayed in Table 1.
Table 1  
*Likert Responses for Perceptions of Optimal School Counselor’s Roles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Counseling Topics</th>
<th>Counselors</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 90)</td>
<td>(n = 76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying Prevention</td>
<td>4.57 0.58</td>
<td>4.68 0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development</td>
<td>4.71 0.45</td>
<td>4.39 0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing the Achievement Gap</td>
<td>4.37 0.64</td>
<td>4.21 0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Admissions</td>
<td>4.53 0.62</td>
<td>4.54 0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Sustaining</td>
<td>4.46 0.64</td>
<td>4.39 0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</td>
<td>4.62 0.59</td>
<td>4.41 0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and Ethics</td>
<td>4.71 0.48</td>
<td>4.54 0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>4.83 0.37</td>
<td>4.92 0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counseling Leadership</td>
<td>4.28 0.63</td>
<td>4.13 0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma and Crisis</td>
<td>4.71 0.45</td>
<td>4.87 0.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1 = not part of counselor’s role, 2 = not very important for counselor’s role, 3 = of limited value for counselor’s role, 4 = important for counselor’s role, 5 = essential to counselor’s role).
Research Question #2

How do the perspectives of school counselors and administrators compare regarding areas of counselor specialization?

In comparing mean scores on the ROSCQ, four topics had significant differences. School counselors ($M = 4.71$, $SD = .45$) rated the topic of Career Development significantly higher than administrators ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.63$), $t(164) = 3.72$, $p < .001$. School counselors ($M = 4.62$, $SD = .59$) also rated the topic of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion significantly higher than administrators ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.59$), $t(164) = 2.32$, $p = .021$. The topic of Legal and Ethics was also rated significantly higher for school counselors ($M = 4.71$, $SD = .48$) than administrators ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.52$), $t(164) = 2.19$, $p = .030$. Finally, school administrators ($M = 4.71$, $SD = .45$) rated the topic of Trauma and Crisis significantly higher than counselors ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.45$), $t(164) = -2.48$, $p = .014$. There was no statistical significance in the other six school counseling topics. Results of the $t$-tests are displayed in Table 2.
Table 2

*Independent Two-Tailed t-Test of All Counselors and All Administrators for Perceptions of Optimal School Counselor’s Roles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Counseling Topics</th>
<th>Counselors M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Administrators M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>-1.698</td>
<td>.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma and Crisis</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>-2.48</td>
<td>.014*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.021*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying Prevention</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>-1.42</td>
<td>.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>&lt;.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing the Achievement Gap</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Sustaining</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>.6226</td>
<td>.534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Admissions</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>.948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and Ethics</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>.030*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counseling Leadership</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1.568</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = significant at the .05 level  
negative t-value = principals scored higher
Spearman’s rank correlation was computed to assess the relationship between school counselors’ and administrators’ responses. There was a strong positive correlation between the two variables, $r_s(164) = 0.99$, $p < .001$. Rankings are displayed in Table 3.
Table 3

*Rank Order Responses for Perceptions of Optimal School Counselor’s Roles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Counseling Topics</th>
<th>Counselors</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(n = 90)</td>
<td>(n = 76)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma and Crisis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying Prevention</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing the Achievement Gap</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Sustaining</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Admissions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and Ethics</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counseling Leadership</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question #3

How strong is the interaction between the perspectives of secondary and elementary school counselors and principals?

A series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were performed to test inferential question 3. Variables measured were role (school counselors and administrators) and level (elementary and secondary). An alpha level of .05 was selected to account for Type I errors.

Bullying. There was a significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 5.06, p = .002$. Tukey's HSD test determined that there was a significant difference between elementary counselors ($M = 4.75, SD = 0.59$) and secondary counselors ($M = 4.42, SD = 0.54$) ($Q = 4.08, p = .023$). Tukey’s HSD test also determined that there was a significant difference between elementary administrators ($M = 4.82, SD = 0.39$) and secondary counselors ($M = 4.42, SD = 0.54$) ($Q = 4.92, p = .004$). Results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 4.
Table 4

**ANOVA Results for Bullying**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F$ = 5.06</th>
<th>$p$ = .002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between-treatments</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within-treatments</td>
<td>43.05</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.09</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tukey’s HSD Pairwise Comparisons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary Counselor Elementary Administrator</th>
<th>HSD $0.05 - 0.30$</th>
<th>Q $0.05 - 3.67$</th>
<th>Q $0.05 = 3.67$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M₁ = 4.75, M₂ = 4.82</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>Q = 0.84 (p = .933)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor Secondary Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M₁ = 4.75, M₂ = 4.42</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>Q = 4.08 (p = .023)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor Secondary Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M₁ = 4.75, M₂ = 4.58</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>Q = 2.08 (p = .456)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator Secondary Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M₂ = 4.82, M₃ = 4.42</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>Q = 4.92 (p = .004)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator Secondary Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M₂ = 4.82, M₃ = 4.42</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>Q = 2.93 (p = .168)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor Secondary Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M₃ = 4.42, M₄ = 4.58</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>Q = 1.99 (p = .495)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = significant at the .05 level
Career Development. There was a significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 8.67, p < .001$. Tukey's HSD test determined that there was a significant difference between elementary counselors ($M = 4.63, SD = 0.49$) and elementary administrators ($M = 4.18, SD = 0.58$) ($Q = 5.33, p = .001$). Tukey's HSD test also determined that there was a significant difference between elementary administrators ($M = 4.18, SD = 0.58$) and secondary counselors ($M = 4.78, SD = 0.42$) ($Q = 7.19, p < .001$). Additionally, Tukey's HSD test determined that there was a significant difference between elementary administrators ($M = 4.18, SD = 0.58$) and secondary administrators ($M = 4.56, SD = 0.63$) ($Q = 4.52, p = .009$). Results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 5.
### Table 5

