

School Counselors' Perceptions of their Academic Preparedness for Job Activities
and Actual Job Activities

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ABSTRACT

The school counseling field has evolved over the years and increasingly clarified school counselors' job roles and activities (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010; Trolley, 2011); however, school counselors' job roles and activities remain inconsistently understood and practiced (Burnham & Jackson; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shillingford & Lambie; Studer, Diambra, Breckner & Heidel, 2011; Trolley). School counselors are highly trained in academic preparation programs to perform school counseling job activities in schools (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2008). At the same time, the job expectations taught in academic preparation programs can differ from the actual school counseling job (Allen et al., 2002; Bodenhorn, 2006; Brott & Myers, 1999; Chambers, Zyromski, Asner-Self, and Kimemia, 2010; Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, & Solomon, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Kolodinsky, Draves, Schroder, Lindsey, & Zlatev, 2009; Milsom, 2002; Mustaine, Pappalardo & Wyrick, 1996; National Office for School Counselor Advocacy [NOSCA], 2011, 2012a; Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Steen, Bauman, & Smith, 2008; Trolley). As a result, several researchers recommended collecting data on school counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of academic preparation to perform work related practices (Kolodinsky et al.; Pérusse & Goodnough; Pérusse, Goodnough, & Noël, 2001; Sisson & Bullis; Trolley).

In this dissertation study the author gathered information on and examined discrepancies between school counselors' reported academic preparation and actual job activities. The author will describe an overview of the problem in Chapter One, an in-depth literature review will be conducted in Chapter Two, the methodology will be described in Chapter Three, the results of the study will be outlined in Chapter Four, and lastly, Chapter Five will include a discussion of the results of the study, including implications and recommendations.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	ii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Questions.....	5
Key Terms.....	5
Rationale	7
Summary.....	10
CHAPTER TWO	11
LITERATURE REVIEW	11
Historical Trends in School Counseling	11
Legislation and Professional Organizations Impacting School Counseling Roles.....	21
Government Legislation.....	22
Professional Counseling and Educational Organizations	24
ACA and ASCA.....	24
NOSCA.....	26
Education Trust.....	26
NEA	27
School Counselors’ Perceptions of Job Activities	28
School Counseling Leaders.....	29
School Counseling Practitioners	30
School Level	38
CACREP Accreditation Status	43
Historical Trends in School Counselor Academic Preparation	46
Accreditation Organizations	51
School Counselors’ Perceptions of their School Counselor Academic Preparation.....	53
Academic Preparation and Job Activities	55
School level.....	57
CACREP accreditation status	60
Suggested changes to academic preparation.....	60
Summary.....	62
CHAPTER THREE	64
METHODS	64
Research Questions.....	64
School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.....	64
Psychometric Properties.....	65
Instruments Used in the Current Study	68
Modified SCARS	69
Reliability.....	69
Summary	70
Demographic Questionnaire	71

Online Survey	71
Face Validity	72
Participants.....	73
Procedures.....	74
Data Analysis	75
Summary	78
CHAPTER FOUR.....	79
RESULTS	79
Demographic Information.....	79
School Level	79
School Counseling Employment Status.....	80
Academic Preparation Completion Date	80
Highest Level of Education Completed Pertaining to School Counseling.....	81
Graduation from a CACREP Accredited Preparation Program.....	81
Research Questions.....	82
Academic Preparation and Job Activities	82
Academic Preparation and Job Activities by School Level.....	85
Academic Preparedness by School Level	91
CACREP Accreditation	91
Summary	97
CHAPTER FIVE	98
DISCUSSION.....	98
Research Questions.....	98
Academic Preparation and Job Activities	98
Academic Preparation and Job Activities by School Level.....	104
Academic Preparedness by School Level	108
CACREP Accreditation	109
Implications and Recommendations	110
Limitations	117
Summary	119
References	121

<i>APPENDICES</i>	133
A. School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.....	133
B. Written Permission to Use and Modify the SCARS Instrument	135
C. Modified SCARS Instrument	136
D. Demographic Questionnaire	139
E. Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Permission to Conduct Survey.....	142
F. First Survey Invitation: January 14, 2013.....	144
G. Second Survey Invitation: January 21, 2013	147
H. Third Survey Invitation: January 28, 2013	150

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Title	Page #
1	The Number of School Counselors Whose Schools Offered Various Grade Levels	80
2.1	Descriptive Statistics for School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities	85
2.2	<i>T</i> -tests for School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities	85
3.1	Descriptive Statistics for Elementary School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities	86
3.2	<i>T</i> -tests for Elementary School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities	87
4.1	Descriptive Statistics for Middle School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities	88
4.2	<i>T</i> -tests for Middle School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities	88
5.1	Descriptive Statistics for High School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities	89
5.2	<i>T</i> -tests for High School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities	89
6.1	Descriptive Statistics for Mixed Level School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities	90
6.2	<i>T</i> -tests for Mixed Level School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities	90
7.1	Descriptive Statistics for Elementary School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status	93
7.2	<i>T</i> -tests for Elementary School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status	93
8.1	Descriptive Statistics for Middle School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status	94

Table	Title	Page #
8.2	<i>T</i> -tests for Middle School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status	95
9.1	Descriptive Statistics for High School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status	95
9.2	<i>T</i> -tests for High School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status	96
10.1	Descriptive Statistics for Mixed Level School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status	96
10.2	<i>T</i> -tests for Mixed Level School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status	97

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

School counselors are specially trained professionals charged with meeting students' academic, career, and personal/social development within the schools (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2004, 2009; Dahir, 2001; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). Using Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (CSCP), such as the American School Counselor Association National Model (ASCA National Model), is one common strategy for school counselors to meet the trio of student needs (ASCA, 2012b; Gysbers & Henderson). Although school counselors' job roles and work activities have shifted over the last century, CSCP have been in existence during the last 40 years (Gysbers & Henderson; Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004), and several researchers have found that fully implemented CSCP positively impact schools and students (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Sink, Akos, Turnbull, & Mvududu, 2008; Sink & Stroh, 2003). Specifically, fully implemented CSCP have contributed to a more positive school climate as well as students (a) feeling more safe, (b) having better relationships with teachers, and (c) earning higher grades and student achievement scores (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun; Sink et al.; Sink & Stroh). Although CSCP have been criticized (Brown & Trusty, 2005a, 2005b; Galassi & Akos, 2004; Sink, 2005), they are currently widely implemented and considered by many as a school counseling best practice (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Dahir, Burnham, and Stone (2009) positively described the impact of the ASCA National Model, an example of CSCP: "the influence of the ASCA National Model on the school counseling profession has been unparalleled" (p. 182). School counselors have the potential to greatly benefit schools and students by fully implementing CSCP.

“Throughout the last half of the 20th century, and continuing into this new millennium, confusion has persisted as to the nature, function, purpose, and role of counseling in schools” (Dahir, 2004, p. 344). School counselors have and continue to perform a variety of job activities not aligned with CSCP, including clerical and administrative job activities (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010; Studer et al., 2011; Trolley, 2011). Inconsistent school counseling job roles and activities have occurred for a host of reasons including (a) a historically ambiguous professional identity and (b) school counselors working for organizations unfamiliar with the profession (Burnham & Jackson; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack; Clemens, Milsom, & Cahswell, 2009; Culbreth et al., 2005; Gysbers & Henderson; Herr & Erford; Hatch & Chen-Hayes; Perera-Diltz & Mason; Rayle & Adams; Scarborough & Culbreth; Shillingford & Lambie). Specifically, non-counseling supervisors, such as school principals, may assign school counselors job activities unaligned with CSCP (Clemens et al., 2009; Culbreth et al., 2005), leaving school counselors to perform job activities inconsistent with their preferences and best practices.

Throughout the field’s history, school counselors’ actual job activities have been inconsistent with their preferred job activities (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). As a result, the presence of the ASCA National Model has been welcomed by many to unify the school counseling field and clarify school counselors’ job roles and activities. Although school counselors’ job roles and activities have become increasingly clarified, there still exists a need for progress (Rayle & Adams, 2008), as CSCP remain inconsistently implemented at the school

and state level (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Martin, Carey, & DeCoster, 2009; Rayle & Adams; Sink & MacDonald, 1998).

Along with the school counseling field evolving during the last century, school counselor academic preparation has also evolved to include greater program standardization (Bobby & Urofsky, 2012; Herr & Erford, 2011). At the same time, researchers have found inconsistencies between school counselor academic preparation programs, such as varied Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accreditation status, graduation requirements, course offerings, and faculty member qualifications (Akos & Scarborough, 2004; Baker & Gerler, 2001; Pérusse et al., 2001; Trolley, 2011). Although school counselor academic preparation has progressed in the last century, improvements are still needed.

School counseling and school counselor academic preparation are closely connected, as school counselor academic preparation prepares and trains students to become school counselors. However, researchers have found and proposed that practicing school counselors' job roles, activities, priorities, and expectations can differ from those taught in school counselor academic preparation programs (Allen et al., 2002; Bodenhorn, 2006; Brott & Myers, 1999; Chambers et al., 2010; Culbreth et al., 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Kolodinsky et al. (2009); Milsom, 2002; Mustaine et al., 1996; NOSCA, 2011, 2012a; Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Steen et al., 2008; Trolley, 2011). As a result, the transition from school counselor academic preparation program to work setting can be challenging for school counselors (Culbreth et al.). Trolley (2011) recognized the corresponding challenge faced by school counselors and counselor educators:

With such a plethora of tasks assigned to school counselors, and the diversity in their roles across school districts and levels, counselor educators are left wondering how they may best communicate the professional identity of school counselors to their graduate students. This lack of uniformity is not only a concern in regard to the academic preparation of future school counselor professionals, but presents challenges in educating the community as to what they actually do. (p. 15)

The discrepancies existing within school counseling and school counselor academic preparation may amplify the inconsistencies between the two fields, due to the high integration of the two fields. As a result, several researchers suggested gathering data to determine school counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of their academic preparation to perform work related practices (Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Pérusse & Goodnough; Pérusse et al., 2001; Sisson & Bullis; Trolley).

Statement of the Problem

Researchers have examined school counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation (Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Trolley, 2011) and school counselors' practices, including their actual job activities (Carter, 1993; Hutchinson, Barrick, & Groves, 1986; Mustaine et al., 1996; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth 2008) . Yet, this author could only find one small published study ($N = 26$) comparing school counselors' academic preparation and actual activities (Trolley). There appears to be potential discrepancies between and a lack of information regarding school counselors' academic preparedness to perform job activities and their actual performed job activities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine discrepancies between school counselors' perceptions of their academic preparedness to perform job activities and their actual job

activities, especially in relation to (1) school level (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed), and (2) the CACREP accreditation status of school counselors' academic preparation programs.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study: (1) What discrepancies exist between school counselors' reported academic preparedness and actual job activities? (2) What discrepancies exist between school counselors' reported academic preparedness and actual job activities within school level (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed)? (3) How do school counselors' academic preparedness vary across school level (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed)? and (4) How do school counselors' reported academic preparedness and actual job activities within school level vary by graduation from a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited preparation program?

Key Terms

Key terms will be defined to clarify the meaning of important concepts relevant to the study.

Academic preparation program - the academic training, typically a master's degree, required for individuals to become school counselors and typically a necessary component for school counselor state licensure or certification. School counselor academic preparation programs often train school counselors to run CSCP and meet students' academic, career, and personal/social development (ASCA, 2008; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). School counselor academic preparation is a specialty within counselor education.

Actual job activities - all included job activities school counselors actually complete as part of their professional duties.

Comprehensive school counseling programs (CSCP) - a widely used and recognized framework for implementing data-driven, student-focused, preventative, systemic, developmental school counseling services implemented in kindergarten through twelfth grade schools (ASCA, 2012b; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). CSCP address students' academic, career, and personal/social development (ASCA; Dahir, 2001) through interventions including counseling, consulting, curriculum, and coordination (Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). The term CSCP can be used interchangeably with comprehensive developmental school counseling programs and comprehensive guidance and counseling programs.

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) - an accrediting body for graduate-level professional counseling preparation programs with various counseling specialties, including school counseling (Bobby & Urofsky, 2012). Specifically, "the mission of CACREP is to promote the professional competence of counseling and related practitioners through the development of preparation standards; the encouragement of excellence in program development; and the accreditation of professional preparation programs" (CACREP, 2012d). Overall, CACREP strives to contribute to the counseling profession by ensuring counselors-in-training are competent and receive preparation meeting basic core standards.

Job activities - the job-related tasks completed by school counselors. Appropriate school counselor job activities include counseling, consulting, curriculum, and coordination (Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Whereas, inappropriate school counseling job activities include non-counseling or "other" job activities not aligned with implementing a CSCP (Scarborough; Scarborough & Culbreth); these job activities include clerical,

administrative, and fair share activities (e.g., job activities in which all school staff are expected to participate in, to assist in running the school [Gysbers & Henderson, 2012]).

Process data - data showing how school counselors spend their time in daily activities and how stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, school) are impacted by school counselors' job activities (ASCA, 2012b; Scarborough, 2005).

School counselor - certified/licensed counselors "with a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling making them uniquely qualified to address all students' academic, personal/social and career development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success. Professional school counselors are employed in elementary, middle/junior high and high schools; in district supervisory positions; and counselor education positions" (ASCA, 2009, para 1).

School level - the population school counselors serve including elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools, as well as mixed levels (e.g., more than one school level). Grade levels may vary within the school level based on geographical location.

Rationale

The findings from this study could benefit (a) professional organizations, (b) school counseling counselor educators and academic preparation programs, and most importantly (c) school counselors and the students they serve. First, this study could assist professional organizations to better advocate for school counseling. For example, professional organizations, such as the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), advocate for school counselors nationally. Results from this study regarding school counselors' actual job activities could be utilized by professional organizations

to understand school counselors' job systemically and areas of needed advocacy. Additionally, findings on school counselors' academic preparation and perceived job activities could provide information helpful to CACREP in their standards revision process, ensuring that school counselor academic preparation is aligned with school counselors' job activities.

Next, collecting data on school counselors' perceptions of their school counselor academic preparation to perform job activities could benefit school counselor academic preparation. School counseling counselor educators could compare data on school counselors' perceptions of preparation effectiveness to their current academic preparation programs and modify programs as appropriate. Thus, school-counselors-in-training could benefit from practical school counseling perceptions from the field.

Researchers have demonstrated that school counselors at different school levels (elementary, middle, and high) implement varied job activities (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Dahir et al., 2009; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2001; Studer et al., 2011). Additionally, researchers have discussed the possible differences in academic preparation needs based on school counselors' school level (Péruce & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Trolley, 2011). School counselor academic preparation may better prepare elementary school counselors for job activities, compared with secondary school counselors (Péruce & Goodnough, 2005). Thus, Péruce and Goodnough (2005) suggested that feedback from school counselors may help school counseling counselor educators adapt their curriculum to meet the needs of school counselors entering all school levels. This study recommends disaggregating findings by school level to gain more information on school counselors' perceptions by specific school level.

Data examining the difference in CACREP accredited and non-CACREP accredited school counselor academic programs status on school counselor job activities could provide the school counselor academic preparation field with more information regarding the long-term impact of CACREP accreditation on school counselors. Findings from this study could give more information to CACREP to assist in their mission of school counselor preparation. Perhaps more information on school counselors' job activities could impact future revisions of the CACREP standards.

The study could positively impact future and current school counselors. School counselors are on the frontlines of the school counseling field, directly working with students, parents, and school faculty; as a result, it is necessary to hear their first-hand opinions of their school counselor academic preparation and their professional job activities. The data collected from school counselors in this study could be shared with school counseling counselor educators to improve future school counselors' preparation, including the professional transition from school counselor academic preparation to practice. For example, Culbreth et al., (2005) said:

Clearly, significant efforts should be taken by counselor educators to prepare preservice school counselors prior to graduation for the true nature of the role within the school, thus reducing discrepancy between preservice perceptions of the school counselor role and actual professional experiences after a student is employed. (p. 67)

The findings from this study could inform district school counseling supervisors of school counselors' training needs. Findings could be communicated to school administrators, who are often responsible for assigning school counseling job activities.

Summary

Fully implemented, school counselor run CSCP are utilized to meet students' academic, career, and personal/social development. In order to plan and implement CSCP, school counselors need to (a) possess appropriate academic preparation and training to perform their job and (b) perform job activities aligned with CSCP to meet students' needs. School counselor academic preparation and school counseling practice are closely related and interdependent; Lambie and Williamson (2004) stated:

School counselor preparation programs and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) advocate professional roles and standards of practice for school counseling professionals. However, incongruence is apparent between what is advocated and the actual duties most professional school counselors (PSCs) are performing. (p. 124)

As a result, Trolley (2011) recommends "school counselors and educators must collaborate to further define the role, appropriate tasks, and necessary preparation of these professionals" (p. 28). Gathering data to determine school counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of their school counselor academic preparation programs in relation to their actual job activities will continue to propel the field forward. This positive momentum can improve both school counselor academic preparation and school counseling and ultimately lead to school counselors better meeting students' needs. The next section of this dissertation includes Chapter Two, an in depth literature review of school counselors' job activities and school counselor academic preparation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of Chapter Two is to review literature on both the school counseling field and school counselor academic preparation, in order to provide both a context and demonstrate a need for the study. School counselors' roles and corresponding job activities will be described in the first half of Chapter Two, including (a) historical trends in the school counseling field, (b) relevant United States (U.S.) legislation and professional counseling and educational organizations, and (c) literature describing school counselors' perceptions of their job activities, and job activity variations based on school level and CACREP accreditation status. The second half of Chapter Two will focus on school counselor academic preparation, specifically (a) historical trends, (b) relevant professional organizations, and (c) literature outlining school counselors' perceptions of their school counseling academic preparation. The author has purposely chosen to describe the school counseling field prior to school counselor academic preparation, as school counseling historical trends and professional organizations are foundational to the description of school counselor academic preparation. Chapter Two will conclude with a summary of key themes and the need for future research examining school counselors' academic preparation for job activities and their actual job activities.

Historical Trends in School Counseling

The school counseling field has not existed in a vacuum but rather has been influenced by historical trends. These changes in the school counseling field subsequently have impacted school counselors' roles and related job activities (Galassi & Akos, 2012; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr, 2001; Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Thus, to fully understand school counselors' job activities, it is crucial to first understand the historical context of school

counseling. This first section of Chapter Two will describe historical trends in school counseling to provide background for the ensuing discussion on school counselors' job activities.

School counselors' roles continue to be unclear for a variety of reasons, including a fluid professional history (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). In the last century the school counseling field has gone through numerous changes and school counselors have a history and current practice of holding varied professional roles and performing a variety of corresponding job activities (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Gysbers & Henderson; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Herr & Erford; Lambie & Williamson; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010; Studer et al., 2011; Trolley, 2011). Galassi and Akos (2012) attributed those changes to U.S. trends, stating "school counseling in the United States has both responded to and reflected national trends and challenges" (p. 50). Additionally, Herr (2001) stated "school counseling has been seen to have different types of relevance to schools depending on the needs of the nation in different historical periods" (p. 237). Overall, changes in the school counseling field have closely intertwined with shifting national trends.

During the late 19th century and early 20th century, the school counseling field began as a response to the U.S. transition from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy, including the need to place individuals in jobs (Herr & Erford, 2011). This time period marked the start of the vocational guidance movement, focusing on vocational counseling and guidance, assessment, and academic placement (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr & Erford; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Initially, school counselors were called guidance officers or guidance counselors and focused on placing (e.g., guiding) students to post-school employment based on individuals' characteristics such as interests, abilities, intelligence, and professional aspirations

(Gysbers & Henderson; Herr & Erford; Lambie & Williamson). Often these guidance counselors were teachers given extra responsibilities (Gysbers & Henderson); however, they were challenged by a lack of formal training, resources, and leadership (Gysbers & Henderson; Gysbers & Lapan, 2001). Essentially, school counseling has its earliest roots in vocational guidance and counseling.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the school counseling field broadened to include diagnostic, clinical, and educational aspects of counseling (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012), as well as a developmental perspective for working with children (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). With the development of broader school counseling roles, professional role conflict also was created (Herr & Erford, 2011), as school counselors wondered how to best define themselves: were they primarily vocational counselors or primarily mental health counselors (Gysbers & Henderson)?

At this time, other school specialists were hired in the schools, which Herr and Erford (2011) suggested may have led to further role confusion due to the overlapping professional responsibilities. Eventually these related positions, including school psychologists and social workers, were housed into a school department called pupil personnel services, an overarching interdisciplinary department providing a range of student services (Gysbers & Henderson). School counseling roles and job activities continued to evolve, as school counselors' responsibilities increased and they shared overlapping responsibilities with other school staff.

A high rate of unemployment during the Great Depression of the 1930s, as well as returning World War II veterans in the 1940s led to an increased federal emphasis on employment and vocational counseling (Herr & Erford, 2011). As a result, the 1946 Vocational Education Act allocated federal funds to support guidance, counseling, and both the training and preparation of counselors (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). School counseling once again had a

vocational emphasis.

During the 1940s, school counseling roles and job activities continued to expand partially due to Carl Rogers' humanistic counseling gaining popularity (Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). This new, non-directive, client-centered counseling approach brought a shift in school counseling, away from psychoanalytic and vocational roots (Herr & Erford; Lambie & Williamson); guidance was seen as giving advice, directives, and other administrative tasks, where counseling was seen as more of a mutual relationship between counselor and client (Herr & Erford; Lambie & Williamson).

The 1950s brought more structure to the school counseling field, including the creation of both (a) professional organizations such as ACA and ASCA and (b) professional and ethical standards for school counseling practice and training (Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). During this time, professional organizations established the title *guidance counselor*. Guidance counselors were defined as staff performing personnel work such as scheduling and other administrative tasks and utilizing a directive, advice-giving approach to counseling and guidance (Herr & Erford), including a heavy emphasis on individual counseling (Lambie & Williamson).

Due to the Space Race in the late 1950s, the U.S. placed an increased emphasis on space exploration and encouraged the schools to prepare students for related careers in math and science (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). As a result, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was created in 1958 and impacted school counseling by (a) providing funds for individual and group vocational counseling and assessment and (b) funding more school counselor preparation and training (Gysbers & Henderson; Herr & Erford).

The 1960s and 1970s were times of significant transition for the school counseling field (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). As a result of the increasing U.S. diversity and the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, and the Disability Movement, school counselors served increasingly diverse students. Additionally, counselor education training programs provided a greater emphasis on multicultural counseling from this point forward (Herr & Erford, 2011).

The school counseling professional identity continued to shift. Prior to the 1950s, school counselors were typically teachers and administrators who fulfilled school counseling responsibilities part-time; this changed as school counselors became a stand-alone position with specialized training (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). During the 1960s and 1970s, the field wrestled with their professional identity and questioned if they identified primarily with educators or psychologists (Gysbers & Henderson). School counseling interventions became increasingly focused on measurable and developmentally appropriate interventions, as well as a range of services including (a) individual and group counseling, (b) appraisal, (c) staff and parent consultation, (d) placement, and (e) orientation (Gysbers & Henderson). Federal legislation continued to support guidance and counseling during the 1960s, including the passage of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). As a result, school counseling continued to have a vocational emphasis, while taking on additional job activities and roles.

