

John C. Carey · Belinda Harris  
Sang Min Lee · Oyaziwo Aluede *Editors*

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# International Handbook for Policy Research on School- Based Counseling

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Editors

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 Springer

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## Preface

This *International Handbook for Policy Research in School-Based Counseling* is an ambitious attempt to document what we currently know about the relationships between policy and school-based counseling practice around the globe, to identify what needs to be known in order to promote effective practice, and to identify how research can help us know what is still unknown. As we worked on the handbook, we became aware that while policy research on school-based counseling is being conducted in many countries, policy research is a neglected focus within the counseling professional community in nearly every country. Moreover, mechanisms to support rigorous international policy research are almost totally lacking. As noted in the capstone chapter, we have come to believe that the establishment of these mechanisms should be a priority given the potential power of school-based counseling and the ways (both positive and negative) that policy is affecting practice.

School-based counseling has major potential to contribute to the public good. School-based counseling practice is affected by policy. Too often this policy is not guided by sound research. Rigorous policy research is urgently needed to ensure that all students and their parents have access to high-quality school counseling services. We advocate greater collaboration between academics, counseling educators, and professional associations to develop and support practice research networks of school-based practitioners, so that data from schools contributes to regional and national databases of outcomes and also yields powerful stories of change and growth. We are indebted to many people who contributed in many ways to the development of this handbook. We must first acknowledge the outstanding work of the chapter authors who took up the major challenges of developing valuable guidelines for different methodologies and summarizing policy landscape and policy research in important national and regional contexts around the globe. We are certain that handbook readers will profit tremendously from the quality of their work. Their work has established that policy research is an essential and exciting research focus within school counseling. In many ways, they have founded a new field of research.

In addition, we wish to thank our colleagues who provided guidance in the organization and realization of this handbook. These include Dr. Michael Krezmien, Dr. Catherine Griffith, Dr. Virginia Lee, and Ms. Karen Harrington.

We wish to acknowledge the outstanding organizational and editorial support that Dr. Kristine Camacho has contributed to the project. The care and quality of her work made the production of the handbook possible and enjoyable.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge and thank our colleagues at Springer, especially Ms. Judy Jones, Ms. Rajeswari Balachandran, and Ms. Michelle Tam, for their guidance, encouragement, and patience.

Amherst, MA, USA

John C. Carey

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**Part I**

**Conceptual Introduction**

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# Introduction to Policy Research in School-Based Counseling

# 1

Sharon F. Rallis and John C. Carey

Policy articulates a desired way of being for a society. Starting as a broad statement of values, a policy describes a set of conditions preferable to those currently in place. Ideally, a policy is meant to serve the public good, not the material benefit of those who establish the policy. Embedded within any policy, we should be able to find a *theory of action*: we want X to happen, so we must do Y. This cause → effect statement, however, is seldom clearly articulated. Designing, enacting, and implementing policy are not a clear and linear process. Furthermore, because the scope of policy tends to be general and broad, it is open to multiple interpretations across individuals and contexts. Thus, the relationship between policy and practice is usually convoluted and often somewhat unpredictable.

Policy statements are mere words. While the words are meant to result in actions that produce the desired new state or condition, multiple forces at various levels mediate the gap between the

words and actions. The explicit or implicit theory of action of the policy may be difficult to find and/or inaccurate so that even effective implementation of a policy leads to the “wrong” outcomes. Even with a sound theory of action, resulting programs and practices, often largely dependent on available resources, may bear little resemblance to the envisioned state – or may produce any number of unintended (positive or negative) consequences. The particular interests of stakeholders (e.g., powerful individuals, professional groups, agencies, taxpayers, consumers) influence the allocation of resources and shape the programs and practices that are put in place. Ultimately, because policy makers are not the people who implement policy, the elements of resulting programs or practices are seldom executed as elements of the policy were originally conceptualized.

Given this complex relationship between policy and practice, policy researchers and analysts have a lot of work to do. They ask questions: What is the public good? Who decides? What roles and influence do various stakeholders have? How does the policy propose to support the public good? What purposive actions or practices does the policy encourage or suggest? What procedures, programs, and practices are needed to move forward this policy goal? What benefits can we expect? What consequences – anticipated, negative, positive, and unintended – might result? The answers that policy research generates can

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inform and improve both practice and future policy making.

The focus of this handbook is policy research on school-based counseling internationally. Decision makers in government need good data to inform their efforts to promote school-based counseling. They also need data to tell them whether these actions achieve their intended effects. Policy research provides decision makers with information that supports effective action for public good. Yet, while the need for high-quality policy research related to school-based counseling is widely recognized around the world, the discipline of policy research in school-based counseling is still in its infancy. The *International Handbook on School-Based Policy Research* offers a benchmark analysis of the state of policy research related to school-based counseling. Chapters consider the utility of different policy research methods and summarize what is currently known in the field as well as areas for further exploration. We aim to provide an integrated and coherent understanding of the various ways that policies regarding school-based counseling are created and implemented to further the common good and to identify questions that policy research needs to answer in order to advance the ethical practice of school-based counseling.

The work of school-based counselors and university-based counselor educators who prepare these counselors is shaped by *policies* that communities and governments create and attempt to impose. At times, these policies may support effective practice; often they constrain or impede practice. What are their purposes? Where do they come from? How do educators and practitioners respond to them? But what exactly is *policy*, a vague, overused, and often misunderstood term? The term evokes varying emotions: indifference in those who do not believe policy affects them, control in those who see it as a reflection of power, curiosity in those who see its potential, concern in those who are challenged to implement, and anticipation in those who recognize the opportunity to interpret. We begin this chapter developing a working definition of the term *policy* that reflects the multiple nested levels of policy contexts within a nation and the international

variability in policy landscapes. Next we describe policy research and identify how research and evaluation can be used to improve policy so that it can have a powerful, positive impact on practice. Finally, we suggest ways policy makers and policy advocates can collaborate with policy researchers and evaluators and with counselors and counselor educators to construct meaningful and useful policy studies. We suggest that including the counselors in this mix is critical to improving practice; they must contribute to the creation of policies that will directly affect them.

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## The Many Ps of Policy

Above we defined policy as a broad expression of values or guiding principles meant to serve the public good. For example, during the cold war the US federal government encouraged the education and placement of school counselors in all high schools by providing tens of millions of dollars in funding to state department of education (who in turn funded university-based training programs and school-based counseling positions) through the National Defense Education Act (NDEA). The act was intended to place counselors in schools so that they could encourage students to pursue careers in science and engineering to maintain the country's competitive edge in space and defense-related technologies. A current example directed toward practice relates to the culture-specific value of protecting confidentiality of clients.

Such broad statements can be seen as uppercase *Policy* with lowercase *policies* as those that target more local or focused actions that emerge from the more encompassing Policy statement. In the previous case of NDEA, the state departments of education and local school districts were less interested in having counselors prospecting for scientists and engineers and more interested in having them address practical perceived problems related to students' course choice, vocational planning, social development, and mental health. State department of education drafted licensure-related competencies and adopted models of counseling that sought to address a

broad set of perceived problems in schools (including the original intended NDEA purposes). Federal policy with a very narrow intent resulted ultimately in the widespread placement of counselors in schools with the expectation that they would help solve a very broad range of problems. Policies governing confidentiality tend to be regulations (that may differ internationally) to guide decisions for keeping and providing reasons for breaking confidentiality. Policies (upper and lowercase) direct allocation of resources and may originate at central or local levels. Implementing these policies directly affects the counselor/client relationship.

When studying policy and policy implementation, we have found it helpful to distinguish the term policy from the other related P words: programs, procedures, and practices. Both broad *Policy* and focused *policies* typically lead to the establishment of specific *Programs*, that is, initiatives aimed toward realizing of the policy's intent (the valued state, the public good). A program is the planned intervention to achieve the policy goal. Programs specify coordinated sets of activities with identified populations. In the USA, almost all state departments of education have developed an official state model of school counseling that describes the goals, organization, and activities of school counseling programs in school. Almost all of these models indicate that the counseling program should be structured to serve all students through a combination of primary prevention and remedially focused activities. Many state department of education invest funds to support the implementation of the state model in public schools. Another example is the Gatekeeper Training Program designed to normalize talking about suicide among students.

*Procedures* may be the rules or regulations or guidelines that stipulate how the policy or program is to be implemented. Procedures, often confused with the policy itself, specify actions that should or should not be taken; they represent choices made from among the many that could serve to achieve the policy goals. At the local level, many school districts in the USA have elaborated specific procedures, some of which support and some of which detract from the origi-

nal policy objectives. One district, for example, mandated that every school counselor had to have three individual sessions with every student on his or her caseload ( $n = 300$ ) every year. In the interests of ensuring that all students benefit from counseling services, this district precluded counselors from engaging in cost-effective classroom guidance and group counseling activities by locking up 900 h of counselor time each year in individual counseling sessions – the majority of which were not needed.

*Practices* occur at the ground level of policy and program implementation. Practices are the routinized behaviors and actions – *the way we do things here* – that constitute the everyday world in the program. Practices are how the people use the resources and activities and how they interact, to move toward the goal of an improved condition. For example, in the USA, school counseling programs show great diversity of actual practices. For example, while there is a growing trend to use empirically supported prevention curricula, the use of counselor-constructed curriculum units is still the most prevalent practice. Thus, one school may respond to policy directives regarding anti-bullying programming by implementing a well-research curriculum, while a neighboring school may respond by implementing curriculum units developed by the counselors themselves. Thus, in short, policies and programs articulate the *what*; procedures and practices represent the *how*. Policy research can address each or all of these levels of *P* or *p*.

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### **Policy Research as Lever for Improving Programs and Practices**

Just as the word policy may be ambiguous and oft misunderstood, so too is the concept of policy research. “Policy research is a close relative of social science, and even though it has put on its working clothes, rolled up its sleeves, and gone out to labor in the offices, legislative chambers, and corridors of government, it has not relinquished the ‘science’ label” (Weiss, 1991, p. 37). Seen as a branch of science, policy research must

produce systematic and objective data – and once available, the information will be used by policy-makers who are meant to serve the needs of society. Those who make these social decisions need a wide range of information – from data on what is needed to information on what works to address these needs. They must understand the tradeoffs: how do the advantages of a particular action balance the disadvantages? The assumption is that, grounded in the products of research, programs will be effectively designed and implemented and thereby improve the lives of the program participants (Weiss, 1987).

However, this assumption can be challenged from several angles. First, the products of policy research are seldom simple. In the real world, advantages and disadvantages are not clear-cut, and stakeholders may disagree on what is advantageous to whom – and on whose advantages should be privileged. Moreover, we have learned that the results of policy research are seldom used in any linear instrumental way (see, e.g., Tseng, 2012). In reality, findings usually served to expose the many shortcomings of the social policies studied without uncovering alternatives or solutions (Weiss, 1987); such studies are easily ignored. Moreover, objectivity itself may be a myth or “illusion” (Weiss, 1991, p. 38). Since policy researchers are human, they construct the worlds they study according to their values and interests, which in turn shape what they find.

How, then, can policy research inform and influence policy decisions that lead to genuine social improvement, specifically practices in school-based counseling? Drawing on Weiss’ position that policy research can be used to advocate a preferred position (1991), we suggest that policy research can serve as a lever to improve programs and practices by – in addition to producing data – supporting or offering ideas, critique, and grounds for argument. Our perspective begins with a look at the difficulties in attributing social or academic improvement directly to a policy or program and its practices. Regarding school counseling policy research, attribution becomes doubly difficult because the links between counseling activities and students’ academic achievement are not linear; counseling

activities can be expected to modulate rather than mediate gains in achievement.

To prove whether a policy has directly led to the desired, valued condition, a direct causal link must be determined. First, we ask: Can we attribute the existence of the program and its practices to the policy? Our analysis must decide if the program would have existed without the policy. To answer, we need a counterfactual, that is, a setting absent the policy. Conducting a controlled experiment to create such a setting is usually unrealistic, so policy analyses tend to trace resource allocation and map contexts. Policy studies also consider if the program design aligns with the policy intents; that is, does the program theory match the policy goal?

If the values, policy, and program theory all appear aligned, we evaluate the program: what are the outcomes? And can we attribute these to the specific activities that occur in the program? Again, to make a direct causal link, we would need to compare the outcomes of a program against a counterfactual to see what would have happened to beneficiaries without the program, controlling for any external influences. Put simply, we use an experiment or quasi-experimental design. In many instances, however, such designs may not be possible, due to various barriers including limited funding, size of program, and lack of comparison. And what if the program was not implemented with fidelity to the design? What if the practices emerged on site rather than on those written in the proposal? If and when these instrumental and causal policy analyses and evaluations are conducted with validity, potentially useful data can be produced. Unfortunately, studies resulting in these data are few, and when policy makers and program decision makers do have access to such data in evaluation reports, they seldom act to change policy, programs, or practice. Without research that captures what actually happens, sustaining specific positive changes is difficult.

Nevertheless, despite discouraging reports of instrumental use, policy research and evaluation results are widely used to affect positive change. Results can become far more than findings to inform a specific policy question or prove a

program effective. Results can become ideas and insights that enlighten policy makers and program decision makers (Weiss, 1977). “The generalizations and ideas that they produce percolate into the consciousness of informed publics, and over time they can alter the terms of policy discourse. Some things once taken for granted become open for discussion, while other issues in hot contention are laid to rest. New ideas come into currency; priorities are changed; new conceptual handles are used to grapple with old policy problems” (Weiss, 1987, 44). Put simply, information from research can capture the public interest and accumulate over time to change the way we think and behave – to *enlighten* the public.

Policy research and evaluation as enlightenment addresses important questions we raised earlier. Informed by insights and evolved understandings, policy discourses can revisit values, beliefs, and the articulated desired state or condition. What exactly *is* the public good? Who decides? What roles do various stakeholders play? In what ways can policies and corollary programs support the public good? Will counselors deem a policy meaningful enough to truly follow it? Research results can uncover conflicting interpretations; misunderstandings, as well as problems in resource allocation; special interests; power dynamics; and unexpected and unintended consequences. Results can also suggest solutions, redirect efforts, garner interest, and provide encouragement.

Within these enlightened policy discourses, we see that results are often used politically or symbolically. Policy makers and program leaders want their work to be viewed as legitimate, so stakeholders use research results to advocate a particular position, to strengthen the arguments, to make them acceptable. A policy’s or program’s legitimacy can also be bolstered by making it seem similar to others that are considered to be effective. Research can support such isomorphic efforts through several processes: mimetic, by providing models (e.g., Ockerman, Mason, & Feiker-Hollenbeck, 2012); coercive, by establishing what is appropriate (e.g., Militello, Carey, Dimmitt, Lee, & Schweid, 2009); or normative, by defining standards for professional practice (e.g., Dahir, 2000) (see DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

An illustrative example of how policy research is used to leverage change comes from the medical field. An enlightened Congress passed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Revitalization Act of 1993 in response to an accumulated body of research documenting how gender and race influence individual responses to medications. This policy mandated that clinical trials include minorities and women. Policy research over the next 20 years revealed that disparities persisted in clinical trials. Various advocacy groups passed these findings to Congress, which eventually requested a Government Accounting Office (GAO) study reporting compliance with the 1993 law. The GAO report demonstrated that the NIH had not operated according to the law. Widespread dissemination of the report led an embarrassed NIH to change their policies regarding the law; their revised policy required the inclusion of adequate numbers of women and minorities. In this case, policy research was used instrumentally, to enlighten, for advocacy, and politically.

Our point is that policy research *can* make a difference. By our very presence and actions while conducting the research, we researchers interfere with the places and people we study; thus, our obligation to ensure that our work is ethical is paramount. We also want our findings to be used to improve policies, programs, and practices. We believe our results can inform, enlighten, and shape policy. But what is the state of policy research in school-based counseling? What do we know about the purposes, methods, and utility of this research? What do we need to know for the field and how can this research be used for the common good?

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## Who Are the Users of Policy Research?

Policy has not only several levels; it also has many varied stakeholders, that is, different groups involved in the elaboration of policy and who are consequently potential consumers of policy research. We will illustrate this point with reference to the US context.

In the USA, public education policy is made at the national, state, and local levels. Some education

policies directly influence school-based counseling (e.g., NDEA, the adoption of a state model, state licensure requirements for school counselors). Other policies indirectly affect school-based counseling in subtle and dramatic ways. The implementation of standards-based education model through the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and corresponding state educational reform initiatives, for example, did not directly address school counseling practice. However, by narrowing the goals of public education, by focusing the evaluation of school quality on standardized achievement test scores, and by making it much easier to remove school leaders whose schools failed to show achievement test gains, NCLB called into question the value that school counselors added to quality of students education (especially in the context of the definition of quality being narrowed to test scores). Both the American School Counselors' Association (ASCA, 2012) and the Education Trust (Martin, 2002) developed models of school-based counseling that were compatible with standards-based reform. Most state department of education then revised their official state model to make them consistent with these models (Martin, Carey, & DeCoster, 2009).

To understand the needs of different policy research users, we distinguish among which types of decisions are made at which levels and what policy levers are available at what levels. It is also important to distinguish between policy makers and policy advocates. The former makes policy and the latter influences policy formation. Each national context will be different in these regards. To illustrate the principles, we will return to the US example.

In the USA, laws related to public education are made by Congress, enacted by the Executive branch (the President and Department of Education), and interpreted by the Supreme Court. Laws can originate through the committee process (e.g., the legislative committees on education) or through the initiatives of individual legislators or groups of legislators. Consistent with the US tradition of local control over public education, the federal government has traditionally respected the autonomy of states and localities to make decision related to education. The federal government has acted in circumstances

where state and local practices violate the constitutional rights of students (e.g., segregation) or in cases where the changes in educational systems are perceived to be necessary for the welfare of the nation (e.g., NDEA and NCLB). Even in these instances, the federal government acts by using funds to encourage states to adopt changes. The responsibility for allocating funding and monitoring compliance resides in Federal Department of Education. The DOE also funds education research that is intended to promote good policy and effective practice.

