

**Assessing the Counseling and Non-Counseling Roles
of School Counselors**

Jan W. Chandler
Rainbow City, Alabama

Joy J. Burnham
The University of Alabama

Morgan E. Kiper Riechel
Mercer University

Carol A. Dahir
New York Institute of Technology

Carolyn B. Stone
University of North Florida

Dariel F. Oliver
Alexander City, Alabama

Amy P. Davis and Kenya G. Bledsoe
The University of Alabama

Abstract

Counseling and non-counseling duties were investigated. The Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development (ASCNPD; Dahir & Stone, 2003, 2004) was used to examine the practices of 1,244 school counselors to determine the prevalence of the activities among school counselors. Principal component analysis indicated a two-factor structure for the ASCNPD related to “counseling duties” and “non-counseling duties.” Additional analyses using MANOVA revealed significant grade level differences and urban and rural school differences. Results and implications related to counseling roles and role confusion are discussed.

Assessing the Counseling and Non-Counseling Roles of School Counselors

Role confusion and ambiguity and the school counselor have been synonymous in the literature over time. As a result of this confusion and ambiguity, school counselors are often assigned non-counseling duties and support tasks (e.g., clerical or administrative tasks) that detract them from time that could be spent on counseling duties (Astramovich, Hoskins, Gutierrez, & Bartlett, 2013; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Gysbers & Stanley, 2014; Lieberman, 2004).

Historically speaking, this imbalance of duties can be understood because the school counseling profession lacked a standard model of practice. Prior to the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) 1990's decision to change the term from guidance counselor to school counselor (Lambie & Williamson, 2004) and the implementation of the ASCA National Model (2003) and state-specific models, the notion that vocational counselors were available to take on auxiliary duties at school, such as clerical activities, disciplinary actions, and substitute teaching (Aubrey, 1973) perpetuated over time. When tasks unrelated to counseling were expected of school counselors, uncertainty and role confusion often occurred (Ballard & Murgatroyd, 1999; Brott & Myers, 1999; Coll & Freeman, 1997; Lieberman, 2004; Niebuhr, Niebuhr, & Cleveland, 1999). Adding to this role conflict, school counselors often balanced different job expectations from multiple stakeholders (Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, & Solomon, 2005; Freeman & Coll, 1997). Oftentimes, a principal's expectations are misaligned with the school counselor's professional training resulting in supplementary work demands which are excessive enough to cause stress and perpetuate role-

confusion (Culbreth et al., 2005; Fried, Ben-David, Tiegs, Avital, & Yeverechyahu, 1998).

Role ambiguity has been prevalent in the school counseling literature for over 45 years (Astramovich et al., 2013; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Dahir, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 1994; Gysbers & Stanley, 2014; Hart & Prince, 1970; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Lieberman, 2004; Sink & MacDonald, 1998). There are two prominent reasons for role ambiguity and role-related concerns. First, misunderstandings about appropriate school counseling duties exist. For example, school counselors may be assigned to non-counseling duties based on established practices, traditions, or customary roles from the past such as test coordination, scheduling, school discipline, and administrative tasks (Anderson, 2002; Baker, 2001; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Gysbers, 2001). Second, administrators often direct school counselors to inappropriate assignments such as class schedules or registration tasks to support the efficiency of the school (Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994) or to accomplish large tasks expeditiously (Anderson & Reiter, 1995; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Consequently, school counselor self-efficacy is negatively affected by performing non-counseling duties (Jellison, 2013).

The struggle with role confusion appears to be a continuing issue for school counselors. In an effort to move beyond the old understanding of the role of the guidance counselor and embrace the role of school counselor, one must determine if the current practices of school counselors fit the new or old model. This research strives to assess the practices of school counselors and determine if those actions support or hinder the ASCA National Model.

Comprehensive School Counseling Programs and the ASCA National Model

Even though problems related to role ambiguity have been inherent to the school counseling profession for many years, ASCA has developed guidelines in the last two decades to amend the previously described concerns. The introduction of comprehensive school counseling programs like the ASCA National Model (2003, 2012) provides school counselors with well-defined structures to guide their counseling activities with students (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Dahir, 2004; Davis, 2005; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017). Additionally, the ASCA National Model, and the ASCA mindsets and behaviors (2014) provides a national framework for comprehensive data-driven counseling programs, incorporating the academic, career, and social/emotional needs of students in an effort to promote the wellbeing of all students and increase student academic performance. The development of the ASCA National Model has been a catalyst for change that encouraged the evolution of the profession by offering guidance for implementing effective school counseling practices and encourages professionalism (Davis, 2005).