The concept of CSCP was developed during the late 1960s and 1970s, has evolved over time, and is synonymous with school counseling best-practices today (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Rather than providing primarily individual counseling to high needs students or providing ancillary services as determined exclusively by the needs of schools, CSCP include a purposeful, developmentally appropriate, accountability-based school counseling framework

with a range of defined components (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). According to Gysbers and Henderson (2012), CSCP are run by certified school counselors with the aim of addressing such components as students' academic, career, and personal/social development. Implementing CSCP require school counselors to (a) collaborate and consult with stakeholders, such as school staff and families, (b) act as school leaders advocating for systemic change, (c) align with the school's academic mission, and (d) connect the school counselor with educational reform (ASCA, 2012b; Dahir, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson). Although conceived half a century ago, CSCP continue to evolve and currently provide school counselors with an increasingly concrete job definition, such as appropriate and inappropriate job roles and activities (Gysbers & Henderson).

Lambie and Williamson (2004) described another school counseling trend in the 1970s regarding the shift in school counselors' roles. The 1970s brought a decrease in student enrollment along with school budgets. Due to the confidential and often misunderstood or unknown nature of the school counselors' job activities (e.g., working individually with students in a closed office), some school counseling jobs were eliminated. Consequently, school counselors began performing other school duties to maintain employment and visibility, such as clerical and administrative tasks (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Although school counselors were increasingly defining their roles and job activities through implementing CSCP, their role definition and job activities were still dependent on school budgets and national needs.

The 1980s included an emphasis on prevention efforts (e.g., substance-abuse, child-abuse, and drop-out prevention), which accordingly influenced school counselors' roles in schools to include prevention (Herr & Erford, 2011). The Carl D Perkins Act (i.e., Perkins Act) was first implemented in 1984, at which time funding was allocated to career and technology

education in the schools, which impacted school counselors (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr & Erford). This paved the way for significant change to occur over the next two decades as the school counseling professional identity continued to solidify.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the public educational system went through several changes, including an increased emphasis on accountability with the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (i.e., NCLB) (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002), which mandated an increased focus on standards-based education and testing, as well as holding schools accountable for student achievement (Dahir, 2004; Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr & Erford, 2011). According to ASCA (2004),

Educational reform movements of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, such as standards-based education and the No Child Left Behind legislation, focused on raising teacher quality and academic achievement. Unfortunately, these efforts ignored the emotional, physical, social and economic barriers that can inhibit student success. This is where school counselors make a difference. (para 2)

NCLB has impacted school counseling in several ways. First, NCLB has allocated some grants for school counseling programs (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr & Erford, 2011). Additionally, according to a national study of ASCA members, school counselors reported NCLB having a mixed impact on the field (Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006). NCLB aims to increase accountability measures in schools, which some school counselors reported as being consistent with current school counseling best practices (Dollarhide & Lemberger). However, school counselors reported a major detractor of NCLB included the increased emphasis on standardized testing, whereby school counselors were often assigned related testing coordinator job activities that consumed significant amounts of time (Dollarhide & Lemberger). A third of

school counselors in Dollarhide and Lemberger's (2006) study reported that NCLB resulted in a decreased emphasis on delivering school counseling services to students. Thus, school counselors may be spending more time on inappropriate school counseling job activities and less time meeting students' personal/social development needs (Dollarhide & Lemberger). Findings from Dollarhide and Lemberger's (2006) study are aligned with other researchers' finding that school counselors are reportedly performing inappropriate or "other" job activities (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

Other researchers have discussed the negative impact of high-stakes testing on school counseling, especially before and during test administration (Brown, Galassi, & Akos, 2004; Davis, 2006). For example, researchers found that high-stakes testing negatively impacted students' participation in school counseling services and contributed to strained relationships between school counselors and their colleagues, such as teachers and administrators (Brown et al.; Davis). Overall, high-stakes testing such as NCLB can have negative ramifications on school counselors' abilities to perform appropriate job activities.

In response to educational reform and inconsistent school counseling job roles and activities, professional organizations in the last several years have focused on increasingly clarifying the definition of school counseling, including job roles and activities (ASCA, 2004; Dahir, 2001, 2004; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). In the late 1980s both the College Board and ACA published reports emphasizing the need for school counselors (Dahir, 2001, 2004). Then in the 1990s, ACA created a think tank to describe school counselors' roles (Dahir, 2001, 2004) followed by ASCA creating a number of position statements to continue with the role definition (Dahir, 2004). In the 1990s, ASCA started to officially use the title *school counselor* rather than *guidance counselor* (Lambie & Williamson).

To further solidify the school counseling identity, in 1996 the Education Trust, a nonprofit organization, developed the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) (Martin, 2002). The TSCI focused on (a) reforming school counselor preparation programs, (b) increasing school counselors' emphasis on data-driven practices, and (c) emphasizing student academic achievement, particularly that of low-income and minority students (Martin). The TSCI created a school counseling vision focusing on leadership, advocacy, systemic change, and collaboration and teaming (Dahir, 2001; Martin).

By 1997, ASCA published the National Standards for School Counseling Programs (now called the ASCA National Standards for Students [National Standards]) (ASCA, 2004; Dahir 2001, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr & Erford, 2011). The National Standards were based off a national school counseling survey, a thorough literature review, and an analysis of successful state school counseling models (ASCA, 2004; Dahir, 2001, 2004). ASCA aimed for the National Standards to be a foundation for CSCP and ultimately, to create a unifying school counseling identity (Dahir, 2004).

In 2003, the ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (ASCA National Model) was released and updated in 2005 and 2012 (ASCA, 2012b). The ASCA National Model was based on the National Standards (ASCA, 2004), well known CSCP models, (Gysbers & Henderson), and the TSCI's concepts of leadership, advocacy, systemic change, collaboration, and teaming (ASCA, 2012b; Dahir, 2001; Martin, 2002). The ASCA National Model is a flexible, purposeful, preventative, developmental, systematic, data-driven, comprehensive school counseling framework based on over 50 years of research, theory, and practice (ASCA, 2012b; ASCA, 2004) that can be adapted to meet the unique needs of each school. The ASCA National Model is run by a state-credentialed school counselor and has three

dimensions: (a) three domains: academic, career, and personal/social development, (b) four themes: leadership, advocacy, systemic change, and collaboration, and (c) four components: foundation, management, delivery, and accountability (ASCA, 2012b). A primary goal of the ASCA National Model is to demonstrate school counselors' impact on student achievement in education as "an integral component of the school's academic mission" (ASCA, 2012b, p. xii). The ASCA National Model suggests 80% of school counselors' time should be spent in direct or indirect services for students and lists appropriate and inappropriate school counseling job activities (ASCA, 2012b).

Galassi and Akos (2012) recently stated, "although ASCA and the National Model represent major influences on school counseling practice, it is well known that many school counselors are not ASCA members and that the National Model is still a relatively new development that has not been universally endorsed" (p. 52). While the ASCA National Model has impacted the school counseling field and has become increasingly well known, readers should be mindful that the first model was published less than ten years ago and is still fairly young. Overall, although the ASCA National Model continues to be widely recognized in the U.S. today, CSCP such as the ASCA National Model are not consistently implemented at the school level (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Rayle & Adams, 2008) or the state level (Martin et al., 2009; Sink & MacDonald, 1998).

Over the past century there has been tremendous change in the school counseling field, as well as school counselors' roles and job activities (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010; Studer et al., 2011; Trolley, 2011).

Lambie and Williamson (2004) recognized school counselors' ambiguous professional identity, reflecting that school counseling has expanded during the last century to include increased roles and a broader professional identity with each passing decade. Walsh, Barrett, and DePaul (2007) normalized this process by remarking that when professions go through transitions, it takes time for those affected to fully accept and implement the changes. Thus, the school counseling field has gone through numerous changes in the last century, which is one factor leading to the wide range of school counseling job activities practiced today. Understanding the historical context of the school counseling field elucidates current professional trends, including varied school counseling roles and job activities. Although the field has progressed tremendously, there continues to be a need to examine school counselors' roles and job activities.

Legislation and Professional Organizations Impacting School Counseling Roles

Throughout the profession's history, organizations like ACA, ASCA, CACREP, and the Education Trust have attempted to clarify school counselors' roles and job activities (ASCA, 2012b; Dahir, 2001, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Martin, 2002; Schweiger, Henderson, McCaskill, Clawson, & Collins, 2012). At the same time, "for many years, individuals and organizations, in addition to the national professional associations, suggested various [school counseling] definitions and directions" (Dahir, 2004, p. 344). Thus, the school counseling field lacks a consistent definition across professional organizations (Herr & Erford, 2011), which can contribute to confusion when defining school counselors' roles and job activities. In addition to historical trends shaping the current status of the school counseling field, so have professional organizations.

Government Legislation

As previously stated, funding from the U.S. government has and continues to shape the school counseling field (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr & Erford, 2011). For example, legislation that has provided funding for the school counseling field and influenced school counselors' roles and job activities includes: the 1946 Vocational Education Act, 1958 National Defense Education Act, 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1984 Carl D Perkins Act, and the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (Gysbers & Henderson; Herr & Erford). Since funding from the U.S. government has been a major impetus in the evolution of the school counseling field historically, it is imperative to assess the government's definition of school counseling currently, which can influence school counselors' job activities. To illustrate the challenges of recognizing a unified set of school counselors' job activities, definitions according to two current U.S. legislation, the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program (ESSCP) and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins Act), will be discussed.

According to U.S. Department of Education's ESSCP, a school counselor is defined as:

An individual who has documented competence in counseling children and adolescents in a school setting and who (A) is licensed by the State or certified by an independent professional regulatory authority; (B) in the absence of such State licensure or certification, possesses national certification in school counseling or a specialty of counseling granted by an independent professional organization; or (C) holds a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling from a program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related

Educational Programs or the equivalent. (United States Department of Education, 2004, Section d-3)

Funding for the ESSCP grant is contingent on school counseling program implementation. However, the school counseling program and other counseling services can be implemented by a host of professionals including not only school counselors but also social workers, school and clinical psychologists, and psychiatrists (U.S. Department of Education). While the U.S. Department of Education clarifies school counselors' preparation and licensure, school counselors' job activities are undermined and ambiguously defined, since non-school counselors can implement school counseling programs.

The Perkins Act is a federal law stipulating funding for vocational education in the schools (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012) and reflects the U.S. Department of Education's desire for school counselors to focus on academic and vocation domains. The Perkins Act provides funding: (a) to train various staff, including school counselors (labeled *career guidance and academic counselors*), to better access and utilize student achievement data, and (b) for career guidance and academic counseling, with the goal of increasing student graduation rates and educating students on postsecondary education and career options (Office of Vocational and Adult Education, United States Department of Education, 2007). Thus, the Perkins Act defines school counselors' job activities as solely centered around students' academic achievement and career development.

Through the U.S. Department of Education's ESSCP and the Perkins Act, the U.S. government provides funding for certain school counseling job activities and specifies expected training, licensure, and certification requirements. However, these pieces of legislation contradict some school counseling literature (ASCA, n.d.a; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). The

U.S. Department of Education's ESSCP permits a variety of mental health professionals to run school counseling programs, which opposes school counseling literature requiring school counseling programs to be run only by licensed or certified school counselors (ASCA; Gysbers & Henderson). The Perkins Act neglects the personal/social development domain found in the CSCP framework (Gysbers & Henderson). The discrepancies between school counseling literature and U.S. legislation may lead to inconsistent school counseling definitions and expectations, as well as inconsistent school counseling job roles and activities.

Professional Counseling and Educational Organizations

In addition to U.S. legislation including various school counseling definitions, professional organizations also portray inconsistent school counseling roles and job activities (Dahir, 2004; Herr & Erford, 2011). Historically, professional counseling organizations have been instrumental in clarifying school counselors' roles and job activities (ASCA, 2012b; Dahir, 2001, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr & Erford; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Martin, 2002; Schweiger et al., 2012), yet differences between these professional organizations can lead to professional discrepancies (Dahir, 2004; Herr & Erford). The following section will detail school counselors' roles and job activities according to these influential professional organizations: ACA, ASCA, the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA), the Education Trust, and the National Education Association (NEA).

ACA and ASCA. ACA is a non-profit professional organization serving over 50,000 members across many counseling specialties, including school counseling (ACA, 2012a). ACA believes that all counselors, regardless of focus, share common counseling goals; specifically, in 2010 ACA defined counseling as “a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals” (Locke,

2011, para. 3). While this broad definition applies to school counselors, previously ACA, ASCA, and NEA (2008) collaborated on a brochure describing school counselors' roles including to:

Help every student improve academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning. School counselors in the 21st century are highly trained educators in pre K-12 settings who uphold ethical and professional standards to design, implement, and manage comprehensive, developmental, results-based school counseling programs that promote and enhance student success. (p. 1)

ASCA, a division of ACA consisting of approximately 31,000 members (ASCA, 2012a), defines school counselors as:

Certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling making them uniquely qualified to address all students' academic, personal/social and career development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success. (ASCA, 2009, para 1)

Thus, ACA and ASCA share commonalities and differences in their view of school counseling. Both organizations believe school counselors address students' academic, career, and personal/social development and utilize CSCP to do so; additionally, both organizations list school counselors as trained educators (ACA, ASCA, & NEA, 2008; ASCA, 2009). However in more recent years, ACA stated that all counselors, including school counselors share a common definition of counseling (Locke, 2011), which is different than the definition previously stated by both ASCA and the joint definition by ACA, ASCA, and NEA. These discrepancies between ACA and ASCA's description of school counselors' roles may impact school counselors' job activities.

NOSCA. NOSCA is a part of the College Board, with an organizational mission “to endorse and institutionalize systemic school counseling practice that advocates for equitable educational access and rigorous academic preparation, and for the achievement and attainment necessary for college and career readiness for all students” (NOSCA, 2012b, para 4). Overall, NOSCA perceives school counseling differently from ACA and ASCA, with a greater emphasis on middle and high school counseling, academics, equity, and college readiness and less of an emphasis on elementary school counseling, personal/social student development, and CSCP. Thus, NOSCA purports a different school counseling vision to the school counseling field and stakeholders, as compared with ACA and ASCA; this variation may contribute to discrepancies in school counselors’ roles and job activities.

Education Trust. The Education Trust is a nonprofit organization that first founded the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) and then the National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) (Education Trust, 2009a; Martin, 2002). Similar to NOSCA in several aspects, NCTSC promotes a model of school counseling practice and training emphasizing social justice, equity, and college and career-readiness (Education Trust, 2009b). According to their website, NCTSC depicts that school counselors:

Advocate for educational equity, access to a rigorous college and career-readiness curriculum, and academic success for all students. Our mission is to transform school counselors into powerful agents of change in schools to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement for low-income students and students of color. (Education Trust, 2009b, para. 1)

The NCTSC provides training, school and state consultations, and school counselor education program grants to better prepare school counselors to advocate for systemic change and equity

for students with disadvantages (Education Trust, 2009a). Like NOSCA, NCTSC focuses almost exclusively on academic, career, and social justice issues with little emphasis on personal/social student development or CSCP, which is a different focus than ACA and ASCA. However, NCTSC additionally focuses on improving school counseling training programs, which is not a main focus for ACA, ASCA, or NOSCA. Thus, the Education Trust's NCTSC has both similarities and differences compared to other professional organizations, which may affect the school counseling definition, job roles, and job activities.

NEA. With over 3 million members, the NEA (2012a) is a professional organization representing educators from preschool to college (National Education Association [NEA], 2012a). NEA (2012b) stated: “the American School Counselor Association supports school counselors’ efforts to help students focus on academic, personal, social, and career development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society” (para. 1). In 2011, NEA posted a brief article on their website advocating for school counseling, stating “strong counseling programs can boost student achievement and help students overcome challenges that can range from bullying to family turmoil” (para. 1); this article described the challenges faced by school counselors, including budget cuts, lay-offs, and higher than recommended ratios. Thus, the NEA agrees with ACA and ASCA regarding school counselors implementing academic, career, and personal/social interventions; however, NEA does not mention the importance of CSCP. Yet, NEA does recognize the relationship between school counseling and positive student outcomes, which is a fundamental aspect of CSCP (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

Although U.S. legislation and professional organizations have some common elements within the definitions of school counseling, job roles, and job activities (ASCA, 2009; 2012a;

ACA, ASCA, & NEA, 2008; Education Trust, 2009b; Locke, 2011; NEA, 2012b; NOSCA, 2012b), the organizational descriptions vary (Dahir, 2004; Herr & Erford, 2011). Professional organizations are charged with providing leadership and professional clarification; however, splintered school counseling definitions from varied professional organizations can trickle down to school counselors and lead to splintered school counseling roles and job activities in the schools. In summary, historical trends, U.S. legislation, and professional organizations have shaped the current status of the school counseling field, including job activities (ASCA, 2012a; Dahir, 2001, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Galassi & Akos, 2012; Herr, 2001; Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Martin, 2002; Schweiger et al., 2012). The next section of this literature review will examine school counselors' perceptions of their job activities, specifically discrepancies between preferred and actual job activities. Dahir et al. (2009) emphasized the need to listen to school counselors' job-related perceptions in order to positively impact the school counseling field: "we must pay close attention to the opinions and perceptions of professional school counselors, those who are closest to the source of their student and school building needs" (p. 191).

School Counselors' Perceptions of Job Activities

Researchers have studied school counselors' perceptions of their job activities (Carter, 1993; Hutchinson et al., 1986; Mustaine et al., 1996; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth 2008). These perceptions can differ from those of school counseling leaders and professional organizations (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Carter, 1993; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Hutchinson et al., 1986; Mustaine et al., 1996; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010). In the following section, school counseling

perceptions will be described from two perspectives: school counseling leaders and school counseling practitioners (i.e., school counselors).

School Counseling Leaders

Pyne (2011) stated “in many situations, the realities of school counseling differ from the ideals offered by experts” (p. 89). Although professional organizations and leaders describe school counselors’ job activities, these descriptions are not always aligned with school counselors’ actual practices in the field (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Carter, 1993; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Hutchinson et al., 1986; Mustaine et al., 1996; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010). As a result, researchers have been examining the relationship between school counselors’ practice as suggested by school counseling organizations and leaders compared to school counselors’ reports (Burnham & Jackson; Carter; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack; Foster, Young, & Hermann, 2005; Hatch & Chen-Hayes; Hutchinson et al.; Mustaine et al.; Perera-Diltz & Mason; Rayle & Adams; Scarborough; Scarborough & Culbreth; Shillingford & Lambie).

There are several possible reasons for the discrepancy between school counselors’ actual job activities and those job activities suggested by school counseling organizations and leaders. First, school counselors may work for organizations that may or may not prescribe to varied perspectives of school counseling job roles and activities (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Clemens et al., 2009; Culbreth et al., 2005; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010), thus school counselors may be assigned inappropriate job activities by supervisors, such as school principals (Clemens et al., 2009; Culbreth et al., 2005).

As a result, school counselors' actual job activities may vary by school (Clemens et al.).

"Whereas ASCA and CACREP have defined best practices for school counseling, professional school counselors often find themselves in organizational systems where there is no defined role or the role is incongruent with their training and values" (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011, p.3).

Overall, school counselors' actual job activities may be based on assigned job activities.

A second potential reason for the inconsistencies between job activities actually performed by school counselors and suggested by school counseling leaders and organizations may be a discrepancy between the two groups. For example, Davis (2006) stated

While school counselors experience the daily events and relationships in a school setting, school counselor educators stay informed about trends or changes in school counseling by reading relevant scholarly literature, attending professional conferences and workshops, and supervising school counselors-in-training in their field experiences in schools. However, counselor educators cannot truly emulate the experience of being a practicing school counselor, despite interaction with or supervision of graduate school counseling students in the field. (p. 217)

Thus, school counseling experts, such as counselor educators may have a different perspective of school counseling job activities, compared to practicing school counselors. As a result of having different experiences, school counselors' may choose to implement different job activities than those recommended by school counseling organizations and leaders.

School Counseling Practitioners

Historically, a discrepancy has existed between school counselors' actual and preferred job activities (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008), whether due to being assigned non-preferred activities, following non-preferred recommendations by school counseling leaders and

organizations, or other variables. As Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) stated “what remains unclear is an understanding of the variables that influence the manner in which school counselors spend their time” (p. 447). School counselors are on the forefront of the field directly serving students and schools; as a result, it is imperative that the field is aware of school counselors’ perceptions (Dahir et al., 2009) and the variables impacting school counselors’ job activities (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Researchers have studied school counselors’ preferred job activities and compared their actual and preferred job activities to gain more information on job activity trends (Carter, 1993; Hutchinson et al., 1986; Mustaine et al., 1996; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Researchers found several discrepancies between school counselors’ actual and preferred job activities (Carter; Hutchinson et al.; Mustaine et al.; Scarborough; Scarborough & Culbreth), which can clarify reasons behind school counselors’ actual job activities. The following section will describe research on school counselors’ actual job activities, preferred job activities, and discrepancies between the two.

Recently Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) analyzed discrepancies between school counselors’ actual and preferred job activities. In their non-experimental study surveying 361 school counselors to determine their actual and preferred job activities relative to CSCP, particularly the 2003 ASCA National Model. Researchers randomly chose 300 school counselors from each of two southern states to participate in the study; participants from one state were randomly chosen from the state school counseling association and participants from the second state were randomly chosen from a list of state-employed school counselors. Scarborough and Culbreth sent out 600 surveys and had a 60% return rate fairly evenly distributed between school levels (32.4% elementary school counselors; 33.3% middle school counselors; 34.3% high school counselors).

Participants completed three instruments and demographic information including the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) instrument, based on the 2003 ASCA National Model and CSCP. The SCARS had four subscales based on CSCP recommended school counseling job activities: counseling, curriculum, consultation, coordination, and another subscale named “other” activities comprised of clerical, administrative and fair share school counseling job activities not aligned with CSCP.

When completing the SCARS, participants assessed items in each subscale and assigned a frequency rating to each item based on their *actual* frequency for performing the job activity currently (actual outcome measure) and their *preferred* frequency for performing the job activity, or their ideal (preferred outcome measure) (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Specifically, the actual job activities frequency scale included 1 = I never do this, to 5 = I routinely do this; next, the preferred job activities frequency scale included 1 = I would prefer to never do this, to 5 = I would prefer to routinely do this. Additional instruments in Scarborough and Culbreth’s (2008) study measured participants’ self-efficacy and school members’ attitudes towards and influence over the school counselor. All three instruments were reported as reliable and valid (Scarborough & Culbreth).

To analyze data, Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) conducted paired sample *t* tests, correlations, hierarchical multiple regressions, one-way ANOVAs, and reported descriptive statistics, including means and percentages. Specifically, Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) examined discrepancies in school counselors’ actual and preferred job activities according to (a) individual intervention subscales (counseling, curriculum, consultation, and coordination), (b) the sum of the intervention subscales (total intervention score), (c) the “other” subscale, including clerical, administrative and fair share activities, and (d) multiple variables.

Overall, there were two key findings in Scarborough and Culbreth's (2008) study (a) school counselors desired to spend more time in counseling, consultation, curriculum, and coordination job activities than "other" job activities including clerical, administrative, and fair share job activities, and (b) school counselors' actual job activities were significantly different than they preferred. For example, after conducting paired sample *t* tests comparing actual to preferred intervention subscales, school counselors' preferred scores were statistically significantly higher than their actual scores for each of the four intervention subscales and the total intervention scale (counseling: $t = -7.52$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.02$; consultation: $t = -7.52$, $p < .01$, $d = .32$; curriculum: $t = -15.13$, $p < .001$, $d = .68$; coordination: $t = -17.77$, $p < .001$, $d = .68$; and total: $t = -21.22$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.02$); thus school counselors preferred to perform school counseling job activities aligned with CSCP, as was measured by the SCARS (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Further, they found a large effect size for the total intervention score, counseling subscale and the coordination subscale, a medium effect size for the curriculum subscale; and a small effect size for the consultation subscale. Additionally, participants' means for the preferred intervention subscales were higher than for the actual intervention subscales (counseling actual $M = 3.06$, counseling preferred $M = 3.78$; curriculum actual $M = 2.68$, curriculum preferred $M = 3.36$; consultation actual $M = 3.39$, consultation preferred $M = 3.61$; coordination actual $M = 2.88$, coordination preferred $M = 3.56$), thus, school counselors' preferences were more closely aligned with CSCP related job activities than their actual job activities (Scarborough & Culbreth).