The policy making structures at the state level parallel those at the federal level. In the past 10 years, Governors have been very active individually and collectively in education policy formation through advocacy for federal and state laws. Education-related laws are made by State Legislatures, interpreted by the Executive branch (the Governor and State Department of Education), and interpreted by the State Supreme Court. As above, laws can originate several ways. States differ in the extent to which public educational decisions are made centrally or locally. State Legislatures (respecting local control) typically require in law that certain programs be delivered in school without specifying who should deliver them or how they should be delivered. It has been popular recently for legislatures to require that school help all middle school students develop 5-year career focused plans for their coursework without indicating how the plans will be developed or who will assist students. Relatedly, State Legislatures are typically very sensitive creating laws that reflect unfunded mandates that will place restraints on how local educational budgets are spent. State Departments of Education typically have the responsibility for allocating funding and monitoring compliance with state laws. In addition the state DOEs influence school counseling practices by establishing licensure requirements for school counselors, awarding licensure, accrediting school counselor preparation programs, developing state models for practice, funding institutional change and professional development initiatives to facilitate implementation of quality school counseling programs, and monitoring the implementation and



outcomes of state laws related to school counseling. In very rare instances, state DOEs support policy research, typically to evaluate programs and practices.

Local policy makers include elected school boards and the educational leaders who are hired to lead and oversee public education (e.g., superintendents and principals). They are ultimately responsible for the tangible representation of policy decisions as they determine the actual organization of the school counseling program, the actual activities and services that are included, the number of staff hired, and the orientation and expertise of the staff hired. In addition, local leaders supervise and evaluate the performance of school counselors. Local school districts occasionally commission evaluations of program and practices in order to examine their effectiveness.

In addition to policy makers, policy advocates use policy research to justify their advocacy for policy that is in service to their interests. Both national professional counseling associations (e.g., the American Counseling Association, American School Counselors' Association, National Association for College Admissions Counseling) and the related associations are major advocates. In addition, nongovernment organizations (e.g., the College Board and Education Trust) advocate for policy affecting aspects of school counseling practice that is related to their organization's mission. Policy advocacy groups commission research studies on the school counseling issues that they deem as important. The results of this research are packaged to influence federal and state policy makers, the decisions of local policy makers, and the perceptions of the general public.

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## **Working Together to Build, to Learn, and to Improve**

This first *International Handbook for Policy Research on School-Based Counseling* is intended to promote high-quality policy research that will lead to the improvement of practice. School-based counseling is rapidly becoming a

worldwide phenomenon as governments are searching for innovative ways to improve the well-being and productivity of their citizenry. Even in countries like the USA where school-based counseling has a long and distinguished history, policy research has been neglected. Very few studies actually have been conducted to intentionally address critically important policy issues (Carey & Martin, 2015). Very few counselor education doctoral students are trained to conduct policy research. Policy makers and advocates lack the information that is necessary to engage together in the policy formation process. In countries where school-based counseling is less developed, educational policy makers are reluctant to dedicate precious resources to promoting school-based counseling without guidance on which activities are likely to be maximally effective and without confirmation that investments bring returns.

This *Handbook* therefore represents a starting point – the founding of an international collaboration to promote quality policy research on school-based counseling. Eminent scholars from around the globe have come together to take stock of what we now know, what we need to know, and how we can come to know what we need to know.

The *Handbook* is organized in four related sections. The first section introduces policy research and includes a very practical reflection on the research that is needed by policy makers. The second section includes a critical examination of the various methods that are used in policy research with practical examples of these methods. The third section includes analyses of the policy landscape, existing policy research, and needed policy research in a very broad range of national contexts. Finally, the fourth section summarizes this work, proposes steps to further the cause of international policy research work, and places this work in the context of the ethical imperatives associated with research in school counseling.

It is our sincere hope that this work will be judged both by its own quality and by the quality of the work that it stimulates.

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# What Government Policy Makers Need to Know About School-Based Counseling

# 2

Dawn Stevenson and Nathan Edvalson

It is very important at the beginning of an International Handbook focusing on policy research in school-based counseling to consider the research needs of government policy makers. The government has legitimate interests in encouraging, supporting, and regulating the practice of school-based counseling to the extent to which it contributes to the public good. The government enacts laws and policies and creates institutions and agencies in order to promote its legitimate interests. The government funds schemes, programs, and initiatives. Decision-makers in the government need good information in order to know what to do and whether actions they take to promote school-based counseling are achieving their intended effects. Policy research can provide decision-makers with information that supports effective action.

Different countries have different government structures that support and influence the practice of school-based counseling. Countries differ, for example, in terms of whether policy regarding school-based counseling (and other components of public education) is made at the national or

regional levels and whether the government is vested with the power to mandate or to just encourage practices at the local (school) level. Despite these differences, all governments have decision-making bodies that effect school-based counseling through laws and/or through some type of executive order that provide direction and funding. Most governments also have agencies (e.g., Ministries of Education or State Department of Education) that are charged with implementing government decisions through actions such as the oversight of schools and school-based programs; the development, funding, and implementation of school improvement and educational change initiatives; and the credentialing of educational personnel.

In this chapter, we will first describe what government policy makers need to know about school-based counseling. This will be elaborated in the context of a 20-year initiative to improve school-based counseling in one state in the United States of America (USA). We will then illustrate what this information has to say about the general needs of policy makers in the government regarding school-based counseling. In the USA, the primary responsibility for educational policy resides at the state (rather than at the national) level. State legislatures pass laws and allocate funds to promote effective practice in public schools. State Departments of Education are charged with implementing the laws and achieving their intent. Both laws and implementation approaches must

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be sensitive to the “local control” heritage of the USA that situates a good deal of decision-making authority regarding public education with local (city and town-level) school boards and school superintendents.

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### **Adoption or Adaptation of a Written Model**

Currently, ASCA recognizes 33 of the 50 states in the USA that have implemented a state comprehensive school counseling program (State School Counseling Programs & Web Sites, n.d.). In a study conducted for this policy manual, the following distribution of model variations was discovered: three of the ASCA recognized states have adopted the ASCA National Model (American School Counselor Association, 2003; 2005; 2012) outright, three states have a slightly modified version of the ASCA National Model, and 16 states have made state adaptations of the ASCA National Model, incorporating state initiatives and related programs into the model. The remaining 11 states have a state-created model, three of which are variations of the original Gysbers model with ASCA elements incorporated. The Gysbers model was heavily incorporated into the ASCA National Model so the state level variations of the Gysbers model differ mostly in terms or language and organization of the models, but not in substance.

Eric Sparks, Assistant Director of ASCA, in a recent conversation (personal communication, June, 2015) stated that ASCA created a national model specifically so that states did not have to create their own model with no starting point and no guidelines. Martin, Lauterbach, and Carey (2015) in an international study of the factors that affect the development of school-based counseling in different national contexts have noted that the development or adaptation of a model of school counseling practices is an important factor affecting the development of the profession. Martin et al. (2015) have identified ten additional factors that affect how school-based counseling is practiced including culture, the nature of the public education system, and educational policy

and laws. While it would be tempting for governments and professional associations around the globe to use the ASCA National Model as a starting point for developing a written national model for school-based counseling for their location, it would be unwise to adopt the model in total since it was developed to fit one particular national context. For the international level, school counseling leaders and policy makers are well advised to develop a strong government- or agency-sponsored model for school-based counseling. Having such a strong model that meets the values and needs of the sponsoring government or agency facilitates the implementation of effective school-based counseling programs at the regional or local government and school level.

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### **Fostering Favorable Conditions**

Carey (2009) published a study of the levels of school-based counseling model implementation across the 50 states in the USA. Working with the National Leadership Cadre under the US Office of Vocational and Adult Education, the investigators selected “nine salient features” (p. 379) and identified which features were present and to what extent in each of the surveyed states. The features shown in Table 2.1 are duplicated from the published study.

Martin, Carey, and DeCoster (Carey, 2009) determined that a state having seven to nine of the features identified in Table 2.1 indicated an “Established” model for school counseling programs in that state, four to six features present indicated a “Progressing” model in that state, and one to three features present indicated a “Beginning” model in that state. “Seventeen states were considered to have “Established” models, 24 states were considered to have “Progressing” models, and ten states were considered to be at a “Beginning” stage.” From this study, it is clear that even after a state model is developed, considerable work needs to be done to enable the model to be properly implemented. According to the 2009 study by Carey et al., “despite a long history of model development, most states in the USA had not developed the necessary mechanisms to

**Table 2.1** Nine salient features of school counseling programs (Carey, 2009)

Feature	Example
Written model	Model distributed on Department of Education (DOE) Web site
Modern model features	Model based on ASCA National Model
Model endorsement	Model endorsed by the commissioner of education and by vote of the state association leadership
Linked to career planning	Model uses state career development guidelines
School counseling leadership	State Department of Education has a designated school counseling director with 50% of time devoted to school counseling who is housed the State Department of Education
Supportive legislation	State School Board rules mandating that all students will complete 6-year career plans
Supportive licensure and accreditation	Licensure process requires documentation that school counselors can implement Comprehensive Developmental Guidance (CDG)
Professional development	State sponsors programs on model implementation at the state association conference
Model evaluation	Districts voluntarily submit results reports to DOE

adequately direct and support model implementation.” While the development of a written model is within reach of any state or nation that has an identified leader and some willing volunteers, sufficient time becomes a critical resource as does supportive funding both for gathering writing team members and later for publication of the written model and professional development for personnel who will be implementing the school-based counseling model. A well-balanced model will include a coherent program structure with a foundation, delivery system, accountability processes, and program management or similar processes that will ensure the delivery of a full counseling program to all students in the local education system.

The more support that can be garnered for the development and implementation of a CSCP program at the state or national level, the better.

Much research has been conducted on education change process in the USA. Gysbers frequently refers to the “sandwich model” (personal communications—Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Training June 1990–June 2000) in which policy is developed at the top levels of the government with similar change initiatives among the grass roots or school-level personnel who will be doing the actual work of delivering a CSCP program at the student level. Governmental departments of education working in partnership with professional school counseling associations can lead to more rapid progress in the development of policies that improve practice (Martin et al., 2015).

Even the best-designed model for school-based counseling must be supported by ongoing professional development. Professional development, in terms of implementing a new school-based counseling model and program, should also be part of the process pre-model development as well as post-model development. It is well to consider *nemawashi*, a term from Japan meaning laying the groundwork or foundation, or the sense of building consensus (Nemawashi-Toyota Production System Guide, n.d.).

Building consensus is a slow process, but it’s necessary to get everybody on board before taking a decision. Otherwise, the implementation will be delayed and (unconsciously) sabotaged by those who didn’t agree or weren’t involved (Nemawashi-Toyota Production System Guide, n.d.).

The Utah case study in the following section will illustrate the *Nemawashi* process of consensus building. Leadership at the government or agency level does not simply develop a school-based counseling model and require implementation without gaining input for the development and implementation process from the working school counselors and the local school-based counseling leadership. By soliciting insights from those at the ground level of program implementation, the recommended model becomes realistic for the local needs and useful for the working school-based counselors and counseling leaders. As the Toyota model notes, “It’s not just about building support for your ideas. The consensus-building process solicits ideas and review from

everyone involved so that the final idea is usually a lot stronger than the original” (Nemawashi-Toyota Production System Guide, n.d.). The process of model development and program implementation then becomes self-informing as noted by Dean L. Fixen and Karen A. Blase as they developed a model for fidelity of implementation for research-based social programs (2009). When the components for effective program implementation are recognized and valued, weakness in one area of program implementation can be compensated for by strength in another area (Fixen & Blase, 2009). When all stakeholders in the process of school-based counseling program implementation are recognized and involved, the process itself is strengthened and the outcome is likewise more effective. As noted by Fixen and Blase, leaders and implementers arrive at policy-informed practice and practice-informed policy. As the Toyota model states, “...there’s one big misunderstanding about consensus. Consensus doesn’t require compromise” (Nemawashi-*Decisions by consensus without compromise*, June 19, 2009). Rather, consensus building and program implementation for school-based counseling programs require long-term commitment and effective collaboration.

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### **Case Study: Implementation of CDG Programs in Utah**

Further elaboration on the features identified by Carey (2009), beyond a written model and modern model features, might be most easily explained by following a case study of a highly implemented model for school-based counseling in one US state. The Utah Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program (CCGP) was developed and implemented through the steps outlined in Table 2.2.

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### **Emphasizing Evaluation**

The final element of the nine features of well-implemented school-based counseling models is program evaluation. From the early days of the

Utah pilot schools for model implementation, rigorous evaluation has been built into the program. At the outset, school counseling programs participated in an every-three-year on-site review process. School counselors at the site undergoing review would develop a written description of how the program met the 12 Utah Model Program Standards (Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program Performance Review, 2013). Additionally, local school counselors kept a file of evidence for school counseling activities to support the 12 standards. Ongoing incentive funding for the local CSCP was dependent on successfully “passing” the on-site review process. Occasionally schools have been placed on probation and given 6 months to make needed program improvements, or, more rarely, a school failed their on-site review and had to forego the incentive funding for a year or until a successful site review.

The original on-site review process for approval of the school-level implementation of the Utah Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs required an out-of-district evaluation every 3 years with the state school counseling leader in attendance. During the 2003–2004 school year, the formal on-site review was changed to a 6-year schedule with local districts facilitating an interim 3-year review focused on sharing of CSCP student outcome data projects: Guidance Activities and Closing the Gap Action Plans and Results Reports, patterned after the action plans and results reports developed by ASCA. The original 1990s site review document was a simple yes/no checklist based on the 12 program standards. In 2003–2004, the 12 program standards checklist was expanded to a five-level rubric with multiple indicators under each program standard. In 2011–2012, the rubric was simplified to three levels. In 2012–2013, the Utah State Office of Education administration directed that the out-of-district site evaluation teams be replaced by an on-site visit from state school counseling leadership. This effort to keep more school counselors in their schools and offices unfortunately eliminated an important aspect of professional development for school counselors who were able to trade ideas and share activities in the highly collaborative on-site review process.

**Table 2.2** Steps in Utah Statewide Implementation of CCGP (CSCP)

Date	Event	Benefit	Additional info
1971	State hires full-time staff to oversee CCGP		
1972	Student Planning Component required by Utah State Board of Education	All students enrolled in Career and Technical Education courses required to have a graduation plan	Early emphasis on student planning directly impacts program development and evaluation
1980	1. Professional consultation on the “Missouri Model” 2. Five main components to the adaptation	Successfully created the “fertile ground” for a 20-year implementation process that has resulted in Utah’s almost universal adoption of a standardized CCGP model	Five main components of restructuring: 1. Broad support at state level was necessary 2. Adequate time for implementation was crucial 3. Building administration needed to be on board 4. Administration, counseling, and other teachers had to participate in the change effort 5. Adequate funding for counselor planning and development (Utah Model, 2005)
1986	CCGP model was embraced at state level	CCGP was preserved through this fragile time period	
1989	1. Dissatisfaction of guidance and counseling resulted in a blossoming of the CCGP model constructed 3 years earlier 2. Training provided to 11 pilot schools	This event created the right environment for programmatic delivery to develop strongly Pilot programs lessen the chance of faculty resistance and promote faculty buy-in (Utah Model, 2005)	
1990	1. Twelve more schools join the pilot program 2. Annual conferences were established as a professional development source for counseling	Annual conferences provided a professional development opportunity for counselors as well as helped continue to gain legitimacy in the educational community	Utah School Counselor Association, chartered in 1960, emerges as a strong partner and advocate for establishing CCGP in all secondary schools (Utah Model, 2005)
1992–1993	1. Twelve of twenty-three schools approved for full implementation of CCGP program 2. Incentive funding provided by Utah Legislature	Program approval resulted in prestige, results, and financial incentives. These reinforcements encouraged others to seek this funding source for support in important counselor roles (Jensen, 1995)	Powerful financial incentive was provided which caused growth from 12 fully implemented schools to 251 fully implemented schools by 2003
1994	Utah State Board of Education codifies program approval standards in administrative code R277–462	Codifying the process cemented the program’s survival. Legislative power imbues educational programs with a weight and force to make impact on practitioners (Utah Admin Code, 2016)	Continual updates and changes to code R277–462 to update incentive grant funding formulas, program approval standards, counselor to student ratios, and counselor licensing requirements (Utah Admin Code, 2016)
2000	Midwinter professional development conference refocused on disaggregated student groups	Increased the professional development opportunities for school counselors	Increased information and skill development for meeting the needs of diverse students

(continued)

**Table 2.2** (continued)

Date	Event	Benefit	Additional info
2003–2004	251 out of 257 target secondary schools receive program approval	Comprehensive guidance gains great momentum ensuring that CCGP programs become the cultural norm instead of the exception	Perkins funding tied CCGP to CTE (Jensen, 1995) and created a link that according to Martin, DeCoster, and Carey (Carey, 2009) created the interface between different constituencies. This kind of support has been shown to ensure program survival
2005–2006	Charter school inclusion into CCGP approval process	A validation of the importance of the funding and impact that CCGP has on educational institutions	
2006–2007	CCGP implemented in 262 schools	CCGP firmly established as the standard of practice and the expectation for all	
2007–present	Continued expansion to many charter schools and district schools		

This collaborative practice had led to the proliferation of many highly effective CSCP practices, such as the round-robin model for classroom-size student planning conferences, classroom integration of the computer-based career information delivery system (CIDS), and models and practices for group-based responsive services.

### Leveraging Program Evaluation

In addition, to the individual school site program evaluation, Utah, through the vision and foresight of early school counseling leadership by R. Lynn Jensen, engaged in an ongoing statewide program evaluation strategy. Each of the statewide studies in the following discussion can be found on the Utah School Counseling Web site publications section (Utah State Board of Education, 2016) (Table 2.3).

### Leveraging Support with the Use of Student Data by a Local District and the School Counselor Association

As illustrated in the previous discussion, Utah, at the state government agency level, established a culture for school-based counseling

research and evaluation early in the program implementation process. This culture of evaluation and research on levels of program implementation and program effectiveness has created a strong expectation that has benefited regional and local government districts, individual school-based counselors, and leadership at the state school counselor association. The use of program evaluation and the use of school counselor effectiveness data can be found in two recent specific examples: one at the local district level and another with lobbying the Utah State Legislature.