School counseling, previously coined vocational counseling, was established in response to the demands of the Industrial Revolution prompting secondary schools to adequately prepare students with higher level skills that would lead to employment (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017). Since the emergence of the profession in the early 1900s, the role of school counselors has seen multiple transitions (Baker, 2001; Dahir & Stone, 2013; Gladding, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Gysbers & Stanley, 2014; Herr, 2001; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Stone & Dahir, 2006). Two pioneers in the school counseling profession are Jesse B. Davis and Frank Parsons. Davis crafted guidance

lessons designed to address problem behaviors, character, and link academic coursework to vocational interests (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017; Schmidt, 2002). Shortly afterwards, Parsons petitioned that vocational guidance be offered in all high schools by trained professionals, which resulted in Boston elementary and secondary schools hiring vocational counselors (Dollarhide & Saginak; Gysbers, 2010; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). This movement was intensified in the mid-20th century by the space race as the United States congress passed the National Defense Education Act in 1958 which supported the role of counselors in schools by providing funding for them (Lambie & Williamson, 2004).

This professional transformation continued, and in the early 21st century many school counseling programs adopted a widely-endorsed comprehensive school counseling program and the ASCA National Model, which offers appropriate guidelines for school counselors to generate and deliver comprehensive, preventative, and developmental programs that foster student achievement (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017; Gysbers & Henderson, 2006; Gysbers & Stanley, 2014; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Despite this evolution, school counseling continues to be associated with job tasks associated with vocational counseling of the past (e.g., test coordination, academic scheduling, substitute teaching, discipline).

ASCA recommends a 250:1 ratio; however, as recent as 2014-2015 school year, the student counselor ratio in the US was 482:1. School counselors are often the only mental health professionals in the school, working alongside principals, teachers, and other professionals trained in education (Bemak, 2000; Dollarhide, 2003). Therefore, the role of the school counselor is often ambiguous and uncertain because of internal and

external influences on the profession (Astramovich et al., 2013; Aubrey, 1973; Day & Sparacio, 1980; Hatch & Bowers, 2002; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Murray, 1995; Sink & MacDonald, 1998).

Consequences of role ambiguity have been documented in a number of studies. Role ambiguity in the school counseling field has caused (1) loss of time to perform actual counseling functions that benefit students (Day & Sparacio, 1980; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Johnson, 1993), (2) heightened stress (Coll & Freeman, 1997; Culbreth et al., 2005; Kendrick & Chandler, 1994; Sears & Navin, 2001), (3) higher burnout and job attrition due to disenchantment with excessive non-counseling assignments (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Schmidt, Weaver, & Aldredge, 2001), and (4) reduced job performance (Fried et al., 1998).

Despite the challenges of role ambiguity, school counselors must demonstrate flexibility as they adapt to the needs of 21st century society (Anderson & Reiter, 1995; Aubrey, 1991; Baker, 2001; Gladding, 2004; Gysbers, 2001; Herr, 2001; Sparks, 2003). This flexibility can be difficult when counselors find themselves overcommitted to indirect student services (e.g., referrals, consultation, collaboration) and non-counseling tasks (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994). Nonetheless, the value of school counselors and the comprehensive school counseling program is strengthened when clearly defined counselor roles, data driven programming, and measurable outcomes are present (Clark & Amatea, 2004; Dahir & Stone, 2013; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004; Stone & Dahir, 2006). The 2012 ASCA National Model divides counselor responsibilities into quadrants: foundation, management, delivery, and accountability, and recommends that

80% or more of a school counselor's time be spent directly related to the delivery of services to students.

Barriers

In spite of the various comprehensive school counseling program models and the ASCA National Model, barriers to implementation still exist for school counselors. Since the early 1990s, role ambiguity has been debated repeatedly in the professional literature (Aubrey, 1991; Baker & Gerler, 2004; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Dahir, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 1994, 2001; Herr, 2001; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Sink & MacDonald, 1998). The historical use of counselors as test administrators, clerical assistants, and disciplinarians has been prolonged as the norm in some school systems and by some administrators (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Historically, organizational models, not counseling models (e.g., ASCA National Model) defined the job duties of many school counselors (Sink & MacDonald, 1998). Because of the early professional history, ongoing struggles of school counseling practitioners with non-counseling duties such as an assessment (testing) and academic and vocational planning (scheduling) have continued into the ASCA National Model era (Lambie & Williamson, 2004).

Non-counseling Duties

Non-counseling duties are persistent barriers that interfere with the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs. Appropriate counseling duties are addressed in the ASCA National Model suggesting that 80% of time is to be spent in the delivery component where school counselors provide direct and indirect services to students (ASCA, 2012). School counseling research has highlighted the prevalence of non-counseling duties, illustrating how non-counseling duties impact the

perception and practice. In a study by Burnham and Jackson (2000), counselors reported actual daily activities that were subsequently compared with the recommended activities from existing models (e.g., Gysbers and Henderson, 1994; Myrick, 1993). The results indicated that many counselors were overusing individual counseling, and misusing small group counseling, guidance activities, and consultation, and were overburdened with non-counseling activities, such as clerical work and test coordination. Fitch and Marshall (2004), compared the roles of counselors in high-achieving versus low-achieving schools while noting problems with the roles of school counselors. Regardless of the achievement level of the school, participants in the study acknowledged that non-counseling duties demanded most of their time with a small percentage of their day spent providing direct counseling services.

Current Study

The purpose of this study was to utilize the results from Expectations and Priorities section of the Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development (ASCNPD; Dahir & Stone, 2003, 2004) to assess and compare the common practices of school counselors. This will provide meaningful data on if school counselors are following the ASCA National Model (2012) and encourage dialogue for best practices amongst school counselors.

