PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS TOWARD THEIR PROFESSIONAL ROLES

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School counselors have an enormous impact on student achievement and attainment (Education Trust, 2005). From the courses students take to the goals they set and paths they pursue, school counselors are powerful forces in their schools and in the lives of students (Education Trust). Yet, school counselors have been left out of the dialogue and action of the standards-based reform movement. Those entering this challenging field today are often left unprepared to serve as effective advocates for all students (Education Trust).

School counselors are charged with a number of duties within the school setting (Burnham & Jackson, 2000). These duties range from administrative, educational, and counseling services to any number of other situations that might arise within the school setting (Burnham & Jackson). While school administrators, teachers, parents, and other individuals often view the school counselor's role differently (Cole, 1991), ultimately the primary source of continuity would be expected to be found within the population of school counselors themselves. However, researchers have shown that school counselors have differing views about their role and how to best utilize their time and skills (Burnham & Jackson). It is of critical importance that counselors know what is needed from them and

their professional abilities. Some school counselors over the years may have encountered difficulty with the boundaries and definition of their job description due to the continued expansion of their role. For example, some counselors view mental health counseling as a vital part of their role, while others discount counseling as part of their duties. That is, some school counselors may think that issues within their job description are beyond their educational preparation. In some cases, the school counselor appropriately refers children to outside sources for further professional care; however, in many instances these issues could be managed by the individual school counselor within the boundaries of ethical school counseling guidelines and their professional preparation. For example, if a school counselor has referred a student engaging in self-mutilation because he or she is not properly educated in this area, the school counselor would be acting ethically to refer to a professional. However, if a school counselor refers a student who is struggling with feelings of depression, the school counselor should be prepared for handling this situation based on the guidelines by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2005).

Perceptions play a large role when counselors consider the best way to utilize their time and skills. For example, the American School Counseling Association lists broad categories of critical school counseling roles, which include foundation, delivery, management, and accountability (ASCA, 2005). If the school counselor views the foundation category as the most important role, he or she focuses on this role more than any other aspect of counseling.

Furthermore, perceptions play another role as school counselors evaluate their skill and competence to perform a particular task (Bandura, 1995). Self efficacy has been shown to be an important aspect of successful teaching, counseling, and coping with change

(Bandura; Larson & Daniels, 1998). However, counselor self efficacy is a relatively new area for theory and research, and although the theoretical constructs seem to fit; there are no definitive studies on how counseling self efficacy affects counselor performance (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). Holcomb (2004) states, "When we are overwhelmed with all the things we know we *should* do, we resort to completing the things we know we *can* do. It is the only way we can maintain the illusion that we are in control of our professional lives" (p. 30). For many situations school counselors are qualified to administer psychological services to children. Unfortunately school counselors feel a reluctance to do so due to issues relating to perceptions of his or her ability or time constraints (Holcomb, 2004). Self efficacy is a concept that originates in Bandura's social cognitive theory. The concept of the self has returned as a hallmark within the arena of academic investigations, particularly how the self relates to adolescent achievement levels (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). An investigation of the relationship of the self to professional role will reveal insight into the professional roles of school counselors.

The practice of school counseling is in the midst of dramatic transformations reflecting a move to a standards-based model of education (Dimmitt, Carey & Hatch, 2007). In 1996, the Education Trust initiated a project to transform the role of school counselors by connecting school counseling to standards-based education reform and by focusing the profession of school counseling on the goal of eliminating the achievement gap. The Education Trust collaborated with the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund to develop a national agenda to improve school counseling. They conducted a 14-month national assessment that included numerous individual interviews and focus groups with school counselors and counselor educators. They concluded that there was little relationship

between how school counselors were trained at universities and the services they provided to students. The results indicated that changes in graduate-level school counseling preparation should consist of adding new courses rather than refocusing current classes, because programs provided a variety of counseling core courses but did not provide counselors with specific skills or experiences needed to be effective in schools, such as in the areas of leadership, advocacy, and collaboration (Education Trust, 2005).

In addition to the initiative of the Education Trust, the ASCA developed national standards in 1997 to directly connect school counseling with standards-based reform. While ASCA hailed the significance of the standards, a study five years after they were released indicated that the standards did not contribute to increased legitimacy, to improved role and function, or to a change in school counselors' beliefs or behaviors with regard to the continuing performance of nonschool counseling activities (Hatch & Bowers, 2002). The ASCA (2003) published a proposed national model to explicitly link school counseling programs to standards-based educational reform. A new study is needed to explore whether these new standards have led to changes in the perceptions of school counselors regarding their role and abilities. Therefore, the focus of this study was to describe school counselors' perceptions of their role in terms of what tasks they view as being most important. The study examined whether self efficacy differed by the groups for school counselors who hold different perceptions.

Background to the Problem

The role of the school counselor has been constantly evolving and has changed drastically over time. On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) initiating an unprecedented level of federal control of public

education. NCLB included many of the features of standards-based education reform employed by comprehensive state legislation. NCLB required frequent testing, the regular public reporting of quantitative indicators of schools' performance and strengthened sanctions against schools that fail to meet adequate expectations (Dimmitt, et al, 2007). With the implementation of NCLB, it appears that many school counselors became informally or formally recognized as testing coordinators. The responsibilities of being a testing coordinator are huge for schools and may take up much of the time of the school counselor, leaving less time to perform day-to-day counseling duties.

The school counseling profession has been redefining its focus on role definition to outcome expectations. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) have been instrumental in developing expectations of advocacy and accountability within the profession (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). ASCA developed National Standards in 1997 (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) and a National Model for School Counseling Programs in 2003 (ASCA, 2003). The standards outlined desired outcomes of school counseling programs, stating what students should know or be able to do as a result of the school counseling program (Bodenhorn & Skaggs).

In addition to the ASCA and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the Education Trust has had a significant impact on the field. In 1996, the Education Trust initiated a project to transform the role of school counselors by connecting school counseling to standards-based education reform and by focusing the profession of school counseling on the goal of eliminating the achievement gap (Dimmitt, et al, 2007). The Education Trust first established a new vision for the school counselor's role and then worked with a number of institutions to accomplish reform in the initial preparation of school counselors. Several new

skills have been identified by the Education Trust as essential to this reformed role of the school counselor. These include leadership, advocacy, use of data, teamwork and collaboration, and effective use of technology (House & Martin, 1998).

In terms of a specific definition of the role of the professional school counselor, the ASCA (2005) made the following statement:

> The professional school counselor is a certified/licensed educator trained in school counseling with unique qualifications and skills to address all students' academic, personal/social and career development needs. Professional school counselors implement a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student achievement. Professional school counselors are employed in elementary, middle/junior high and high schools and in district supervisory, counseling education and post-secondary settings. Their work is differentiated by attention to developmental stages of student growth, including the needs, tasks and student interests related to those stages. Professional school counselors uphold the ethical and professional standards of professional counseling associations and promote the development of the school counseling program based on the following areas of the ASCA National Model: foundation, delivery, management and accountability. (p. 11)

This broad definition has led to vast differences in the role of various school counselors across the United States. School counselors assume a vast range of responsibilities, and some concentrate their energy and skill development on certain aspects of their job more than others.

Education may have an impact on the skills and perceptions of school counselors. According to Dimmitt, et al, (2007), the emergence of standards-based education has

presented some challenges to the school counseling profession. One of those challenges is that school counselors and guidance directors lack the skills necessary to participate in data-based decision making and quantitative accountability reporting. These skills are not normally taught in school counselor education programs and opportunities to develop these skills have not been readily available (Dimmitt, et al). Therefore, regarding demographic patterns, years of experience may show some differences. If a school counselor has been practicing for 20 years, it is possible that he or she has not been exposed to the necessary education according to the new ASCA standards. However, it is possible that a new counselor who has recently graduated from a counseling program may have different perceptions of the school counselor's role based on the ASCA standards.

Statement of the Problem

The role of the school counselor has changed over time and there appears to be disagreement in a defined role of the school counselor (Burnham & Jackson, 2000). It seems as if some school counselors are getting further away from doing counseling at all due to the increasing number of roles expected of them, a concern in light of the high level of need for counseling services in our schools. Research is needed to explore the current perceptions of school counselors since the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) was implemented five years ago. In order to thoroughly investigate the current perceptions of school counselors a method of research that describes roles subjectively without the potential bias of objective measures, such as Q method is needed.

Theoretical Framework

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) developed a national model for school counseling programs in 2003. According to the model, the four key areas of critical

tasks for counselors are foundation, delivery, management, and accountability (ASCA, 2005). Foundation is described as the professional school counselors' personal beliefs and philosophies that underlie the school counseling program. The delivery category has to do with the role of the school counselor to provide services to students, parents, school staff and the community. Program management focuses on the incorporation of organizational processes and tools that are concrete and reflective of the school's needs. In the area of accountability, the focus is on demonstrating the effectiveness of the school counseling program. Therefore, the ASCA national model and its standards were used as the theoretical framework in this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to describe the various perceptions of school counselors toward their role according to what tasks they view as being most important. Additionally, I examined whether school counselors who had differing perceptions about their role would also have differing levels of self-efficacy. I describe how the perceptions align with or differ from the ASCA's position on critical school counseling roles. The theory used to describe the perceptions was the critical tasks defined as necessary for school counselors as outlined by the ASCA National Model. I identified patterns of beliefs school counselors hold about their roles by using Q-methodology, a research method developed by William Stephenson (1953). Q methodology was chosen to complete this research project as Q methodology is an excellent research technique used to uncover a participant's subjective perspective. Q methodology uses a controlled technique to elicit subjective viewpoints in order to compare them (Robbins, 2005). Based on data collection and a by-person factor analysis technique, Q-methodology gives the researcher an organized technique to uncover qualitative data

within the participants' opinions, as well as, a way to quantify this data using factor analysis procedures. Q reveals common patterns or factors of subjectivity. These common patterns were then used to analyze the quantitative differences between the school counselors who defined each of the patterns or factors.

Research Questions

Research questions investigated for this study were:

1. What perceptions do school counselors have regarding their roles according to critical tasks of school counselors?
2. How do school counselors' perceptions of their professional roles compare to the ASCA National Model?
3. Does self efficacy differ by the perceptions of school counselors?
4. What demographic patterns might assist in understanding the various groups of perceptions of school counselors regarding their professional roles?

Significance of the Study

There appears to be a great deal of disagreement in the field regarding what counselors perceive as their most essential role. It is hypothesized that part of this discrepancy is due to the idea that school counselors have so many different job responsibilities, that there has become an increased confusion in how to best use their time and skills (Burnham & Jackson, 2000). It is further hypothesized that this discrepancy may be in part due to the fact that counselors have such differences in training. It is hoped that this study will shed light on these hypotheses to help us better understand the discrepancies between actual practice and existing models (Burnham & Jackson).

Due to the transformation of the educational system by NCLB and the role of the school counselor, the field of school counseling has been attempting to shift the focus to an evidence-based approach, to support educational practices that can be proven effective through rigorous, controlled, scientific research (Dimmitt, et al, 2007). Whiston and Sexton (1998) found that the school counseling profession is suffering from an evidence gap that limits practitioners' abilities to identify evidence-based best practices, which limits the credibility of the field. Unless the profession can demonstrate that its interventions are supported by empirical evidence, school counseling may be viewed as less legitimate in the emerging evidence-based education environment (Dimmitt, et al.).

Existing research indicated that a need exists to explore where the field of school counseling currently stands regarding the ASCA national standards. Hatch and Chen-Hayes (2008) indicated that future research should establish how five years of the ASCA national model have affected the perceptions and practices of school counselors. The theory of planned behavior and a causal link between humans' attitudes, beliefs, intentions, and behavior has been noted (Conner & Armitage, 1998). Researchers have found that what teachers believe about a new program can influence their expectations regarding the impact they believe the program will have on students (Yero, 2002). Similarly applied to school counseling programs, determining what school counselors believe or perceive about various program components may impact their implementation and outcomes for students. Few researchers to date have discussed school counselor perceptions about the various school counseling program components that have been outlined by the ASCA National Model (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). Therefore, this study may lead to implications for counselor educators as well as the field of school counseling as a whole.

Definition of Terms

ASCA – American School Counselor Association – the professional organization for school counselors.

CACREP – Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs – an independent agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation to accredit master's degree programs in school counseling and other related fields.

Concourse – the range of all possible ideas and opinions about a topic potentially held by research participants

Condition of Instruction – a direction for sorting Q statements, often reflecting the degree of agreement or disagreement along a continuum

Consensus statements - statements that display no significant differences among the participants' rankings

The Education Trust - established the National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) in June 2003, to ensure school counselors across the country are trained and ready to help all groups of students obtain high academic standards

Factor Array – model Q-sort for each factor with scores ranging from +5 to -5

Factor Loadings –like correlation coefficients in that they indicate the extent to which each Q-sort is similar or dissimilar to the composite factor array for a particular factor

Factors – patterns of subjective views discovered through Q analysis

Factor Scores – weighted z-scores for each statement in the Q-sample (McKeown & Thomas, 1988)

Form Board – a board or sheet of paper on which research participants organize Q-sort items according to the condition of instruction

LPC – Licensed Professional Counselor – individuals are licensed to practice as a counselor in the community for an agency or in private practice

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) – established in 1987 as a nonprofit organization with high standards for teachers' knowledge, skills and performance allowing teachers to become nationally certified

No Child Left Behind – The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 or Public Law 107-110, is a federal law designed to enhance several federal programs created to improve the performance of public schools through the implementation of assessment and accountability.

Non-significant Loading – a sort that does not reach significant level in order to define the factor

PQMethod – a computer program developed by Stephen Brown to perform Q factor analysis

P-Set – the subjects or group of people participating in the study

Q Methodology – a research method that explores subjectivity by enabling research participants to create their own meanings about a phenomenon by rank-ordering statements in relation to one another and then using a statistical analysis to reveal common patterns (Robbins, 2005)

Q-Set – the set of statements about a particular topic or the sample of statements drawn from the concourse

Q-Sorting – the process of arranging Q-set statements along a continuum defined by a condition of instruction

Limitations

Most of the participants in this study (36 out of 53) were working at Oklahoma public schools with kindergarten through twelfth-grade students. A small number of subjects (17 out of 53) were working at public schools in other states. They do not represent the school counselors in all schools across the United States. However, it is likely that the participants may represent what some school counselors in today's society are likely to report.