In the local education agency example, Jordan School District was able to use local district level data to leverage the hiring of 14.5 new school counselors in one school year. The Jordan District experience was well summarized by the Education Trust in their document, *Poised to Lead: How School Counselors Can Drive College and Career Readiness* (Education Trust, 2011). In brief, leadership for Jordan School District approached the local board of education to request an additional 14.5 school counselors to lower the district school-based counselor to student ratio to 1:350 in accordance with Utah State Board of Education rules. Chris Richards-Kong, then the secondary school-based counselor specialist, presented the “ results of a small

**Table 2.3** Summary of research and evaluation in Utah Statewide CSCP

Date and event	Research questions	Outcomes	Additional comments
1995 Study of the Student Education and Occupation Plan (SEOP) (Kimball and Gardner, 1995)	In what ways has CCGP funding affected schools? How much have career-related services and resources (such as SEOP) been improved by funding? Have school counselors become more available for students?	Responses from 42 of 49 schools receiving funding 95% of schools have students develop a 4- or 5-year plan 91% of respondents have students revise plans annually 91% of the plans address specific postsecondary goals 83% of schools indicate that 70% or more of parents attend SEOP conferences 95% of schools offer special education, bilingual, learning disabled and at risk students' equal treatment 98% of students and counselors use computerized career information delivery systems 88% of administrators create and support school goals related to SEOP	These positive responses are presented to the Utah Legislature and used to leverage the 1993 incentive funding from the initial trial level of \$3 million to full funding of more than \$7 million by 1997. The SEOP remains an important part of school-based counseling in Utah. The language in everyday school counselor practice has been updated to College and Career Readiness Plan or more commonly CCR Plan
1998 An Evaluation of the Comprehensive Guidance Program in Utah Schools (Nelson and Gardner, 1998)	What impact does the level of implementation of the Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program have on important descriptors of student success and other characteristics?	Responses from 176 of 193 eligible schools Students in high implanting schools: Took more advanced mathematics and science courses Took more [CTE] technical courses Had higher scores on standardized college aptitude test (ACT) in every area of the test Rated their overall educational preparation as more adequate Rated their job preparation as better Fewer described their program of study as general Rated guidance and career planning services in their schools higher	Results of this study were valuable when the 1998 Utah Legislature moved the funding for the Utah CCGP from a line item in the annual education budget to part of the overall block funding for CTE. With full support from local district leaders, the CCGP funds were identified as a separate funding column in the annual CTE spreadsheet and were recognized as a protected fund to be used only for supporting school-based counseling programs

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**Table 2.3** (continued)

Date and event	Research questions	Outcomes	Additional comments
March 1998 Study II: Contrasts Between Students in High Implementation and Low Implementation High Schools in the Utah CCGP (Nelson et al., 1998)	What is the relationship of CCG program implementation and counselor to student ratios?	A statistically significant relationship exists between counselor to student ratios and the level of program implementation Secondary schools with highest rates of implementation of CCGP had counselor to student ratios below 1:400 Secondary schools with the lowest rates of program implementation had counselor to student ratios over 1:500 Schools with lower ratios report more effective in making SEOPs meaningful Schools with lower ratios report more effective individual assistance through responsive services (Gardner et al., 1998)	The expectation for counselor to student ratios of 1:400 or better becomes widely accepted. In November 2008 The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) passed a resolution proposing a counselor to student ratio of 1:350 or better. By 2010 the USBE changed the R277-462 Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance rule, officially lowering the recommended counselor to student ratio to 1:350 or lower and requiring an annual school by school report on school-based counselor to student ratios. Incentive funding becomes contingent on meeting recommended ratios
2007 An Evaluation of Utah's Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program—The Fourth Major Study of Utah's 13-Year Program (Nelson et al., 2007)	What is the current level of implementation statewide of the CCGP in Utah secondary schools? How do current levels of implementation compare to past levels? What is the relationship between the level of implementation of CCGP and student outcomes?	252 eligible secondary schools 247 schools implementing CCGP 208 secondary schools received surveys and 175 responded Successes of 1998 study replicated Students in higher implementing schools: Take more high-level mathematics, language arts, and science classes Score higher in every area of the standardized college aptitude test (ACT) Students in higher and lower implementing schools are less likely to describe their program of study as general, improving from the 1998 study levels of 49 percent and 58 percent to 38 percent and 46 percent, respectively	Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance implementation continues as a cultural norm for secondary schools in Utah. 2016 ACT data indicates that in Utah secondary schools, only 13% of students consider their program of study as general. ACT data was the source used for this outcome in the 1998 and 2007 studies. Annual incentive funding for CCGP in the 2016–2017 school year is \$9.5 million, an average of \$33 per student per year

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**Table 2.3** (continued)

Date and event	Research questions	Outcomes	Additional comments
2010 National Study of School Counseling Programs, including Utah, Connecticut, Missouri, Nebraska, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin (Carey and Harrington, 2010)	<p>Do school counseling programs in high schools contribute significantly to students’ educational outcomes?</p> <p>What aspects of school practice contribute most to students’ educational outcomes?</p> <p>Based on these results, how might school counseling practice be improved?</p>	<p>Outcome and demographic data collected from 280 secondary schools. Survey data from 161 school counselors and 128 principals.</p> <p>Effective school counseling programs and effective school counselor practice impact the following student outcomes:</p> <p>More students achieving math proficiency</p> <p>More students achieving reading proficiency</p> <p>More students taking the standardized college aptitude test (ACT)</p> <p>Higher graduation rates and career and technical education programs</p> <p>More students participating in nontraditional career preparation programs (less than 25% of workers are the minority gender)</p>	<p>Additionally, improved counselor to student ratios had an impact on these student outcomes:</p> <p>Lower discipline rates</p> <p>Higher attendance rates (in Utah we now know that chronic absenteeism—defined as missing 10 percent or more of class time in an attendance period—results in dropout rates two to seven times higher)</p> <p>Length of time a CCGP has been implemented has an impact on these student outcome:</p> <p>Higher attendance rates</p> <p>Lower suspension rates</p>

pilot program designed to increase participation of historically underserved students in Early College and honors programs.” Through the pilot program, “school counselors were trained in the importance of postsecondary education, labor market trends, what makes a student college and career ready, and how to analyze and disaggregate their school’s student data.” As a result of the pilot program, an additional 32 percent of the students, helped by the counselors, chose to participate in Early College and honors programs. Subsequently, the Jordan School District (JSD) Board of Education made funding school counselors their number one priority for the 2010–2011 school year and funded all 14.5 positions. In a district with 48 school counselors, this represents an increase of over 30 percent. During the 2011–2012 school year, JSD expanded this project district wide.

The summary of the TSCI document reinforces the connection between research, evalua-

tion, and policy that supports effective school-based counselor practice: “School districts have a specific mission and, like any employer, they need to see how every position contributes to that mission. School counselors cannot expect their jobs to continue if they aren’t able to provide data that show how they contribute to college and career readiness. If counselors do make that case, armed with real evidence, their profession has the potential to endure and grow, even in hard economic times” (The Education Trust, 2011 p. 4).

The Jordan School District story has an interesting corollary in school-based counseling-related legislation passed by the 2015 Utah Legislature (personal communication Holly Todd, June 2016). House Bill 198 Strengthening College and Career Readiness sponsored by Representative Patrice Arent and Senator Stephen Urquhart (Utah State Legislature, 2015) requires the following three components to strengthen



school counselor preparation for preparing students for college and careers:

1. Course work provided by SREB through University of Utah and Utah State University focused on college readiness.
2. USOE Updates and Essentials training focused on the Utah School Counseling Program with the emphasis on College and Career Readiness, using data to drive services and resources for students.
3. Coursework provided by UEN through Southern Utah University focused on career readiness, with emphasis from business and industry.

In order to earn the certificate for the Strengthening College and Career Readiness Program, counselors must complete all three components. The coursework and cost for each participating school counselor is covered through the \$600,000 in funding that supports the requirements of HB 198. Once all three components are complete, Utah School Counselors will have the certificate indicated on their state educator license. To our knowledge, Utah was the first to offer the additional certificate for school-based counselor licensing.

The goal for this professional development is to help school counselors work with students to increase preparation to enter the work force to boost Utah economy. The focus is on helping students see the need to further their education in a variety of ways through certificate programs as well as college and university programs. Working with business and industry partners, students can complete their “1, 2, 4 or more” years of study in programs that prepare them to be ready to sustain a high wage/high demand profession.

The Utah School Counselor Association (USCA) was the driving force behind this legislation. USCA approached Representative Arent, asking for her support in creating legislation to increase the number of school counselors. While researching the proposed project for Representative Arent, the Association learned that they needed to change the approach. As

noted in the TSCI document in the Jordan School District example, school counselors work hard, but sometimes their work does not meet the desired outcomes, or evidence is not available showing that work does meet the desired outcomes. The Utah SCA determined that the best approach to improving school counselor ratios was to ask Representative Arent to promote professional development for school counselors. USCA actively promoted HB 198, working with business and industry partners in Utah, Utah System of Higher Education, State School Board Association, State Superintendent Association, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and counselors across the state. In a state which discourages any lobbying by public agency personnel such as state-level school counseling leaders, the state school counseling association fills this need by providing media interviews, public service announcements, and direct contact with supportive partners.

When Todd was asked “How did research or data projects support the effort?” She responded,

Representative Arent referred to research she had from Park City School District on the number of scholarships received when targeted information was provided to students. Her research lead us to believe if counselors had more information and time to work with students on college and career readiness, students would be better informed and prepared. (Personal Communication-Holly Todd, July 2016)

Todd further noted that,

One of the pieces of information that was frequently sought [was] information on the ratios of counselors to students, and if that were lower, were students better prepared for college and career readiness? (personal communication, June 14, 2016)

In both the Jordan School District and HB 198 examples, improvements in CSCP came through the efforts of leadership outside of the state agency school counseling leadership. Creating, nurturing, and supporting strong partnerships at the local level and with leaders in the school counseling association were critical in improvements for CSCPs. This provides further evidence

of the assertion (Carey, 2009) that “having an identified school counseling leader who is well-placed in the state government, who has access to funds that can be used to support school counseling program development, who has sufficient time to provide school counseling leadership, and who can bring together ‘different constituencies to support school counseling, had a greater capacity to promote school counseling model development’” (p. 385).

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## Summary

The following specific answers are provided to the questions posed in the introduction: What did state policy makers need to know from research/evaluation in order to invest properly in the development of school-based counseling? What specifically directed their decision-making? What confirmed the value of school-based counseling?

School-based school counseling leadership in Utah, with the support of stakeholders and the collaboration of a leadership advisory group, determined to adopt a CSCP model that included a strong emphasis on individual student planning processes. So specifically, the initial 1995 (Kimball & Gardner) study sought to confirm that time and financial investment in both the Utah CSCP model and the individual student planning process were effective and supported the expansion of incentive funding for the Utah CSCP. This confirmation was needed to satisfy the interests of parents in positive outcomes for students, to satisfy the investment of CTE program funds to support CSCP implementation and positive outcomes, to satisfy the needs of school-based counselors that the intense work of CSCP implementation was worth the efforts, and to satisfy the Utah Legislature that their initial pilot funding was successful and worthy of additional funding.

Additional statewide studies sought to confirm that the time and funding provided for expanded implementation of CSCP program expansion was effective and worth the investment. The Utah CSCP funding was predicated on

meeting program standards, so additional studies sought confirmation that levels of program implementation had a positive effect on student outcomes. The continued positive outcomes for students were confirmed by the research and evaluation in the studies from 1998, 1998 Study II, 2007, and 2010. The importance of levels of program implementation and the importance of school-based counselor to student ratios included in those studies have confirmed overall CSCP program outcomes for students and parents, for school counselors, for state and district leadership, and for the Utah Legislature.

We posit that the following research/evaluation needs for government policy makers were satisfied in the Utah case study:

- Governments enact laws and policies and create institutions and agencies to promote its legitimate interests.
- Governments fund schemes, programs, and initiatives.
- Decision-makers need good information in order to know what to do and whether the actions they take to promote school-based counseling are achieving their intended efforts.
- Evaluation supports effective decision-making for school-based counseling programs.

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## Part II

# Effective Methodologies

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# Ethical and Social Justice Foundations of Policy and Policy Research Related to School-Based Counseling

# 3

Vivian V. Lee

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## Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, to examine the social justice and ethical underpinnings that can shape and inform school-based counseling (SBC) policy research (PR) and second, to connect the dots between the ethical and social justice underpinnings to transformational global agendas that impact the well-being of children as global citizens. The chapter is structured around a paradigm that positions policy research for the promotion of school-based counseling as a contributor to the well-being of children as global citizens as part of the 17 Sustainable Development goals, more specifically Education 2030 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2016a). This paradigm examines the ethical and social justice underpinnings relative to the ethical belief system and practices of the researcher and evaluator, the need for cultural competence to effectively engage in diverse global contexts, international perspectives on research that impacts children, ways in which researchers and evaluators can enter the policy process, and an overview of how school-based counseling can be

an active contributor to global sustainable development as outlined in Education 2030 (UNESCO, 2016a; United Nations, 2015, 2016).

The components of the Ethical and Social Justice Paradigm for Policy Research in School-Based Counseling are listed below. Figure 3.1 depicts this model:

- Inner Circle: The well-being of children as global citizens as outlined in Goal 4 Sustainable Development Goals/Education 2030
- Circle 1: Ethical foundations and social justice perspective on school-based counseling and policy research
- Circle 2: Ethical and social justice perspectives on research with children
- Circle 3: Cultural competence: The person and the process,
- Circle 4: Policy research: Engaging the process
- Circle 5: School-based counseling and policy research: Directions for the future

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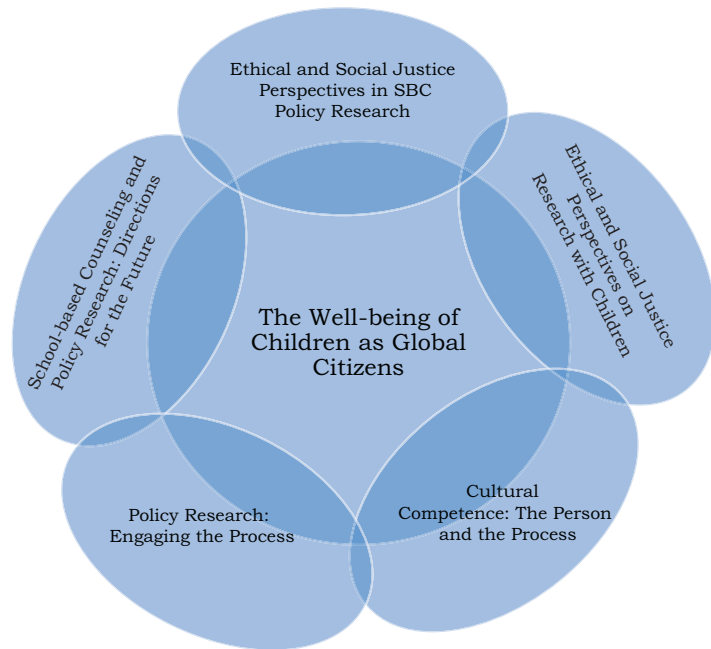
## Inner Circle: The Well-Being of Children as Global Citizens

In September 2015, the United Nations passed the new 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that build on the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2015). Each of the SDGs is expanded upon with universal targets which

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**Fig. 3.1** Ethical and social justice paradigm for policy research in school-based counseling



apply to both developed and developing countries. Grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (United Nations, 1948) and other international human rights documents, the SDGs and targets are “integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainability; economic, social and environmental.” (United Nations, 2015).

Significantly, the sustainable development agenda envisions a world of peace and nonviolence; universal respect for human dignity and rights; inclusive and equitable education; physical, social, and mental health; relevant employment; and gender parity, to name a few, in an open and socially just world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met and sustainable security, economic growth, and decent work for all for the full realization of human potential and shared prosperity (United Nations, 2015). To meet these goals, all individuals and societies must be empowered with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for strategic and intentional action. SDG 4 or Education 2030 (UNESCO, 2016a; United Nations, 2015) targets inclusive and equitable quality education to promote life-

long learning opportunities and can play a critical role in shaping children’s well-being around the world. More specifically, attention to positioning school-based counseling in a relevant global agenda with a vision of well-being for children as global citizens, grounded in the UDHR and consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989), provides a solid rights-based approach for SBC policy research especially since school-based counseling takes place within the educational arena in schools.

Significantly, the sustainable development agenda recognizes the differences in the circumstances of different nation states and the impact that has on the realization of goals and associated targets (United Nations, 2015). This point is essential as national comparatives can position countries from a deficit perspective (Adams & Judd, 2016) rather than drawing on their strengths and considering what is effective in serving the common good in different national contexts. Adams and Judd (2016) suggest that when comparatives from a deficit perspective manifest, it fuels distrust among



nations creating a hierarchy further “multiplying its weakness.” (p. 3).

Within the counseling profession, approaches focused on strengths and assets can be useful to promote dialogue that links school-based counseling and global agendas in ways that value the complexity and confounded nature inherent in moving a profession forward at the global, regional, national, and local levels. This approach is key as researchers and evaluators often conduct transnational work or domestic endeavours that can stretch their understanding of the world context in which they find themselves. School-based counseling needs to envisage a place within the global agenda designed to improve and sustain the holistic and systemic reality of present-day life and the sustainability needs of the future for children (United Nations, 2015). Thus, it is incumbent upon school-based counseling policy research and practice and related stakeholders to ensure that efforts are ethical, socially just, culturally competent, and grounded in a rights-based approach that supports equitable and inclusive education and promotes sustainable living for all children in a world of peace and nonviolence.

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### **Circle 1: Ethical and Social Justice Perspectives on School-based Policy Research**

This section of the paradigm addresses ethics as the responsibility and obligation of those engaged in professional activities that impact children either directly or indirectly to conduct themselves and their endeavors in ways that uphold the rights and dignity of children in all contexts in which they work considering a world where children can live sustainable lives as global citizens (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013). More specifically, it addresses professional values, principle and virtue ethics, for policy research in SBC, and the expression of ethics within professional codes of ethics. It is designed to be a self-reflection tool for researchers and evaluators as they work for and with children as rights-bearing citizens of agency (Graham, Powell, Taylor, Anderson, & Fitzgerald, 2013).