This research was conducted in a state in the southeastern United States during the early stages of the implementation of the state's new regulations for public K-12 schools, based upon the ASCA National Model. We were interested in identifying the prevalence of counseling duties that contribute to compliance with the new state model as well as assessing non-counseling duties that detract from the model. Data for the

present study were elicited in the ASCNPD (Dahir & Stone, 2003, 2004), which compares typical school counselor duties with activities outlined in the ASCA National Model (2012). In addition, the present study used data from an additional section that was added to the ASCNPD. The new section, titled Expectations and Priorities (Oliver, Burnham, & Dahir, 2004), concerns information specific to school counseling activities outlined in the state school counseling plan (See Table 3 for specific items added).

These questions were chosen based on the state school counseling program at the time which was evaluated by counselor educators and state department officials.

For the study, the following research questions were examined:

1. What is the factor structure of the new section of the ASCNPD?
2. Will scores on the new section of the ASCNPD differ significantly based on grade level assignment for the school counselors?
3. Will scores on the new section of the ASCNPD differ based on locale?

Method

Participants

K-12 public school counselors employed in one state in the southeastern region of the U.S. were recruited to participate in this study. Surveys were completed and returned by 1,244 school counselors. Totals by grade level were as follows: elementary school level, 37% ($n = 461$); middle school level, 18% ($n = 224$); high school level, 25% ($n = 312$); K-12, 6% ($n = 74$); other 14% ($n = 171$). The participants who indicated grade level combinations were categorized together as Other. See Table 1 for additional participant information such as school counselor years of experience and location of school. Schools were classified based on the density of the population (rural or urban) as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (2000).

Table 1.
Participant Variables

Variables	Frequency n	Percent %
<i>Grade Level</i>		
<i>Elementary</i>	461	37
<i>Middle</i>	224	18
<i>Secondary</i>	312	25
<i>K-12</i>	74	6
<i>Other</i>	171	14
<i>Missing</i>	2	0
<i>Years of Experience</i>		
1-5	574	48
6-10	269	22
11-15	237	20
16-20	62	5
21-25	30	3
26+	29	2
Missing	4	0
<i>Location</i>		
Urban	588	47
Rural	656	53

Procedure

Surveys were mailed to all public-school counseling coordinators in the state in which the survey was conducted. The coordinators distributed the surveys to the school counselors in their school district. A total of 1,691 surveys were distributed and 1,244 were returned (a 74% return rate). Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was secured prior to data collection.

Instrument

The ASCNPD was developed by Dahir and Stone (2003, 2004). The original survey had been used in Florida, Tennessee, Rhode Island, New York, and New York City to elicit information about counseling programs. An additional section, Expectations

and Priorities developed by Oliver, Burnham, and Dahir (2004) was used to obtain specific information about counseling and non-counseling duties in the state school counseling plan. Correlations subscale correlations were all moderate to high, ranging from .20 to .57 with each $p < .01$ (Burnham, Dahir, Stone, & Hooper, 2008).

The original ASCNPD consisted of 81 items that solicit information about counselor activities and roles, the school setting, priorities of school counselors, and working with students. Participants rated statements as they applied to their experiences at school. Respondents chose one answer for each item from the following alternatives: (a) *not at all accurate*, (b) *a little accurate*, (c) *somewhat accurate*, or (d) *very accurate* or (a) *not at all important*, (b) *somewhat important*, (c) *important*, (d) *very important*, or (e) *extremely important*.

The additional section of the ASCNPD, Expectations and Priorities (Oliver et al., 2004) was the portion of the measure that was used for this research. This section consisted of 12 statements about activities or responsibilities that were common for school counselors. Examples of items on the additional section of the ASCNPD include "I am involved in the coordination of statewide assessments," "I am involved in record keeping, including transferring records, posting grades, etc." and "I am involved in the scheduling and placement of students." Respondents chose one answer for each item from the following alternatives: (a) *not at all accurate*, (b) *a little accurate*, (c) *somewhat accurate*, (d) *very accurate*, and (e) *NA* (not applicable). The 12 items on the additional section of the ASCNPD were converted to numerical scores by assigning Likert-type values to each response. The *not at all accurate* responses were given a value of 1; a

little accurate answers were given a value of 2; *somewhat accurate* responses were converted to 3; and the value assigned to *very accurate* responses was 4.

Analysis

Prior to data collection, the primary researcher solicited feedback from a panel of school counseling experts since the ASCNPD was updated. Pett, Lackey, and Sullivan (2003) recommended using a panel of content experts to determine empirical indicators (items) to measure a construct. Members of the expert panel, for this current study, were education professionals employed in the same state and familiar with the statewide model for school counselors. The panel included a diverse set of professionals, all with an investment in school counseling. To broaden the perspectives represented and to reduce potential bias, the expert panel included three practicing school counselors, three counseling coordinators, one staff member from the department of education, and two counselor educators at state universities.

