

Emergence of National School Counseling Models: Views From the
United States and Turkey

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Abstract

School counseling in Turkey and the United States has progressed on different historical paths. The two countries also have distinct cultures. This article reviews the historical development of the profession in both countries and specifically examines efforts to develop and implement broad national models based on a comprehensive developmental school counseling (CDSC) program. Challenges impeding further advancement of the profession in both countries are examined. Comparison of cross-cultural challenges will inform and support practitioners in both countries striving to implement national models based on CDSC programs.

Emergence of National School Counseling Models: Views From the United States and Turkey

The field of professional school counseling has a long history in the United States (Gysbers, 2001) while its origins in Turkey are more recent (Doğan, 1998a). This article will briefly review the historical development of the profession in both countries. Examination of the emergence and implementation of national models based on comprehensive, developmental school counseling (CDSC) programming illustrates the current challenges that are common and unique in both countries. Specifically, this article aims to provide an international perspective on how cultural, political, and economic factors may have an influence on school counseling programs in general, and implementation of national models in particular. While the United States and Turkey have distinct cultures, economies, and educational systems, there are similarities regarding the challenges implementing national models based on CDSC programs. This article will help counselors and counselor educators to develop a unique perspective of pertinent issues in school counseling around the world by providing two distinctive examples from a developed and a developing country.

History of School Counseling in the United States

Professional school counselors in the United States trace their history back to the first years of the 20th century. The pioneers of school counseling include Jessie B. Davis who offered guidance in the classroom in 1907 and the 1908 creation of the Vocation Bureau by Frank Parsons (Baker & Gerler, 2008). First termed vocational guidance, the titles and emphases of professional school counseling have evolved over the past century. From the 1920's to the 1940's a clinical model that emphasized counseling as the primary activity dominated the profession (Gysbers,

2001). The next model, pupil personnel work, grouped school counselors with other service providers in the school (e.g., nurses, social workers, attendance officers). During the late 1960's new models began to develop that viewed school counseling as more integrated into the school rather than as an adjunct service (Gysbers, 2004). Career, academic, and personal social development began to emerge as central components in school counseling programs (Gysbers, 2001). The Missouri Model, developed by Gysbers' and his colleagues (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006; Gysbers & Moore, 1974; 1981), is arguably the most important model in professional school counseling in the United States (Rowley, Stroh, & Sink, 2005). This model emphasizes the need for an organized, planned, and sequential guidance and counseling program (Green & Keys, 2001). Components of the Missouri Model are prominent in the recently developed ASCA National Model of school counseling published by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2005).

Development of the ASCA National Model

The ASCA National Model grew out of the development of national standards for school counseling articulated by Campbell and Dahir (1997) and the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust, 1997). The ASCA National Model is a guiding framework to develop comprehensive, developmental, and systematic school counseling programs (ASCA, 2005). The ASCA National Model is gaining acceptance among counselors (Sink, 2005) and is increasingly being adopted by school counseling associations and education departments in many states (Dahir, Burnham, & Stone, 2009). The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) outlines the components of a CDSC program as well as articulating appropriate roles of school counselors. This model describes four components of a

CDSC program: a foundation, delivery system, management system, and program accountability.

The school counseling profession has been challenged to clearly define the roles and expectations of school counselors from the beginning of the profession (Gysbers, 2001). Efforts to examine and clarify appropriate school counselor activities continue today. Research on school counselors' daily activities demonstrates that a substantial amount of time is devoted to administrative tasks, paperwork, and other inappropriate activities (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Leuwerke, Bruinekool, & Lane, 2008). Further, there is an inconsistency between the actual functions performed, and the roles endorsed by the profession (Coogan & DeLucia-Waak, 2007; Perera-Diltz & Mason 2008). The combination of inappropriate activities and ambiguity of proper functions causes role confusion (Fitch, Newby, Ballesterro, & Marshall, 2001). School counselors also have a poor history of demonstrating how their efforts have positive impact on student outcomes (Astramovich, Coker, & Hoskins, 2005). Many authors have called for dramatic increases in efforts to document positive student outcomes (Lapan, 2001; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Studer, Oberman, & Womack, 2006). Whiston (2002) went so far to state that school counseling would cease to exist as a profession without increased attention to accountability and demonstration of effectiveness.

