Perceptions of School Counselors and Administrators on the Role of School Counseling

by

Heather Dorough Windham

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Approved by

Malti Tuttle, Chair, Associate Professor of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling
Jamie Carney, Humana-Germany-Sherman Distinguished Professor of Special Education,
Rehabilitation, and Counseling
Heather Delgado, Assistant Professor of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling
Margaret Taylor, Visiting Assistant Professor of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and
Counseling

Abstract

This quantitative survey study aimed to identify differences between the perception of the role of school counselors of both administrators and school counselors and if the demographic criteria of years of experience, years in education, enrollment size, and grade level impacted these perceptions. Currently employed school counselors and administrators in the state of Alabama who had at least one year of experience were recruited to participate in this study. The School Counseling Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) (Scarborough, 2005b) and SCARS Modified (Lane et al., 2020) instruments were utilized. Results were analyzed by comparing descriptive statistics and performing a factorial ANOVA and multiple regression. Results of the ANOVA suggest that discrepancies exist between how school counselors and administrators view the preferred role of the school counselor but were not statistically significant on how the groups perceive the actual role of the school counselor. The results of the multiple regression were inconclusive and suggest additional research. Implications for school counselors and administrators aim toward opportunities for professional development, training, and collaboration.

Keywords: role of school counselor, administrator, demographic criteria, SCARS

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Chapter 1

Introduction

School counselors experience a disconnect between the training provided on the ideal role of the school counselor and the actual job expectations once in a school counseling position (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Mullen et al., 2018). This disconnect in the role of the school counselor has a negative impact on school counselors in various ways; some of which include an increase in role confusion, stress, and burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Holman et al., 2019; Mullen et al., 2018). Various stakeholders within the education setting, including administrators, teachers, and parents, each have a different understanding of the role of the school counselor (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Mullen et al., 2018; Ruiz et al., 2019). More specifically, administrators have been found to have differing perspectives on what the role of the school counselor should be (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fye et al., 2018; Fye et al., 2020; Lane et al., 2020; Moyer, 2011; Mullen et al., 2018; Rose, 2019; Ruiz et al., 2019).

Administrators report that while the role of the school counselor as defined by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) is important, so are non-counseling duties (Finkelstein, 2009; Fitch et al., 2001; Ruiz et al., 2019). Some of these non-counseling duties include monitoring designated areas (hallways, bus loading zones, and lunchrooms), scheduling students for classes, completing administrative or clerical tasks, record keeping, facilitating standardized tests, and disciplinary actions (Finkelstein et al., 2009; Ruiz et al., 2019). ASCA has published a specific list of appropriate and inappropriate duties that school counselors should strive to maintain within their intended roles (ASCA, 2019a). In addition to those previously mentioned, ASCA includes the following as additional inappropriate duties for school

counselors: completing new student paperwork, providing tardy or absence passes to students, conducting long-term counseling services, calculating grades or grade point averages for students, taking responsibility of or filing student educational records, and coordinating teams for student education such as 504 plans and response to intervention teams (ASCA, 2019a). When school counselors are asked to complete these non-counseling duties, they report higher levels of burn out, job dissatisfaction, stress, role confusion, role ambiguity, exhaustion, and incompetence (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fye et al., 2020; Holman et al., 2019; Moyer, 2011; Mullen et al., 2018). The incongruence between stakeholders on the school counselor role often leaves school counselors experiencing negative consequences such as an increase in non-counseling duties, job demands, exhaustion, stress, and burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Carey et al., 2012; Lapan et al., 2012; Mullen et al., 2018).

When school counselors experience these negative consequences from a discrepancy in the school counselor role, the impact leads to a decrease in direct counseling services, student outcomes, and overall implementation of the ASCA National Model (Carey et al., 2012; Lapan et al., 2012; Moyer, 2011). Therefore, it can be posited that the incongruence between school counselor role perceptions can lead to an increase in non-counseling duties, which causes a myriad of negative consequences to school counselors, and further decreases the productivity of the school counseling program. While it is evident that school counselors experience negative repercussions both personally and professionally from the disconnect between school counselors and administrators on the role of the school counselor (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Carey et al., 2012; Lapan et al., 2012; Mullen et al., 2018), there remains a need to explore where the disconnect lies (Graham et al., 2011; Lane et al., 2020). It is recommended that future research focus on including both school counselors' and administrators' perceptions of the role of the school

counselor in the same study (Graham et al., 2011; Ruiz et al., 2019). It may also be helpful to expand and include the perceptions of the role from other school counseling program stakeholders in addition to administrators such as students, teachers, and parents (Ruiz et al., 2019).

ASCA National Model: Framework

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model is a framework established by the American School Counseling Association to guide school counselors into developing a comprehensive school counseling program. The National Model encompasses four main components: define, manage, deliver, and assess (ASCA, 2019c). The first of four components of the ASCA National Model (2019c) is the define section in which school counselors use both student standards and professional standards to develop the basis of a comprehensive counseling program. The student standards are called the ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student (ASCA, 2021a) and the professional standards include both the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (ASCA, 2016) and the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies (ASCA, 2019b).

Manage, the second component of the ASCA National Model (2019c), comprises two parts: program focus and program planning. Program focus includes identifying the "beliefs, mission statement, [and] vision statement" of the counseling program, while program planning encompasses the following: "data (participation, mindsets & behavior, outcomes), annual student outcome goals, school data summary, program results data, action plans (classroom and group mindsets & behaviors action plan and closing-the-gap action plan/results report), lesson plans, calendars, advisory council, [and] annual administrative conference" (ASCA, 2019c, p. 29). The

purpose of this section is to allow school counselors to make use of data and other quantifiable tools to guide the strategies and interventions of the counseling program to meet specifically identified needs of the school or student population (ASCA, 2019c).

The deliver section of the ASCA National Model (2019c) pertains to both the direct and indirect student services that school counselors provide to students. The direct services include instruction, appraisal and advisement, and counseling, while the indirect services include consultation, collaboration, and referrals (ASCA, 2019c). Assess is the final section of the ASCA National Model (2019c) and is a process of regularly evaluating the effectiveness and accuracy of the school counseling program that has been developed by evaluating current data to determine if progress towards pre-established goals were met. Assess is divided into two components: 1) program assessment includes "school counseling program assessment and annual results report comprised of classroom results report, small-group results report, and closing-the-gap results report" and 2) school counselor assessment and appraisal includes "ASCA school counselor professional standards & competencies and school counselor performance appraisal" (ASCA, 2019c, p. 85).

ASCA National Model: School Counselor Role

While these four components constitute the overall framework for the model, the introduction and executive summary of the National Model (ASCA, 2019c) addresses additional information relevant to the role of school counselors. For instance, the National Model (ASCA, 2019c) addresses that a school counselor should spend a minimum of eighty percent of time delivering direct or indirect services to students, outlines a recommended student to school counselor ratio of 250:1, and includes a list of appropriate and inappropriate activities for a school counselor to do within the role. The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2019c) also speaks to

the importance of a school counselor role to include serving all students' academic, career, and social and emotional needs through classroom lessons, small groups, and individual sessions. Additionally, the National Model provides several methods of data collection to identify the needs of students, the current time allocation of school counselors, and methods to adjust this allocation as needed (ASCA, 2019c). This clear outline of the school counselor role provides a grounding platform for school counselors to have a strong understanding of their role and ability to perform required duties.

School Counseling Stakeholders

In a general sense of the word, stakeholders in education can be defined as individuals who have a vested interest in the overall success of the school (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). This can include teachers, administrators, parents, students, school personnel, community members, or other individuals (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). Additional examples of stakeholders specific to school counseling include principals, teachers, and school board members from the internal school community as well as parents, business partners, faith representatives, and college and university personnel from the external school community (Stone & Dahir, 2016). In the school counseling role, stakeholders help to provide feedback and often resources to the school counseling program (Stone & Dahir, 2016). For instance, stakeholder representatives provide feedback on the implementation of the comprehensive school counseling program as part of their role on the advisory council (ASCA, 2019c).

An advisory council consists of 8-20 members that represent all stakeholders to the comprehensive counseling program such as community members, board members, administrators, teachers, students, and parents (ASCA, 2019c). This advisory council assists

school counselors by reviewing the annual student outcome goals, making suggestions to improve the school counseling program, increasing community involvement, and increasing available resources to students (ASCA, 2019c). Most importantly, stakeholders provide a sense of accountability to school counselors to uphold the intentions of the ASCA National Model in the role of school counselor (Perkins, 2010; Stone & Dahir, 2016).

A primary stakeholder in the comprehensive school counseling program is the administrator (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Moyer, 2011). Administrators are often responsible for assigning duties to school counselors (Moyer, 2011). Further, administrators have a change in position about every three years (Gates et al., 2003), causing school counselors to have a new set of job duties assigned to them often (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011). With each new administrator, school counselors likely deal with new role assignments and an increase in role conflict (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011). The frequent change in leadership, and thus job expectations, may contribute to the role confusion that school counselors experience (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011).

School Counselor Role Confusion

When school counselors feel an imbalance between duties assigned and expected within an occupation, including duties that other individuals are equally qualified to perform, this is called role confusion or role diffusion (Astromovich et al., 2013; McCarthy et al., 2010). Research has shown that role confusion can develop if strong professional identity is not established (Gibson et al., 2018). Furthermore, Brott and Myers (1999) found that professional identity is negatively impacted as a result of the disconnect between how school counselors are trained and the job expectations in the field. School counselors are trained through a graduate, master's level program, often accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and

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Related Educational Programs (CACREP) (Branthoover et al., 2010; Perry et al., 2020). Programs that are accredited through CACREP cover eight common core areas as well as school counseling specific standards (CACREP, 2015). The eight common core areas include: Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice, Social and Cultural Diversity, Human Growth and Development, Career Development, Counseling and Helping Relationships, Group Counseling and Group Work, Assessment and Testing, and Research and Program Evaluation (CACREP, 2015). Additionally, the standards for the school counseling specialty area include: Foundations, Contextual Dimensions, and Practice (CACREP, 2015). The disconnect in the training school counselors receive and the expectations after graduation are what leads to role confusion for school counselors (Cinotti, 2014).

A model by Rønnestad and Skovholt (2003) outlines the novice professional phase that beginning school counselors are in for the first few years after graduating from their training program. This phase is a time when school counselors challenge the education they have received and work to develop a professional identity within the new role (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003). As a result of this fragile exploration stage, Rønnestad and Skovholt (2003) ascertain that individuals in this stage are not adequately prepared to feel incongruencies among the role. This aligns with more recent literature that supports the continued conflict that school counselors experience in the workplace (Carey et al., 2012; Holman et al., 2019; Lapan et al., 2012; Moyer, 2011). Brown and colleagues (2017) found that novice school counselors experience internal conflict when administrators request a solution to an ethical dilemma that contradicts previous training. In addition to this concern, in the educational setting, novice school counselors and teachers are expected to meet occupation expectations at the same level of execution of veteran employees without additional support (Bickmore & Curry, 2013; Mathes, 1992).

Additionally, school counselors who attend a CACREP accredited program are trained by the same core curriculum that professional counselors in other specialty areas receive (CACREP, 2015; Gibson et al., 2018). The Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) made an effort to improve the training for school counselors by implementing an updated vision of the role of the school counselor (Perkins et al., 2010). This vision was for school counselors to take a student-oriented, holistic system approach, acting as change agents to ensure that all students experience educational equity (Perkins et al., 2010). However, this similarity among curriculum can lead to an internal debate on whether their role is that of a counselor or educator in the school setting (Gibson et al., 2018).

A study by Perkins et al. (2010) reported that stakeholders view the predominant role of school counselors as counselors to support the emotional or personal needs of students over academic or career roles. This suggests that stakeholders prefer school counselors' role to be that of a counselor rather than an educator. Yet, in a study by Lane et al. (2020), 89% of administrators stated that they were not familiar with the ASCA National Model, a tool that outlines the expected role of the school counselor. Therefore, school counselors who are torn between the professional identity of counselor versus educator may feel even more conflicted by their local stakeholders' perceptions of their role, which may or may not be reflective of the ASCA National Model.

Administrators' Training of the School Counselor Role

School counselors and administrators are trained in different programs in which the coursework provided is aligned with their specific roles (Carnes-Holt el al., 2012). While there is a focus on collaboration between school counselors and administrators in the school setting, administrators may not be receiving training on the benefits of this collaboration (Perruse et al.,

n.d., as cited in Perruse et al., 2009; Tygret et al., 2020). Additionally, administrators have reported not feeling adequately trained in how to collaborate with school counselors (Lowrey et al., 2018). Unfortunately, it is common for administrators in training to learn about the role of the school counselor through informal sources, primarily personal experience (Mason & Perera-Diltz, 2010). The National Policy Board for Educational Administration has produced Professional Standards for Educational Leaders which outlines the role of administrators (McConnell et al., 2020; NPBEA, 2015). However, this document neglects to provide specific instruction on the collaboration with or roles of school counselors (McConnell et al., 2020; NPBEA, 2015). Administrators may remain unclear on the role of the counselor as it is outlined by ASCA (Boyland et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2011). Therefore, it may be helpful to overlap the training that future school counselors and administrators receive (Carnes-Holt el al., 2012; Perruse et al., 2009; Tygret et al., 2020).

School Counselor Burnout

Burnout has been defined as extensive feelings related to exhaustion, pessimism, inefficiency, and other negative work-place factors (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). School counselors experience high levels of burnout as a result of daily job expectations (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fye et al., 2020; Mullen et al., 2018). There has been research to directly connect an increase in school counselor burnout when school counselors are asked to complete tasks that are labeled as non-counseling tasks, or tasks that contradict the training that school counselors have received about their intended role (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fye et al., 2020; Moyer, 2011; Mullen et al., 2018). When school counselors experience burnout, they have less job satisfaction (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Mullen et al., 2018; Rayle, 2006). This is predominantly a concern for younger school counselors, a distinction from being novice school counselors (Mullen et al., 2018;

Wilkerson, 2009). Additionally, school counselors with high caseloads experience higher levels of burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2007; Moyer, 2011). ASCA recommends that the caseload of students assigned to school counselors, or the school counselor-to-student ratio, be 1:250 (ASCA, 2019c). However, in 2019-2020 only 4% of the United States have met this ideal ratio, with the national average being 1:424 (ASCA, 2021b). This information supports the increase in burnout that school counselors have experienced.