### **Ethics**

Ethics refers to the moral principles guiding research and evaluation from its inception to the publication of results. Ethics is related to moral constructs, codes, rules, or knowledge that shapes and informs moral behavior and decision-making in every sphere of life (Meara, Schmidt, & Day, 1996). In the professional sphere, ethics is the way in which individuals conduct themselves within a discipline (Remley & Herlihy, 2010). Within the field of counseling, ethical constructs are formulated into professional codes of ethics with varying sets of principles based upon the shared beliefs and values of the profession (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014; Asian Professional Counselling Association [APCA], 2008; British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy [BACP], 2016; Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association [CCPA], 2007; New Zealand Association of Counsellors [NZAC], 2014; Singapore Association for Counselling [SAC], 2015; The Jamaican Psychological Society [JPS], 2015). Many codes of ethics espouse that the degree to which one subscribes to various ethical constructs are influenced by one’s values (European University Institute, 2013). For example, codes of ethics and ethical behavior are to protect clients and the public or to promote the common good. However, the common good can have varying operationalized meanings and expressions in diverse cultural settings (Meara et al., 1996) as it is influenced by social, cultural, economic, and political contexts and depending on the vantage point of the one defining it. Seminal even today, Meara et al. (1996) suggests that in a cultural milieu in which pluralism is valued, many would argue that ethics is relative and that there are few absolute standards of moral behavior. Thus, it can be argued that while there may be no absolutes and no full relativism, there are *prima facie* obligations in which one can override specific rules or principles in specific situations (Meara et al., 1996). These points are relevant to our discussion as this text is designed for policy-related researchers and evaluators globally which includes a vast array of cultural contexts, populations, and settings all over the world.

## Principle Ethics

Codes of ethics are established in professional communities to guide professional conduct and aid in ethical decision-making. Codes are normative (Lutzen & Silva, 1996; Meara et al., 1996; Urofsky, Engels, & Engebretson, 2009) in that they describe professional obligations and direct the researcher in appropriate action based on ethical principles. An examination of codes of ethics from various countries reveals the most commonly used principles are similar those put forth by Kitchner (1984) as a means of engaging moral reasoning in ethical decision-making. Below is a brief definition of each ethical principle relative to this discussion.

### Autonomy

From a western perspective autonomy is traditionally conceptualized as individual self-determination. However, when considered from a global perspective, notions of self-determination can manifest in different ways. For example, in more collectivistic cultures children are more likely to be closely tied to family and the community, and decisions are not seen as individualistic endeavors (Morrow, 2013). In this way, autonomy moves beyond the individual and takes on a more collective self-governance perspective of which the individual is a part. Thus, the concept of autonomy can now become more systemic in nature and complimentary and supportive to collectivistic cultures thereby challenging the singularity of western individualism. Once released from the exclusivity of a western perspective, autonomy as a concept can gain entree into an ethical dialogue not only focused on the individual but on the family, community, group and nation as whole. Thus, when considering research and evaluation, processes, methodologies, and policy recommendations in diverse contexts, attention to diverse interpretations of the principle of autonomy can serve to prevent harm.

### Nonmaleficence

Traditionally defined as do no harm either through acts of omission or commission (Graham, Powell, Taylor, Anderson, & Fitzgerald, 2013).

Applied to this discussion, no harm can encompass issues of inclusion or exclusion of children from research, inappropriate methodologies for the culture and context, age and capabilities of children, biased policy recommendations, inappropriate reporting, and other factors within the research and policy process as well as practice (Felzmann, 2009; Wilson & Wilks, 2013).

### Beneficence

Beneficence means taking positive steps to help others including the prevention and elimination of harm. Beneficence is characterized by an obligation to act – but not impartially because beneficence is both an obligation and an ideal of greater common good (Meara et al., 1996; Graham et al., 2013) which means that not only does the individual child benefit but the larger social group of children receive benefit from the research and/or resulting policy and practice. This point is critical to this discussion as the pressure to scale up interventions to reach increasingly larger numbers of children around the world is growing.

### Justice

Often concerned with the distribution of resources and issues of fairness, (Maiese, 2013) justice also is concerned with the equitable distribution of burdens and benefits of research and evaluation (Felzmann, 2009). Justice shines a light on the power differentials between children and those in power who control decisions and services designed either directly or indirectly to impact their life (Felzmann, 2009). Justice also means that children's voices and opinions are heard, valued and results reported and represented accurately. A lack of justice can render "children invisible" and/or perpetuate stereotypical images that diminish their agency which further upholds unjust institutions" (Graham et al., 2013, p. 18).

### Fidelity

"Fidelity means fulfilling one's responsibilities of trust in a relationship" (Graham et al., 2013, p. 17). When working with children, it is incumbent upon the researcher to acknowledge the dignity and agency of children while addressing issues such as the tension between protection and



participation and privacy and confidentiality that exists between themselves and the child (Meloni, Vanthuyne, & Rousseau, 2015). Special attention to creating a relationship of loyalty and trust that is meaningful and consistent throughout the entire scope of the work is paramount.

### Veracity

Veracity means truthfulness. Veracity is essential in research as telling the truth allows potential participants to make informed decisions regarding potential risks and benefits which is central to informed consent.

Respect. Graham et al. (2013) propose respect as an ethical principle. Defining it as “more than tolerance [rather it is the] valuing of children in the context of their lives and recognition of their dignity” (p. 15). Codes of ethics around the world address respect for individuals within their cultural context as a consistent expectation. Graham et al. (2013) expounds on this point to include relational and subjective components of respect stating the researcher needs to know “who the child is” and how “culture shapes their experiences, capabilities and perspectives” (p. 15) a point central to this discussion.

### Virtue Ethics

Up to this point, we have addressed principle ethics noting them as the rules and obligations that aid in solving ethical dilemmas and problems. Virtues focus on an individual’s “motives, intentions, character, and ethical consciousness” that moves beyond rules (Lutzen & Silva, 1996; Meara et al., 1996; Urofsky et al., 2009). Virtues can act as significant motivators when deciding a course of action in various situation (Lutzen & Silva, 1996; Meara et al., 1996; Pederson, 1997) and is the ideal to which Meara asserts researchers can aspire to reach. This point is key as we already established problems occur in a cultural context, and what is relative in one context is not necessarily appropriate in another. Unlike principle ethics focused on universalism and rules, virtue ethics emanate from the community or shared context and have value with in that con-

text. Thus, the ability to adapt decision-making and actions to the cultural mores and nuances of various contexts is essential for researchers and evaluators (Meara et al., 1996).

Given the unlimited number of research settings around the world and the potential influence findings can have on resulting policy for diverse school settings, where school-based counseling practice and policy research often is conducted, ethical decisions made on principle alone can ignore the concrete reality and lived experience of those the policy is intended to serve.

Honoring the nuances of multicultural settings can help a researcher to address the ethnocentrism associated with principle ethics and to be sensitive to the distinct qualities of a group such as gender socialization, religion and spirituality, centrality of family, and historical realities such as colonialism and paternalism that impact a context (Wilson & Wilks, 2013). Essential to this type of sensitivity and understanding is awareness of how a researcher is seen by participants especially when entering a context dissimilar to one’s own, to work with children. Given the criticality of conducting ethically sound work in diverse settings, virtue ethics which are content specific enhance and bring clarity to multicultural settings. Like principle ethics, Meara et al. (1996) offers a paradigm of self-regarding and other-regarding virtues. Self-regarding virtues are prudence and integrity, and other-regarding virtues are respectfulness and benevolence. A condensed summary of the elements of their self-regulating virtue paradigm is offered below.

*Prudence* depicts the researcher whose character is considered incorruptible. This researcher and evaluator takes calculated risks, engages in thoughtful assessment, examines motives, questions intentions, is open to learning, and possesses the humility to admit they could be wrong.

*Integrity* is about one’s consistency of action not just in one project, or how one strives to influence one policy of interest, but throughout one’s career as the outcomes of one’s work, be it of benefit or harm, can impact children and the school-based counseling profession, and can endure across time.

*Respectfulness* moves from the tacit or implicit to the explicit targeting behaviors that exemplify the worth and dignity of the child within their cultural milieu while at the same time balancing agency with protection, power differentials, and the impact the researcher and research experience can have on the child, their family, and community (Boddy, 2014).

*Benevolence* is not only wanting to do good, it is about the courage to speak up and have a voice or show special concern for issues of injustice. It is about wanting to know the most important research questions that can help address injustice or the evaluation methods more likely to reveal why a policy did or did not work in ways equitable to all. It is about examining the worth of a program from the worldview of those it is designed to serve rather than one's own or a desired political agenda. It is about focusing on the needs of those marginalized and then actually doing something about it.

Taken together as complimentary approaches (Meara et al., 1996; Urofsky et al., 2009), principle and virtue ethics (grounded in the UDHR and the UNCRC) provide researchers, evaluators, practitioners, and policy makers a lens through which to work toward the well-being of children as global citizens.

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## **Circle 2: Ethical and Social Justice Perspectives on Research with Children**

When considering policy research, it is easy to see it as far removed from children. However, the outcomes of research conducted either directly or indirectly with children can have long-lasting consequences either positive or negative. As the demand for evidence-based or informed practice and policy grows, the inclusion of children in research will grow as most research with children occurs in schools (Felzmann, 2009) which can bring the school-based counseling practitioner either directly or indirectly into the actual research or evaluation process. The UNCRC expounds on both the

agency of the child and the continued need for protection regarding inclusion in research and evaluation. Considering the purpose of this international volume which recognizes the transnational influence of research, evaluation, practice, and policy making, attention to ethical considerations when conducting research with children warrants attention.

Graham et al. (2013) states that research involving children means “all research in which children are taking part, either directly or indirectly through a representative, irrespective of their role, and the methodology or methods used to collect, analyze and report data or information” (p. 2). With the previous discussion of principle and virtue ethics in mind, the discussion now centers on the ethical considerations of four components of the research process: (1) harms and benefits, (2) informed consent, (3) privacy and confidentiality, and (4) payments and compensation from a rights-based approach. The discussion below of the four components represents a brief sketch of the content presented in Graham et al. (2013). The reader is encouraged to refer to the original document *Ethical Research Involving Children*, ERIC, Graham et al. (2013) which represents a wide-ranging global collaboration, specifically designed to provide direction and guidance for conducting ethical research and evaluation involving children. Additionally, the original document contains critical inquiry as well as interpretations based on the UNCRC for each component.

### **Harms and Benefits**

Directly related to the ethical principles of beneficence and nonmaleficence, ethical school-based counseling policy research should be designed to minimize harm and provide the highest level of benefit not only to research participants but to the widest possible group of children possible. To do so it is essential to begin by assessing risks and benefits which is not always straightforward. Cultural competence is a critical factor in assessing harms and benefits in

research with children as meanings can vary in different contexts around the world. Assessing risks and benefits through the concept of utility forms the basis for determining the legitimacy of all research and calls upon one's virtue ethics in addition to principle ethics to forego a research endeavor or evaluation projects when the ultimate usefulness is dubious. Harm can range from minor discomforts to more severe consequences including physical harm to the participant and economic harm or hardship for families who may be ostracized, discriminated against, or threatened. Researchers are cautioned to carefully assess potential risks especially in post-conflict areas, in situations where abuse or neglect has occurred, or where participation in research may signal betrayal of others in a community. Retaliation or retribution coupled with stigma may be consequences of inclusion in research. It is therefore incumbent upon the researcher and/or evaluator to ascertain the sociopolitical and sociocultural nature of any setting in which they enter and work to ensure they have reliable contacts on the ground who can assist in navigating the research or evaluation arena. Potential harms can be difficult to detect and may occur in hidden cultural nuances unseen by researchers unfamiliar with a context.

More specifically, in instances where children have been separated from their parents and families due to emergency situations (violent conflict, migration, natural disaster, neglect, or abuse), researchers must guard against re-traumatization of children as part of research and evaluation designed to be of benefit. Skill and sensitively in recognizing and minimizing stigma, anxiety, and distress in both short- and long-term consequences as well as referral and support services to serve both children and their families are all factors that require careful thought and planning placed within the cultural realities of child participants. Further as one assesses the potential risks and benefits, it requires researchers to engage the tension between protection and participation of child participation (Morrow, 2013; Felzmann, 2009). Consulting children and giving

them a voice about their participation can help balance the tension between protection and participation.

### **Informed Consent**

Informed consent is the cornerstone of the research relationship. The four main components are considered essential for informed consent:

- A verbal or written agreement as well as agreements through other means.
- The child must be informed about the research and possess understanding.
- Consent is voluntary – children have the right to refuse participation.
- Participants (children) must be able to withdraw at any point in time without retribution or punishment (Graham et al., 2013, p. 57).

Adherence to all four of these components aid in assuring respect for the rights and autonomy of the child. However, the nuances of how these points play out in schools where children are accustomed to following the directives of teachers and parents can intrude on informed consent where children are expected to be obedient without question (Felzmann, 2009). In institutions, such as schools, the authority of teachers and other school personnel may negate inquiry into voluntary participation in research and create a sense of participation as part of the regular school agenda (Felzmann, 2009).

Consent can also be controversial in different contexts where laws regulate the age at which children can give consent or where beliefs about children's capabilities and agency vary from that of the researcher (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013). Consent can be further complicated by language barriers (Boddy, 2014), lack of literacy, and with those whose consent may increase their vulnerability such as undocumented migrants. Researchers are advised to continue to renegotiate consent throughout the research process to help ensure children and gatekeepers understand the risks and benefits through each step of

the process especially in longitudinal research (Graham et al, 2013, Morrow, 2013).

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Privacy and confidentiality can take on different meanings and implications in different contexts. Privacy and confidentiality in research involves multiple factors such as data collection, methods of collection, data storage and security, tangible artifacts, dissemination of work in reports, presentations, and use of pictures of children in those reports (Morrow, 2013). While these points are certainly not new to those who engage research, for our purposes considering these and other points within culturally diverse contexts calls upon the ethics and cultural competence of the research. For example, in some contexts and settings privacy to conduct interviews or hold meetings may not be available, family or community norms may define privacy in communal terms compared to more individualistic settings, and the gender, age, language, and religion or nationality of a participant compared to the researcher may spark concern (Boddy, 2014; Felzmann, 2009). These are all issues that researchers must consider when conducting research with children in diverse settings around the world (Graham et al, 2013). Moreover, knowledge of laws, mandatory reporting regulations, referral resources, and social, cultural, and familial norms and expectations are also critical knowledge and skills should the researcher encounter issues involving abuse and neglect. Finally, researchers are wise to consider these issues prior to conducting research and ensure their entire research and/or evaluation team is skilled to handle these types of issues.

### **Payment and Compensation**

The four recognized forms of payment include: reimbursement, compensation, appreciation, and incentive. Significant to this discussion are issues where potential participants live in extreme poverty and unscrupulous activities such as bribery,

coercion, and exploitation which could harm participants who put themselves at risk due to their level of need and the promise of payment for participation. Additionally, researchers need to consider how payments from participation could result in retribution, retaliation, and resentment from others who were not included in a research endeavor (Morrow, 2013). In poverty-stricken areas researchers may consider compensation to schools, community centers, or recreation areas to reduce individual participants or families being singled out (Morrow, 2013).

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### **Circle 3: Cultural Competence: The Person and the Process**

The purpose of this section is to examine cultural competence as it relates to policy research while acknowledging the foundation set in the previous sections of the paradigm. In a time of increasing diversity within and across cultures and nations, conceptualizing cultural competence as integrated with principle and virtue ethics, perspectives on research with children, and social justice is critical to a human rights-based approach for the well-being of children as global citizens.

### **Defining Cultural Competence**

Cultural competence allows one to effectively engage across a fluid and dynamic cultural milieu which requires specific competencies and capacities for individuals and societies to “learn, re-learn and unlearn” (AEA, 2004; UNESCO, 2013) to “free themselves from their own logic and cultural idioms” (UNESCO, 2013, p. 4) to more effectively engage diverse vulnerable and marginalized populations, especially children. The American Evaluation Association defines cultural competence as an ethical issue obligating evaluators to “produce work that is valid, fair, honest, and respectful of stakeholders, ensure stakeholders in all aspects of the evaluation process and guard the human rights of participants especially where minority or indigenous communities are concerned” (American Evaluation

Association (AEA), 2004, p. 4). Given that the promotion of children's well-being is a systemic undertaking requiring action by all stakeholders, the definition of cultural competence by Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaac (1989) is relevant: "A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together as a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross cultural settings" (p. IV).

Conceptualized as a developmental characteristic that can improve with experience, cultural competence is the ideal the individual researcher or evaluator, as well as institution, funders, policy makers, and participants can all strive to attain (Ortiz, Sosulski, & Sherwood, 2012).

### **Cultural Competence in the Process of Policy Research**

SBC policy research takes place in various social, cultural, historical economic, and political contexts. Individuals and groups are shaped by the various cultural contexts in which they live and in turn shape those contexts engaging in an ever-changing and dynamic process of cultural evolution (Danso, 2015). As such, individuals within those contexts have differing values, varying levels of cultural competence, and hold varying levels of power and privilege. Since research is how we develop knowledge and evaluation is how worth or value is placed on a policy or program (Mertens, 2009), those with power and privilege in each culture can make decisions that shape and frame both meaning and reality that frames the discourse and rhetoric of a locality or nation (Mertens, 2009, 2011; SenGupta, Hopson, & Thompson-Robinson, 2004). Thus, one's cultural competence, which shapes and informs how individuals operationalize their ethical reasoning and behavior, can either positively or negatively impact those they engage in research and evaluation (Dunaway, Morrow, & Porter, 2012; Mertens, 2011). Moreover, viewed from a rights-based approach, cultural competence becomes critical to the policy making process (Danso, 2015 1; Mertens, 2009). Given the gravity of cultural

competence in the larger scope of PR, cultural competence can be viewed as part of one's "inter-cultural responsibility" (UNESCO, 2013, p. 17) especially where it influences or shapes policy that impacts the lives of children.

Therefore, reflexive forethought about research and its potential outcomes that can influence policy becomes part of cultural competence. Graham et al (2013) offer five specific points for examination:

- Whether the research is necessary and should be undertaken
- The readiness and capacity to conduct the research
- Assumptions about childhood and the children involved
- The impact of both their own and children's experiences
- Disparities in power and status between themselves and the child research participants

Depending on one's cultural competence, these five considerations may or may not even become a point of pause and critical attention. For example, in deciding whether SBCPR is necessary and should be undertaken sparks questions about one's ability to identify need which requires empirical examination and if one possess the cultural competence readiness to engage the research process without causing harm. These two points have a clear relationship between the assumptions one holds about children and their agency in a cultural context and the corresponding power differentials between researchers and children and the way in which it impacts both (Graham, Phelps, Nhung, & Geeves, 2012). Moreover, it raises questions about the researcher ability to recognize when research yields relevant and actionable outcomes to advance the purpose of marginalized children's well-being.