Panel members were familiar the ASCA National Model (2012) and were leaders in the field with 20-30 years of K-12 experience. The panel of school counseling experts reviewed the list of items and were asked to determine if each of the 12 items (i.e., a-f, and i-n) promoted implementation of the state's counseling model (counseling duties) or detracted from implementation (non-counseling duties). Information gleaned from the panel members' feedback was later compared with results of a factor analysis to support the validity of the measures.

Results

This current study revealed some significant findings. Each research question is subsequently explored.

Research Question 1

What is the factor structure of the new section of the ASCNPD? The first research question sought to determine the factor structure of the 12 items used in the second section of the ASCNPD. A principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax orthogonal rotation was used for this analysis (Green & Salkind, 2003). PCA is a variable reduction method used to identify the underlying factor structure of a set of measured variables. This method considers how a smaller set of orthogonal principal components can represent the interrelationships and linear combinations of multiple variables (Pett et al., 2003). Determination of conditions for the principal component analysis included the a priori hypothesis that the measure was unidimensional.

After analysis of the correlation matrix, varimax orthogonal rotation was chosen to achieve simple structure of the data and to increase interpretability of the extracted factors. Varimax orthogonal rotation assumes that the factors in the analysis are uncorrelated, or, orthogonal to one another which was appropriate for this set of data. To determine the number of factors, Green and Salkind (2003) noted that examination of the scree plot and “retaining factors with eigenvalues in the sharp descent part of the plot before the eigenvalues start to level off” (p. 301) often yielded more reliable results than using the “eigenvalue-greater-than-1 criterion” (p. 301), however, other authors have argued that both eigenvalues and scree plots should be considered for best fit and interpretability (Pett et al., 2003). Therefore, based on interpretability of the factor solution with an examination of eigenvalues, the scree plot, and input from a panel of counseling experts from across the state, the null hypothesis was rejected and a two-factor solution was retained. See Table 2 for the factor loadings and associated values.

Table 2.*Rotated Factors for the New Section of the PDS*

Item	Name	Factor 1	Factor 2
Factor 1 non-counseling duties (Eigenvalue = 2.731, Variance = 22.762)			
b	I am involved in record-keeping, including transferring records, posting grades, etc.	.827	.009
e	I serve as the building registrar for new entrants and transferred and withdrawn students.	.810	.003
d	I am involved in the scheduling and placement of students	.802	-.077
c	I am involved in the development of the master schedule	.774	.034
Factor 2 counseling duties (Eigenvalue = 2.261, Variance = 18.842)			
j	I/we have implemented a comprehensive individual school guidance plan that is aligned with the state plan or ASCA National Model	.087	.742
i	I have established a School Counseling and Guidance Advisory Committee	.131	.673
f	I implement the Minimum Requirements for School Counseling and Guidance Programs outlined in the state plan	-.013	.645
m	I keep records that document time spent or activities performed, which would enable me to determine the percentage of time spent providing direct services to students.	-.160	.534
l	I/we meet regularly without system-level counselor coordinator.	.016	.529
k	I will attend school counseling conferences and/or workshops during this school year	-.132	.404
The following items did not load on Factor 1 or Factor 2			
a	I am involved in the coordination of statewide assessments	.231	.237
n	I perform fair-share duties above and beyond what is expected of other certified staff at my school	.121	.235

The analysis distinguished a relationship among the typical activities of the school counselors, resulting in identification of the two factors, which were designated as counseling duties and non-counseling duties. The non-counseling duties factor accounted for 22.6% of item variance, and the counseling duties factor accounted for

18.9% of item variance. The total variance explained by the two-factor solution was 41.6%. Two items, a (testing duties) and n (excessive fair-share duties), failed to load on either factor (see Table 2).

The nine school counseling expert panelists, who initially rated the 12 items on the ASCNPD (i.e., a - f, i - n), chose items that were very similar to the results of the factor analysis generated in this study. For example, a majority of the expert raters determined that items a, b, c, e, and n (see Table 3) should be categorized as detractors from the state model for school counselors.

Table 3.

Ratings of 12 Activities of New Section of ASCNPD by School Counseling Expert Panel

Item	Effect on State Model		
	Promotes	Detracts	Not Sure
a (testing)	1	8	-
b (records, grades)	-	9	-
c (master schedule)	-	9	-
d (scheduling)	6	1	2
e (registrar)	-	8	1
f (State Plan minimum requirements)	8	1	-
l (advisory committee)	9	-	-
j (implement Plan)	9	-	-
k (professional conferences)	9	-	-
l (system coordinator)	9	-	-
m (document time)	7	2	-
n (excessive fair-share duties)	-	9	-

In contrast, items d, f, i, j, k, l, and m (see Table 3) were primarily rated as promoters of the state model by the expert panel. The expert panel's' responses supported most of the findings of the factor analysis, nonetheless, there were a few exceptions. For example, item d (scheduling and placement of students) was correlated with Factor 1,

non-counseling duties, in the factor analysis. The expert panel revealed somewhat mixed opinions about item d. Six raters posited that “scheduling” promoted the state plan, while one rater indicated that “scheduling” detracted, and two raters expressed mixed views for item d. Each rater was sent the document separately and there was no discussion amongst the panel members. One concern is that it is possible that “scheduling” was interpreted differently by the individuals. Some may have thought it meant choosing classes which does benefit from counseling; while others may have interpreted it to mean the administrative function of building master schedules and manually putting in choices. The latter was the intent of the term. The expert panel clearly considered items a (statewide assessments or testing) and n (excessive fair-share duties) as detractors from the state plan, yet both items failed to correlate with Factor 1 or Factor 2 after the varimax rotation. Table 4 summarizes the results of the expert panels’ contributions.