I cannot make generalizations to other professions or to school counselors who are not included in this study. However, the study allowed the opportunity to see how the respondents themselves define their professional roles as school counselors (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). It contributed to the literature in a unique way by using Q methodology to describe participants' subjective views about their professional roles. School counselors come from a wide range of educational and theoretical backgrounds and may have significantly different views of the counseling process. I am not attempting to measure why school counselors perceive their role as they do. I focus solely on describing the perceptions of the school counselors involved. This is not a random selection from the population at large, but more of a purposive sample in that the subjects who participated have acquired the certification required of school counselors. In the field of education, vast differences may exist from state to state and from school district to school district in terms of the philosophy and expectations of an individual school. Regarding my Q-set, the items that were used may not represent all dimensions of a school counselor's role and may not represent a way to describe all possible views about the role of the school counselor. However, use of the items from various assessment instruments and interviews ensures a broader sampling of the various roles of the school counselor.

Finally, my study was limited in that it did not provide exhaustive information on the current practices of school counselors. However, my goal of the study was to not only explore what counselors are currently doing in their role as compared to the ASCA national model, but to describe what roles they view as being important. Therefore, by using Q methodology to describe the participants' subjective viewpoints, I will contribute to the literature in a unique way.

Summary

In this chapter, I included a description of the problem addressed by the study as well as an overview of the theoretical framework of the ASCA National Model. I provided the purpose of the study, followed up with the plausible research questions, provided a description of the significance of the study, and provided definition of terms and limitations of the research study. In Chapter II, I review relevant literature, including a deeper examination of the theoretical framework of the ASCA National Model. Discussion will focus on the views of the American School Counselors Association of the school counselors' role and the impact of the Education Trust on the field of school counseling. A brief history of the field of school counseling is provided in order to demonstrate how the field has evolved over time. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997) is reviewed with a specific emphasis on self efficacy in enactment of occupational roles. Additional information is provided regarding the various assessment scales utilized to formulate the Q-set. In Chapter III, I provide an overview of the methodology utilized in the study. In Chapter IV, I provide a summary of the findings, analysis of the data, and interpretations of the results. In Chapter V, I summarize the findings and provide conclusions and implications for theory and practice.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

School counselor role ambiguity has been present since the early days of the guidance movement and remains an issue today (Schmidt, 1999). There continues to be a need to look at the current trends of school counseling in our quickly changing society. My purpose in this study was to gain insight into the various perceptions school counselors have regarding their role and what tasks they view as being most important. Additionally, I examined whether school counselors who had differing perceptions about their role would also have differing levels of self efficacy. I describe how the perceptions align with or differ from the ASCA's position on critical school counseling roles. Q methodology (Brown, 1980) was chosen to complete this research project as Q methodology is a research technique used to uncover a participant's subjective perspective.

In this chapter, I provide a brief history of the field of school counseling to demonstrate how the field has evolved over time. The chosen theoretical model of the ASCA's national model is described in more detail. Following a discussion of the impact of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and The Education Trust on the field is a review of social cognitive theory with a specific emphasis on self efficacy in enactment of occupational roles. Additional information is given regarding

the various assessments that were utilized to formulate the Q-set, including the School Counseling Program Component Scale (SCPCS) (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008), the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) (Scarborough, 2005), and the School Counselor Self efficacy Scale (SCSE) (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). The reasons for using ASCA theory and items from the various assessments is provided in this chapter.

History of School Counseling

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief history of the field of school counseling to demonstrate how the field has evolved over time. School counselors perform a vital role in the school systems. They help to make learning a positive experience for every student. They are sensitive to individual needs and differences. They know that a classroom environment that is effective for one child may not necessarily be effective for another child. Counselors are excellent communication facilitators between teachers, parents, administrators, and students. They assist individual students make the most of their school experiences and attempt to prepare them for the future. However, their role has changed significantly over time.

School administrators, teachers, parents, and other interested groups often view the role of the school counselor differently (Snyder & Daly, 1993). Even school counselors have differing views about their role and responsibilities (Burnham & Jackson, 2000). School counseling roles are often problematic in definition, interpretation, and implementation. However, there are clearly stated models for school counselors which provide role definition and suggested emphasis for school counselors (ASCA, 2005).

The history of school counseling formally started at the turn of the twentieth century. The social and political reformer, Frank Parsons, is often credited for being the father of the vocational guidance movement. His work led to the development of the Boston Vocation Bureau which helped outline a system of vocational guidance in the Boston public schools in 1909. The work of the bureau influenced the need for vocational guidance across the United States and other countries. The focus in these early years was mostly vocational in nature, but as the profession advanced other personal concerns became part of the school counselor's agenda.

World War I played a significant role in the field. It brought the need for assessment of large groups of draftees, mostly to select appropriate individuals for various positions. These early psychological assessments were quickly identified as being valuable tools to be used in the schools, which led to the standardized testing movement. During this time, vocational guidance continued to spread throughout the country where teachers were appointed to the position of vocational counselor without any relief from their teaching duties and with no additional pay (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001).

During the 1920s and 1930s, there was an expansion of counseling roles beyond vocational concerns. Counselors began focusing on social, personal, and educational aspects of a student's life. The Great Depression of the 1930s led to the restriction of funds for counseling programs. It wasn't until the passage of the George Dean Act in 1938 where counselors started to see an increase in support for their work.

There were many different factors that impacted the field during the 1940s and 1950s. The Vocational Education Act of 1946 and the National Defense Education Act

of 1958 played a major role in shaping guidance and counseling in the schools (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) was formed in 1950 furthering the professional identity of the school counselor. Guidance and counseling were provided more and more by full-time personnel. The concept of pupil personnel work or pupil personnel services continued to be the preferred organizational system. Professionals providing services as school psychologists, nurses, social workers, and school counselors were all brought together under the description of pupil personnel services. Usually six services of guidance were identified: orientation, assessment, information, counseling, placement, and follow-up. This format continued the emphasis of the position of counselor, not the program of guidance and counseling. As a result, school counseling was often seen as support services in the eyes of many people. This pattern placed school counselors in the position of providing several roles as part of their job and even reinforced the practice of school counselors doing many administrative-clerical duties because they could be defined as being support services (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001).

Beginning in the 1970s, the concept of guidance and counseling for student development began to emerge. During this period, there was a shift from seeing the school counselor as providing support services to an actual comprehensive, developmental guidance program. This change in focus came from a variety of sources. There was a renewed interest in vocational-career guidance, a renewed interest in developmental guidance and counseling, concern about the efficacy of the prevailing approach to school counseling in the schools, and concern about accountability in education (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001).

During the 1980s and 1990s, comprehensive guidance and counseling programs continued to emerge in the schools. In addition, increasingly sophisticated models began to be translated into practical programs to be implemented in the schools. With the implementation of NCLB, additional changes developed in which assessment practices exploded. Schools needed to place someone in charge of coordinating the testing in the schools. In many cases, this responsibility fell upon the school counselors leaving them even less time to focus on the more traditional counseling roles.

The Impact of the Education Trust

The Education Trust and MetLife Foundation established the National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) in June 2003, to ensure school counselors across the country are trained and ready to help all groups of students obtain high academic standards. According to the center, everyone working in schools has a critical role to play in meeting the needs of underserved students, especially school counselors. Compelling data underscore the need for school counselors to work effectively to improve academic results for low-income students and minority students (Education Trust, 2005). The NCTSC works with a network of organizations, state departments of education, school counselor professional associations, institutions of higher education and school districts across the country dedicated to transforming school counselors into powerful agents of change in their schools and in the lives of students (Education Trust).

American School Counselor Association

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) was established in 1950. Since that time, the ASCA has had a profound impact on the field. The ASCA's mission is to represent professional school counselors and to promote professionalism and ethical

practices. The ASCA reported their vision as being the foundation that expands the image and influence of professional school counselors through advocacy, leadership, collaboration, and systemic change. ASCA empowers professional school counselors with the knowledge, skills, linkages, and resources to promote student success in the school, the home, the community and the world (ASCA, 2006). Most recently, the ASCA developed the *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs*, which continues to clearly call to all school counselors the need to use data-based decision making. This landmark document has paved the way for school counselors to navigate the diverse system in a more comprehensive, consistent and systematic manner.

Based on the ASCA's National Model, the counseling role is divided into the following areas: foundation, delivery, management and accountability (ASCA, 2005). Regarding foundation, professional school counselors identify personal beliefs and philosophies how all students benefit from the school counseling program and act on these beliefs and philosophies to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of a comprehensive school counseling program. Regarding delivery, school counselors are responsible for providing services to students, parents, school staff, and the community in the following areas: school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, individual and group counseling, consultation with parents, teachers, and other educators, referrals to other school support services or community resources, peer helping, information, and system support. Regarding management, professional school counselors incorporate organizational processes and tools that are concrete, clearly delineated and reflective of the school's needs. Accountability refers to

the ways that professional school counselors are responsible for demonstrating the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measureable terms (ASCA, 2005).

Foundation

The foundation aspect of the ASCA National Model provides the *what* of the program by laying the foundation for what every student should know and be able to do (ASCA, 2005). A collaborative effort is required in designing a strong foundation. Therefore, during this developmental stage, parents, staff and community members are consulted when laying the foundation for the school counseling program.

Elements of the program's foundation include beliefs, philosophies, mission statements, and ASCA National Standards for student academic, career and personal/social development (ASCA, 2005). Beliefs are individual and personal. What individuals believe about students, families, teachers and education is crucial in supporting success for every student. These beliefs form the philosophy or guiding principles of the school counseling program, which, in turn will guide the creation of a mission statement. The purpose of the mission statement is to keep the program's focus on the beliefs, assumptions, and philosophy, establish a structure for innovations, create one vision, and to provide an anchor in the face of change (ASCA). According to the ASCA National Model, the school counseling program facilitates student development in three broad domains: academic development, career development, and personal/social development. School counseling programs should set measureable goals in each of the three domain areas.

Delivery System

Once the foundation has been laid, the focus turns to how the program will be delivered. The delivery system aspect of the ASCA National Model addresses *how* the program will be implemented (ASCA, 2005). Elements of the program's delivery system include the school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services and system support (ASCA). The school guidance curriculum consists of a written instructional program that is comprehensive in scope, preventative and proactive, and developmental. It is coordinated and delivered by the school counselors. The individual student planning component provides all students an opportunity to work closely with their guardians to establish personal goals. The responsive services component responds to the immediate concerns of students including individual counseling, group counseling, crisis counseling, referrals, and consultation. Regarding the system support component, school counselors use their leadership and advocacy skills to promote change. The school counseling program provides support services through professional development, consultation, collaboration and team work (ASCA).

Management Systems

The management systems aspect of the ASCA National Model addresses the *when, why, who* and *on what authority* the program will be implemented (ASCA, 2005). The management system is the various organizational processes and tools needed to manage a school counseling program. The *when* has to do with the use of time and is the use of action plans and calendars, whereas, the *why* is the use of data. The *who* is who will implement the program or the management agreement and *on what authority* is the management agreements and advisory council (ASCA). Therefore, elements of the school counseling program's management system include management agreements,

advisory councils, use of data, action plans, use of time, and calendars. Management agreements ensure effective implementation of the delivery system. This is a team process of collaborating and deciding the assignment of counselors. The principal or school counseling administrator must be involved. An advisory council is a representative group of people appointed to advise and assist the school counseling program by making reviews and recommendations. The use of data is essential to ensuring that every student received the benefits of the school counseling program. Therefore, a school counseling program must be data-driven. In order to effectively deliver the school counseling program, there must be action plans. Knowing how much time school counselors should spend delivering services is somewhat tricky. However, Gysbers and Henderson (2001) suggest that 80 percent of time should be spent in direct services to students. Lastly, school calendars are used to keep students, parents and/or guardians, teachers and administrators informed of school counseling events.

Accountability

The accountability system aspect of the ASCA National Model addresses the question: How are the students different as a result of the program? It has become increasingly important for school counselors to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs (ASCA, 2005). Therefore, school counselors must collect data that support and link the school counseling program to successful outcomes for students. Elements of the accountability system include results reports, school counselor performance standards and the program audit (ASCA). Result reports are used for showing how students are different as a result of the school counseling program. Data collection allows schools the information needed to evaluate the school counseling program for effectiveness. The

program audits serve as a tool to aid in the analysis of each program component. It will assist in identifying areas of strength and weakness. It provides evidence of alignment with ASCA's National Model. School counselor performance standards contain thirteen basic standards of practice expected from counselors as noted in Table 1.

Table 1

School Counselor Performance Standards

Number	Standard
Standard 1:	The professional school counselor plans, organizes and delivers the school counseling program.
Standard 2:	The professional school counselor implements the school guidance curriculum through the use of effective instructional skills and careful planning of structured group sessions for all students.
Standard 3:	The professional school counselor implements the individual planning component by guiding individuals and groups of students and their parents or guardians through the development of educational and career plans.
Standard 4:	The professional school counselor provides responsive services through the effective use of individual and small-group counseling, consultation and referral skills.
Standard 5:	The professional school counselor provides system support through effective school counseling program management and support for other educational programs.

Standard 6: The professional school counselor discusses the counseling department management system and the program action plans with the school administrator.

Standard 7: The professional school counselor is responsible for establishing and convening an advisory council for the school counseling program.

Standard 8: The professional school counselor collects and analyzes data to guide program direction and emphasis.

Standard 9: The professional school counselor monitors the students on a regular basis as they progress in school.

Standard 10: The professional school counselor uses time and calendars to implement an efficient program.

Standard 11: The professional school counselor develops a results evaluation for the program.

Standard 12: The professional school counselor conducts a yearly program audit.

Standard 13: The professional school counselor is a student advocate, leader, collaborator and a systems change agent.

Note: Adapted from The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, p. 63-65.

Social Cognitive Theory

In order to describe the perceptions of counselors toward their roles and ability to perform them, it may be useful to discuss school counselor critical tasks in terms of self efficacy as conceptualized by Bandura (2005). In the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory, Bandura conceptualizes self efficacy as being concerned with people's

beliefs in their capabilities to produce given attainments. With this statement in mind one can begin to understand the framework for this complex system of perception. “Beliefs that young people hold about their capacity to succeed in their endeavors are vital forces in the subsequent success or failures that they obtain in these endeavors. These self efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment in all areas of life” (Pajares, 2005, p. 327).