Since children most often hold lesser power, their voices, worldviews, perspectives, needs, and rights can be marginalized (SenGupta et al., 2004). Therefore, those engaged in research and evaluation must recognize and acknowledge that such endeavors are driven in large measure by dominant culture discourse and can be used to



either perpetuate the status quo and oppressive systems or it can be used to make visible inequities and support social change (Graham et al., 2012; Mertens, 2009). As noted throughout the literature, research and evaluation are processes designed to promote social justice as made explicit in the Nuremberg Code (1947). Further to the assertion that the counselor is the instrument, (so to is the researcher or evaluator), Ponterotto et al. (2013) notes that one research paradigm is not more socially just than another, and “socially just research is anchored in the multicultural awareness of the researcher and not the research method” (p. 45).

### **Components of Cultural Competence in School-Based Counseling Policy Research**

Traditional models of cultural competence outline a paradigm referencing the awareness of self and others, knowledge of self and others, and the skills individuals need to possess to effectively engage in interactions or endeavors across cultures (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). These early models seem to tacitly imply that awareness, knowledge, and skill would result in timely and appropriate action which is not the case. Without the explicit indication of the expectation of appropriate action or advocacy (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016), the individual actor could position themselves as a silent bystander, a passive agent, or one who does not connect personal awareness, knowledge, and skill with action (obligatory action inherent in principle and virtue ethics) to ensure the best interest of research participants or those involved in an evaluation project. Based in Ratts et al. (2016), below is a brief explanation of the four developmental domains of the Multicultural Counseling and Social Justice Competencies. The reader is encouraged to consult the original document.

#### **Awareness**

The SBCPR’s self-awareness begins with the recognition and acknowledgement of their own

values, attitudes and beliefs (UNESCO, 2013), world views, and intersection of multiple identities and how those intersections either contribute to their status as privileged or marginalized in society. In turn, awareness of how they are impacted by this positionality, how they impact society, and the foresight to question how this process unfolds for others across sociohistorical events and ideologies nationally and globally is key (AEA, 2004; Nilson, 2016). Importantly, awareness of how one’s lived reality articulated through laws, policies, funding, economic trends, and social constructs are reciprocal is critical when devising empirical studies. Such reflexive awareness assists those engaged in policy research to understand the way in which participants communicate their lived reality which may or may not be through words but rather in a language of multiple dimensions such as traditions, symbols, words, rites of passage, and silence (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013; UNESCO, 2013). To reach such levels of understanding, requires care in the way one enters a context, allowing the context and its inhabitants to control the pace and location of entry into their world communicating ongoing respect as the process unfolds to equalize power and build trust. This type of sensitive engagement promotes a shared and collaborative approach encouraging greater meaning for participants which assists in serving common good (Nilson, 2016).

#### **Knowledge**

Activating awareness necessitates knowledge. Culturally competent and social just-based policy research requires knowledge of philosophical underpinnings of theories, knowledge of research, and evaluation paradigms and methodologies, to respond to the multiple realities and truths of diverse individuals, groups, communities, and the nations in which they live (Mertens, 2009). Recognizing that reality is socially constructed given one’s position in society, diverse participants are socialized from a variety of perspectives. With this ontological understanding, the epistemological perspective is one that recognizes SBCPR as positioned within the structural and institutional context of societal power and

occurring at a given point in time (Mertens, 2011). These perspectives are significant in the interpretative quality and authenticity of the behavior SBCPR observe, data they collect, interpret, and report (SenGupta et al., 2004). Adherence to this perspective is participatory, seeks to empower participants, and gives voice to those whose power is often marginalized by dominant voices (Graham et al., 2013). As Ponterotto, Mathew, and Raughley (2013) note, in this way the process of research “can serve, in-and-of-itself as a social justice mechanism” (p. 49). This perspective is grounded in the worth and dignity of humankind and the advancement of social justice and social action (Ponterotto et al., 2013).

### **Skill**

Using awareness and knowledge of theoretical perspectives and paradigms must develop into skillful practices. While skills can be approached in a variety of ways, the choice of research and evaluation methods can assist in framing and implementing culturally competent endeavors.

### **Research**

Currently within the field of research, movement from traditional postpositive quantitative research to more participatory qualitative methods and more mixed method design is gaining ground (Chapman & Schwartz, 2012; Ponterotto et al., 2013). While quantitative research that addresses the cultural constructs of marginalized communities can yield valuable outcomes useful in the policy arena (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013), when appropriately employed, mixed method research can illuminate invisible lives and give voice to those marginalized (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013; SenGupta et al., 2004).

### **Evaluation**

Culture and the social implications of culture are evident not only in the context in which evaluation takes place but in the design of programs, approaches, and evaluation methods (Mertens, 2011). The values of a culture will determine the aspects of a program or policy that will undergo evaluation which in and of itself defines it as

worthy to evaluate or worth proving it ineffectual so that it can be eliminated (Dunaway et al., 2012; SenGupta et al., 2004). As with research, the evaluation dialogue is often shaped by deficits focused on what needs to be fixed rather than what is working and how it is working (Werts & Brewer, 2014). The values that underlie these assumptions impact how evaluation projects are conceptualized and conducted (Bowen & Tillman, 2014). As with research, when evaluation efforts are developed through a dominant culture lens, the perception regarding what is or is not problematic may reside in stereotypic or biased myths about groups and/or the ways in which they make decisions, solve problems, and the sociocultural or political factors that influence or cause challenges. When this occurs, programs can be developed, implemented and then evaluated for effectiveness that are in conflict with the norms and values of the group it is designed to help (SenGupta et al., 2004).

Moreover, SenGupta et al. (2004) reminds us that policy and funding are inextricably woven together. When funding stream conceptualize needs from a deficit perspective, research and evaluation models, methodologies processes and procedures subsequently lead to deficit focused recommendations and corresponding policies (Dunaway et al., 2012). This is further complicated when funding streams do not respond to strengths-based initiatives as central to growth and change (Chapman & Schwartz, 2012). These realities present ethical dilemmas for SBCPR as they attempt to balance their cultural competence in systems with often conflicting processes and procedures.

### **Action**

Possessing awareness, knowledge, and skill, one is poised to engage social action and advocacy. Within this discussion social action and advocacy are intentionally undertaken to address societal issues related to the promotion of the well-being of children to live sustainable lives as global citizens in a peaceful world. The Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development recently released the updated *Multicultural Social Justice Competencies* (2016) that outline

actions from an international perspective that are applicable to this discussion. Moreover, in Chap. 32, *Using Advocacy in Policy Research and School-based Counseling* of this volume builds on this chapter and outlines an advocacy model that can be used to move the well-being of children as global citizens forward.

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#### **Circle 4: Policy Research: Engaging the Process**

This section will focus on how policy research enters into and informs the policy making process through the exploration of research utilization models, policy as power, and international consideration for policy research. This section is positioned within the larger discussion presented in this chapter that will necessitate the development and implementation of policy to better understand children's needs and the impact of social, cultural, economic, and political challenges on children's development and success as they present in school to promote equitable services for more equitable outcomes. The process of policy making is neither linear nor necessarily predictable (Lomas, 2000) with authors noting that there is often more that is not known than is known about how research is used in the policy making process. Moreover, per Weiss (1991) within the policy making process, "research does not carry the day" (p. 40). If that is the case, it is essential to understand where and how research can have the best chance of being influential.

#### **Research Utilization Models in Policy Making**

In an era marked by shrinking budgets and a call for evidence-based practice and accountability (Sutherland et al., 2012), governments, funders, and donors are questioning the value of social science research, which includes disciplines such as counseling, in policy making (Weiss, 1991). To examine how research is used in policy making authors (Weiss, 1991; Young, Ashby, Boaz,

& Grayson, 2002), examine three models offering various avenues.

First, the interactive model holds promise recognizing policy making as a complex process. In this model research is only one factor influencing the policy making process (Elliott & Popay, 2000; Lomas, 2000; Weiss, 1991). Research findings can become part of the mainstream of social knowledge referenced in the media and other modes of communication (Elliott & Popay, 2000). While this can potentially diminish the status of research and related findings, ethical and rigorous research can still offer a worthy contribution in the policy making process (Weiss, 1991).

Second, the political model is designed to use research findings compatible with a policy maker's position to leverage a cause (Weiss, 1991). While potentially rife with ethical issues, research that is conducted using appropriate and rigorous methods, responsive to cultural sensitivities, responsive to the needs of the people (Young et al., 2002), and grounded in a rights-based approach, can be highly useful in supporting efforts to bring about needed change. However, to promote ethical practice, complete findings in a usable format must be available to those on both sides of the issue. This model opens possibilities for research to be used as advocacy (Weiss, 1991).

Third, the enlightenment model is an indirect way of research influencing policy. Authors (Weiss, 1991; Young et al., 2002) see this model as a means through which ideas are used to frame, shape, and inform thinking about problems over time to help decision makers conceptualize issues and challenges as they consider a possible course of action. However, difficulties can ensue when findings enter the broad public milieu where they can be diluted and oversimplified (Lomas, 2000). Moreover, even though ideas from research enters the social and/or political mainstream, it still lacks the sufficient influence needed for action (Weiss, 1991). Given that this model focuses on conceptualizations and understanding, Young et al. (2002) sees it as an evidence-informed vs. an evidence-based model. As with the other mod-



els, the downside of this model is that over time findings can be over simplifying, distorted, and misrepresented and may not reflect the best information available (Weiss, 1991).

## Policy Research and Power

Beyond contributions to policy, research can also be part of the “intellectual pursuits of a society” (Weiss, 1991, p. 430) in that it reflects the culturally generated trends and discourse of a society (Ward et al., 2015). Situated within this discussion, initiatives to address the contemporary currents of society are presented as global agendas with an examination of the ethical and social justice underpinnings of school-based counseling policy research. Given this position, an examination of how power is operationalized through policy is essential (Heimans, 2012). Normative policy that maintains the status quo or perpetuates images of individuals or groups from a deficit perspective promotes discrimination and injustice (Danso, 2015; Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009). More specifically, those in positions of power can sway political and social discourse garnering support for policy that either does or does not support justice and fairness for those in need (Danso, 2015). When applied to the political model which essentially frames policy research as advocacy, winning the day for a desired cause may not rest in the best research findings but in the group who has the greater power to leverage their position (Weiss, 1991) potentially silencing the voices of those most vulnerable and oppressed such as children. Importantly, because a growing body of those in the counseling profession and other groups embrace advocacy as a valid scope of work, understanding policy research as arguing for a cause, understanding the potential challenges, implications, benefits, and unintended consequences on both sides of the argument is integral. To help ameliorate these concerns, Levinson et al. (2009) suggests that critical approaches to policy research “has as the imagined horizon of their analysis a picture of the possible [from a

social justice perspective] (Levinson et al., 2009, p. 769). In this way, policy research can be a practice of power for democratic pursuits (Levinson et al., 2009).

## International Considerations

Around the world policy research in support of SDG’s and Education 2030 may be met with interest and enthusiasm or with varying degrees of acceptance, if at all. Given the challenges experienced in many parts of the world and the systemic and longstanding inequality between nations, the Overseas Development Institute (2004) offers four salient points for policy researchers to consider. First, research and policy making are both political processes that can and do come under scrutiny from governments and other bodies. Officials may or may not agree with the position of the researcher, who they represent or the organizations or institutions to which they belong. The political, cultural, historical, and ideological tenants of a country or society may limit the freedom of the researcher to actively engage in the research process and may limit the policy maker in using out of country results in the policy making process. Second, researchers are advised to show evidence of successful pilot programs (Morrow, 2013) that substantiate findings and show promise in the area of need to help make new ideas or approaches seem acceptable without disrupting the social order. This leads to the third point of supportive local social networks especially if the research is conducted with an out of country team. Significantly, the fourth point elaborates on the perspective of funding for research which is often conducted in the “North” raising questions about the applicability and relevance of findings to other areas of the world (Overseas Development Institute [ODI], 2004). More specifically, this group states that research that occurs in the poorest countries is primarily funded by international donors raising ethical and social justice questions about “ownership, priorities, use of external consultants and perceived legitimacy. As policy processes become

increasingly global and politically driven (Lee, Smith, & Henry, 2013) this arena will increase in importance” (ODI, 2004, np).

In closing, those who engage in policy research ought “to pay attention to the imperatives of policy making systems (as they occur in diverse settings with diverse needs around the world) and to consider soberly what they can do, not necessarily to increase use of research, but to improve the contribution that research makes to the wisdom [and justice] of social policy” (Weiss, 1991, p. 431).

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### **Circle 5: School-Based Counseling and Policy Research: Directions for the Future**

Around the world children’s needs range from the challenges of violent conflict, poverty, hunger, and lack of access to clean drinking water and education to lives marked by adequate and even abundant resources. In response, school-based counseling in varying forms is present in many countries (Harris, 2013) working to address the needs and development of children. Recently Harris (2013) and Martin, Lauterbach, and Carey (2015) conducted studies that examined the state of school-based counseling around the world and the factors that influence the development of school-based counseling in different nations, respectively. Together these studies provide an overarching picture of social, cultural, economic, and political realities that shape and regulate SBC. These studies raise compelling questions regarding the ethical and social justice issues not only in policy research but in the future of school-based counseling as a voice for and with children. Accordingly, it is posited throughout this chapter that if school-based counseling and policy research is to become a relevant force that can impact the well-being of children around the world, it is essential to carve out a space within the global discourse and contribute to global agendas such as Education 2030 in ways that concretely help move identified targets forward at the local, national, and even global levels. To do so will

require “new information, communication, engagement, and capacity building” (Sterling, 2014, p. 91). While this ascertain is a significant leap in comparison to where school-based counseling is today, the rapidly changing world in which we live will demand flexibility coupled with visionary thinking for transformative change that can connect the dots between global agendas, the needs of children, and possibilities of what can be, as we move forward into an undetermined future.

Therefore, this section of the paradigm will serve as a culminating point drawing together key ideas and framing them into structured inquiry that can be used by proponents of school-based counseling and policy research and evaluation to begin to engage in critical analysis regarding of the relationship of school-based counseling to Education 2030 necessary to shape and inform present- and future-oriented dialogue and action. To begin this process will require all those concerned with this field to gain an understanding and working knowledge of global agendas, documents, and organizations involved in globally focused work as well how that is currently being operationalized in one’s local or nation and how it may be in the future. Definitions, meanings, targets, and desired outcomes regarding school-based counseling as it occurs all over the world will need scrutiny in relation to targets of Education 2030 and other sustainable development goals and targets especially those focused on gender equality, mental health, employment, and peace and nonviolence. Based in a commitment to ethical and social justice perspectives, and with a complimentary attention to equity as described in SDGs, and Education 2030 (UNESCO, 2013, 2016b), school-based counseling policy research approaches will need to create a sense of shared outcomes that acknowledge the assets and not just deficits that each locale, nation, or region brings to the table. Much learning, sharing, and understanding needs to occur (Sterling, 2014), bridges need to be built, and networks formed leading to dialogue, strategic planning, partnerships, social action, and advocacy if even small steps toward school-based counseling and policy research for the well-being of children as

global citizens in peaceful and sustainable societies are to become a reality (UNESCO, 2014).

### Inquiry for Dialogue and Action

If a rethinking and reimagining of school-based counseling and corresponding policy research is to occur in support of larger global agendas, an adaptation of accepted frameworks to school-based counseling and policy research offers a place to start. Sterling (2014) in a report summary commissioned by UNESCO on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) outlines a model of what an orientation toward ESD contains. Sterling suggests that both policies and programs can be evaluated in their orientation to ESD using the “C” model which examines the following: context, congruence, culture, criticality, commitment, and contribution. The aspects of the “C” model are presented below with structured inquiry for each point adapted to school-based counseling and PR. Note that not only is school-based counseling policy research addressed in the inquiry below but practice, and the link, between the two is key:

1. “Context—does its stated purpose and boundaries of concern embrace the wider context of sustainability and futures?” (p. 97)
  - How does school-based counseling policy research and practice embrace the wider context of sustainable development and Education 2030?
2. “Congruence—is it sufficiently grounded in real world issues and concerns, reflecting the systemic nature of the real world and the current threats and opportunities this presents?” (p. 97)
  - How does school-based counseling policy research and practice currently reflect the broader societal, political, economic, and social realities of diverse communities, those marginalized, and those with the power to construct meaning and the impact of that societal positioning?
  - How does school-based counseling policy research and practice address the realities of all children in a nation, especially those most in need?
3. “Culture—is it sufficiently attuned to the culture in which it is located, and to the existing values, understanding and needs of the learners?” (p. 97)
  - How does school-based counseling policy research and practice attune to the culture in which it is located, and to the existing values, understanding, and needs of the children in relation to their families and the communities in which they live?
4. “Criticality—does it help the examination of dominant assumptions and values in relation to building a more sustainable future?” (p. 97)
  - How does school-based counseling policy research and practice critically examine dominant assumptions that have shaped the school-based counseling profession (scope of practice, training, responsibility to children, families and communities, and existing models and approaches) and open itself to transformation to be part of building a more sustainable future?
5. “Commitment—does it engage with the ethical dimensions of issues to facilitate building an ethos of critical commitment and care?” (p. 97)
  - How does school-based counseling policy research and practice engage with ethical and social justice perspectives to exemplify commitment and care for the physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, and educational well-being of all children as global citizens?
6. “Contribution—through this policy and program, will the learners, outputs and learning outcomes of the policy or program make a positive (or negative) difference to sustainable development?” (p. 97)
  - How does the current work of school-based counseling policy research and practice demonstrate a salient contribution to promoting global citizenship, education, critical thinking, conflict resolution, problem solving, and peace and nonviolence necessary for a sustainable future for all children?