Implementation of the ASCA National Model

There is a growing body of research supporting the conclusion that schools with more thoroughly implemented CDSC programs are linked to positive outcomes in the areas of personal-social, career, and academic development (Bierma, 2007; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Sink, Akos, Turnbull, & Mvududu, 2008; Sink & Stroh, 2003). As this research accumulates and counselors in the United States become

more aware of CDSC programs there should be increased efforts to adapt existing school counseling practice to a systematic model. The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) provides practitioners with such a framework to organize and implement a CDSC program. As implementation efforts grow, the literature describing and documenting this development should also expand.

Scarborough and Luke (2008) noted the dearth of research in this area in their qualitative examination of the implementation experience of eight professional school counselors. Personal motivation and abilities, graduate training, experience, role models, and the existence of CDSC models were all identified as factors supporting implementation efforts (Scarborough & Luke, 2008). The authors also found that self-efficacy beliefs and the importance of school counseling being integrated into the larger school system facilitated the counselors' actions. The counselors identified a number of barriers to implementation, lack of a CDSC program, non-supportive colleagues and administrators, and inappropriate counselor duties (Scarborough & Luke, 2008, p, 410). Poynton, Schumacher, and Wilczenski (2008) surveyed professional school counselors in Massachusetts and identified the top two areas of concern, labeled personal and impact concerns, regarding the implementation of a CDSC program. Personal concerns focused on doubts about the CDSC program representing an improvement over existing models. Impact concerns included questions about how the model would affect students and families and how counselors would evaluate program outcomes (Poynton et al., 2008). These authors suggested that informing counselors and professional development opportunities would be key efforts to increase support among counselors.

Gysbers, Lapan & Roof (2004) noted a variety of criticisms of implementation efforts in the United States, including insufficient attention to cultural concerns,

scarce effectiveness research, lack of developmental theory, and too little focus on prevention efforts. Implementation efforts have also included the development of the ASCA National Model Readiness Survey (Carey, Harrity, & Dimmitt, 2005).

Professional school counselors can use this instrument as a self-assessment to evaluate readiness as well as identify the next steps and resources required to support a more successful implementation experience. Continued research efforts that identify the barriers as well as facilitative conditions that support the implementation of national model will strengthen counselors' knowledge base and support efforts to achieve the aims established by the professional organizations.

History of School Counseling in Turkey

The Republic of Turkey was established in 1923 following the fall of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. Since this time, education has been perceived as one of the most important elements for modernization and Westernization of the country (Ergun, 1990). Professional counseling began in schools (Kepçeoğlu, 1986) in the 1950's in accordance with Turkish-American collaboration by inviting American scholars and counselor educators to Turkey (Doğan, 1998a; 1998b). These scholars reviewed the education system in Turkey and prepared comprehensive reports, seminars and conferences and presented solutions to identified problems (Tan, 1986). Additionally, educators, scholars, and graduate students were sent to the United States to receive training in school counseling (Yeşilyaprak, 2003). Turkish and American educators subsequently started pilot guidance and counseling programs. These programs were perceived as mechanisms for developing the skills and talents of society (Kepçeoğlu, 1996), as well as helping students choose school subjects, extracurricular activities, and colleges or vocational schools (Doğan, 2000a; 2001). Although this perspective limited the development and growth of the

counseling profession in other areas such as rehabilitation and mental health, guidance and counseling had gained importance in educational settings.

In the 1970-1971 academic year, the Ministry of National Education (MNE) started guidance and counseling programs in 24 schools (Kepçeoğlu, 1996). Two-hour class periods were included as "Guidance Hours" in the school curriculum (Ültanır, 2005). Today the majority of school counseling and guidance activities are still carried out in these hours. This practice does create confusion of school counselor roles (Nazlı, 2004) as they are perceived as being like teachers. Until recently, the orientation and placement principle as well as a clinical-crisis oriented approach have dominated the general function of school counseling (Kepçeoğlu, 1986; 1996). In the latter model, counseling was perceived and practiced as services only for underachieving, problem students. The clinical-crisis oriented approach resulted in the marginalization and isolation of school counseling programs from overall school activities (Doğan, 1998a; 1998b).