A number of research questions can be grounded within self-efficacy theoretical orientation. The focus of this study was that of the school counselor’s perceived ability to perform their role in an effective manner. School is the place where children develop the cognitive competencies and acquire the knowledge and problem-solving skills essential for participating effectively in the larger society. Here their knowledge and thinking skills are continually tested, evaluated, and socially compared. As children master cognitive skills, they develop a growing sense of their intellectual efficacy. Many social factors, apart from the formal instruction, such as peer modeling of cognitive skills, social comparison with the performances of other students, motivational enhancement through goals and positive incentives, and teachers interpretations of children's successes and failures in ways that reflect favorably or unfavorably on their ability affect children's judgments of their intellectual efficacy (Bandura, 1998). Counselor’s perceived self efficacy plays a large part in the individual’s abilities to complete such important work. School counselor self efficacy may not only be limited to inward perceptions of the self but may be a key component in factors relating to the student. Students who work with a counselor who has a high level of self efficacy are undoubtedly benefited in an enormous way. These benefits can be found in any number of areas from increased confidence, self

motivation, or an increased sense of self efficacy on the part of the student. After receiving training in their occupational roles, employees put into practice their knowledge and skills and continue to develop them over time (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura, perceived self efficacy affects how well they manage the requirements and challenges of their occupation. The evidence for the contributing role of efficacy beliefs comes from a wide range of occupations. Bandura (1997) discussed the need for role clarity as many jobs vary in their degree of clarity about employee expectations. Much of the research around role ambiguity has centered around the stressful effects caused by the ambiguity.

Fortunately, a self efficacy scale was developed specifically for school counselors in 2005 by Bodenhorn and Skaggs and is called the *School Counselor Self efficacy Scale* (SCSE). They developed it in 2005 because there was no self efficacy scale that had been validated for use in the school counseling profession. They noted that counselor self efficacy is a new area for theory and research and called for the need to further explore how counseling self efficacy affects counselor performance (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005).

Background on Assessment Instruments

The purpose of this section is to discuss the background of the various assessment instruments that were utilized in the current study. Some of the items from the assessments were utilized in developing the Q-set. Additionally, one of the assessments was used to answer the second research question. The School Counselor Self Efficacy Scale (SCSE), the School Counseling Program Component Scale (SCPCS), and the

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) are reviewed here with a description of how the content of the scales informed the present study.

The School Counselor Self Efficacy Scale (SCSE)

The School Counselor Self Efficacy Scale (SCSE) developed by Nancy Bodenhorn and Gary Skaggs (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005) utilized Bandura's social cognitive theory. The items were designed to specifically assess the self efficacy of school counselors to perform critical tasks. However, since our condition of instruction is not asking about the school counselors' perceptions of their abilities, we are not measuring self efficacy with Q Methodology. Therefore, the SCSE statements were not chosen to assess the counselors various perceptions of their abilities to perform particular tasks in the first portion of the study, rather they were utilized as an attempt to measure school counselors perceptions of important tasks of the school counseling role. However, we were measuring self efficacy in the R portion of this study as counselors were asked to complete the SCSE in an attempt to answer the second research question of whether or not school counselors who have differing perceptions of their role also have differing levels of school counselor self efficacy. The scale did an excellent job of outlining some important tasks of school counselors. The five components of the scale were: Personal and Social Development, Leadership and Assessment, Career and Academic Development, Collaboration and Cultural Competence (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005).

School Counseling Program Component Scale (SCPCS)

Items from the SCPCS were utilized in formulating the Q-set. The SCPCS was developed by Hatch and Chen-Hayes (2008) as a measure of school counselor beliefs about school counseling program components. It was developed in 2002 based on a

review of literature on the school counselor's role and function, discussions held with two focus groups and consultation with ASCA leadership. It contains 19 items addressing school counselors' beliefs about school counseling duties and priorities. Based on the ASCA National Model for School Counseling, the expectations were outlined in terms of how school counselors could connect their work to student achievement data and demonstrate their results as connected to the academic mission of their schools (ASCA, 2005). The ASCA National Model assumed that enhancing and documenting school counselor outcome productivity at the local level would be both necessary and sufficient to cause changes in resource allocation at the district level (Hatch & Bowers, 2002). Therefore, the success of the ASCA National Model depended on the willingness of school counselors to learn new skills, to change practices, and to design and implement program evaluation showing component effectiveness (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). Therefore, the SCPCS was designed to measure school counselors' beliefs about the standards in an attempt to determine how willing they might be to make needed changes.

The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS)

Items from the SCARS were utilized in formulating the Q-set. The SCARS was developed by Scarborough (2005) as a measure of gathering process data. More specifically, it was designed to measure how school counselors actually spend their time versus how they would prefer to spend their time in job-related activities (Scarborough, 2005). It contains 48 items divided into five categories of counselor roles: counseling activities, consultation activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities and other activities.

Summary of the Chapter

The literature reviewed in this chapter was provided to give relevance to the problem in the current study. One issue revealed is the vast differences in the ways school counselors are performing or describing their roles (Cole, 1991). Possible explanations are that No Child Left Behind may have evoked significant changes on the role of the school counselor and counselors perceive their abilities differently. In order to fully explain the background, I provided a brief history of the field of school counseling to demonstrate how the field has evolved over time. There was a discussion of the impact of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and the Education Trust on the field. Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997) was reviewed here with a specific emphasis on self efficacy in enactment of occupational roles. Additional information was given regarding the various assessments that were utilized to formulate the Q-set, including the School Counseling Program Component Scale (SCPCS) (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008), the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) (Scarborough, 2005), and the School Counselor Self Efficacy Scale (SCSE) (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). In Chapter III, I provide an overview of the methodology utilized in the study. In Chapter IV, I provide a summary of the findings, analysis of the data, and interpretations of the results. In Chapter V, I summarize the findings and provide conclusions and implications for theory and practice.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This study was designed to examine the various perceptions of school counselors toward their roles in schools and their perceptions of what tasks are of critical importance. Additionally, the study examined whether school counselors who had differing perceptions of their role would also have differing levels of self efficacy. This chapter will expand on the research strategy of Q-methodology, which was chosen for this study. This chapter includes a description of the considerations with the use of human subjects, participant selection (P-set), concourse development (Q-set), research instruments, procedures, and data analysis.

Q Methodology

Q methodology was chosen to complete this research project as it is a research technique used to uncover a participant's subjective perspective. Q methodology is a technique for the study of subjectivity that was created in the mid-1930s by British physicist/psychologist William Stephenson (Brown, 1980). Q methodology uses a controlled technique to elicit subjective viewpoints in order to compare them (Robbins, 2005). Based on data collection and a by-person factor analysis technique, Q reveals common patterns or factors of subjectivity. Q method is carried out in a series of steps.

First, the domain of subjectivity is determined. Second, a concourse of statements is obtained or recorded. Third, all the representative ideas of the concourse are sampled and included in a much smaller Q-set of statements or stimuli. Fourth, subjects engage in Q-sorting of the statements in which they rank the statements based on a condition of instruction (i.e. "most like/most unlike). Fifth, subjects are asked to comment on the sorting. Sixth, the Q-sorts are subjected to a by-person factor analysis; and finally, the factors are defined by the statements within each and interpreted (Robbins, 2005).

Use of Human Subjects

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Oklahoma State University (OSU) reviews any research study that involves the use of human subjects. Approval was gained from the institutional review board before data collection began. A copy of the approval letter is provided in Appendix A.

Procedure

Participants were given the Informed Consent Form. As a matter of confidentiality of records, the signed Informed Consent Forms were collected and stored separately from any research data. Those who agree to participate sorted one set of 47 statements twice. Once as related to their perceptions of their role and another time according to their perceptions of what roles they view as being most important as stated on the Researcher's Script (Appendix B). The subjects sorted the statements on an 11-point forced distribution continuum ranging from "most unlike" to "most like" to the question, "How would you describe your role as a school counselor?," and recorded their results on the record form (Appendix C). A second condition of instruction was, "What

do you view as being the most important tasks of a school counselor?" In addition, participants responded to a demographic survey (Appendix D).

Participants or P-set

Participants for the study were chosen intentionally to provide an understanding of the perceptions of school counselors regarding their role. Determining what school counselors believe or perceive about various program components may impact their implementation and outcomes for students. No researchers to date have discussed school counselor perceptions about the various school counseling program components that have been outlined by the ASCA National Model (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). The subjects who participate in a Q-study are called a P-set. The subjects participating in this study consisted of 53 school counselors from a range of educational settings and backgrounds. According to McKeown and Thomas (1988), "The purpose is to study intensively the self-referent perspectives of particular individuals in order to understand the lawful nature of human behavior. Specific sampling principles and techniques important in mainstream behavioral research are not necessarily relevant to person sampling in Q given the contrasting research orientations and purposes," (McKeown & Thomas, p. 36).

Concourse and Q-Set

According to Brown (1993), a concourse is considered to be all possible statements regarding a particular topic and the Q-set is the sample of the concourse. In the current study, the topic was the various roles of the school counselor and by sampling the concourse the Q-set was developed. The Q-set, or set of statements to be sorted, in the current study consisted of 47 statements adapted from a variety of sources including the three assessment instruments that were described in Chapter II. They are the School

Counselor Self Efficacy Scale (SCSE), the School Counseling Program Component Scale (SCPCS) and the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS). Appendix E provides a list of the statements selected for the Q-set, where the statements originated and how or if they were modified for use in the current study.

Some of the statements selected for the Q-set were utilized from the 43 items on the School Counselor Self Efficacy Scale (SCSE) (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005), which utilized Bandura's social cognitive theory. Some of the items were used just as listed on the scales while other items were slightly modified, The items were designed to specifically assess the four key categories as outlined by the ASCA National Model, which are foundation, delivery, management and accountability. In addition, since many counselors may engage in activities outside of these four categories a fifth category of other activities was developed.

The second assessment utilized in developing the Q-set was the SCARS (Scarborough, 2005), which was designed to measure how school counselors actually spend their time versus how they would prefer to spend their time in job related activities. The items were designed to assess the five categories of the school counselor's role: counseling activities, consultation activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities and other activities.

The third assessment utilized in developing the Q-set was the SCPCS (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). This assessment was designed as a measure of school counselor beliefs about school counseling program components. It was based on the ASCA National Model.

Various items from the three assessments were chosen to develop the five categories used to structure the sampling for the Q-set. (Appendix F). The five categories are foundation, delivery, management, accountability and other activities. In the first category of foundation, ten items were chosen for the Q-set. Out of the ten items, five items came from the SCSES (items 2-6), three came from the SCPCS (items 7-9) and two came from the SCARS (1 and 10). In the second category of delivery, twelve items were chosen for the Q-set. Out of the twelve items, nine of the items were from the SCARS (items 11-16, 18, 20-21), two were from the SCSES (items 17 and 19) and one was developed by the researcher (item 22) to assess whether or not the school counselors perceive being actively involved in professional organizations as an important part of their role. In the third category of management, nine items were chosen for the Q-set. Eight of the items were utilized form the SCSES (items 23-30) and one of the items was from the SCARS (item 31). In the fourth category of accountability, eight items were chosen for the Q-set. Two of the items were from the SCSES (items 32 and 37), two of the items were from the SCPCS (items 33 and 39), two of the items were from the SCARS (items 35 and 38) and two of the items were developed by the researcher (items 34 and 36) through interviews with school counselors. In the fifth and final category of other activities, eight items were chosen for the Q-set and all eight items were utilized from the SCARS.

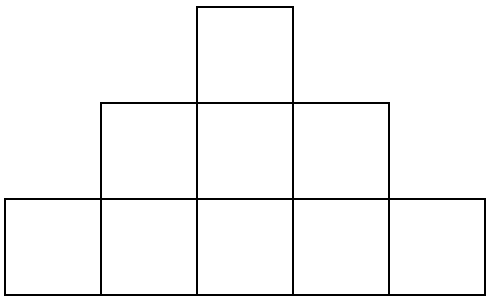
Q-Sorting

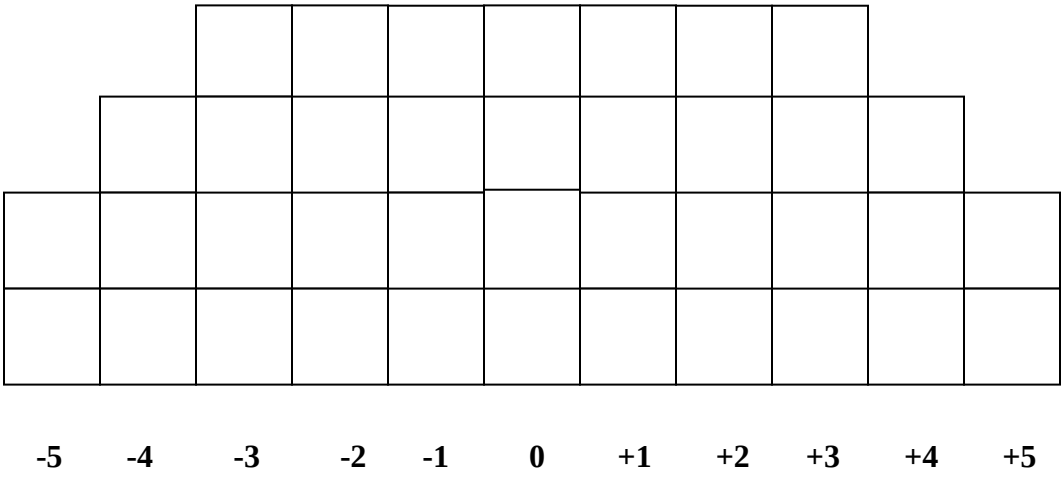
Those who agreed to participate in the study sorted a set of 47 statements related to their perceptions of their role as a school counselor as stated on the Researcher's Script. Q-sorting is the process of arranging statements along some sort of forced

continuum according to a condition of instruction. In this study, the subjects were asked to sort the statements on an 11-point forced distribution continuum ranging from “most like” to “most unlike” to two separate conditions of instructions. The condition of instruction was, “How would you describe your role as a school counselor?” They then recorded their results on the report form. Subjects began by sorting the statements into three piles: “Most Like,” “Most Unlike,” and “Neutral.” When they were finished with the initial phase of sorting, they were asked to begin with their “Most Like” pile and pick the top two or strongest responses. They were given a sorting form board with squared matching the size of the magnets. The top two “Most Like” items were placed in the far right column. Table 1 is an exact replica of the form board utilized in the study. The form board has eleven columns ranging from two to seven items. After placing the top two “Most Like” items, subjects were asked to identify the top two “Most Unlike” and place them on the form board in the far left column. The subjects were then instructed to work back and forth until all 47 statements are placed on the form board using the eleven point scale ranging from -5 to +5 or 1 to 11. Items placed in the middle were views about which the subjects were indifferent or less characteristic of them. The sorting procedure took approximately 45 minutes and the resulting sorts were recorded on the sorting sheet.

Figure 1

Form Board





Data Analysis

Q methodology examines participants' relationships to one another by analyzing how they sorted their statements similarly. In other words, Q provides an opportunity for the scientific study of subjectivity (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In this instance, subjectivity refers to a person's communication of his or her point of view. Q methodology enables individuals to communicate their viewpoint through Q-sorting where the subjects systematically rank-order a purposively sampled set of stimuli (McKeown & Thomas).

