Ideal to Real: Duties Performed by School Counselors

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Abstract

School counselors ($n = 1,704$) nationwide were surveyed to determine if the duties performed by them were aligned with the duties prescribed by the school counseling profession since the inception of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model in 2003. Differences were found based on participants having received ASCA National Model training, having teaching credentials, and working in states with mandates for school counseling.

Ideal to Real: Duties: Performed by School Counselors

Role definition and the duties performed by school counselors have been a topic

of discussion since the inception of the school counseling profession (Paisley &

McMahon, 2001; Scarborough, 2002; Sears & Granello, 2002), and the subject of

debate since the 1920s (Erford, 2007). It is reasonable that the school counselors'

duties vary from state to state, school district to school district, and school to school

(Erford), depending on the needs of the schools. However, the lack of consensus on

endorsed duties for school counselors across the nation has generated role confusion

and frustration for the profession (Fitch, Newby, & Ballestero, 2001; Miller, 1988; Sutton

& Fall, 1995). Some have attributed the role confusion to the myriad of duties performed

by school counselors based not only on the individual needs of school districts, but also

on the difference in perception of counselor's role and related duties between the

counselor and his or her supervisor, who most often is the principal (Kirchner &

Setchfield, 2005; Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004; Ponec & Brock,

2000). For instance, Perusse et al. (2004) reported that principals across building levels

deemed certain duties, although non-endorsed by the school counseling profession, as

both appropriate and necessary for school counselors to perform. These decisions by

principals' on how to use resources is greatly influenced by the school district budget

(Kirchner & Setchfield), especially personnel with poorly defined roles. At times, the

poorly defined school counselor position was eliminated as a non-essential service to

the school (Vail, 2005).

Recognizing the instability of the school counselor profession nationwide, the

lack of a defined role (Lieberman, 2004), and the differences in practice of school

counseling and the value placed on school counseling professionals evident across building levels, some researchers have investigated the duties performed by school counselors. For instance, Carroll (1993) concluded that elementary school counselors readily engaged in duties as a consultant, a coordinator, and a counselor, but were reluctant to engage in duties as a guidance instructor and a manager of a school counseling program. Hardesty and Dillard (1994) examined the types of delivery of services elementary school counselors engaged in and found that they worked more from a systems perspective engaging in consultation and collaboration, where as middle and secondary school counselors performed more individual services (i.e. advising and counseling) and administrative duties. Three years later, Coll and Freeman (1997) reported that although all school counselors experienced conflict over their role in the school and an overload of duties, elementary school counselors experienced more significant role conflict and overload, (e.g., working without proper resources, working on unnecessary things, struggling to accomplish required tasks within existing rules and policies) than their middle and high school counterparts. A similar trend in role conflict and therefore decrease in job satisfaction was reported by DeMato and Curcio (2004), who reported that a decrease in job satisfaction among elementary school counselors in the State of Virginia was most likely due to "mandated statewide accountability testing, cutbacks in personnel, school violence, and societal changes" (p. 243). Furthering the analysis of types of delivery services that school counselors provide, Burnham and Jackson (2000) found that school counselors performed a wide range of duties, from duties endorsed (i.e., individual and group counseling, consultation, classroom guidance, assessment) to duties non-endorsed (i.e., scheduling, record keeping, filing

paperwork) by the profession. In sum, the above researchers have confirmed that there are issues related to the role of and duties performed by school counselors with variation across building levels.

In an attempt to stabilize the school counselor role and profession, some changes have been made. First, the eligibility requirements for the school counseling profession have changed. Traditionally, only individuals with a teaching credential were able to become school counselors (Randolph & Masker, 1997) after completing some additional coursework. Recently, some states (e.g., Ohio) have dropped this requirement recognizing school counseling as a separate profession which requires specialized training (ASCA, n.d.a.; Ohio Department of Education, 2006; Paisley & Hubbard, 1989). Second, some states have passed legislation to make school counseling a license with specific requirements such as passing the Praxis II specialty area test for school counseling, in addition to coursework in school counseling (ASCA, n.d.a.; Lum, 2003) Third, some states have passed legislature mandating school counselors or school counseling services in their schools (ASCA, n.d.b.). Mandates vary among the states with some states mandating only access to counseling (e.g., Wyoming), some mandating comprehensive school counseling programs (e.g., New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island), and others mandating student to counselor ratios (e.g., Virginia). A list of the states and if they have any mandates for school counseling at the elementary, middle, and high school levels are provided in Table 1. Fourth, in 2003, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) developed a National Model with a delivery system component to help define specialized duties for school counselors. This delivery system component outlines duties endorsed by the profession in the areas of