Table 4.

Means and Standard Deviations on the Dependent Variables for Grade Level

Grade Level	Counseling Duties		Non-counseling Duties	
	M	SD	M	SD
Elementary	21.9	2.5	9.1	4.0
Middle	21.5	2.7	12.2	3.6
High	20.1	3.0	12.9	2.9
K-12	21.3	2.8	14.1	2.8
Other	21.4	3.1	12.2	4.2

Based on the results of the factor analysis, items on the second section of the ASCNPD were combined into subgroups. Factor 1, non-counseling duties, consisted of four items, (i.e., b, c, d, and e). Factor 2, counseling duties, included six items, (i.e., f, i,

j, k, l, and m). Responses for items in each subgroup were totaled to produce scores for each subgroup for each participant. The range of possible scores for the non-counseling duties subgroup was 4 to 16. Possible scores for the counseling duties subgroup ranged from 6 to 24. The subsequent scores were utilized in multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs).

Research Question 2

Will scores on the new section of the ASCNPD differ significantly based on grade level assignment for the school counselors? The null hypothesis for this research question was rejected. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) revealed that grade level assignment was related to differences in counseling duties and non-counseling duties. Significant differences in counseling activities were discovered among counselors at the elementary and high school levels. Elementary counselors were also found to have significant differences in non-counseling duties in comparison to the other groups.

Results of the MANOVA discovered differences among the grade levels on the two dependent variables, Wilks's $\lambda = .78$, $F(8, 2320) = 38.55$, $p = .00$. The multivariate η^2 of .12, which Pett et al. (2003) list as moderate, documents that 12% of the variance in duties was attributable to school level assignment. Table 4 contains the means and standard deviations on the dependent variables for the five groups.

Univariate analyses (ANOVAs) were conducted as follow-up tests to the MANOVA. Using the Bonferroni method, each ANOVA was tested at the .025 level. The ANOVA on both subgroups, counseling duties and non-counseling duties, were significant; counseling $F(4, 1161) = 7.84$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .03$; and non-counseling $F(4,$

1161) = 69.7, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .20$. These results indicated that grade level was related to 20% of the variance in non-counseling duties, in contrast to 3% of the variance in the counseling duties.

Post hoc analyses to the univariate ANOVA scores consisted of conducting pair-wise comparisons to find which grade level affected counseling duties the most. Each pair-wise comparison was tested at the .05/5 or .01 level. The elementary school level was significantly higher in the counseling duties when compared to the high school level. The other levels were not significantly different. In the non-counseling duties, the elementary level was significantly lower than the other four levels. The K-12 level was significantly higher than the middle school level or the "other" level. The remaining levels were not significantly different. Table 4 summarizes the means and standard deviations of the different school levels.

Research Question 3:

Will scores on the new section of the ASCNPD differ based on locale? Research Question 3 determined the effect of location of the school, either urban or rural, on counseling and non-counseling duties. Using information from the United States Census, school districts were designated as rural or urban as a measure of location. School districts within areas with a population of at least 1,000 people per square mile were classified as urban.

School districts that were in regions outside urbanized areas were classified as rural. Of the 51 school districts that fell within urbanized areas, 44 districts returned surveys. Seventy-three of the 80 rural school districts returned surveys. The results of a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) discovered significant differences exist

among counseling activities in urban and rural schools. Counseling and non-counseling duties were higher in rural schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Results of the MANOVA revealed disparity between counseling and non-counseling duties of urban and rural school counselors, Wilks's $\lambda = .921$, $F(2, 1164) = 50.26$, $p = .000$. The multivariate $\eta^2 = .08$ was low accounting for 8% of the variance. Means and standard deviations on the dependent variables for the two types of locale are displayed in Table 5. Univariate analyses (ANOVA) were conducted as follow-up tests to the MANOVA. Control for inflated Type I errors was maintained by using an alpha level of $.05/2$, or $.025$. The univariate ANOVA on both dependent variables were significant, counseling duties $F(1, 1165) = 7.04$, $p < .025$, $\eta^2 = .01$ and non-counseling duties $F(1, 1165) = 93.54$, $p < .025$, $\eta^2 = .07$. Comparisons of the means (Table 5) revealed that the differences between urban and rural schools in counseling duties were slight. However, rural schools were significantly higher in non-counseling duties as compared to urban schools.

Table 5.