**ANOVA Results for Career Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F = 8.67$</th>
<th>$p &lt; .001$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between-treatments</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within-treatments</td>
<td>45.47</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52.77</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tukey’s HSD Pairwise Comparisons</th>
<th>HSD$_{.05} = 0.31$</th>
<th>Q$_{.05} = 3.67$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>M$_1 = 4.63$</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>M$_2 = 4.18$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M$_3 = 4.78$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>M$_4 = 4.56$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M$_5 = 4.56$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>M$_2 = 4.18$</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M$_3 = 4.78$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>M$_4 = 4.56$</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M$_5 = 4.56$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = significant at the .05 level
**Closing the Gap.** There was a significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 3.52, p = .017$. Tukey's HSD test determined that there was a significant difference between secondary counselors ($M = 4.46, SD = 0.61$) and secondary administrators ($M = 4.07, SD = 0.59$) ($Q = 4.06, p = .024$). Results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 6.
Table 6

ANOVA Results for Closing the Gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between-treatments</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within-treatments</td>
<td>60.59</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64.54</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tukey’s HSD Pairwise Comparisons</th>
<th>HSD .05 = 0.35</th>
<th>Q .05 = 3.67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>M&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.25 M&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.39</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.25 M&lt;sub&gt;3&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.46</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.25 M&lt;sub&gt;4&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.07</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.39 M&lt;sub&gt;3&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.46</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.39 M&lt;sub&gt;4&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.07</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M&lt;sub&gt;3&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.46 M&lt;sub&gt;4&lt;/sub&gt; = 4.07</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = significant at the .05 level
**College Admissions.** There was a significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 4.21, p = .007$. Tukey's HSD test determined that there was a significant difference between elementary administrators ($M = 4.33, SD = 0.65$) and secondary administrators ($M = 4.70, SD = 0.47$) ($Q = 3.98, p = .028$). Results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 7.
Table 7

**ANOVA Results for College Admissions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F$ = 4.21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between-treatments</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within-treatments</td>
<td>55.00</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>$p = .007$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59.28</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = significant at the .05 level

**Tukey’s HSD Pairwise Comparisons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>HSD $\bar{y}$</th>
<th>Q $\alpha = 0.05$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>$M_1 = 4.38$</td>
<td>Q = 0.46 ($p = .988$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>$M_2 = 4.33$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_3 = 4.66$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_4 = 4.70$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_5 = 4.66$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_1 = 4.38$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_2 = 4.33$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_3 = 4.66$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_4 = 4.70$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_1 = 4.38$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_2 = 4.33$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_3 = 4.66$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_4 = 4.70$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_5 = 4.66$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_4 = 4.70$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$* =$ significant at the .05 level
Culturally Sustaining. There was no significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 2.09, p = .103$. Results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 8.
Table 8

ANOVA Results for Culturally Sustaining

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between-treatments</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within-treatments</td>
<td>62.22</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64.63</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tukey’s HSD Pairwise Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary Counselor</th>
<th>HSD.05 = 0.36</th>
<th>Q.05 = 3.67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>M₁ = 4.53</td>
<td>Q = 0.52 (p = .983)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>M₂ = 4.58</td>
<td>Q = 1.28 (p = .800)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M₃ = 4.40</td>
<td>Q = 2.77 (p = .209)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M₄ = 4.26</td>
<td>Q = 1.81 (p = .578)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M₅ = 4.40</td>
<td>Q = 3.29 (p = .096)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M₆ = 4.26</td>
<td>Q = 1.48 (p = .721)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion. There was no significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 1.85, p = .141$. Results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 9.
Table 9

ANOVA Results for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between-treatments</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>$F = 1.85$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within-treatments</td>
<td>57.44</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>$p = .141$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59.40</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tukey's HSD Pairwise Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HSD$_{.05}$ = 0.34</th>
<th>Q$_{.05}$ = 3.67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>$M_1 = 4.65$</td>
<td>$Q = 2.42 (p = .323)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_2 = 4.42$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_3 = 4.60$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_1 = 4.65$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_2 = 4.60$</td>
<td>$Q = 0.53 (p = .982)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>$M_3 = 4.40$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>$M_2 = 4.42$</td>
<td>$Q = 2.72 (p = .221)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_3 = 4.60$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>$M_2 = 4.42$</td>
<td>$Q = 1.88 (p = .545)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>$M_4 = 4.40$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_3 = 4.60$</td>
<td>$Q = 0.31 (p = .996)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>$M_4 = 4.40$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>$M_3 = 4.60$</td>
<td>$Q = 2.19 (p = .411)$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legal and Ethics. There was no significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 1.84, p = .142$. Results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 10.
Table 10

ANOVA Results for Legal and Ethics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between-treatments</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within-treatments</td>
<td>41.18</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td></td>
<td>.142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42.58</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tukey’s HSD Pairwise Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tukey’s HSD Pairwise Comparisons</th>
<th>HSD.05 = 0.29</th>
<th>Q.05 = 3.67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>M₁ = 4.72</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>M₂ = 4.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M₃ = 4.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>M₄ = 4.58</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>M₁ = 4.72</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td>M₂ = 4.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M₃ = 4.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>M₄ = 4.58</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>M₂ = 4.48</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M₃ = 4.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M₄ = 4.58</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Mental Health.** There was a significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 3.31, p = .022$. Tukey's HSD test determined that there was a significant difference between elementary administrators ($M = 4.97, SD = 0.17$) and secondary counselors ($M = 4.76, SD = 0.43$) ($Q = 4.09, p = .022$). Results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 11.
Table 11

*ANOVA Results for Mental Health*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F (=3.31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between-treatments</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>p (= .022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within-treatments</td>
<td>17.28</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18.34</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tukey's HSD Pairwise Comparisons</th>
<th>HSD (_{0.05} = 0.19)</th>
<th>Q (_{0.05} = 3.67)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>(M_1 = 4.92)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>(M_2 = 4.97)</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>(M_3 = 4.76)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>(M_4 = 4.88)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>(M_5 = 4.76)</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>(M_6 = 4.97)</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>(M_7 = 4.88)</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = significant at the .05 level
School Counseling Leadership. There was no significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 0.95, p = .417$. Results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 12.
Table 12