Table 1

School counseling mandates for the 50 states

State	Elementary	Middle	High School
Alabama	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alaska	No	No	No
Arizona	No	No	No
Arkansas	Yes	Yes	Yes
California	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colorado	No	No	No
Connecticut	No	No	No
Delaware	No	No	No
Florida	No	No	No
Georgia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hawaii	Yes	Yes	Yes
Idaho	Yes	Yes	Yes
Illinois	No	No	No
Indiana	Yes	Yes	Yes
Iowa	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kansas	No	No	No
Kentucky	No	No	No
Louisiana	No	No	Yes
Maine	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maryland (Includes Washington D.C.)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 1 (continued)

School counseling mandates for the 50 states

State	Elementary	Middle	High School
Massachusetts	No	No	No
Michigan	No	No	No
Minnesota	No	No	No
Mississippi	No	No	Yes
Missouri	Yes	Yes	Yes
Montana	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nebraska	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada	No	No	No
New Hampshire	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Jersey	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Mexico	Yes	Yes	Yes
New York	No	No	No
North Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Dakota	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ohio	No	No	No
Oklahoma	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oregon	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	No	No	No
Rhode Island	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	No	No	No

Table 1 (continued)

School counseling mandates for the 50 states

State	Elementary	Middle	High School
Tennessee	Yes	Yes	Yes
Texas	No	No	No
Utah	No	No	Yes
Vermont	Yes	Yes	Yes
Virginia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Washington	No	No	Yes
West Virginia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wyoming	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Mandate requirements are different for each state.

guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support (ASCA, 2005).

Even with the above outlined changes, there continues to be speculation among school counseling professionals regarding the appropriateness of actual duties performed by the school counselors across building levels. Thus, it is important to know the actual duties performed by school counselors to gauge them in relation to those proposed in the professional literature and within the National Model's delivery system component. A review of the professional literature indicated a scarcity in research on the actual duties performed by school counselors since the inception of the ASCA National Model in 2003. Two empirical studies were located (i.e., Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Monteiro-Leitner, Asner-Self, Milde, Leitner, and Skelton, 2006). Using a state sample, Kirchner and Setchfield reported that although school counselors in the State of Washington sanctioned ASCA endorsed duties for themselves, the principals endorsed both ASCA endorsed and non-endorsed duties for school counselors, supporting earlier similar findings by Perusse et al. (2004). In the second study, using a rural Midwestern regional sample, Monteiro-Leitner et al. reported a discrepancy between actual duties performed (e.g., testing, bus loading/unloading) by school counselors and duties school counselors believed they should perform (e.g., counseling services, referrals) based on training and profession endorsed duties. Findings from these two studies suggest differences not only in the duties that school counselors and principals believe to be important but also in the duties school counselors engage in and those endorsed by the school counseling profession.

Purpose of the Study

Because research examining school counselor duties in relation to the ASCA National Model's delivery system component has been limited, this study was designed to fill that void. Specifically, this research will expand the work of Monteiro-Leitner et al. (2006) beyond a limited regional sample. The following exploratory questions were addressed in this study.

What are the actual duties performed by school counselors at the elementary, middle, and high school levels?

1) Is there a relationship between being trained in the ASCA National Model and duties performed by school counselors at the elementary, middle, and high school?

2) Is there a relationship between having a teacher credential and duties performed by school counselors at the elementary, middle, and high school?

3) Is there a relationship between a state mandate for school counseling and duties performed by school counselors at the elementary, middle, and high school?

Method

Participants

A total of 2,574 started the survey from 3,743 individuals who visited the survey site. It is not possible to determine the reason that 1,169 of those who visited the survey site did not complete the survey. Of these 2,574 respondents, 18 declined consent. An additional 464 respondents only partially completed the survey. Of the 2,092 participants who completed the survey, only those who indicated a building level (*n*=1,704) were eligible for this study.

The participants included 456 (26.76%) elementary, 384 (22.54%) middle, and 602 (35.33%) high school counselors who worked at only one building level and 262 (15.38%) counselors who worked at more than one building level, referred to as the mixed group. The participants included 281 (16.49%) males, 1,408 (82.63%) females, and 15 (.88%) participants who did not indicate their gender. The sample mean age was 40.94 years (SD = 11.42, range = 23-69) for the 1,620 (95.07%) participants who indicated their age. The ethnic identity provided by 1,445 participants included American Indian/ Alaskan Native (n = 11, .65%), Asian/ Pacific Islander (n =12; .70%) Black (not of Hispanic Origin) (n = 89; 5.22%), Hispanic (n = 88; 5.16%), White (not of Hispanic Origin) (n = 1,209; 70.95%), and "Other" (n = 36; 2.11%). The other category included those who identified as biracial or bicultural as well as those who identified themselves by their country of origin. The participants included individuals who were trained in the ASCA National Model (n = 1,367; 80.22%) as well as those who were not trained in the model (n = 319; 18.72%). Eighteen (1.06%) did not indicate their training. While a similar proportion of school counselors with (n = 884; 51.88%) and without (n = 811; 47.59%) a teaching credential indicated their status, 9 (.64%) refrained from responding to this question. Of the total number of participants indicating a specific building level, 614 (36.03%) were from states with some level of mandates for school counseling for kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12), 245 (14.38%) were from states with some level of mandates for school counseling for only some grades between K-12, and 845 (49.59%) were from states with no mandates for school counseling at any grade level.