Once the viewpoints have been communicated through Q-sorting, Q methodology utilizes factor analysis statistical procedures to analyze the data. Data analysis in Q methodology involves three basic steps of statistical procedures: correlation, factor analysis, and the computation of factor scores (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In the current study, the data were analyzed using PQMethod, (version 2.11) Q-factor analysis software developed by Peter Schmolck and available free for download at

www.qmethod.org. Each subject's Q sort was correlated to all other sorts. The resulting correlation matrix was factor analyzed and rotated appropriately to the most optimal solution, after which a z-score for each statement from defining sorts for each factor were then calculated. The statements for each factor were then ordered in a descending array by the z-scores in order for interpretation of the factor to provide responses to the research questions.

Interpretation involves examining the individual items that make up each factor and the relationship of each sort to each factor (Robbins, 2005). Robbins described how each sort is scored according to a loading for each factor. Factor loadings are in effect correlation coefficients in that they indicate the extent to which each Q-sort is similar or dissimilar to the composite factor array for that factor (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Individuals with a loading on a single factor are considered to hold a relatively pure viewpoint; however, some individuals may load on multiple factors or have a confounded sort. Subjects who load significantly on a factor are thought to share a common viewpoint (McKeown & Thomas). Positive loadings reflect agreed viewpoints, while negative loadings represent disagreement with the viewpoint.

During the interpretation phase of the current study, each factor was considered both individually and in relation to the other factors. The sorts were analyzed by examining the "most like" and "most unlike" statements both individually and in relation to other statements. Consideration was given to distinguishing statements and consensus statements as factor viewpoints evolved. High and pure loaders were also examined to provide a further analysis of the factors. The final stage of factor interpretation involved

analysis of demographics, follow-up interviews, and comments allowing for a complete picture of each viewpoint.

Analysis of Variance

An additional analysis was completed using the School Counselor Self efficacy Scale (SCSE) (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). A copy of the SCSE is provided in Appendix G. The SCSE utilized Bandura's social cognitive theory. The items were designed to specifically assess the self efficacy of school counselors to perform critical tasks. Therefore, this instrument was useful in answering the second research question of whether or not school counselors who have differing perceptions of their role also have differing levels of school counselor self efficacy.

The data were analyzed using a one-way between subjects ANOVA where members where nested in self efficacy by factor group. In other words, the factors that emerged as a result of the first analysis of Q-methodology were used as the groupings to determine if self efficacy differed for school counselors who held differing views of their professional roles.

Summary

My purpose in this study was to gain insight into the various perceptions of school counselors regarding their role and what tasks they view as being most important. I describe how their perceptions align with or differ from the ASCA's position on critical school counseling roles. I attempt to identify patterns of beliefs school counselors hold about their role by using Q-methodology, a research method developed by William Stephenson (1953) and later furthered by Steven Brown (1980). An overview of Q-methodology was provided in this chapter, including a description of the considerations

with the use of human subjects, participant selection (P-set), concourse development (Q-set), research instruments, procedures and data analysis. In Chapter IV, I provide a summary of the findings, analysis of the data, and interpretations of the results. In Chapter V, I summarize the findings and provide conclusions and implications for theory and practice.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

My purpose in this study was to examine perceptions of school counselors toward their roles in schools and how these perceptions compare to the ASCA National Model. Additionally, I examined whether school counselors who had differing perceptions of their role would also have differing levels of self efficacy. Further attention was given to the relationships between how school counselors perceive their roles and their specific demographic information.

1. What perceptions do school counselors have regarding their roles according to critical tasks of school counselors?
2. How do school counselors' perceptions of their professional roles compare to the ASCA National Model?
3. Does self efficacy differ by the perceptions of school counselors?
4. What demographic patterns might assist in understanding the varying perceptions of school counselors regarding their professional roles?

Forty-seven Q-sort statements were selected from a variety of sources in an attempt to gain a well-rounded sample of the concourse. Fifty-three school counselors

sorted these 47 statements under two separate conditions of instruction yielding 103 Q-sorts. The two conditions of instruction were: (1) How would you describe your role as a school counselor? and (2) What do you view as being the most important tasks of a school counselor? In other words, what should the role of the school counselor be like? The process yielded 103 Q-sorts; however, upon examination of the results of the factor analysis, it was discovered that the second condition of instruction was largely identical to the sorter's first sorting and the entire group of sorts did not yield any additional information. In fact, two of the fifty-three subjects did not change anything indicating they were doing things exactly as they should be and six of the subjects only made very minor changes yielding almost identical sorts. Likely, the sorters used the results form from the first sort to record their thoughts on the results form rather than going through the sorting procedure again. Therefore, since the second condition of instruction did not yield any additional information, it was decided to drop the sorts resulting from the second condition of instruction which led to a final 53 sorts to be analyzed.

Description of Participants

The participants in this study were asked to fill out a demographic information sheet with a wide variety of information including gender, age, ethnicity, geographic location, school district, type of district (urban or rural), educational background, additional licensure or certifications held, years of experience, and familiarity with the ASCA model. There was a question asking if they had graduated from a CACREP program and whether or not they were nationally certified. The below list is a summary of these key items of demographic information.

Demographic Information for the 53 Subjects

Gender:	Female	48	Male	5
Ethnicity:	Caucasian	49	Hispanic	1
	Native American	2	Other	1
Location:	Oklahoma	36	Out of State	17
Age:	24-34	6	45-54	17
	35-45	12	55-63	18
Experience:	0-5 Years	15	11-20 Years	16
	6-10 Years	17	21+ Years	5

Graduated from CACREP Program:	Yes	10	No	43
Familiar with ASCA Model:	Yes	37	No	16
Licensed (LPC):	Yes	13	No	40

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using PQMethod, (version 2.11) Q-factor analysis software developed by Peter Schmolck and available free for download at www.qmethod.org. Each Q sort was correlated to all other sorts. The resulting correlation matrix was factor analyzed and rotated appropriately to the most optimal solution, after which a z-score for each statement from defining sorts for each factor were then calculated. The statements for each factor were then ordered in a descending array by the z-scores in order for interpretation of the factor to provide responses to the research questions. Four characteristics of each factor were examined: variance, number of significant sorts, number of confounded sorts, and number of nonsignificant sorts. The objective is to have a maximum number of sorts load significantly on only one or more of the extracted factors. Additionally, the goal is to account for the largest amount of

variance and have the least amount of nonsignificant sorts and confounded sorts. Nonsignificant sorts are those that are not similar to any of the factors and confounded sorts are those sorts that load on multiple factors meaning they held more than one viewpoint.

Principal components analysis was followed by a varimax rotation. Varimax rotation uses the unrotated factor matrix and allows you to choose from multiple factor solutions. Varimax rotation was performed on a three factor solution for this study. Factor loading significance was calculated using the significance formula for significance by McKeown and Thomas (1988): $\alpha < .01$, significance = $2.58(1/\sqrt{N})$ with N being the number of Q statements. The use of $\alpha < .01$ was chosen because it is more rigorous than $\alpha < .05$. Using a less rigorous significance level yields more consensus and in Q, the objective is to seek variance. In the current study N = 47, therefore, significance was calculated to be .376 or .38. In using .38 as the significance level, factor one had fifteen significant sorts, factor two had twelve, and factor three had eight. In addition, there were sixteen confounded sorts and two nonsignificant sorts. By raising significance to .43, factor one had seventeen significant sorts, factor two had fifteen, and factor three had eleven. In addition, there were only eight confounded sorts and two nonsignificant sorts. Since increasing the significance to .43 increased the number of significant sorts and reduced the number of confounds by 50%, the chosen level of significance was .43.

In Q methodology, interpretations are based on a variety of data. The factor array or solutions of the z-scores of the statement structure within each factor are examined and the focus is on the items distributed at the extreme values as they are the most meaningful (Robbins, 2005). These statements must be carefully analyzed in an attempt to

characterize each factor. Array position are the values given to the statements for each of the factors used in the analysis (-5 to 5). The factor matrix is examined which lists the z-scores for each subject on each of the three factors. This allows for a visual representation of the defining sorts as the significant sorts on only one factor are marked with an "X". Consideration is given to distinguishing statements and consensus statements. Demographic data, follow-up interviews, and comments are examined to gain a complete picture of each unique viewpoint.

The first to be examined was the factor matrix as seen in Table 2. To assist in reading the factor matrix, a series of numbers and letters were used to identify each sort. First there is the number of the sort, one through 53, followed by an M or F for gender. The next letter signifies whether they were in an urban school district (U), rural school district (R) or suburban school district (S). The next letter indicates whether or not the subject was also licensed as a counselor (L) or not (N).

The three factor solution was chosen and 43 of the 53 sorts loaded significantly on only one of the three factors. Table 2 displays 17 defining sorts for Factor One (18% of variance), 15 defining sorts for Factor Two (17% of variance), and 11 defining sorts for Factor Three (16% of variance). Of the 53 sorts, eight were confounded by loading on multiple factors, meaning those participants held more than one viewpoint. There were two nonsignificant sorts, meaning those sorts were not similar to any of the three-factor viewpoints.

Table 2

Factor Matrix – X Indicates a Defining Sort

QSORT	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1FUL	0.5506X	-0.1024	0.0149
11FUL	0.5703X	0.0259	0.1466
12FRN	0.5839X	0.1200	0.3955
14FRN	0.5506X	0.3532	0.4173
17FUN	0.5923X	-0.0134	-0.1866
26FRN	0.7174X	0.2759	0.1817
27FUN	0.7394X	0.1209	0.3729
31FUN	0.6452X	0.1731	0.1595
32FUN	0.5648X	0.3195	0.1747
35FRN	0.7775X	-0.0188	0.1076
38FRN	0.5699X	-0.0233	0.1923
39MUN	0.5343X	-0.1957	0.3567
41FUN	0.7902X	0.0922	0.3264
43FUN	0.6627X	0.2965	0.2838
45FUN	0.7253X	0.0430	-0.2280
46FUN	0.4269X	0.1368	-0.3437
53FRN	0.6670X	0.0651	0.0921
2FUN	0.0944	0.4593X	0.1970
3MRN	-0.0926	0.6483X	0.1546
4FRN	0.2333	0.7613X	-0.2965
6FUL	0.1271	0.7576X	-0.3776
7FUN	0.0400	0.6815X	0.0706
8FUN	0.0862	0.8171X	0.2699
9FUN	0.0542	0.7917X	-0.2294
10FRN	0.1339	0.5262X	0.0575
13FUL	-0.0754	0.8591X	0.0718
19FUN	0.0355	0.7596X	-0.0539
20FUN	-0.0245	0.6438X	0.1874
21FUL	0.0406	0.7353X	0.2663
24FRN	0.3961	0.4927X	-0.2383
30FRN	0.2026	0.4128X	0.3957
48FUL	0.0886	0.6720X	-0.3686
15FUN	0.2086	-0.3993	0.4632X
22FRN	0.0689	-0.1169	0.7824X
25FRN	0.0906	-0.1105	0.6264X
34FRN	-0.0144	0.0180	0.7002X
36MRN	0.2774	-0.2370	0.5607X
37FUL	-0.1578	0.2272	0.7084X
40FRN	0.1249	0.0500	0.6636X
42FRN	0.2070	0.2332	0.6224X
44FRN	0.3906	0.1494	0.5556X
47FRN	0.3881	0.1472	0.5495X
51FRL	0.3544	0.1389	0.6120X
5FSN	0.4688	0.5523	0.1333 (confounded)

16FUL	0.4256	0.5468	0.1678 (confounded)
18FUN	0.0550	0.5193	-0.5413 (confounded)
23FRL	0.5107	0.1578	0.4941 (confounded)
28FRN	0.5909	0.0557	0.5460 (confounded)
29FRL	0.4574	0.2712	0.5799 (confounded)
33MRN	0.4367	0.0603	0.5516 (confounded)
50FRN	0.5780	-0.1819	0.4453 (confounded)
49MUL	0.3516	0.2650	0.1148 (nonsig.)
52FRN	0.2193	0.1648	0.3179 (nonsig.)
Number of Sorts	17	15	11
% Expl. Var.	18	17	16

Table 3 reflects the factor correlations ranging from .03 to .41, which is a relationship of the theoretical sorts of the factors. This indicates that while the three factors share some commonalities in the view of the school counseling role, the factors are unique enough to represent individualistic views of the professional roles of the school counselor.

Table 3

Correlations between Pairs of Factors

Factors	1	2	3
1	1.0000		
2	0.2267	1.0000	
3	0.4127	0.0323	1.0000

Response to Research Questions

Research Question One: What perceptions do school counselors have regarding their roles according to critical tasks of school counselors?

The factors were interpreted by examining them both individually and in relation to the other factors. By examining each individual Q-sort, we can determine what type of

loadings there were on each factor. Some individuals are considered high and pure loaders meaning they represent relatively pure viewpoints on a particular topic as they loaded very highly on one factor (Robbins, 2005). The viewpoints from high and pure loadings are often used to define a particular factor. In contrast, other individuals may load on multiple factors or reach significance on multiple factors. These are referred to as confounded. High and pure loaders were examined to provide a further analysis of the factors. The final stage of factor interpretation involved analysis of demographics, follow-up interviews, and comments allowing for a complete picture of each viewpoint.

The consensus statements were the first to be examined (see Table 4). Consensus statements are statements that display no significant differences among the participants' rankings. The factors are unique enough to represent individualistic views of the professional roles of the school counselor; however, they shared some commonalities on the following statements listed below.

Table 4

Consensus Statements with Array Positions

Item No.	Statement	Array Positions for Factors 1	2	3
Most Like				
5.	Consult with external community agencies which provide support services for our students.	1	0	1
11.	Counsel individually with students regarding mental health issues.	3	3	2
18.	Consult with staff regarding student behaviors.	4	4	3
21.	Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences,	2	1	0

	local in-services.)			
28.	Ensure a safe environment for all students in my school.	2	2	3
31.	Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness).	2	2	1
Most Unlike				
22.	Actively involved in professional organizations promoting school counseling at the local, state and national levels.	-2	-2	-1
23.	Analyze data to identify patterns of achievement and behavior that contribute to school success.	0	-1	0
27.	Select and implement applicable strategies to assess school-wide issues.	-1	-2	-1
32.	Develop measurable outcomes for a school counseling program which would demonstrate accountability.	-2	-1	-3
33.	Use data to demonstrate the impact of the school counseling program.	-2	-1	-2

Item 18 (Consult with staff regarding student behaviors) should be recognized by its overtly shared importance. School counselors loading on Factors One and Two placed this statement in the category of most like (+4) with only two statements in higher regard and Factor Three school counselors placed it in the category of most like (+3) with only five statements held in higher regard. Therefore, it appears that the school counselors loading on all three factors viewed consultation with staff regarding student behaviors as a critical task of a school counselor. Item 32 (Develop measurable outcomes for a school

counseling program which would demonstrate accountability) appeared to rate most unlike for the school counselors on all three factors with Factor One rating it as -2, Factor Two as -1 and Factor Three as -3. Many of the other items shared close rankings but fell into the middle ground of the grid or the "neutral" area indicating school counselors on Factors 1, 2, and 3 gave little value to those particular items. For example, Item 23 (Analyze data to identify patterns of achievement and behavior that contribute to school success) contained an array position of 0 by Factor One, -1 by Factor Two, and a 0 by Factor Three. This indicates that the school counselors viewed this item as neither extremely important or unimportant.