Statement of the Problem

Stakeholders in the comprehensive counseling program such as administrators, teachers, and parents have conflicting perceptions of the role of the school counselor (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Moyer et al., 2011; Mullen et al., 2018). This controversy on the school counselor role has led to an increase in non-counseling duties assigned to school counselors and school counselor burnout, exhaustion, and stress (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Carey et al., 2012; Cervoni & DeLuca-Waack, 2011; Lapan et al., 2012; Moyer, 2011; Mullen et al., 2018). Research by Cervoni and DeLuca-Waack (2011) posited that the more time that school counselors spent completing non-counseling duties, the less time was spent on the duties that ASCA recommends. Further, the primary indicator of high school counselors' job satisfaction in a study by Cervoni and DeLuca-Waack (2011) was how much time was spent on non-counselor related duties. In addition to job satisfaction, when school counselors have non-counseling tasks assigned to them, they also have increased reports of burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2007; Moyer, 2011). An increase in school counselor burnout leads to school counselors having negative feelings about the work environment, more exhaustion and feelings of incompetency, and increased negativity in their personal lives (Moyer, 2011).

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With an increase in non-counseling duties, school counselors also experience an increase in role confusion (Holman et al., 2019). The role confusion that school counselors experience impacts their ability to implement a comprehensive school counseling program (Carey et al., 2012; Lapan et al., 2012; Moyer, 2011). Because the comprehensive school counseling program is developed with the primary goal of supporting the emotional and social, career, and academic needs of students (ASCA, 2019c), students are the ones who primarily suffer from an underperforming counseling program (Carey et al., 2012; Lapan et al., 2012). School counselors also suffer from role confusion personally. For instance, Cervoni and DeLuca-Waack (2011) found that when school counselors reported less role confusion, they also reported higher job satisfaction. Therefore, the disconnect in school counselor role assignments impacts the assignment of non-counseling duties, role confusion, and success of the comprehensive counseling program.

Significance of the Study

This study provides critical insight to the disconnect between the way administrators and school counselors view the role of the school counselor. There has been ample evidence to support that there is a disconnect between the perceptions of these two roles (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Brott & Myers, 1999; Cinotti, 2014; Graham et al., 2011; Henderson, 2020; Lane et al., 2020; Monterio-Leitner et al., 2006; Rose, 2019; Ruiz et al., 2019; Unger et al., 2021), with little change in recent studies (Unger et al., 2021). Therefore, this study pinpoints particular differentiating factors. It is crucial for the role of the school counselor to be understood in the field in which they work. This would reduce both school counselor role confusion and school counselor burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fye et al., 2020; Mullen et al., 2018). For instance, in a study by Graham et al. (2011), administrators were surveyed on their familiarity with the role

of the school counselor, but authors recommended that school counselors be included in future research to fully compare the perception of the role. This study serves to meet this need by contributing to the research on school counselors' and administrators' roles of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to determine the differences between school counselor and administrator perspectives on the role of the school counselor and how demographic criteria impact these differences. School counselors who graduate from Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited programs are trained using the ASCA National Model (Olsen et al., 2018). However, there is continued evidence of a disconnect between the trained role of the school counselor and the job expectations as a school counselor from administrators (Brott & Myers, 1999; Cinotti, 2014; Havlick et al., 2019; Lane et al., 2020; Mullen et al., 2018; Ruiz et al., 2019; Slaten et al., 2013). Therefore, this study looks at the differences between how the school counselor and administrator view the role of the school counselor.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be utilized for this study:

1. What are administrators' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model?
2. What are school counselors' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model?
3. What are the differences between school counselors' and administrators' perceptions on the role of school counselors?
4. Does perception of the role of the school counselor differ based on demographic criteria?

Definition of Terms

Appropriate activities for school counselors are activities outlined by the ASCA national model in which school counselors are either encouraged or discouraged from performing (ASCA, 2019a; ASCA, 2019c). Questions used to measure appropriate activities for school counselors include "Maintaining student records," and "Performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences," (ASCA, 2019c, p. xiv).

Counseling activities are individual and group counseling services in the school counseling setting (ASCA, 2019c). Questions used to measure counseling activities include "counsel with students regarding school behavior," "provide small group counseling for academic issues," and "follow-up on individual and group counseling participants" (Scarborough, 2005a, p. 2).

Consultation activities are school counseling tasks that promote the acquisition of additional information, opinion, or support from an expert (ASCA, 2019c). Questions used to measure consultation activities include "consult with school staff concerning student behavior," "coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)," "participate in team/grade level/subject team meetings" (Scarborough, 2005a, pp. 2-3).

Curriculum activities are tasks related to the time in which school counselors instruct students in a classroom setting (ASCA, 2019c). Questions used to measure curriculum activities include "conduct classroom activities to introduce yourself and explain the counseling program to all students," "conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)," and "conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution" (Scarborough, 2005a, p. 3).

Coordination activities are tasks in which school counselors may work with other individuals to organize or facilitate an event, policy, or program (ASCA, 2019c). Questions used to measure coordination activities include "coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)," "keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform," and "formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives" (Scarborough, 2005a, pp. 3-4).

Other activities are any clerical or miscellaneous duties that school counselors may perform (Scarborough, 2005b). Questions used to measure other activities include "participate on committees within the school," "respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)," and "handle discipline of students" (Scarborough, 2005a, p. 4).

Chapter 2

Methodology

This study determined the differences between school counselor and administrator perspectives on the role of the school counselor and how demographic criteria impact these differences. Various research suggests a continued disconnect between the trained role of the school counselor and the job expectations of a school counselor from administrators (Brott & Myers, 1999; Cinotti, 2014; Slaten et al., 2013). This study explored those differences through the perceptions of the role of the school counselor.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be utilized for this study:

1. What are administrators' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model?
2. What are school counselors' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model?
3. What are the differences between school counselors' and administrators' perceptions on the role of school counselors?
4. Does perception of the role of the school counselor differ based on demographic criteria?

Procedures

Prior to conducting this study, permission was collected from the Auburn University Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Human Subjects. Permission to utilize the adapted SCARS instrument was collected from the authors of the survey instrument. The representative for the following listservs was contacted for permission to recruit participants: Alabama School Counselor Association, Alabama Counseling Association, and Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools. Participants were provided with a recruitment flyer and an informational letter that served as the informed consent. The informational letter included all details about their participation in the study. Consent was conveyed by participants' decision to participate in the

study when they selected "I wish to participate in this research study" and proceeded with completing the survey.

Participants were asked to complete an electronic survey on Qualtrics that contained a demographic form and two measures. This survey was modified with consent from authors, Lane et al. (2020), to survey both school counselors and administrators simultaneously. The survey consisted of five parts of multiple choice, short response, ranking, and slider questions, to include the SCARS instrument.

<div align="center">

Instrumentation

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School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS)

The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) (Scarborough, 2005a) was established by Janna L. Scarborough (2005b) as a reliable scale to measure the differences between how school counselors "actually" spend their time and how they would "prefer" to spend their time (p. 2). This measure includes 48 survey items broken down into five subscales: (a) counseling activities, (b) consultation activities, (c) curriculum activities, (d) coordination activities, and (e) other activities (Scarborough, 2005b). As opposed to using a traditional Likert scale to have participants rate *how much* they agree with a particular statement, this instrument utilizes a verbal frequency scale to measure *how often* school counselors spend their time performing each task (Scarborough, 2005b). For each statement, participants will rank on a verbal frequency scale from one to five how often they feel that they perform these duties and how often they would like to perform these duties (Scarborough, 2005b). The verbal frequency scale for actual ratings is listed as follows: 1) "I never do this," 2) "I rarely do this," 3) "I occasionally do this," 4) "I frequently do this," and 5) "I routinely do this" (Scarborough, 2005a, p. 2). On the verbal frequency scale for preferred ratings, the rankings are: 1) "I prefer never to

do this," 2) "I prefer rarely to do this," 3) "I prefer occasionally to do this," 4) "I prefer frequently to do this," and 5) "I prefer routinely to do this" (Scarborough, 2005a, p. 2).

The SCARS was developed in two phases, allowing for the survey to be piloted and revisions to be made (Scarborough, 2005b). A principal components factor analysis was conducted to determine the four primary factors within the SCARS and assess construct validity (Scarborough, 2005b). Within the four identified factors (counseling, consultation, curriculum, and coordination), the amount of explained variance was 47.27% and 45.22% for the actual and preferred factors respectively (Scarborough, 2005b). Additional measures such as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Barlett's test were conducted to determine that these variance scores were acceptable (Scarborough, 2005b). Convergent and discriminant construct validity were also established for the SCARS (Scarborough, 2005b). Further, the Cronbach's alpha for curriculum (actual, $\alpha = .93$; prefer, $\alpha = .90$), coordination (actual, $\alpha = .84$; prefer, $\alpha = .85$), counseling (actual, $\alpha = .85$; prefer, $\alpha = .83$), consultation (actual, $\alpha = .75$; prefer, $\alpha = .77$), and other (actual, $\alpha = .84$; prefer, $\alpha = .80$) were considered reliable (Scarborough, 2005b).

The subscales were initially developed to align with the ASCA National Model (Scarborough, 2005b) and are still relevant 17 years later. The first edition of the National Model was published in 2003, second edition in 2005 (Gysbers, 2010), and the latest fourth edition in 2019 (ASCA, 2019c). While the role of the school counselor has changed over time and caused the National Model to reflect this change (Gysbers, 2010), there have been minimal changes to each edition of the model. For instance, the first list of appropriate and inappropriate duties for school counselors was posited by Campbell and Dahir (1997) in which an appropriate duty included "counseling students who have disciplinary problems" (p. 2-9). This specific task as well as many others can still be found in the latest edition of the ASCA National Model (2019c).

Therefore, the SCARS instrument has continued to remain relevant against the numerous updates in the ASCA National Model.

SCARS Modified

Lane and colleagues (2020) received permission to adapt the SCARS survey instrument to meet the needs of their study; to measure how familiar administrators were with the duties of school counselors and the school counseling programs. This survey consisted of five parts, one of which included the adapted SCARS instrument. The first section of the survey asked administrators about school counseling national and state programs (three Likert-type questions and six yes or no questions), the program implemented at the participant's current school (four or five multiple choice responses), and responsibility of particular tasks at the participant's current school (five open-ended questions) (Lane et al., 2020). The second section of the survey measured appropriate and inappropriate activities through 28 statements taken from the National Model (ASCA, 2019a; Lane et al., 2020). Participants were asked to rank each of these statements of possible activities as either appropriate, inappropriate, or neutral (Lane et al., 2020).

The third section of the survey consisted of the SCARS instrument, which was adapted slightly in verbiage to accommodate administrators as participants instead of school counselors (Lane et al., 2020). The fourth section of this survey measured the percentage of time perceived and desired for each of the categories within the SCARS instrument (counseling, consultation, curriculum, coordination, and other activities) (Lane et al., 2020). Participants were asked to use a slider to place a percentage of time beside each category that added up to 100% of the school counselors' time for both how much the administrator perceived that a school counselor spends on the tasks and for the administrators' desired amount of time for a school counselor to spend

on the tasks (Lane et al., 2020). The fifth and final section of the survey included ten demographic questions about the participant's current school, professional experience, and personal demographic information (Lane et al., 2020).

This study utilized the SCARS Modified instrument in the same survey format as described above. However, when utilized by Lane and colleagues (2020), consent was obtained to modify the language to reflect the intended audience of administrators only. This study intended to survey two groups of participants (administrators and school counselors); therefore, slight verbiage modifications were made in the instructions and descriptions of this study to include both groups. This was done with consent by Lane and colleagues (2020). For instance, one question Lane et al. (2020) included in the demographics section asked, "Is your school counselor licensed as a Professional School Counselor by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)?" This was adjusted to reflect the current study by asking participants, "Is your school counselor certified as a school counselor by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE)?" Another example can be found in the instructions given to participants. Lane and colleagues (2020) stated, "In the first column, please indicate the frequency you perceive your school counselor ACTUALLY performing the function." The current study used the verbiage, "In the first column, please indicate the frequency you perceive a school counselor (including yourself if you are a school counselor) to ACTUALLY perform the function."

Demographic Information

Participants were asked to self-report multiple types of demographic data that was used in the data analysis of this study. Participants first identified their current role as a school counselor or administrator. Participants then reported how many years of work experience they have obtained within their specified role as either a school counselor or administrator as well as their

total years of experience in the field of education. Participants were asked to include their school level, to determine the impact of the education setting (elementary, middle, high, combination of grade levels, or all grade levels) on the study variables. School enrollment size, whether the school is classified as public or private, and the school's urban or rural classification were also be collected to determine the impact of these factors. Participants were also asked to provide their identified gender and ethnicity. It was expected that these demographic factors would have an impact on the variables measured in this study as these have aligned in previous research (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2007; Mullen et al., 2018).

Participants

Participants for this study consisted of currently practicing school counselors and administrators from the state of Alabama. School counselors were invited to participate in the study through the Alabama School Counselor Association and Alabama Counseling Association listservs while administrators were invited through the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools listservs. Snowballing was encouraged to increase the number of professionals invited to participate in the study. All eligible part-time or full-time administrators (assistant principals or principals) and school counselors (elementary, middle, or high school) in these positions in the state of Alabama were recruited for this study. Participants were limited to school counselors and administrators who have been working in these positions for at least one academic year.

G*Power software (Faul et al., 2007) was utilized to determine the required sample size for this study. Utilizing a priori power analysis for a linear multiple regression, the total sample size needed was 85. The following parameters were used to determine this sample size: medium effect size of ($f = 0.15$), alpha level of $p < 0.05$, and 4 predictors. With 85 total participants, the estimated critical f value is $F(4,80) = 2.49$, $p < 0.05$.

Participant Flow

This study aimed to collect 85 responses utilizing G*Power software (Faul et al., 2007). A total of 51 participants (n=51) responded to the survey, with 30 participants (n=30) completing the survey in full. See Figure 1 for a full breakdown of the participant flow. Of the 51 responses, 6 were excluded for declining to participate in the survey (n=1) and entering no responses to the survey after agreeing to participate (n=5). There were 45 responses (n=45) analyzed from both school counselors (n=36) and administrators (n=9). There was one participant who identified as "other" for their current role and labeled this role as "district administrator." This participant was included in the group of administrators (n=8) for a total of 9 participants in this role (n=9).