The above examination into the current state of school-based counseling policy research and practice can provide insight into gaps and areas of need resulting in an overarching picture of the state of SCB policy research and practice through the lens of global agendas. Following this type of initial inquiry and dialogue, a follow-up set of eight critical inquiry focused on ESD again adapted to school-based counseling policy research (Sterling, 2014, p. 108) can be useful to initiate reflective and transformative dialogue.

1. What is this about?
  - What is SD and Education 2030 about in relation to school-based counseling and policy research?
2. How does it affect SBCPR?
  - How might the SD movement and Education 2030 affect school-based counseling and policy research as it exists today?
  - How might the SD movement and Education 2030 encourage SBCPR to change?
3. Why is the change necessary or desirable?
  - In today's global arena, what factors suggest that change is needed in school-based counseling and subsequently in policy research?
  - Why would research and evaluation methods and protocols traditionally employed in school-based counseling policy research need to change?
  - How might the potential change position school-based counseling to better serve children from a local, national, and global perspective?
4. Why should we change?
  - Why should school-based counseling and policy research change?
  - Why should ethical and social justice foundations in school-based counseling guide a dialogue around the need for change relative to advancing the well-being of children as global citizens?
5. How might we need to see things differently or do things differently?
  - How might school-based counseling policy research and practice need see and do things differently to contribute to global agendas?
  - How might a commitment to increased cultural competence help envisage school-based counseling and PR part of a global dialogue?
6. How is our voice heard?
  - How is the voice of school-based counseling policy research and practice heard locally, nationally, regionally, and globally?
7. How do we make a difference?
  - How can school-based counseling and PR use make a difference? What difference is desired?
  - How can school-based counseling and policy research formulate a vision supportive of Education 2030 galvanized and mobilized locally, nationally, regionally, and globally?
  - How will success be measured?
8. What do we need to learn to make that difference?
  - What do school-based counseling policy researchers, practitioners, professional organizations, academics, and policy makers need to learn?
  - What is the level of openness to that learning?
  - Who are the people who are willing to learn, engage the ambiguity of the future, and move forward?
  - How can the Ethics and Social Justice Paradigm for Policy Research in School-based Counseling be used as a framework for that learning?

Answers to the above questions are worthy of careful and critical debate and consideration as the potential implications are vast with both short- and long-term transformative changes. Airing a wide range of similar and divergent perspectives will be needed and should be encouraged to thoroughly explore numerous possibilities and to craft a vision that recognizes,

acknowledges, and validates potential positive outcomes and challenges that change can bring. Global efforts will be necessary to communicate new knowledge, share ideas, and build capacity among the global community of school-based counseling and related professionals who teach, train, research, evaluate, supervise make policy, credential, fund, legislate, govern, and regulate. Ideally, such beginning level dialogue could take place in Global Forums (Lee & Carey, *in press*) that brings together thought leaders over time in a spirit of friendship and collaboration with an intentional and committed focus on the well-being of children as global citizens living to their full potential in sustainable and peaceful societies.

## Summary

This chapter has explored the ethical and social justice underpinnings of school-based counseling policy research within the larger arena of the well-being of children as global citizens to live sustainable lives in peaceful societies. If school-based counseling policy research and practice is to establish a place in the global dialogue, it is essential to consider what contributions school-based counseling policy research and practice can make. Attention to ethically sound and culturally competent interventions and approaches applicable to and representative of diverse populations around the world, innovative research and evaluation, and evidenced-informed practice and policy that promotes social justice will be essential in a way we have never seen before (Lee & Carey, *in press*). Those involved in school-based counseling and the policy research that helps shape it have a unique opportunity, as nations deliberate how to refine and implement global agendas, to garner a seat at the table and become part of a global dialogue to promote sustainable development and a world of peace and nonviolence for our children.

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# Using Scoping Reviews to Document and Synthesize Current Practices in School-Based Counselling

# 4

Belinda Harris

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## Introduction

In this chapter, a scoping review is defined as a comprehensive analysis and narrative account of a range of scholarly and non-scholarly documentation, in order to illuminate a broad, exploratory research question related to a complex or under-researched situation or phenomenon. The primary purpose of this chapter's contribution to the handbook is to illuminate the processes involved in conducting a scoping review of school-based counselling across the globe. This was one of nine scoping reviews commissioned by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and funded by the Department of Health (UK), the government body responsible for making policy on health and social care issues in England.

The larger project led to the development of an e-portal, MindEd\*, where over 300 e-learning resources are available free of charge to anyone with a duty of care for the mental health of children and young people. One of four learning frameworks, which enable users to navigate the portal, addresses the counselling of children and young people with mental health issues. The data that

emerged from the scoping review discussed here provided some ground and context for the production of educational resources for counsellors working in diverse contexts and settings, including schools. The findings informed policy discussions and development within the BACP itself and alongside evidence from recent randomised controlled trials of school counselling in England, Scotland and Wales (e.g. Cooper et al., 2010; Pearce et al., 2016; Pybis et al., 2014) had the potential to support the BACP in its advocacy for mandatory school counselling in England and Scotland.

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## The English Policy Context

Before focusing specifically on the scoping review itself, it is important to clarify key policy levers driving the wider investigation. Whilst counselling in secondary (high) schools is mandatory in Northern Ireland and Wales, it is still optional in England and Scotland (Cooper, 2013). Although there is evidence of significant counselling activity in primary (elementary) schools across the UK, it is not mandatory in this sector in any of the four countries that make up the UK (Thompson, 2013).

The history of school-based counselling in the UK has been closely connected to the nature of education, as defined by government policy, and the way this impacts the role of school staff, particularly teachers. Traditionally, teachers have been required to act in loco parentis and therefore

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to build strong, pastoral relationships with children and young people. In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, this role became more formalised, and many teachers were trained in counselling skills (McLaughlin, 1999). In 1989, an Education Reform Act began to change the nature of this teacher-student relationship. A national curriculum was introduced, and schools were made directly accountable for academic performance. Published league tables fostered competition, and schools designated as 'failing' or 'underperforming' by the School's Inspectorate were named and shamed (Harris & Biddulph, 2000). Early evidence indicated that this emphasis on performativity had a deleterious effect on teacher's capacity to sustain 'an ethic of care', empathy and inclusion (Ball, 2003; Cooper, 2004; Day, Elliott, & Kingdon, 2005), on teaching and learning approaches (Clarke, 1996; Hargreaves, 2003) and on the engagement of many marginalised young people in learning (Beckmann & Cooper, 2005; Watkins, 1999).

Over time, a steep rise in mental health statistics related to children and young people (Department of Health [DoH], 2004; Mental Health Foundation [MHF], 2006) was reflected in the social, emotional and behavioural challenges facing schools and growing public concerns about the wellbeing of children and young people (Harris, 2009). The government identified schools as one of the main settings for the promotion of wellbeing and mental health in children and young people, epitomised by the concept 'Every Child Matters' (Department for Education and Employment [DfEE], 2001; DCSF, 2008), and introduced new legislations, the Children Act 2004 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to ensure that schools were centrally involved and could demonstrate their effectiveness in enhancing all children's 'wellbeing'.

Despite these policies, a study of child wellbeing undertaken by UNICEF (Adamson, 2007) found that among the 21 richest countries examined, children in the UK fared particularly badly on five out of six measures of wellbeing. This may, in part, have been due to the cyclical short-term nature of government in the UK and the reality that new initiatives emerging from the

Children Act would take time to yield measurable outcomes. Indeed, many of the Children's Trusts set up to promote cooperation between agencies and other voluntary and community organisations to improve children's wellbeing, facilitated by the redevelopment of counselling in primary and secondary schools, albeit using external service providers. School counsellors therefore picked up the individual support work that teachers no longer had the time to offer.

Following the election of a coalition government in 2010, the government's school inspection framework was changed, reducing significantly the extent to which wellbeing measures informed the school's official rating (National Children Bureau, 2014). Instead, the government decided to introduce a Pupil Premium in England in April 2011, a special payment made to each school based on the numbers of pupils receiving free school meals, thereby focusing resources on those children deemed to be more at risk. A year later the Welsh government introduced a similar scheme, the Pupil Deprivation Grant. In theory, this additional resource to schools could be used to buy in counselling services. However, concerns have been raised from several quarters about how these funds have been spent (e.g. National Audit Office, 2015; The Sutton Trust, 2016; Wiggins, 2015).

It is against this backdrop that the Department of Health's investment in supporting children and young people with mental health issues is to be understood. The MindEd project delivered through the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, provided academics and professionals in the field of school-based counselling with an opportunity to clarify and strengthen the research base for school-based counselling and to provide bespoke data to (a) contribute to the production of the Counselling MindEd learning framework and (b) to support the BACP in lobbying policymakers to formally endorse the value and status of school-based counselling in England. The e-resource also had the potential to enhance awareness and understanding of school-based counselling among parents, carers, educators, health and social professionals and others.

Of nine scoping reviews commissioned by the BACP, three focussed directly on school-based counselling in the UK with respect to phase (i.e. one each for primary and secondary), and the scoping review featured in this chapter was designed to clarify the status and prevalence of school counselling internationally. The next section will clarify the author's positioning on the nature and purpose of a scoping review and clarify why this was chosen rather than a literature or systematic review.

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## Personal Positioning

Nash (2004) argues that as few as three sentences reveal a person's standpoint in life and that it is incumbent upon an academic writer to locate themselves within their scholarly writing. For the purposes of this chapter, reference will be made to the author's previous experience of conducting a systematic review to illuminate key learning and how this influenced the approach taken to the scoping review.

More than a decade ago, the BACP published a systematic scoping review of the research evidence on counselling children and young people (Harris & Pattison, 2004). Originally commissioned as a systematic review, the process had presented the authors with multiple challenges and learning opportunities as humanistic researchers. In brief, they favoured a 'science with wisdom' approach, where academic inquiry 'needs to give intellectual priority to the task of discovering possible solutions to the problems of living' (Maxwell, 2007, p. 98). Guidance was sought from a research mentor, whose methodological expertise and experience proved invaluable in reconciling some of the dilemmas and tensions involved in undertaking the review.

A key issue was the prevailing discourse of 'gold standard' research (Nespor, 2006) and the UK government's preoccupation with and agenda of 'standardisation' and 'evidence-based' practice. The reviewers began their work by identifying recently published meta-analyses, which utilise a numerical process to classify, tally and

compare outcomes on a specific therapeutic issue as reported in relevant systematic reviews. It soon became clear that any reported 'mean effect', derived from the 'net effects' of individual studies, involved a number of simplifications. For example, meta-analyses tended to merge together different practices under an umbrella concept, thereby disregarding any differences in how (and by whom) a particular approach was practised and the research context, in order to produce a single measure of effectiveness. As Pawson (2002: 176) argued, systematic review has to 'acknowledge and foster an interpretative agenda' in that the particular information selected for extraction influences the explanations given for the success of a particular intervention. Moreover, most studies involved a relatively short period of therapy, whereas in the UK, it is not unusual for school counsellors to work with a traumatised child or adolescent for anywhere between 6 weeks and a whole school year.

There was therefore an irresistible urge to 'reframe rather than reject the enterprise of disciplined inquiry', (Krippner, 2001: 291), and to expand the conceptualisation of Evidence-Based Practice (EBP), to include a variety of methodological strategies (Davies, 2000). The priority was to draw evidence from methodologically sound, transparent case studies, pre and post intervention studies, and qualitative studies including the voices of children and young people. This approach resembled that of a 'bricoleur' (De Certeau, 1984; Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991) and represented a sort of 'do-it-yourself' response to emergent questions and curiosities arising from the research process and the evidence base.

The result was a systematic scoping review, which included practice-based evidence within the overarching concept of EBP and which sought to inform a range of audiences. It was this mix of systematic review and scoping strategy that had sustained the author's motivation throughout the process, and this blend of rigor, transparency and communicative approach was brought to the scoping review of school counselling internationally.

## The Review: Literature, Systematic or Scoping?

All reviews share some common ground and involve a degree of sustained effort and rigour throughout the research cycle. Key decisions need to be made about the scope of the review, the keywords used during the search process and the search for a common template on which to code a range of published materials, including scholarly, grey and popular literatures. Further, the process of translating data into a common framework can be laborious given the human propensity to read texts in multiple ways. This can be particularly challenging when researchers develop different interpretations of the same data based on their theoretical framework and share responsibility for producing the final presentation of the findings. That said, there are key differences between different genres of review.

Both systematic and scoping reviews involve conducting a literature review, which provides the scholar with a critical analysis of published works illuminating theoretical perspectives, research methods and outcomes related to a specific question within a discipline. The literature reviewer is charged with making a case for further investigation and research based on systematic and rigorous argumentation. A systematic review tends to focus on a narrowly defined research question and assesses research studies within a quality framework, or hierarchy of evidence. This process of categorising studies to quality assure their findings necessarily limits the systematic review to an in-depth analysis of a narrow range of studies. A scoping study, however, has a different purpose and leans more towards answering a broader, more exploratory research question, based on best available evidence from a range of sources.

In their discussion of systematic reviews, Gough, Oliver and Thomas (2013) captured the author's thoughts on designing a useful and valid evaluation to inform policy. They argue that if evidence can be provided to show that review methods follow a clearly articulated, well-thought-out, well-designed plan, a review can be described as systematic. The scoping review pre-

sented here broadly followed these principles, although in reality, each phase of the design emerged in response to the limitations of data that could be accessed via either a literature review or a systematic review.

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## The Scoping Review

As a relatively new intervention, there are differences of opinion about the scoping review and its place in knowledge production. Dijkers (2015) identified Mays, Roberts and Popay (2001) as possibly the first researchers to coin the term scoping review, when they emphasised its role in providing a 'rapid' synthesis of the existing knowledge base. Levac, Colquhoun and O'Brien (2010: 1) concurred with Mays et al.'s view of the scoping study as an independent activity well suited to reviewing a complex or emergent, under-researched area or discipline (p. 194).

A key feature of scoping reviews is their attention to breadth (Arskey & O'Malley, 2005), where breadth refers to the focus of the investigation, the questions used to frame the search strategy and the sources included to create a knowledge base. It is not surprising that they identify 'mapping' the prevalence, range and nature of an activity, such as school counselling across the globe, as one of four main reasons for conducting a scoping review. However, in their review of reviews, Schmucker, Motschall, Antes and Meerpohl (2013, p. 1391) identified a scoping review as more than a mapping exercise, claiming that it adds a 'narrative integration' to the tables and findings presented. This 'requires analytical re-interpretation of the literature' (Levac et al., 2010: 1), where the literature can include a range of study designs in published and grey literature and address questions beyond those related to the intervention. In this case, the research activity is less concerned with assessing the quality of the studies and more focused on communicating both breadth and depth of knowledge, by summarising a range of evidence. This has left the scoping review open to criticism and to undermine its status as a form of knowledge synthesis (Dijkers, 2015).

Arskey and O'Malley identified three further reasons for conducting a scoping review, namely, to explore the feasibility of conducting a full systematic review; to disseminate a summary of research findings to time-pressed policymakers, practitioners and consumers; and to identify gaps in the evidence base in the existing literature. The scoping review discussed potentially offered policymakers, practitioners and consumers a brief overview of school counselling policy and practice in 82 countries. There were considerable time restraints involved in production of the review, which related (a) to timelines for the production of video materials and (b) to the stage in the academic year when the project was commissioned, a particularly busy teaching period for the author. Despite the practicalities involved, the author was enthusiastic to participate in a project closely related to her own interests and values.

Arskey and O'Malley (2005) developed a methodology for conducting a scoping review to address some of the criticisms levelled at this relatively recent addition to review methods. Their framework has been used and critiqued by researchers in the healthcare field (e.g. Colquhoun et al., 2014; Daudt, van Mossel, & Scott, 2013; Davis, Drey, & Gould, 2009; Levac et al., 2010) and provided a structure with which to organise this account of the challenges and opportunities posed in conducting a scoping review of school counselling internationally.

### **Stage 1: Identifying the Research Question**

Clarifying the research question driving the review process is critical for all types of review: the question defines the boundaries of the inquiry and therefore the way in which the search strategy is organised. Given the focus on breadth in a scoping review, Arskey and O'Malley emphasise the importance of clarifying the key terminology used in the research question to minimise any ambiguities whilst maintaining a 'wide approach' (p. 23).

The brief for the scoping review provided the overarching research question, namely, 'What is the status and prevalence of school counselling

internationally?' The primary task therefore was to define what is meant by the term status in this context. Given the mixed policy context governing school counselling across the UK, the first priority was to determine those countries where government policy mandated for the provision of school-based counselling and to clarify which stages of education were included. This 'reconnaissance' (Davis et al., 2009, p. 1396) would provide the BACP and the Counselling MindEd resource developers with relevant, comparative information to guide their actions. This fits with Anderson, Allen, Peckham, and Goodwin's (2008) claim that 'scoping studies are concerned with contextualizing knowledge in terms of identifying the current state of understanding; identifying the sorts of things we know and do not know; and then setting this within policy and practice contexts' p. 7. The research question was therefore primarily concerned with mapping policy that has a bearing on the practice of counselling in schools, whilst simultaneously illuminating countries where policy does not exist or is in development.

The concept of prevalence also needed to be clarified so as to provide meaningful comparative data. Did this simply mean, for example, stage of schooling mandated for, or should it also include relevant data about the ratio of counsellors to students by stage, where available? Further consideration was given to the mapping process and whether to focus primarily on providing detailed information on those countries where counselling is mandatory, or to include as much information as possible irrespective of the status and prevalence of school counselling elsewhere. A more inclusive approach was taken to provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of status and prevalence internationally. That said, it was decided to focus specifically on state-funded education and to exclude private schools, which are not always subject to the same policy, resource and accountability mechanisms as state-funded schools.

In considering these matters, I was mindful that the report would be published on the MindEd website and therefore the findings needed to be readable and accessible to parents, health professionals, educators and counselling practitioners,

in addition to the BACP and MindEd developers. It was important to consider the interests of a potentially global network of practitioners and to ensure that they could find and recognise their national situation in the final account. Following discussions with the clinical lead for the MindEd project, the decision was made to map the status of school counselling in as many countries as possible and to include key data on age, stage and ratio of counsellors to pupils wherever possible. During these preliminary discussions, ethical approval was granted by the University of Nottingham for this multinational study, and the application process acknowledged the cross-cultural nature of the study: the need for fairness and equity in reviewing the data, so that diverse ways of conceptualising and practising school counselling would be respected, fidelity to the information gained and rigorous attention to any bias during the analysis and writing up stages.