Researchers conducted paired sample *t* tests for the "other" subscales and determined a statistically significant finding that participants preferred not to spend their time in "other" job activities such as clerical ($t = 13.96$, $p < .001$, $d = .48$), administrative ($t = 13.20$, $p < .001$, $d =$

.71;) and fair share ($t = 18.87, p < .001, d = .87$). Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) found a large effect size for fair share subscale and medium effect size for clerical and administrative subscales. Thus, there is a larger discrepancy between school counselors' preferred and actual fair share means than between preferred and actual clerical and administrative means. Looking at the means, participants preferred to perform these "other" job activities less than their actual job activities (clerical actual $M = 3.41$, clerical preferred $M = 2.71$; administrative actual $M = 1.77$, administrative preferred $M = 1.32$; fair share actual $M = 3.28$, fair share preferred $M = 2.57$). It can be inferred that although school counselors are actually implementing job activities not aligned with CSCP, they prefer not to perform these particular activities (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

Other researchers have examined school counselors' actual and preferred school counseling job activities (Carter, 1993; Hutchinson et al., 1986; Mustaine et al., 1996). In an older study, Mustaine et al. (1996) surveyed 100 school counselors in the Ontario school system to examine the amount of actual and preferred time they spent in eight job activities and a ninth "other" category. Researchers had a 72% return rate and found significant discrepancies between participants' actual and preferred job activities in the following areas: group guidance (preferred activities [$M = 4.08$] were higher than actual activities [$M = 1.56$]), educational and occupational planning (preferred activities [$M = 9.73$] were higher than actual activities [$M = 8.90$]), placement and follow-up (preferred activities [$M = 2.67$] were higher than actual activities [$M = 1.77$]), and "other" activities (e.g., clerical, administrative, and ancillary duties including school duties, discipline, scheduling, and substitute teaching) (actual activities [$M = 5.30$] were higher than preferred [$M = 1.73$]) (Mustaine et al.). Thus, school counselors reported actually spending significantly less time performing group guidance, educational and

occupational planning, and placement and follow up activities then they would prefer. Additionally, school counselors reported spending significantly more time providing “other,” non-school counseling job activities than preferred (Mustaine et al). However, participants did not report a significant discrepancy between actual and preferred job activities in planning and development, appraisal, individual and group counseling, consultation, and referrals (Mustaine et al.).

The Mustaine et al. (1996) study aligned with aspects of Scarborough and Culbreth’s (2008) findings, as the former researchers determined significant discrepancies between participants’ actual and preferred job activities in four of the nine studied school counseling job activities areas. However, findings from Mustaine et al. (1996) must be interpreted conservatively, as researchers published their study over 15 years ago in a different country and with a much smaller sample size than Scarborough and Culbreth (2008).

Similarly, Foster et al. (2005) examined school counselors’ actual job activities, but compared them to school counselors’ assigned level of importance per job activity. Specifically, researchers used archival data collected from the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) to assess the importance and frequency school counselors assigned to school counseling job activities (Foster et al., 2005). Specifically, NBCC electronically surveyed a national population of 2,400 Nationally Certified School Counselors (NCSC) and received a 17% return rate from the original population to determine participants’ feedback on 193 job activities. Foster et al. (2005) gained permission to use the NBCC data in their own research to examine (1) the importance and frequency school counselors assign to job activities in relation to the National Standards (e.g., student academic, career, and personal/social development) and (2) school counselors’ responses compared to the opinions of school counseling experts.

School counseling experts analyzed the 193 school counseling job activities and methodically agreed on 40 job activities they perceived as highly promoting the National Standards: student academic, career, and personal/social development; these 40 items were categorized as meeting one or more of the three National Standards (Foster et al., 2005). Specifically, of the 14 academic job activities experts deemed important, school counselors identified five as very important or critically important and reported performing those five job activities frequently or routinely. For career job activities, school counselors identified 3 of the 20 job activities chosen by experts as very important or critically important and reported performing those three job activities frequently or routinely. Lastly, of the 25 personal/social job activities determined by experts, school counselors identified 11 as very important or critically important and reported performing five of the 25 job activities frequently or routinely (Foster et al.).

Foster et al. (2005) found variation between school counselors' reported actual job activities and the job activities' degree of importance. Specifically, although school counselors' agreed on the frequency and importance level of academic and career related job activities, researchers found a discrepancy between the frequency and importance level of personal/social job activities. Thus, different types of job activities have varied discrepancies between actual performance and importance (Foster et al., 2005).

At the same time, the Foster et al. (2005) study should be reviewed with caution and may not be generalizable to all school counselors. Specifically, participants in the described study were all NCSC, the study had a small return rate (17%), and the analyzed job activities in the published study were fewer than the original 193 job activities in the original NBCC survey. However, in combination with the research described in the current literature review, the Foster

et al. (2005) study further confirms the history of research findings describing the discrepancies between actual job performance and preferences.

For years, researchers have demonstrated the discrepancies between school counselors' actual and preferred job activities, including several clear-cut consistencies across the literature. Multiple researchers found that school counselors are spending more time than desired in "other" or inappropriate school counseling job activities unaligned with CSCP, including clerical, administrative, and fair share job activities (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Carter, 1993; Hutchinson et al., 1986; Mustaine et al., 1996; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). According to Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) there was a significant discrepancy between school counselors' actual and preferred counseling, consultation, curriculum, and coordination job activities, as participants reported spending less time in all four interventions than preferred. Carter (1993) and Hutchinson et al. (1986) found similar results in comparing actual and preferred job activities, determining that school counselors preferred to spend more time in counseling related activities directly serving students than their reported actual job activities. Thus, school counselors' actual and preferred job activities have been researched for years, and discrepancies between the two have been proven repeatedly.

Additionally, when examining school counselors' job activities, researchers have examined multiple variables (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Perkins, Oescher, & Ballard, 2010; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010; Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2001; Studer et al., 2011). However two variables will be discussed in depth in the current literature review: school level (e.g., elementary, middle, and high school) and graduation from a CACREP

accredited preparation program. The subsequent two sections will address the two named variables: school level and CACREP status.

School Level

There exists a plethora of research findings that school counselors' activities differ by school level: elementary, middle, and high school levels (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Dahir et al., 2009; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2001; Studer et al., 2011). As a result of the variety of research on the school level variable, the topic will be discussed in depth. School counselors at different school levels perform varied academic, career, and personal/social activities. For example, Hatch and Chen-Hayes (2008) conducted a national survey using a sample of 3,000 practicing school counselors from the ASCA membership. Researchers had a 43% return rate comprised of 34% elementary school counselors, 21% middle school counselors, 30% high school counselors, 8% school counselors at multiple settings, and 5% school counselor supervisors. Hatch and Chen-Hayes conducted the study prior to the ASCA National Model debut release to measure school counselors' beliefs about school counseling duties and priorities; researchers asked school counselors to assign a level of importance for several school counseling job activities. They reported using Promax rotation and Kaiser normalization to group the job activities into four factors: (a) use of data for program planning, (b) use of data for accountability, (c) administrator support, and (d) mission, goals, and competencies. Hatch and Chen-Hayes found that school counselors across school levels differed significantly in the level of importance they assigned to job activities across the four factors.

Scarborough (2005) demonstrated that school counselors at different levels implemented varied interventions; the survey study included 600 school counselors in two southeastern states,

randomly selecting 300 participants from each state. Participants from one state came from the list of school counselors employed by the state; participants from the second state were randomly selected from the state school counseling association. Scarborough had a 60% return rate with a similar number of participants in each school level (elementary [$n = 117$], middle [$n = 120$], and high: [$n = 120$]). She found significant differences in elementary, middle, and high school levels across curriculum, coordination, and counseling job activities. Specifically, elementary school counselors spent more time in curriculum, coordination, counseling, consultation, and fair share activities than middle or high school counselors. Middle school counselors spent more time in curriculum, coordination, counseling, consultation, and fair share job activities than high school counselors (Scarborough).

Next, Perera-Diltz and Mason (2008) conducted a national study of school counselors ($n = 1704$) with a similar percentages of elementary (26.76%), middle (22.54%) and high (35.33%) school counselors as well as a small sample (15.38%) of school counselors with more than one school level. They compared school counselors receiving ASCA National Model training to those without the training. Perera-Diltz and Mason found that although school counselors with ASCA National Model training reportedly implemented significantly more aspects of the model, those aspects varied according to school level. For example, (a) elementary school counselors trained in the ASCA National Model reportedly performed significantly more system support activities than non-ASCA National Model trained participants, (b) middle school counselors with ASCA National Model training reportedly performed significantly more guidance curriculum duties than non-ASCA National Model trained participants, and (c) high school counselors trained in the ASCA National Model also reportedly performed significantly more non-endorsed duties than non-ASCA trained. Participants receiving ASCA National Model training utilized

the training differently based on their school level, again, reinforcing the trend that school counselor activities vary by school level.

Baggerly and Osborn (2006) demonstrated varied school counselors' activities by school level, but these findings had several contradictions with other authors' findings (Dahir et al., 2009; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2001). Specifically, Baggerly and Osborn (2006) conducted a survey of Florida school counselors' career satisfaction including their duties, self-efficacy, and supervision. They reported school counselors' mean rating of appropriate and inappropriate duties by level. To further analyze the differences in school activities by level, Baggerly and Osborn found that the average middle school counselor reported spending slightly more time in inappropriate ($M = 2.17$) than appropriate ($M = 2.10$) duties [on a four point Likert scale (1 = least time; 4 = most time)]. However, in the literature, there is much evidence supporting middle school counselors implementing appropriate activities, even more so than school counselors at other levels. For example, Rayle and Adams (2008) determined that middle school counselors spent more time than elementary or high school counselors providing direct services to stakeholders including students, teachers, administrators, and parents; Dahir et al., (2009) found that middle school counselors placed significantly higher importance on personal/social and academic development than elementary or high school counselors. Scarborough (2005) found that middle school counselors spent a significant more time in curriculum, coordination, counseling, consultation, and fair share activities than high school counselors. Although Baggerly and Osborn found that middle school counselors had slightly greater time spent in inappropriate than appropriate activities, other researchers demonstrated myriad appropriate activities performed by middle school counselors, especially in comparison to school counselors at other school levels (Dahir et

al.; Rayle & Adams; Scarborough). At the same time, all authors (Baggerly & Osborn; Dahir et al.; Rayle & Adams; Scarborough) found that school counselors' job activities differed by school level.

An additional unusual finding in Baggerly and Osborn's (2006) study was that high school counselors reportedly spent the most time in appropriate duties ($M = 2.17$) followed by middle school counselors ($M = 2.10$), and elementary school counselors ($M = 2.01$). Additionally, Baggerly and Osborn found that elementary school counselors had the lowest rate of inappropriate duties ($M = 1.71$) followed by high school counselors ($M = 1.98$) and middle school counselors ($M = 2.17$). This finding contradicts other findings that high school counselors spend the most time on inappropriate duties, compared to middle and elementary school counselors (Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2001). High school counselors tended to spend more time in administrative, planning (Rayle & Adams; Sink & Yilik-Downer), and clerical activities (Scarborough) and less time directly serving students, when compared to middle and elementary school counselors. In fact, Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) found that when comparing school counselors' actual and preferred activities, although high school counselors preferred performing counseling, consulting, collaboration, and curriculum related activities, in comparison to elementary and middle school counselors, they had the greatest discrepancy between tasks they actually performed and tasks they preferred to perform. Thus, there are mixed findings in the literature regarding high school counselors' degree of appropriate duties when compared to elementary and middle school counselors. However, consistently school counselors' activities were found to vary by school level.

Next, Baggerly and Osborn (2006) found that middle school counselors had the largest standard deviation for inappropriate tasks ($SD = .59$) compared to elementary school counselors ($SD = .54$) and high school counselors ($SD = .45$), which is interpreted as the middle school counselors reported greater variation in their inappropriate tasks followed by elementary and high school counselors. Additionally, the standard deviations for appropriate duties for all three levels were lower (elementary [$SD = .36$], middle [$SD = .35$], high [$SD = .35$]), than the standard deviations for inappropriate duties, suggesting that participants had less variability in appropriate than inappropriate duties.

Although Baggerly and Osborn's (2006) results were unique, these findings need to be reviewed cautiously and may not be generalizable to other populations as the study (a) only included school counselors in Florida, (b) had a 53% return rate, and (c) participants were unevenly distributed between school levels, which could have led to skewed data (participants: 63% elementary school counselors; 20% middle school counselors; 16% high school counselors). Additionally the survey was collected in 2002 and may not reflect current school counselors' activities. In summary, many studies have documented the difference in school counselors' activities based on school level (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Dahir et al., 2009; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2001; Studer et al., 2011). As a result of the different job activities conducted by school level, when examining school counselor job activities in future studies, researchers should disaggregate school counselors' responses by school level prior to examining the data.

CACREP Accreditation Status

Researchers have found mixed results when examining the status of school counselors' CACREP accredited academic preparation program in regards to school counseling job activities (Holcomb-McCoy, Bryan, & Rahill, 2002; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Rayle and Adams (2008) found that school counselors from CACREP accredited academic preparation programs conducted significantly less small group counseling ($M = .72, SD = .45$) than non-CACREP graduates ($M = .83, SD = .38$). These findings were unusual, as both the 2001 and 2009 CACREP standards included group counseling as a core area to be covered in CACREP accredited academic preparation programs (CACREP, 2009; Rayle & Adams, 2008).

Next, Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) researched discrepancies between school counselors' actual and preferred counseling, consulting, collaborating, and curriculum job activities. Researchers found that participants from CACREP accredited academic preparation programs had a significantly higher discrepancy between actual and preferred job activities in the curriculum subscale (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Specifically, participants from CACREP programs, in comparison to non-CACREP program graduates, reported a greater desire to implement curriculum job activities in comparison to the curriculum job activities actually performed (Scarborough & Culbreth).

Holcomb-McCoy et al. (2002) conducted a principle components factor analysis on items that comprise the CACREP standards and found four underlying factors of CACREP school counseling standards: (a) program development, implementation, evaluation, (b) counseling and guidance knowledge and skills, (c) contextual dimensions, and (d) knowledge and skills for specialized assistance. Participants found all factors but program development, implementation,

evaluation to be highly to very important in their actual school counseling work. Participants ranked program development, implementation, evaluation significantly lower than the other three factors. Thus, Holcomb-McCoy et al. (2002) found that school counselors reported their actual job activities to be closely aligned with three of the four factors of a CACREP program.

Not all studies have found differences based on CACREP accreditation status (Kolodinsky et al., 2009). For example, Kolodinsky et al. (2009) surveyed Arizona school counselors regarding job activities and job satisfaction; when analyzing qualitative comments from all participants, researchers found no difference in responses from CACREP and non-CACREP graduates. Overall, when examining school counselors' job activity differences based on CACREP accreditation status, researchers have found inconsistent findings (Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2002; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

Nearly half the school counseling academic preparation graduate programs in the United States are CACREP accredited (CACREP, 2012b; Schweiger et al., 2012). As a result, there is crucial need to determine consistent findings on the impact of a CACREP accredited academic preparation program versus a non-CACREP accredited academic preparation program. Future research is needed to further examine school counselors' job activities relative to the CACREP accreditation status of school counselors' academic preparation programs.

Researchers have studied school counselors' perceived practices and beliefs (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Carter, 1993; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Foster et al., 2005; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Hutchinson et al., 1986; Mustaine et al., 1996; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010) including school counselors' actual job activities, preferred job activities, and discrepancies between the two (Carter; Hutchinson et al.; Mustaine et al.; Scarborough;

Scarborough & Culbreth). Researchers also have examined myriad variables related to school counselors' activities (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Burnham & Jackson; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack; Hatch & Chen-Hayes; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Perera-Diltz & Mason; Perkins et al., 2010; Rayle & Adams; Scarborough; Scarborough & Culbreth; Shillingford & Lambie; Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2001; Studer et al., 2011), including school level (e.g., elementary, middle, and high school) and graduation from a CACREP accredited academic preparation program. Thus, discrepancies between school counselors' actual and preferred activities have been clearly articulated in the literature. At the same time, school counselors possess inconsistent job roles and activities (Burnham & Jackson; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack; Shillingford & Lambie; Trolley, 2011). According to Rayle and Adams (2008), "even as our profession is transforming and redefining the roles of school counselors, more must be done" (p. 32). Thus, there is a need to continue examining school counselors' roles and activities, but differently.

One novel strategy to clarify school counselors' job activities includes examining the effectiveness of school counselor academic preparation; researchers recommended collecting data on school counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation effectively preparing them for job activities (Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005; Pérusse et al., 2001; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Trolley, 2011). Kolodinsky et al. (2009) stated "it is also critical that school counselors are well prepared for their versatile roles" (p. 199). As a result, the second half of this literature review will examine school counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation to perform school counseling job activities and conclude by summarizing the need to further examine school counselors' academic preparation to conduct job activities.

Historical Trends in School Counselor Academic Preparation

Previously, the history of the school counseling field was described to set a context for school counselors' roles and job activities; influential organizations including ACA and ASCA were described in relation to their relevance in contributing to the school counseling field, as well as the discrepancies between the expectations of professional organizations and school counselors' actual job activities. Similar to school counseling job activities evolving over time, so has school counselor academic preparation. For example, Lockhart and Keys (1998) said "just as school counselors must now alter how they function in the light of the changing needs of students and families, so too must counselor education programs" (p. 5). Understanding school counselor academic preparation begins by examining relevant background information, historical trends, and influential organizations. School counselor academic preparation background information and historical trends will be discussed in the next section of Chapter Two, followed by a description of key organizations in school counselor preparation.

School counselor academic preparation programs are important for several reasons. Primarily, school counselor academic preparation programs are foundational for socializing school counseling students into the profession and shaping their professional school counseling identity (Brott & Myers, 1999). Additionally, school counselor academic preparation is required by states and recommended by accrediting bodies and professional organizations (ACA, 2012b; ASCA, n.d.a; CACREP, 2009). Specifically, the ACA Code of Ethics section C.2.c, *Qualified for Employment* states "counselors accept employment only for positions for which they are qualified by education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience" (2005, p. 9). Thus, school counselors need

appropriate education and training to accept a position and perform school counseling job activities.

School counselor academic preparation, often used interchangeably with the broader term counselor education, has been multifaceted and complex throughout the field's history (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). For example, "counselor educators are frequently confronted with the daunting task of providing school counselor graduate students with a solid theoretical foundation, while at the same time, keeping abreast of practical skills essential to securing and maintaining such a position" (Trolley, 2011, p. 15). Thus, school counselor academic preparation includes balancing multiple responsibilities and teaching both theoretical and practical skills, amidst maintaining relevancy on current and evolving school counseling trends.

Historically, counselor education has roots in the early 20th century. According to Herr and Erford (2011), one of the earliest school counseling-related trainings was held in Boston in the early 1900s as part of the vocational guidance movement, in an effort to train vocational counselors. In the 1930s, training courses were developed in some universities (Herr & Erford, 2011). However, overall in the first half of the century school counselor preparation was inconsistent and limited.

The 1950s were an instrumental time in school counselor academic preparation. For example, this decade included the creation of ACA, ASCA, a professional school counseling journal, and professional and ethical standards for school counseling practice and training (Herr & Erford, 2011; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). The 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA) funded school counselor academic preparation and led to a significant increase in preparation programs and more standardized curriculum, certifications, and even master's degrees (Gysbers & Henderson; Herr & Erford); during this time the organization now known as

ACA had an increased focus on standardizing counselor preparation (Bobby & Urofsky, 2012), as did other professional organizations. Specifically, the organization now known as the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), a division of ACA, collaborated with ASCA to improve school counselor preparation (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). In 1957, ACES developed the American Board for Professional Standards in Vocation Guidance. However, counselor preparation during this time had a different focus than today's academic preparation programs; in the 1950s counselor preparation tended to consist of primarily individual counseling, as well as administrative tasks and evaluation (Lambie & Williamson).

The 1960s and 1970s included changes to counselor education, such as school counselor academic preparation having an increased focus on multicultural issues (Herr & Erford, 2011). In 1963, ACES published standards for preparing school counselors, which was eventually the basis for CACREP and the CACREP standards (Bobby & Urofsky, 2012). In 1973, ACES created the *ACES Standards for the Preparation of Counselors and Other Personnel Services Specialists*, which defined the basic preparation requirements for counselors (Bobby & Urofsky). Over the next several years, ACES held national trainings and attempted to provide national accreditation for counselor preparation programs; however, there were several other organizations involved in the accreditation process, each with different priorities. As a result, accreditation progress was not made as quickly as desired (Bobby & Urofsky). By 1980, the organization now known as ACA decided to centralize counselor preparation accreditation to one organization and collaborated with ACES to create CACREP in 1981 (Bobby & Urofsky; CACREP, 2012a).

Counselor education continued to evolve in the 1990s. For example, the Education Trust focused on school counselor preparation in the 1990s and partnered with the DeWitt Wallace-

Reader's Digest Fund to conduct a 14-month national study on school counselor preparation (2009a). After interviews and focus groups with school counselors and counselor educators, the Education Trust found the following: (a) universities were not preparing school counselors for their actual work with students, (b) school counselors were trained with other counselors rather than educators (teachers, administrators, etc.), (c) counseling courses were usually the same across all specialties with school counseling courses added on, and (d) although school counselors were learning core counseling skills, they lacked school counseling specific skills such as leadership, advocacy, and collaboration (Education Trust). As a result of their findings, the Education Trust developed the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI), a competitive grant process for school counseling preparation programs to train school counselors with an increased emphasis on leadership, advocacy for low-income and minority students, and data-driven school counseling (Education Trust). Similarly, in a national study, Pérusse et al. (2001) found that counseling graduate students across specialties took a core set of counseling courses together, then took separate classes for their specialties (e.g., school counseling, clinical mental health counseling, etc.).

In recent years, school counselor preparation programs train school counseling students to meet their future students' academic, career, and personal/social development through facilitating CSCP (ASCA, 2008; CACREP, 2009), which align with ethical requirement in the *ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (ASCA, 2010). The ASCA website describes the school counseling requirements mandated by most schools nationally (ASCA, n.d. a); these requirements mirror many CACREP requirements (CACREP). According to both ASCA and CACREP, school counseling academic preparation programs are typically master's level and include courses in (a) counseling (individual, group, career, and multicultural), (b) counseling

theories and techniques, (c) testing, appraisal and research methods, (d) human growth and development, (e) orientation, and (f) practicum and internship. Currently, CACREP accredited school counseling programs are at least 48 credit hours (CACREP).

ACA (2012b) outlines current trends in school counseling preparation requirements for state certification and licensure. According to ACA's Guide to State Laws and Regulations on Professional School Counseling (2012b), for credentialing purposes all states require school counselors obtain school counseling graduate education. However, only 44 states and the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands require a master's degree in school counseling or a related profession. Thus, master's degrees in school counseling are not consistently required in all U.S. states and territories; related master's degrees, or school counseling coursework may be adequate to certify or license school counselors in some states (ACA). Additionally, only 26 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands require school counselors complete a supervised practicum and/or internship. Thus, U.S. states and territories require varied academic preparation requirements for state licensure and certification (ACA).