ANOVA Results for School Counseling Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between-treatments</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within-treatments</td>
<td>58.59</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59.62</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tukey’s HSD Pairwise Comparisons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>HSD $0.05 = 0.35$</th>
<th>Q $0.05 = 3.67$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor - Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>M₁ = 4.25 M₂ = 4.09</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor - Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M₁ = 4.25 M₃ = 4.30</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Counselor - Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M₁ = 4.25 M₄ = 4.16</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator - Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M₂ = 4.09 M₃ = 4.30</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator - Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M₂ = 4.09 M₄ = 4.16</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor - Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M₃ = 4.30 M₄ = 4.16</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trauma and Crisis. There was a significant main effect \( F(3, 162) = 5.92, p < .001 \). Tukey's HSD test determined that there was a significant difference between elementary counselors (\( M = 4.85, SD = 0.36 \)) and secondary counselors (\( M = 4.60, SD = 0.49 \)) (\( Q = 4.02, p = .026 \)). Tukey's HSD test also determined that there was a significant difference between secondary counselors (\( M = 4.60, SD = 0.49 \)) and secondary administrators (\( M = 4.93, SD = 0.26 \)) (\( Q = 5.31, p = .001 \)). Results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 13.
Table 13

**ANOVA Results for Trauma and Crisis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F = 5.92$</th>
<th>$p &lt; .001$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between-treatments</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within-treatments</td>
<td>25.41</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28.19</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tukey’s HSD Pairwise Comparisons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary Counselor</th>
<th>M₁ = 4.85</th>
<th>M₂ = 4.79</th>
<th>0.06</th>
<th>Q = 1.00 ($p = .894$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Administrator</td>
<td>M₁ = 4.85</td>
<td>M₂ = 4.60</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>Q = 4.02 ($p = .026$)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M₁ = 4.85</td>
<td>M₂ = 4.93</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>Q = 1.29 ($p = .798$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M₁ = 4.79</td>
<td>M₂ = 4.60</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>Q = 3.02 ($p = .146$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Counselor</td>
<td>M₁ = 4.79</td>
<td>M₂ = 4.93</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>Q = 2.29 ($p = .371$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Administrator</td>
<td>M₁ = 4.60</td>
<td>M₂ = 4.93</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>Q = 5.31 ($p = .001$)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = significant at the .05 level
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between what principals and school counselors view the roles of school counseling in important topics shared by both professions. The Roles of School Counseling Questionnaire (ROSCQ) was sent to all middle and high school counselors, principals, and assistant principals in the large urban school district in the Midwest. The number of study participants was 166.

The Roles of School Counseling Questionnaire (ROSCQ) is a self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to measure topics that were recognized by the professional organizations for school counselors, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and secondary school administrators, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). The questionnaire measured the comparison of perceptions that school counselors and principals had about the roles of the counselor.

In the first question, school counselors and administrators were asked to mark their perception of ten school counselor roles (1=not part of counselor’s role, 2=not very important for counselor’s role, 3=of limited value for counselor’s role, 4=important for counselor’s role, 5=essential to counselor’s role). The second question asked school counselors and administrators to rank order the counseling topics (1=most important to 10=least important). The third question asked participants to explain how they determined what their most important and least important rankings were. In the fourth question, participants were asked if they believed counselors and principals have different perspectives on counselor roles and if so, what are those differences. The fifth question gave participants the opportunity to share anything else regarding the topics addressed in
the survey. The final four questions were demographic questions asking about their current role in schools, total years in their role, what level they currently worked, and total years in education.

Conclusions

Student and System-based Roles

Research question # 1 was used to determine school counselors’ and administrators’ perceptions of school counseling roles as designated by items of ROSCQ. The findings of this study indicate that both school counselors and school administrators considered all ten topics highly positive. Even the lowest mean score of the ten topics was 4.28, which recognizes the topic as important to the school counselor’s role.

Student-centered and individual relationship-based topics were more likely to be indicated as essential to the school counselor’s role. For example, “Mental Health” was considered the highest scoring topic for both school counselors ($M = 4.83, SD = 0.37$) and also for school administrators ($M = 4.92, SD = 0.27$). Another high scoring topic for school counselors ($M = 4.71, SD = 0.45$) and school administrators ($M = 4.87, SD = 0.34$) was “Trauma and Crisis”. This finding is consistent with research that supports counselors predominately taking an individual student approach (Kaplan, 1995; Kimber & Campbell, 2014). The social/emotional relationship of a school counselor were most consistently at the top of the roles.

While seen as positive, the roles that were more organizational or group focused, while important, did not have the same level of being essential to the school counselor roles. Here are three topics that scored towards the bottom for both groups. “School Counseling Leadership” was rated the lowest by both school counselors ($M = 4.28, SD =$
“Closing the Achievement Gap” was also rated low by both school counselors ($M = 4.37, SD = 0.64$) and also for school administrators ($M = 4.21, SD = 0.59$). Finally, “Culturally Sustaining” was one of the lower scoring topics for both school counselors ($M = 4.46, SD = 0.63$) and school administrators ($M = 4.39, SD = 0.61$).

Other studies also reinforce these differing perspectives of the work done by the principals and counselors where the principals’ primary concerns were focused on the school as a whole and school counselors main focus was on individual student’s well-being (Kaplan, 1995; Kimber & Campbell, 2014; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). During this study, one administrator mentioned that some of their “bottom choices are more administrative duties. We need counselors working closely with students and staff on what they are best trained for.”

It may be interesting to compare these responses to the conceptual framework of Mitchell and Spady (1979). The dichotomy between administrators and counselors where administrators’ primary focus is the operations of the school as a whole and institutional systems as a top-down approach. School counselors focus on a bottom-up approach through the fulfillment of each individual student by the attainment of skills and competencies for success.

**Priorities of School Counselors’ Roles**

Research question # 2 explored how perspectives of school counselors and administrators compare regarding specialization topics for school counselors. The findings of this study indicate that despite the different occupations in the building, school counselors and administrators agreed in what the essential topics are for school
counselors. Spearman’s rank correlation was computed to assess the relationship between school counselors’ and administrators’ and showed a strong positive correlation between the two variables, $r_s (164) = 0.99$, $p < .001$.

School counselors ranked the ten school counseling topics from most important to least important in the following order: Mental Health; Trauma and Crisis; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Bullying Prevention; Career Development; Closing the Achievement Gap; Culturally Sustaining; College Admissions; Legal and Ethics; and School Counseling Leadership. School administrators independently ranked the ten school counseling topics: Mental Health; Trauma and Crisis; Bullying Prevention; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Career Development; Closing the Achievement Gap; Culturally Sustaining; College Admissions; Legal and Ethics; and School Counseling Leadership. The ten school counseling topics were ranked ordered the same for both groups, with the only exception being that counselors ranked “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” third and “Bullying Prevention” fourth while administrators ranked “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” fourth and “Bullying Prevention” third.