There are five parts to the survey conducted in this study, SCARS Modified (Lane et al., 2020). The participant flow was organized based on these five sections of the study: 1) Demographics, 2) School Counseling (SC) Programs (National and State), 3) Appropriate and Inappropriate Duties, 4) School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS), and 5) Percentage of Time (perceived and desired). There were 45 participants (n=45) who completed the demographics section, comprised of both school counselors (n=36) and administrators (n=9). The SC Programs section was completed by 40 participants (n=40) or 32 school counselors (n=32) and 8 administrators (n=8). The next section, appropriate and inappropriate duties, was completed by 38 participants (n=38), of which 31 were school counselors (n=31) and 7 were administrators (n=7). The SCARS instrument was completed by 30 participants (n=30), both school counselors (n=25) and administrators (n=5). The last component of the survey was the percentage of time. This component was completed by 30 participants (n=30) or 25 school counselors (n=25) and 5 administrators (n=5).

Of the 51 initial survey responses (n=51), 30 participants (n=30) completed the survey in full. These responses were made up 25 school counselors (n=25) and 5 administrators (n=5). Therefore, this study had a completion rate of 58.8%. The completion rate for school counselors was 69.4% while only 55.6% for administrators. It is also of importance that the participant ratio of school counselor to administrator was 4:1 as there were more school counselor participants (n=36) than administrator participants (n=9).

Participant Demographic Information

A full breakdown of participant demographics by role of school counselor and administrator is shown in Table 1. There was a total of 45 participants (n=45) in this study. Of the 45 participants, 80% (n=36) were school counselors and 20% were administrators (n=9). Participants reported their gender and ethnicity in a free-response format. Participants identified their gender as 93.3% female (n=42) and 6.7% male (n=3). This is common in Alabama education for the field to be predominantly female (ALSDE, 2022). Participants also reported ethnicity as 77.8% (n=35) White or Caucasian, 15.6% (n=7) Black or African American, 2.2% Native American (n=1), and 4.4% Latino/a or Hispanic (n=2).

Participants were also asked about their current place of employment in questions determining enrollment size, public or private status, community classification status (urban, rural, etc.), and grade levels served. These findings are also indicated in Table 1 by role of school counselor or administrator. Most participants reported an enrollment size of 250-500 students (n=16; 35.6%) or 750-1000 students (n=9; 20.0%), although responses ranged from under 250 students (n=6; 13.3%) to over 2500 students (n=2; 4.4%). When comparing the responses from school counselors or administrators, the majority of responses from both school counselors and administrators came from those working in schools with 250-500 students (n=16). All

participants indicated working in a public school system (n=45; 100.0%). Additionally, when classifying the school community, over half of the participants reported working in a rural setting (n=25; 55.6%). Several participants also reported working in a suburban community (n=16; 35.6%), while only some participants reported to work in an urban setting (n=2, 4.4%) or were unsure how to classify the school community (n=2, 4.4%). Participants were asked to select which grade levels are served in the school in which they work, from on the following options: a) elementary school (P-6), middle school (6-8), high school (9-12), elementary/middle combination (P-8), middle/high combination (6-12), or all grade levels (P-12). Forty-two percent of participants (n=19; 42.2%) work in an elementary (n=13; 28.9%) or elementary/middle combination (n=6; 13.3%). Thirty-six percent of participants (n=16; 35.6%) work in a middle (n=7; 15.6%), elementary/middle combination (n=6; 13.3%), or middle/high combination (n=3; 6.7%). Thirty-six percent of participants also work in a high (n=13; 28.9%) or middle/high combination (n=3; 6.7%).

Participants were also asked to report the number of years of experience they have as a counselor, administrator, or in the field of education. These findings are reported in Table 2. Administrators reported an average of 4 years of experience in counseling, 8 years as an administrator, and 23 years in education. School counselors reported an average of 10 years in counseling, 0 years as an administrator, and 15 years in education. Interestingly, 17.8% of participants (n=8) reported experience in both administration and school counseling. Of these responses, participants reported an average of 7 years in counseling, 6 years in administration, and 20 years in education. Of these 8 participants, 3 reported to be current school counselors, 4 administrators, and 1 district administrator.

Recruitment

Recruitment of participants ran for 55 days in the Spring 2022 semester. The first call for school counselor participants was sent through the Alabama Counseling Association Listserv and a second call for participants was sent through this listserv approximately four weeks later. Administrators were recruited via the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) weekly update email for five consecutive weeks. Recruitment was also conducted via social media, including a second call approximately four weeks later. The following social media platforms were utilized: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The social media call for participants included both school counselors and administrators and was shared initially on personal pages and then to professional groups and organizations.

In an attempt to increase the number of participants who identified as administrators, a modification to the Auburn University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained to email administrators in the state of Alabama directly for recruitment. The Alabama State Department of Education webpage was utilized to obtain a list of all P-12 public and private schools in the state. This list was then reduced from 2,268 to 1,425 listings by removing duplicate and incomplete entries. This list included 1,425 schools within 127 city and county public school systems in the state of Alabama. Starting at the top of the list, administrators from 19 different schools were directly emailed an invitation to participate in the study through their online school contact portal. Contact ceased after 19 schools were directly emailed; no further schools from the list were contacted.

The researcher identified two primary concerns for consideration of this recruitment plan: time required and the potential for spam/junk emails. First of concern was the length of time required to continue with this recruitment plan. There were 19 schools and approximately 38

administrators contacted over a span of 8 hours due to the length of time needed to research the administrators of each school within each school system and locate a contact email address or contact page on the school webpage for each individual administrator. Of the 19 schools contacted, 5 utilized an automated system to protect the school system from digital threats. This required a dual-step authenticity process to send the recruitment email to the administrator by replying with a specific code from a separate email. This process was required for each administrator within the school system. Based on the length of time spent thus far, it would take approximately 600 additional hours to continue contacting each school administrator in the state. The next concern was for the potential of spam or junk emails. As mentioned, many school systems utilized a protection software to limit the spam or junk emails received within the school system. It is possible that this software also filtered out these emails and automatically sent them to the school system's junk email folder or marked the emails as spam because they all had the same content and wording in them. As a result, the researcher decided that the likelihood of this recruitment method producing viable participants was unlikely. Instead, the recruitment process would extend for a few more weeks at the conclusion of the second call for participants.

Data Analysis

This study utilized multiple data analysis methods to address each research question. The first and second research questions are as follows: What are administrators' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model, and what are school counselors' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model? These two research questions were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics for the responses of administrators and school counselors individually. The third research question asked what are the differences between school counselors' and administrators' perceptions on the

role of school counselors? This research question was analyzed with a factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA). The following assumptions of factorial ANOVA were checked: 1) independence of participants, 2) homogeneity of variance, 3) normality of the sample, and 4) normality of the residuals (Aryadoust & Raquel, 2019; Verma & Abdel-Salam, 2019).

The fourth research question, does perception of the role of the school counselor differ based on demographic criteria, was analyzed using a multiple regression to explain the relationship of school counselors and administrators broken down by demographic factors (years of experience, years in education, enrollment size, and grade level). The following assumptions of a linear regression were checked: 1) the independent variable is continuous and dependent variables are continuous or binary, 2) linearity exists in the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables, 3) the residuals are normally distributed, 4) the residuals are homoscedastic, and 5) there is limited multicollinearity (Pedhazur, 1997; Tranmer et al., 2020). This study had the following *independent variables*: years of experience, years in education, enrollment size, and grade level. The *dependent variables* in this study were the school counselor and administrator responses on the SCARS instrument. The dependent variables were measured using the sum means of each of the subscales of the SCARS instrument (counseling, consultation, curriculum, coordination, and other activities), as conducted in research by Wilder and Ray (2013).

Chapter 3

Results

Introduction

This study aimed to identify differences in how school counselors and administrators define the role of the school counselor and if demographic criteria impact those perceptions. This study utilized a survey comprised of multiple instruments: SCARS, SCARS Modified, and demographic information. The survey was administered electronically to school counselors and administrators throughout the state of Alabama and results were compared to the research questions in data analysis. The following research questions were addressed: (1) What are administrators' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model? (2) What are school counselors' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model? (3) What are the differences between school counselors' and administrators' perceptions on the role of school counselors? (4) Does perception of the role of the school counselor differ based on demographic criteria?

Research Question 1: What are administrators' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model?

When comparing the responses from administrators to the list of appropriate and inappropriate school counselor duties, administrators averaged a score of 1.45, with 2 being the score assigned to duties as they aligned with the ASCA NM. Table 3 shows the average administrator and school counselor responses to each item within the survey as it corresponds to the ASCA NM list of appropriate and inappropriate school counselor activities. Administrators rated the following items in agreement with the ASCA NM entirely (M=2.00): item 4, analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement; item 10, advisement and appraisal for

academic planning; item 21, providing short-term individual and small- group counseling services to students; item 24, signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent; and item 28, orientation, coordination and academic advising for new students. Of these, items 4, 10, 21, and 28 are deemed as appropriate school counselor activities and item 24 is deemed as an inappropriate activity (ASCA, 2019a). There are three additional items with low administrator scores, suggesting that administrators disagree with the ASCA NM: item 22, coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, 504 plans, student study teams, response to intervention plans, MTSS and school attendance review boards (M = 0.43); item 2, maintaining student records (M = 0.57), and item 26, computing grade-point averages (M = 0.57).

Table 5 outlines a summary of the SCARS mean responses from both administrators and school counselors for actual and preferred activities based on the subscale means. Recall that the SCARS instrument utilized a frequency rating scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing a low frequency and 5 a high frequency of a function (Scarborough, 2005b). The results from comparing the scores of the SCARS instrument suggested that administrators prefer for school counselors to be frequently performing curriculum activities (M = 4.00), while only occasionally performing all other activities (Counseling, M = 3.60; Consultation, M = 3.29; Coordination, M = 3.69; "Other", M = 3.04). Table 4 outlines the item means reported by administrators and school counselors. The highest rating items by administrators within the preferred category of this instrument were for the following items: "Counsel students regarding academic issues" (Counseling, Item 3, M = 4.40), "Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program" (Coordination, Item 2, M = 4.40), and "Coordinate the standardized testing program" ("Other", Item 2, M = 4.40). These results suggest that administrators have a preference for school counselors to complete these tasks over other tasks as part of their role as a school

counselor. The lowest ranking items by administrators within the preferred category were as follows: "Handle discipline of students" ("Other", Item 9, M = 1.20), "Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school" ("Other", Item 10, M = 1.80), "Conduct small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own use or family/friend use)" (Counseling, Item 9, M = 2.20), and "Participate in team / grade level / subject team meetings" (Consultation, Item 7, M = 2.20). These results suggest that administrators prefer that as part of the role of the school counselor, school counselors limit their engagement in these activities.

When reviewing the administrators' responses to how much time they would prefer that school counselors spend in each category of activities, administrators favored counseling. As shown in Table 6, administrators preferred that school counselors spend about half of their time counseling (M = 48.00), about a third of their time providing curriculum (M = 32.00), about a fifth of their time consulting (M = 20.00), and a small percentage of time doing "other" activities (M = 6.00).

Research Question 2: What are school counselors' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model?

School counselors' average responses on the list of appropriate or inappropriate activities for school counselors is located in Table 3. The overall average for school counselors on all items was M = 1.68. Of these items, there were three in which school counselors agreed with the ASCA NM in full (M = 2.00): item 8, consulting with the school principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems; item 14, analyzing disaggregated schoolwide and school counseling program data; and item 21, providing short-term individual and small- group counseling services to students. School counselors also had several other items in which the mean indicated almost complete agreement with the ASCA NM (M > 1.90): item 15, serving as a

data entry clerk (M = 1.90); item 25, covering classes when teachers are absent or to create teacher planning time (M = 1.90); item 18, providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems (M = 1.97), and item 20, consulting with teachers to schedule and present school counseling curriculum lessons based on developmental needs and needs identified through data (M = 1.94). Of these items, all were listed as appropriate duties for school counselors except items 15 and 25 which were identified as inappropriate (ASCA, 2019a). The lowest mean for school counselors was for item 12, providing long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders (M = 1.13), in which school counselors still aligned with the ASCA NM. This study found that school counselors agree with the ASCA's list of appropriate and inappropriate duties for school counselors.

After reviewing school counselors' responses to the SCARS instrument, as shown in Table 5, school counselors prefer to engage in counseling and curriculum activities frequently (M = 4.10, M = 4.38). While school counselors reported a preference for engaging in consultation and coordination activities occasionally (M = 3.59, M = 3.87), they only rarely preferred to engage in "other" activities (M = 2.26). Table 4 outlines school counselors' itemized results for this instrument. The items in which school counselors rated the highest preference for frequency are as follows: "Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program" (Coordination, Item 2, M = 4.92), "Counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns" (Counseling, Item 1, M = 4.85), "Counsel with students regarding school behavior" (Counseling, Item 2, M = 4.62), "Counsel students regarding crisis/emergency issues" (Counseling, Item 4, 4.62), "Conduct classroom activities to introduce yourself and explain the counseling program to all students" (Curriculum, Item 1, M = 4.62), "Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)" (Curriculum, Item 3,

M = 4.62), and "Conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues" (Curriculum, Item 4, M = 4.62). These are the activities in which school counselors prefer and attribute their role as a school counselor. The following are the lowest scoring preferred items by school counselors: "Substitute teach and / or cover classes for teachers at your school" ("Other", Item 10, M = 1.29), "Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school" ("Other", Item 7, M = 1.62), "Handle discipline of students" ("Other", Item 10, M = 1.64), "Coordinate the standardized testing program" ("Other", Item 2, M = 1.67), "Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty" ("Other", Item 5, M = 1.67), and "Maintain/Complete educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)" ("Other", Item 8, M = 1.67). These activities school counselors have a low preference for engaging in within their role.

As Table 6 reports, school counselors preferred to spend their time with students. School counselors indicated a preference of spending about half their time counseling (M = 43.75), about a third of their time providing curriculum activities (M = 36.40), about 18% of their time consulting (M = 17.60), and about 7% of their time completing "other" activities (M = 7.20).

Research Question 3: What are the differences between school counselors' and administrators' perceptions on the role of school counselors?

To determine differences between the perceptions of school counselors and administrators on the role of school counselors, data results were sorted into two groups based on how each participant responded to their current role (school counselor or administrator). Sum means were used to develop independent variables for this study, as was done by Wilder and Ray (2013). Sum means were created for responses on each of the following SCARS subscales: counseling activities, consultation activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities, and other activities. These sum means were then categorized into two predictor variables: actual and

preferred. This allowed for a factorial ANOVA to be conducted to compare the main effects of actual and preferred activities (IV) and their interaction effects on school counselors and administrator responses (DV) (Y ~ Actual + Preferred + Actual * Preferred).