In addition to discrepancies between state preparation requirements, there exists variation in the CACREP accreditation of school counselor academic preparation programs. Schweiger et al., (2012) as well as CACREP (2012b) states there are between 214 and 222 CACREP accredited school counselor academic preparation program nationally. ASCA lists 466 school counseling preparation programs nationally, including online programs (ASCA n.d. b); thus, CACREP accredits nearly half of all school counselor academic preparation programs nationally, meaning only half of school counselor academic preparation programs are documented as following CACREP standards.

In addition to the discrepancies listed above, inconsistencies in other areas of academic preparation have existed over the years. For example, in 1987 the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD) task force examined school counselor preparation programs and found variation across the 300 programs, including only 25% of the researched programs were CACREP accredited (Baker & Gerler, 2001). Additionally, in a national study of counselor education preparation requirements for entry-level school counselors, researchers found variation in the programs' required (a) fieldwork experience, (b) credit hours for graduation, (c) screening process, (d) faculty members' professional school experiences, and (e) types of courses offered (Pérusse et al., 2001). In a qualitative study of 59 school counselor preparation internship syllabi, numerous variations in school counseling internship requirements were found (Akos & Scarborough, 2004). Overall, researchers have demonstrated inconsistencies in academic preparation including varied state requirements, CACREP-accreditation, and discrepancies in school counselor academic preparation program practices. Although school counselor academic preparation has progressed in the last century to become increasingly standardized, discrepancies in the field remain. These discrepancies impact school counselors' academic preparation.

Accreditation Organizations

Just as counselor academic preparation has been impacted by its history, counselor academic preparation has been shaped by influential professional accreditation organizations. Professional accreditation organizations have varied perceptions of school counselor academic preparation. Two professional accreditation organizations, CACREP and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), will be discussed and compared.

CACREP is an accrediting body that solely accredits graduate-level professional counseling academic preparation programs across several counseling specialties, such as school counseling (Bobby & Urofsky, 2012). According to CACREP (CACREP, 2012c), graduates from CACREP accredited programs are trained to meet students' academic, career, and personal/social development through activities like facilitating CSCP; this vision is aligned with other counseling organizations, such as ACA and ASCA. Additionally, the CACREP accreditation of academic preparation programs has burgeoned over the last 10 years (Urofsky, Bobby, & Ritchie, 2013).

NCATE is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an accrediting body that accredits educational training programs for educators working with kindergarten through twelfth grade students, including teachers, school administrators, and specialists such as school counselors (NCATE, 2012). Although NCATE accredits school counselor preparation programs, NCATE primarily focuses on accrediting educational programs and perceives school counseling as a branch of education. This perspective is different from CACREP, which accredits only counseling programs and perceives school counseling as a counseling discipline. Thus, although NCATE and CACREP both accredit school counselor academic preparation programs, these two organizations view the school counseling field from two different lenses.

Overall, school counselor academic preparation has been impacted by both its history and relevant professional organizations: CACREP and NCATE. The subsequent section of Chapter Two will further evaluate school counselor academic preparation programs. Specifically, school counselors' perceptions of their school counselor academic preparation will be discussed.

School Counselors' Perceptions of their School Counselor Academic Preparation

School counselors' professional identity and professional preparation typically begin in school counseling academic preparation programs (Brott & Myers, 1999). However, the transition from academic preparation to professional practice can be wrought with inconsistencies and challenges for many school counselors. Specifically, the needs, importance, implementation, and expectations of the school counseling job can differ from the academic preparation teachings (Allen et al., 2002; Bodenhorn, 2006; Brott & Myers, 1999; Chambers et al., 2010; Culbreth et al., 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Milsom, 2002; Mustaine et al., 1996; NOSCA, 2011, 2012b; Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Steen et al., 2008; Trolley, 2011). Since school counselors' job activities can be impacted by academic preparation (Mustaine et al.), in order to best understand and advocate for consistent school counseling job roles and activities, academic preparation also must be examined. The previous section of Chapter Two examined the history of and credentialing organizations relevant to school counselor academic preparation, and the subsequent section will describe school counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation. As Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) said, "besides knowing what counselor educators are teaching, it is equally important to know how school counselors perceive their graduate level course content in relation to their work as professional school counselors" (p. 110). Several other researchers have suggested the need to examine how school counseling counselor academic preparation programs prepare school counselors for their work-related practices (Kolodinsky et al; Pérusse et al.; Sisson & Bullis; Trolley). As a result, the subsequent section will discuss school counselors' perceptions regarding their academic preparation.

In a national survey, Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) sent questionnaires to 1,000 randomly chosen ASCA members, to determine the level of importance school counselors assigned to specific graduate training course content; responses were compared by level (elementary and secondary). The questionnaire included 24 items, each reflecting different counselor education course content; items were based on CACREP standards and counselor academic preparation literature. Course content in Pérusse and Goodnough's study included: (a) individual counseling (e.g., crisis intervention); (b) small group counseling; (c) consultation with parents and teachers; (d) understanding child growth and development; (e) legal/ethical issues in counseling; (f) classroom guidance curriculum; (g) coordination between teachers, parents, community; (h) multicultural counseling; (i) theories in counseling; (j) drug and alcohol abuse; (k) program evaluation and development; (l) case management of student's progress; (m) parent education; (n) assessment techniques; (o) play therapy; (p) career development; (q) school law; (r) special education; (s) public relations; (t) curriculum and instruction (including classroom management); (u) psychopathology, DSM-IV, diagnosis; (v) computer and related technology; (w) couple and family counseling; and (x) writing, research, and grant proposals. Participants used a five-point Likert scale to rank the level of importance of each named course content area regarding their school counseling; the scale ranged from 1 = not important to 5 = very important (Pérusse & Goodnough). There exists a possibility for inaccurate participant responses based on the academic preparation content each participant completed in their graduate program. For example, according to Pérusse et al. (2001), not every academic preparation program offers the same courses. Thus, school counselors' responses to specific course content is based on their completed course content and needs to be interpreted with caution. Lastly, participants were given an open-ended question to provide additional comments and suggestions regarding their

counseling preparation. School counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation, such as findings from the Pérusse and Goodnough study, will be discussed in the following sections: (a) academic preparation and job activities, (b) school level, (c) CACREP accreditation, and (d) suggested changes to academic preparation.

Academic Preparation and Job Activities

Several studies asked school counselors to rank their perceived level of preparedness to perform current job activities. In one study, NOSCA (2011) self-published findings from a national survey of middle and high school counselors, including 5,308 school counselors (1,327 middle and 3,981 high school counselors). NOSCA aimed to gather information on school counselors' experiences and perceptions, including opinions of their academic preparation.

According to the NOSCA (2011) report, school counselors stated that their academic training prepared them for their school counselor job very well (16%), somewhat (56%) and not at all well (28%). Although 72% of participants believed their academic preparation program prepared them very well or somewhat, almost a third of participants stated that their academic preparation did not at all prepare them well for their school counseling job (NOSCA, 2011).

Kolodinsky et al. (2009) asked a similar question and found that 55% of participants described their academic preparation program as training them well or very well for their school counseling roles and job activities, and slightly less than 10% of participants in the study described their academic preparation program training as poor or not well. Next, Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) determined that most school counselors in their study found the majority of counselor education course content areas to be moderate to very important to their school counseling job. Thus, according to these three studies, the majority of school counselors reported their academic preparation program prepared them moderately to strongly; however, there were still

discrepancies between researchers' findings. Specifically, participants in NOSCA's (2011) study had nearly three times the number of participants report poor academic preparation, compared to Kolodinsky et al. (2009).

The next year, NOSCA (2012a) released the results of another national survey with similar findings, including "counselors are ready to lead in the college- and career-ready mission, but their graduate schools fail to train them for this mission..." (NOSCA, 2012a, p. 6). At the same time, NOSCA's reports should be interpreted cautiously. Specifically, NOSCA (2011, 2012a) primarily focuses on college and career readiness and may be evaluating school counselor academic preparation based on college and career readiness goals, rather than academic, career, and personal/social dimensions, as is endorsed by ACA, ASCA, and CACREP (ACA, ASCA, & NEA, 2008; ASCA, n.d. b; CACREP, 2009). Additionally, NOSCA only surveyed middle and high school counselors, excluding a third of school counseling professionals (elementary school counselors); overall, more research in this area is warranted.

In addition to researching general themes in school counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation to perform job activities, research has been conducted on the topic of specific program content such as ethics, multicultural competencies, and serving students with disabilities (Allen et al., 2002; Bodenhorn, 2006; Chambers et al., 2010; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Milsom, 2002; Steen et al., 2008). For example, in one study school counselors typically reported being less than adequately prepared for crisis situations and suggested school counselor preparation better prepare them for crises such as suicide, grief, death, and abuse (Allen et al.). In another study, school counselors reported feeling somewhat prepared to provide services to students with disabilities, including the least prepared to assist these students with the postsecondary transitions and the most prepared to provide individual and group counseling

(Milsom). A different researcher found no significant difference between the self-reported multicultural competence of elementary school counselors who had taken a multicultural course and those who had not (Holcomb-McCoy). In another study, researchers indicated that school counselors reported slightly more negative group counseling preparation experiences (23.41%) than adequate group preparation experiences (21.38%) (Steen et al.). According to Chambers et al. (2010), school counselors were somewhat prepared for responding to school violence. Lastly, according to Bodenhorn (2006), school counselors reportedly received an ethics course during their academic preparation and reported encountering challenging and frequent ethical dilemmas, such as student confidentiality concerns (Bodenhorn). Overall, school counselors reported a need for greater training in specific content areas including crises, students with disabilities, multicultural competencies, group counseling, school violence, and ethics.

School level. When studying school counselor academic preparation, school level is a variable frequently discussed. Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) determined participants' means and standard deviations for each course content area, broken down by school level. Although they had a strong response rate (63.6%), results included many more secondary ($n = 352$) participants than elementary ($n = 218$), which may have skewed the results. Additionally, research has shown differences between middle and high school counselors' work activities (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Dahir et al., 2009; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2001; Studer et al., 2011), and perhaps researchers could have collected more meaningful data if respondents were broken down into elementary, middle, and high school levels instead of only by elementary and secondary levels. Next, participants were all ASCA

members and findings can only be generalized to ASCA members, rather than all school counselors in the field.

First, Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) found similarities in elementary and secondary responses. Specifically, they found that although a slightly different order, both elementary and secondary school counselors prioritized the same five course content items as the most important: individual counseling (prioritized first by both elementary and secondary participants); small group counseling; consultation with parents and teachers; understanding child growth and development; and legal/ethical issues in counseling (Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005). Additionally, both secondary and elementary school counselors assigned the least importance to four of the five same course content, including psychopathology, DSM-IV, diagnosis; couple and family counseling; curriculum and instruction (e.g., classroom management); and writing, research, and grant proposals. In terms of inconsistencies between the two groups, secondary participants listed play therapy as a lower prioritized importance, while elementary participants placed a lower prioritized importance on computer and related technology (Pérusse & Goodnough).

Although participants listed some content areas lower than others, it is important to note that participants still deemed most content areas important (Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005). For example, elementary school counselors listed 21 of 24 content areas as either important or very important ($M = \geq 3.5$) except computer and related technology ($M = 3.47$), couple and family counseling ($M = 3.37$), and writing research and grant proposals ($M = 3.14$). However, these three course content areas were still labeled as moderately important by elementary participants ($M = \geq 3.0$). Similarly, secondary school counselors listed most content areas as either important or very important ($M = \geq 3.5$) except psychopathology, DSM-IV, diagnosis ($M = 3.35$), couple

and family counseling ($M = 3.27$), classroom guidance curriculum ($M = 3.11$), play therapy ($M = 2.85$), and writing, research, and grant proposals ($M = 2.74$).

Both elementary and secondary school counselors ranked writing, research, and grant proposals as the lowest prioritized importance (Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005); Sisson and Bullis (1992) found similar results in their study. At the same time, Pérusse et al. (2001) stated that 96% of counselor education programs require research courses; additionally, CACREP (2009) recommends that research courses be taught in counselor education programs. Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) question the contradiction between counselor education programs offering research courses and school counselors assigning a low level of importance to writing, research, and grant proposals. However, the information learned in counselor education research courses may not be mutually exclusive to writing, research, and grant proposals. Perhaps skills learned in research courses also can be assigned to course content areas on the questionnaire such as program evaluation and development, case management of student's progress, assessment techniques, and computer and related technology. Overall, there may be a discrepancy between counselor education and practicing school counselors regarding the assigned importance given to research course content.

Next, Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) found significant differences between elementary and secondary school counselors, as elementary school counselors assigned a statistically significant greater importance to 13 of the 24 course content areas, compared to secondary school counselors. Secondary school counselors assigned a statistically significant greater importance to three of 24 course content areas, when compared to elementary school counselors, which raises the question: could the counseling course content taught in school counselor

academic preparation programs be more relevant to elementary than secondary school counselors?

In a much smaller study, Trolley (2011) surveyed practicing school counselors who were members of the New York State School Counselor Association regarding their actual job activities, preferred job activities, and academic preparation. However, Trolley had a small sample ($N = 26$), and as a result, findings are not generalizable and should be examined only as an exploratory study. Trolley found that school counselors at different school levels reported various levels of preparation, as well as actual and preferred job activities. Additional researchers also discussed the potential differences in academic preparation needs based on school counselors' school level (Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992). Thus, school level is a common variable used when studying school counselors' perceptions of academic preparation, as differences typically exist between level.

CACREP accreditation status. School counselors' academic preparation perceptions and CACREP accreditation is a topic somewhat studied by researchers (Culbreth et al., 2005). Specifically, Culbreth et al. (2005) discovered a significant positive relationship between students graduating from a CACREP accredited program and their belief that their academic preparation prepared them well for their school counseling position (Culbreth et al., 2005). As nearly 50% of school counselor education programs are CACREP accredited (CACREP, 2012b; Schweiger et al., 2012), future studies should continue to examine the relationship between school counselor academic preparation effectiveness and CACREP accreditation status.

Suggested changes to academic preparation. In studying school counselor academic preparation, researchers often solicited open-ended suggestions from participants regarding their school counselor academic preparation. Specifically, researchers examined Arizona school

counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation programs (Kolodinsky et al., 2009). In response to open-ended questions regarding suggestions for improved school counselor academic preparation, participants stated the following themes (a) a desire for more training on specific counseling topics, such as training on crisis interventions and parent meetings, (b) the need for increased academic preparation to better serve exceptional students, specifically the special education and corresponding paperwork process, (c) recommendations for academic preparation programs to better prepare school counselors to work with school administrators and relevant politics, and (d) high school counselors suggested more preparation on scheduling (Kolodinsky et al., 2009).

Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) examined participants' qualitative feedback and suggestions, finding several themes in school counselors' suggestions including (a) increased training in personal/social counseling, (b) more training in special education, and (c) secondary school counselors requested more training on school law and college counseling. From the same study, secondary school counselors also recommended that training be more realistic, including preparing school counselors for scheduling and other clerical jobs. Meanwhile, elementary school counselors suggested that counselor education training include more information on running CSCP (Pérusse & Goodnough).

In conclusion, researchers have studied school counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of their school counselor academic preparation program (Allen et al., 2002; Bodenhorn, 2006; Chambers et al., 2010; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Milsom, 2002; NOSCA 2011 & 2012a; Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Steen et al., 2008; Trolley, 2011). Although studies have examined school counselors' perceived preparation across several variables and content, such as school level and CACREP accreditation

status, few studies have examined school counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation in its entirety (Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Trolley, 2011). Thus, there exists a need to gather additional data on school counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation as it relates to school counselors' job activities.

Summary

Transitioning from academic preparation to the school counseling field has been challenging for many school counselors (Culbreth et al., 2005). Brott and Myers (1999) echoed this sentiment when they said “a major theme that is repeated throughout the literature related to the professionalization of school counseling relates to this dissonance or conflict between school counselor preparation and the realities of the work environment” (p. 339). Researchers have discussed discrepancies between concepts and expectations taught in academic preparation programs and the needs, degree of importance, actual implementation, and expectations of the school counseling job (Allen et al., 2002; Bodenhorn, 2006; Brott & Myers, 1999; Chambers et al., 2010; Culbreth et al., 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Milsom, 2002; Mustaine et al., 1996; NOSCA, 2011, 2012a; Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Steen et al., 2008; Trolley, 2011). Further, Mustaine et al. (1996) found that some school counselors attributed discrepancies between their actual and preferred job activities to a lack of training. Thus, transitioning from academic preparation to professional practice can be challenging for many school counselors, as (a) discrepancies can exist between preparation and practice and (b) school counselors are entering a school counseling field with varied expectations, job roles, and job activities.

Researchers recommended school counselors provide feedback on the effectiveness of their academic preparation toward their work related practices (Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Pérusse

& Goodnough, 2005; Pérusse et al., 2001; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Trolley, 2011). However, there currently exists very few studies examining school counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation (Pérusse & Goodnough; Sisson & Bullis; Trolley) and one small study ($N = 26$) comparing school counselors' activities and academic preparation (Trolley). Thus, there exists a need to research school counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of their academic preparation program on their job activities. Trolley (2011) successfully sums up the crux of this professional problem by stating:

While guidelines as to the role and preparation of school counselors exist, there are many variations and ambiguities as well. There is also very little research which exists that pertains to the adequacy of school counselor preparation, given the current demands of the job. (p. 21)

Overall, although the field has made progress clarifying school counselor academic preparation and school counselors' roles, inconsistencies continue to be commonplace in both school counselor academic preparation and school counselors' job activities. Additionally, there exists a dearth of research specifically studying school counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation to perform job activities and their job activities. As a result, this researcher addressed the gap in the literature by conducting a quantitative survey to glean school counselors' perceptions of their academic preparation for performing job activities and their actual job activities. The following chapter is a description of the methodology used for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Chapter Three describes the methods used in this dissertation. Information on the following aspects of this study will be included in this chapter: research questions, instruments (SCARS, modified SCARS, and demographics), participants, and procedures. The data analysis utilized in this study is also outlined.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study: (1) What discrepancies exist between school counselors' reported academic preparedness and actual job activities? (2) What discrepancies exist between school counselors' reported academic preparedness and actual job activities within school level (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed)? (3) How do school counselors' academic preparedness vary across school level (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed)? and (4) How do school counselors' reported academic preparedness and actual job activities within school level vary by graduation from a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited preparation program?

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale

The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS; 2005) (Appendix A) is an instrument created by Dr. Janna Scarborough to measure school counselors' process data including how they spend their time, in relation to their actual and preferred job activities. The SCARS is divided into two overarching categories (a) job activities suggested by the 2003 ASCA National Model and aligned with CSCP (i.e., counseling job activities, curriculum job activities, coordination job activities, and consultation job activities) and (b) "other" school counseling job activities that school counselors often perform but are not aligned with meeting

students' academic, career, and personal/social development as part of CSCP (i.e., administrative, clerical, and fair share job activities). From these two overarching categories, the SCARS is comprised of seven subscales: counseling, curriculum, coordination, consultation, administrative, clerical, and fair share job activities. Each subscale has several items describing a particular job activity relevant to that subscale. The SCARS has a total of 48 items within the seven subscales (Scarborough, 2005). The SCARS instrument has two columns in which participants answer questions using verbal frequency scales, which are similar to Likert scales that measure the strength of agreement; except verbal frequency scales measure the frequency of occurrence (Scarborough). Specifically, the actual job activities frequency scale includes 1 = I never do this; 2 = I rarely do this; 3 = I occasionally do this; 4 = I frequently do this; and 5 = I routinely do this. Next, the preferred job activities frequency scale includes 1 = I would prefer to never do this; 2 = I would prefer to rarely do this; 3 = I would prefer to occasionally do this; 4 = I would prefer to frequently do this; and 5 = I would prefer to routinely do this.

Psychometric Properties

Scarborough (2005) created the SCARS instrument based on school counseling literature such as textbooks, professional journal articles, and statements from professional organizations like ASCA. After initially creating the SCARS, Scarborough (2005) pre-tested the instrument using three distinct strategies: (1) a think-aloud interview where Scarborough observed an individual complete the SCARS while the individual verbally expressed their thoughts, (2) a retrospective interview where Scarborough observed an individual's nonverbal patterns while the individual completed the SCARS; then Scarborough interviewed this individual after they completed the SCARS, and (3) five experts in school counseling, clinical counseling, counselor education, and research completed the SCARS and communicated feedback to Scarborough.

After receiving feedback, Scarborough modified the SCARS' content and design. Scarborough's three pre-test steps determined face-validity: an instrument appearing to be valid by participants or examinees (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000).

Scarborough (2005) also conducted a study to establish the construct validity of the SCARS. That study was designed to determine if the instrument accurately measured the underlying constructs of the stated SCARS subscales. Scarborough randomly selected a stratified sample of 600 school counselors across elementary, middle, and high school level counselors, from two Southern states. Participants from the first state were randomly selected from the state list of employed school counselors; participants from the second state were randomly selected from state school counselor association membership list. Scarborough received approximately a 60% participant return rate, which was divided fairly evenly between elementary ($n = 117$), middle ($n = 120$), and high ($n = 124$) school participants.

To identify factors and assess construct validity, Scarborough (2005) used a principal components factor analysis with an orthogonal transformation using the varimax rotation to analyze the 40 items recommended by the 2003 ASCA National Model (counseling, consultation, coordination, and curriculum job activities). She performed a subsequent factor analysis on the 10 "other" job activities (not aligned with CSCP). Scarborough used a minimum of .4 factor loading, which she noted was commonly used in studies.

Next, Scarborough (2005) used a scree test, explained variance eigenvalues, and comprehensibility to retain factors. A factor solution based on school counseling literature and research was used to determine a factor solution; both Bartlett's test and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy were used to decide if data could be examined using factor analysis. Overall, subscales were determined by factor analysis results and examining items

loading on the actual and preferred scales. One-way ANOVAs (analysis of variance) and correlations were used to assess for construct validity, examining demographic variables and school counselor activities.

Scarborough (2005) found a four-factor solution for the 40 items in the counseling, consultation, coordination, and curriculum subscales in both the actual and preferred outcome measures. All factors in the actual outcome measure had eigenvalues greater than 1, and thus met Kaiser's criterion. Factors in the preferred outcome measure were equal to or greater than .40. The explained variance for the four factors for the actual outcome measure was 47.27% and 45.22% for the preferred outcome measure. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .91 for the actual outcome measure and .90 for the preferred outcome measure; the Bartlett's test was significant for both the actual and preferred outcome measures.

Additionally, 32 of the 40 items on the actual and preferred outcome measures loaded similarly and factors were named curriculum, coordination, counseling, and consultation (Scarborough, 2005). Specifically, (a) the curriculum factor included eight items and a Cronbach's alpha of .93 for the actual outcome measure and .90 for the preferred outcome measure; (b) 13 items were included in the coordination factor, including a Cronbach's alpha of .84 for the actual outcome measure and .85 for the preferred outcome measure; (c) the counseling factor included nine items with a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .85 for the actual outcome measure and .83 for the preferred outcome measure; (d) the consultation factor was comprised of seven items and a Cronbach's alpha of .75 for the actual outcome measure and .77 for the preferred outcome measure.