The Survey Instrument

The instrument contained a total of 9 items. The first question requested consent. The second question determined eligibility by inquiring at which building level the participant worked as a school counselor. The third question, "what type of school counselor duties do you perform?", was developed based on questions and comments that emerged in the school counseling internship courses taught by the two authors. These questions and comments centered on the differences between what we taught as the ASCA National Model duties prescribed for school counselors and what interns actually observed and participated in their respective internship sites. The focus group interviews were informal, purposeful, and focused to provide opportunities for information to emerge somewhat spontaneously from each intern. This allowed interns to talk in depth and elaborate on their views and experiences. Becker and Geer (1982) indicated that the more unstructured the interview, the more likely the researcher would obtain unexpected data. The authors kept running notes of the interns' responses, reviewed them, and utilized them to form the research question and survey in order to increase the validity of the study (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). Choices for the third question included a list of endorsed duties directly imported from the ASCA National Model's four delivery system components and non endorsed duties generated from other duties experienced by school counseling interns. The list of duties provided to the participants is presented in Table 2 categorized under the ASCA National Model's four delivery system components and other category. Data gathered by the subsequent six questions (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, ASCA model training, teacher credential, and practicing state) were provided in the participant demographic section. Survey questions were

generated by the first author and analyzed by the second author. Both authors

independently analyzed the survey and made changes in readability and clarity of the

questions. Once the survey was loaded to Zoomerang (1998-2008) by the first author,

both authors completed the survey before launching to test for accuracy, ambiguity, and

the amount of time it would take to complete the survey. Further piloting of the

instrument was not undertaken as ambiguities or conflicts did not arise.

Table 2

Percentages of delivery system component duties by building levels

Delivery System Components	Elementary *n*=456	Middle *n*=384	High *n*=602	Mixed *n*=262
Guidance Curriculum				
Classroom instruction	93	71.4	58.8	76.3
Interdisciplinary curriculum development	57.9	51.8	74.8	61.8
Group activities	95.8	86.7	71.1	82.8
Parent workshops and instruction	27	24.7	29.4	36.6
Individual Student Planning				
Individual appraisal	56.4	55.2	58.8	66
Individual advisement	71.1	88	92.4	89.3
Group appraisal	39.5	41.7	32.6	43.5
Group advisement	49.8	63.5	63.5	61.1
Responsive Services				
Consultation	97.4	97.7	96.5	97.7
Counseling	91.2	83.9	81.7	84.7
Crisis response	58.1	67.2	47.7	57.3
Referrals	85.7	83.3	84.6	84.4
Peer facilitation	91.9	93	87.4	92.7
System Support				
Professional development activities	56.4	48.7	52.5	48.9
System support related consultation	78.7	75	71.3	74.4
Collaboration and teaming	87.7	85.9	84.4	85.5
Program management and operation	62.5	58.3	60.5	62.6

Table 2 (continued)

Percentages of delivery system component duties by building levels

Delivery System Components	Elementary *n*=456	Middle *n*=384	High *n*=602	Mixed *n*=262
ASCA Non-endorsed Duties				
Scheduling	25.4	76.6	89.5	56.1
Bus duty	39	22.1	5	14.1
Lunchroom duty	25.4	39.8	23.3	26
Testing administration	56.6	67.4	77.2	63.4

Note: Values are percentages; Mixed = school counselor serving more than one building level

Procedure

The total population of 13,805 members from the ASCA membership website was emailed with a brief introduction of the authors, the purpose of contact, and an invitation to currently practicing school counselors to participate in an online survey using the Zoomerang (1998-2008) survey program. Zoomerang also provided the opportunity for individuals invited to remove their names from the mailing list, if they were not appropriate for the survey purpose or did not want to participate. We received many emails informing us that some were not currently practicing school counselors as they were counselor educators, retired, on maternity leave, or serving in a different capacity. We removed these names from the email list. After two weeks, a reminder was emailed to those who had not completed the survey or responded with a request to remove their names either directly to Zoomerang or to the authors.

Results

Results of the data analysis examined within the context of the ASCA National Model's four delivery system components for each building level are provided in Tables 2 and 3. Only some highlights are provided below.