While the rank orders for school counselors and administrators were almost the exact same in this study, the specific topics were limited to items considered beneficial for both school counselors and administrators. The topics used in the ROSCS questionnaire were determined by cross-referencing the National Association of Secondary School Principal’s Position Statements (NASSP Position Statements, 2017) with the American School Counselor Association’s Specialists Training (ASCA U Specialist Trainings | American School Counselor Association, n.d.) and used the 10 topics considered beneficial for both organizations.
**Variations by Role and Level**

Research question #3 investigated how strong the interactions were between the perspectives of secondary and elementary school counselors and principals. When analyzing the data, the information they can bring understanding to the natural relationships can be categorized into two categories: 1) Perspectives not impacted by level or role; and 2) Different perspectives by either level or role.

While there were topics that showed statistical significance in this study that shared neither the same role nor level, they are not being analyzed because of their lack of interaction regarding vertical alignment of the role or horizontal alignment of the level. The topics where this happened in this study was for Mental Health, where there was a significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 3.31, p = .022$. Tukey's HSD test determined that there was a significant difference between elementary administrators ($M = 4.97, SD = 0.17$) and secondary counselors ($M = 4.76, SD = 0.43$) ($Q = 4.09, p = .022$). Another topic where this occurred was for Career Development, where there was a significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 8.67, p < .001$. Tukey's HSD test also determined that there was a significant difference between elementary administrators ($M = 4.18, SD = 0.58$) and secondary counselors ($M = 4.78, SD = 0.42$) ($Q = 7.19, p < .001$). The final example in this study where this occurred was for Bullying, where there was a significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 5.06, p = .002$. Tukey's HSD test also determined that there was a significant difference between elementary administrators ($M = 4.82, SD = 0.39$) and secondary counselors ($M = 4.42, SD = 0.54$) ($Q = 4.92, p = .004$).
Perspectives Not Impacted by Level or Role

School counseling leadership. While there was no significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 0.95, p = .417$, this data shows that all four groups rated it on a similar level of importance. School Counseling Leadership had the lowest means and standard deviation amongst all topics for both counselors ($M = 4.28, SD = 0.63$), and for administrators ($M = 4.13, SD = 0.55$) (see Table 1). Both counselors and administrators also rank ordered school counseling leadership last out of the ten topics, with 33 of 90 school counselors and 34 of 76 administrators selecting it as their last choice. As one school counselor stated, “I feel they [administrator] want the counselor to help out as needed and still part of plan time, which does not allow for leadership of the counselor to broaden in the school with staff.” Only one counselor and one administrator ranked school counseling leadership as their top choice.

Several studies show that effective school leadership has a positive, significant relationship on student achievement (Beck, 2016; Duslak & Geier, 2016; Seashore, et al., 2010). ASCA also recognizes the importance of leadership in working with administrators, teachers, and school community in improving character education (Position Statements | American School Counselor Association, n.d.). While leadership is considered important in education, 71 of the 166 participants selected their top choice by daily needs of the students or school. One participant noted that they ranked School Counseling Leadership as their top priority because leadership is necessary for making long-term consequences for improving student outcomes. It may be that leadership was not as much a priority for other counselors based on their interpretation of the term.
Another participant stated that they “distinguished between that JUST the school counselor fulfills vs roles that the school community works on.”

**Legal and ethics.** There was no significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 1.84, p = .142,$ and all four groups had similar determinations for the level of importance. Legal and ethics was interesting to interpret for both school counselors and administrators throughout the study. On the Likert Scale questions, Legal and Ethics had the second highest average out of the ten topics for counselors ($M = 4.41, SD = 0.48$), and fourth highest among administrators ($M = 4.54, SD = 0.52$); however, both counselors and administrators rank ordered Legal and Ethics ninth out of the ten topics.

There appears to be a difference in opinion amongst school counselors as to how legal and ethics fit into the rank ordering of these topics. While many counselors referenced the immediate needs of their students and school being of high priority, several counselors reference the importance of legal and ethics for the foundation of their job. Twelve of 90 school counselors rank ordered Legal and Ethics within their top three choices and 56 of 90 selected it in their bottom three choices. Some of the responses from counselors that rated this topic as most important mentioned, “ethics and legal are the most important because they are the lighthouse of our craft.” Another counselor wrote, “you cannot do the rest well without having an understanding of the legal and ethical consequences of our actions.” ASCA provides counselors with ethical standards, which includes specific responsibilities to students, parents/guardians, the school, and several other areas related to counseling (2016). While policies and laws differ by districts and states, the ethical standards to provide norms, values, and beliefs for school counselors is universal. With the many changing rights for minors and parents/guardians in today’s
society, it is essential that counselors remain knowledgeable about new and current literature, laws, and ethics in the profession (Remley, et al., 2003).

**Diversity, equity, inclusion, and culturally sustaining.** While the ANOVA results for Diversity, Equity, and inclusion showed no significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 1.85, p = .141$. However, the $t$-Tests between all counselors and all administrators showed that school counselors ($M = 4.62, SD = .59$) rated the topic of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion significantly higher than administrators ($M = 4.41, SD = 0.59$), $t(164) = 2.32, p = .021$. Counselors also ranked Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as third out of the ten topics and administrators ranked it fourth out of ten. The ANOVA results for Culturally Sustaining showed no significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 2.09, p = .103$.

A possible reason why school counselors may have ranked these topics high are all the various items where ASCA mentions their importance. The following ASCA Position Statements that include these topics: Anti-Racist Practices; Equity for All Students; Cultural Diversity; Character Education; Promotion of Safe Schools through Conflict Resolution and Bullying/Harassment Prevention; LGBTQ Youth; Academic Development; and Gifted and Talented Student Programs (Position Statements | American School Counselor Association, n.d.).