Factor 1: Academics First

Factor One was defined by 17 sorts, and was named *Academics First* because these individuals expressed a focus on providing academic services to the students within their school district through scheduling, academic counseling, and coordinating the standardized testing program. Table 5 provides the 14 most like and 14 least like statements for the *Academics First* factor, along with each statement's array position and z-score. Additionally, distinguishing statements were examined to assist with interpretation. Distinguishing statements are noted in Table 5 with an asterisk.

Table 5

Most Like and Most Unlike Statements and Scores for Academics First

No.	Statement	Array Position	z-Score
Most Like Statements			
42	Schedule students for classes.	5	2.038*

12	Counsel individually with students regarding academic issues.	5	1.806*
18	Consult with staff regarding student behaviors.	4	1.593
40	Coordinate the standardized testing program.	4	1.518*
30	Communicate in writing with staff, parents, and the external community.	4	1.453*
20	Participate in team meetings.	3	0.937
11	Counsel individually with students regarding mental health issues.	3	0.927
2	Implement a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions.	3	0.910*
10	Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program.	3	0.890*
31	Coordinate special events for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g. career day, drug awareness week).	2	0.737
28	Ensure a safe environment for all students in my school.	2	0.709
29	Implement a preventive approach to student problems.	2	0.659
45	Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school.	2	0.568*
21	Attend professional development activities (e.g. state conferences, local in-services).	2	0.568
Most Unlike Statements			
46	Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school.	-5	-2.251*
41	Handle discipline when the principal is unavailable.	-5	-2.091*
43	Perform hall, bus, or cafeteria duty.	-4	-1.722*
38	Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you	-4	-1.164

	perform.		
24	Evaluate commercially prepared material designed for school counseling to establish their relevance to my school population.	-4	-1.134*
15	Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution.	-3	-1.112*
13	Provide small group counseling for mental health issues.	-3	-1.068
39	Use data to measure the outcome results of the school counseling program.	-3	-0.926
16	Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g. responsibility, respect, etc.)	-3	-0.853*
32	Develop measureable outcomes for a school counseling program which would demonstrate accountability.	-2	-0.826
44	Respond to health issues (e.g. check for lie, eye screening, 504 coordination).	-2	-0.796*
22	Actively involved in professional organizations promoting school counseling at the local, state and national levels.	-2	-0.781
33	Use data to demonstrate the impact of the school counseling program.	-2	-0.732
25	Identify aptitude, achievement, interest, values, and personality appraisal resources appropriate for specified situations and populations.	-2	-0.510

The *Academics First* view emphasized the importance of academic issues first and foremost. A most-like distinguishing statement reflected the importance of

scheduling students for classes (statement 42). Besides scheduling students for classes, these school counselors view counseling individually with students regarding academic issues to be of high value (statement 12). These school counselors listed other critical tasks as being the standardized testing program coordinator (statement 40) and being a strong communicator (statement 30). They also view an important part of their role as coordinating the comprehensive school counseling program (statement 10) and implementing a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions (statement 2).

The *Academics First* view was very different from the Factor Three view in a number of ways. One was regarding their view of their role in discipline. The school counselors with the *Academically First* view have strong opposition to acting as the disciplinarian in any aspect of their role (statement 41). Another way that these two views were very different was in their philosophy of covering classes for teachers as needed. School counselors with the *Academics First* view are opposed to substituting for teachers as needed (statement 46) perhaps because these activities would deter them from focusing on their primary focus of academics.

There were other aspects that set this view apart from the others. The *Academics First* school counselor does not spend time conducting classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits such as respect (statement 16) or on conflict resolution skills (statement 15). These counselors also do not spend their time evaluating commercially prepared materials designed for school counseling to establish their relevance to their school (statement 24) nor do they spend their days performing hall, bus or cafeteria duty (statement 43). Rather, these counselors are busy scheduling students for classes,

counseling individually with students regarding academic issues, and acting as the standardized testing coordinator.

The *Academics First* view indicated there were several activities that were neither most like their role or most unlike their role. For example, they were somewhat neutral regarding participating on committees within the school (statement 47, array position 1, z-score = 0.49, distinguishing statement). They did not express a strong feeling toward completing paperwork after engaging in counseling sessions such as progress notes (statement 36, array position 1, z-score = 0.42, distinguishing statement) or consulting with administration regarding improvement of the counseling program (statement 8, array position 0, z-score = 0.23, distinguishing statement). Additionally, these school counselors were somewhat neutral regarding promoting the use of counseling and guidance activities by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate (statement 3, array position 0, z-score = 0.07, distinguishing statement) and writing a mission statement or philosophy (statement 7, array position -1, z-score = -0.36, distinguishing statement).

Additionally, the comments and follow-up interviews were analyzed to provide a more complete picture of each viewpoint. One of the individuals from the *Academics First* view indicated that her current position is quite different from her other school counseling positions over the years. In the follow-up interview, she stated that they are fortunate at her current school and are able to split the responsibilities of the school counselor. She handles all the academic counseling activities while the other counselor handles all the mental health aspects of the school counseling role. In another follow-up

interview, the school counselor stated, “This is dead on. I will say that I don’t mind covering classes but once you do they start to expect it, so I just don’t do it.”

Factor 2: Mental Health First

Factor Two was defined by 15 sorts, and was named *Mental Health First* because these individuals are focused on providing mental health services by engaging in a wide variety of activities aimed at ensuring mental health for all students as an essential part of the comprehensive school counseling program. Table 6 provides the 14 most like and 14 least like statements for the *Mental Health First* factor, along with each statement’s array position and z-score. Additionally, distinguishing statements were examined to assist with interpretation. Distinguishing statements are noted in Table 6 with an asterisk.

Table 6

Most Like and Most Unlike Statements and Scores for Mental Health First

No.	Statement	Array Position	z-Score
Most Like Statements			
16	Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g. responsibility, respect, etc.)	5	2.141*
10	Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program.	5	2.023*
13	Provide small group counseling for mental health issues.	4	1.658*
15	Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution.	4	1.400*
18	Consult with staff regarding student behaviors.	4	1.351
11	Counsel individually with students regarding mental health issues.	3	1.183
14	Provide small group counseling for academic issues.	3	1.071*

19	Teach, develop and/or support students' coping mechanisms for dealing with crisis in their lives (e.g. peer suicide, abuse, etc.).	3	0.978*
3	Promote the use of counseling and guidance activities by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate.	3	0.976*
12	Counsel individually with students regarding academic issues.	2	0.888*
29	Implement a preventive approach to student problems.	2	0.884
6	Incorporate students' developmental stages in establishing and conducting the school counseling program.	2	0.768*
28	Ensure a safe environment for all students in my school.	2	0.655
31	Coordinate special events for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g. career day, drug awareness week).	2	0.647
Most Unlike Statements			
45	Enroll student in and/or withdraw students from school.	-5	-2.167*
42	Schedule students for classes.	-5	-1.863*
44	Respond to health issues (e.g. check for lice, eye screenings, 504 coordination).	-4	-1.393*
46	Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school.	-4	-1.340*
37	Develop school improvement plans based on interpreting school-wide assessment results.	-4	-1.295*
41	Handle discipline when the principal is unavailable.	-3	-1.192*
38	Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform.	-3	-1.066
7	Write a mission statement of philosophy.	-3	-1.058*

25	Identify aptitude, achievement, interest, values, and personality appraisal resources appropriate for specified situations and populations.	-3	-1.037
24	Evaluate commercially prepared material designed for school counseling to establish their relevance to my school population.	-2	-0.752
40	Coordinate the standardized testing program.	-2	-0.653*
22	Actively involved in professional organizations promoting school counseling at the local, state and national levels.	-2	-0.632
27	Select and implement applicable strategies to assess school-wide issues.	-2	-0.627
39	Use data to measure the outcome results of the school counseling program.	-2	-0.612

Factor Two was interpreted to represent a view called the *Mental Health First* view. These school counselors view the mental health needs of their students to be a high priority and engage in a wide variety of activities aimed at ensuring mental health for all students as an essential part of the comprehensive school counseling program. These school counselors conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits such as responsibility and respect (statement 16) and conflict resolution skills (statement 15). They spend time coordinating and maintaining a comprehensive school counseling program (statement 10). Providing small group counseling for mental health issues is an important part of their job (statement 13). These school counselors are busy teaching students coping mechanisms for dealing with crises in their lives (statement 19) and

promoting the use of counseling and guidance activities by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate (statement 3).

Due to their focus on mental health issues, there are many tasks that these school counselors do not do on a regular basis. There were some tasks which these school counselors reported as an unessential part of their job that were very different from the other factors. These school counselors do not spend time scheduling students for classes (statement 42). Enrolling students in and/or withdrawing them from school is not a task of these school counselors (statement 45). Another difference was regarding the standardized testing program. These school counselors do not coordinate the standardized testing program in their schools (statement 40) nor do they develop school improvement plans based on interpreting school-wide assessment results (statement 37). These school counselors do not spend time on nonessential counseling tasks such as substituting to cover classes for teachers (statement 46) or responding to health issues like checking for head lice, eye screenings or 504 coordination (statement 44). Writing a mission statement (statement 7) and handling discipline (statement 41) are also not tasks that these school counselors spend time doing.

The *Mental Health First* view indicated there were several activities that were neither most like their role or most unlike their role. For example, they were somewhat neutral regarding leading school-wide initiatives which focus on ensuring a positive learning environment (statement 26, array position 1, z-score = 0.49, distinguishing statement). They did not express a strong feeling toward participating in team meetings (statement 20, array position 0, z-score = 0.07, distinguishing statement) or participating on committees within the school (statement 47, array position 0, z-score = -0.10,

distinguishing statement). Additionally, these school counselors were somewhat neutral regarding consulting with administration regarding improvement of the counseling program (statement 8, array position 0, z-score = -0.20, distinguishing statement) and implementing a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions (statement 2, array position 0, z-score = -0.25, distinguishing statement). These school counselors did not express strong views towards helping out with additional duties such as performing hall, bus or cafeteria duty (statement 43, array position -1, z-score = -0.44, distinguishing statement).

Additionally, the comments and follow-up interviews were analyzed to provide a more complete picture of each viewpoint. One of the individuals from the *Mental Health First* view indicated, "It was frustrating! Too many important responsibilities are not priorities." In a follow-up interview, one of the school counselors indicted that she does help with the standardized testing; however, it does not take up much of her time. Another school counselor commented, "It was not an easy task because I feel that activities such as bus duty can be useful because I get a chance to interact with a lot of students. However, I know that many school counselors frown on having to do such activities."

Factor 3: Counselor and Beyond

Factor Three was defined by 11 sorts, and was named *Counselor and Beyond* because these school counselors are attempting to do it all. These individuals are not only focused on providing mental health services and academic services but also on helping out in many other areas of need within their school district like stepping in as the disciplinarian when needed. Table 7 provides the 14 most like and 14 least like

statements for the *Counselor and Beyond* factor, along with each statement's array position and z-score. Additionally, distinguishing statements were examined to assist with interpretation. Distinguishing statements are noted in Table 7 with an asterisk.

Table 7

Most Like and Most Unlike Statements and Scores for Counselor and Beyond

No.	Statement	Array Position	z-Score
Most Like Statements			
40	Coordinate the standardized testing program.	5	2.040*
42	Schedule students for classes.	5	2.015*
45	Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school.	4	2.006*
12	Counsel individually with students regarding academic issues.	4	1.374*
47	Participate on committees within the school.	4	1.295*
18	Consult with staff regarding student behaviors.	3	1.275
43	Perform hall, bus, or cafeteria duty.	3	1.216*
41	Handle discipline when the principal is unavailable.	3	1.047*
28	Ensure a safe environment for all students in my school.	3	0.962
11	Counsel individually with students regarding mental health issues.	2	0.938
46	Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school.	2	0.906*
16	Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g. responsibility, respect, etc.)	2	0.745*
20	Participate in team meetings.	2	0.679
15	Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution.	2	0.631*

Most Unlike Statements

5	Advocate for myself as a professional school counselor and articulate the purposes and goals of school counseling.	-5	-1.911*
38	Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform.	-5	-1.703*
39	Use data to measure the outcome results of the school counseling program.	-4	-1.554*
7	Write a mission statement of philosophy.	-4	-1.506*
1	Inform teacher/administrators about the role, training program, and interventions of the school counselor.	-4	-1.209*
8	Consult with administration regarding improvement of the counseling program.	-3	-1.129*
9	Identify specific state content standards to which the school counseling programs curricula, or activities contribute or align.	-3	-1.045*
32	Develop measurable outcomes for a school counseling program which would demonstrate accountability.	-3	-0.994
35	Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students.	-3	-0.881*
33	Use data to demonstrate the impact of the school counseling program.	-2	-0.881
34	Engage in ongoing evaluation to ensure the overall effectiveness of the school counseling program.	-2	-0.803*
13	Provide small group counseling for mental health issues.	-2	-0.733

25	Identify aptitude, achievement, interest, values, and personality appraisal resources appropriate for specified situations and populations.	-2	-0.656
6	Incorporate students' developmental stages in establishing and conducting the school counseling program.	-2	-0.624

Factor Three was interpreted to represent a view called the *Counselor and Beyond* view. These school counselors view their role in terms of meeting as many demands as possible, including the academic needs of students and the mental health needs of students. Not only are these school counselors the standardized testing coordinators (statement 40), but they are engaged in many other tasks such as participating on committees (statement 47), scheduling students for classes (statement 42), and counseling individually with students regarding academic issues (statement 12).

These school counselors are quick to help out in a variety of situations including performing hall, bus or cafeteria duty (statement 43), covering classes for teachers as needed (statement 46), and handling discipline issues when the principal is unavailable (statement 41). These counselors are also busy enrolling students in and/or withdrawing them from school (statement 45) and conducting classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (statement 16) and conflict resolution skills (statement 15).