Actual Duties Performed by School Counselors Nationwide

Guidance curriculum. Guidance curriculum was determined by classroom instruction, interdisciplinary curriculum development, group activities, and parent workshops and instruction (ASCA, 2005). While most of the duties under the guidance curriculum delivery system component were endorsed by at least 50% of school counselors in each building level, parent workshops and instruction received less than 37% endorsement from school counselors across the building level. Additionally, over

70% of counselors across building levels engaged in group activities (i.e., 95.8% elementary; 86.7% middle; 71.7% high; and 82.8% mixed group). Classroom instruction was endorsed by 93% elementary, 71.4% middle, 58.8% high, and 76.3% mixed group school counselors. Lastly, over 74% of high school counselors endorsed interdisciplinary curriculum development.

Individual student planning. Individual student planning included individual and group appraisal and advisement services (ASCA, 2005). The most endorsed duty was individual advisement with 71.1% elementary, 88% middle, 92.4% high, and 89.4% mixed group school counselors endorsing this duty. The lowest endorsed duty within this category was group appraisal ranging from 32.6% (high school) to 43.5% (mixed group).

Responsive services. Responsive services included consultation, individual and small group counseling, crisis counseling and response, referrals, and peer facilitation (ASCA, 2005). Consultation (97.4% elementary school; 97.7% middle school, 96.5% high school, and 97.7% mixed group) and peer facilitation (91.9% elementary school; 93% middle school, 87.4% high school, and 92.7% mixed group) were the highest endorsed duties. The lowest endorsed duty was crisis response with a range between 47.7% (high school) and 67.2% (middle school).

System support. Support services were defined by professional development activities, consultation, collaboration and teaming, and program management and operation (ASCA, 2005). Collaborating and teaming was the highest endorsed duty within this category with 87.7% elementary, 85.9% middle, 84.4% high school, and 85.5% mixed group school counselors endorsing it. Professional development activities

were the lowest endorsed duty ranging from 48.7% (middle school) to 56.4%

(elementary school).

      ASCA non endorsed duties. This category included duties that are performed by

school counselors but not endorsed as central to the school counselor role by the

profession. We provided scheduling, bus duty, lunch room duty, and test administration

with an additional "other" category requiring participants to qualify their responses. The

additional other responses included, but were not limited to, breakfast and lunch duty,

front door duty, individualized education plans, recess duty, cross walk duty, hall

monitoring, scheduling, new student intake, substituting, aid to classroom teacher,

testing related activities including driving students to tests, coach for various sports, and

principal duties. Of the duties provided by the authors, bus duty and lunch duty were

endorsed less frequently than scheduling and testing. While 39% of elementary school

counselors endorsed bus duty, only 5% of high school counselors endorsed it. Lunch

room duty was more endorsed by middle school counselors (39.8%) than elementary

(25.4%), high (23.3%), or mixed group (23.6%) school counselors. Scheduling was

mostly endorsed by high school counselors (89.5%), closely followed by middle school

counselors (76.6%). Only 25.4% of elementary school counselors endorsed scheduling

as a duty within their role. Testing duty was more equally shared among the building

levels with 56.6% of elementary, 67.4% middle, 77.2% high school, and 63.7% mixed

group school counselors endorsing it as a duty.

Chi Square Analysis

      Chi square analysis were conducted to determine if there was a relationship

between the actual duties performed by school counselors at the different building

levels and training in the ASCA National Model, having a teaching credential, and the state mandate for school counseling where the school counselor worked. Data from the duties listed under each delivery system component were used to form the four delivery system components. For instance, if a participant indicated he or she engaged in classroom instruction, the guidance delivery system component was endorsed for the participant. Chi square analysis results are provided in Table 3. An alpha level of .05 was set for statistical significance. Only the significant relationships are provided below.

ASCA training. A statistically significant relationship was found between elementary counselors and system support duties [χ^2(1, *n*=452)=19.467, *p*<.001, Cramér's V=.16], middle school counselors and guidance curriculum duties [χ^2(1, *n*=381)=12.849, *p*<.001, Cramér's V=.17], high school counselors and non-endorsed duties [χ^2(1, *n*=594)=12.130, *p*<.001, Cramér's V=.10], and mixed group counselors and system support duties [χ^2(1, *n*=259)=4.119, *p*<.042, Cramér's V=.08]. According to Cohen (1992)'s rubric, the values correspond to a small effect size, indicating a significant but weak relationship between the two variables.

Teaching credential. A statistically significant relationship was found between elementary school counselors and non-endorsed duties [χ^2(1, *n*=455)=8.123, *p*<.004, Cramér's V=.15] and high school counselors and individual student planning duties [χ^2(1, *n*=602)=6.546, *p*<.011, Cramér's V=.09]. According to Cohen (1992)'s rubric, the values correspond to a small effect size, indicating a significant but weak relationship between the two variables.