Means and Standard Deviations on the Dependent Variable for Locale

Locale	Counseling Duties		Non-counseling Duties	
	M	SD	M	SD
Urban	21.2	3.1	10.2	4.0
Rural	21.6	2.6	12.4	3.8

Discussion

The ASCNPD results offered important distinctions between counseling and non-counseling duties. For instance, this study offered general agreement about which counseling duties promote and distract the school counselor, with these data generated

from the factor analysis and the expert panel ratings. Nonetheless, researchers considered that the lack of consensus between the school counselors and the expert panel ratings was most noteworthy, given the history of the school counseling field and the importance of pinpointing areas that need improvement. For example, we believe that the failure of certain items on the ASCNPD (i.e., testing duties, scheduling, and excessive fair-share duties) to be consistently identified with counseling duties or other non-counseling duties indicates continued role confusion in the school counseling field. This study also revealed some adherence to traditional non-counseling functions, such as testing coordination, scheduling, and registration duties. Similar confusion amongst school counselors about appropriate and inappropriate duties has been reported by other researchers through the years (Astramovich et al., 2013; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Dahir et al., 1997; Day & Sparacio, 1980; Hatch & Bowers, 2002). Further, it appears that some counselors are unclear about fair-share duties, perhaps unaware that non-counseling duties should be shared equally across the entire faculty population (ASCA, 2012). The role ambiguity we found among the panel experts also indicates confusion about the perceived duties of school counselors.

The grade level differences were important in this study. Like past studies, the elementary school counselors aligned more clearly with the state counseling plan than other grade level counselors, particularly the high school counselors. Elementary counselors also reportedly performed fewer non-counseling duties than all other grade levels. Previous studies (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006; Hardesty & Dillard, 1994; Partin, 1993; Scarborough, 2002) noted that grade level assignment was related to variations in counseling and non-counseling duties.

Several explanations have been suggested for the differences between elementary counselors and high school counselors. One theory is that elementary counselors are not overburdened with non-counseling duties such as scheduling and grade reporting. Thus, elementary counselors can implement a school counseling curriculum complete with regular core curriculum lessons and small group sessions. Another possible reason for the differences is that elementary school counselors were hired in schools after comprehensive school counseling models began to be adopted, thus they had clearer guidelines for appropriate activities. Perhaps because the elementary counselors were mandated in elementary schools in the 1990s in the state, in comparison to high school being hired many decades prior, they inherited fewer non-guidance duties (Herr, 2001; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). On the other hand, perhaps high school counselors have continued to function in more traditional roles because their non-counseling roles had been passed down through the years from one administration to the next. Theoretically, role confusion and conflict should be reduced when counselors actually perform duties for which they have been trained (Culbreth et al., 2005; Scarborough, 2002). Role conflict likely results from a combination of factors, including a lack of administrative support in addition to non-counseling responsibilities (Day & Sparacio, 1980; King, 2003).

The present study also offered differences in counseling duties based on geographic settings. Rural school counselors had slightly more counseling duties and significantly more non-counseling duties than urban school counselors. This finding was opposite of Barron's report (2002) of no differences attributed to classification of the school as rural or non-rural. Several influences may explain the variations among

locations. Tight budgets in rural areas might have prevented employment of system-level counseling coordinators to advocate for the profession with local stakeholders and policy decision-makers. Lack of professional supervision might have negatively influenced the practices of rural counselors, a supposition supported by other researchers (King, 2003; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). In King's (2003) study, the researcher found little or no professional supervision for some practicing counselors. Without adequate supervision, rural school counselors may face challenges securing resources to fully implement a comprehensive school counseling program (CSCP), fewer opportunities to stay abreast of the current research, and limited availability of counseling colleagues for consultation.

Implications and Suggestions

There were four limitations to this study. The data collected represented school counseling participants and expert panelists from one state. There were also a higher number of elementary school counselors that participated in this study, which could have influenced the results. Generalizability to other states is not clear. Also, survey participants may have been exposed to the state and the ASCA National Model (2012) via in-service training or a counselor training program; however, there were no records of the surveyed participants' training in this area. With these limitations in mind, this study offered important implications.

It is essential for practicing school counselors and other professionals to recognize and distinguish counseling and non-counseling duties and to be aware of how such activities promote or prevent implementation of state and national counseling models. Three suggestions are offered based upon the results of this study.

First, this study underlines that that role confusion continues to exist in the school counseling profession despite the implementation of school counseling models. We believe that professional development centered around the ASCA National Model (2012) is necessary to educate and train counselors, administrators, and other educational professionals about school counselor roles and responsibilities. Continuing to develop distance learning options to offset the limited access to resources such as professional development and consultation for counselors in rural settings is vital. Second, this study raises the awareness that counselor role confusion impacts and influences school counseling roles and the implementation of a CSCP. Follow-up studies should consider grade level, school locale, leadership of counseling coordinators, supervision for practicing counselors, administrator/principal support and training, and school counselor education. Third, school counselors, counseling coordinators, counselor educators, administrators, and policy-makers must be reminded of the importance of the ASCA National Model, the statewide counseling plan, and the benefits of a fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program (Anderson, 2002; Dahir & Stone, 2013; Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Gysbers, 2005; McGannon, Carey, & Dimmitt, 2005).