After analyses, the ten items on the "other" scale had a two-factor solution for the actual outcome measure and a three-factor solution for the preferred outcome measure (Scarborough,

2005). The amount of explained variance was 48% for the two factors on the actual outcome measure and 57.3% for the preferred outcome measure. Next, for both actual and preferred outcome measure, the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .73 and the Bartlett's test was significant. The factor analysis resulted in 10 items within these three factors: clerical (3 items), administrative (2 items), and fair share activities (5 items). The Cronbach's alpha rating ranged from .83 to .84 for the fair share activities subscale and .43 to .58 for clerical and administrative subscales.

The SCARS' validity was examined by ANOVAs and correlations to determine relationships between demographic variables and school counselor job activities. Expected significant results were found. Scarborough (2005) found statistically significant differences between school counselors in different grade levels and job activities.

Other researchers have reviewed and used the SCARS and attest to its validity and reliability (Berry, 2006; Buchanan, 2011; Clark, 2006; Forlizzi, 2008; Herbert, 2007; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010; Sink, 2009). For example, the SCARS has been used in studies published in professional journals (e.g., *Journal of Counseling & Development* and *Professional School Counseling*) (Scarborough & Culbreth; Shillingford & Lambie) and numerous dissertation studies (Berry; Buchanan; Clark; Forlizzi; Herbert). Additionally, Sink (2009) reviewed several school counseling accountability instruments and described the SCARS as both a reliable and valid instrument to measure how school counselors perceive and prefer to be spending their time.

Instruments Used in the Current Study

This dissertation used a version of the SCARS modified by this researcher, as well as a demographic questionnaire created by this researcher. In the following section, the modified

SCARS and the demographic questionnaire is described. The online survey process is outlined in the conclusion of this section.

Modified SCARS

Dr. Scarborough gave written permission through electronic mail (email) for the primary researcher to use and modify the SCARS instrument (J. Scarborough, personal communication, July 31, 2012) (Appendix B). Thus, the researcher modified the SCARS (Appendix C) by replacing the second column with a new column, with the following question: *How effectively did your graduate program prepare you to...* Participants responded using a Likert scale, with the following scale range: 1 = very ineffectively; 2 = ineffectively; 3 = somewhat effectively; 4 = effectively; and 5 = very effectively. Similar to the original instrument, the modified SCARS included 96 questions from two columns: 48 actual work activities questions and 48 academic preparation questions. The questions were categorized into the seven subscales: counseling activities, consultation activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities, fair share activities, clerical activities, and administrative activities. To validate the new column of the modified SCARS, this researcher examined both reliability and validity. Reliability was measured by Cronbach's alpha, a statistic of internal consistency (Santos, 1999); to measure validity, the researcher pre-tested this instrument with three school counselors.

Reliability. The researcher used Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient to measure the reliability of the academic preparation items within each of the seven subscales. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the ten items in the counseling activities subscale ranged from .89 to .90. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the seven items in the consultation activities subscale ranged from .89 to .90. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the eight items in the curriculum activities subscale ranged from .95 to .96. The Cronbach's alpha

reliability coefficients for the 13 items in the coordination activities subscale ranged from .93 to .94. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the five items in the fair share activities subscale ranged from .78 to .81. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the three items in the clerical activities subscale ranged from .81 to .89. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the two items in the administrative activities subscale was .83. Thus, the items in the modified SCARS have moderate to strong reliability.

Summary. Overall, the SCARS is a valid and reliable instrument for gathering school counselors' process data, specifically the frequency of their self-reported actual and preferred job activities (Berry, 2006; Buchanan, 2011; Clark, 2006; Forlizzi, 2008; Herbert, 2007; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink, 2009). This study utilized the modified SCARS in a similar method as did Scarborough (2005) with the original instrument, including similar participant demographics and similar data collection. For example, Scarborough used a large stratified sample of elementary, middle, and high school counselors ($N = 600$), and this study utilized a large population of school counselors at these three school levels ($N = 13,079$). Next, Scarborough sent the pre-notification, survey, and follow-up messages to participants, which similarly occurred in this described study. However, Scarborough sent all communication through the U.S. postal mail system, whereas this study utilized email to distribute notifications and surveys. Additionally, pre-notifications were not sent in this study, since Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009) stated pre-notifications are not necessarily needed in emailed surveys. Overall, this study used the modified SCARS in a similar fashion as the original SCARS (Scarborough), which was shown to be both a reliable and valid instrument.

Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire (Appendix D) was used to gather information about participants to provide a better understanding of the participants in relationship to their reported academic preparedness to perform job activities and actual job activities. Specific demographic information on the questionnaire included: (a) grade levels in the school counselors' school, (b) school counseling employment status, (c) academic preparation completion date, (d) highest level of education completed pertaining to school counseling, and (e) whether the counselor graduated from a CACREP accredited preparation program.

Online Survey

The researcher created an online survey using Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2013). The online survey was comprised of demographic questions and the modified SCARS. The first section of the survey included one page of demographic questions, because Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009) recommended surveys begin with the simplest questions first to increase the likelihood of participants continuing to complete the survey. The second section of the survey included the Modified SCARS, which was divided into five sections: (1) counseling activities, (2) consultation activities, (3) curriculum activities, (4) coordination activities, and (5) "other" activities including fair share, clerical, and administrative activities. The last page of the Qualtrics survey directed participants to a different online survey in a separate online survey tool: survey.vt.edu (Virginia Tech, 2009). On survey.vt.edu, participants were given the option of submitting their email addresses if they desired to be entered into a drawing for one of four \$50 gift certificates to amazon.com, awarded by the researcher after the closing of the survey. Participants' email addresses were purposefully collected in a separate online survey tool to

protect participant confidentiality. After creating the online survey and testing it with the three school counselors, the researcher launched the survey for data collection.

Face Validity

To determine the face validity of the survey (e.g., the modified SCARS and demographic questions), three school counselors completed the survey and provided feedback. Specifically, on January 11, 2013, three school counselors (an elementary, a middle and a high school counselor), individually completed the survey online. This online survey was in an identical format to the survey intended for survey participants. The three school counselors provided feedback to the researcher, who made several changes accordingly. These three school counselors found the following mostly adequate and clear: (a) the email message inviting participants to complete the survey, (b) the survey directions, (c) the physical layout of the questions, and (d) the demographic questions. One school counselor suggested that the email invitation be shortened; as a result, the email invitation was streamlined while keeping the required information. Next, two school counselors advised the use of the phrase *master's program* instead of *academic preparation*; therefore, when using the term *academic preparation* in the survey, the term *master's program* also was included multiple times. Next, two of the three school counselors suggested slightly modifying the physical layout of the survey by: (a) eliminating the same directions on every page and (b) bolding and enlarging the sub-headings (e.g., counseling activities, consultation activities, etc.); these suggested physical layout recommendations were made accordingly.

In efforts to maintain the psychometric strengths of the original instrument and to maintain consistency and wording, some of the three school counselors' provided suggestions were not changed. For example, two of the three school counselors reported confusing questions

in the academic preparation fair share and administrative activities subscales, such as (a) completing bus duty, (b) discipline issues, and (c) substitute teaching. Mainly the school counselors questioned if *very effectively prepared* for these activities meant participants were prepared *to perform* the activities or were prepared *to not perform* them, since the activities are often considered inappropriate school counseling activities (Scarborough, 2005). Lastly, two of the three school counselors suggested the researcher clarify the terms *routinely* and *frequently* within the actual work activities verbal frequency scale.

Participants

According to J. Broderson (personal communication, November 12, 2012), ASCA membership included approximately 26,000 practicing school counselors in the late fall of 2012; however, in early January 2013, there were only 13,079 valid email addresses of self-identified school counselors in the on-line ASCA Member Directory (an on-line directory accessible to ASCA members). The researcher emailed the 13,079 self-identified school counselors and requested that they complete the survey if they (a) were currently practicing school counselors and (b) graduated from their academic preparation program in the last ten years. Out of the 13,079 emailed school counselors, 2,089 individuals started the survey, 1,702 completed the survey, and the researcher analyzed data from 1,225 participants. Participants who did not meet demographic criteria or who left more than 10% of the survey questions unanswered were omitted. Thus, it is not possible to determine a participant return rate for this study, as a broad range of individuals were contacted and asked to complete the survey based on meeting certain criteria.

Procedures

The procedures section will detail the research study in chronological order. The researcher used several internet surveying strategies suggested by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009). First, the researcher obtained permission to conduct the described survey on January 8, 2013 from the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix E).

Over a two and a half week period, the researcher sent three email messages inviting participants to complete an online survey on school counselors' preparation and actual job activities. Specifically, the researcher sent email messages through Qualtrics, on three consecutive Mondays, at 4:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, since Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009) recommended sending surveys early in the week and early in the day. The first email was sent to all participants ($N = 13,079$) and the subsequent two emails were only sent to participants who had not yet started the survey, which was an option offered through Qualtrics. The researcher emailed the first survey invitation on January 14, 2013 (Appendix F), the next email invitation/reminder was sent on January 21, 2013 (Appendix G), and the final email invitation/reminder was sent on January 28, 2013 (Appendix H). The emails sent to participants provided: (1) an invitation to complete the survey, (2) the internet address for accessing the survey, and (3) the study background and consent, including information about the (a) purpose of the study and questionnaire, (b) instrument, (c) participants, (d) confidentiality, (e) consent, (f) the researcher, and (g) contact information for the researcher, her dissertation chair, and the chair of the Virginia Tech IRB. The survey was closed Thursday, January 31, 2013 at approximately 8:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time.

On February 3, 2013 the researcher transferred the list of participant emails from surveys.vt.edu into an Excel spreadsheet, which was saved in an encrypted file on the

researcher's computer. Participants' email addresses were put in alphabetical order, and each email address was assigned a number from 1 to 1471. Using a random number generator (Stat Trek, 2013), the researcher randomly selected four numbers corresponding to four participants; each of the four participants was emailed Sunday, February 3, 2013 with a thank you notification and an electronic \$50 gift certificate to amazon.com. Participants were asked to confirm their acceptance of the gift certificate by Friday, February 8, 2013, or the gift certificate would be awarded to another participant. Between February 3 and 8, 2013, three of the four participants accepted their gift certificate. On Wednesday, February 6, 2013 the researcher sent a reminder email to the fourth participant who had not responded. Then, on Saturday, February 9, 2013, the researcher emailed the fourth winner for a final time, communicating that the amazon.com gift certificate would be given to another participant. On Saturday, February 9, 2013, the researcher used the same random number generator to select another winner for the amazon.com gift certificate and emailed this participant both a thank you notification and an electronic amazon.com gift certificate. This last participant redeemed the gift certificate. Then, on February 18, 2013, at 4:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, the researcher sent a final thank you email through Qualtrics, thanking all participants who started the survey, and notifying them that the four amazon.com gift certificates had been awarded in the previous two weeks.

Data Analysis

Survey data were housed in two places (a) on the researcher's computer, which is password protected, and (b) on an encrypted, password-protected folder in Dropbox, a password protected online storage unit. Survey data also were saved in the password-protected online survey tools (e.g., Qualtrics and survey.vt.edu).

The data from the demographic questions and the modified SCARS were downloaded from Qualtrics into an Excel spreadsheet; this spreadsheet was saved on the researcher's password-protected computer while analyzing the data. After analyses were completed, the data were transferred to the researchers' encrypted folder.

The data downloaded from Qualtrics included responses from 1,705 participants. The researcher reviewed the data and omitted participants who (1) were not currently employed as school counselors, (2) graduated before 2002, and (3) completed less than 90% of the survey questions. After removing participants, the researcher was left with 1,225 participants meeting the described criteria.

Simultaneously, the researcher looked at participants' responses to the CACREP demographic question. Participants could either respond affirmatively (e.g., that they graduated from a CACREP accredited program), negatively (e.g., that they did not graduate from a CACREP accredited program), or state that they did not know if they graduated from a CACREP accredited program and provide the name of their academic preparation program. Some participants ($n = 336$) stated that they did not know if their academic preparation program was CACREP accredited at the time of their graduation. As a result, the researcher searched the online CACREP directory (CACREP, 2012b) for each of the 336 participants, to code the participants as either having graduated from a CACREP accredited or a non-CACREP accredited program. The researcher could not identify the CACREP status of the academic preparation program attended by 13 participants, so these participants were not included in the sample of 1212 participants whose responses were analyzed for the CACREP accreditation question.

The researcher analyzed participants' responses to the grade level question and grouped responses into one of four school level categories: elementary school counselors, middle school

counselors, high school counselors, and mixed level school counselors. Participants were asked to indicate all student grade levels offered at their school, with responses starting at preschool and ending with twelfth grade. The researcher used the following criteria to assign a school level to each participant: (a) elementary school counselors ($n = 369$) reported a grade level beginning with any grade preschool through fourth and having no grade higher than sixth; (b) middle school counselors ($n = 214$) reported a grade level beginning with any grade fifth through eighth and having no grade higher than ninth; (c) high school counselors ($n = 403$) reported a grade level beginning with ninth and having no grade higher than twelfth; and (d) mixed-level school counselors ($n = 239$) reported more than one school level, including elementary and middle school ($n = 64$), elementary and high school ($n = 2$), middle and high school ($n = 81$), and elementary, middle, and high school ($n = 92$).

The last step was accounting for missing data. Participants who completed 90% or greater of the survey questions were included in the analyses. Of these, 1,086 of 1,225 participants completed 100% of the survey questions and 139 participants completed greater than 89% and less than 100% of the survey; the researcher made adjustments for the 139 participants' missing responses. Specifically, for participants who missed questions on the modified SCARS instrument, the researcher replaced any missing data for that question with the mean response. For missing demographic data, missing data were not calculated in the analyses.

When running analyses, the first step was determining descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and percentages. Inferential analyses were conducted using JMP 10.0 data analysis software to address the research questions. The first, second, and fourth research questions were examined using a matched pair (i.e., dependent) t -test to compare the seven subscales' means between participants' reported academic preparedness and actual job

activities. The third research question was analyzed using an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare the means of the seven subscales in academic preparedness, between the four grade levels; post-hoc tests were not run because of the lack of significant findings on question three.

Summary

Chapter Three outlined the dissertation method for a national, quantitative, school counseling survey. Data collected from the modified SCARS and demographic questionnaire were analyzed to answer the research questions of this study. In the following chapter, research findings will be discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

In this quantitative research study, data from a national population of school counselors were collected to investigate school counselors' academic preparedness and actual job activities. Demographic data were collected, as well as school counselors' reported academic preparedness for job activities and actual job activities. Findings are reported in Chapter Four, starting with demographic information, and then examining data results for each of the four research questions.

Demographic Information

In the study, information was gathered on participants' (a) school level, (b) school counseling employment status, (c) academic preparation completion date, (d) highest level of education completed pertaining to school counseling, and (e) graduation from Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited preparation program.

School Level

On the survey, school counselors indicated all student grade levels offered at their school, as shown in Table 1. Then the researcher categorized each participant into one of four school level categories, based on their responses: (a) elementary school counselors ($n = 369$) reported a grade level beginning with any grade preschool through fourth and having no grade higher than sixth; (b) middle school counselors ($n = 214$) reported a grade level beginning with any grade fifth through eighth and having no grade higher than ninth; (c) high school counselors ($n = 403$) reported a grade level beginning with ninth and having no grade higher than twelfth; and (d) mixed level school counselors ($n = 239$) reported more than one school level, including

elementary and middle school ($n = 64$), elementary and high school ($n = 2$), middle and high school ($n = 81$), and elementary, middle, and high school ($n = 92$).

Table 1

The Number of School Counselors Whose Schools Offered Various Grade Levels

Grade Level	Number of School Counselors
Preschool	291
Kindergarten	496
First	499
Second	500
Third	504
Fourth	508
Fifth	510
Sixth	424
Seventh	423
Eighth	431
Ninth	557
Tenth	568
Eleventh	561
Twelfth	561

School Counseling Employment Status

Full time school counselors ($n = 1174$) outnumbered part time school counselors ($n = 51$). Participants who were not currently employed as school counselors were removed from the study prior to analyses. Thus, most school counselors in this study were employed full time.

Academic Preparation Completion Date

Participants identified the year they completed their academic preparation, including 2002 ($n = 82$), 2003 ($n = 79$), 2004 ($n = 85$), 2005 ($n = 110$), 2006 ($n = 134$), 2007 ($n = 126$), 2008 ($n = 142$), 2009 ($n = 154$), 2010 ($n = 121$), 2011 ($n = 114$), and 2012 ($n = 78$). The highest number of participants graduated in 2009, 2008, and 2006. The lowest number of participants graduated in 2012, 2003, 2002, and 2004.

Highest Level of Education Completed Pertaining to School Counseling

Participants specified the highest level of education they completed in relation to school counseling, which spanned a broad range of responses. The majority of participants completed a master's degree, including a master's degree in school counseling ($n = 1052$), a master's degree in clinical mental health/community counseling ($n = 47$), and a master's degree in a mental health field (e.g., social work, psychology, etc.) ($n = 40$). Some participants earned less than a master's degree, including some master's level courses ($n = 10$), or a bachelor's degree only ($n = 4$); thus, not all practicing school counselors in this study were required to have a master's degree to perform their job. Other participants reported obtaining a doctoral degree, including a doctoral degree in a mental health field (e.g., social work, psychology, etc.) ($n = 6$), a doctoral degree in school counseling ($n = 3$), and a doctoral degree in clinical mental health/community counseling ($n = 1$). Lastly, some participants reported obtaining "other" training ($n = 55$) or gave no response to this question ($n = 7$).

Graduation from a CACREP Accredited Preparation Program

Participants identified themselves as (a) graduated from a CACREP accredited program, (b) did not graduate from a CACREP accredited program, or (c) not knowing if they graduated from a CACREP accredited program, in which case they were asked to give the name of their academic preparation program. For the participants who stated they did not know the CACREP accreditation status of their academic preparation program, the researcher looked up the CACREP accreditation status of the university by name, graduation date, and type of program using the CACREP online directory (CACREP, 2012b) and then categorized the participant as either having graduated from a CACREP or a non-CACREP accredited program. The majority of participants graduated from a CACREP accredited program ($n = 856$), compared to

participants who did not graduate from a CACREP accredited program ($n = 356$). Additionally, the researcher was unable to identify the status of some participants' academic preparation program's CACREP accreditation status ($n = 13$).

Research Questions

Academic Preparation and Job Activities

For the first question, *What discrepancies exist between school counselors' reported academic preparation and actual job activities?* the researcher ran seven matched pair t -tests to compare the means of school counselors' reported academic preparation to their reported actual job activities. Specifically, t -tests were run to compare the means of school counselors' reported academic preparation to their reported actual job activities for the following subscales:

counseling activities, consultation activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities, fair share activities, clerical activities, and administrative activities. The results are presented in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.

Overall, school counselors reported statistically significant higher means in academic preparation (M_{AP}) than actual job activities (M_{AJA}) for four subscales: counseling activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities, and administrative activities. At the same time, school counselors reported statistically significant higher means in actual job activities for three subscales: consultation activities, fair share activities, and clerical activities. Additionally, the measure of effect size for the seven subscales ranged from small to medium. Next, the findings for this first research question will be described in depth by subscale.

School counselors reported statistically significant higher means in academic preparation than actual job activities for counseling activities ($M_{AP} = 3.58$; $M_{AJA} = 3.40$) ($t(1224) = 7.39$, $p < .05$). The effect size was small ($d = .26$). This means that school counselors reported being

more effectively prepared to provide individual and group counseling to students, compared to their frequency in performing individual and group counseling with students.

School counselors reported statistically significant higher means in academic preparation than actual job activities for curriculum activities ($M_{AP} = 3.48$; $M_{AJA} = 3.10$) ($t(1224) = 10.70$, $p < .05$). The effect size was small ($d = .39$). This means that school counselors reported being more effectively prepared to conduct classroom lessons, compared to their frequency in performing classroom lessons.

School counselors reported statistically significant higher means in academic preparation than actual job activities for coordination activities ($M_{AP} = 3.31$; $M_{AJA} = 3.13$) ($t(1224) = 8.35$, $p < .05$). The effect size was small ($d = .30$). This means that school counselors reported being more effectively prepared for coordination activities such as (a) coordinating events and programs for students, parents, and teachers, (b) collecting data, and (c) informing stakeholders of the school counselors' role, compared to their frequency in performing these coordination job activities.

School counselors reported statistically significant higher means in academic preparation than actual job activities for administrative activities ($M_{AP} = 2.48$; $M_{AJA} = 1.87$) ($t(1224) = 16.03$, $p < .05$). The effect size was medium ($d = .65$). This means that school counselors reported being more effectively prepared for handling student discipline issues and substitute teaching for teachers, compared to their frequency in performing these job activities.

On the other hand, school counselors reported statistically significant higher means in actual job activities for consultation activities ($M_{AJA} = 3.60$; $M_{AP} = 3.22$) ($t(1224) = -14.73$, $p < .05$) compared to academic preparedness. The effect size was medium ($d = .54$). This means school counselors reported actually performing activities such as (a) consulting with school staff,

community professionals, and parents regarding student issues, (b) consulting with school administrators regarding school, student, and staff issues, (c) referring students and families to professionals within the school and community, and (d) participating in the special education identification process with greater frequency than the level of effective academic preparation for these consultation activities.

School counselors reported statistically significant higher means in actual job activities for fair share activities ($M_{AJA} = 3.23$; $M_{AP} = 2.66$) ($t(1224) = -17.81$, $p < .05$) compared to academic preparedness. This effect size was medium ($d = .69$). This means school counselors reported actually performing activities such as (a) participating on school committees, (b) coordinating school wide standardized testing, (c) organizing the school's low-income family outreach programs, (d) responding to health issues, and (e) performing school duties (i.e., bus, hall, etc.) with greater frequency than the level of effective academic preparation for these job activities.

School counselors reported statistically significant higher means in actual job activities for clerical activities ($M_{AJA} = 2.96$; $M_{AP} = 2.36$) ($t(1224) = -11.99$, $p < .05$) compared to academic preparedness. The effect size was medium ($d = .47$). This means school counselors reported actually performing activities such as scheduling and enrolling students for classes, and maintaining student records with greater frequency than the level of effective academic preparation for these job activities.

Table 2.1

Descriptive Statistics for School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities

Subscale	Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling Activities	3.58	.69	3.40	.59
Consultation Activities	3.22	.78	3.60	.63
Curriculum Activities	3.48	.89	3.10	1.06
Coordination Activities	3.31	.55	3.13	.63
Fair Share Activities	2.66	.87	3.23	.81
Clerical Activities	2.36	1.06	2.96	1.42
Administrative Activities	2.48	1.09	1.87	.81

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation. Academic Preparation scale: 1 = very ineffectively; 2 = ineffectively; 3 = somewhat effectively; 4 = effectively; 5 = very effectively. Actual Job Activities scale: 1 = I never do this; 2 = I rarely do this; 3 = I occasionally do this; 4 = I frequently do this; 5 = I routinely do this.

Table 2.2

T-tests for School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities

Subscale	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> score	Effect Size
Counseling Activities	.17	7.39	<.0001*	.26
Consultation Activities	-.38	-14.73	<.0001*	.54
Curriculum Activities	.38	10.70	<.0001*	.39
Coordination Activities	.18	8.35	<.0001*	.30
Fair Share Activities	-.58	-17.81	<.0001*	.69
Clerical Activities	-.59	-11.99	<.0001*	.47
Administrative Activities	.62	16.03	<.0001*	.65

Academic Preparation and Job Activities by School Level

For the second question, *What discrepancies exist between school counselors' reported academic preparedness and actual job activities within school level (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed)?* the researcher ran seven matched pair *t*-tests for each school level: elementary, middle, high, and mixed, to compare the means of school counselors' reported academic preparation to their reported actual job activities. Specifically *t*-tests were run to compare the means of school counselors' reported academic preparation to their reported actual job activities

for the following subscales: counseling activities, consultation activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities, fair share activities, clerical activities, and administrative activities.