Table 3

Chi Square results for the four delivery system components and non-endorsed duties by state mandate, ASCA Model training, teaching credential at different building levels

	ASCA Training	Teaching Credential	State Mandate
Elementary School (*n*=456)			
Guidance Curriculum	χ^2(1, *n*=452)=.412, *p*<.521	χ^2(1, *n*=455)=1.546, *p*<.214	χ^2(1, *n*=456)=.000, *p*<.985
Ind. Stud. Planning	χ^2(1, *n*=452)=.655, *p*<.418	χ^2(1, *n*=455)=.037, *p*<.847	χ^2(1, *n*=456)=.148, *p*<.701
Responsive Services	χ^2(1, *n*=452)=.620, *p*<.431	χ^2(1, *n*=455)=2.324, *p*<.127	χ^2(1, *n*=456)=2.941, *p*<.086
System Support	χ^2(1, *n*=452)=19.467, *p*<.001*	χ^2(1, *n*=455)=.004, *p*<.952	χ^2(1, *n*=456)=1.390, *p*<.238
Other	χ^2(1, *n*=452)=.002, *p*<.967	χ^2(1, *n*=455)=8.123, *p*<.004*	χ^2(1, *n*=456)=.572, *p*<.449
Middle School (*n*=384)			
Guidance Curriculum	χ^2(1, *n*=381)=12.849, *p*<.001*	χ^2(1, *n*=384)=.935, *p*<.334	χ^2(1, *n*=384)=.020, *p*<.887
Ind. Stud. Planning	χ^2(1, *n*=381)=.073, *p*<.787	χ^2(1, *n*=384)=.486, *p*<.486	χ^2(1, *n*=384).217, *p*<.642
Responsive Services	χ^2(1, *n*=381)=1.106, *p*<.293	χ^2(1, *n*=384)=.001, *p*<.979	χ^2(1, *n*=384)=.003, *p*<.953
System Support	χ^2(1, *n*=381)=3.104, *p*<.078	χ^2(1, *n*=384)=.010, *p*<.919	χ^2(1, *n*=384)=.639, *p*<.424
Other	χ^2(1, *n*=381)=.118, *p*<.732	χ^2(1, *n*=384)=.690, *p*<.406	χ^2(1, *n*=384)=.004, *p*<.947
High School (*n*=602)			
Guidance Curriculum	χ^2(1, *n*=594)=.036, *p*<.850	χ^2(1, *n*=602)=3.630, *p*<.057	χ^2(1, *n*=602)=.116, *p*<.733
Ind. Stud. Planning	χ^2(1, *n*=594)=.000, *p*<.992	χ^2(1, *n*=602)=6.546, *p*<.011*	χ^2(1, *n*=602)=.257, *p*<.612
Responsive Services	χ^2(1, *n*=594)=.230, *p*<.631	χ^2(1, *n*=602)=.959, *p*<.327	χ^2(1, *n*=602)=1.878, *p*<.171
System Support	χ^2(1, *n*=594)=1.806, *p*<.179	χ^2(1, *n*=602)=.406, *p*<.524	χ^2(1, *n*=602)=.833, *p*<.361
Other	χ^2(1, *n*=594)=12.130, *p*<.001*	χ^2(1, *n*=602)=.526, *p*<.468	χ^2(1, *n*=602)=4.991, *p*<.025*
Mixed Group (*n*=262)			
Guidance Curriculum	χ^2(1, *n*=259)=2.312, *p*<.128	χ^2(1, *n*=262)=.181, *p*<.671	χ^2(2, *n*=262)=2.587, *p*<.274
Ind. Stud. Planning	χ^2(1, *n*=259)=3.178, *p*<.075	χ^2(1, *n*=262)=.015, *p*<.901	χ^2(2, *n*=262)=.942, *p*<.624
Responsive Services	χ^2(1, *n*=259)=1.038, *p*<.308	χ^2(1, *n*=262)=1.549, *p*<.213	χ^2(2, *n*=262)=.515, *p*<.773
System Support	χ^2(1, *n*=259)=4.119, *p*<.042*	χ^2(1, *n*=262)=.061, *p*<.151	χ^2(2, *n*=262)=3.472, *p*<.176
Other	χ^2(1, *n*=259)=.101, *p*<.751	χ^2(1, *n*=262)=.475, *p*<.490	χ^2(2, *n*=262)=1.043, *p*<.594

Note: Reader will notice differences in sample sizes due to missing data; Mixed = school counselor serving more than one building level; df=2 for Mixed group state mandate due to unknown designation due to partial mandates. * indicates significance at *p*<.05.