The questions driving the study therefore became:

Research questions	Research questions used to define the initial search
What is the status of school counselling internationally?	In which countries is school counselling mandatory?
What is the prevalence of school counselling internationally?	Which stages of education are covered by government policy on school counselling?
	How widespread is the non-mandatory provision of school counselling by stage in other countries?
	What is the student-counsellor ratio in each country?

## Stage 2: Identifying Relevant Studies

Given the comprehensive, broad nature of the scoping study, there is a strong argument for a comprehensive review of relevant documentation ranging from peer-reviewed papers in prestigious journals to short pieces in professional journals, government websites and conference proceedings. A key challenge in undertaking this work was managing the process to do justice to policy and practice in 106 countries within the time frame and resources allocated for this work.

In line with Arskey and O'Malley's guidance, the search procedure adopted was intended to access a range of different sources given diverse cultural contexts and the variable development of counsellor education and counselling research in different parts of the globe. The time span for the search was limited to papers published between 2000 and 2013. The start date of 2000 was chosen to capture contemporary data and developments in the policy context, and only publications in the English language were used given the lack of time and resources to translate documents written in other languages. In brief the search procedure involved:

1. Keyword searching via electronic library databases (PsycInfo, ERIC, Google Scholar)
2. Direct searching of key journals (e.g. International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, Journal of Counselling and Development, Professional School Counselling)
3. Backward searching via reference lists
4. E-mail contact with key authors to clarify information and access more recent research and developments in the field
5. Electronic searching of government websites and professional associations
6. 'Contact Us' link on homepage of websites to request basic information or clarify incomplete or ambiguous information found elsewhere
7. Existing networks and conferences

The author was well versed in the electronic library databases to undertake this research and had easy access to key journals in the field through her University library system. In total, 203 documents were found, although the number of documents found on each country varied significantly from 0 to 23.

Arskey and O'Malley noted the Western, US bias of most databases in the field of mental health, and this was also true of the databases on school counselling. It was particularly important to hand search three key journals to identify articles missed in the database and reference lists, and this process yielded valuable data that would otherwise have been missed. Contact was made with national professional school counselling organisations wherever



possible, and although responses were inconsistent, those who did respond often provided key, up-to-date information, including one article in press, and more nuanced data than had been found in the published literature.

A pragmatic decision was taken to approach the task on a region by region basis, with the aim of significantly reducing the complexity of the task and managing the volume of data. Ten geographical regions were identified: Africa, Australia/New Zealand, Caribbean, Central and South America, Eastern Europe, Far East, Middle East, North America, South Asia and Western Europe.

The search procedure used four keyword categories to search titles and abstracts of papers covering the activity of counselling (counselling, guidance, psychology, psychotherapy, psychiatry), the venue (school, educational), the population (child/children, young people, young adults, adolescents), and the work (mental health, well-being). It was recognised that this strategy might exclude some countries and some practices, for example, careers and vocational guidance, as this work is allocated to non-counselling professionals (careers guidance officers) in the UK.

It soon became apparent, however, that national and regional conceptualisations of the nature of the school counsellor's work differed significantly and that some accommodation was needed to access relevant information. For example, in Scandinavian countries the work of the school counsellor is 'vocational', whilst in many Eastern European countries, the focus is on 'career' counselling, and in North America on 'guidance and counselling', so these differences needed to be acknowledged in the keywords used to search for information in different regions. Using this strategy, data was collected for 82 countries.

As the work unfolded, the author became increasingly curious about emergent differences in how school counselling was conceptualised and organised. These differences made the process intrinsically engaging and motivating, and guidance was sought from the clinical lead about the relevance and usefulness of including further information on school counselling. Consideration was given to the overall aims of the MindEd project and

the importance of informing and supporting adults who care for and work with children and young people. It was therefore agreed that attention needed to be paid to illuminate the nature of school counselling in different parts of the globe. This led to the addition of the following research questions to the original brief:

Research question	Additional research questions
What is the nature of the school counsellor's work internationally?	What is the nature of the work of school counsellors in each country?
	Who delivers school counselling?
	What qualifications are needed to be a school counsellor?

Arskey and O'Malley emphasise the iterative, nonlinear nature of their framework stages, and this proved to be very apt, as new research questions emerged from the preliminary search process and contributed significantly to the author's engagement in the task, as well as affecting the selection of studies for inclusion.

### Stage 3: Study Selection

Whereas systematic reviews are concerned with locating the best quality evidence available, the scoping review embraces a range of study designs in both published and grey literatures in order to ascertain key information pertinent to the research questions. The process began by rigorous searching of the published literatures, which proved frustrating as relevant information was embedded in articles charting the development of school counselling within a specific country. Key authors were contacted and asked for further information about their context, but this proved complex in countries such as Australia and the USA, where individual states make their own policy decisions. This led to close examination of websites on professional associations and State/Government Education Boards or Ministries where further information was located.

Arskey and O'Malley noted that familiarity with the literature over time meant that inclusion criteria sometimes had to be developed 'post

hoc'. My own experience supports their claim that the more immersed one becomes in the literature, the more familiar the local context becomes, so that it is easier to include and exclude documents and to become aware of the limitations of the initial search strategy. In this case many papers had to be revisited once the questions had been expanded to include more information about the school counselling professional and their work.

Decisions about inclusion and exclusion were based on the timeliness of the paper or document, the geographic location (whether adequately covered or under reported), and the quality of the data or description of school counselling practices, including the qualifications and experience required for the role. Where papers compared an intervention or issue across different countries, data was only taken for the host country, and the reference list together with any coauthor information was used to ascertain information directly from within the country concerned. Equally, in countries where no information could be found in the English language, culturally sensitive approaches to locating experts in the field had to be explored and previous experience of being a 'bricoleur' proved invaluable.

Such quests were time consuming and represented an ethical commitment to the principle of non-maleficence, the intention not to do harm by ignoring or misrepresenting reality based on Western values and cultural encapsulation (Pederson, 1997). Instead, efforts were made to locate and build alliances with local practitioners and academics and to trust their integrity in representing the field conditions in their own country. Such personal communications yielded a further 12 documents which expanded the number of countries for which data could be found. Clearly, there were risks involved in this process, and therefore, everyone contacted had a degree of legitimacy by virtue of their professional role, affiliations and in some cases their publication record in their own language.

Of the now 215 documents published in the English language and illuminating aspects of school counselling, 107 found their way into the final report, although the data extracted from

each was often minimal. The experience of being a lone researcher on this project necessitated the triangulation of data found, either by reference to another publication or web-based document, by locating a secondary citation in other papers or through dialogue with an in-country expert. As soon as data was confirmed by one or more of these means, the information was recorded on a table used to chart the data in a specific region.

#### **Stage 4: Charting the Data**

This stage of the process involved recording key information obtained from primary data sources. The concept of 'charting' was developed by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) and is described by Arskey and O'Malley (2005: 26) as 'a technique for synthesizing and interpreting qualitative data by sifting, charting and sorting material according to key issues and themes'. Premature attempts to engage in the interpretative process proved counterproductive, and I positioned myself as a traveller navigating the culture and contours of new terrain and played with ideas for recording the data found for each country within a specific geographical region. The resulting template collected this information:

- Policy position re-mandating counselling
- Prevalence of school-based counselling in the primary sector
- Prevalence of school-based counselling in the secondary sector
- Primary tasks performed by school counsellors
- Qualifications needed for employment as school counsellor
- Theoretical orientation
- Key sources for each of the above

This combined data created a strong foundation for the analysis, as a systematic focus on each region served to highlight areas of commonality and difference based on social, economic and cultural factors as well as gaps in the knowledge base. In many cases the latter led to a return to the databases and a final attempt to locate relevant

information before contacting organisations or individuals for support with the task. As Arskey and O'Malley noted, following a 'uniform approach' to all the documentation did not always provide a full set of information. Where a report had been written for a home readership, a basic understanding of the national context had often been assumed, and therefore, some detailed information required for the review had been omitted.

### Stage 5: Collating, Summarizing and Reporting Results

When working on a comprehensive scoping review, the aim is to 'present an overview of all the material reviewed and consequently issues of how best to present this potentially large body of material are critical' (Arskey & O'Malley, 2005: 27). A primary consideration was to provide an overview of the aims, a summary of key findings and clarification about the search procedure used. A more substantive account of the findings was presented in two ways. Firstly, attention was given to cross-tabulating information recorded onto regional charts to produce a set of tables, including, for example, those countries where counselling is delivered by teachers. The aim was to provide a brief overview of aspects of the situation together with relevant summary tables to enable readers to quickly locate specific information within a global context. The following extract provides an example of this in practice. The first sub-question asked is 'In which countries is school counselling mandatory?' A brief summary preceded the first table:

'This study found that school-based counselling is mandatory in 39 of the 82 countries reviewed. Further, these countries are spread across the globe (see Table 4.1).'

Here, a significant amount of data was summarized and reported in a succinct and accessible format to give the reader a sense of the extent to which school counselling is validated by government policy. Similar tables were produced mapping the distribution of countries where

**Table 4.1** Countries in which school-based counselling is mandatory

Austria	Iceland	Slovakia
Bahamas	Indonesia	Singapore
Botswana	Iran	St Kitts
Costa Rica	Japan	South Korea
Cyprus	Jordan	Sweden
Czech Republic	Macau	Tanzania
Denmark	Malta	Trinidad and Tobago
Finland	Malaysia	Turkey
France	Nepal	Venezuela
Gambia	New Zealand	Uganda
Germany	Nigeria	Vietnam
Ghana	Norway	Portugal
Hong Kong	Philippines	Romania

(Harris, 2013: 5)

In addition, school-based counselling is mandatory in 32 (of 50) states in the USA, in 3 (of 10) provinces within Canada (Alberta, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island), in 1 (of 6) states in Australia (New South Wales), in 3 German states (Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria and Nord-Rhein Westfalen) and in 2 countries of the UK (Wales, Northern Ireland)

counselling is well established but not mandatory, the provision of school counselling by age and stage, the professionals involved in delivering the school counselling services, different forms of work undertaken by practitioners and countries where relational approaches are practised. This part of the analysis illuminated areas of strength and challenge in the policy domain and provision of counselling.

The second approach involved the development of a narrative account to provide more context and clarity to the tabulated data. The narrative sought to highlight areas of commonality and singularity. Here the focus was on the qualitative data found in documents of all types, and a concerted effort was made to summarize responses to the more open questions, such as those related to the 'prevalence' of school counselling, namely, *Which stages of education are covered by government policy on school counselling? How widespread is the non-mandatory provision of school counselling by stage in other countries? What is the student-counsellor ratio in each country?* For example, in response to the above questions, the following account was provided of the situation in the Far East:



In the Far East, school based counselling is mandatory in eight of the 10 countries reviewed, although not at all levels of the system. In Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and South Korea counselling is only mandated beyond the primary sector. Two countries, Thailand and China, have made a serious financial commitment to school based counselling despite not making it mandatory. Therefore, in Thailand, the ratio of school counsellors to secondary school students is high by comparison with other countries (1:500) (Tangdhanakanond & Lee, 2013). In Chinese urban areas, counselling is developing as a discipline and as a practice in schools. Government support for psycho-education for all pupils can be understood as a means of enabling young people to develop the skills necessary for thriving in a situation of rapid societal and economic change. However, in rural areas of China only 1% of schools have access to a school counsellor and the Chinese government is reported to be investing significant resources to ameliorate the situation across the country (Leuwerke & Shi, 2010)

Summaries for each region followed a similar format, thereby providing a degree of consistency and balance to the narrative. However, having a framework for collating and summarizing results ‘does force researchers to prioritize certain aspects of the literature’ (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005: 28). This is evident in the narrative analysis of the data where caution was exercised to ensure that only robust information was used to make claims. Therefore, where only anecdotal evidence confirmed specific data, this was entered onto the regional tables included in the appendices but excluded from the narrative analysis. Whilst this seems counter to the emphasis on inclusion and breadth discussed earlier and may have been confusing for the astute reader, it represented the outcome of a dialogue with the

clinical lead, whose concerns about the risk of misleading or inaccurate information being presented in the final text, led to a strategic decision in service of the wider project as a whole.

### **Optional Stage: Consultation Exercise**

Arskey and O’Malley (2005: 29) highlight the value and importance of consulting with stakeholders and acknowledge, that as with this scoping review, contributors provided valuable information and resources and also impacted the research team’s understanding and framing of the data. Despite these gains, this is presented as an optional stage in the review process. In contrast to this view, experience of undertaking a multinational study leads me to assert the vital role of stakeholders during all stages of the process. Their local knowledge, experience and generosity of spirit enhanced the comprehensive nature of the review; added detailed, well-supported information to findings; and significantly enhanced the experience of the researcher, who felt connected to a global community of professionals sharing similar interests. Unfortunately, direct contact with professional organisations and government departments was less successful with only two out of twelve professional organisations and two out of eight education departments responding. Language issues may have played a role in this, and it is not clear whether e-mails were delivered to the right people. It does highlight the importance of direct contact with named individuals to elicit their support and develop a constructive working relationship.

Brien, Lorenzetti, Lewis, Kennedy, and Ghali (2010) expressed concerns about issues of knowledge translation when there is a wealth of data to present to stakeholders and highlighted challenges in communicating clearly with the intended audience so that the report is useful to them. Each individual who had contributed to the review data was invited to comment on the draft report. Their feedback helped to clarify small details and provide a degree of reassurance that

the narrative accounts for their country or region spoke accurately to their reality. Further, they provided confirmation of the accessibility, readability and usefulness of the publication. That said, there were many challenges involved in making contact with stakeholders. It seemed that contact information found via the Internet was often out of date and e-mails were therefore returned as non-deliverable, or individual circumstances may have changed as no response was received, despite at least one follow-up email. In one case however, a response was received 4 months after the follow-up email, when the report was already in press. This is an inbuilt disadvantage given the 'rapid mapping' associated with a scoping review.

## Final Reflections

The scoping review was published in August, 2013, soon after the publication of a book on counselling across the globe (Hohenshil, Amundson, & Niles, 2013). Having been immersed in the review process, I had missed this event and also the opportunity for it to inform my review. It was a humbling reminder of the rapidity with which new knowledge becomes outdated and loses its impact. This is particularly true of a scoping review such as this, which focused on a rapidly changing field at one particular point in time.

The review itself highlighted key differences in the nature and practice of school-based counselling in the UK and the majority of other countries represented in the report. Producers of the Counselling MindEd resources were aware of these differences when producing their resources, although the priority was to address the needs of the home audience. The findings of the Counselling MindEd scoping reviews were presented at the BACP research conference in 2014. Shortly after that the BACP established an Expert Reference Group to develop a set of core competences for working with children and young people, after which a further group was established to develop a curriculum for counsellors working with children and young people, a draft of which was produced in summer 2016. The author was

fortunate to be included in this development work and to be able to contribute a global perspective to the discussions and development work. In this sense the review has had a modicum of traction in raising awareness and understanding of wider policy and practice in the field.

In recent months the government has produced a blueprint for counselling in schools (2016) which appears to signal a return to a more inclusive and holistic appreciation of the role of schools in supporting mental health and wellbeing and legitimates counselling as a way of supporting this work. No inference can be made in relation to the scoping review discussed in this chapter, but as part of the broader Counselling MindEd project funded by a large government department, it is likely to have played a modest part in changing the policy landscape in a direction that on paper at least seems more hopeful than in recent years.

Given similarities in the prevalence of and differences in the status of school counselling in UK countries, this scoping review could potentially contribute to policy advocacy by providing evidence that England and Scotland are unusual among Western nations in not making school counselling mandatory. Further, the review offers a window onto different ways in which this work is conceptualised, organised and delivered elsewhere, which could serve as the basis for research and policy formation initiatives to determine a model of school counselling that is best suited to the needs of children and adolescents and UK schools.

To this end, it would be valuable to conduct a scoping review to explore more fully the minimum training requirements and qualifications of school counsellors in countries with similar education systems to the UK and where school counselling is mandatory. This would provide the government with relevant information to develop policy on minimum training standards, competences and qualifications for this work, similar to those required of teachers. This might in turn ensure sufficient mentoring, and support is available in schools for newly qualified counsellors, as it currently is for newly qualified teachers. Such policy developments would ensure that

school counsellors are viewed as central to the educational effort and not mere ‘appendages’ (Harris, 2009). A further scoping review could be conducted to explore the aims and remit of national associations for school counselling, as no specific unifying organisation exists in the UK at the current time.

In this chapter a concerted effort has been made to clarify methodological issues involved in producing a scoping review and to identify key considerations involved in conducting a multinational study and to consider the implications for policy advocacy and policy development. It is the author’s hope that her experience will support the research of future students, academics and practitioners.

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# Developing and Conducting International School Counseling Survey Research

# 5

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The role of the school counselor has shifted and expanded many times in the profession's century-long history, often in response to broader educational, societal, political, and economic issues (Gysbers, 2001; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). The changes are accompanied by shifts in the knowledge, values, beliefs, and research on effective practices in school counseling. As schools increase the emphasis on academic achievement, specific benchmarks for learning goals, and standardized assessments (Martin & Carey, 2014), school counseling has shifted to adopt a focus on evidence-based practices and the development of a standards-based comprehensive school counseling model. To understand how changes are adopted and to what degree the changes affect practice and outcomes, the school counseling discipline should utilize survey research to inform research, policy, and practice (Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). Furthermore, as school counseling becomes increasingly international, it is necessary to design and implement valid and reliable international school counseling surveys. This chapter will (a) provide an overview of survey research, (b) describe the process for designing international school counseling surveys, and

(c) describe the basic methodological standards for critiquing survey research with an accompanying review of a study.

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## What Is Survey Research?

Survey research is a discrete research methodology that involves the collection of responses to carefully designed questions or statements delivered by paper, by electronic means, by phone, or in person. Surveys are administered to a specific sample of respondents for a particular purpose. Like all research, survey research requires a strong rationale and should be guided by clear research questions and associated hypotheses informed from the existing body of research. There are three stages in the survey research process: (a) survey development, (b) sample selection and survey administration, and (c) data analysis and reporting. Survey development is a complex process related to psychometrics and research. It involves item development, coordination of items into a survey, and conducting reliability and validity testing of the survey. Sample selection and survey administration are related to the identification of a sample, the sample recruitment process, and the administration of the survey. Data analysis and reporting involves the use of appropriate inferential statistics to interpret the responses from the sample and reporting the findings in a comprehensive and cohesive manner.