These school counselors have so many different tasks that they are unable to spend time keeping track of how their time is being spent (statement 38) or on advocating for the profession of school counseling (statement 5). These school counselors spend little time informing others about their role (statement 1), writing a mission statement

(statement 7) or consulting with the administration regarding the school counseling program (statement 8). They also do not engage in ongoing evaluation to ensure the overall effectiveness of the school counseling program (statement 34), which is vital to the school counseling profession.

Regarding data management and accountability, these school counselors do not seem to spend time conducting needs assessments and evaluations (statement 35) or using data to measure the outcome results of the school counseling program (statement 39). They do not spend their time identifying specific state content standards to which the school counseling programs curricula, or activities contribute or align (statement 9).

The *Counselor and Beyond* view indicated there were several activities that were neither most like their role or most unlike their role. For example, they were somewhat neutral regarding attending professional development activities such as state conferences and local in-services (statement 21, array position 0, z-score = 0.09, distinguishing statement). They did not express a strong feeling toward conducting interventions with families in order to resolve problems that impact students' effectiveness and success (statement 17, array position 0, z-score = 0.04, distinguishing statement) or responding to health issues such as checking for lice and eye screenings (statement 44, array position 0, z-score = -0.08, distinguishing statement). Additionally, these school counselors were somewhat neutral regarding implementing a preventive approach to student problems (statement 29, array position 1, z-score = .12, distinguishing statement) and implementing a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions (statement 2, array position 1, z-score = 0.36, distinguishing statement). These school counselors did not express strong views towards coordinating and maintaining a comprehensive school

counseling program (statement 10, array position 0, z-score = -0.14, distinguishing statement) or promoting the use of counseling and guidance activities by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate (statement 3, array position -1, z-score = -0.31, distinguishing statement).

Additionally, the comments and follow-up interviews were analyzed to provide a more complete picture of each viewpoint. From the comments and follow-up interviews it became evident that these school counselors were frustrated about their multifaceted role. One of the individuals from the *Counselor and Beyond* view indicated, "I think it's pretty obvious that school counselors are expected to do tedious extra duty jobs that really take away from activities that have the potential to help multiple kids." In a follow-up interview, one of the school counselors stated, "I hate my job. I feel like a glorified secretary. I'm counselor part-time, psychometrist part-time, and I teach 3 hours each day. I have to answer the phones after 3:30. I would love it if I were just the counselor."

Research Question Two: How do school counselors' perceptions of their professional roles compare to the ASCA National Model?

Based on the ASCA's National Model, the counseling role is divided into the following areas: foundation, delivery, management, and accountability (ASCA, 2005). This model was used as the theoretical framework for this study and the Q-set was divided into the four categories with an additional category for other school counseling activities. An interesting finding was that out of all three of the factors, none of the most like statements were from the category of accountability. However, four of the most unlike statements for *Academics First* were from the accountability category, two of the

most unlike statements for *Mental Health First* were from the accountability category, and six of the most unlike statements for *Counselor and Beyond* were from the accountability category.

The accountability category focuses on the school counselors' responsibility to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms (ASCA, 2005). This task is listed as critical in terms of demonstrating the legitimacy of the school counseling profession. Whiston and Sexton (1998) found that the school counseling profession is suffering from an evidence gap that limits practitioners' abilities to identify evidence-based best practices, which limits the credibility of the field. Unless the profession can demonstrate that its interventions are supported by empirical evidence, school counseling may be viewed as less legitimate in the emerging evidence-based education environment (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007). Therefore, while the accountability category of the ASCA National Model is crucial to the school counseling profession, it appears that school counselors continue to spend their time on other tasks. Table 8 provides a breakdown of the factor comparison to the ASCA National Model for both the 14 most like statements and 14 most unlike statements.

Table 8

Factor Comparison to the ASCA National Model

Most Like Statements

	ASCA National Model Categories				
	Foundation	Delivery	Management	Accountability	Other
Factor					
1	2	5	4	0	3
2	3	8	3	0	0
3	0	6	1	0	7

Most Unlike Statements					
Factor					
1	0	4	2	4	4
2	1	1	3	3	6
3	6	1	1	6	0

Research Question Three: Does self efficacy differ by the perceptions of school counselors?

The main methodology utilized in this study was Q methodology. However, an additional analysis was conducted using R methodology in an attempt to answer the third research question. Self efficacy was assessed by scores on the School Counselor Self Efficacy Scale (SCSE) (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005) which measures five aspects of school counselor self efficacy. The five components were: Personal and Social Development, Leadership and Assessment, Career and Academic Development, Collaboration and Cultural Competence (Bodenhorn & Skaggs). The SCSE contains 43 items that are indicators of one of five categories of school counselor self efficacy. Statements are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from not confident to highly confident.

In their 2005 study, Bodenhorn and Skaggs found good reliability using SPSS (Version 12.0) on the 43 item scale. The coefficient alpha for the scale score was .95. In the current study, the findings were consistent. Reliability statistics were run using SPSS (Version 16.0). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the 43 statements of the scale revealed that the SCSE at .943 demonstrated high internal consistency reliability.

The data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 16.0) using a one-way between subjects ANOVA design where members where nested in factor group. In other words, the factors that emerged as a result of the first analysis of Q-Methodology were used as the groupings to determine if self efficacy differed by the various groups of perceptions of school counselors. The three factors were utilized as groups one, two and three and a fourth group was established to represents all the confounded sorts and nonsignificant results. Descriptive statistics were calculated prior to the analysis of variance to insure the required statistical assumptions were met. Results [$F(3,49) = 1.901$; $p = .142$] suggest that there were no overall significant differences in self efficacy between the four Q groups. Effect size was determined using Omega Squared. The data suggested that about 5% of the variability in self efficacy may be due to the differing perceptions of school counselors. According to Cohen (1962, 1992), this is evidence of a medium effect size.

Research Question Four: What demographic patterns might assist in understanding the varying perceptions of school counselors regarding their professional roles?

In order to answer this research question, a number of attributes were explored including gender, ethnicity, years of experience, and licensure. Of the fifty-three school counselors involved in the study, forty-eight were female and five were male. Gender did not appear to play any significant factor in the differing views as the five males all defined different factors. The sort of one male loaded on each of the three factors.

The majority of participants (49) in the study were Caucasian. There were two Native American school counselors who took part in the study, one Hispanic school

counselor, and one Creole/Cajun. Due to the lack of diversity among the participants, no differences could be explored regarding ethnicity.

Another demographic attribute that was explored was whether or not the school counselors held an additional license to practice as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). Of the fifty-three participants, twelve were Licensed Professional Counselors in addition to being certified school counselors. The largest number of licensed individuals defined on Factor Two: *Mental Health First* with four being licensed. On Factor One: *Academics First*, there were two that were licensed. There were two that were licensed on Factor Three: *Counselor and Beyond.* Then there were three that were licensed that had confounded sorts and one was nonsignificant.

Years of experience and age were other demographics that were explored. There was a significant amount of diversity regarding years of experience which ranged from one year to 35 years of experience. Of the fifty-three participants, fifteen had 0-5 years of experience, seventeen had 6-10 years of experience, sixteen had 11-20 years of experience and five participants had 21-35 years of experience. Age range also varied from 24 years of age to 63 years of age. Of the fifty-three participants, two were between 24-29 years of age, eleven were between 30-39 years of age, seven were between 40-49 years of age, twenty-seven were between 50-59 years of age and six were 60+ years. Regarding understanding the varying perceptions of school counselors, there appears to be little connection between age and years of experience.

Other demographics examined were in state versus out of state, familiarity with the ASCA National Model and whether or not the participants graduated from a CACREP program. Of the fifty-three subjects, 36 were from Oklahoma and 17 were

from out of state. There seemed to be an overwhelming number of subjects who were in state that had the view of *Academics First* with thirteen being in state and only four being out of state. When asked if they were familiar with the ASCA National Model, sixteen said no and 37 said yes. Therefore, 30% of the participants were not familiar with the ASCA National Model. When asked if they graduated from a CACREP program, ten said yes and 43 said no. An interesting point was that out of the seventeen out of state participants, eight of them graduated from a CACREP accredited program; whereas, only two out of the 36 participants that were in state graduated from a CACREP accredited program. Table 9 provides a summary of the participant characteristics by factor.

Table 9

Participant Characteristics by Factor

	Factor 1: *Academics First*	Factor 2: *Mental Health First*	Factor 3: *Counselor and Beyond*	Total
In State	13	6	8	28
Out of State	4	9	3	14
CACREP Graduate	5	3	1	9
Not CACREP Graduate	12	12	10	34
Licensed	2	4	2	8
Not Licensed	15	11	9	35
Male	1	1	1	3
Female	16	14	10	40
Caucasian	14	15	11	40
Hispanic	1	0	0	1
Native American	2	0	0	2
Familiar with ASCA Model	12	11	6	29

Not Familiar with ASCA	5	4	5	14
Age:				
24-29	1	1	0	2
30-39	2	6	2	10
40-49	2	0	2	4
50-59	9	7	6	22
60+	3	1	1	5
Years of Experience:				
0-5	3	6	4	13
6-10	8	3	1	12
11-20	3	4	6	13
21+	3	2	0	5

Summary

This chapter presented the results of the data after it was analyzed using PQ Method 2.11. The analysis revealed a three factor solution. Using the statements loadings on each factor, the factors were named: *Academics First, Mental Health First, and Counselor and Beyond.* The participants aligning with each factor were described and each of the three research questions was addressed. Chapter V provides a summary of the results, conclusions and a discussion of implications for future research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of school counselors toward their professional roles in schools according to the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005). Demographic patterns were examined to uncover any relationships that might exist. An additional analysis of variance was completed to examine whether school counselors who held different perceptions of their role would also have different levels of school counselor self efficacy. This chapter provides conclusions based on the summary of results and a discussion of future implications concerning the theory, practice, and future research.

Summary of the Study

Fifty-three school counselors from school districts across the United States participated in the study. The participants represented a range of years of experience, educational settings and backgrounds. Q-methodology gave the researcher an organized technique for uncovering the participants' opinions regarding their professional roles. Q-sort statements aligned with the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005). In addition to participating in the Q-sort, the school counselors also agreed to fill out a demographic survey and complete the School Counselor Self efficacy Scale (SCSE) (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). The research questions for this study were:

1. What perceptions to school counselors have regarding their roles according to critical tasks of school counselors?
2. How do school counselors' perceptions of their professional roles compare to the ASCA National Model?
3. Does self efficacy differ by the perceptions of school counselors?
4. What demographic patterns might assist in understanding the various groups of perceptions of school counselors regarding their professional roles?

Research Question One: What perceptions do school counselors have regarding their roles according to critical tasks of school counselors?

The study identified three patterns of ideas this group of school counselors hold about their professional roles using Q-methodology. School counselors indicated a strong preference to one of the three views. The views were named *Academics First, Mental Health First and Counselor and Beyond.* The *Academics First* school counselors expressed an emphasis on providing academic services to the students within their school district though scheduling, academic counseling, and coordinating the standardized testing program. The *Mental Health First* school counselors view the mental health needs of their students to be a high priority and engage in a wide variety of activities aimed at ensuring mental health for all students as an essential part of the comprehensive school counseling program. The *Counselor and Beyond* school counselors are attempting to do a little bit of everything by not only focusing on providing mental health services and academic services for the students but also on helping out in many other areas of need within their school district.

Research Question Two: How do school counselors' perceptions of their professional roles compare to the ASCA National Model?

School counselors are not spending their time on what of the four areas outlined by the ASCA National Model, the accountability category. Based on the ASCA's National Model, the counseling role is divided into the following areas: foundation, delivery, management, and accountability (ASCA, 2005). This model was used as the theoretical framework for this study and the Q-set was divided into the four categories with an additional category for other school counseling activities. An interesting finding was that out of all three of the factors, none of them indicated they were spending time on the accountability category. In fact, all three of the different views of school counselors indicated that they actually were not spending time on the accountability category.

The accountability category focuses on the school counselors' responsibility to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school counseling program in measurable terms (ASCA, 2005). This task is listed as critical in terms of demonstrating the legitimacy of the school counseling profession. Whiston and Sexton (1998) found that the school counseling profession is suffering from an evidence gap that limits practitioners' abilities to identify evidence-based best practices, which limits the credibility of the field. Unless the profession can demonstrate that its interventions are supported by empirical evidence, school counseling may be viewed as less legitimate in the emerging evidence-based education environment (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007). Therefore, while the accountability category of the ASCA National Model is crucial to the school counseling profession, it appears that school counselors continue to spend their time on other tasks.

Research Question Three: Does self efficacy differ by the perceptions of school counselors?

The data were analyzed using a one-way between subjects ANOVA where self efficacy was explored with counselors nested in factor group. In other words, the factors that emerged as a result of the first analysis of Q-methodology were used as the groupings to determine if the school counselors who hold different perceptions of their role would also have different levels of self efficacy. The three factors were utilized as groups one, two and three and a fourth group was established to represents all the confounded sorts and nonsignificant results. Results suggest that there were no significant differences in level of self efficacy between the four Q groups. However, results suggested a medium effect size, in that perceptions did account for about 5% of the variations in counselor self efficacy.

Research Question Four: What demographic patterns might assist in understanding the varying perceptions of school counselors regarding their professional roles?

The majority of participants in the study were Caucasian females. There were two Native American school counselors who took part in the study, one Hispanic school counselor, and one Creole/Cajun. Out of the fifty-three participants, only five were male. Due to the lack of diversity among the participants, no differences could be explored regarding ethnicity or gender. Another demographic pattern that was explored was whether or not the school counselors held an additional license to practice as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). Of the fifty-three participants, twelve were Licensed Professional Counselors in addition to being certified school counselors. The largest

number of licensed individuals loaded on Factor Two: *Mental Health First* with four being licensed. Regarding understanding the varying perceptions of school counselors, there appears to be little connection between age and years of experience.

Other demographics examined were in state versus out of state, familiarity with the ASCA National Model and whether or not the participants graduated from a CACREP program. Of the fifty-three subjects, 36 were from Oklahoma and 17 were from out of state. There seemed to be an overwhelming number of subjects who were in state that had the view of *Academics First* with thirteen being in state and only four being out of state. When asked if they were familiar with the ASCA National Model, sixteen said no and 37 said yes. When asked if they graduated from a CACREP program, ten said yes and 43 said no. An interesting point was that out of the seventeen out of state participants, eight of them graduated from a CACREP accredited program; whereas, only two out of the 36 participants that were in state graduated from a CACREP accredited program. This was statistically significant.

Conclusion

Several conclusions are evident from the findings of this study. The results indicate that school counselors spend their time in three different ways and therefore, there continues to be no unity in the role of the school counselor. This study found that there are three views of school counselors regarding their professional roles. Each of the views has distinct characteristics that make it unique in comparison to the others. Therefore, school counselors continue to approach their professional roles in a number of different ways. Their approach could affect how they choose to spend the majority of their time which in turn will continue to affect the field of school counseling as a whole.