State mandate. If a state mandate for school counseling existed, in the state and the building level at which the participant worked, was determined based on the information provided by ASCA (n.d. b) (Table 1). The mixed group participants who worked in a state with a partial mandate (e.g., 9-12 only) were classified as unknown. A statistically significant relationship was found between high school counselors and non-endorsed duties [χ^2(1, *n*=602)=4.991, *p*<.025, Cramér's V=.10]. According to Cohen (1992)'s rubric, the value corresponds to a small effect size, indicating a significant but weak relationship between the two variables.

Based on the findings provided above, a discussion of the results is provided below with some plausible explanations for our findings. Implications of our findings, limitations of the research, and directions for future research are provided following the discussion.

Discussion

The school counseling profession has taken several steps including creating a National Model to alleviate some confusion related to the role and specific duties appropriate for school counselors and to promote stability for the school counseling profession. This study was designed to examine if the actual duties of the school counselor had aligned with the recommended duties set forth by the delivery system component of ASCA National Model since its inception in 2003, and to extend the work of Monteiro-Leitner et al. (2006) from a regional sample to a national sample. The results indicated that school counselors at all building levels engage in both profession endorsed and non-endorsed duties with some variation existing among the building levels (Table 2). Furthermore, results of this study are similar to that of Monteiro-Leitner

et al.'s findings which indicated that more high school counselors engaged in test administration, and individual planning (i.e., individual advisement) in contrast to elementary and middle school counselors, who spent more time in classroom guidance curricula (i.e., classroom instruction and group activities) and non-endorsed duties (i.e., lunch and bus duty). Our findings also had similarities with findings discussed by Hardesty and Dillard (1994). For instance, although a small difference across buildings, more elementary school counselors endorsed consultation and collaboration where as more middle and high school counselors endorsed individual counseling. A larger difference in endorsement of individual advising by high and middle school counselors than elementary school counselors was also found, similar to discussed by Hardesty and Dillard. Given the history and length of the ongoing debate concerning the role of the school counselor (Brott & Myers, 1999; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Scarborough, 2002; Sears & Granello, 2002) it is not surprising that there are still issues related to establishing appropriate and universally accepted duties, and thus the role of the school counselor.

Discussion of our findings in the four delivery system components and non-endorsed category in relation to others' research findings are provided below. In examining the variation among the four delivery system components, more than 50% of the counselors in each level endorsed most of the guidance curriculum duties, with over 90% endorsement of classroom instruction and group activities by elementary counselors. This finding is in contrast to findings of DeMato & Curcio (2004), who indicated that elementary school counselors did not have time to provide classroom instruction. Although most activities in this component were well endorsed by all

counselors, parent workshops and instruction received less than 37% endorsement across building levels. This finding is concerning for two reasons. First, parents are an important group of constituents to support the school counseling profession (Loesch & Ritchie, 2007). Second, students whose parents are involved in and supportive of their children's educational journey achieve higher levels of performance and are better adjusted socially and emotionally (Erford, 2007). In addition, one of the National Education Goals (2000) challenges every school to promote partnerships and increase parent participation promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children. A suitable way for school counselors to support such educational goals is to provide parent workshops on topics that would facilitate parents to help their children succeed in school (Ritchie & Partin, 1994).

In the individual student planning category, results indicated that more than 50% of the counselors in each building level engaged in duties listed under this component, with the exception of group appraisal (32% to 44%). Moreover, group appraisal and advisement were endorsed by fewer counselors across the building levels than individual appraisal and advisement. This finding also supports Hardesty and Dillard (1994)'s conclusion that high and middle school counselors work with students more on an individual basis, at least on advisement related duties. In an era where much is demanded from limited number of school counselors serving large number of students (ASCA, 2005), in most states, engaging more in individual advisement (i.e., high and middle school) and individual appraisal (i.e., high school) may be an inefficient means of providing services to students (DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Erford, 2007), especially those who are developmentally able to benefit from group advisement and group appraisal.

Therefore, it is astute to re-evaluate if some of the services provided as individual appraisal can be provided as group appraisal, making appraisal a more time efficient duty.

Duties within the responsive services category were endorsed by more than 80% of school counselors with the exception of crisis response services rendered by high school counselors. The less than 67% endorsement of crisis response services across building levels, especially the less than 48% endorsement by high school counselors, is an unexpected finding in light of Hurricane Katrina, the terrorist attacks in the United States, school shootings, and student suicides to name a few. Although crisis counseling is an important duty for school counselors to perform, in that it services the immediate needs of students (ASCA), it appears that school counselors engage in less crisis response services. One possible explanation for this finding is that school counselors, across building levels, may be referring students (Erford, 2007; Monteiro-Leitner et al., 2006) with crisis needs to school or community based mental health counselors. For instance, after Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana implemented the "Louisiana Spirit" outreach crisis counseling program to address the emotional and mental health needs of those impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita (Speier, 2006). A second explanation is that at least at the high school level, schools may be more focused on preparing students for college and vocational roles (Hardesty & Dillard, 1994; Monteiro-Leitner et al.) than providing crisis response services.