The effects of actual scores were not statistically significant ($p = 0.66$), but the effects of preferred scores were statistically significant ($p = 0.05$). This suggests that the school counselor and administrator *preferred* scores on the school counselor role differ significantly ($F_{(1, 27)} = 4.12$, $p = 0.05$). There was no statistical significance in the effect of actual scores ($F_{(1, 27)} = 0.19$, $p = 0.66$) or the interaction of actual and preferred scores ($F_{(1, 27)} = 1.43$, $p = 0.24$). Because there was no significance of the interaction effect, the main effects can be analyzed individually (Hair et al., 2009). The assumptions of a factorial ANOVA were also tested. A Levene's test was conducted and homogeneity of variances was found ($F_{(1, 27)} = 1.95$, $p = 0.17$). Histograms were utilized to graph and confirm the normality of sample and residuals.

Research Question 4: Does perception of the role of the school counselor differ based on demographic criteria?

A multiple regression was completed to determine if demographic criteria (IV) could statistically significantly predict administrator responses (DV). The specific demographic criteria observed were years of experience, years in education, enrollment size, and grade level. Sum means were used to develop independent variables for this study, as was done by Wilder and Ray (2013). A participant's sum mean was collected by averaging their responses in one category and then adding among each subscale to obtain one score per participant. Sum mean scores were obtained for responses on each of the following SCARS subscales: counseling activities, consultation activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities, and other activities.

The final predictive model was as follows: Administrator Responses = 8.90 +
(0.80*Years of Experience) + (0.10*Years in Education) + (0.60*Enrollment Size) +
(5.13*Grade Level). The results indicated that the model explained 100% of the proportion of
variation ($R^2 = 1.00$), whereas years of experience explains about 63% ($R^2 = 0.63$), years in
education explains about 16% ($R^2 = 0.16$), enrollment size explains about 29% ($R^2 = 0.29$), and
grade level explains about 98% ($R^2 = 0.98$) of SCARS responses. The model was not a
significant predictor of administrator's SCARS responses as the results were inconclusive ($F_{(4, 0)}$
$= NaN$, $p = NA$). The results being inconclusive is likely explained by the small participant
sample (n = 30) and lack of reaching G*Power target sample size (n = 85). Grade level
contributed significantly to the model ($F_{(1,3)} = 140.9$, $p = .001$); however, years of experience
($F_{(1, 3)} = 5.06$, $p = .11$), years in education ($F_{(1,3)} = 0.59$, $p = .49$), and enrollment size ($F_{(2,2)} =$
0.41, $p = .71$) did not contribute significantly to the model. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that
grade level has an impact on administrators' perception of the role of the school counselor,
although additional research is needed to determine this.

Summary

This study aimed to identify differences between the perception of the role of school
counselors of both administrators and school counselors. The SCARS and SCARS Modified
instrumentations were utilized to achieve this goal. The results demonstrated that there are not
statistically significant effects in the perceptions of the role of the school counselor by
administrators and school counselors when comparing both actual and preferred scores.
However, there are small differences of note such as the statistically significant effect of
preferred scores on the school counselor and administrator responses. Additionally, the results

were inconclusive to determine how demographic criteria impact the perception of the role of the

school counselor.

Chapter 4

Discussion of Findings

This study focused on the role of the school counselor and how administrators and school counselors perceive this role. The first two research questions of this study aimed to determine how administrators and school counselors perceive the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model respectively. The third research question sought to determine if differences existed between the way school counselors and administrators perceived the role of the school counselor. While the overall effects were not proven to be statistically significant, the results suggest that preferred scores effect how school counselors and administrators perceive the role of the school counselor. Lastly, the fourth research question aimed to consider the impact of demographic criteria on the perception of the role of the school counselor. The specific demographic criteria considered in this study include the following: years of experience, total years of experience in the field of education, school enrollment size, and grade levels served. These results were inconclusive in determining the effect of demographic criteria on the perception of the role of the school counselor as a result of the small sample size.

Discussion

Below is the discussion of the key findings from this research study. This includes the perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate duties for school counselors as part of their role, perceptions on the desired activities for school counselors to engage in as part of their role, the differences in how administrators and school counselors perceive the role of the school counselor, and specific findings from the impact of demographic criteria among these perceptions. There is some overlap between the structure of these key findings and the research questions of this study, discussed above.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Duties

As part of the SCARS Modified instrument (Lane, 2020), participants were given items from the ASCA National Model list of appropriate and inappropriate activities for school counselors (ASCA, 2019a). The items from this list were provided to participants at random, being sure to eliminate a pattern between the appropriate and inappropriate activities. Further, the activities were delivered word-for-word from the language utilized by ASCA (2019a). Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn that participants' agreeance with these activities also signifies their agreeance with the ASCA National Model. When comparing the scores of participants, participants received a score of 2 when they responded in alignment with the ASCA National Model, a score of 1 when they responded with "neutral," and a score of 0 when they responded in disagreement with the ASCA National Model. Therefore, the higher the scores (closest to 2.0), the more participants agreed with whether particular activities were appropriate or inappropriate for school counselors, as outlined by the ASCA National Model (2019a).

There was only one item in which both administrators and school counselors completely agreed with the ASCA National Model: "Providing short-term individual and small-group counseling services to students" (See Table 3, Item 21; M = 2.0). It is a positive finding that there is agreeance among administrators and school counselors that school counselors should be providing individual and small-group counseling to students. However, it is also a testament to the differences among these perceptions of the role that this is the singular response in which both groups of participants fully agreed with the ASCA National Model.

However, there were other items in which school counselors and administrators did not fully agree with the ASCA National Model, yet their responses were in agreeance with one another. For instance, the item "Providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent" (See

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Table 3, Item 6) was scored similar for both administrators (M = 1.71) and school counselors (M = 1.68). This suggests that while both groups agree with the ASCA National Model, they have a stronger agreeance with one another (range = 0.03). There were two other items with similar scoring: "Assisting with duties in the principal's office" (See Table 3, Item 9, range = 0.08), and "Consulting with teachers to schedule and present school counseling curriculum lessons based on developmental needs and needs identified through data" (See Table 3, Item 20, range = 0.08). As before, both of these items were marked in agreeance with the ASCA National Model by scoring 1.57 and 1.65, and 1.86 and 1.94 respectively for administrators and school counselors and had a similar range (n = 0.08), suggesting that the two groups were in agreement. Therefore, the results suggest that while both groups have somewhat differing opinions, and differing opinions from the ASCA National Model, there are specific items in which they agree with one another.

Desired Activities for School Counselors

The SCARS Modified (Lane et al., 2020) instrument was utilized to determine how often school counselors and administrators sought for school counselors to engage in particular activities. These activities were categorized into five subscales: Counseling, Consultation, Curriculum, Coordination, and "Other" Activities. Participants rated these activities on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most frequent and 1 being the least, for both how often they thought school counselors were actually engaging in these activities and how often they would prefer that school counselors engage in these activities.

The results of this instrument suggested that administrators want school counselors to be engaging in these activities more often than they believe that they currently are (Actual Mean < Preferred Mean). While school counselors agree for most categories of activities, school counselors desire to do less in the "Other" Activities category than they currently are (Actual M

= 3.03, Prefer M = 2.26). The specific activities in which school counselors feel the strongest desire to engage less often are as follows: "Respond to health issues (e.g. check for live, eye screening, 504 coordination)" (Table 4, Subscale "Other" Activities, Item 4, Range = 1.87), "Coordinate the standardized testing program" (Table 4, Subscale "Other" Activities, Item 2, Range = 1.86), and "Perform hall, bus, and cafeteria duty" (Table 4, Subscale "Other" Activities, Item 5, Range = 1.53). Recall that scores on the SCARS instrument (Scarborough, 2005a, p. 2) correspond with phrases such as 1) "I prefer never to do this," 2) "I prefer rarely to do this," 3) "I prefer occasionally to do this," 4) "I prefer frequently to do this," and 5) "I prefer routinely to do this." Approximated average responses were used to draw conclusions about the data; for instance, an approximate mean of 1.00 can be written as $M \approx 1.00$ or never. For each of these tasks, school counselors feel as though they are actually engaging in these tasks occasionally ($M \approx 3.00$), and desire to engage in these tasks either never ($M \approx 1.00$) or rarely ($M \approx 2.00$). However, administrators prefer that school counselors engage in testing coordination frequently ($M \approx 4.00$) and rarely ($M \approx 2.00$) respond to health issues or engage in shared duties.

Another finding is that school counselors believe to be engaging in activities more often than administrators believe that they are. For instance, administrators reported that school counselors are rarely ($M \approx 2.00$) engaging in consultation, curriculum, and "other" activities, whereas school counselors believe they are engaging in these activities occasionally ($M \approx 3.00$). School counselors and administrators believe that school counselors are engaging in counseling and coordination activities occasionally ($M \approx 3.00$), but school counselors rated actual engagement in these activities higher than administrators did.

Differences in Perceptions of Role

The main method of determining differences in how school counselors and administrators perceive the role of the school counselor was done through a factorial ANOVA. While these results suggested no statistically significant difference in how these two groups perceive this role overall, there are slight differences in the way these two groups responded to the survey as well as an impact on the respondents' preference for the role of the school counselor.

The results from the appropriate and inappropriate duties of the school counselor section of the survey suggest that there are some activities in which school counselors and administrators disagree. As previously mentioned, these results directly respond to the groups' agreeance towards the ASCA National Model as well. There are 6 items in which the school counseling group scored the task as agreeing with the ASCA National Model (N > 1) while the administrator group scored the task as disagreeing with the ASCA National Model (N < 1), and one item in which the administrator group scored the task as neutral in agreeance with the ASCA National Model (N = 1.00). These items are as follows and can be found in Table 3: "Maintaining student records" (Item 2, M = 0.57, M = 1.13), "Coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs" (Item 16, M = 0.71, M = 1.29), "Coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students" (Item 17, M = 0.71, M = 1.61), "Providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems" (Item 18, M = 1.57, M = 1.97), "Coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, 504 plans, student study teams, response to intervention plans, MTSS and school attendance review boards" (Item 22, M = 0.43, M = 1.61), "Computing grade-point averages" (Item 26, M = 0.57, M = 1.26), and "Consulting with teachers about building classroom connections, effective classroom management and the role of noncognitive factors in student success" (Item 1, M = 1.00, M = 1.47). These findings suggest that the following tasks

are viewed by administrators as appropriate for school counselors but are viewed as inappropriate by school counselors themselves and the ASCA National Model: a) student record keeping, b) new student data entry, c) student grade calculations, d) school-wide testing organization, and e) coordination of school-wide MTSS programs. For the following tasks, school counselors agree with the ASCA National Model as this being an appropriate activity for their role while administrators disagree: a) counseling students with disciplinary concerns, b) assisting teachers with rapport building, classroom management, and overall student success. Of these tasks, the results suggest that school counselors and administrators disagreed the most strongly about school counselors being responsible for coordinating school-wide MTSS teams (See Table 3, Item 22, Range = 1.18) and organizing the paperwork for new students (See Table 3, Item 17, Range = 0.90).

Based on the SCARS results (see Table 4), both school counselors and administrators agree that the school counselor role should include counseling activities; however, there is a difference of agreement in how often to engage in these specific behaviors. School counselors reported a desire to engage in counseling activities frequently (M = 4.10), while administrators reported a preference for school counselors to provide counseling services only occasionally (M = 3.60). Yet, when reviewing how both groups responded to the percentage of time portion of the instrument (see Table 6), administrators prefer for school counselors to engage in counseling services approximately half of the day (M = 48.00). School counselors believe to actually be providing counseling services (M = 38.40) less often than administrators perceive them to be (M = 46.00), and only want to be engaging in counseling activities about 44% of the time (M = 43.75). This is likely a result of the ASCA National Model recommendation that school

counselors spend 80% of their time engaging in direct or indirect services to benefit students (ASCA, 2019c).

These discrepancies in findings also align with the results of the factorial ANOVA done in this study. These results indicate that the interacting effect of actual and preferred SCARS responses do not depict school counselor and administrator responses ($F_{(1, 27)} = 1.43$, $p = 0.24$). Although, the results do indicate the effects of preferred scores were statistically significant ($p = 0.05$) and thus preferred scores have an effect on school counselor and administrator responses. This finding suggests that while school counselors and administrators have differing opinions on the actual role of the school counselor, they have unified agreeance on the preferred role.

Implications of Research Findings

Targeted ASCA Training is Needed for Both School Counselors and Administrators

In the appropriate and inappropriate school counselor duties section of the survey, the findings suggest that the school counseling group did not fully align with the ASCA National Model either. School counselors agreed with all appropriate and inappropriate activities overall (N > 1), and agreed more strongly than administrators did, with an average of 1.68 compared to the administrators' overall group average of 1.45. However, when school counselors are trained with the ASCA National Model in CACREP accredited programs (Branthoover et al., 2010; Perry et al., 2020), it can be hypothesized that these individuals would score in more agreeance with the ASCA National Model. It is possible that these findings are skewed. There were 105 instances when a school counselor marked an item in this portion of the survey as "neutral," which means that each school counselor rated approximately 3 items as neutral when taking the survey (n = 2.92). While this number may seem low, this is approximately 10% of the items in which school counselors either did not have a strong opinion or were unsure whether the activity

listed should be considered appropriate or inappropriate for their role. It is possible that school counselors need additional training in the use of the ASCA National Model themselves.

Additionally, participants were asked in the survey to rate how familiar they found themselves to be with the ASCA National Model. The responses were coded such that "Not familiar at all" = 0, "Not very familiar" = 1, "Familiar" = 2, and "Very familiar" = 3. School counselors reported feeling familiar (M = 2.52) with the ASCA National Model. This further supports the idea that school counselors may need additional training in the ASCA National Model themselves. This may be helpful to be provided in the form of professional supervision. Many school counselors reportedly lack professional supervision (Zalewski, 2022) or targeted professional development for school counselors (Griffen & Hallett, 2017), and this may be a great way to fill that gap.

Administrators reported feeling not very familiar (M = 1.88) with the ASCA National Model. As a result, it is critical that administrators receive proper training in the ASCA National Model because this is the tool being used to train school counselors within their school programs. Administrators can learn more about the ASCA National Model through webinars, conferences, or even collaborative team meetings with the school counselor at their own school or district. The ASCA National Model (2019c) supports this idea and teaches school counselors to hold an "Annual Administrative Conference" in which these concerns could be addressed. This conference or meeting is intended to be a time to outline the goals of the school counseling comprehensive program, address any limitations or needs of the program, and foster collaboration between these two roles (ASCA, 2019c). This would be a good time for school counselors to model the role of the school counselor, and for the administrator to bridge any gaps in their own knowledge of the ASCA National Model.