Administrators and school counselors may view diversity, equity, and culture differently based on size of school, financial resources, and traditional members of the leadership team. Often support is provided by a team approach or other members of the school community. When asked for reasons behind the rank-ordering, one counselor noted,
I tried to look at which roles seemed to have other stakeholders involved. Career/college matters are typically handled in our district by counselors, while the mental health/trauma side of things have other individuals such as social workers, community counselors, and crisis response teams involved.

Inclusive leadership teams can provide counselors and administrators with better skills and communication for a more culturally aware environment (Walker, 2006).

**Significant Difference, Naturally Occurring**

In some instances, there were significant differences between counselors and administrators because of their work with different ages of students. Their job position as either counselor or administrator also requires different responsibilities.

**Career Development.** There was a significant difference among the four groups on Career Development, $F(3, 162) = 8.67, p < .001$. Tukey's HSD test determined that elementary counselors ($M = 4.63, SD = 0.49$) were significantly higher than elementary administrators ($M = 4.18, SD = 0.58$) ($Q = 5.33, p = .001$). Tukey's HSD test also determined that secondary administrators ($M = 4.56, SD = 0.63$) were significantly higher than elementary administrators ($M = 4.18, SD = 0.58$) ($Q = 4.52, p = .009$).

Elementary administrators may prioritize social/emotional development and behaviors at the school over career readiness. In a study by Zalaquett (2005), elementary principals were asked to rank order 19 priority areas where school elementary counselors spent their time and crisis counseling (5th) was ranked several spots before career counseling (11th). An administrator from this study expressed that preparing for postsecondary options is not top concern of elementary counselors as much as the focus on social/emotional needs.
Elementary counselors could view career development more essential than elementary administrators is the belief of when career development should begin for students. According to Curry & Milson (2017), many people convey that out of the three levels of P-12 education career development starts in high school. While ASCA recognizes K-12 career readiness for all students (2021), it may not be recognized as an essential topic by elementary administrators that are required of counselor to perform.

Another reason elementary administrators may have rated career lower than elementary counselors is the focus on student success in academics. An elementary administrator commented that “principals tend to focus on academic achievement first.” While academics was not a category on the ROSCQ questionnaire, the district’s strategic plan in this study lists academics as their top priority (Strategic Plan of Action Powered by Foresight / Strategic Priorities, n.d.). Due to the continual educational reforms, school counselors have developed a stronger partnership with principals in assisting students in meeting these academic standards (Stone & Clark, 2001). A counselor in this study commented on most principals have a strong focus on the academic success of their schools as a top priority. While elementary counselors do assist in this area, the task of whether the school’s academic goals were met falls under the responsibility of the building principal.

While both elementary and secondary administrators focus on the importance of academics, secondary administrators have the additional responsibilities of ensuring that their students graduate and transition into a career or program to assist them at acquiring their desired career. The federal legislation, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires that students will be taught academic standards that will prepared for success in
college and careers (Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) | U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). This additional responsibility as well as seniors selecting different colleges, trades schools, apprenticeships, and the military may be a reason secondary principals feel more importance with counselors preparing students for future careers.

**Trauma and Crisis.** There was a significant difference among the four groups on Trauma and Crisis Development, $F(3, 162) = 5.92, p < .001$. Tukey’s HSD test determined that elementary counselors ($M = 4.85, SD = 0.36$) were significantly higher than secondary counselors ($M = 4.60, SD = 0.49$) ($Q = 4.02, p = .026$). Tukey’s HSD test also determined that secondary administrators ($M = 4.93, SD = 0.26$) were significantly higher than secondary counselors ($M = 4.60, SD = 0.49$) and ($Q = 5.31, p = .001$). Both counselors and administrators also rank ordered trauma and crisis the second highest out of the ten topics.

When comparing trauma and crisis support among these three groups, 35 out of 40 (87.5%) of elementary counselors, 36 of 43 (83.7%) of secondary administrators, and 31 out of 50 (62.0%) of secondary counselors listed them in their top three most important topics for school counselors. Zero out of 40 (0%) elementary counselors, 2 out of 43 secondary administrators (4.7%), and 8 out of 50 secondary counselors listed trauma and crisis as their bottom three topics.

This study suggests secondary counselors having a different response for trauma and crisis. While all groups belief response to trauma and crisis are important, secondary counselors may be reframing this issue as closing the achievement gap. One secondary counselor stated that because of the pandemic, they have noticed that crisis/trauma is higher than usual because of ongoing stressors on the lives of families and closing the
achievement gap is needed now more than ever before. Another secondary counselor expressed, “it was tough to determine a solid one[topic] I wish I could combine a few answers. I choose the closing the gap as the data provides the “why” purpose for the program goals.” Studies have discussed that the impacts of the pandemic will widen the achievement gap (Anderson, 2020). When comparing closing the achievement gap among these three groups, 18 out of 50 (36.0%) of secondary counselors, 4 out of 40 (10%) of elementary counselors, and 3 of 43 (7.0%) of secondary administrators listed it in their top three most important topics for school counselors.

**Bullying.** There was a significant main effect $F(3, 162) = 5.06, p = .002$. Tukey's HSD test determined that elementary counselors ($M = 4.75, SD = 0.59$) were significantly higher than secondary counselors ($M = 4.42, SD = 0.54$) ($Q = 4.08, p = .023$).

Based on ASCA, elementary counselors spend a larger part of their day focusing on classroom lessons than secondary schools (Bailey, et al., 1989; *Classroom Management the Elementary Way - American School Counselor Association*, n.d.). Elementary counselors use classroom curriculum to promote social skills in an effort to increase empathy, problem-solving, and anger management (Frey, et al., 2000). These lessons that elementary counselors deliver where students can learn to appropriately express their feelings of anger and reduce behavioral outbursts, such as bullying (Candelaria, et al., 2012).

Elementary counselors may find bullying to be more essential to their role than secondary counselors are because secondary buildings have more people to support them. One elementary counselor responded, “I think conflict resolution and bully prevention are essential to helping students be more successful in school and their relationships.” In
elementary buildings, the leadership team typically consists of the principal, counselor, and some buildings might have an assistant principal, instructional facilitator, or social worker. Also, most elementary buildings have one counselor, but some of the larger buildings have two counselors. In secondary buildings, buildings consist of principals, assist principals, deans, and socials workers that can help support situations where bullying may be occurring. Because of the additional staffing at the secondary buildings, secondary counselors not be involved in as many incidents pertaining to bullying, especially because the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors states that they should report all incidents of bullying to administration (2016).