Emergence of Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling

The Turkish educational system is highly centralized; the entire system is governed by the MNE (Yıldırım, 2003). As such, the MNE has the power to dictate the role of counselors in schools. Recently, counselor educators began to emphasize integration of the school counseling program into the larger school system, and efforts to reach all students (Doğan, 2000a; Nazlı, 2003a). Therefore, the scholars of counseling urged the MNE to recognize school counseling as essential elements of the entire educational system (Doğan, 2000a, 2001; Erkan Güven, Kılıç, Altay, Çetin, Gülebağlan, et.al. 2006). In 2000, guidance activities and programs were developed to be implemented in the designated guidance hours by classroom teachers with the supervision of school counselors. The implementation of classroom guidance

activities by designated teachers represents a first step toward implementation of CDSC programs. The following year, CDSC programs started to be implemented in some selected pilot schools across the country (Nazlı, 2003a)

A study exploring teachers' attitudes towards this new model of counseling found that the majority of teachers (93%) believe CDSC programs are more effective than the old clinical-crisis oriented model (Nazlı, 2002; 2003b). In 2006, a group of scholars, assessment specialists, and directors of counseling programs in the MNE conducted a needs assessment survey, which showed that CDSC programs would be beneficial to students, teachers, and parents (Erkan, et.al. 2006). Realizing the need, and seeing the effectiveness of the model in pilot schools, during the 2006-2007 academic year the Comprehensive Developmental Guidance Model started to be systematically implemented in schools across the country as a mandatory counseling program (Erkan, et.al., 2006).

In Turkey, the development of CDSC programs starts in Province Guidance Research Centers (PGRC), which are governmental institutions that provide guidance to schools in their regions to carry out special education and counseling services effectively. PGRCs consist of special education specialists, school counselors and assessment specialists. In the beginning of each academic year, PGRC members attend the Province Advisory Council and prepare guidelines for Guidance and Counseling programs based on the CDSC program. This guideline program is prepared for four areas of service delivery; (a) individual planning, (b) responsive services, (c) program development, research, consultation and professional development, and (d) other. The last area of service delivery, other, describes responsibilities remaining from the old system (Erkan, Kaya, & Altun, 2007; Erkan, et.al 2006). Each PGRC then sends the guideline to the schools in their

area (Terzi, 2004). School counselors prepare their comprehensive developmental school counseling programs based on the needs of students, teachers, school, and the local area. Prior to this new national school counseling program, teacher, student, and parental needs or expectations were not taken into consideration when planning guidance and counseling services. Further, there were no efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of counseling programs (Terzi, 2004). Although it is too early to say how the program is accepted by parents, students, administrators and teachers, the program has the potential to strengthen the status of school counselors in schools.

Even though implementation of national models based on CDSC programs are in different developmental phases in both countries, the challenges faced by both countries to successfully implement such programs seem similar. In the following section, we will discuss common challenges faced when implementing national models.

Program Implementation Challenges

The school counseling professions in Turkey and the United States face similar challenges as counselors strive to improve their position in the schools and their ability to meet the developmental needs of students. Interestingly, despite different histories and cultural differences, both countries face many of the same difficulties in training, program implementation, accountability, number of school counselors, and establishing effective collaborative relationships among stakeholders in the education system.

Counselor Education

In Turkey, a counseling degree is obtained after a four-year-undergraduate program with approximately 140-150 credit hours training (Ültanır, 2005); whereas in

the United States it is typically obtained after two-year master's level training. In Turkey, the first counselor education program started in 1965 (Kuzgun, 1993), since then there have not been significant changes in counselor education. There is no standardization or accreditation of counselor education programs in Turkey (Doğan, 1998a). The type of courses and content of courses vary from university to university (Akkoyun, 1995; Culbreth & Korkut, 2006; Doğan, 2000b; 1998a). In addition, there are no specialties in training of counseling, any formally recognized requirements, or certifications for professional counselors (Doğan, 2000b). Some universities prepare students as generalists with a clinically oriented training while other programs emphasize school counseling. Recently efforts have been underway to standardize counselor education programs (Ültanır, 2005). Quite often, graduates start their job as a school counselor without sufficient training on preparation and delivery of a CDSC program (Hatunoğlu & Hatunoğlu, 2006).

In the United States, although accreditation standards are well defined, CDSC training is not uniformly integrated into counselor education programs (Schwallie-Giddis, ter Maat, & Pak, 2003). Therefore, school counseling students may have difficulty transforming their education into actual practice (Gibson, 2009). A significant challenge in U.S. training programs is that although there is emphasis on accountability there is still a lack of training on program evaluation as part of pre-service experiences (Astramovich, et al., 2005; Murphy & Kaffenberger, 2007). With these changes, counselor education programs are accepting the challenge of transforming their own curricula in order to not only prepare future school counselors to include an academic focus in their roles and school counseling programs but to support these new counselors as they enter into a profession that is in the midst of transformation (Jackson, et al., 2002). School counselor education programs should

also emphasize professional advocacy and leadership (West, Bubenzer, Osborn, Paez, & Desmond, 2006), as implementing a successful CDSC program relies heavily on the school counselor. The school counselor advocacy competencies are well defined in literature (Trusty & Brown, 2005), school counselor education programs should embrace the advocacy competencies in their training.