The results for the elementary school level are presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. Overall, elementary school counselors reported statistically significant higher means in academic preparation for two subscales: clerical activities ($M_{AP} = 2.32$; $M_{AJA} = 1.75$) ($t(368) = 7.63$, $p < .05$) and administrative activities ($M_{AP} = 2.50$; $M_{AJA} = 2.03$) ($t(368) = 6.68$, $p < .05$). At the same time, elementary school counselors reported statistically significant higher means in actual job activities for three subscales: consultation activities ($M_{AJA} = 3.71$; $M_{AP} = 3.18$) ($t(368) = -11.90$, $p < .05$), curriculum activities, ($M_{AJA} = 3.91$; $M_{AP} = 3.53$) ($t(368) = -6.81$, $p < .05$), and fair share activities ($M_{AJA} = 3.59$; $M_{AP} = 2.71$) ($t(368) = -15.09$, $p < .05$). The measure of effect size for the five subscales with statistically significant differences ranged from medium to large. Specifically, curriculum activities ($d = .45$), administrative activities ($d = .49$), and clerical activities ($d = .55$) had medium effect sizes; consultation activities ($d = .78$) and fair share activities ($d = 1.08$) had large effect sizes.

Table 3.1

Descriptive Statistics for Elementary School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities

Subscale	Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling Activities	3.54	.71	3.61	.52
Consultation Activities	3.18	.77	3.71	.58
Curriculum Activities	3.53	.94	3.91	.74
Coordination Activities	3.27	.55	3.21	.62
Fair Share Activities	2.71	.88	3.59	.76
Clerical Activities	2.32	1.04	1.75	1.03
Administrative Activities	2.50	1.08	2.03	.83

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation.

Table 3.2

T-tests for Elementary School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities

Subscale	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> score	Effect Size
Counseling Activities	-.07	-1.70	.0897	.11
Consultation Activities	-.53	-11.90	<.0001*	.78
Curriculum Activities	-.38	-6.81	<.0001*	.45
Coordination Activities	.06	1.59	.1130	.10
Fair Share Activities	-.89	-15.09	<.0001*	1.08
Clerical Activities	.57	7.63	<.0001*	.55
Administrative Activities	.47	6.68	<.0001*	.49

The results for the middle school level are presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. Overall, middle school counselors reported statistically significant higher means in academic preparation for three subscales: curriculum activities ($M_{AP} = 3.48$; $M_{AJA} = 2.94$) ($t(213) = 6.85$, $p < .05$), coordination activities ($M_{AP} = 3.34$; $M_{AJA} = 3.11$) ($t(213) = 4.22$, $p < .05$), and administrative activities ($M_{AP} = 2.63$; $M_{AJA} = 1.95$) ($t(213) = 6.92$, $p < .05$). Next, middle school counselors reported statistically significant higher means in actual job activities for three subscales: consultation activities ($M_{AJA} = 3.76$; $M_{AP} = 3.24$) ($t(213) = -8.24$, $p < .05$), fair share activities, ($M_{AJA} = 3.49$; $M_{AP} = 2.72$) ($t(213) = -10.06$, $p < .05$), and clerical activities ($M_{AJA} = 3.38$; $M_{AP} = 2.43$) ($t(213) = -9.03$, $p < .05$). The measure of effect size for the six subscales included small, medium, and large. Specifically, coordination activities ($d = .37$) had a small effect size; curriculum activities ($d = .59$), administrative activities ($d = .68$), and consultation activities ($d = .73$) had medium effect sizes, and clerical activities ($d = .84$) and fair share activities ($d = .99$) had large effect sizes.

The results for the high school level are presented in Tables 5.1 and 5.2. Overall, high school counselors reported statistically significant higher means in academic preparation for four subscales: counseling activities ($M_{AP} = 3.60$; $M_{AJA} = 3.17$) ($t(402) = 11.49$, $p < .05$), curriculum activities ($M_{AP} = 3.45$; $M_{AJA} = 2.37$) ($t(402) = 20.73$, $p < .05$), coordination activities

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics for Middle School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities

Subscale	Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling Activities	3.64	.66	3.56	.59
Consultation Activities	3.24	.78	3.76	.61
Curriculum Activities	3.48	.87	2.94	.97
Coordination Activities	3.34	.53	3.11	.64
Fair Share Activities	2.72	.82	3.49	.74
Clerical Activities	2.43	1.08	3.38	1.19
Administrative Activities	2.63	1.11	1.95	.83

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation.

Table 4.2

T-tests for Middle School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities

Subscale	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> score	Effect Size
Counseling Activities	.08	1.32	.1895	.13
Consultation Activities	-.51	-8.24	<.0001*	.73
Curriculum Activities	.54	6.85	<.0001*	.59
Coordination Activities	.22	4.22	<.0001*	.37
Fair Share Activities	-.77	-10.06	<.0001*	.99
Clerical Activities	-.95	-9.03	<.0001*	.84
Administrative Activities	.67	6.92	<.0001*	.68

($M_{AP} = 3.32$; $M_{AJA} = 3.07$) ($t(402) = 6.71$, $p < .05$), and administrative activities ($M_{AP} = 2.41$; $M_{AJA} = 1.62$) ($t(402) = 12.51$, $p < .05$). At the same time, high school counselors reported statistically significant higher means in actual job activities for three subscales: consultation activities ($M_{AJA} = 3.42$; $M_{AP} = 3.24$) ($t(402) = -4.01$, $p < .05$), fair share activities, ($M_{AJA} = 2.87$; $M_{AP} = 2.64$) ($t(402) = -4.12$, $p < .05$), and clerical activities ($M_{AJA} = 2.79$; $m_{AP} = 2.39$) ($t(402) = -19.64$, $p < .05$). The measure of effect size for the seven subscales included small, medium, and large. Specifically, consultation activities ($d = .25$), fair share activities ($d = .27$), and coordination activities ($d = .43$) had small effect sizes, counseling activities ($d = .70$) had a

medium effect size, and administrative activities ($d = .86$), curriculum activities ($d = 1.30$) and clerical activities ($d = 1.35$) had large effect sizes.

Table 5.1

Descriptive Statistics for High School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities

Subscale	Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling Activities	3.60	.67	3.17	.55
Consultation Activities	3.24	.80	3.42	.63
Curriculum Activities	3.45	.87	2.37	.79
Coordination Activities	3.32	.57	3.07	.63
Fair Share Activities	2.64	.89	2.87	.73
Clerical Activities	2.39	1.06	2.79	1.03
Administrative Activities	2.41	1.11	1.62	.70

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation.

Table 5.2

T-tests for High School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities

Subscale	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> score	Effect Size
Counseling Activities	.43	11.49	<.0001*	.70
Consultation Activities	-.18	-4.01	<.0001*	.25
Curriculum Activities	1.08	20.73	<.0001*	1.30
Coordination Activities	.26	6.71	<.0001*	.43
Fair Share Activities	-.22	-4.12	<.0001*	.27
Clerical Activities	-1.41	-19.64	<.0001*	1.35
Administrative Activities	.80	12.51	<.0001*	.86

The results for the mixed school level are presented in Tables 6.1 and 6.2. Overall, mixed level school counselors reported statistically significant higher means in academic preparation for four subscales: counseling activities ($M_{AP} = 3.54$; $M_{AJA} = 3.35$) ($t(238) = 3.44$, $p < .05$), curriculum activities ($M_{AP} = 3.44$; $M_{AJA} = 3.22$) ($t(238) = 2.99$, $p < .05$), coordination activities ($M_{AP} = 3.30$; $M_{AJA} = 3.10$) ($t(238) = 4.14$, $p < .05$), and administrative activities ($M_{AP} = 2.45$; $M_{AJA} = 1.96$) ($t(238) = 5.61$, $p < .05$). At the same time, mixed level school counselors reported statistically significant higher means in actual job activities for three subscales:

consultation activities ($M_{AJA} = 3.57$; $M_{AP} = 3.20$) ($t(238) = -6.12, p < .05$), fair share activities ($M_{AJA} = 3.07$; $M_{AP} = 2.55$) ($t(238) = -7.64, p < .05$), and clerical activities ($M_{AJA} = 3.04$; $M_{AP} = 2.34$) ($t(238) = -5.91, p < .05$). The measure of effect size for the seven subscales ranged from small to medium. Specifically, curriculum activities ($d = .24$), counseling activities ($d = .29$), and coordination activities ($d = .34$) had small effect sizes. Administrative activities ($d = .51$), consultation activities ($d = .52$), clerical activities ($d = .56$), and fair share activities ($d = .64$) had medium effect sizes.

Table 6.1

Descriptive Statistics for Mixed Level School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities

Subscale	Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling Activities	3.54	.70	3.35	.60
Consultation Activities	3.20	.78	3.57	.63
Curriculum Activities	3.44	.87	3.22	1.03
Coordination Activities	3.30	.54	3.10	.64
Fair Share Activities	2.55	.82	3.07	.77
Clerical Activities	2.34	1.04	3.04	1.44
Administrative Activities	2.45	1.04	1.96	.85

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation.

Table 6.2

T-tests for Mixed Level School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities

Subscale	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> score	Effect Size
Counseling Activities	.19	3.44	.0007*	.29
Consultation Activities	-.37	-6.12	<.0001*	.52
Curriculum Activities	.23	2.99	.0031*	.24
Coordination Activities	.20	4.14	<.0001*	.34
Fair Share Activities	-.51	-7.64	<.0001*	.64
Clerical Activities	-.70	-5.91	<.0001*	.56
Administrative Activities	.48	5.61	<.0001*	.51

Academic Preparedness by School Level

In the third research question, *How do school counselors' academic preparedness vary across school level (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed)?* academic preparedness was measured by seven subscales (counseling activities, consultation activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities, fair share activities, clerical activities, and administrative activities). This research question was answered by running an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for each of the seven subscales to analyze the academic preparation by school level: elementary, middle, high, and mixed level school counselors. The ANOVAs showed that the academic preparedness did not have a statistical significant variance by school levels on any of the seven subscales. Specifically, there were no significant differences in counseling activities ($F(3, 1221) = 1.37, p = .25$), consultation activities ($F(3, 1221) = .53, p = .66$), curriculum activities ($F(3, 1221) = .59, p = .62$), coordination activities ($F(3, 1221) = .80, p = .49$), fair share activities ($F(3, 1221) = 1.93, p = .12$), clerical activities ($F(3, 1221) = .61, p = .61$), or administrative activities ($F(3, 1221) = 1.90, p = .13$).

CACREP Accreditation

For the fourth research question, *How do school counselors' reported academic preparedness and actual job activities within school level vary by graduation from a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited preparation program?* the researcher disaggregated the data by school level (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed) and ran two sets of analyses, one for each school level. When analyzing each school level, the researcher ran (a) seven matched pair *t*-tests to compare the reported academic preparation means of school counselors from CACREP accredited academic preparation programs to the reported academic preparation means of school counselors from

non-CACREP accredited academic preparation programs, and (b) seven matched pair *t*-tests to compare the reported actual job activities means of school counselors from CACREP accredited academic preparation programs to the reported actual job activities means of school counselors from non-CACREP accredited academic preparation programs. The *t*-tests were run to compare CACREP accredited and non-CACREP accredited school counselors' (a) reported academic preparation and (b) actual job activities, both for the following subscales: counseling activities, consultation activities, curriculum activities, coordination activities, fair share activities, clerical activities, and administrative activities.

The results for the elementary school level are presented in Tables 7.1 and 7.2. Overall, elementary school counselors from CACREP accredited academic preparation programs reported statistically significant higher means in academic preparation for two subscales: consultation activities ($M_C = 3.24$; $M_{NC} = 3.05$) ($t(360) = -2.06$, $p < .05$), and coordination activities ($M_C = 3.32$; $M_{NC} = 3.17$) ($t(360) = -2.29$, $p < .05$). The measure of effect size for the two subscales was small. Specifically, consultation activities ($d = .25$) and coordination activities ($d = .27$) have small effect sizes.

The results for the middle school level are presented in Tables 8.1 and 8.2. Overall, middle school counselors from CACREP accredited academic preparation programs reported statistically significant higher means in academic preparation for three subscales: counseling activities ($M_C = 3.70$; $M_{NC} = 3.49$) ($t(211) = -2.01$, $p < .05$), curriculum activities ($M_C = 3.57$; $M_{NC} = 3.27$) ($t(211) = -2.26$, $p < .05$), and coordination activities ($M_C = 3.41$; $M_{NC} = 3.16$) ($t(211) = -3.11$, $p < .05$). The measure of effect size for the three statistically significant subscales ranges from small to medium. Specifically, counseling activities ($d = .30$) and curriculum

activities ($d = .34$) had a small effect size, while coordination activities ($d = .49$) had a medium effect size.

Table 7.1

Descriptive Statistics for Elementary School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status

Subscale	CACREP				Non-CACREP			
	Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities		Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling Activities	3.58	.69	3.62	.51	3.45	.73	3.59	.55
Consultation Activities	3.24	.76	3.74	.60	3.05	.78	3.66	.55
Curriculum Activities	3.52	.94	3.92	.74	3.57	.93	3.85	.76
Coordination Activities	3.32	.54	3.23	.62	3.17	.58	3.15	.64
Fair Share Activities	2.71	.91	3.62	.77	2.72	.79	3.54	.77
Clerical Activities	2.29	1.07	1.71	1.02	2.41	.96	1.87	1.07
Administrative Activities	2.49	1.11	2.01	.84	2.52	.97	2.09	.81

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; CACREP (e.g., Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) = participants who reported graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program; non-CACREP = participants who reported not graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program.

Table 7.2

T-tests for Elementary School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status

Subscale	Academic Preparation				Actual Job Activities			
	<i>M Dif</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p score</i>	<i>Eff Size</i>	<i>M Dif</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p score</i>	<i>Eff Size</i>
Counseling Activities	-.14	-1.65	.1000	.20	-.03	-.55	.5857	.06
Consultation Activities	-.19	-2.06	.0398*	.25	-.08	-1.12	.2655	.14
Curriculum Activities	.05	.42	.6745	.05	-.07	-.81	.4204	.09
Coordination Activities	-.15	-2.29	.0227*	.27	-.08	-1.08	.2822	.13
Fair Share Activities	.01	.09	.9286	.01	-.08	-.87	.3843	.10
Clerical Activities	.12	.98	.3277	.12	.15	1.26	.2097	.14
Administrative Activities	.03	.22	.8252	.03	.08	.79	.4330	.10

Note. *M Dif* = mean difference; *Eff Size* = effect size; CACREP (e.g., Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) = participants who reported graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program; non-CACREP = participants who reported not graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program.

The results for the high school level are presented in Tables 9.1 and 9.2 and the results for the mixed level school counselors are presented in Tables 10.1 and 10.2. Overall, there were no statistically significant differences between school counselors from CACREP accredited and non-CACREP accredited academic preparation programs for either high school counselors or mixed level school counselors. At the same time, school counselors from CACREP accredited academic preparation programs tended to report higher means in academic preparation and actual job activities than school counselors from non-CACREP accredited preparation programs; however, none of those findings were statistically significant.

Table 8.1

Descriptive Statistics for Middle School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status

Subscale	CACREP				Non-CACREP			
	Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities		Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling Activities	3.70	.64	3.59	.58	3.49	.69	3.50	.61
Consultation Activities	3.26	.80	3.74	.62	3.21	.73	3.79	.61
Curriculum Activities	3.57	.85	3.00	.96	3.27	.91	2.78	.99
Coordination Activities	3.41	.53	3.12	.64	3.16	.49	3.11	.63
Fair Share Activities	2.75	.87	3.49	.75	2.65	.69	3.48	.70
Clerical Activities	2.50	1.10	3.36	1.21	2.25	1.01	3.42	1.14
Administrative Activities	2.60	1.14	1.92	.84	2.69	1.07	2.03	.80

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; CACREP (e.g., Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) = participants who reported graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program; non-CACREP = participants who reported not graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program.

Table 8.2

T-tests for Middle School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status

Subscale	Academic Preparation				Actual Job Activities			
	<i>M</i> Dif	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> score	Eff Size	<i>M</i> Dif	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> score	Eff Size
Counseling Activities	-.20	-2.01	.0459*	.30	-.09	-.95	.3423	.15
Consultation Activities	-.05	-.41	.6801	.07	.05	.55	.5852	.08
Curriculum Activities	-.30	-2.26	.0248*	.34	-.22	-1.49	.1366	.23
Coordination Activities	-.25	-3.11	.0022*	.49	-.01	-.11	.9134	.02
Fair Share Activities	-.09	-.73	.4665	.11	-.01	-.05	.9600	.01
Clerical Activities	-.25	-1.52	.1308	.24	.06	.32	.7522	.05
Administrative Activities	.09	.52	.6055	.08	.11	.88	.3785	.13

Note. *M* Dif = mean difference; Eff Size = effect size; CACREP (e.g., Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) = participants who reported graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program; non-CACREP = participants who reported not graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program.

Table 9.1

Descriptive Statistics for High School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status

Subscale	CACREP				Non-CACREP			
	Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities		Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling Activities	3.62	.67	3.19	.55	3.57	.67	3.09	.53
Consultation Activities	3.23	.80	3.43	.61	3.30	.80	3.37	.66
Curriculum Activities	3.45	.89	2.38	.81	3.44	.83	2.33	.76
Coordination Activities	3.36	.57	3.10	.61	3.24	.57	2.99	.66
Fair Share Activities	2.65	.92	2.88	.72	2.62	.85	2.85	.75
Clerical Activities	2.38	1.11	3.85	1.02	2.41	.95	3.66	1.03
Administrative Activities	2.43	1.13	1.59	.68	2.40	1.06	1.69	.73

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; CACREP (e.g., Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) = participants who reported graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program; non-CACREP = participants who reported not graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program.

Table 9.2

T-tests for High School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status

Subscale	Academic Preparation				Actual Job Activities			
	<i>M</i> Dif	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> score	Eff Size	<i>M</i> Dif	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> score	Eff Size
Counseling Activities	-.05	-.69	.4920	.07	-.11	-1.76	.0786	.20
Consultation Activities	.08	.85	.3955	.10	-.06	-.89	.3742	.09
Curriculum Activities	-.01	-.08	.9376	.01	-.06	-.66	.5118	.08
Coordination Activities	-.12	-1.92	.0560	.21	-.11	-1.58	.1142	.17
Fair Share Activities	-.04	-.36	.7190	.05	-.02	-.28	.7783	.03
Clerical Activities	.02	.18	.8543	.02	-.18	-1.61	.1088	.18
Administrative Activities	-.03	-.25	.8000	.03	.10	1.27	.2039	.14

Note. *M* Dif = mean difference; Eff Size = effect size; CACREP (e.g., Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) = participants who reported graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program; non-CACREP = participants who reported not graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program.

Table 10.1

Descriptive Statistics for Mixed Level School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status

Subscale	CACREP				Non-CACREP			
	Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities		Academic Preparation		Actual Job Activities	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Counseling Activities	3.58	.71	3.40	.60	3.48	.69	3.27	.61
Consultation Activities	3.24	.79	3.61	.63	3.15	.77	3.51	.64
Curriculum Activities	3.49	.87	3.29	1.02	3.37	.87	3.08	1.05
Coordination Activities	3.33	.57	3.17	.65	3.25	.49	3.00	.63
Fair Share Activities	2.63	.85	3.12	.77	2.43	.77	2.97	.76
Clerical Activities	2.42	1.07	3.17	1.40	2.20	.99	2.81	1.48
Administrative Activities	2.49	1.07	1.99	.84	2.36	.98	1.89	.84

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; CACREP (e.g., Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) = participants who reported graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program; non-CACREP = participants who reported not graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program.

Table 10.2

T-tests for Mixed Level School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Actual Job Activities by CACREP Status

Subscale	Academic Preparation				Actual Job Activities			
	<i>M Dif</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p score</i>	Eff Size	<i>M Dif</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p score</i>	Eff Size
Counseling Activities	-.10	-1.09	.2775	.14	-.13	-1.56	.1199	.21
Consultation Activities	-.09	-.86	.3881	.12	-.10	-1.14	.2569	.16
Curriculum Activities	-.12	-1.01	.3151	.14	-.21	-1.51	.1326	.20
Coordination Activities	-.08	-1.02	.3087	.15	-.17	-1.91	.0567	.27
Fair Share Activities	-.19	-1.73	.0853	.23	-.15	-1.48	.1400	.20
Clerical Activities	-.21	-1.50	.1354	.20	-.36	-1.86	.0639	.25
Administrative Activities	-.13	-.94	.3464	.13	-.11	-.92	.3570	.13

Note. *M Dif* = mean difference; Eff Size = effect size; CACREP (e.g., Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) = participants who reported graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program; non-CACREP = participants who reported not graduating from a CACREP accredited preparation program.

Summary

In Chapter Four, findings were reported from the described survey, which utilized a modified version of the SCARS instrument. In answering the four research questions, both descriptive statistics (e.g., participants' demographic information, means, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (e.g., the results from *t*-tests and ANOVAs) were also reported. These findings are further discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

In Chapter Five, the researcher will interpret the findings presented in Chapter Four in relation to other research. The discussion will include an overview of the findings by research question, followed by implications, recommendations, and limitations. Chapter Five will conclude with a summary of both the chapter and the dissertation.

Research Questions

This dissertation study was guided by four research questions. The first part of Chapter Five will present an overview of findings. These findings will be divided into four sections by research question.

Academic Preparation and Job Activities

For question one, *What discrepancies exist between school counselors' reported academic preparedness and actual job activities?* statistically significant discrepancies were found between all seven subscales. Hence, school counselors reported statistically significant differences between the effectiveness of their academic preparation programs and the frequency of actually performing job activities for counseling, consultation, curriculum, coordination, fair share, clerical, and administrative activities. School counselors reported statistically significantly higher academic preparation effectiveness for counseling, curriculum, coordination, and administrative activities, compared to the frequency of actually performing these job activities. On the other hand, school counselors reported statistically significant higher frequencies of actually performing consultation, fair share, and clerical activities over the effectiveness of their academic preparation for these job activities. Thus, school counselors reported being prepared for counseling, curriculum, coordination, and administrative activities to

a greater degree than they were performing these activities, and reported performing consultation, fair share, and clerical activities to a greater degree than their academic preparation effectiveness.

Although there are statistically significant discrepancies in the recommended subscales between academic preparation and actual job activities, it is important to note that school counselors reported moderate scores (i.e., somewhat effectively prepared for job activities and occasionally performing these job activities) for all the recommended job activities, for both academic preparation and actually performed job activities. Thus, on average, school counselors perceived being somewhat effectively prepared for the recommended job activities and occasionally performing these recommended job activities.