**Discussion**

Many counselors and administrators expressed that ranking the ten different school counseling topics was a difficult task. One administrator remarked, “I didn’t put very much as ‘essential’ because put together, that is an overwhelming job/task.” One of the counselors said they believed “all of those pieces are of equal importance” and that “we [counselors] are expected to do all with expert precision.” Several counselors commented on the challenges of getting everything done. One counselor said the ten topics “are all equally important, but due to lack of time in each day priorities have to be made.” Finally, another counselor expressed, “it is difficult when we have so many things that we want to help with…what do we focus on? What can we really do when there are so many expectations upon us?” Prioritizing the essential tasks may need the additional efforts of communicating between stability and transformation, diminishing inappropriate duties, and turning knowledge into action.
Communicating between stability and transformation

The conceptual framework of this study, Mitchell and Spady’s Organization Realms (1978), delineates two distinct positions in schools. Maintenance and preservation of the organization requires the administrators to prioritize stability through a top-down approach by maintaining order, routines, and stabilizing activities and procedures. Systems productivity is the realm of the faculty and emphasizes transformation and attention to the individual. Faculty, including counselors, focus on divergent ways of supporting student achievement within their buildings. Both stability and transformation are positive forces in education. Neither should be viewed in terms of being right or wrong because both perspectives are important in supporting students.

While conflict is viewed with many negative connotations, it can have some positive impacts for the working relationship between school counselors and administrators that should not be left unnoticed. Functional conflict address problems that have previously been overlooked or neglected in order to develop solutions (Baron, 1990). Another benefit that conflict can create is the examination of new ideas and strategies to implement them. Finally, conflict can increase loyalty and interconnection between members of different groups.

Understanding the perspective of each role and listening to their challenges and concerns may be a beneficial first step because it may create quality connections in improving organizational results (Kluger & Itzchakov, 2022). While both school counselors and administrators commented on what the differences in perspectives are in school counseling roles, understanding why the other role has their beliefs helps with understanding and working together. According to Finkelstein (2009), both principals and
counselors stated that communication and respect were the most important elements and greatest obstacles to a successful principal-counselor relationship. The definitions of each of these; however, looked differently to each group. When describing communication, principals often referred to the level of quality while counselor referred to the amount of frequency. For the element of respect, principals often mentioned the respect referring to their vision for the school while counselors mentioned respect for themselves and their area of expertise.

Counselors and administrators may benefit by planning time to meet and openly listen to each other’s perspectives while not assuming the other group knows their personal experiences or challenges while working together. When asked about different perspectives on the counselor roles, 22 counselors and administrators responded that it depended on the principal/counselor relationship. One administrator stated, “I have worked with several counselors and what they do has varied which makes it difficult for me to know what they are doing based on duty.” A counselor from our study stated, “I believe principals use counselors to fill the gaps for what is missing, whether it be programming, duties, outreach, etc.” While this study indicated a great deal of alignment between administrators and counselors, it also showed individual variance in priorities and understanding. Respectful, regular, and ongoing communication becomes vital to keep conflict functional in the organization.

Another counselor said, “I think sometimes principals don’t understand the full scope of the school counselor profession and the many areas we are trained in.” This study, both counselors and administrators commented on the challenges of understanding
the perspective of the other group before expecting them to understand their own group in order to work effectively together.

**Diminishing Inappropriate Duties**

I am fortunate that my principal understands and respects my position. That’s not the case for many counselors have become a dumping ground. We are assigned so many tasks that we barely get to operate in the role of the counselor, noted one counselor from the study. While the Spearman’s rank correlation showed a strong positive correlation between counselors and administrators for the ten school counseling topics, counselors are asked to do many more tasks than what was listed in this study.

In order for counselors to utilize their time most effectively with high yield activities that support schools, they must prioritize the important tasks that their role is specifically trained to do. In the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Covey (2013) refers to this as Habit 3: put first things first. Covey expresses the importance of prioritizing and completing the most essential goals and not constantly react to the tasks that is not important. Covey provides four quadrants, which are categorized by the factors of urgency and importance (2013). Quadrant I contains activities that are urgent and important. Quadrant II includes activities that are not urgent and important. Quadrant III consists of activities that are urgent, but not important. Finally, Quadrant IV comprises of activities that are not urgent and not important. Covey explains that the key to maintaining effective management is to accomplish activities in Quadrant II which allow us to be preventative and proactive, yet people rarely complete them because they are not considered urgent (2013).
While it is still important to complete tasks that are urgent and important in Quadrant I, these things are smaller and as one begins to think preventatively, these items will begin to diminish. These principles reflect the ASCA National Model comprehensive school counseling programs format where programs should be “comprehensive in scope, preventive in design, and developmental in nature” (Position Statements | American School Counselor Association, n.d.). While 80% of time should be used to directly support student, ASCA also reinforces that that a limit of 20% of the school counselor’s time ought to be used for program planning and school support activities (2019a). ASCA refers to these supportive school activities as fair-share responsibilities, which should not inhibit counselors from managing and accomplishing the goals of the school counseling program (Position Statements | American School Counselor Association, n.d.). Fair-share duties are defined as all school members taking turns completing tasks in order for the school to operate smoothly.

While all job positions seem to have some clerical, repetitive, and mindless tasks, they are necessary to do the work; however, ASCA (2019a) have indicated a specific set of activities that are deemed as inappropriate for school counselors (see Figure 1). Several of these duties could be reallocated to other positions in the school setting where there is a natural fit with their appropriate duties. For example, building secretaries could receive the following duties considered inappropriate for counselors: coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students, signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent, maintaining student records, keeping clerical records, and assisting with duties in the principal’s office. For administrators, some of the inappropriate duties for
counselors that would align for them are building the master schedule, performing disciplinary actions, or assigning discipline consequences.

Another step that can help diminish inappropriate counseling activities would be for school counselors to effectively communicate their roles to their administrators. Principals are the building managers that frequently decides the daily job description for employees at their building (Murray, 1995; Peace, 1995). With the changes in society, administrators may be confused by the current role of the school counselor (Murray, 1995). An administrator from this study stated the need for a “more explicit definition and outlining of roles of the school counselor. I think there are a lot of misperceptions about what the job entails, or what people’s perceptions are of what a counselor does during the day.” The success of the school counseling program relies on the principal’s support and their communication of benefit of a comprehensive school counseling program (Chata & Loesch, 2007).