The ASCA National Model (2012) was established for the school counseling profession 15 years ago. Nonetheless, limitations and obstacles still interfere with program implementation, as illustrated in this study and in previous studies (Astramovich et al, 2013; Gysbers & Stanley, 2014; Lieberman, 2004). We believe that implementation of the ASCA National Model is a vital step toward the needed role clarity. Until all stakeholders and school counselors embrace the nationally accepted

model and the state supported comprehensive plan, role confusion and misuse of professional school counselors will likely continue.

References

- American School Counselor Association (2003). *The ASCA National Model: A framework for school counseling programs*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American School Counselor Association (2012). *The ASCA National Model: A framework for school counseling programs* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American School Counselor Association (2014). *Mindsets and behaviors for student success: K-12 college and career readiness standards for every student*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Anderson, K. (2002). A response to common themes in school counseling. *Professional School Counseling, 5*(5), 315-322.
- Anderson, R. S., & Reiter, D. (1995). The indispensable counselor. *School Counselor, 42*(4), 268-297.
- Astramovich, R., Hoskins, W. Gutierrez, A., & Bartlett, K. (2013). Identifying role diffusion in school counseling. *The Professional Counselor, 3*, 175-184.
doi:10.15241/rla.3.3.175
- Aubrey, R. F. (1973). Organization victimization of school counselors. *The School Counselor, 20*, 346-354.
- Aubrey, R. F. (1991). A house divided: Guidance and counseling in 20th-century America. In D. R. Coy, C. G. Cole, W. C. Huey, & S. J. Sears (Eds.), *Toward the transformation of secondary school counseling* (pp. 4-46). Ann Arbor, MI: ERIC Counseling and Personnel Services Clearinghouse.
- Baker, S. B. (2001). Reflections on forty years in the school counseling profession: Is the glass half full or half empty? *Professional School Counseling, 5*(2), 75-83.

- Baker, S. B., & Gerler, E. R., Jr. (2004). *School counseling for the twenty-first century*, (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Ballard, M. B., & Murgatroyd, W. (1999). Defending a vital program: School counselors define their roles. *NASSP Bulletin*, 83(603), 19-26. doi:10.1177/019263659908360304
- Barron, D. W. (2002). *An examination of school counselors' awareness and implementation of the statewide comprehensive guidance and counseling program model in Alabama*. (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Alabama, 2002). (UMI No. 3075110).
- Brott, P. E., & Myers, J. E. (1999). Development of professional school counselor identity: A grounded theory. *Professional School Counseling*, 2(5), 339-348.
- Burnham, J. J., Dahir, C., Stone, C., & Hooper, L. (2008). The development and exploration of the psychometric properties of the Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development Survey. *Research in the Schools*, 15, 51-63.
- Burnham, J. J., & Jackson, C. M. (2000). School counselor roles: Discrepancies between actual practice and existing models. *Professional School Counseling*, 4(1), 41-49.
- Clark, M. A., & Amatea, E. (2004). Teacher perceptions and expectations of school counselor contributions: Implications for program planning and training. *Professional School Counseling*, 8(2), 132-140.

- Coll, K. M., & Freeman, B. (1997). Role conflict among elementary school counselors: A national comparison with middle and secondary school counselors. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, 31*(4), 251-262.
- Culbreth, J. R., Scarborough, J. L., Banks-Johnson, A., & Solomon, S. (2005). Role stress among practicing school counselors. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 45*(1), 58-72.
- Dahir, C. A. (2004). Supporting a nation of learners: The role of school counseling in educational reform. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 82*, 344-353.
- Dahir, C., & Stone, C. (2003, 2004). *School counselor professional development survey*. Unpublished work.
- Dahir, C., & Stone, C. (2013). *The transformed school counselor* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Davis, T. (2005). *Exploring school counseling: Professional practices and perspectives*. Boston, MA: Lahaska Press.
- Day, R. W., & Sparacio, R. T. (1980). Impediments to the role and function of school counselors. *The School Counselor, 27*, 270-275.
- DeMato, D. S., & Curcio, C. C. (2004). Job satisfaction of elementary school counselors: A new look. *Professional School Counseling, 7*(4), 236-245.
- Dollarhide, C. T. (2003). School counselors as program leaders: Applying leadership contexts to school counseling. *Professional School Counseling, 6*, 304-308.
- Dollarhide, C. T., & Saginak, K. A. (2017). *Comprehensive school counseling programs: K-12 delivery systems in action* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