Resources

In Turkey, resources such as interest, aptitude, intelligence, personality tests are not well developed (Doğan, 1998a; 1998b, Hatunoğlu & Hatunoğlu, 2006), having a negative effect on executing the national model efficiently. Lack of resources especially limits planning, implementation and evaluation of school counseling programs. In addition, there are limited resources such as evidence-based strategies or workbooks that school counselors can use to develop guidance activities (Nazlı, 2003b). Without sufficient resources, the implementation of the program relies on the creativity and extra efforts of individual school counselors. This condition eventually causes low job satisfaction and fatigue (Gökçakan & Özer, 2003). In the United States resources are more readily available (e.g., the ASCA website, www.schoolcounselor.org), but the profession does continue to struggle to gain attention and appropriate resources. This is evidenced by the exclusion of school counseling in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (U. S. Department of Education, 2002).

Student/Counselor Ratio

Closely tied to resources and materials, high counselor-student ratios are a major challenge in both countries. In Turkey, the ratio of students to counselors appears to be typically about 4,500:1 (Doğan, 1998b), in some cities, the ratio is better although still very high (1,800:2, Hatunoğlu & Hatunoğlu, 2006). The ratio is

higher in less developed parts of the country. To address this problem, the MNE appoints professionals from various disciplines as counselors. A recent study shows that counseling activities in 45% of the schools are carried out by professionals who are not trained to be counselors (Ültanir, 2005). This quick and easy solution creates larger problems by contributing the perception of school counseling as a non-professional function, which can be carried by anyone without specific training (Doğan, 1998a). In the United States the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) advocates a student counselor ratio of 250:1, with the national average at 475:1 (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Obviously, in both countries, it is very challenging to implement national model and CDSC effectively with such high ratios.

Role Changes

CDSC programs shift the focus of school counseling from crisis orientation to becoming an integral part of the entire educational system. In Turkey, the suggested guideline of a Comprehensive Developmental Guidance Model retains the non-counseling activities and responsibilities from the old system. This means CDSC program implementation is essentially a large, additional task placed on school counselors, rather than a comprehensive re-organization of roles and expectations. Poorly defined counselor roles in legislation and mandates create confusion of role expectations, which in turn cause elevated levels of burnout and job dissatisfaction among school counselors (Hatunoğlu & Hatunoğlu, 2006). School counselors in Turkey reported spending too much time on clerical duties (Korkut-Owen & Owen, 2008). It is necessary to develop clear and consistent role definition for school counselors (Korkut-Owen & Owen, 2008). When school counselors are expected to perform duties that are not related to their roles, it is almost impossible to effectively implement the national model.

While the adoption and implementation of CDSC program in the United States has gained steam in recent years (Dahir, et al., 2009; Scarborough & Luke, 2008), research clearly demonstrates that counselors continue to spend substantial time on inappropriate activities (Baker 2001; Brott, 2006; Leuwerke et al., 2008). School counselors are still struggling to become an integral part of the school system (Hatch, 2008). There is still role ambiguity even among school counselors (Brott, 2006; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). Adding responsibilities to school counselors through the adoption or implementation of a CDSC program may be challenging and resistance provoking to some counselors (Poynton et al., 2008; Whiston, & Sexton, 1998). In order to implement a CDSC program effectively, inappropriate activities need to be removed from counselors rather than asking them to just do more.

In most instances implementing CDSC programs requires system change therefore school counselors should have strong leadership (Dollarhide, Gibson, & Saginak, 2008; Schwallie-Giddis, ter Maat, & Pak, 2003) and professional advocacy competencies. Although there is much emphasis on client advocacy professional advocacy competencies have not been identified (Myers, & Sweeney, 2004). School counselors should be equipped with leadership and professional advocacy skills through pre-service and in-service training as well as support should be provided from state, regional and national professional associations (Gysbers, 2006; Miller, 2006).