School Counselors and Administrators Need Open Communication and Formally Outlined Role Expectations

This study found that administrators do not feel very familiar (M = 1.88) with the ASCA National Model. While increasing administrators' knowledge about the ASCA National Model is a step in the right direction, administrators and school counselors also need to have formalized conversations about how the ASCA National Model will be integrated into the school counselor's role at their school. This study found that there are some specific activities in which school counselors and administrators agree more with one another than they do with the ASCA National Model (See Table 3, Item 6). There are also some instances in which school counselors and administrators have differing perceptions on how much time school counselors are and should be spending on certain activities (See Table 6). While school counselors and administrators can increase their own understanding of the ASCA National Model, they should also increase their communication with one another to ensure a collaborative approach to the comprehensive school counseling program.

It is important to note that open communication between administrators and school counselors needs to include the perception of a safe space in which both parties feel respected and valued when expressing agreement and disagreement (Lawrence & Stone, 2019). Some examples for ways to increase this open communication include asking administrators to serve on the advisory council, as recommended by ASCA (ASCA, 2019c); holding weekly or bi-weekly check-in meetings between administrators and school counselors within a school or district, and holding debriefing opportunities after professional development related to the ASCA National Model. Increasing open communication between school counselors and administrators on the role expectations for school counselors would lead to an increase in unified perspectives.

In addition to increasing communication, school counselors and administrators should also formally outline specific role expectations. The ASCA National Model (2019c) provides an outline or template for the suggested Annual Administrative Conference. This template, to be filled out by the school counselor and then discussed during the meeting, consists of the following components: priorities and goals of the school counseling comprehensive program, school counselor use of time analysis, ratio and caseload size, the comprehensive program plan to address student needs (based on student data), professional development plan, and school and district responsibilities (ASCA, 2019c). While all of these components are great for minimizing role confusion, a primary tool of focus should be the section related to school and district responsibilities. This section might include responsibilities associated with bus duty, testing, 504 planning, Response to Intervention, or advisory council. It also allows for school counselors and administrators to be clear about the time commitment requirements of each activity, as well as the overall time that school counselors should be spending in each category (direct or indirect services, program planning, or non-school counseling duties). Providing a document with clear role expectations can increase the ability for both parties to have open communication about these expectations. In turn, this would reduce both school counselor role confusion and school counselor burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fye et al., 2020; Mullen et al., 2018).

Administrator and School Counseling Students-in-Training Need Collaborative Educational Opportunities

School counseling and educational leadership educators can also be intentional to integrate collaborations between program coursework as well. There are numerous opportunities to provide collaboration between these programs. For instance, school counseling and educational leadership students could engage in a group project or presentation in which they

both train the other students on their roles and training, establish ways that each role could collaborate with one another throughout the year, and build a sample annual plan of collaboration. This could include components of several CACREP (2015) standards: "school counselor roles in school leadership and multidisciplinary teams," (5.G.2.d.), "competencies to advocate for school counseling roles," (5.G.2.f.), "development of school counseling program mission statements and objectives," (5.G.3.a.), "design and evaluation of school counseling programs" (5.G.3.b.), "techniques to foster collaboration and teamwork within schools," (5.G.3.l.), "use of accountability data to inform decision making," (5.G.3.n.) and "use of data to advocate for programs and students," (5.G.3.o.).

While these are suggestions for collaboration, these are only some ways that students could engage with one another. Faculty can also organize for students to attend a class from the other program; invite guest speakers of students, recently graduated students, or faculty from the other program to speak on a specific topic; develop collaborative assignments across courses; or integrate role play or other hands-on activities across courses, giving students practice interacting with one-another. These teaching tools would be a great way to increase advocacy skills, basic content knowledge of the other profession, and provide networking opportunities for students. Previous scholarship has also supported the idea of collaboration between training programs for future school counselors and administrators (Carnes-Holt el al., 2012; Perruse et al., 2009; Tygret et al., 2020). This would encourage the overlap in training for both school counselors and administrators moving forward.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the limited number of survey participants. As previously discussed, participants were recruited via professional state organizations, social media, some

direct email invitations, and through snowballing. As shown in the participation tree in Figure 1, there were only 9 administrators and 36 school counselors who contributed to the survey. Within these, only 5 administrators and 25 school counselors completed the majority of the SCARS instrumentation. This unequal distribution of participants could have impacted the data analysis of this study. Additionally, the G*Power software (Faul et al., 2007) utilized recommended a sample size of 85 participants, of which only 30 were obtained to complete the survey in full. This resulted in inconclusive data in the multiple regression for research question number 4, made it challenging to compare differences in perceptions of the role of the school counselor for research question number 3, and limited the overall representation of the sample. This also impacts the generalizability of the study results as this small sample size cannot ethically represent the intended population. It is also possible that the decision to recruit participants during the spring of the academic year made it difficult for administrators to find time to engage in research. Additionally, the length of the survey may have contributed to the level of participatory drop out from the beginning the survey.

Another limitation of this study was that there were two flaws in the percentage of time section of the SCARS Modified (Lane et al., 2020) instrument. The participants were instructed to identify how much time per week they engage and prefer to engage in each category per week. When doing so, they were asked to make the results equal to 100, which would represent 100% of the time spent in all five categories each week. However, the sum of responses in this section for many participants was higher than 100. This caused this section of the data to be skewed. Additionally, the researcher of the current study neglected to include a sliding bar to represent the Coordination Activities section. Therefore, there is no data to report for this component (See Table 6).

Recommendations for Future Research

This study utilized a multiple regression to determine if demographic factors impacted the perception of the role of the school counselor. The findings were inconclusive in determining if years of experience, years in education, enrollment size, or grade level impact the way school counselors or administrators view the role of the school counselor. However, grade level contributed significantly to the model ($F_{(1,3)} = 140.9$, $p = .001$). This suggests that grade level may have an influence on the perception of the role, although more research is needed to support this.

Additionally, it may be beneficial to expand the demographic criteria utilized when determining the impact on the perception of the role of the school counselor. For instance, research has shown that school counselors with higher caseloads also have higher levels of burnout and job dissatisfaction (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Mullen et al., 2021). It may be worth considering how caseload size may have an impact on the perception of the role of the school counselor. Many school counselors are trained in programs that are CACREP accredited (Brandthoover, 2010; Perry et al., 2020). Therefore, it would be interesting to compare the results of individuals who were trained by CACREP programs to those who attended non-CACREP accredited programs. Another possible impact on this perception could be the difference in public and private school settings. The responses of this study were 100% from public entities, which lends itself to question if results would differ if participants worked in another setting.

Furthermore, qualitative research may be helpful in gaining additional insight into how school counseling roles are perceived. This may be helpful in determining themes among the responses provided. Additionally, it may provide a way to increase the stakeholders included in

the sample (i.e., teachers, students, parents, staff members). A qualitative study may also be useful in comparing the direct results within one school system. This would allow a direct comparison between a school counselor and an administrator within the same working dynamic. Lastly, a longitudinal study may be beneficial in identifying changes in the perception of the role of the school counselor over time from both the administrator and school counselor perspective.

Chapter 5

Manuscript

School counselors experience a disconnect between the training provided on the ideal role of the school counselor and the actual job expectations once in a school counseling position (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Mullen et al., 2018). This disconnect in the role of the school counselor has a negative impact on school counselors in various ways; some of which include an increase in role confusion, stress, burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Holman et al., 2019; Mullen et al., 2018). Various stakeholders within the education setting, including administrators, teachers, and parents, each have a different understanding of the role of the school counselor (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Mullen et al., 2018; Ruiz et al., 2019). More specifically, administrators have been found to have differing perspectives on what the role of the school counselor should be (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fye et al., 2018; Fye et al., 2020; Lane et al., 2020; Moyer, 2011; Mullen et al., 2018; Rose, 2019; Ruiz et al., 2019).

Administrators report that while the role of the school counselor as defined by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) is important, so are non-counseling duties (Finkelstein, 2009; Fitch et al., 2001; Ruiz et al., 2019). When school counselors are asked to complete these non-counseling duties, they report higher levels of burn out, job dissatisfaction, stress, role confusion, role ambiguity, exhaustion, and incompetence (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fye et al., 2020; Holman et al., 2019; Moyer, 2011; Mullen et al., 2018). The incongruence between stakeholders on the school counselor role often leaves school counselors experiencing negative consequences such as an increase in non-counseling duties, job demands, exhaustion, stress, and burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Carey et al., 2012; Lapan et al., 2012; Mullen et al., 2018).

When school counselors experience these negative consequences from a discrepancy in the school counselor role, the impact leads to a decrease in direct counseling services, student outcomes, and overall implementation of the ASCA National Model (Carey et al., 2012; Lapan et al., 2012; Moyer, 2011). Therefore, it can be posited that the incongruence between school counselor role perceptions can lead to an increase in non-counseling duties, which causes a myriad of negative consequences to school counselors, and further decreases the productivity of the school counseling program. While it is evident that school counselors experience negative repercussions both personally and professionally from the disconnect between school counselors and administrators on the role of the school counselor (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Carey et al., 2012; Lapan et al., 2012; Mullen et al., 2018), there remains a need to explore where the disconnect lies (Graham et al., 2011; Lane et al., 2020). It is recommended that future research focus on including both school counselors' and administrators' perceptions of the role of the school counselor in the same study (Graham et al., 2011; Ruiz et al., 2019). It may also be helpful to expand and include the perceptions of the role from other school counseling program stakeholders in addition to administrators such as students, teachers, and parents (Ruiz et al., 2019).

ASCA National Model: Framework

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model is a framework established by the American School Counseling Association to guide school counselors into developing a comprehensive school counseling program. The National Model encompasses four main components: define, manage, deliver, and assess (ASCA, 2019c).

School Counselor Role

While these four components constitute the overall framework for the model, the introduction and executive summary of the ASCA (2019c) National Model addresses additional information relevant to the role of school counselors. For instance, the ASCA (2019c) National Model addresses that a school counselor should spend a minimum of eighty percent of time delivering direct or indirect services to students, outlines a recommended student to school counselor ratio of 250:1, and includes a list of appropriate and inappropriate activities for a school counselor to do within the role. The ASCA (2019c) National Model also speaks to the importance of a school counselor role to include serving all students' academic, career, and social and emotional needs through classroom lessons, small groups, and individual sessions. Additionally, the ASCA National Model provides several methods of data collection to identify the needs of students, the current time allocation of school counselors, and methods to adjust this allocation as needed (ASCA, 2019c). This clear outline of the school counselor role provides a grounding platform for school counselors to have a strong understanding of their role and ability to perform required duties.

School Counseling Stakeholders

In a general sense of the word, stakeholders in education can be defined as individuals who have a vested interest in the overall success of the school (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). This can include teachers, administrators, parents, students, school personnel, community members, or other individuals (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). Additional examples of stakeholders specific to school counseling include principals, teachers, and school board members from the internal school community as well as parents, business partners, faith representatives, and college and university personnel from the external school

community (Stone & Dahir, 2016). In the school counseling role, stakeholders help to provide feedback and often resources to the school counseling program (Stone & Dahir, 2016).

A primary stakeholder in the comprehensive school counseling program is the administrator (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Moyer, 2011). Administrators are often responsible for assigning duties to school counselors (Moyer, 2011). Further, administrators have a change in position about every three years (Gates et al., 2003), causing school counselors to have a new set of job duties assigned to them often (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011). With each new administrator, school counselors likely deal with new role assignments and an increase in role conflict (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011). The frequent change in leadership, and thus job expectations, may contribute to the role confusion that school counselors experience (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011).

School Counselor Role Confusion

When school counselors feel an imbalance between duties assigned and expected within an occupation, including duties that other individuals are equally qualified to perform, this is called role confusion or role diffusion (Astromovich et al., 2013; McCarthy et al., 2010). Research has shown that role confusion can develop if strong professional identity is not established (Gibson et al., 2018). Furthermore, Brott and Myers (1999) found that professional identity is negatively impacted as a result of the disconnect between how school counselors are trained and the job expectations in the field. School counselors are trained through a graduate Master's level program, often accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) (Branthoover et al., 2010; Perry et al., 2020). Programs that are accredited through CACREP cover eight common core areas as well as school counseling specific standards (CACREP, 2015). The disconnect in the training school counselors

receive and the expectations after graduation are what leads to role confusion for school counselors (Cinotti, 2014).

Additionally, school counselors are trained by the same curriculum that professional counselors in other specialty areas receive (Gibson et al., 2018). The Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) made an effort to improve the training for school counselors by implementing an updated vision of the role of the school counselor to that of a student-oriented, holistic system approach to be change agents to ensure that all students experience educational equity (Perkins et al., 2010). However, this similarity among curriculum can lead to an internal debate on whether their role is that of a counselor or educator in the school setting (Gibson et al., 2018). A study by Perkins et al. (2010) reports that stakeholders view the predominant role of school counselors as counselors to support the emotional or personal needs of students over the academic or career roles. Yet, in a study by Lane et al. (2020), 89% of administrators stated that they were not familiar with the ASCA National Model, a tool that outlines the expected role of the school counselor.

Administrators' Training of the School Counselor Role

School counselors and administrators are trained in different programs in which the coursework provided is aligned with their specific roles (Carnes-Holt el al., 2012). While there is a focus on collaboration between school counselors and administrators in the school setting, administrators may not be receiving training on the benefits of this collaboration (Perruse et al., n.d., as cited in Perruse et al., 2009; Tygret et al., 2020). Additionally, administrators have reported not feeling adequately trained in how to collaborate with school counselors (Lowrey et al., 2018). Unfortunately, it is common for administrators in training to learn about the role of the school counselor through informal sources, primarily personal experience (Mason & Perera-

Diltz, 2010). The National Policy Board for Educational Administration has produced

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders which outlines the role of administrators

(McConnell et al., 2020; NPBEA, 2015). However, this document neglects to provide specific

instruction on the collaboration with or roles of school counselors (McConnell et al., 2020;

NPBEA, 2015). Administrators may remain unclear on the role of the counselor as it is outlined

by ASCA (Boyland et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2011). Therefore, it may be helpful to overlap the

training that future school counselors and administrators receive (Carnes-Holt el al., 2012;

Perruse et al., 2009; Tygret et al., 2020).