Administrators may also benefit from professional development regarding the role of a school counselor. A counselor from this study stated, “I wish more future administrators took a school counseling course to better understand school counseling”. Several studies indicate that principals that had none or very little training on appropriate school counseling roles delegate inappropriate role activities to their counselors (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Fitch, et al., 2001; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005). One study indicates that the administrator’s beliefs towards assigning appropriate and inappropriate duties is based on the misunderstanding of the counseling profession (Lane, et al., 2020). Professional development may be able to lessen these misunderstandings. Some studies have shown that providing current or future administrators information on the ASCA
National Model impacted their perceptions and viewed inappropriate tasks for school counselors as less important (Bringman, et al., 2010; Leuwerke, et al., 2009).

**Turning Knowledge into Action**

An administrator in this study expressed, “Everyone at school has a clear picture of what they want their role to be. Principals have to make sure a school functions and serves students while balancing those ideals with reality.” While school counselors may have knowledge of ASCA Model and understand what they desire but are challenged putting the knowledge into practice within their schools. During this study, the Spearman’s rank correlation displayed a strong positive correlation between counselors and administrators for the ten school counseling topics; however, without some form of action, there will be no change impacted by this information. Pfeffer and Sutton (2000), discuss this is a common occurrence in organizations and refers to it as the knowing-doing gap. The five elements that widen the gap between knowing and doing can be interpreted through the lens of educational organizations:

- *Talk substitutes for action.* Substituting talk for action frequently occurs in the field of education. Educators discuss potential solutions in meetings with limited forethought as to how to execute the objective. Often the ideas discussed are met by criticism and hostility and excuses are made as to why something will not work. Keeping the present conditions is met with more agreement than creating a new, unfamiliar path. These meetings tend to be unproductive and could be replaced by emails or memos. This leads to a cyclical lack of change.

- *Memory is a substitute for thinking.* Irrelevant traditions and outmoded procedures have always existed in education. Instead of reflecting using research
or evidence of the causes to a problem, unconscious behaviors based on ways things have always been done becomes an automatic response and people continue to approach these issues in the same manner. Educational systems may benefit from removing these ineffective tasks or systems by questioning their purposefulness in order to free up time to accomplish priority items. When activities are no longer serving their purpose, obsolete things need to be questioned in order to free up the limited time school employees have.

- **Fear prevents acting on knowledge.** In school settings, we as educators are often paralyzed from starting new things because we do not want to cause any damage, we fear the risk of jeopardizing how other people see us and our relationship with others. As John F. Kennedy once said, “sometimes the majority just means all the fools are on the same side.” When educators hide what is wrong in fear of speaking up to their superiors instead of having the courage to speak up to make things right, progress tends to be inhibited and creates a toxic environment.

- **Measurement obstructs good judgement.** One of the challenging aspects of education is that everything that is beneficial is not quantifiable. While reviewing the school improvement plans and other surveys, educators should continue to ask how the data highlights adjustments that need to be explored and not a replacement for common sense. This is often displayed in schools when educators teach to the test. While the scores may increase, the abilities to apply and analyzed may be sacrificed in the process.

- **Internal competition turns friends into enemies.** While resources are scarce in schools and need to be allocated wisely, the two largest resources at school
leaders’ disposal are time and people. Often the phrase “other duties as assigned” may cause staff members to tremble when they are asked to complete tasks they do not feel fit their job descriptions. Making adjustments to realign some of the tasks based on roles may create animosity between administrators, school counselors, sectaries, teachers, and other staff members.

Administrators and counselors may move away from a knowing-doing gap by taking deliberate steps towards creating a culture of transparency. “Transparency doesn’t mean sharing every detail. Transparency means always providing the context for our decision,” (Inc., 2020). While the positions of counselors and administrators are constantly evolving, both groups may benefit discuss their perspectives on differing topics without judgement. An example of this would be the area of confidentiality. Several counselors expressed that some administrators do not respect a counselor’s view on confidentiality. One counselor states that so much of the counselor’s job, “happens behind closed doors and addressing the invisible disability (mental) and needs (confidentiality) is not known to the school population and perception is skewed.” On the other hand, an administrator from the study expressed their concerns clearly by saying, “there has been such a stigma that counselors not sharing info and it often times flies back in the face of a principal when we have not been told anything that could affect a child or their family.” While both counselors and administrators have points in their argument, they could benefit from having a dialog while trying first to understand the perspective of the other group.

Administrators and counselors should model trust and safety in order to build positive climate and culture for their school. While differences will arise due to the
natural differences between their jobs, it is important that venting to staff members or members with your specific team do not create a toxic environment. In order to establish trust and safety, the words that are chosen to describe other staff members in person and behind closed doors are important because it can impact the way we view both the talker and the person they are gossiping about.

Once counselors and administrators work collaboratively and demonstrate shared leadership, the true winners will be the students and families of our communities. Mental health, crisis, trauma, racism, social justice, and other issues have been brought out into the public eye, especially during the pandemic, where students are being exposed every day to an overload of information with many uncertainties in this world. Students need to be supported in a safe, trusting environment with effective systems and individual attention in order to provide a quality education with nurturing support in place. While change and uncertainties can be difficult, they may also allow administrators and counselors to discover new, courageous ideas and practices that meet the needs of the ever-changing child.

Counselors must be provided with the proper knowledge, abilities, and approach in order to prepare for this uncertain future. Hiring the most qualified counselors is the first step; however, it is essential that there is a plan for growth and continual improvement. It is important for building administrators and counselors to collaborate to decide what their buildings most critical needs are to determine the high-priority trainings. ASCA offers fifteen trainings on topics that counselors face every day. Ten of these topics were used in the questionnaire of this study. Counselors would be able to
attend these trainings and not only apply the skills while working directly with the students, but also exhibit leadership by presenting key topics and information to the staff.

“Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.” (TR Center - TR Quotes, n.d.). While a significant amount of work that school counselors provide occurs while working with individual students, establishing a trusting rapport and taking the time to listen to students is not a “one-size-fits-all” process because each student is unique. Developing these relationships are important and provide students with stability and a counselor that will support them throughout high school. There has never been a better time for counselors to partner with administrators during and through their continued partnership, they can continue to learn and respect one another and transform the educational environment for students to thrive every day.
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APPENDIX A

The Roles of School Counseling Questionnaire-ROSCQ

Hi, I am Don Ferree. In addition to being a school counselor for Omaha Public Schools, I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Within my coursework, I need to complete a dissertation as part of fulfilling my Doctoral Degree in Educational Administration.

The purpose of this study is to explore and compare the perceptions that school counselors and administrators have about the roles of the school counselor. This questionnaire was developed on topics identified by ASCA and NASSP. Your responses will be confidential and non-identifiable. By completing it will indicate your consent to be a part of this study.

This questionnaire will take approximately 8-12 minutes. Thank you for your assistance for helping to complete this questionnaire for my dissertation. If you would like more information, please contact Dr. Kay A. Keiser at kkeiser@unomaha.edu.

Rate questions 1-10 using a 5-Point Likert Scale

Directions: When thinking about the optimal school counselor's role, what is your opinion of the following topics?

1. Bullying Prevention

   (Help foster a positive school climate by using a comprehensive school counseling anti-bullying/harassment, violence-prevention and conflict-resolution programs.)

   ○ 1 - Not Part of Counselor's Role
   ○ 2 - Not Very Important for Counselor's Role
   ○ 3 - Of Limited Value for Counselor's Role
   ○ 4 - Important for Counselor's Role
   ○ 5 - Essential to Counselor's Role

2. Career Development

   (Helping students understand the connection between school and global professions by
assisting students to identifying their interests, abilities, specific career clusters, and post-secondary plans.)

○ 1 - Not Part of Counselor's Role
○ 2 - Not Very Important for Counselor's Role
○ 3 - Of Limited Value for Counselor's Role
○ 4 - Important for Counselor's Role
○ 5 - Essential to Counselor's Role

3. Closing the Achievement Gap

(School counselors learning about targeted and intentional interventions in order to help minimize the academic, behavior, and attendance discrepancies and inequities among different student groups.)

○ 1 - Not Part of Counselor's Role
○ 2 - Not Very Important for Counselor's Role
○ 3 - Of Limited Value for Counselor's Role
○ 4 - Important for Counselor's Role
○ 5 - Essential to Counselor's Role

4. College Admissions

(Helping students understand the connection between school and college and make a
successful transition to post-secondary education.)

○ 1 - Not Part of Counselor's Role
○ 2 - Not Very Important for Counselor's Role
○ 3 - Of Limited Value for Counselor's Role
○ 4 - Important for Counselor's Role
○ 5 - Essential to Counselor's Role

5. Culturally Sustaining

(Help foster increased awareness, understanding, and appreciation of cultural diversity in the school community.)

○ 1 - Not Part of Counselor's Role
○ 2 - Not Very Important for Counselor's Role
○ 3 - Of Limited Value for Counselor's Role
○ 4 - Important for Counselor's Role
○ 5 - Essential to Counselor's Role

6. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

(Serve as leaders that help promote systemic change directed by the district’s mission and improvement plans by providing equitable educational access and success using the
school counseling comprehensive programs.)

○ 1 - Not Part of Counselor's Role
○ 2 - Not Very Important for Counselor's Role
○ 3 - Of Limited Value for Counselor's Role
○ 4 - Important for Counselor's Role
○ 5 - Essential to Counselor's Role

7. Legal and Ethics

(Assist and support counselors with increasing ethical and legal dilemmas facing school counselors today, including confidentiality, suicide, self-harm, violence, teen pregnancy, divorce, drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse and neglect, subpoenas, and administrative supervision.)

○ 1 - Not Part of Counselor's Role
○ 2 - Not Very Important for Counselor's Role
○ 3 - Of Limited Value for Counselor's Role
○ 4 - Important for Counselor's Role
○ 5 - Essential to Counselor's Role

8. Mental Health

(Identifying best practices for schools to follow to protect the mental health and safety for all students by recognizing the warning signs of various mental health disorders; address mental health needs of students and provide direct services, accessing community...
resources, and working with school staff and community service providers.)

1. Not Part of Counselor's Role
2. Not Very Important for Counselor's Role
3. Of Limited Value for Counselor's Role
4. Important for Counselor's Role
5. Essential to Counselor's Role

9. School Counseling Leadership

(Empower school counselors to develop personal leadership attributes by learning theories, principles, and impacting systemic change in organizations.)

1. Not Part of Counselor's Role
2. Not Very Important for Counselor's Role
3. Of Limited Value for Counselor's Role
4. Important for Counselor's Role
5. Essential to Counselor's Role

10. Trauma and Crisis

(Identify ways to best support individual students living with and experiencing trauma and how to be a school leader in creating and/or maintaining a safe, supportive, trauma-
sensitive school.)

- 1 - Not Part of Counselor's Role
- 2 - Not Very Important for Counselor's Role
- 3 - Of Limited Value for Counselor's Role
- 4 - Important for Counselor's Role
- 5 - Essential to Counselor's Role

11. Rank the following school counselor training topics in order of importance from 1 to 10 (1 most important, 10 least important)
   _____ Bullying Prevention
   _____ Career Development
   _____ Closing the Achievement Gap
   _____ College Admissions
   _____ Culturally Sustaining
   _____ Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
   _____ Legal and Ethics
   _____ Mental Health
   _____ School Counseling Leadership
   _____ Trauma and Crisis Support

12. How did you determine what your most important and least important rankings were?

   ________________________________________________________________

13. Do you believe counselors and principals have different perspectives on counselor roles? If so, what are those differences?

   ________________________________________________________________

14. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding any of the topics addressed in the survey?

   ________________________________________________________________
Demographics

15. What is your current role?
   - School Counselor
   - Principal
   - Assistant Principal

16. Counting the current school year, how many total years have you worked in the following roles?
   - School Counselor ________________
   - Principal _________________________
   - Assistant Principal ______________________

17. What level do you currently work?
   - Elementary School
   - Middle School
   - High School

18. Counting this school year, how many years have you worked in education?
   - Years in education _____________________