In the system support category, professional development activity was the lowest endorsed (49% to 56%) duty. Professional development includes activities that involve school counselors updating their skills through active involvement in in-service

programs, professional conferences, and/or post-graduate education (Loesch & Ritchie, 2007). Although in DeMato & Curcio (2004) and Monteiro-Leitner et al. (2006) findings, school counselors had indicated they would like to engage in continuing education and training, school counselors do not appear to be engaging in professional development. Neglecting one's professional development may lead to out-dated methods of intervention and lack of confidence in one's abilities as a counselor in addition to a lack of understanding and knowledge of new developments in the profession. Therefore, it is important for counselors at every building level to increase engagement in professional development activities.

Overall, five duties were endorsed by more than 75% of school counselors across building levels. These consisted of consultation (97% to 98%), individual and group counseling (82% to 91%), referrals (83% to 86%) and peer facilitation (87% to 93%) of the responsive service delivery system component and collaboration and teaming (84% to 88%) of the system support component. It is of interest to note that the duties directly related to the three C's (i.e., counseling, consultation, and collaboration) of school counseling that has been a part of the profession for many decades (Erford, 2007) are within the highest endorsed duties performed by current school counselors.

This study also informs the extent to which school counselors perform duties that are not endorsed by the profession. Pointing to the specifics, in our sample, the greatest variation across building levels was in scheduling duties performed by school counselors with almost 90% endorsement from high school counselors and only about 25% endorsement from elementary counselors. High school counselors also endorsed testing more than their counterparts at other building levels. This supports Monteiro-

Leitner et al. (2006)'s finding, that high school counselors engage more in non-endorsed duties. This finding may reflect the historic duties in testing and assessment (DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Erford, 2007; Monteiro-Leitner et al., 2006) associated with school counseling. Another significant variation was found in bus duty where elementary school counselors endorsed 39% and high school counselors only endorsed 5%. This difference can be explained by the developmental and academic needs of the student body. For instance, high school students may drive to school or may need less supervision in entering or exiting the bus because of their ability to think abstractly and problem solve (Newman & Newman, 2006). In general, our finding that school counselors across building level continue to engage in non-endorsed duties is similar to previous research (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Coll & Freeman, 1997; Monteiro-Leitner et al.; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Perusse et al., 2004) findings. There are two possible explanations for this continued engagement in non-endorsed duties. First, school counselors may be assigned these duties by supervisors who believe they should supervise hall duty, bus loading, and unloading, and lunch duty and spend at least five hours per week testing students (Monteiro-Leitner et al.). Second, staff shortages due to budget cuts and lack of funds may influence duties assigned to school counselors (Vail, 2005). Third, school counselors may volunteer their time to engage in non-endorsed duties due to needs of schools and/or personal comfort in performing such services.

Further analysis of the participants who were trained in the ASCA National Model, having a teaching credential, and working in states with mandates for school counseling at some level provided some interesting results. Results analyzed by building levels and ASCA National Model training provided three significant results.

First, elementary and mixed school counselors who were trained in the ASCA National

Model endorsed more system support duties than their non-ASCA National Model

trained counterparts. Although we are unable to comment on the mixed group

counselors, elementary school counselors trained in the ASCA National Model may

engage in more system support duties because of the collaborative climate of

elementary schools.

The developmental level of elementary students, including lack of ability to

articulate their needs (Newman & Newman, 2006), often require that service

professionals collaborate and team with teachers, parents, and other professionals to

advocate for students' needs (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2007), thus creating a collaborative

climate. Second, middle school counselors who were trained in the ASCA National

Model endorsed more guidance curriculum duties than their non-ASCA National Model

trained counterparts. This may be due to the transitions that take place during middle

school from childhood to adolescence. The developmentally appropriate struggles with

self-esteem and individual identity as well as issues related to bullying, eating disorders,

self-injury, and substance use (Newman & Newman) may increase the need for a

proactive approach reaching all students, thus increasing the need for guidance

curriculum duties. Third, high school counselors who were trained in the ASCA National

Model endorsed more non-endorsed duties than their non-ASCA National Model trained

counterparts. This finding is not surprising since majority of high school counselors are

responsible for coordinating scheduling and testing (Burnham & Jackson, 2000;

Monteiro-Leitner et al., 2006; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Perusse et al., 2004).