School Counselor Burnout

Burnout has been defined as extensive feelings related to exhaustion, pessimism,

inefficiency, and other negative work-place factors (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). School counselors

experience high levels of burnout as a result of daily job expectations (Bardhoshi et al., 2014;

Fye et al., 2020; Mullen et al., 2018). There has been research to directly connect an increase in

school counselor burnout when school counselors are asked to complete tasks that are labeled as

non-counseling tasks, or tasks that contradict the training that school counselors have received

about their intended role (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fye et al., 2020; Moyer, 2011; Mullen et al.,

2018). When school counselors experience burnout, they have less job satisfaction (Baggerly &

Osborn, 2006; Mullen et al., 2018; Rayle, 2006). This is predominantly a concern for younger

school counselors, a distinction from being novice school counselors (Mullen et al., 2018;

Wilkerson, 2009). Additionally, school counselors with high caseloads experience higher levels

of burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2007; Moyer, 2011). ASCA recommends that the

caseload of students assigned to school counselors, or the school counselor-to-student ratio, be

1:250 (ASCA, 2019c). However, in 2019-2020 only 4% of the United States have met this ideal

ratio, with the national average being 1:424 (ASCA, 2021b). This information supports the increase in burnout that school counselors have experienced.

Statement of the Problem

Stakeholders in the comprehensive counseling program such as administrators, teachers, and parents have conflicting perceptions of the role of the school counselor (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Moyer et al., 2011; Mullen et al., 2018). This controversy on the school counselor role has led to an increase in non-counseling duties assigned to school counselors and school counselor burnout, exhaustion, and stress (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Carey et al., 2012; Cervoni & DeLuca-Waack, 2011; Lapan et al., 2012; Moyer, 2011; Mullen et al., 2018). Research by Cervoni and DeLuca-Waack (2011) posited that the more time that school counselors spent completing non-counseling duties, the less time was spent on the duties that ASCA recommends. Further, the primary indicator of high school counselors' job satisfaction in a study by Cervoni and DeLuca-Waack (2011) was how much time was spent on non-counselor related duties. In addition to job satisfaction, when school counselors have non-counseling tasks assigned to them, they also have increased reports of burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2007; Moyer, 2011). An increase in school counselor burnout leads to school counselors having negative feelings about the work environment, more exhaustion and feelings of incompetency, and increased negativity in their personal lives (Moyer, 2011).

With an increase in non-counseling duties, school counselors also experience an increase in role confusion (Holman et al., 2019). The role confusion that school counselors experience impacts their ability to implement a comprehensive school counseling program (Carey et al., 2012; Lapan et al., 2012; Moyer, 2011). Because the comprehensive school counseling program is developed with the primary goal of supporting the emotional and social, career, and academic

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needs of students (ASCA, 2019c), students are the ones who primarily suffer from an underperforming counseling program (Carey et al., 2012; Lapan et al., 2012). School counselors also suffer from role confusion personally. For instance, Cervoni and DeLuca-Waack (2011) found that when school counselors reported less role confusion, they also reported higher job satisfaction. Therefore, the disconnect in school counselor role assignments impacts the assignment of non-counseling duties, role confusion, and success of the comprehensive counseling program.

Significance of the Study

This study provides critical insight to the disconnect between the way administrators and school counselors view the role of the school counselor. There has been ample evidence to support that there is a disconnect between the perceptions of these two roles (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Brott & Myers, 1999; Cinotti, 2014; Graham et al., 2011; Henderson, 2020; Lane et al., 2020; Monterio-Leitner et al., 2006; Rose, 2019; Ruiz et al., 2019; Unger et al., 2021), with little change in recent studies (Unger et al., 2021). Therefore, this study pinpoints particular differentiating factors. It is crucial for the role of the school counselor to be understood in the field in which they work. This would reduce both school counselor role confusion and school counselor burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fye et al., 2020; Mullen et al., 2018). For instance, in a study by Graham et al. (2011), administrators were surveyed on their familiarity with the role of the school counselor, but authors recommended that school counselors be included in future research to fully compare the perception of the role. This study serves to meet this need by contributing to the research on school counselors' and administrators' roles of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to determine the differences between school counselor and administrator perspectives on the role of the school counselor and how demographic criteria impact these differences. School counselors who graduate from Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited programs are trained using the ASCA National Model (Olsen et al., 2018). However, there is continued evidence of a disconnect between the trained role of the school counselor and the job expectations as a school counselor from administrators (Brott & Myers, 1999; Cinotti, 2014; Havlick et al., 2019; Lane et al., 2020; Mullen et al., 2018; Ruiz et al., 2019; Slaten et al., 2013). Therefore, this study looks at the differences between how the school counselor and administrator view the role of the school counselor.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be utilized for this study:

5. What are administrators' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model?
6. What are school counselors' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model?
7. What are the differences between school counselors' and administrators' perceptions on the role of school counselors?
8. Does perception of the role of the school counselor differ based on demographic criteria?

Methodology

Procedures

Prior to conducting this study, permission was collected from the Auburn University Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Human Subjects. Permission to utilize the adapted SCARS instrument has already been collected from the authors of the survey instrument. Participants

were asked to complete an electronic survey on Qualtrics that contained a demographic form and two measures. This survey was modified with consent from authors: Lane et al. (2020). The survey consisted of five parts of multiple choice, short response, ranking, and slider questions, to include the SCARS instrument.

Instrumentation

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS)

The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) (Scarborough, 2005a) was established by Janna L. Scarborough (2005b) as a reliable scale to measure the differences between how school counselors actually spend their time and how they would prefer to spend their time. This measure includes 48 survey items broken down into five subscales: (a) counseling activities, (b) consultation activities, (c) curriculum activities, (d) coordination activities, and (e) other activities (Scarborough, 2005b). As opposed to using a traditional Likert scale to have participants rate how much they agree with a particular statement, this instrument utilizes a verbal frequency scale to measure how often school counselors spend their time performing each task (Scarborough, 2005b).

SCARS Modified

Lane and colleagues (2020) received permission to adapt the SCARS survey instrument to meet the needs of their study; to measure how familiar administrators were with the duties of school counselors and the school counseling programs. This survey consisted of five parts, one of which included the adapted SCARS instrument. The first section of the survey asked administrators about school counseling national and state programs (three Likert-type questions and six yes or no questions), the program implemented at the participant's current school (four or five multiple choice responses), and responsibility of particular tasks at the participant's current

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school (five open-ended questions) (Lane et al., 2020). The second section of the survey measured appropriate and inappropriate activities through 28 statements taken from ASCA (2019a) (Lane et al., 2020). Participants were asked to rank each of these statements of possible activities as either appropriate, inappropriate, or neutral (Lane et al., 2020).

The third section of the survey consisted of the SCARS instrument, which was adapted slightly in verbiage to accommodate administrators as participants instead of school counselors (Lane et al., 2020). The fourth section of this survey measured the percentage of time perceived and desired for each of the categories within the SCARS instrument (counseling, consultation, curriculum, coordination, and other activities) (Lane et al., 2020). Participants were asked to use a slider to place a percentage of time beside each category that added up to 100% of the school counselors' time for both how much the administrator perceived that a school counselor spends on the tasks and for the administrators' desired amount of time for a school counselor to spend on the tasks (Lane et al., 2020). The fifth and final section of the survey included ten demographic questions about the participant's current school, professional experience, and personal demographic information (Lane et al., 2020).

Demographic Information

Participants were asked to self-report multiple types of demographic data that was used in the data analysis of this study. Participants first identified their current role as a school counselor or administrator. Participants then reported how many years of work experience they have obtained within their specified role as either a school counselor or administrator as well as their total years of experience in the field of education. Participants were asked to include their school level, to determine the impact of the education setting (elementary, middle, high, combination of grade levels, or all grade levels) on the study variables. School enrollment size, whether the

school is classified as public or private, and the school's urban or rural classification were also be collected to determine the impact of these factors. Participants were also asked to provide their identified gender and ethnicity. It was expected that these demographic factors would have an impact on the variables measured in this study as these have aligned in previous research (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2007; Mullen et al., 2018).

Participants

Participants for this study consisted of both currently practicing school counselors and administrators from the state of Alabama. School counselors were invited to participate in the study through statewide professional listservs. Snowballing was encouraged to increase the number of professionals invited to participate in the study. All eligible part-time or full-time administrators (assistant principals or principals) and school counselors (elementary, middle, or high school) in these positions in the state of Alabama were recruited for this study. Participants were limited to school counselors and administrators who have been working in these positions for at least one academic year.

G*Power software (Faul et al., 2007) was utilized to determine the required sample size for this study. Utilizing a priori power analysis for a linear multiple regression, the total sample size needed was 85. The following parameters were used to determine this sample size: medium effect size of ($f = 0.15$), alpha level of $p < 0.05$, and 4 predictors. With 85 total participants, the estimated critical f value is $F(4,80) = 2.49$, $p < 0.05$.

Data Analysis

This study utilized multiple data analysis methods to address each research question. The first and second research questions were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics for the responses of administrators and school counselors individually. This research question was analyzed with a

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factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA). The fourth research question was analyzed using a multiple regression to explain the relationship of school counselors and administrators broken down by demographic factors (years of experience, years in education, enrollment size, and grade level. This study had the following *independent variables*: years of experience, years in education, enrollment size, and grade level. The *dependent variables* in this study were the school counselor and administrator responses on the SCARS instrument. The dependent variables were measured using the sum means of each of the subscales of the SCARS instrument (counseling, consultation, curriculum, coordination, and other activities), as conducted in research by Wilder and Ray (2013).

Results

Of the 51 initial survey responses (n=51), 30 participants (n=30) completed the survey in full. These responses were made up 25 school counselors (n=25) and 5 administrators (n=5). Therefore, this study had a completion rate of 58.8%. The completion rate for school counselors was 69.4% while only 55.6% for administrators. It is also of importance that the participant ratio of school counselor to administrator was 4:1 as there were more school counselor participants (n=36) than administrator participants (n=9).

Research Question 1: What are administrators' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model?

When comparing the responses from administrators to the list of appropriate and inappropriate school counselor duties, administrators averaged a score of 1.45, with 2 being the score assigned to duties as they aligned with the ASCA NM. Table 3 shows the average administrator and school counselor responses to each item within the survey as it corresponds to the ASCA NM list of appropriate and inappropriate school counselor activities.

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Table 5 outlines a summary of the SCARS mean responses from both administrators and school counselors for actual and preferred activities based on the subscale means. Recall that the SCARS instrument utilized a frequency rating scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing a low frequency and 5 a high frequency of a function (Scarborough, 2005b). The results from comparing the scores of the SCARS instrument suggested that administrators prefer for school counselors to be frequently performing curriculum activities ($M = 4.00$), while only occasionally performing all other activities (Counseling, $M = 3.60$; Consultation, $M = 3.29$; Coordination, $M = 3.69$; "Other", $M = 3.04$). Table 4 outlines the item means reported by administrators and school counselors. These results suggest that administrators prefer that as part of the role of the school counselor, school counselors limit their engagement in these activities.

When reviewing the administrators' responses to how much time they would prefer that school counselors spend in each category of activities, administrators favored counseling. As shown in Table 6, administrators preferred that school counselors spend about half of their time counseling ($M = 48.00$), about a third of their time providing curriculum ($M = 32.00$), about a fifth of their time consulting ($M = 20.00$), and a small percentage of time doing "other" activities ($M = 6.00$).

Research Question 2: What are school counselors' perceptions on the role of the school counselor in relation to the ASCA National Model?

School counselors' average responses on the list of appropriate or inappropriate activities for school counselors is located in Table 3. The overall average for school counselors on all items was $M = 1.68$. This study found that school counselors agree with the ASCA's list of appropriate and inappropriate duties for school counselors.

After reviewing school counselors' responses to the SCARS instrument, as shown in Table 5, school counselors prefer to engage in counseling and curriculum activities frequently (M = 4.10, M = 4.38). While school counselors reported a preference for engaging in consultation and coordination activities occasionally (M = 3.59, M = 3.87), they only rarely preferred to engage in "other" activities (M = 2.26). Table 4 outlines school counselors' itemized results for this instrument.

As Table 6 reports, school counselors preferred to spend their time with students. School counselors indicated a preference of spending about half their time counseling (M = 43.75), about a third of their time providing curriculum activities (M = 36.40), about 18% of their time consulting (M = 17.60), and about 7% of their time completing "other" activities (M = 7.20).

Research Question 3: What are the differences between school counselors' and administrators' perceptions on the role of school counselors?

To determine differences between the perceptions of school counselors and administrators on the role of school counselors, data results were sorted into two groups based on how each participant responded to their current role (school counselor or administrator). Sum means were used to develop independent variables for this study, as was done by Wilder and Ray (2013). This allowed for a factorial ANOVA to be conducted to compare the main effects of actual and preferred activities (IV) and their interaction effects on school counselors and administrator responses (DV).

The effects of actual scores were not statistically significant ($p = 0.66$), but the effects of preferred scores were statistically significant ($p = 0.05$). Therefore, the effect size of preferred scores indicated that they account for 100% of the variance in the school counselor and administrator responses ($F_{(1, 27)} = 4.12$, $p = 0.05$). This also explains why there was no

significance in the effect of actual scores ($F_{(1, 27)} = 0.19$, $p = 0.66$) or the interaction of actual and preferred scores ($F_{(1, 27)} = 1.43$, $p = 0.24$). The assumptions of a factorial ANOVA were also tested. A Levene's test was conducted and homogeneity of variances was found ($F_{(1, 27)} = 1.95$, $p = 0.17$). Histograms were utilized to graph and confirm the normality of sample and residuals.

Research Question 4: Does perception of the role of the school counselor differ based on demographic criteria?

A multiple regression was completed to determine if demographic criteria (IV) could statistically significantly predict administrator responses (DV). The specific demographic criteria observed were years of experience, years in education, enrollment size, and grade level. Sum means were used to develop independent variables for this study, as was done by Wilder and Ray (2013). A participant's sum mean was collected by averaging their responses in one category and then adding among each subscale to obtain one score per participant. Sum mean scores were obtained for responses on each of the following SCARS subscales: counseling activities, consultation activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities, and other activities.