The three views described in this study represent very unique views on how school counselors perceive their professional roles within the public schools. With the overwhelming number of roles being placed on school counselors, many have chosen to focus on one aspect over others. For example, the *Academics First* school counselors seem to be focusing more on the academic aspects of their job while the *Mental Health First* school counselors seem to be focusing on more of the mental health aspects of their job. In turn, the *Counselor and Beyond* school counselors are trying to do it all and are finding that it is a constant struggle.

The *Academics First* school counselors were very different from the other views in a number of ways. They differed from the *Counselor and Beyond* school counselors regarding their view on their role in handling discipline. The Academics First school counselors indicated they did not act as the disciplinarian while this was just another one of the many tasks required of the *Counselor and Beyond* school counselors. Additionally, *Academics First* school counselors indicated opposition toward filling in for teachers as needed, while the *Counselor and Beyond* school counselors indicated this was just another aspect of their role.

Another conclusion relates to the implementation of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005). The ASCA National Model proposes that school counselors spend their time in four different areas: foundation, delivery, management and accountability. Out of all three perceptions, none of the views expressed that they were spending time on the accountability category. In fact, all three views indicated that they were not spending their time on tasks related to accountability. Dimmitt, et al (2007) indicated that unless the profession can demonstrate that its interventions are supported by empirical evidence,

school counseling may be viewed as less legitimate in the emerging evidence-based education environment. Therefore, while the accountability category of the ASCA National Model is crucial to the school counseling profession as a whole, it appears that school counselors continue to spend their time on other tasks that are seen as more pressing.

A third conclusion is that school counselors' training and background influences which tasks they choose to focus on over others. For example, school counselors who are also Licensed Professional Counselors are more apt to focus on the mental health aspects of their role. Of the fifty-three participants, twelve were Licensed Professional Counselors in addition to being certified school counselors. The largest number of licensed individuals defined on Factor Two: *Mental Health First* with four being licensed. This view was described as being focused on providing mental health services by engaging in a wide variety of activities aimed at ensuring mental health for all students as an essential part of the comprehensive school counseling program. When counselors are faced with the challenge of completing a wide variety of tasks, they end up doing what they are most comfortable with or what they feel most trained to do. Therefore, school counselors' background and training influences which tasks they spend the most time completing.

A fourth conclusion is regarding school counselors' familiarity with the ASCA National Model. The findings from this study indicate that school counselors continue to be unfamiliar or unaware that the ASCA National Model even exists. In fact, a number of the participants in this study indicated no familiarity with the ASCA National Model. If school counselors are unaware that the national model exists, they will be unaware of

the need to implement many of the new standards. As noted by Dimmitt, et al. (2007), unless the profession can demonstrate that its interventions are supported by empirical evidence, school counseling may be viewed as less legitimate in the emerging evidence-based education environment. Therefore, this makes the accountability category of the ASCA National Model particularly important for demonstrating the legitimacy of the profession of school counselor. If school counselors are unaware of the model itself, they will certainly be unaware of the need to demonstrate accountability.

A final conclusion is that fewer Oklahoma participants reported graduating from a CACREP program when compared to out of state participants. In the state of Oklahoma, there are eight school counseling master's programs. However, only one of the eight programs is CACREP accredited. Therefore, this finding is not surprising. The question is whether or not this has an impact on the field of school counseling. Regarding the differing views of school counselors, there did not appear to be a connection regarding whether or not they graduated from a CACREP program.

Implications

Existing research indicated that a need existed to explore where the field of school counseling currently stands regarding the ASCA national standards (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). Little research to date has discussed school counselor perceptions about the various school counseling program components that have been outlined by the ASCA National Model (Hatch & Chen-Hayes). Understanding school counselors' perceptions of their role will eventually lead to higher school counselor satisfaction and unity of the school counseling role. The data analyzed will help guide decision makers regarding the role of the school counselor and help create a more uniform decision regarding job

responsibilities. This study provides the opinions of the school counselors to the information stakeholders needed to make appropriate decisions pertaining to the advancement of the school counseling profession. Based on the conclusions drawn from this study, the need continues to exist for school counselors to take a more proactive role in following national standards in an effort to enhance the profession.

One of the conclusions from this study focused on the fact that school counselors continue to spend their time in very different ways. Additionally, it was concluded that school counselors who are also Licensed Professional Counselors were more apt to focus on the mental health aspects of their role. This implies that school counselors who have additional training in mental health may be more apt to focus on the mental health aspect of their role. This could also have implications regarding self efficacy. If school counselors do not feel adequately trained in a particular area, they may remain adamant that it is not a crucial aspect of their professional roles. However, if they feel more qualified or highly trained in a particular area, they may begin to include it in the set of skills to be utilized on a regular basis.

This study has shed light on the need to better understand the discrepancies between actual practice and existing models. While it appears that advancements have been made in this effort, school counselors continue to report feeling frustrated and overwhelmed by the growing number of responsibilities of the school counselor. A number of participants voiced their frustration in the comments section of the demographic survey and in the follow-up phone interviews. School counselors may be spread so thin that they are unable to perform critical tasks as identified by ASCA. By taking a more proactive role, school counselors could become their own advocates.

Policy makers and stakeholders need to listen to the voices of the school counselors that are engaging in the services on a daily basis to better understand the needs and concerns that exist.

School counselors are not the only individuals that are needed for change. School counselors are not only working under their own assumptions and perceptions but also under the values and expectations of their administrators. School administrators must come together in an effort to unify the school counseling role. If the administrators expect the school counselors working within their district to spend a majority of their time as the testing coordinator or other additional services, then school counselors will continue to have less time to focus on the critical tasks as outlined by the ASCA National Model.

Another implication that can be drawn from this study is that school counselors continue to be asked to do more than is possible. This was evident in the school counselors' comments and follow-up phone interviews. The only counselors that did not seem frustrated were those that were able to divide up their responsibilities with other school counselors in which one would focus on certain tasks and the other would focus on the remaining tasks. For example, in a few situations, school counselors reported working for districts in which one school counselor was assigned the role of an academic school counselor, while another school counselor was assigned the role of a mental health school counselor. When responsibilities were divided, the school counselors reported higher satisfaction with their role and their ability to meet all the demands. However, in school districts where responsibilities were not divided, school counselors indicated a great deal of frustration in being asked to do more than they can possibly accomplish.

Implications exist regarding familiarity with the ASCA model itself. It was found that a number of participants were not even aware that the ASCA National Model existed. If more school counselors were aware of the model, they might be more apt to engage in the critical tasks as outlined by the model. If they aren't aware that it exists, how can they strive toward implementation?

Additionally, there are implications regarding familiarity with the ASCA model and CACREP programs. It was concluded that there were fewer Oklahoma participants that graduated from CACREP programs when compared to out of state participants. However, this did not seem to impact the school counselors' perceptions of their roles. Even though this did not seem to impact school counselors' view of their professional roles, it may have an impact on the overall familiarity with the ASCA National Model. It is clearly laid out in the CACREP standards for school counseling programs that accredited programs must provide evidence that student learning has occurred in several domains. One of the required domains is that school counselors will understand the current models of school counseling programs (e.g., ASCA National Model) and their integral relationship to the total educational program. Therefore, by graduating from a CACREP accredited program, school counselors may be more likely to be familiar with the ASCA National Model.

Directions for Future Research

ASCA has identified four different areas in which they recommend school counselors spend their time: foundation, delivery, management and accountability. Out of these areas, the accountability factor has been identified as crucial to keeping the school counseling profession viewed as necessary and legitimate in the emerging

evidence-based education environment (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007). However, out of all three of the views expressed by the school counselors in this study, none of them indicated that they were spending time on demonstrating accountability. In fact, all three views indicated that they were not spending their time on tasks related to accountability. Therefore, while the accountability category of the ASCA National Model is crucial to the school counseling profession, it appears that school counselors continue to spend their time on other tasks that are seen as more pressing. Additional research is needed to identify problems and issues that inhibit school counselors' ability to adequately engage in the accountability area of the ASCA National Model in an effort to demonstrate the legitimacy of the school counseling profession in the emerging evidence-based education environment. The results from this study indicated how school counselors are spending the majority of their time but additional research is needed to identify why they are doing what they are doing. Is it simply a matter of preference or is it based on the requirements outlined by the administrators? Or perhaps how school counselors are spending their time is the result of their background, training and overall comfort level? By answering these additional questions, we will be better able to advocate for the school counseling profession as a whole by responding to the areas of need.

Concluding Comments

This research was considered an initial analysis of how five years of the ASCA National Model have impacted the perceptions and practices of professional school counselors. This study did not provide objective information on the level of participation regarding each of the four key areas of critical tasks for school counselors: foundation, delivery, management, and accountability (ASCA, 2005). However, the study did

contribute to the literature in a unique way by using Q methodology to describe participants' subjective views about their professional roles. It is hoped that the literature will continue to explore the problems and issues that inhibit school counselors' ability to adequately engage in all four of the areas of critical tasks for school counselors as outlined by ASCA and how these might be addressed.

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APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	Thursday, May 28, 2009
IRB Application No	ED0983
Proposal Title:	Perceptions of School Counselors Toward Their Professional Roles
Reviewed and Processed as:	Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 5/27/2010

Principal Investigator(s):

Amy Barnett
107 Bluestem
Weatherford, OK 73096

Diane Montgomery
424 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

X The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405 744 5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Sheila Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

Researcher's Script: Directions for Sorting Q Statements

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Please make sure you have the materials in front of you. You should have a Form Board and an envelope containing 47 cards, each with a statement printed on it describing ideas about the role of the school counselor. You will need a pencil later.

Step 1: Please read through the statements and sort them into three (3) piles according to the question: **"How would you describe your role as a school counselor?"**

The pile on your right are those statements that are **most like** what you think about the question and the pile on your left are those statements that are **most unlike** what you think about the question. Put any cards that you don't have strong feelings about in a middle pile.

Step 2: Now that you have three piles of cards, start with the pile to your right, the "most like" pile and **select** the two (2) cards from this pile that are **most like** of your response to the question and place them in the two (2) spaces at the far right of the Form Board in front of you in column 11. The order of the cards within the column-that is, the vertical positioning of the cards-does not matter.

Step 3: Next, from the pile to your left, the "most unlike" pile, **select** the two (2) cards that are **most unlike** your response to the question and place them in the two (2) spaces at the far left of the Form Board in front of you in column 1.

Step 4: Now, go back to the "most like" pile on your right and select the three (3) cards from those remaining in your **most like** pile and place them into the three (3) open spaces in column 10.

Step 5: Now, go back to the "most unlike" pile on your right and select the three (3) cards from those remaining in your **most unlike** pile and place them into the three (3) open spaces in column 2.

Step 6: Working back and forth, continue placing cards onto the Form Board until all of the cards have been placed into all of the spaces.

Step 7: Once you have placed all the cards on the Form Board, feel free to rearrange the cards until the arrangement best represents your opinions.

Step 8: Record the number of the statement on the Response Sheet.

Step 9: Now CLEAR your Form Board. Read through the cards once again, thinking about the question: **"What do you view as being the most important tasks of a school counselor? In other words, what *should* the role of the school counselor be like?"**

Repeat steps 2 through 8.

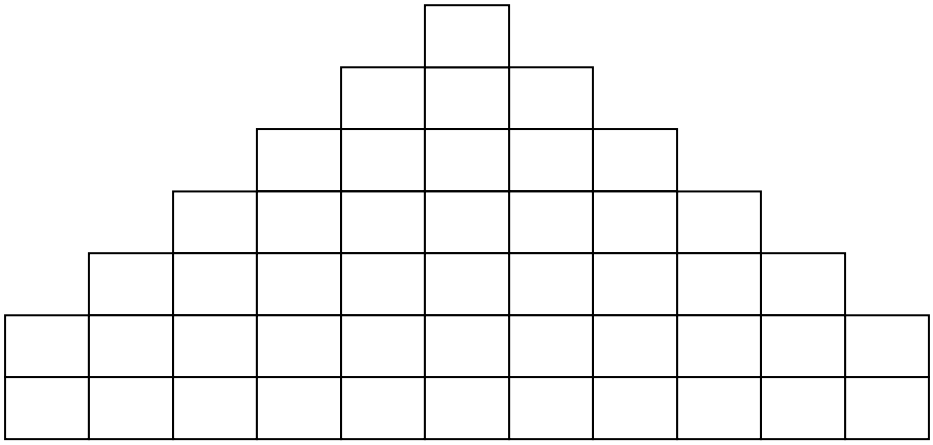
Step 10: Now please complete the School Counselor Concept Scale.

Finally, please complete the survey attached to the Response Sheet and add any comments. Thank you for your participation!

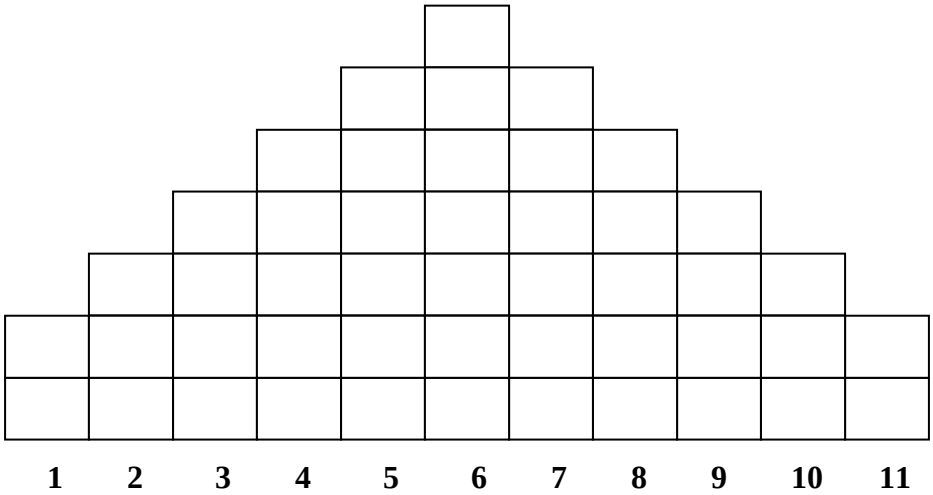
APPENDIX C
RECORD FORM

Name: _____

Sort I: How would you describe your role as a school counselor?



Sort II: What do you view as being the most important tasks of a school counselor? In other words, what *should* the role of the school counselor be like?