Several researchers recommended collecting data on how counselor academic preparation programs prepare school counselors for their work-related practices (Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Pérusse et al.; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Trolley, 2011), as school counselors have struggled with the transition from academic preparation to professional practice since the two settings often have different views of the school counseling job (Allen et al., 2002; Bodenhorn, 2006; Brott & Myers, 1999; Chambers et al., 2010; Culbreth et al., 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Milsom, 2002; Mustaine et al., 1996; NOSCA, 2011, 2012b; Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Steen et al., 2008; Trolley, 2011). In fact, almost a third of the school counselors in a national 2011 NOSCA study reported that their academic preparation programs prepared them poorly for their school counseling job (NOSCA, 2011). The following year, NOSCA released another report from a national school counseling survey, stating “counselors are ready to lead in the college- and career-ready mission, but their graduate schools fail to train them for this mission...” (NOSCA, 2012a, p. 6). Not all findings in the literature

were as negative toward school counselor academic preparation as NOSCA, as Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) reported most school counselors in their study found the majority of counselor education course content areas to be moderate to very important to their school counseling job. Additionally, Kolodinsky et al. (2009) found that 55% of the school counselors in their study described their academic preparation program as training them well or very well for their school counseling roles and job activities, and slightly less than 10% of participants in the study described their academic preparation program training as poor or not well.

Next, according to the findings in this study, although school counselors reported statistically significantly higher academic preparation compared to actually performed job activities for three of the four recommended job activities (curriculum, coordination, and counseling activities), the differences were small. Both academic preparation and actual job activities scores were moderate, meaning that school counselors perceived (a) being somewhat effectively prepared for counseling, consultation, curriculum, and coordination job activities and (b) occasionally performing these recommended job activities. Thus, the findings in this study support the claim that school counselors believed they were somewhat effectively trained for the job activities they are occasionally performing.

On the recommended subscales, school counselors reported being trained most effectively for counseling activities, followed by curriculum activities, coordination activities, and consultation activities, respectively. At the same time, school counselors reported actually performing consultation activities the most frequently, followed by counseling, curriculum, and coordination. Overall, school counselors reported receiving the most effective training in counseling activities, yet more frequently performed consultation activities. Additionally, out of the four recommended job activities, school counselors reported being prepared the least

effectively for consultation job activities, even though that was the highest performed actual job activity reported. In fact, consultation job activities had the greatest discrepancy between academic preparation and actual job activities (a medium effect size), when compared to the discrepancies in the other recommended job activities.

The consultation and counseling findings in this study may show different themes compared to the study conducted by Pérusse and Goodnough (2005). Pérusse and Goodnough found that although school counselors reported the activity *consultation with parents and teachers* to be one of the three most important academic preparation course content areas by both elementary and secondary school counselors, *individual counseling* was the most important. The school counselors in this dissertation study reported conducting consultation activities the most frequently and counseling activities second, while school counselors in the Pérusse and Goodnough study reported consultation as one of the most important course content areas, but reported individual counseling as the most important. School counselors in the Pérusse and Goodnough study placed a lower importance on consultation compared to counseling course content, while school counselors in this dissertation study reported performing consultation more frequently than counseling job activities.

Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) used the original version of the SCARS instrument with a sample of school counselors from two states. In comparing school counselors' reported actual activities for recommended subscales from the current study to Scarborough and Culbreth's study, the current study shows higher scores in all four recommended subscales; however, school counselors in both studies prioritized the subscales in the same order. Specifically, school counselors in the present study reported higher consulting activities ($M_{GS} = 3.60$) compared to the school counselors in Scarborough and Culbreth's study ($M_{SC} = 3.39$); the

same pattern was found in the other three subscales, including counseling activities ($M_{GS} = 3.40$; $M_{SC} = 3.06$); coordination activities ($M_{GS} = 3.13$; $M_{SC} = 2.88$); and curriculum activities ($M_{GS} = 3.10$; $M_{SC} = 2.68$). In both the present study and Scarborough and Culbreth's study, school counselors reported actually performing consultation more than counseling activities; at the same time, school counselors in the present study report higher frequencies of all four recommended subscales: consultation, counseling, coordination, and curriculum. Overall, in comparing the present study to Scarborough and Culbreth's, there were many similarities, including that consultation is the most frequently performed school counseling job activity in both studies.

Next, when looking at the reported discrepancies in the academic preparation and actual job activities for the "other" subscales in the current study, the three "other" subscales had three of the four greatest discrepancies (medium effect sizes) found. At the same time, the academic preparation was lowest for the "other" scales as well, meaning that school counselors reported that academic preparation programs focused more on recommended job activities and less on "other" job activities. Thus, school counselors reported the lowest academic preparation for these three "other" subscales, which is aligned with recommended school counseling best practices, such as the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2012b).

The two lowest actually performed job activities were administrative and clerical job activities, respectively; meaning that school counselors reported that they performed less administrative and clerical job activities than fair share or recommended job activities. In fact, school counselors reported performing administrative job activities *rarely* ($M_{GS} = 1.87$). This was similar to Scarborough and Culbreth's (2008) findings ($M_{SC} = 1.77$).

Although clerical activities had one of the lowest actually performed scores, the score is still fairly moderate and is similar to the scores for curriculum, coordination, and fair share

activities, respectively. Hence, school counselors reported performing moderate amounts of clerical job activities in the current study, although the frequency is still lower than the recommended job activities. Fair share activities, the third “other” subscale was the only “other” actual job activities response with higher actually performed scores than the recommended subscales, meaning that school counselors reported performing fair share activities more frequently than curriculum or coordination activities.

Next, the fair share and administrative actual job activities will be compared to Scarborough and Culbreth’s (2008) findings. Findings for the fair share actual job activities subscale were fairly similar for both studies, the present study ($M_{GS} = 3.23$) and Scarborough and Culbreth’s study ($M_{SC} = 3.28$), which both had moderate responses. However, the findings for the clerical actual job activities subscale for the two studies were different, as school counselors in Scarborough and Culbreth’s study reported a higher clerical subscale score ($M_{SC} = 3.41$), compared to the present study ($M_{GS} = 2.96$). Thus, school counselors in the current study were reportedly performing less clerical job activities than in Scarborough and Culbreth’s previous study. Additionally, in a small study ($N = 80$), Burnham and Jackson (2000) found that school counselors reportedly performed large percentages of nonguidance (i.e., “other”) activities. Specifically, school counselors reported spending between 28% and 65% of their time in clerical activities and 26% to 38% of their time in fair share activities. Thus, previous research regarding clerical activities, including (a) Scarborough and Culbreth’s study published five years ago and (b) Burnham and Jackson’s study published thirteen years ago are quite different from the findings in the present study. Perhaps school counselors are decreasingly performing clerical activities in schools.

Academic Preparation and Job Activities by School Level

It was important to examine school counselors' academic preparation and job activities by school level, as many researchers have found that school counselors' activities differ by school level: elementary, middle and high school levels (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Dahir et al., 2009; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2001; Studer et al., 2011). For the second question, *What discrepancies exist between school counselors' reported academic preparedness and actual job activities within school level (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed)?* school counselors' responses were disaggregated by school level, then analyzed; findings will be discussed by each of the four levels and also general themes will be discussed. First, elementary school counselors reported statistically significant differences between academic preparation and actual job activities in five of the seven subscales: fair share, consultation, clerical, administrative, and curriculum activities; the effect sizes for these discrepancies ranged from high to medium, respectively. The two largest discrepancies were found in fair share and consultation activities, as elementary school counselors reported performing both fair share and consultation activities more than they were effectively trained for these activities. Next, elementary school counselors reported greater effectiveness in training for clerical and administrative job activities, compared to the frequency that they actually performed these two job activities. At the same time, elementary school counselors reported rarely performing clerical and administrative activities. Lastly, elementary school counselors reported performing more frequent curriculum activities compared to the effectiveness of their academic preparation for curriculum activities. Overall, elementary school counselors may benefit from their academic preparation programs increasingly focusing on consultation and curriculum

activities, and perhaps addressing appropriate and efficient use of fair share job activities, such as observing student behaviors during school duties.

Next, middle school counselors reported statistically significant differences between academic preparation and actual job activities in five of the seven subscales: fair share, clerical, consultation, administrative, and curriculum activities. The effect sizes of the discrepancies ranged from high to medium, respectively. The three largest discrepancies were found in fair share, clerical, and consultation activities, as middle school counselors reported performing all three activities more than they were effectively trained for those activities. Next, middle school counselors reported greater effectiveness in training for administrative and curriculum job activities, compared to the frequency that they actually performed these two job activities. In summary, it appears middle school counselors may benefit from their academic preparation programs increasingly focusing on consultation activities and perhaps performing recommended job activities (i.e., consultation) while implementing fair share job activities.

High school counselors reported statistically significant differences between academic preparation and actual job activities for all seven subscales: clerical, curriculum, administrative, coordination, fair share, and consultation; the effect sizes in discrepancies ranged from high to small, respectively. The three largest discrepancies were found in clerical, curriculum, and administrative activities, as all three had high effect sizes. High school counselors reported performing clerical activities more frequently than the effectiveness of their training and received greater academic preparation effectiveness in curriculum and administrative activities, compared to the frequency they actually performed these two activities. Additionally, high school counselors reported greater academic preparation effectiveness in counseling and coordination activities, compared to the frequency that they actually performed these two activities. Lastly,

high school counselors reported performing consultation and fair share activities more frequently than the effectiveness of their training. Overall, high school counselors may benefit from their academic preparation programs increasingly focusing on consultation activities and utilizing recommended job activities while performing fair share job activities.

Mixed level school counselors reported statistically significant differences between academic preparation and actual job activities in all seven subscales: fair share, clerical, consultation, administrative, coordination, curriculum, and counseling activities. The effect sizes of the discrepancies ranged from medium to small, respectively. The four largest discrepancies were found in fair share, clerical, consultation, and administrative activities, as all four had medium effect sizes. Mixed level school counselors reported performing fair share, clerical, and consultation activities more frequently than they were effectively trained for these three activities, and receiving greater academic preparation effectiveness in administrative activities, compared to the frequency that they actually performed administrative activities. Additionally, mixed level school counselors reported receiving greater academic preparation effectiveness in coordination, curriculum, and counseling activities, compared to the frequency that they actually performed these three activities. Overall, mixed level school counselors may benefit from their academic preparation programs increasingly focusing on consultation activities, and describing strategies to implement recommended job activities while performing fair share job activities.

In examining school counselors' responses across the four school levels (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed level school counselors), several general themes emerged. First, this present study found some similarities across the four school levels. For example, school counselors in the four school levels reportedly performed fair share and consultation activities to a greater degree than the effectiveness of their academic preparation. Also, school counselors at

all school levels reported higher levels of effective academic preparation for administrative activities in comparison to the frequency of actually performing administrative activities. At the same time, school counselors reported fairly low levels of performing administrative activities, with elementary school counselors reportedly performing the highest levels of administrative activities of the four school levels. The findings in the present study regarding elementary school counselors reporting the highest level of administrative job activities are varied when compared to other findings in the literature. For example, Rayle and Adams (2008) and Sink and Yilik-Downer (2001) found that high school counselors reported spending more time in administrative job activities, compared to elementary or middle school counselors. However, Scarborough (2005) had similar findings compared to the present study, that elementary school counselors reportedly performed more administrative job activities than high school counselors.

Another general theme in examining school counselors' academic preparation and actual job activities by school levels was that elementary school counselors were the only school level to report performing higher frequencies of curriculum activities than the effectiveness of academic preparation. In fact, as school levels increased (i.e., elementary, middle, high, mixed, respectively), the frequency of school counselors' reported performed curriculum activities decreased. This finding is consistent with the literature, as Scarborough (2005) also found that elementary school counselors reportedly spent more time in curriculum activities than middle or high school counselors. Additionally, Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) found that elementary school counselors reported classroom guidance curriculum as a higher level of importance than secondary school counselors; this finding was one of the highest reported differences between elementary and secondary school counselors in their study.

Lastly, middle, high, and mixed level school counselors reported performing more clerical activities, compared to the effectiveness of their academic preparation. Middle, high, and mixed level school counselors also reportedly performed more clerical job activities than elementary school counselors. Similarly, Scarborough (2005) found that middle and high school counselors reportedly performed more clerical job activities than elementary school counselors.

Academic Preparedness by School Level

When comparing the reported academic preparation of school counselors in the four different school levels (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed) in the third research question, *How do school counselors' academic preparedness vary across school level (e.g., elementary, middle, high, and mixed)?* there were no statistically significant discrepancies between school levels in any of the seven subscales (e.g., counseling, consultation, curriculum, coordination, fair share, clerical, or administrative activities). The findings in the present study are different from a much smaller study (N = 26) Trolley (2011), who found that school counselors at different school levels reported different levels of academic preparation. Generally speaking, there have been many inconsistencies in school counselor academic preparation programs described in the literature. For example, states have varied school counseling educational, certification, and licensure requirements (ACA, 2012b), nearly half of the school counselor academic preparation programs nationally are CACREP accredited (ASCA, n.d.b; CACREP, 2012b; Schweiger et al., 2012), and requirements vary between school counselor academic preparation programs (Akos & Scarborough, 2004; Baker & Gerler, 2001; Pérusse et al., 2001). While this dissertation study does not examine the difference between school counselor academic preparation programs, differences between school levels were examined and no statistically significant differences were found. As a result, there may be few differences between school counselors' perceived

preparation by school level. Future studies can expand on the current study by examining similarities and differences between school counselor academic preparation programs.

CACREP Accreditation

In examining the fourth research question, *How do school counselors' reported academic preparedness and actual job activities within school level vary by graduation from a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited preparation program?* although school counselors from CACREP accredited academic preparation programs tended to have higher means for academic preparation and actual job activities scores for recommended job activities compared to school counselors from non-CACREP accredited programs, there were very few statistically significant findings. Specifically, elementary school counselors from CACREP accredited academic preparation programs reported statistically significant higher consultation and coordination academic preparation scores, compared to school counselors from non-CACREP accredited programs. Additionally, middle school counselors from CACREP accredited academic preparation programs reported statistically significant higher counseling, curriculum, and coordination academic preparation scores, compared to school counselors from non-CACREP accredited programs. Thus, the only statistically significant findings between graduates from CACREP and non-CACREP accredited programs were that elementary and middle school CACREP graduates reported higher mean scores on some recommended academic preparation subscales.

Historically, elementary and middle school counselors performed more recommended job activities than high school counselors (Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2001). Additionally, CACREP created standards for recommended school counseling academic preparation (CACREP, 2009). Perhaps elementary

and middle school counselors from CACREP accredited academic preparation programs may be more likely to perceive being effectively prepared for recommended job activities, as these school counselors are both (a) from academic preparation programs emphasizing recommended activities and (b) likely to have more opportunities to actually perform these recommended job activities in the role of elementary or middle school counselor. Additionally, this finding may tentatively echo the findings of Culbreth et al. (2005), as researchers discovered a significant positive relationship between students graduating from a CACREP-accredited program and their belief that their academic training prepared them well for their school counseling position.

Implications and Recommendations

This study resulted in many implications and recommendations, which will be discussed in the subsequent section. First, the findings in the present study show that a national sample of school counselors who graduated from their academic preparation programs between 2002 and 2012 (a) perceived being somewhat effectively prepared for recommended job activities including counseling, consultation, curriculum, and coordination activities and (b) occasionally performed those recommended activities in their current school counseling position. Several researchers discussed discrepancies between job expectations taught in academic preparation programs and actually performed by school counselors (Allen et al., 2002; Bodenhorn, 2006; Brott & Myers, 1999; Chambers et al., 2010; Culbreth et al., 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Milsom, 2002; Mustaine et al., 1996; NOSCA, 2011, 2012a; P érusse & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Steen et al., 2008; Trolley, 2011). In the present study, although discrepancies were found between school counselors' academic preparation and actual practice, it is promising that the average responses for recommended job activities for both academic preparation and actual job activities were fairly moderate for all recommended

subscales. Although none of the reported recommended job activities means for preparation or practice were high (e.g., effective or very effective academic preparation; frequently or routinely performing job activities), all were moderate, this may be indicative of school counselors' receiving training on and performing many job activities rather than an over emphasis on one or two activities. Thus, school counselors perceived moderately effective preparation and frequency of practice for all subscales. It is also positive that, for the most part, the school counselors in the present study reported both being more effectively prepared for recommended job activities and conducting the recommended job activities with greater frequency, in comparison to the "other" job activities, such as fair share, clerical, and administrative activities. Professional organizations, school counseling counselor educators, school counseling leaders, and school counselors should continue working to improve school counselor preparation and practice.

At the same time, although school counselors reported moderate preparation and practice in the current study, school counselors could be prepared for and performing activities that were not included in this close-ended survey. Additionally, it should be noted that the SCARS instrument was created in 2005, eight years before the data collected in this study. In the future, researchers should include open-ended questions when collecting data on school counselors' preparation and practice to gather information on all academic preparation content and actual job activities. Additionally, the SCARS should be reviewed to determine if the job activities in the instrument are still relevant, especially in light of new school counseling initiatives and trends, such as the 2012 edition of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2012b).

The second recommendation to come from this study includes: school counseling students and school counselors should receive more preparation and training on consultation. Although school counselors reported that academic preparation programs most effectively

prepared them for counseling activities, school counselors also reported conducting consultation job activities with the greatest frequency. As a result, school counseling academic preparation programs should incorporate more effective consultation course content; school counseling supervisors and school district leaders also should provide training to current school counselors on consultation.

Other sources have documented the need to include consultation in school counselor academic preparation programs (Akos & Scarborough, 2004; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; CACREP, 2009; Pérusse, Goodnough, & Noël, 2001). Burnham and Jackson (2000) found that school counselors often used consultation and recommended school counseling counselor educators provide more consultation training to school counselors. In a national self-report study of school counselor academic preparation programs, Pérusse, Goodnough, and Noël (2001) found that only 20% of the academic preparation programs provided consultation course content specifically for school counselors. Akos and Scarborough (2004) performed a content analysis of syllabi used in school counseling internship courses; they found that consultation was one of the top three on-site requirements for school counseling interns. Lastly, in the CACREP 2009 standards, the importance of consultation was emphasized, as *collaboration and consultation* was one of the eight school counseling specific domains required of school counseling students from CACREP accredited programs.

There could be several reasons for school counselors' reporting higher frequencies of consultation job activities compared to the other recommended job activities. For example, the higher frequency of reported consultation job activities in this study may be the result of larger educational trends, such as educational budget cuts and a struggling U.S. economy. Although ASCA recommends 250 students to every one school counselor (ASCA, 2012c), the national

average is actually 459 students to one school counselor (United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011), which is nearly double the recommended average. With high student caseloads, school counselors may have less time to provide direct services to students (e.g., counseling and curriculum job activities) and instead may be spending more time in consultation activities such as supporting teachers, administrators, parents, as well as internal and external staff who are directly serving students. Thus, the high student caseloads could be one reason for school counselors' reportedly performing more frequent consultation job activities, compared to other job activities. Thus, school counseling students need to be better prepared for (a) the realities of the kindergarten through twelfth grade educational system and (b) their future school counseling job activities, including high student caseloads and providing consultation job activities.

The third recommendation is for school counseling counselor educators to prepare school counseling students to best utilize their time performing fair share and clerical activities. Although fair share and clerical activities are not recommended activities, the school counselors in this study reported performing these activities with similar frequencies as other recommended job activities. Systemically, school counseling counselor educators and leaders should advocate for, as well as prepare school counseling students and train school counselors to advocate for school counselors performing recommended job activities. Since the school counselors in this study reported moderately performing some "other" activities (i.e., fair share and clerical activities), in addition to advocating, school counselors should be prepared to perform fair share and clerical activities as efficiently as possible.

This recommendation is not to perform "other" job activities instead of or more than recommended job activities. Rather, this researcher suggests that in addition to advocating for

and performing recommended job activities, school counselors should be prepared for the realities of school counseling practice. With a realistic perception of school counselors' roles and activities, school counselors will be better prepared to advocate for their role, as well as to reframe and best utilize their time spent performing "other" job activities.

Examples of efficiently performing "other" job activities include: while participating in fair share job activities such as committee participation or coordinating standardized tests, school counselors can build rapport with colleagues to aide in consultation and collaboration, market the school counseling program, and gather information on the school climate. When school counselors engage in the fair share job activities of facilitating outreach programs to low income families, or participating in bus or cafeteria duties, they also can informally conduct needs assessments, engage in brief counseling, make appointments for future counseling, observe student, family, and peer behavior, development, and interactions, briefly check-in with students and families, and build rapport with students and families. When performing clerical tasks, such as enrolling new students or scheduling students for classes, school counselors can use the interaction to informally assess the students' functioning, market the school counseling program, build rapport, discuss transition issues, and initiate the student orientation process.

The fourth recommendation is for school counselor academic preparation programs to increasingly prepare school counselors to work in specific school levels. Thus, while preparing all school counseling students for kindergarten through twelfth grade employment, school counselor academic preparation programs also should describe the job activities for each different school level. The school counselors in this study reported no statistically significant difference in preparation by school level. At the same time, school counselors reported several differences in job activities by school level, as well as discrepancies between job activities and

academic preparation. For example, elementary school counselors were the only school level who reported performing more curriculum job activities than the effectiveness of their academic preparation. Additionally, middle, high, and mixed level school counselors reported performing more clerical activities than the effectiveness of their academic preparation. Overall, school counselors at different school levels are performing different activities, which has been documented in the literature (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Dahir et al., 2009; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2008; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yilik-Downer, 2001; Studer et al., 2011). Thus, school counselor academic preparation programs should provide specific preparation for each school levels. Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) found that secondary school counselors recommended their training be more realistic, including preparation on scheduling and other clerical jobs. Pérusse and Goodnough also recommended that school counseling academic preparation programs should vary course content based on school level. For example, perhaps school counseling counselor educators could offer supplemental seminars to all school counseling students focusing on the specific job activities performed in each of the three school levels (elementary, middle, and high). Additionally, perhaps CACREP accreditation standards could include the need to train all school counselors on the different job activities for each school level. Overall, school counselors should continue to receive academic preparation for kindergarten through twelfth grade levels; in addition, academic preparation programs can prepare all school counselors for the different job activities performed in each school level.

The fifth recommendation is for researchers to use a broader range of participants (i.e., non-ASCA members) to collect data on school counselors' academic preparation and actual job activities. All participants in this study were ASCA members, which could have impacted the

findings. For example, few statistically significant differences were found between participants who graduated from CACREP and non-CACREP accredited academic preparation programs. CACREP accredited school counselor academic preparation programs prepare school counselors to meet students' academic, career, and personal/social development through activities, such as facilitating CSCP (CACREP, 2012c); the ASCA National Model is a type of CSCP (ASCA, 2012b). Additionally, the SCARS instrument (and as a result, the modified SCARS instrument used in this study) was based off the 2003 ASCA National Model. ASCA members may be more exposed to the ASCA National Model, as a result of their membership. For example, Perera-Diltz and Mason (2008) found that school counselors who received training on the ASCA National Model reported significant differences in implementing more aspects of the model, compared to school counselors who did not receive training in the ASCA National Model. Future studies could examine school counselor preparation and practice using non-ASCA members, to determine if a wider range of school counselors would have similar reported academic preparation and practice.

The last recommendation is to assess the future uses of school counselors' perceived preparation and practice. Although school counselors in the current study reported fairly moderate scores for their academic preparation and practice, there were still discrepancies between the two. A crucial question for the field is: what should be the driving forces shaping school counselor academic preparation requirements? Similarly, Pérusse and Goodnough (2005) asked:

Are school counselors the best source for determining the future of school counselor education, or are these data best viewed as perceptions based on current practice? Many questions seem yet to be answered regarding whether counselor educators might design

their curriculum around what professional school counselors deem as important, what ASCA deems as important, what the literature shows, a combination of these, or some alternate option. (p. 117)

School counselors are at the forefront of the school counseling field directly working in the schools and their voices should be heard in the school counselor academic preparation discussion. School counselor academic preparation should be impacted by a combination of forces: school counselors' perceptions, as well as theory, national movements and standards, input from school counseling leaders, and counseling and educational trends. In fact, these six factors should mutually influence each other in a continuous cycle of feedback to provide a more unified school counseling front.