The final predictive model was as follows: Administrator Responses = 8.90 + (0.80*Years of Experience) + (0.10*Years in Education) + (0.60*Enrollment Size) + (5.13*Grade Level). The results indicated that the model explained 100% of the proportion of variation ($R^2 = 1.00$), whereas years of experience explains about 63% ($R^2 = 0.63$), years in education explains about 16% ($R^2 = 0.16$), enrollment size explains about 29% ($R^2 = 0.29$), and grade level explains about 98% ($R^2 = 0.98$) of SCARS responses. The model was not a significant predictor of administrator's SCARS responses as the results were inconclusive ($F_{(4, 0)}$ = NaN, p = NA). The results being inconclusive is likely explained by the small participant sample (n = 30) and lack of reaching G*Power target sample size (n = 85). Grade level

contributed significantly to the model ($F_{(1,3)} = 140.9$, $p = .001$); however, years of experience

($F_{(1, 3)} = 5.06$, $p = .11$), years in education ($F_{(1,3)} = 0.59$, $p = .49$), and enrollment size ($F_{(2,2)} = 0.41$, $p = .71$) did not contribute significantly to the model. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that

grade level has an impact on administrators' perception of the role of the school counselor,

although additional research is needed to determine this.

Results Summary

This study aimed to identify differences between the perception of the role of school

counselors of both administrators and school counselors. The SCARS and SCARS Modified

instrumentations were utilized to achieve this goal. The results demonstrated that there are not

statistically significant effects in the perceptions of the role of the school counselor by

administrators and school counselors when comparing both actual and preferred scores.

However, there are small differences of note such as the statistically significant effect of

preferred scores on the school counselor and administrator responses. Additionally, the results

were inconclusive to determine how demographic criteria impact the perception of the role of the

school counselor.

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Discussion

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This study focused on the role of the school counselor and how administrators and school

counselors perceive this role. The first two research questions of this study aimed to determine

how administrators and school counselors perceive the role of the school counselor in relation to

the ASCA National Model respectively. The third research question sought to determine if

differences existed between the way school counselors and administrators perceived the role of

the school counselor. While the overall effects were not proven to be statistically significant, the

results suggest that preferred scores effect how school counselors and administrators perceive the

role of the school counselor. Lastly, the fourth research question aimed to consider the impact of demographic criteria on the perception of the role of the school counselor. The specific demographic criteria considered in this study include the following: years of experience, total years of experience in the field of education, school enrollment size, and grade levels served. These results were inconclusive in determining the effect of demographic criteria on the perception of the role of the school counselor as a result of the small sample size.

As part of the SCARS Modified instrument (Lane, 2020), participants were given items from the ASCA National Model list of appropriate and inappropriate activities for school counselors (ASCA, 2019a). There was only one item in which both administrators and school counselors completely agreed with the ASCA National Model: "Providing short-term individual and small-group counseling services to students" (See Table 3, Item 21; M = 2.0). It is a positive finding that there is agreeance among administrators and school counselors that school counselors should be providing individual and small-group counseling to students. However, it is also a testament to the differences among these perceptions of the role that this is the singular response in which both groups of participants fully agreed with the ASCA National Model.

However, there were other items in which school counselors and administrators did not fully agree with the ASCA National Model, yet their responses were in agreeance with one another. For instance, the item "Providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent" (See Table 3, Item 6) was scored similar for both administrators (M = 1.71) and school counselors (M = 1.68). This suggests that while both groups agree with the ASCA National Model, they have a stronger agreeance with one another (range = 0.03). Therefore, the results suggest that while both groups have somewhat differing opinions, and differing opinions from the ASCA National Model, there are specific items in which they agree with one another.

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Desired Activities for School Counselors

The SCARS Modified (Lane et al., 2020) instrument was utilized to determine how often school counselors and administrators sought for school counselors to engage in particular activities. The results of this instrument suggested that administrators want school counselors to be engaging in these activities more often than they believe that they currently are (Actual Mean < Preferred Mean). While school counselors agree for most categories of activities, school counselors desire to do less in the "Other" Activities category than they currently are (Actual M = 3.03, Prefer M = 2.26). The specific activities in which school counselors feel the strongest desire to engage less often are as follows: "Respond to health issues (e.g. check for live, eye screening, 504 coordination)" (Table 4, Subscale "Other" Activities, Item 4, Range = 1.87), "Coordinate the standardized testing program" (Table 4, Subscale "Other" Activities, Item 2, Range = 1.86), and "Perform hall, bus, and cafeteria duty" (Table 4, Subscale "Other" Activities, Item 5, Range = 1.53). For each of these tasks, school counselors feel as though they are actually engaging in these tasks occasionally (M ≈ 3.00), and desire to engage in these tasks either never (M ≈ 1.00) or rarely (M ≈ 2.00). However, administrators prefer that school counselors engage in testing coordination frequently (M ≈ 4.00) and rarely (M ≈ 2.00) respond to health issues or engage in shared duties.

Another finding is that school counselors believe to be engaging in activities more often than administrators believe that they are. For instance, administrators reported that school counselors are rarely (M ≈ 2.00) engaging in consultation, curriculum, and "other" activities, whereas school counselors believe they are engaging in these activities occasionally (M ≈ 3.00). School counselors and administrators believe that school counselors are engaging in counseling

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and coordination activities occasionally (M ≈ 3.00), but school counselors rated actual

engagement in these activities higher than administrators did.

Differences in Perceptions of Role

The main method of determining differences in how school counselors and administrators

perceive the role of the school counselor was done through a factorial ANOVA. While these

results suggested no statistically significant difference in how these two groups perceive this

role, there are slight differences in the way these two groups responded to the survey.

The results from the appropriate and inappropriate duties of the school counselor section

of the survey suggest that there are some activities in which school counselors and administrators

disagree. As previously mentioned, these results directly respond to the groups' agreeance

towards the ASCA National Model as well. There are 6 items in which the school counseling

group scored the task as agreeing with the ASCA National Model (N > 1) while the administrator

group scored the task as disagreeing with the ASCA National Model (N < 1), and one item in

which the administrator group scored the task as neutral in agreeance with the ASCA National

Model (N = 1.00). These findings suggest that the following tasks are viewed by administrators

as appropriate for school counselors but are viewed as inappropriate by school counselors

themselves and the ASCA National Model: a) student record keeping, b) new student data entry,

c) student grade calculations, d) school-wide testing organization, and e) coordination of school-

wide MTSS programs. For the following tasks, school counselors agree with the ASCA National

Model as this being an appropriate activity for their role while administrators disagree: a)

counseling students with disciplinary concerns, b) assisting teachers with rapport building,

classroom management, and overall student success.

Based on the SCARS results (see Table 4), both school counselors and administrators agree that the school counselor role should include counseling activities; however, there is a difference of agreement in how often to engage in these specific behaviors. School counselors reported a desire to engage in counseling activities frequently (M = 4.10), while administrators reported a preference for school counselors to provide counseling services only occasionally (M = 3.60). Yet, when reviewing how both groups responded to the percentage of time portion of the instrument (see Table 6), administrators prefer for school counselors to engage in counseling services approximately half of the day (M = 48.00). School counselors believe to actually be providing counseling services (M = 38.40) less often than administrators perceive them to be (M = 46.00), and only want to be engaging in counseling activities about 44% of the time (M = 43.75). This is likely a result of the ASCA National Model recommendation that school counselors spend 80% of their time engaging in direct or indirect services to benefit students (ASCA, 2019c).

Implications of Research Findings

Targeted ASCA training is needed for both school counselors and administrators

In the appropriate and inappropriate school counselor duties section of the survey, the findings suggest that the school counseling group did not fully align with the ASCA National Model either. School counselors agreed with all appropriate and inappropriate activities overall (N > 1), and agreed more strongly than administrators did, with an average of 1.68 compared to the administrators' overall group average of 1.45. However, when school counselors are trained with the ASCA National Model in CACREP accredited programs (Branthoover et al., 2010; Perry et al., 2020), it can be hypothesized that these individuals would score in more agreeance with the ASCA National Model. It is possible that these findings are skewed. There were 105

instances when a school counselor marked an item in this portion of the survey as "neutral,"

which means that each school counselor rated approximately 3 items as neutral when taking the

survey (n = 2.92). While this number may seem low, this is approximately 10% of the items in

which school counselors either did not have a strong opinion or were unsure whether the activity

listed should be considered appropriate or inappropriate for their role. It is possible that school

counselors need additional training in the use of the ASCA National Model themselves.

Additionally, participants were asked in the survey to rate how familiar they found

themselves to be with the ASCA National Model. The responses were coded such that "Not

familiar at all" = 0, "Not very familiar" = 1, "Familiar" = 2, and "Very familiar" = 3. School

counselors reported feeling familiar (M = 2.52) with the ASCA National Model. This further

supports the idea that school counselors may need additional training in the ASCA National

Model themselves. This may be helpful to be provided in the form of professional supervision.

Many school counselors reportedly lack professional supervision (Zalewski, 2022) or targeted

professional development for school counselors (Griffen & Hallett, 2017), and this may be a

great way to fill that gap.

Administrators reported feeling not very familiar (M = 1.88) with the ASCA National

Model. As a result, it is critical that administrators receive proper training in the ASCA National

Model because this is the tool being used to train school counselors within their school programs.

Administrators can learn more about the ASCA National Model through webinars, conferences,

or even collaborative team meetings with the school counselor at their own school or district.

The ASCA National Model (2019c) supports this idea and teaches school counselors to hold an

"Annual Administrative Conference" in which these concerns could be addressed. This

conference or meeting is intended to be a time to outline the goals of the school counseling

comprehensive program, address any limitations or needs of the program, and foster

collaboration between these two roles (ASCA, 2019c). This would be a good time for school

counselors to model the role of the school counselor, and for the administrator to bridge any gaps

in their own knowledge of the ASCA National Model.

School counselors and administrators need open communication and formally outlined role expectations

This study found that administrators do not feel very familiar (M = 1.88) with the ASCA

National Model. While increasing administrators' knowledge about the ASCA National Model is

a step in the right direction, administrators and school counselors also need to have formalized

conversations about how the ASCA National Model will be integrated into the school

counselor's role at their school. This study found that there are some specific activities in which

school counselors and administrators agree more with one another than they do with the ASCA

National Model (See Table 3, Item 6). There are also some instances in which school counselors

and administrators have differing perceptions on how much time school counselors are and

should be spending on certain activities (See Table 6). While school counselors and

administrators can increase their own understanding of the ASCA National Model, they should

also increase their communication with one another to ensure a collaborative approach to the

comprehensive school counseling program.

It is important to note that open communication between administrators and school

counselors needs to include the perception of a safe space in which both parties feel respected

and valued when expressing agreement and disagreement (Lawrence & Stone, 2019). Some

examples for ways to increase this open communication include asking administrators to serve

on the advisory council, as recommended by ASCA (ASCA, 2019c); holding weekly or bi-

weekly check-in meetings between administrators and school counselors within a school or district, and holding debriefing opportunities after professional development related to the ASCA National Model. Increasing open communication between school counselors and administrators on the role expectations for school counselors would lead to an increase in unified perspectives.

In addition to increasing communication, school counselors and administrators should also formally outline specific role expectations. The ASCA National Model (2019c) provides an outline or template for the suggested Annual Administrative Conference. This template, to be filled out by the school counselor and then discussed during the meeting, consists of the following components: priorities and goals of the school counseling comprehensive program, school counselor use of time analysis, ratio and caseload size, the comprehensive program plan to address student needs (based on student data), professional development plan, and school and district responsibilities (ASCA, 2019c). While all of these components are great for minimizing role confusion, a primary tool of focus should be the section related to school and district responsibilities. This section might include responsibilities associated with bus duty, testing, 504 planning, Response to Intervention, or advisory council. It also allows for school counselors and administrators to be clear about the time commitment requirements of each activity, as well as the overall time that school counselors should be spending in each category (direct or indirect services, program planning, or non-school counseling duties). Providing a document with clear role expectations can increase the ability for both parties to have open communication about these expectations. In turn, this would reduce both school counselor role confusion and school counselor burnout (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fye et al., 2020; Mullen et al., 2018).

Administrator and school counseling students-in-training need collaborative educational
opportunities

School counseling and educational leadership educators can also be intentional to integrate collaborations between program coursework as well. There are numerous opportunities to provide collaboration between these programs. For instance, school counseling and educational leadership students could engage in a group project or presentation in which they both train the other students on their roles and training, establish ways that each role could collaborate with one another throughout the year, and build a sample annual plan of collaboration. This could include components of several CACREP (2015) standards: "school counselor roles in school leadership and multidisciplinary teams," (5.G.2.d.), "competencies to advocate for school counseling roles," (5.G.2.f.), "development of school counseling program mission statements and objectives," (5.G.3.a.), "design and evaluation of school counseling programs" (5.G.3.b.), "techniques to foster collaboration and teamwork within schools," (5.G.3.l.), "use of accountability data to inform decision making," (5.G.3.n.) and "use of data to advocate for programs and students," (5.G.3.o.).

While these are suggestions for collaboration, these are only some ways that students could engage with one another. Faculty can also organize for students to attend a class from the other program; invite guest speakers of students, recently graduated students, or faculty from the other program to speak on a specific topic; develop collaborative assignments across courses; or integrate role play or other hands-on activities across courses, giving students practice interacting with one-another. These teaching tools would be a great way to increase advocacy skills, basic content knowledge of the other profession, and provide networking opportunities for students. Previous scholarship has also supported the idea of collaboration between training programs for

future school counselors and administrators (Carnes-Holt el al., 2012; Perruse et al., 2009; Tygret et al., 2020). This would encourage the overlap in training for both school counselors and administrators moving forward.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the limited number of survey participants. There were only 9 administrators and 36 school counselors who contributed to the survey. This unequal distribution of participants could have impacted the data analysis of this study. Additionally, the G*Power software (Faul et al., 2007) utilized recommended a sample size of 85 participants, of which only 30 were obtained to complete the survey in full. This resulted in inconclusive data in the multiple regression for research question number 4, made it challenging to compare differences in perceptions of the role of the school counselor for research question number 3, and limited the overall representation of the sample. This also impacts the generalizability of the study results as this small sample size cannot ethically represent the intended population. It is also possible that the decision to recruit participants during the spring of the academic year made it difficult for administrators to find time to engage in research. Additionally, the length of the survey may have contributed to the level of participatory drop out from the beginning the survey.

Another limitation of this study was that there were two flaws in the percentage of time section of the SCARS Modified (Lane et al., 2020) instrument. The participants were instructed to identify how much time per week they engage and prefer to engage in each category per week. When doing so, they were asked to make the results equal to 100, which would represent 100% of the time spent in all five categories each week. However, the sum of responses in this section for many participants was higher than 100. This caused this section of the data to be skewed.