Collaboration and Support

Effective implementation of a CDSC program relies heavily on collaboration of many school personnel (Clemens, 2007; Terzi, 2004). Administrator, teacher, and parental support are crucial. In Turkey, there is still some resistance to the idea of counseling in schools; many teachers and administrators do not see counseling as

an important discipline and think of it as a luxury (Doğan, 1998a; 1998b). In one study, 85% of the school counselors reported that their efforts to perform their jobs are impeded by administrators and teachers (Hatunoğlu & Hatunoğlu, 2006). The reasons for unsupportive attitudes toward school counseling is identified as follows: (a) ineffective communication, (b) misunderstanding of counselor roles, (c) low motivation of the counselor, (d) problem centered approach to counseling, (e) inability to fulfill unrealistic expectations of administrators, (f) intensive curriculum, (g) insufficient regulations regarding school counseling, (h) insufficient parental participation, and (i) crowded classrooms (Akbaş, 2001). Lack of support from administrators and teachers is one of the main causes of burnout for school counselors (Hatunoğlu & Hatunoğlu, 2006). Interestingly, Korkut-Owen and Owen (2008) found that principals' role expectations of school counselors were consistent with counselors' expectations and principals presented favorable opinions for school counseling programs. One of the reasons for such support for school counseling is explained by the in-service training on the new national model and CDCS programs to school principals by the MNE (Korkut-Owen & Owen, 2008). It is evident that the lack of understanding about role and functions of professional school counselors prevents support and collaboration, therefore informing administrators and teachers about appropriate school counselor duties is crucial (Hamamcı, Murat & Esen-Çoban, 2004).

Research in the United States has found support for counselors among school principals (Beesley & Frey, 2006; Zalaquett, 2005). However, others have found stark contrasts among school counselors and school administrators regarding appropriate and inappropriate counselor activities (Monteiro-Leitner, Asner-Self, Milde, Leitner, & Skelton, 2006; Pérusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004).

Given these attitudes, there still might be a lack of understanding and appreciation of the counseling program by school administrators and teachers who have difficulties understanding and carrying their roles in the implementation of the program.

Collaborative efforts are therefore crucial; agencies and educational leaders (Clemens, 2007; Trevisan, 2001) should support school counselors and make them to become more aware of the counselors' roles in student achievement (Brott, 2006). Leuwerke, Walker, and Shi (2009) recently demonstrated the positive impact of information about the ASCA National Model on principals' perceptions of school counselors. This research suggests that appropriately presented information created more favorable impressions of counselors which may in turn foster support among school administrators.

Accountability and Research

In both countries, the Comprehensive Developmental Guidance Model guideline program (Erkan, et al. 2006) and the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) provide definition and organization to school counseling programs. There have been efforts to explore student outcomes, evaluate program effectiveness (Lapan, 2001; Lapan, et al., 1997; Sink et al., 2008; Sink & Stroh, 2003; Whiston & Sexton, 1998), and increase accountability (Brott, 2006). The school counseling profession will continue to gain acceptance and support as the research base documenting positive student outcomes grows. The inability to utilize research and program evaluation strategies limits support from other professionals and therefore school counseling cannot receive the status it deserves (Hatunoğlu & Hatunoğlu, 2006). The school counseling profession will be well served with increased outcome and accountability research (Brott, 2006; Fairchild, 1994). Efforts to provide pre-service and in-service

data management and research training to school counselors will greatly facilitate these outcomes (Astramovich et al., 2005).

It is evident that while the school counseling professions in Turkey and the United States have substantially different histories, counselors in both countries face many of the same challenges. School counseling in Turkey and the United States would benefit from continued development and implementation of national models based on CDSC programs. With this implementation, school counselors in Turkey must be relieved of requirements from previous models while U.S. counselors need to continue to advocate for reduction of inappropriate duties. Counselor education programs would benefit from standardization of training and making the national models a core element of the school counseling training programs in both countries. Additional resources, reduced student/counselor ratios, and system wide support (i.e., respect from school administrators, teachers, and parents) would greatly strengthen school counseling programs within schools. Finally, professional school counselors must greatly increase efforts demonstrating student outcomes and being accountable for their efforts. The authors believe that school counselors' demonstration of students' positive outcome from counselor interventions is the most powerful argument supporting the continued advancement of the profession.

Conclusion

CDSC programs seem to have been most easily established in conditions of relatively high stability, adequate funding, and low political influence (Watkins, 2001). Counseling in general is still less developed, less organized, and still in search of its professional identity in Turkey (Doğan, 1998a). Although better equipped and supported in the United States, both countries experience growing pains when implementing National Models based on CDSC programs. Collaboration among

counseling associations in Turkey, the United States, as well as other countries, to support international exchange and training programs will likely benefit the profession globally. Given the recent advancement of national models, much more program implementation research is needed in both countries. Research that examines the effectiveness of comprehensive developmental school counseling programs, changes in teacher, administrator and parental attitudes, and the overall impact of the program into the entire school programs are needed.

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