- Fitch, T. J., & Marshall, J. L. (2004). What counselors do in high-achieving schools: A study on the role of the school counselor. *Professional School Counselor*, 7(3), 172-177.
- Freeman, B., & Coll, K. M. (1997). Factor structure of the role questionnaire (RQ): A study of high school counselors. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 30(1), 32-40.
- Fried, Y., Ben-David, H. A., Tiegs, R. B., Avital, N., & Yeverechyahu, U. (1998). The interactive effect of role conflict and role ambiguity on job performance. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 71, 19-27.
- Gladding, S. T. (2004). *Counseling: A comprehensive profession* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Green, S. B., & Salkind, N. J. (2003). *Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and understanding data* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Gysbers, N. C. (2001). School guidance and counseling in the 21st century: Remember the past into the future. *Professional School Counseling*, 5(2), 96-105.
- Gysbers, N. C. (2005). Closing the implementation gap. *The School Counselor*, 43(2), 37-41.
- Gysbers, N. C. (2010). *Remembering the past, shaping the future: A history of school counseling*. Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association.
- Gysbers, N. C., & Henderson, P. (1994). *Developing and managing your school guidance program*, (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

- Gysbers, N. C., & Henderson, P. (2001). Comprehensive guidance and counseling programs: A rich history and a bright future. *Professional School Counseling, 4*(4), 246-257.
- Gysbers, N. C., & Henderson, P. (2006). *Developing and managing your school guidance program*, (4th ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Gysbers, N. C., & Henderson, P. (2012). *Developing and managing your school guidance program*, (5th ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Gysbers, N. C., & Stanley, B. (2014, January/February). From position to program. *ASCA School Counselor, 51*, 22-27.
- Hardesty, P. H., & Dillard, J. M. (1994). The role of elementary school counselors compared with their middle and secondary school counterparts. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, 29*(2), 83-92.
- Hart, D. H., & Prince, D. J. (1970). Role conflict for school counselors: training versus job demands. *Personnel and Guidance Journal, 48*(5), 374-380.
- Hatch, T., & Bowers, J. (2002, May-June). The block to build on. *School Counselor, 39*(5) 12-19.
- Herr, E. L. (2001). The impact of national policies, economics, and school reform on comprehensive guidance programs. *Professional School Counseling, 4*(4), 236-245.
- Jellison, V. D. (2013). *High school counselors' perceived self-efficacy and relationships with actual and preferred job activities* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest LLC. (Accession No. ED561452).

- Johnson, L. S. (1993). School counseling: Standards versus practice. *The New York State Journal for Counseling and Development, 8*, 55-70.
- Johnson, S., & Johnson, C. (2003). Results-based guidance: A systems approach to student support programs. *Professional School Counseling, 6*(3), 180-185.
- Kendrick, R., & Chandler, J. (1994). Job demands, stressors, and the school counselors. *School Counselor, 41*(5), 365-370.
- King, M. A. (2003). *Comprehensive school counseling program: Counselor and principal agreement*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Mississippi State University, Starkville.
- Lambie, G. W., & Williamson, L. L. (2004). The challenge to change from guidance counseling to professional school counseling: A historical proposition. *Professional School Counseling, 8*(2), 124-131.
- Lieberman, A. (2004). Confusion regarding school counselor functions: School leadership impacts role clarity. *Education, 124*(3), 552-559.
- McGannon, W., Carey, J., & Dimmitt, C. (2005). *The current status of school counseling outcome research* (Research Monograph No. 2). Amherst: University of Massachusetts, Center for School Counseling Outcome Research.
- Murray, B. (1995). Validating the role of the school counselor, *The School Counselor, 43*(1), 5-10.
- Niebuhr, K., Niebuhr, R., & Cleveland, W. (1999). Principal and counselor collaboration. *Education, 119*(4), 674-678.
- Oliver, D., Burnham, J. J., & Dahir, C.A. (2004) *Expectations and priorities, Professional Development Survey*. Unpublished survey.

- Partin, R. L. (1993). School counselors' time: Where does it go? *School Counselor*, 40(4), 274-282.
- Perusse, R., Goodnough, G. E., Donegan, J., & Jones, C. (2004). Perceptions of school counselors and school principals about the national standards for school counseling programs and the Transforming School Counseling Initiative. *Professional School Counseling*, 7(3), 152-161.
- Pett, M., Lackey, N., and Sullivan, J. (2003). *Making sense of factor analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ribak-Rosenthal, N. (1994). Reasons individuals become school administrators, school counselors, and teachers. *School Counselor*, 41(3), 158-165.
- Scarborough, J. L. (2002). *Between practice and preference: Factors related to discrepancies in how school counselors spend their time*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia, Charlottesville. (UMI No. 3056857)
- Schmidt, J. J. (2002). *Counseling in the schools: Essential services and comprehensive programs* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Schmidt, J. J., Weaver, F. S., & Aldredge, A. L. (2001). *Perceptions of school counselor's role and satisfaction by newly hired counselors and principals in eastern North Carolina*. Greenville, NC: East Carolina University, School of Education.
- Sears, S. J., & Navin, S. L. (2001). Stressors in school counseling. *Education*, 103(4), 333-338.
- Sink, C. A., & MacDonald, G. (1998). The status of comprehensive guidance and counseling in the United States. *Professional School Counseling*, 2(2), 88-95.

Sparks, E. (2003). Defining skool kounseler. *School Counselor*, 40(3), 14-17.

Stone, C. B., & Dahir, C. A. (2006). *The transformed school counselor*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

U. S. Census Bureau (2000). *United States Census 2000*. Washington, DC: Author.