Additionally, the researcher neglected to include a sliding bar to represent the Coordination Activities section. Therefore, there is no data to report for this component (See Table 6).

Recommendations for Future Research

This study utilized a multiple regression to determine if demographic factors impacted the perception of the role of the school counselor. The findings were inconclusive in determining if years of experience, years in education, enrollment size, or grade level impact the way school counselors or administrators view the role of the school counselor. However, grade level contributed significantly to the model ($F_{(1,3)} = 140.9$, $p = .001$). This suggests that grade level may have an influence on the perception of the role, although more research is needed to support this.

Additionally, it may be beneficial to expand the demographic criteria utilized when determining the impact on the perception of the role of the school counselor. For instance, research has shown that school counselors with higher caseloads also have higher levels of burnout and job dissatisfaction (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Mullen et al., 2021). It may be worth considering how caseload size may have an impact on the perception of the role of the school counselor. Many school counselors are trained in programs that are CACREP accredited (Brandthoover, 2010; Perry et al., 2020). Therefore, it would be interesting to compare the results of individuals who were trained by CACREP programs to those who attended non-CACREP accredited programs. Another possible impact on this perception could be the difference in public and private school settings. The responses of this study were 100% from public entities, which lends itself to question if results would differ if participants worked in another setting.

Furthermore, qualitative research may be helpful in gaining additional insight into how school counseling roles are perceived. This may be helpful in determining themes among the responses provided. Additionally, it may provide a way to increase the stakeholders included in the sample (i.e., teachers, students, parents, staff members). A qualitative study may also be useful in comparing the direct results within one school system. This would allow a direct comparison between a school counselor and an administrator within the same working dynamic. Lastly, a longitudinal study may be beneficial in identifying changes in the perception of the role of the school counselor over time from both the administrator and school counselor perspective.

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Table 1

Demographic Information

Characteristic			N	Percentage (n=45)
Current Role	School Counselor		36	80.0%
	Administrator	Admin	8	17.8%
		District	1	2.2%
		Total	9	20.0%
Gender	Male	SC	2	4.4%
		Admin	1	2.2%
		Total	3	6.7%
	Female	SC	34	75.6%
		Admin	8	17.8%
		Total	42	93.3%
Ethnicity	White or Caucasian	SC	28	62.2%
		Admin	7	15.6%
		Total	35	77.8%
	Black or African American	SC	5	11.1%
		Admin	2	4.4%
		Total	7	15.6%
	Native American	SC	1	2.2%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	1	2.2%
	Latino/a or Hispanic	SC	2	4.4%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	2	4.4%
Enrollment Size	Under 250 Students	SC	6	13.3%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	6	13.3%
	250 - 500 Students	SC	11	24.4%
		Admin	5	11.1%
		Total	16	35.6%
	500 – 750 Students	SC	5	11.1%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	5	11.1%
	750 – 1000 Students	SC	9	20.0%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	9	20.0%
	1000 – 1250 Students	SC	3	6.7%
		Admin	1	2.2%
		Total	4	8.9%
	1250 – 1500 Students	SC	1	2.2%

		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	1	2.2%
	1500 – 1750 Students	SC	1	2.2%
		Admin	1	2.2%
		Total	2	4.4%
	1750 – 2000 Students	SC	0	0.0%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	0	0.0%
	2000 – 2250 Students	SC	0	0.0%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	0	0.0%
	2250 – 2500 Students	SC	0	0.0%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	0	0.0%
	Over 2500 Students	SC	0	0.0%
		Admin	2	4.4%
		Total	2	4.4%
	Unsure	SC	0	0.0%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	0	0.0%
School	Public	SC	36	80.0%
		Admin	9	20.0%
		Total	45	100.0%
	Private	SC	0	0.0%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	0	0.0%
	Unsure	SC	0	0.0%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	0	0.0%
School Classification	Urban	SC	2	4.4%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	2	4.4%
	Rural	SC	19	42.2%
		Admin	6	13.3%
		Total	25	55.6%
	Suburban	SC	13	28.9%
		Admin	3	6.7%
		Total	16	35.6%
	Unsure	SC	2	4.4%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	2	4.4%
Grade Level	Elementary School (P-6)	SC	13	28.9%
		Admin	0	0.0%
		Total	13	28.9%

Middle School (6-8)	SC	7	15.6%
	Admin	0	0.0%
	Total	7	15.6%
High School (9-12)	SC	10	22.2%
	Admin	3	6.7%
	Total	13	28.9%
Elementary/Middle Combination (P-8)	SC	5	11.1%
	Admin	1	2.2%
	Total	6	13.3%
Middle/High Combination (6-12)	SC	1	2.2%
	Admin	2	4.4%
	Total	3	6.7%
All Grade Levels (P-12)	SC	0	0.0%
	Admin	3	6.7%
	Total	3	6.7%

Table 2

Participant Years of Experience

Specifier	Responses Collected	SC *Frequency*	Admin *Frequency*	Total (n=45)	
				Frequency	*%*
Years as a Counselor	0	0	4	4	8.9%
	1	1	0	1	2.2%
	2	3	0	3	6.7%
	3	1	0	1	2.2%
	4	3	1	4	8.9%
	5	2	1	3	6.7%
	6	5	1	6	13.3%
	7	1	0	1	2.2%
	8	3	0	3	6.7%
	9	3	1	4	8.9%
	10	2	0	2	4.4%
	12	3	0	3	6.7%
	13	0	1	1	2.2%
	15	2	0	2	4.4%
	16	1	0	1	2.2%
	18	1	0	1	2.2%
	19	2	0	2	4.4%
	22	1	0	1	2.2%
	23	1	0	1	2.2%
	25	1	0	1	2.2%
Years as an Administrator	0	32	0	32	71.1%
	1	1	0	1	2.2%
	3	0	2	2	4.4%
	4	1	0	1	2.2%
	6	2	2	4	8.9%
	8	0	2	2	4.4%
	9	0	1	1	2.2%
	10	0	1	1	2.2%
	15	0	1	1	2.2%
Years in Field of Education	2	2	0	2	4.4%
	3	1	0	1	2.2%
	4	1	0	1	2.2%
	5	1	0	1	2.2%
	6	3	0	3	6.7%
	7	1	0	1	2.2%
	8	2	0	2	4.4%
	9	3	0	3	6.7%

10	2	0	2	4.4%
11	1	1	2	4.4%
12	1	0	1	2.2%
14	1	0	1	2.2%
15	2	1	3	6.7%
16	0	1	1	2.2%
18	2	1	3	6.7%
19	1	0	1	2.2%
20	1	0	1	2.2%
22	1	0	1	2.2%
23	2	0	2	4.4%
25	2	0	2	4.4%
26	2	1	3	6.7%
27	0	1	1	2.2%
29	1	1	2	4.4%
30	2	0	2	4.4%
32	0	1	1	2.2%
34	1	1	2	4.4%

Table 3

Results: Appropriate and Inappropriate School Counselor Duties

Item		ASCA Rating	Mean Responses	
			Admin	SC
1	Consulting with teachers about building classroom connections, effective classroom management and the role of noncognitive factors in student success	A	1.00	1.47
2	Maintaining student records	I	0.57	1.13
3	Interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests	A	1.71	1.39
4	Analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement	A	2.00	1.55
5	Keeping clerical records	I	1.14	1.58
6	Providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent	A	1.71	1.68
7	Performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences	I	2.00	1.87
8	Consulting with the school principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems	A	1.86	2.00
9	Assisting with duties in the principal's office	I	1.57	1.65
10	Advisement and appraisal for academic planning	A	2.00	1.77
11	Supervising classrooms or common areas	I	1.14	1.81
12	Providing long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders	I	1.00	1.65
13	Advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams, and school attendance review boards	A	1.57	1.87
14	Analyzing disaggregated schoolwide and school counseling program data	A	1.86	2.00
15	Serving as a data entry clerk	I	1.43	1.90
16	Coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs	I	0.71	1.29
17	Coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students	I	0.71	1.61
18	Providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems	A	1.57	1.97
19	Building the master schedule	I	1.43	1.68
20	Consulting with teachers to schedule and present school counseling curriculum lessons based on developmental needs and needs identified through data	A	1.86	1.94
21	Providing short-term individual and small- group counseling services to students	A	2.00	2.00

22	Coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, 504 plans, student study teams, response to intervention plans, MTSS and school attendance review boards	I	0.43	1.61
23	Protecting student records and information per state and federal regulations	A	1.86	1.55
24	Signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent	I	2.00	1.81
25	Covering classes when teachers are absent or to create teacher planning time	I	1.29	1.90
26	Computing grade-point averages	I	0.57	1.26
27	Interpreting student records	A	1.71	1.26
28	Orientation, coordination and academic advising for new students	A	2.00	1.77

Note: The column named "ASCA Rating" signifies which column these items are listed in the ASCA National Model chart for Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors (ASCA, 2019a). Items above deemed A are listed as "Appropriate" and items deemed I are listed as "Inappropriate" (ASCA, 2019a).

Table 4

Results: SCARS

Item		Mean Responses			
		Admin		SC	
		Act.	Pref.	Act.	Pref.
Subscale: Counseling Activities					
1	Counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns	4.00	3.80	4.73	4.85
2	Counsel with students regarding school behavior	3.00	3.00	4.47	4.62
3	Counsel students regarding academic issues	4.40	4.40	4.07	4.31
4	Counsel students regarding crisis/emergency issues	4.00	4.00	4.20	4.62
5	Counsel with students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)	3.80	3.80	4.73	4.58
6	Provide small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	3.20	4.00	3.00	3.85
7	Provide small group counseling for academic issues	3.20	4.00	2.87	3.67
8	Conduct small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)	2.40	3.00	3.20	3.92
9	Conduct small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own use or family/friend use)	2.20	2.20	1.67	2.45
10	Follow-up on individual and group counseling participants	3.40	3.80	3.60	4.08
	Mean	3.36	3.60	3.65	4.10
Subscale: Consultation Activities					
1	Consult with school staff concerning student behavior	3.20	4.00	4.60	4.54
2	Consult with community and school agencies concerning individual students	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.85
3	Consult with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues	3.80	4.00	3.73	4.00
4	Coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	3.40	3.60	3.60	4.08
5	Assist in identifying exceptional children (special education)	2.00	2.60	2.93	2.58
6	Provide consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.17
7	Participate in team / grade level / subject team meetings	1.80	2.20	2.87	2.92
	Mean	2.97	3.29	3.48	3.59
Subscale: Curriculum Activities					
1	Conduct classroom activities to introduce yourself and explain the counseling program to all students	3.00	4.20	4.20	4.62
2	Conduct classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	3.00	3.80	3.93	4.46
3	Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/ or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)	2.60	4.00	4.00	4.62

4	Conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues	3.00	4.20	3.80	4.62
5	Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution	3.00	4.20	3.47	4.38
6	Conduct classroom lessons regarding substance abuse	2.00	3.40	3.20	3.83
7	Conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues	3.00	4.20	3.80	4.15
	Mean	2.80	4.00	3.77	4.38
Subscale: Coordination Activities					
1	Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	2.80	3.60	3.53	4.23
2	Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program	4.20	4.40	4.40	4.92
3	Inform parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	3.80	4.00	3.87	4.42
4	Conduct or coordinate parent education classes or workshops	2.60	3.20	2.40	3.83
5	Coordinate school-wide response for crisis management and intervention	3.00	3.20	2.87	3.50
6	Inform teachers / administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school.	3.00	3.80	2.67	4.00
7	Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs	1.40	2.60	2.53	2.58
8	Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform	3.25	3.75	3.40	3.62
9	Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local in-services)	3.60	4.00	4.00	3.85
10	Coordinate with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	3.00	3.80	2.87	3.62
11	Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives	3.00	3.60	3.27	3.77
12	Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students	3.40	4.00	3.87	4.17
13	Coordinate orientation process / activities for students	4.00	4.00	3.67	3.83
	Mean	3.16	3.69	3.33	3.87
Subscale: "Other" Activities					
1	Participate on committees within the school	3.20	3.60	3.87	4.17
2	Coordinate the standardized testing program	4.40	4.40	3.53	1.67
3	Organize outreach to low income families (i.e., Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)	2.80	3.20	4.07	3.85
4	Respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	2.60	2.80	3.87	2.00
5	Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty	1.60	2.60	3.20	1.67
6	Schedule students for classes	4.00	3.40	3.27	3.00

7	Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school	3.60	3.60	2.13	1.62
8	Maintain/Complete educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)	3.80	3.80	2.60	1.67
9	Handle discipline of students	1.40	1.20	1.80	1.64
10	Substitute teach and / or cover classes for teachers at your school	1.80	1.80	1.93	1.29
	Mean	2.92	3.04	3.03	2.26

Table 5

Results: SCARS Summary

Subscale	Mean Responses			
	Admin		**SC**	
	Act.	**Pref.**	**Act.**	**Pref.**
Counseling Activities	3.36	3.60	3.65	4.10
Consultation Activities	2.97	3.29	3.48	3.59
Curriculum Activities	2.80	4.00	3.77	4.38
Coordination Activities	3.16	3.69	3.33	3.87
"Other" Activities	2.92	3.04	3.03	2.26

Table 6

Results: Percentage of Time based on SCARS

Item		Mean Responses			
		Admin		SC	
		Act.	Pref.	Act.	Pref.
1	Counseling Activities (individual, group, etc.)	46.00	48.00	38.40	43.75
2	Consultation Activities (school staff, community partners, etc.)	20.00	20.00	18.00	17.60
3	Curriculum Activities (classroom guidance on career, personal/social, and academic issues)	32.00	32.00	25.60	36.40
4	Coordination Activities (special events, training, etc.).	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	Other Activities (committee participation, respond to health concerns, discipline students, hallway monitoring)	10.00	6.00	20.40	7.20

Figure 1

Participant Flow

Assessed for eligibility (n=51)

Excluded (n=6): Declined to participate (n=1), No responses (n=5)

Survey Responses (n=45)

School Counselors (n=36)

Administrators (n=9): Administrators (n=8), District Administrator (n=1)

Demographics (n=36)

Demographics (n=9)

SC Programs (n=32)

SC Programs (n=8)

Appropriate/Inappropriate Duties (n=31)

Appropriate/Inappropriate Dutes (n=7)

SCARS (n=25)

SCARS (n=5)

Percentage of Time (n=25)

Percentage of Time (n=5)