Limitations

This dissertation study has several limitations that may have impacted the findings. First, the survey was only comprised of close-ended questions; thus, participants did not have the opportunity for additional responses to fully report their perceptions of their academic preparation and actual job activities. Some participants emailed the researcher to give additional feedback, and those comments were not considered in this study.

Second, some participants expressed confusion regarding some academic preparation "other" survey questions. Specifically, the researcher received feedback from two of the three school counselors in the pre-testing process, as well as from two study participants who emailed the researcher regarding their responses to the last part of the survey, where they answered questions pertaining to the effectiveness of their academic preparation for "other" job activities. For example, one participant who emailed the researcher stated "I wasn't sure how to respond to certain responses, particularly the final page. What exactly would a program prepare me for in

terms of things like hall duty, except to encourage me to resist that? In that sense, then, “effectively” would make sense.” Overall, the academic preparation “other” questions could have been confusing to participants, which could impact the reliability and validity of those items.

A third limitation of this study involves the participants. The participants in this study were all ASCA members who volunteered to provide their email address in the online ASCA Member directory and who self-reported as both a practicing school counselor and having graduated in the last ten years. The findings from this study cannot be generalized to all school counselors, only ASCA members, and even then, less than half of the practicing ASCA members provided their email addresses to the online ASCA Member Directory. Lastly, the findings were based on the school counselors’ self-reports and perceptions, not on observed behaviors. Thus, findings need to be interpreted accordingly.

Fourth, although technology was an incredible benefit to this study, technology could also be a limitation. For example, the email invitation sent to participants to complete the survey could have been blocked by participants’ firewall and spam settings. Hence, not all participants may have received the emails sent from the researcher. Additionally, some participants unfamiliar with email and internet technology may have been uncomfortable and less likely to complete the online survey. Lastly, the emails could have been sent to outdated or incorrect email addresses without reaching the intended participant.

Lastly, researcher biases also could be a study limitation. For example, the researcher may be positively biased toward both ASCA and CACREP, as (a) she is an ASCA member, (b) within the previous couple years she conducted a research study as a contractor for CACREP, and (c) she attended both a master’s and doctoral graduate program accredited by CACREP.

Additionally, the researcher could also be biased by her previous experience as a school counselor and future aspirations to be a school counseling counselor educator. As a result, the researcher consulted with members of her committee throughout her dissertation study including her methodology and findings.

Summary

The aim of this study was to examine school counselors' academic preparation and job activities, and ultimately, to contribute to continuing the effort to unify the school counselor academic preparation and the school counseling field. The results from the present study lead to several implications and recommendations for future research and practice, including (a) acknowledging school counselors' moderate reported levels of preparation and practice, (b) increasing school counseling students' and school counselors' consultation preparation and training, (c) better preparing school counselors to utilize fair share and clerical job activities, (d) better preparing school counselors for specific school level employment, (e) conducting research on a broader range of participants, and (f) assessing the future uses of school counselors' perceptions of their preparation and practice.

One of the biggest findings in this study were the consultation trends: that of the recommended job activities, school counselors, on average, reported performing consultation job activities the most frequently and receiving the least effective training for this activity. Thus, school counseling counselor educators and supervisors are charged with better preparing school counseling students and better training school counselors for consultation job activities. At the same time, school counseling counselor educators, leaders, and professional organizations need to be cognizant of the potential reasons for more frequent consultation activities systemically such as high student caseloads, and to address those issues on a large scale.

A second major finding was school counselors' moderate reported academic preparation and practice. Several researchers have discussed discrepancies between job expectations taught in academic preparation programs and actually performed by school counselors (Allen et al., 2002; Bodenhorn, 2006; Brott & Myers, 1999; Chambers et al., 2010; Culbreth et al., 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Milsom, 2002; Mustaine et al., 1996; NOSCA, 2011, 2012a; Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005; Sisson & Bullis, 1992; Steen et al., 2008; Trolley, 2011). Additionally, researchers have claimed that school counselors performed inconsistent job roles and activities (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010; Trolley, 2011). Although the school counselors in this dissertation study reported statistically significant discrepancies between their preparation and practice, at the same time, they also reported both moderate preparation and practice: that they were somewhat effectively prepared for the recommended job activities and occasionally performing these recommended job activities. This study is a snapshot of the perceptions of a national population of school counselors who have graduated in the last decade. School counseling counselor educators, leaders, professional organizations and school counselors, in looking at this snapshot: is this where you want school counseling preparation and practice? And if not, what changes can you make for the future generation of school counselors who graduate in the next decade?

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APPENDICES

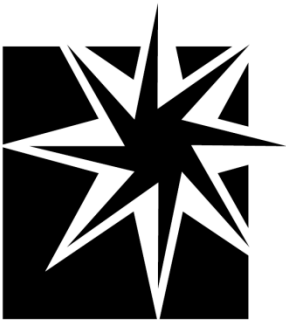
Appendix A

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale

1 = never 4 = frequently	2 = rarely 5 = routinely	3 = occasionally	ACTUAL	PREFER
Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local in-services)				
Coordinate with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs				
Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives				
Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students				
Coordinate orientation process / activities for students				
"Other" Activities				
Participate on committees within the school				
Coordinate the standardized testing program				
Organize outreach to low income families (i.e., Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)				
Respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)				
Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty				
Schedule students for classes				
Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school				
Maintain/Complete educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)				
Handle discipline of students				
Substitute teach and / or cover classes for teachers at your school				

Please reference:
 Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8, 274-283.

*The School Counselor
 Activity Rating Scale*



Developed by: Janna L. Scarborough, Ph.D., NCC, NCSC, ACS

School Counseling Activity Rating Scale

Below is a list of functions that may be performed by school counselors. In **Column 1**, please write the number that indicates the frequency with which you ACTUALLY perform each function. In **Column 2**, please write the number that indicates the frequency with which you would PREFER to perform each function.

Please place the corresponding number in each box.

Ratings: 1 = I never do this; I would prefer to never do this
 2 = I rarely do this; I would prefer to rarely do this
 3 = I occasionally do this; I would prefer to occasionally do this
 4 = I frequently do this; I would prefer to frequently do this
 5 = I routinely do this; I would prefer to routinely do this

	1 = never	2 = rarely	3 = occasionally	4 = frequently	5 = routinely	ACTUAL	PREFER
Counseling Activities							
Counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns							
Counsel with students regarding school behavior							
Counsel students regarding crisis/emergency issues							
Counsel with students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)							
Provide small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills							
Provide small group counseling for academic issues							
Conduct small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)							
Conduct small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own use or family/friend use)							
Follow-up on individual and group counseling participants							
Counsel students regarding academic issues							
Consultation Activities							
Consult with school staff concerning student behavior							
Consult with community and school agencies concerning individual students							
Consult with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues							
Coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)							

	1 = never	2 = rarely	3 = occasionally	4 = frequently	5 = routinely	ACTUAL	PREFER
Assessment Activities							
Assist in identifying exceptional children (special education)							
Provide consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)							
Participate in team / grade level / subject team meetings							
Curriculum Activities							
Conduct classroom activities to introduce yourself and explain the counseling program to all students							
Conduct classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work							
Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)							
Conduct classroom lessons on relating to others (family, friends)							
Conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues							
Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution							
Conduct classroom lessons regarding substance abuse							
Conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues							
Coordination Activities							
Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)							
Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program							
Inform parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school							
Conduct or coordinate parent education classes or workshops							
Coordinate school-wide response for crisis management and intervention							
Inform teachers / administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school.							
Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs							
Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform							

Continued...

Appendix B

Written Permission to Use and Modify the SCARS Instrument

Simone Lambert

From: Scarborough, Janna Lynn [SCARBORO@mail.etsu.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, July 31, 2012 10:44 AM
To: Emily Goodman Scott
Cc: slambert@vt.edu
Subject: RE: using & modifying the SCARS

Hello Emily,

Thank you for your interest in the SCARS. You do have my permission to use and modify the instrument as long as you cite appropriately. I am always interested in how the instrument is used and your findings. If you are willing to share this information as you progress, I am interested. Good luck to you!

-Janna

Janna L. Scarborough, Ph.D., NCC, NCSC, ACS, NYLMHC
 Associate Professor and Counseling Program Coordinator
 Associate Department Chair, HDAL

Clemmer College of Education
 Box 70548, Warf Pickel 301E
 East Tennessee State University
 Johnson City, TN 37614
 423-439-4191
scarboro@etsu.edu
<http://www.counseling.etsu.edu/coe/hdal/counseling>

From: egscott.vt@gmail.com [mailto:egscott.vt@gmail.com] **On Behalf Of** Emily Goodman Scott
Sent: Thursday, July 26, 2012 11:14 AM
To: Scarborough, Janna Lynn
Cc: slambert@vt.edu
Subject: using & modifying the SCARS

Dr. Scarborough,

I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech and anticipate focusing my dissertation on school counselors' roles.

I am contacting you for permission to use and modify the SCARS instrument. I propose adding on to the instrument for my dissertation, so participants (school counselors) can respond with how well their school counseling training program prepared them for each item.

I have CCed my chair, Dr. Simone Lambert. For more information or questions, please respond to either of us.

Thanks so much, in advance, for your consideration.

Best,

Emily

--

Emily Goodman Scott, MA Ed, NCC, NCSC, ACS
 Doctoral Candidate: Counselor Education, Virginia Tech
www.emilygoodmanscott.com

**School Counselor Activity Rating Scale by Dr. Janna L. Scarborough
Modified by Emily Goodman-Scott**

Below, in the left column is a list of functions that may be performed by school counselors.

In **Column 1, Actual**, please click the response that indicates the frequency with which you **actually** perform each function.

In **Column 2, Academic Preparation**, please click the response that indicates **how effectively your graduate program prepared you** to perform each function.

These responses (below) were imbedded in a drop-down box for each question below

Actual Work Activities	Academic Preparation
I never do this	Very ineffectively
I rarely do this	Ineffectively
I occasionally do this	Somewhat effectively
I frequently do this	Effectively
I routinely do this	Very effectively

Counseling Activities		
	How often do you actually:	How effectively did your graduate program prepare you to:
Counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Counsel with students regarding school behavior	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Counsel students regarding crisis/emergency issues	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Counsel with students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Provide small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Provide small group counseling for academic issues	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Conduct small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Conduct small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own use or family/friend use)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Follow-up on individual and group counseling participants	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Counsel students regarding academic issues	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>

Consultation Activities		
	How often do you <u>actually</u>:	How effectively did your <u>graduate program prepare you to</u>:
Consult with school staff concerning student behavior	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Consult with community and school agencies concerning individual students	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Consult with parents regarding child/adolescent development issues	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Assist in identifying exceptional children (special education)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Provide consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Participate in team / grade level / subject team meetings	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
[page break]		
Curriculum Activities		
	How often do you <u>actually</u>:	How effectively did your <u>graduate program prepare you to</u>:
Conduct classroom activities to introduce yourself and explain the counseling program to all students	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Conduct classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/ or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Conduct classroom lessons on relating to others (family, friends)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and development issues	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Conduct classroom lessons regarding substance abuse	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
[page break]		
Coordination Activities		
	How often do you <u>actually</u>:	How effectively did your <u>graduate program prepare you to</u>:
Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Inform parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>

your school			
Conduct or coordinate parent education classes or workshops	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Coordinate school-wide response for crisis management and intervention	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Inform teachers / administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local in-services)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Coordinate with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Coordinate orientation process / activities for students	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
[page break]			
“Other” Activities			
	How often do you actually:		How effectively did your graduate program prepare you to:
Participate on committees within the school	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Coordinate the standardized testing program	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Organize outreach to low income families (i.e., Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Schedule students for classes	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Maintain/Complete educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Handle discipline of students	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>
Substitute teach and / or cover classes for teachers at your school	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>	<i>Insert possible responses here</i>

Based on:
 Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8, 274-283.

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the following demographic questions by clicking in the appropriate box or typing in the given box.

1. Check all student grade levels that attend your school:

- Preschool
- Kindergarten
- First
- Second
- Third
- Fourth
- Fifth
- Sixth
- Seventh
- Eighth
- Ninth
- Tenth
- Eleventh
- Twelfth

2. Your current school counseling employment status:

- Full-time employment

- Part-time
- I am not currently employed as a school counselor

3. The year you completed your academic preparation (e.g., Master's program) that enabled you to become certified/licensed as a school counselor:

- 2002
- 2003
- 2004
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- Other (open dialogue box)

4. The highest level of education you completed pertaining to your work as a school counselor:

- Bachelor's degree only
- Some Master's level courses
- Master's degree in school counseling
- Master's degree in clinical mental health/community counseling

- Master's degree in a mental health field (e.g., social work, psychology, etc.)
- Doctoral degree in school counseling
- Doctoral degree in clinical mental health/community counseling
- Doctoral degree in a mental health field (e.g., social work, psychology, etc.)
- Other (open dialogue box)

5. Did you graduate from a program accredited by CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs)?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know (if you select this option, please state the name of your institution here)

Appendix E

Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Permission to Conduct Survey



Office of Research Compliance
 Institutional Review Board
 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497)
 Blacksburg, VA 24060
 540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
 email irb@vt.edu
 website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 8, 2013
TO: Simone Lambert, Emily Goodman Scott
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires May 31, 2014)
PROTOCOL TITLE: School Counselors' Job Activities and Preparation for Job Activities
IRB NUMBER: 12-1103

Effective January 8, 2013, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 2**
 Protocol Approval Date: **January 8, 2013**
 Protocol Expiration Date: **N/A**
 Continuing Review Due Date*: **N/A**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Invent the Future

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
 An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution

Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

Appendix F

First Survey Invitation: January 14, 2013

Email subject:

Please Help Future School Counselors

Email body:

Greetings School Counselor,

How well did your education prepare you for your school counseling job? In this 10-15 minute survey, share your opinion and help improve school counselor education for the future generation.

Please consider completing this survey if:

1. You are a practicing school counselor
2. You graduated from your preparation program (e.g., Master's program) in the last ten years

Complete this online survey by clicking on the link below.

Created link inserted here

Participants' responses will be anonymous and four randomly chosen participants will receive \$50 to Amazon.com.

Please see the statement below for more information; completing the survey implies you have read and agree with the consent statement, below.

Thank you for your consideration in taking this important survey, and for continuing to serve your profession.

Best,

Emily Goodman-Scott, Virginia Tech doctoral candidate

Study Background and Consent: School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Job Activities

Purpose of Study and Questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to compare school counselors' academic preparation (e.g., their Master's program) and their actual school counseling job activities. Participants will complete an online survey to gather information about their academic preparation, their current school counseling job activities, and applicable demographic information. The ultimate purpose of this study is to improve the school counseling field, specifically to better prepare school counselors to meet their students' needs.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study is a modified version of the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS; 2005) by Dr. Janna Scarborough.

Participants

Participants are American School Counselor Association (ASCA) members who have self-identified as (1) practicing school counselors and (2) have graduated from their preparation program in the last ten years. Participants choose to participate in the study and may withdraw from the study at any time. As far as can be anticipated, participation will entail no or minimal mental, social, legal, emotional, or physical risk from participating in this study. There is no compensation or penalty for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

Participant responses are anonymous and participants can choose to enter a raffle to win an incentive. To enter the voluntary raffle, a participant can choose to give an email address; these email addresses will be housed in a separate file and a separate online survey tool from all other participant responses; thus, participant responses and email addresses will not be associated. The researcher will be the only person with access to the list of participant email addresses and will do so only to award raffle prizes; the list of raffle participants will be destroyed after incentives have been collected.

The researcher is in the process of applying for a grant from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). If awarded the CACREP grant, the data from this study will be shared with CACREP, excluding participants' email addresses given for the incentive raffle. Thus, both the primary researcher and CACREP may publish findings from the described study.

Consent

By completing the online survey, participants indicate that they are willingly participating in the study, have read and understand their rights and responsibilities under Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board regulations described in this statement, and agree to answer as honestly as possible. Additionally, participants are free to avoid answering any questions they choose. Participants may choose to stop completing the survey at any time. However, once participants have submitted the survey, withdrawal will not be possible, as there will be no linkage between the participant and their responses.

Researcher

The primary researcher is Emily Goodman-Scott, a doctoral student at Virginia Tech, Falls Church campus; she is conducting the described study in fulfillment of a Doctor of Philosophy in Counselor Education. Ms. Goodman-Scott's dissertation is chaired by Dr. Simone Lambert, a faculty member at Virginia Tech. This study has been approved by (1) Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, (2) Dr. Simone Lambert, and (3) Ms. Goodman-Scott's dissertation committee.

Contact information. To inquire about this study via email, please contact Ms. Goodman-Scott: egscott@vt.edu or Dr. Lambert: slambert@vt.edu. Both Ms. Goodman-Scott and Dr. Lambert can be reached via mail at Virginia Tech, School of Education, Northern Virginia Center, 7054 Haycock Road, Falls Church, VA 22043. For questions about the

protection of human research participants in this study, please contact Dr. David Moore, Chair, Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects via email: moored@vt.edu, or mail: Office of Research Compliance, 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497), Blacksburg, VA 24061.

Appendix G

Second Survey Invitation: January 21, 2013

Email subject:

Please Share Your Opinion on School Counseling

Email body:

Greetings,

As school counselors, we value helping others. In approximately 10 minutes, you can help the school counseling field by completing a quick online survey through Virginia Tech. This important survey will help improve school counselor preparation.

Please complete the survey if:

1. You are a practicing school counselor
2. You graduated from your preparation program (e.g., Master's program) in the last ten years

You may complete this online survey by clicking on the link below.

Created link inserted here

Participants' responses will be anonymous. **Four randomly chosen participants will receive \$50 to Amazon.com.**

Please see the statement below for more information; completing the survey implies you have read and agree with the consent statement, below.

Thank you for your consideration in taking this important survey, and for continuing to serve your profession.

Best,
Emily Goodman-Scott

Study Background and Consent: School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Job Activities

Purpose of Study and Questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to compare school counselors' academic preparation (e.g., their Master's program) and their actual school counseling job activities. Participants will complete an online survey to gather information about their academic preparation, their current school counseling job activities, and applicable demographic information. The ultimate purpose of this study is to improve the school counseling field, specifically to better prepare school counselors to meet their students' needs.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study is a modified version of the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS; 2005) by Dr. Janna Scarborough.

Participants

Participants are American School Counselor Association (ASCA) members who have self-identified as (1) practicing school counselors and (2) have graduated from their preparation program in the last ten years. Participants choose to participate in the study and may withdraw from the study at any time. As far as can be anticipated, participation will entail no or minimal mental, social, legal, emotional, or physical risk from participating in this study. There is no compensation or penalty for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

Participant responses are anonymous and participants can choose to enter a raffle to win an incentive. To enter the voluntary raffle, a participant can choose to give an email address; these email addresses will be housed in a separate file and a separate online survey tool from all other participant responses; thus, participant responses and email addresses will not be associated. The researcher will be the only person with access to the list of participant email addresses and will do so only to award raffle prizes; the list of raffle participants will be destroyed after incentives have been collected.

The researcher is in the process of applying for a grant from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). If awarded the CACREP grant, the data from this study will be shared with CACREP, excluding participants' email addresses given for the incentive raffle. Thus, both the primary researcher and CACREP may publish findings from the described study.

Consent

By completing the online survey, participants indicate that they are willingly participating in the study, have read and understand their rights and responsibilities under Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board regulations described in this statement, and agree to answer as honestly as possible. Additionally, participants are free to avoid answering any questions they choose. Participants may choose to stop completing the survey at any time. However, once participants have submitted the survey, withdrawal will not be possible, as there will be no linkage between the participant and their responses.

Researcher

The primary researcher is Emily Goodman-Scott, a doctoral student at Virginia Tech, Falls Church campus; she is conducting the described study in fulfillment of a Doctor of Philosophy in Counselor Education. Ms. Goodman-Scott's dissertation is chaired by Dr. Simone Lambert, a faculty member at Virginia Tech. This study has been approved by (1) Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, (2) Dr. Simone Lambert, and (3) Ms. Goodman-Scott's dissertation committee.

Contact information. To inquire about this study via email, please contact Ms. Goodman-Scott: egscott@vt.edu or Dr. Lambert: slambert@vt.edu. Both Ms. Goodman-Scott and Dr. Lambert can be reached via mail at Virginia Tech, School of Education, Northern Virginia Center, 7054 Haycock Road, Falls Church, VA 22043. For questions about the

protection of human research participants in this study, please contact Dr. David Moore, Chair, Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects via email: moored@vt.edu, or mail: Office of Research Compliance, 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497), Blacksburg, VA 24061.

Appendix H

Third Survey Invitation: January 28, 2013

Email subject:

There is still time to help!

Email body:

Greetings School Counselor,

I still need your help and it is not too late. You have three more days to complete this 10- 15 minute survey and be eligible for one of four \$50 gift certificates to Amazon.com. This is the last email reminder.

Please complete the survey if:

1. You are a practicing school counselor
2. You graduated from your preparation program (e.g., Master's program) in the last ten years

You can complete this online survey by clicking the link below.

Created link inserted here

Please see the statement below for more information; completing the survey implies you have read and agree with the consent statement, below.

Thank you for your consideration in taking this important survey, and for continuing to serve your profession.

Best,
Emily Goodman-Scott

Study Background and Consent: School Counselors' Academic Preparation and Job Activities

Purpose of Study and Questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to compare school counselors' academic preparation (e.g., their Master's program) and their actual school counseling job activities. Participants will complete an online survey to gather information about their academic preparation, their current school counseling job activities, and applicable demographic information. The ultimate purpose of this study is to improve the school counseling field, specifically to better prepare school counselors to meet their students' needs.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study is a modified version of the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS; 2005) by Dr. Janna Scarborough.

Participants

Participants are American School Counselor Association (ASCA) members who have self-identified as (1) practicing school counselors and (2) have graduated from their preparation program in the last ten years. Participants choose to participate in the study and may withdraw from the study at any time. As far as can be anticipated, participation will entail no or minimal mental, social, legal, emotional, or physical risk from participating in this study. There is no compensation or penalty for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

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The researcher is in the process of applying for a grant from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). If awarded the CACREP grant, the data from this study will be shared with CACREP, excluding participants' email addresses given for the incentive raffle. Thus, both the primary researcher and CACREP may publish findings from the described study.

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Researcher

The primary researcher is Emily Goodman-Scott, a doctoral student at Virginia Tech, Falls Church campus; she is conducting the described study in fulfillment of a Doctor of Philosophy in Counselor Education. Ms. Goodman-Scott's dissertation is chaired by Dr. Simone Lambert, a faculty member at Virginia Tech. This study has been approved by (1) Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, (2) Dr. Simone Lambert, and (3) Ms. Goodman-Scott's dissertation committee.

Contact information. To inquire about this study via email, please contact Ms. Goodman-Scott: egscott@vt.edu or Dr. Lambert: slambert@vt.edu. Both Ms. Goodman-Scott and Dr. Lambert can be reached via mail at Virginia Tech, School of Education, Northern Virginia Center, 7054 Haycock Road, Falls Church, VA 22043. For questions about the protection of human research participants in this study, please contact Dr. David Moore, Chair, Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects via email:

moored@vt.edu, or mail: Office of Research Compliance, 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497), Blacksburg, VA 24061.