APPENDIX D

Demographic Survey

1. What is your gender (check one)? _____Female _____Male

2. How old are you? _____ years

3. Please check the item that best describes your ethnicity. Check all that apply.
   _____African American _____Asian American

   _____Hispanic/Latino(a) _____Native American

   _____White _____Other, please specify: _____

4. Where do you live? _____

5. What school district do you work in? _____

6. Is this district in a rural or urban area? _____

7. What is the highest degree that you completed (check one)?
   _____Bachelor's Degree _____Doctorate Degree
   _____Master's Degree _____ Other, please specify: _____

8. Please list your degree area: _____

9. Other than your school counseling certification, do you hold any other license to work independently outside of the school district? (I.e. LPC, LMFT) ____ Yes ____ No

10. If you answered yes on #9, what license do you have? _____

11. Please indicate the number of years you taught in the following.
    _____ years teaching elementary

    _____ years teaching middle school

    _____ years teaching high school

    _____ Other, please specify: _____

12. What is your current job? _____

13. How long have you worked as a school counselor? _____

14. What year did you obtain your school counselor certification? _____

15. Did you graduate from a CACREP program? _____

16. What additional certifications do you hold? _____

_____

17. National Board Certification (check one):
___ Nationally Certified
___ currently attempting for the first time
___ banked scores, reattempting
___ applying for scholarship this year
___ never attempted

18. Are you aware of the ASCA's National Model? _____ Yes _____ No

19. Have you had any recent training based on the ASCA's National Model? If so, please specify. _____

_____

_____

20. What else would you like to say about the ideas on the statements you sorted?

If you would like to participate in phone interview please write your first name or a code name that you will know and a telephone number at which you can be reached.

FIRST NAME _____PHONE NUMBER _____

APPENDIX E

Q-Set Development

Q-Set Statements for Study	Measure	Original Statement
Foundation:		
1. Inform teacher/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of school counselors within the context of your school	SCARS	Inform teacher/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school
2. Implement a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions	SCSES	Implement a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions
3. Promote the use of counseling and guidance activities by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate	SCSES	Promote the use of counseling and guidance activities by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate
4. Consult with external community agencies which provide support services for students	SCSES	Consult with external community agencies which provide support services for our students
5. Advocate for myself as a professional school counselor and articulate the purposes and goals of school counseling	SCSES	Advocate for myself as a professional school counselor and articulate the purposes and goals of school counseling
6. Incorporate students' developmental stages in establishing and conducting the school counseling program	SCSES	Incorporate students' developmental stages in establishing and conducting the school counseling program
7. Write a mission statement or philosophy	SCPCS	Write a mission statement or philosophy
8. Consult with the administration regarding improvement of the counseling program	SCPCS	Consult more with administration regarding improvement of the counseling program
9. Identify specific state content standards to which the school counseling programs curricula, or activities contribute or align	SCPCS	Identify specific state content standards to which the school counseling programs curricula, or activities contribute or align
10. Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program	SCARS	Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program
Delivery:		
11. Counsel individually with students regarding mental health issues	SCARS	Counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns
12. Counsel individually with students regarding academic issues	SCARS	Counsel students regarding academic issues
13. Provide small group counseling for mental health issues	SCARS	Provide small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills
14. Provide small group counseling for academic issues	SCARS	Provide small group counseling for academic issues
15. Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution	SCARS	Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution
16. Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g. responsibility, respect, etc.)	SCARS	Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g. responsibility, respect, etc.)

17. Conduct interventions with parents, guardians and families in order to resolve problems	SCSES	
18. Consult with staff regarding student behaviors	SCARS	Consult with school staff concerning student behavior
19. Teach, develop and/or support students' coping mechanisms for dealing with crises in their lives – e.g., peer suicide, parent's death, abuse, etc.	SCSES	
20. Participate in team meetings	SCARS	Participate in team/grade level/subject team meetings
21. Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local in-services)	SCARS	Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local in-services
22. Actively involved in professional organizations promoting school counseling at the local, state and national levels	Researcher	N/A – Developed by the researcher through interviews
Management:		
23. Analyze data to identify patterns of achievement and behavior that contribute to school success	SCSES	Analyze data to identify patterns of achievement and behavior that contribute to school success
24. Evaluate commercially prepared material designed for school counseling to establish their relevance to my school population	SCSES	Evaluate commercially prepared material designed for school counseling to establish their relevance to my school population
25. Identify aptitude, achievement, interest, values, and personality appraisal resources appropriate for specified situations and populations	SCSES	Identify aptitude, achievement, interest, values, and personality appraisal resources appropriate for specified situations and populations
26. Lead school-wide initiatives which focus on ensuring a positive learning environment	SCSES	Lead school-wide initiatives which focus on ensuring a positive learning environment
27. Select and implement applicable strategies to assess school-wide issues	SCSES	Select and implement applicable strategies to assess school-wide issues
28. Ensure a safe environment for all students in my school	SCSES	Ensure a safe environment for all students in my school
29. Implement a preventive approach to student problems	SCSES	Implement a preventive approach to student problems
30. Communicate in writing with staff, parents, and the external community	SCSES	Communicate in writing with staff, parents, and the external community
31. Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or persona/social issues (e.g. career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	SCARS	Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)
Accountability:		
32. Develop measurable outcomes for a school counseling program which would demonstrate accountability	SCSES	Develop measurable outcomes for a school counseling program which would demonstrate accountability
33. Use data to demonstrate the impact of the school counseling program	SCPCS	Use data to demonstrate the impact of the school counseling program on student success in school
34. Engage in ongoing evaluation to ensure the overall effectiveness of the program	Researcher	N/A – Developed by the researcher through interviews
35. Conduct needs assessments and counseling		Conduct needs assessments and

program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students	SCARS	counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students
36. Complete paperwork after engaging in counseling sessions (I.e. progress notes)	Researcher	N/A – Developed by the researcher through interviews
37. Develop school improvement plans based on interpreting school-wide assessment results	SCSES	Develop school improvement plans based on interpreting school-wide assessment results
38. Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform	SCARS	Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform
39. Use data to measure outcome results of the school counseling program	SCPCS	Use data to measure the outcome results of the school counseling program
Other Activities:		
40. Coordinate the standardized testing program	SCARS	Coordinate the standardized testing program
41. Handle discipline when the principal is unavailable	SCARS	Handle discipline of students
42. Schedule students for classes	SCARS	Schedule students for classes
43. Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty	SCARS	Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty
44. Respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	SCARS	Respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)
45. Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school	SCARS	Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school
46. Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school	SCARS	Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school
47. Participate on committees within the school	SCARS	Participate on committees within the school

APPENDIX F

Q-Set by Category

Foundation:

1. Inform teacher/administrators about the role, training program, and interventions of school counselors within the context of your school
2. Implement a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions
3. Promote the use of counseling and guidance activities by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate
4. Consult with external community agencies which provide support services for students
5. Advocate for myself as a professional school counselor and articulate the purposes and goals of school counseling
6. Incorporate students' developmental stages in establishing and conducting the school counseling program
7. Write a mission statement or philosophy
8. Consult with the administration regarding improvement of the counseling program
9. Identify specific state content standards to which the school counseling programs curricula, or activities contribute or align
10. Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program

Delivery:

11. Counsel individually with students regarding mental health issues
12. Counsel individually with students regarding academic issues
13. Provide small group counseling for mental health issues
14. Provide small group counseling for academic issues
15. Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution
16. Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g. responsibility, respect, etc.)
17. Conduct interventions with parents, guardians and families in order to resolve problems that impact students' effectiveness and success
18. Consult with staff regarding student behaviors
19. Teach, develop and/or support students' coping mechanisms for dealing with crises in their lives – e.g., peer suicide, parent's death, abuse, etc.
20. Participate in team meetings

21. Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local in-services)
22. Actively involved in professional organizations promoting school counseling at the local, state and national levels

Management:

23. Analyze data to identify patterns of achievement and behavior that contribute to school success
24. Evaluate commercially prepared material designed for school counseling to establish their relevance to my school population
25. Identify aptitude, achievement, interest, values, and personality appraisal resources appropriate for specified situations and populations
26. Lead school-wide initiatives which focus on ensuring a positive learning environment
27. Select and implement applicable strategies to assess school-wide issues
28. Ensure a safe environment for all students in my school
29. Implement a preventive approach to student problems
30. Communicate in writing with staff, parents, and the external community
31. Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)

Accountability:

32. Develop measurable outcomes for a school counseling program which would demonstrate accountability
33. Use data to demonstrate the impact of the school counseling program
34. Engage in ongoing evaluation to ensure the overall effectiveness of the school counseling program
35. Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty, and/or students
36. Complete paperwork after engaging in counseling sessions (I.e. progress notes)
37. Develop school improvement plans based on interpreting school-wide assessment results
38. Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform
39. Use data to measure the outcome results of the school counseling program

Other Activities:

40. Coordinate the standardized testing program
41. Handle discipline when the principal is unavailable
42. Schedule students for classes
43. Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty

44. Respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)
45. Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school
46. Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school
47. Participate on committees within the school.

APPENDIX G

School Counselor Self Efficacy Scale

Below is a list of activities representing many school counselor responsibilities. Indicate your confidence in your current ability to perform each activity by circling the appropriate answer next to each item according to the scale defined below. Please answer each item based on one current school, and based on how you feel now, not on your anticipated (or previous) ability or schools(s). Remember, this is not a test and there are no right answers.

Use the following scale:

1 = not confident,
2 = slightly confident,
3 = moderately confident,
4 = generally confident,
5 = highly confident.

Please circle the number that best represents your response for each item.

1. Advocate for integration of student academic, career, and personal development into the mission of my school.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Recognize situations that impact (both negatively and positively) student learning and achievement.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Analyze data to identify patterns of achievement and behavior that contribute to school success	1 2 3 4 5
4. Advocate for myself as a professional school counselor and articulate the purposes and goals of school counseling.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Develop measurable outcomes for a school counseling program which would demonstrate accountability.	1 2 3 4 5
6. Consult and collaborate with teachers, staff, administrators and parents to promote student success.	1 2 3 4 5
7. Establish rapport with a student for individual counseling.	1 2 3 4 5
8. Function successfully as a small group leader.	1 2 3 4 5
9. Effectively deliver suitable parts of the school counseling program through large group meetings such as in classrooms.	1 2 3 4 5
10. Conduct interventions with parents, guardians and families in order to resolve problems that impact students' effectiveness and success.	1 2 3 4 5

11. Teach students how to apply time and task management skills.	1 2 3 4 5
12. Foster understanding of the relationship between learning and work.	1 2 3 4 5
13. Offer appropriate explanations to students, parents and teachers of how learning styles affect school performance.	1 2 3 4 5
14. Deliver age-appropriate programs through which students acquire the skills needed to investigate the world of work.	1 2 3 4 5
15. Implement a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions.	1 2 3 4 5
16. Teach students to apply problem-solving skills toward their academic, personal and career success.	1 2 3 4 5
17. Evaluate commercially prepared material designed for school counseling to establish their relevance to my school population.	1 2 3 4 5
18. Model and teach conflict resolution skills.	1 2 3 4 5
19. Ensure a safe environment for all students in my school.	1 2 3 4 5
20. Change situations in which an individual or group treats others in a disrespectful or harassing manner.	1 2 3 4 5
21. Teach students to use effective communication skills with peers, faculty, employers, family, etc.	1 2 3 4 5
22. Follow ethical and legal obligations designed for school counselors.	1 2 3 4 5
23. Guide students in techniques to cope with peer pressure.	1 2 3 4 5
24. Adjust my communication style appropriately to the age and developmental levels of various students.	1 2 3 4 5
25. Incorporate students' developmental stages in establishing and conducting the school counseling program.	1 2 3 4 5
26. I can find some way of connecting and communicating with any student in my school.	1 2 3 4 5
27. Teach, develop and/or support students' coping mechanisms for dealing with crises in their lives – e.g., peer suicide, parent's death, abuse, etc.	1 2 3 4 5
28. Counsel effectively with students and families from different social/economic statuses.	1 2 3 4 5
29. Understand the viewpoints and experiences of students and parents who are from a different cultural background than myself.	1 2 3 4 5

30. Help teachers improve their effectiveness with students.	1 2 3 4 5
31. Discuss issues of sexuality and sexual orientation in an age appropriate manner with students.	1 2 3 4 5
32. Speak in front of large groups such as faculty or parent meetings.	1 2 3 4 5
33. Use technology designed to support student successes and progress through the educational process.	1 2 3 4 5
34. Communicate in writing with staff, parents, and the external community.	1 2 3 4 5
35. Help students identify and attain attitudes, behaviors, and skills which lead to successful learning.	1 2 3 4 5
36. Select and implement applicable strategies to assess school-wide issues.	1 2 3 4 5
37. Promote the use of counseling and guidance activities by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate.	1 2 3 4 5
38. Develop school improvement plans based on interpreting school-wide assessment results.	1 2 3 4 5
39. Identify aptitude, achievement, interest, values, and personality appraisal resources appropriate for specified situations and populations.	1 2 3 4 5
40. Implement a preventive approach to student problems.	1 2 3 4 5
41. Lead school-wide initiatives which focus on ensuring a positive learning environment.	1 2 3 4 5
42. Consult with external community agencies which provide support services for our students.	1 2 3 4 5
43. Provide resources and guidance to school population in times of crisis.	1 2 3 4 5

VITA

Amy Lynn Barnett

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS TOWARD THEIR PROFESSIONAL ROLES

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Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2010.

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Institution: Oklahoma State University Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS TOWARD THEIR PROFESSIONAL ROLES

Pages in Study: 102 Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major Field: Educational Psychology

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to describe perceptions of school counselors toward their professional roles in schools according to the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005). An additional analysis was completed to determine whether school counselor who held different perceptions of their role would also have different levels of school counselor self efficacy. Fifty-three school counselors participated in the study. Data were analyzed using Q methodology.

Findings and Conclusions: Three distinct factor viewpoints emerged from the data analysis: *Academics First*, *Mental Health First*, and *Counselor and Beyond.* Factor One was defined by 17 sorts, and was named *Academics First* because these individuals expressed a focus on providing academic services to the students within their school district through scheduling, academic counseling, and coordinating the standardized testing program. Factor Two was defined by 15 sorts, and was named *Mental Health First* because these individuals are focused on providing mental health services by engaging in a wide variety of activities aimed at ensuring mental health for all students as an essential part of the comprehensive school counseling program. Factor Three was defined by 11 sorts, and was named *Counselor and Beyond* because these school counselors are attempting to do it all. These individuals are not only focused on providing mental health services and academic services but also on helping out in many other areas of need within their school district like stepping in as the disciplinarian when needed. Several conclusions emerged from this study: School counselors spend their time in at least three different ways; school counselors are not spending their time on the accountability tasks as outlined by the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005); and a large number of school counselors are unfamiliar with the ASCA National Model.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Diane Montgomery