Approximately half of the participants were teachers before they were school counselors. This shift from all school counselors having a teaching credential to only some having such a credential is due to some states eliminating the requirement for school counselors to have a teaching credential. One of our significant findings is that elementary school counselors with a teaching credential endorsed more non-endorsed duties. One explanation is that elementary school counselors with a teaching credential are more aware of and willing to share in duties outside their work role that are needed for the functioning of the school due to the collaborative climate of elementary schools discussed above. On the other hand, a less positive explanation is that school counselors with a teaching credential may be struggling to establish their identity in a different role as school counselors. A second significant finding is that high school counselors with a teaching credential endorsed more individual student planning duties. It is reasonable to assume that high school counselors provide college information and vocational exploration, which may be conducted in the form of teaching or tutoring and disseminating information to students, a task that is very familiar to teachers.

Working in a state with any mandates for school counseling produced significant results for high school counselors endorsing non-endorsed duties. This finding is not a surprise because scheduling and testing are both responsibilities historically strongly associated with school counselor duties. Due to the variation that exists between states even with state mandates, it is hard to generalize from our findings. However, state mandates appear important as they provide job security and job satisfaction as noted by DeMato and Curcio (2004).

Implications

Great variations in duties still exist among school counselors across building levels. A couple of possible explanations and solutions are provided here. First, it is possible that some of these delivery system components were not endorsed by some counselors because they are part of a school counseling department in which counselors have divided the components they perform. Second, it is possible that some school counselors do not believe that the ASCA National Model is useful to them. Therefore, it appears that the profession may need to educate and demonstrate the usefulness of the ASCA National Model delivery system components school counselors. Third, Studer (2005) concluded that school counselor trainees who have the opportunity to engage in the various components of the ASCA National Model continued with such duties as a school counselor. Encouraging school counselor interns to engage in the delivery system components during internship may provide the opportunity to experience the benefits of engaging in ASCA endorsed duties. Fourth, it is possible that some administrators are still assigning duties that are non-endorsed by the profession. If this assignment is due to a lack of knowledge, then finding ways to educate administrators would benefit school counselors.

Limitations

First, we cannot determine a response rate due to our method of data gathering. We invited the entire population that consisted of individuals who were appropriate and inappropriate for our study. If we determine our response rate according to total invited (N=13,805) to our eligible participants (n=1,704) our response rate was 12.34% which limits the generalizability of results. Interestingly, there is no consensus among

researchers on a critical return rate with return rate varying in published articles. Some (Kline & Farrell, 2005) call for at least 50% to increase chances of acceptance for publication. Obviously it is assumed that the larger the return rate, the more appropriate the finding and thus inferences. However, two studies (Curtin, Presser, & Singer, 2000; Keeter, Miller, Kohut, Groves & Prosser, 2000) report minimal differences in answers after studying high and low return rates. In addition, Couper, Traugott, and Lamias (2001) indicated that web-based survey methods do not compare to snail mail surveys as individuals may have technical difficulties, such as slow modem speeds, unreliable connections, low-end browsers, spam filters, incorrect or expired email addresses, and servers unable to handle mass emails, which may discourage participation. Our sample exceeds the sample size recommendation of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) who recommended 375 participants for a population of 15,000 which is larger than our population. Second, the instrument was not piloted using school counselors, which may confound the results if school counselors found any questions to be ambiguous. However, we did not receive any such comments. Third, the sample was gathered from those whose email addresses were available through the ASCA website. We are aware that there are school counselors who are non-members of the ASCA and school counselors who do not have an active email address. The lack of representation of these other groups of counselors and their duties is duly noted. Finally, it is important to note that the effect size of significant relationships were small according to Cohen (1992), suggesting that relationships discussed in this article were weak although significant.

Future Direction

First, due to the web-based format of this survey replicating this study to include those who were not sampled due to lack of email addresses and to increase the response rate is important for generalizability of the results. Second, investigating the beliefs about the importance of various duties and the ASCA National Model in relation to what school counselors actually do will help understand reasons for advocating or not advocating for ASCA endorsed duties. Third, examining the factors that affect school counselor's ability to engage in certain duties may allow counselor educators to tailor school counselor training appropriately. For instance, research on the practicum and supervision expectations of school counselors need to be conducted to determine if school counselors are being provided the opportunity to practice the various delivery system components of the ASCA National Model instead of engaging in an experience consisting of only individual and group counseling similar to community counselors. Fourth, investigation of the current pre-service training curriculum of principals and superintendents to determine if they are informed on appropriate duties for the school counselor based on the current ASCA National Model is necessary. Information gathered by these four areas will contribute to an overall understanding of what components affect school counselors engaging in ASCA endorsed duties that were provided to reduce confusion related to and instability of the school counseling profession. An understanding of such can create a pathway to facilitating a strong school counselor role thus stabilizing the profession.

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