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## Types of Surveys

There are generally three broad categories of surveys: face-to-face or videoconferencing interviews, phone or other media-based interviews (e.g., Skype), and questionnaires. Each survey type has a specific purpose and corresponding advantages and disadvantages. Researchers should carefully consider the purpose of the survey and the relative strengths and limitations of the survey types before choosing a survey type.

### Face-to-Face or Videoconferencing Surveys

Face-to-face surveys provide the greatest opportunity for the interviewer to build rapport with a respondent and enable a flexible and adaptive setting for collecting impressions. Respondents can ask for clarification when necessary, while interviewers have the ability to ask probing follow-up questions for deeper understanding of respondents' answers. In-person interviews typically yield the highest response rate. However, this method of data collection is resource intensive in both time and money, especially when interviewers and respondents are separated by great geographical distances. Surveys that utilize media-based platforms (i.e., Skype) enable the synchronous communication afforded with face-to-face interviews while providing a less costly way of reaching geographically dispersed respondents. Interviews can be easily recorded through videoconferencing, allowing interviewers to review any aspect of the survey administration process. Despite these advantages, administering a survey via a computer screen may provide a different experience than an in-person interview. Establishing the relationship between interviewer and respondent may be more difficult with videoconferencing (Fontana & Frey, 2008), and technical issues may arise to interrupt the interview process.

### Phone Surveys

Phone surveys are less time-consuming and costly than face-to-face surveys and were a favored survey data collection method for a number of decades. However, there are constraints to the types of survey questions that can be used in this method of survey administration. Respondents may have a challenging time if presented with a number of choices they must hold in their memory in order to answer a survey question. Also, complex questions or those of a sensitive nature are difficult to pose without the personal contact provided with face-to-face or videoconferencing interviews.

Face-to-face, videoconferencing, and phone surveys can all provide rich and layered information about the topic being investigated. On the other hand, interviewing requires training on how to collect data through this conversational format. Additionally, interviewers are at risk of introducing bias to the interviewing process and must therefore be skilled in creating reflexive follow-up questions free from the interviewer's influence. The interview process is not anonymous, and the personal contact may also introduce bias such as social desirability as respondents may respond in ways they perceive as favorable by the interviewer.

### Questionnaires

Questionnaires are the most widely used type of survey because they can be conducted regionally, nationally, and internationally. The most common type of survey research uses questionnaires composed of written questions with a choice of answers or rating scales. Questionnaires assure anonymity, eliminate interviewer bias, and reduce social desirability. Questionnaires can be distributed regionally, nationally, or globally via postal mail or through an online survey tool. Mail surveys are not a viable model for international research. Online surveys are often

less expensive than mail surveys and provide almost instantaneous results. This method also allows interviewers to construct complex skip patterns in their questionnaire design to improve the efficiency and adequacy of responses. Finally, questionnaires may not be appropriate for complicated issues that might need clarification by respondents.

### **Issues Associated with Different Types of Surveys in International Contexts**

Surveys conducted via face-to-face, videoconferencing, or phone interviews have numerous obstacles when conducting international school counseling survey research. Interviewers need to be fluent in the languages in which the survey is being implemented, and they need to possess a deep understanding of the cultures of the interviewee to be able to interact to culturally influenced responses. Additionally, the interviewer must have a sophisticated knowledge of school counseling practices in the country of the interviewee. This is extremely difficult because school counseling practices vary dramatically from country to country, and the details of school counseling practices in a single country are not fully understood until an individual has had extensive experience working as a school counselor or with school counselors. Consequently, international interview surveys have the potential of missing important information that is culturally or educationally linked, and they have the potential for producing inaccurate information because of misconceptions caused by international cultural or educational barriers.

Well-designed questionnaires can limit or eliminate the cultural or educational barriers associated with international school counseling research. A group of international school counseling researchers can develop the survey collaboratively, developing items and testing items in multiple languages and in multiple countries at the same time. Because the questionnaire does not involve an interviewer, the language, content, concepts, and educational considerations can be controlled during the survey design

process. Researchers can employ international experts and cognitive interviewing to maintain the validity of the survey and the cultural and educational uniqueness of the various countries.

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## **Surveys and International Counseling Research**

As technology creates instantaneous means of communication and increasing opportunities to share research findings across national borders, there is an increasing interest in and need to conduct international counseling research. The ability of a researcher or practitioner to learn from researchers in countries other than one's own expands the foundation of knowledge available to researchers previously limited to the knowledge base in one's own country. Survey research creates an efficient means for investigating and sharing information (Sills & Song, 2002) about school counseling. However, conducting research across international borders necessitates that researchers consider the numerous cultural, linguistic, and educational differences between countries. Designing surveys to examine school counseling issues across countries requires researchers to conceptualize the international aspects of the research as they develop surveys and plan survey research agendas. The number and complexity of the differences between countries and between educational systems require survey researchers to move beyond the simple translation of existing surveys and comparing findings. Instead, survey researchers should endeavor to develop surveys from an international perspective, finding consistencies and differences between countries that are of empirical interest and designing surveys and studies that can answer questions of international interest.

### **Survey Development for International Survey Research**

Designing original surveys for international research on school counseling is a complex process. It should begin with an international

collaboration of researchers from at least two, but preferably more, countries. For instance, a survey that two of the authors of this chapter designed on inclusive practices (Przibilla, Lauterbach, Boshold, Linderkamp, & Krezmien, 2015) involved researchers from three countries: the United States, Turkey, and Germany. To effectively develop an international survey in school counseling, researchers from each of the countries involved in development should participate in each stage of the survey development including (a) survey conceptualization, (b) development of items, (c) organization of survey design, (d) translation of the survey, (e) parallel administration of cognitive interviews, (f) parallel pilot testing of the survey, (g) parallel factor analyses of survey findings, and (h) final revision of survey.

It is critical that researchers from each country be involved in the conceptualization of the survey because the topic addressed by the survey will differ across countries with respect to cultural considerations, educational structures and practices, and language and linguistic issues. For instance, in the United States, a learning disability is a category of disability defined by federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004). It is described as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, which may cause impairments in the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. In contrast, the term learning disability in Germany refers to a cognitive disorder more akin to mild intellectual disabilities in the United States (Opp, 1992). Furthermore, learning disabilities, while recognized as an official disability category in Turkey (Ministry of National Education, 2006), is not clearly understood by researchers or by the field (Kargin & Guldenoglu, 2016). This is particularly poignant with respect to the identification of LD, as students with intellectual disabilities are often misdiagnosed with having an LD, and students with LD “cannot get the required and appropriate educational supports and services” (Kargin & Guldenoglu, 2016). Researchers interested in understanding the perceptions and attitudes of educators in the United States, Germany, and Turkey toward individuals with a “learning disability” as defined by the US

federal law must develop a contextualized definition that is equivalent across the three nations. Consequently, researchers from the three countries must collaborate on the conceptualization of the survey to ensure equivalency across international understanding of educational concepts and constructs. Similarly, international researchers need to collaborate on the development of each survey item and the organization of the survey to ensure that participants taking the survey in each of the countries have an equivalent experience during the survey administration.

### Survey Translation

Researchers developing an international school counseling survey also need to address translation of the survey during the survey development. This will allow the researchers to validate the survey through parallel validation procedures. The translation of an international survey is a critical step and should be an iterative process. First, the survey developers need to carefully identify the translators of the survey. The researchers should identify two translators in each language. The translators of the survey must be academically literate in the language in which the survey was developed and the language into which the survey is being translated. Additionally, the translators must be familiar with the discipline for which the survey is being designed. To ensure that the survey is accurately and adequately translated, it should be translated into the new language by one translator and back into the language in which the survey was developed by the second translator. Then, the researchers developing the survey should collaboratively review the surveys from each language after they have been translated back into the language in which they were initially developed. This process allows the researchers to identify inconsistencies in the translations and also enables the researchers to identify any items or concepts that were not equivalently understood across the countries. In some situations, it may mean that an item will need to be rewritten so that it is consistently understood in each language. In other situations, it may be necessary to eliminate or redesign the



item because the inconsistencies across each of the languages reveal that the item cannot be equivalent for potential participants across the countries. As the translations are reviewed, the researchers edit and refine the survey to limit the inconsistencies for a survey prototype.

### **Pilot Testing**

After the survey has been translated, it should go through a pilot testing phase in each of the countries involved in the survey development. The pilot testing should include parallel administration of cognitive interviews with participants in each country. The cognitive interview process is a means of systematically probing the thought processes of survey participants as they take a survey (Collins, 2003). Researchers observe participants as they take the survey and ask the participants to describe their thought processes as they answer each item and to report their opinion of the question (e.g., does the participant understand the question, can the participants accurately answer the questions, etc.). The researchers should conduct cognitive interviews with five to ten participants in each country. They should also conduct a pilot test of the survey, administering the survey to an adequate number of participants in each state to conduct an exploratory factor analysis. Researchers should analyze findings from the cognitive interviews and the pilot studies. They should use the findings from the cognitive interviews to identify problematic items or problematic aspects of the survey administration. They should use the findings from the pilot studies to determine if there were inconsistencies across the countries with respect to reliability and validity of the survey. Finally, researchers should use the analyses from the cognitive interviews and pilot studies to revise and refine the survey for broad use.

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### **Methodological Requirements of Surveys in Counseling Research**

In order to advance the knowledge and understanding within a discipline, it is critical to develop, conduct, and disseminate survey

research that is methodologically rigorous. A rigorous survey is much more than a report of the distribution of responses to a series of author-designed questions. Instead, the development of surveys is girded by a foundation in psychometrics. Researchers must comply with rigorous procedures for survey development, with scientifically designed items organized in a carefully constructed survey. After a school counseling survey has been designed or chosen, researchers must carefully plan, execute, and report their research in a methodologically rigorous manner. The methodological rigor of survey research can be evaluated using a predetermined set of standards. Researchers can use these standards to design their surveys and/or their survey research studies, as well as to write articles that carefully report the methodological rigor of the work. Consumers of research can use these standards to ensure that the articles they read are methodologically rigorous and that interpretations of the findings have merit. Through the adherence to survey research standards, the field of school counseling can develop a robust body of rigorous empirical research that can inform the field of education and advance the knowledge base. In the following section, we describe a set of survey research standards, and we use the standards to review a single article (Young & Kaffenberger, 2011) that is reported on a school counseling survey research study.

### **Rationale and Purpose**

Survey research should begin with a clear rationale or purpose of the study (Gersten et al., 2005). Authors of survey research should describe the existing research from the literature, identify and describe gaps in the research, and clearly articulate how the study presented in an article adds to the research in a new or novel way that is supported by the review of the literature. The statements of the rationale and purpose should be concise and easily identified by the reader.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) conducted a survey on data use in school counseling programs that had received a Recognized American School Counselor Association Model Program (RAMP) award. They provided a clear rationale and

purpose, stating, “the authors conducted this study in order to understand the beliefs and practices of a particular group of school counselors who are consistently using data.” The rationale was linked to the gap in knowledge about school counseling data use and clearly articulated the need for this line of research.

## Research Questions

The key to any rigorous survey research study is a set of carefully constructed research questions aligned to the purpose of the study. Research questions should drive all aspects of a study, and a survey design should be adopted because it is the best research method for answering the research questions. Researchers should be careful not to choose a survey and then develop research questions to fit the parameters of the survey. In fact, the research questions should guide the survey research, including the selection of a survey.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) used six well-defined research questions to examine the school counselors’ use of data, attitudes about using data, and motivations for adopting a data-based approach to their practice. The questions were logically linked to the rationale of the study and were functionally related to the survey. The well-defined research questions established a clear research framework of the study, increasing the credibility of the research.

## Survey Construction

Researchers should carefully describe how the school counseling survey was constructed. If the survey was developed by the researchers, they should provide a thorough description of all steps of survey construction from conceptualization to item development, to completion of the survey. If the researchers are using an existing survey, they should describe and cite the appropriate steps of the survey development process (from a survey manual or from the seminal article or report from the survey authors). If the researchers are using a modified version of an existing survey, they

should report each of the steps in the modification process.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) created the *Data Beliefs and Practices Survey* (DBAPS) for the purposes of this study. The authors reported the survey was based on a review of the literature and that the questions were adapted from a non-published instrument used in data training workshops. The authors stated that the DBAPS was comprised of 20 items with three subscales. In the manuscript, the authors stated the 13 items were part of a subscale that assessed school counselors’ perceptions of data uses and practices through a seven-point Likert response set with anchors of *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The authors reported that a second subscale measured school counselors’ data training and data sharing practices. The survey also contained two open-ended questions about school counselors’ motivation to use data and their understanding of the purposes for using data. The authors did not adequately describe the process for developing the instrument and failed to provide any information about the training instrument that was used in the development of the DBAPS. Consequently, a reader lacks the necessary information to evaluate the quality of the survey design procedures which limits the legitimacy of the survey.

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## Survey Validity

Survey validity relates to the accuracy of the measurement of a survey. Specifically, survey validity ensures that the survey measures what it is supposed to measure (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 1993). It is related to both the survey design and construction, as well the sample representativeness. There are many ways that researchers conceptualize validity including face validity and content validity. Face validity is related to the appearance and appropriateness of the survey and has to do primarily with the “seeming” reasonableness of the questions. Face validity is the weakest aspect of validity. Content validity is the extent to which the items in a survey relate to the issue being examined. For instance, a survey designed to examine how school counselors collaborate with high school teachers

with respect to college planning would need to consider both the current experiences of a school counselor (e.g., “How many times did you speak to a teacher about a student’s college readiness?”) as well as the school counselor’s training, experience with collaboration, and knowledge about effective college planning (e.g., “How many courses did you take that focused on collaboration with teachers?”). Additionally, content validity refers to the extent to which the survey measures the construct it was intended to measure or do other factors unrelated to the construct influence the participant responses. Content validity is typically demonstrated by having experts on the survey constructs review each survey item and provide feedback on the adequacy of the items with respect to the survey construct (Fraenkel et al., 1993). Survey designers use the feedback to revise and refine the survey items to maximize content validity. Content validity is also enhanced through the systematic administration of cognitive interviews, as described previously.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) failed to describe any validation procedures used in the development of the DBAPS. Consequently, the reader cannot adequately determine the extent to which the survey measures what it purports to measure. This substantially limits the reader’s ability to accept that the outcomes from the survey reflect school counselor’s understanding of, attitudes toward, and use of data in school counseling practices.

## Survey Reliability

Survey reliability is fundamentally the ability to demonstrate that a survey reliably yields consistent findings with multiple administrations (Fraenkel et al., 1993). Essentially, it demonstrates consistency of the survey. Reliability is demonstrated through statistical techniques, and coefficients of reliability should be reported for all surveys. There are typically three types of approaches to establishing reliability. First, a test-retest reliability can be calculated by administering an identical survey to the same participants twice and calculating the reliability coefficient between the two administrations.

Second, equivalent forms reliability can be determined by creating two equivalent forms of a survey, administering both forms to a sample, and calculating the reliability coefficient between the two forms. Third, split-half reliability can be determined by arbitrarily splitting the questions into two groups and calculating the correlation coefficient for the two subsets. Survey researchers should describe the process used to establish survey reliability and report the reliability coefficients.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) failed to report any reliability procedures or reliability coefficients. The authors did report a reliability coefficient but failed to describe how that coefficient was determined. The reader cannot adequately determine the consistency of the survey. As a result, the reader cannot assume the outcomes from this administration of the survey would be the same outcomes if the survey were administered again, even to the same participants. The lack of survey reliability substantially limits a reader’s ability to accept Young’s and Kaffenberger’s findings with respect to school counselor’s use of or attitudes toward student data.

## Participant Selection

The selection of survey participants is a critical component of any survey research. The selection of participants should be clearly described and should be aligned with the purpose of the study and the research questions (Hudson, Lewis, Stichter, & Johnson, 2011). Providing clear participant selection criteria also supports replication of the study.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) clearly described the participant selection process. Because they were interested specifically in the attitudes and perceptions about the use of data by school counselors, they chose participants who had been recognized as counselors who worked in schools that had earned a Recognized American School Counselor Association Model Program (RAMP) status for implementing data-driven, comprehensive school counseling program.

## Sampling Procedures

Sampling procedures are critical to all survey research, and researchers can employ a variety of sampling techniques (e.g., random sampling, stratified sampling, convenience sampling, systematic sampling, and purposive sampling). Each sampling approach has strengths and limitations based upon the purpose of the survey and the potential sample population. It is critical that researchers describe the sampling procedures thoroughly and that the researchers describe the rationale for the sampling procedure that they selected and the appropriateness of the sampling procedures.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) used a purposive sample of counselors working in schools that had earned a (RAMP) status for implementing a data-driven, comprehensive school counseling program. The purposive sampling procedure was appropriate because the authors were interested in understanding the perceptions from school counselors working in schools that were recognized for their data-driven counseling practices.

## Administration Procedures

Survey researchers should clearly describe the administration procedures so that the readers can understand the steps in the survey administration and to support replication of study.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) clearly described the survey administration procedures. They identified a participant from each of the 231 RAMP schools across the United States and sent an electronic survey to potential participants with an invitation to participate in the research. They sent a second invitation and survey 2 months later. All surveys were completed electronically.

## Response Rate

The response rate for survey research is critical for interpreting the findings of a survey (Krosnick, 1999). Low response rates indicate that the respondents represent a small fraction of the recruited sample population. Consequently, they

may not adequately reflect the way that the sample population would respond on the survey. Low response rates result in findings that cannot easily be generalized to the broader population, thereby limiting the interpretability of the findings. Authors of survey research studies should report the response rate.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) reported an acceptable response rate of 48%, well above the 23% response rate typically obtained in survey research published in education journals (Edwards et al., 2002). This response rate ensured that the findings reported by the authors were reflective of the sample population, as nearly half of the recruited school counselors completed the survey. This enhanced the credibility of the findings.

## Participant Description

Survey research depends upon clear participant descriptions that allow for replication of the survey and support generalization of the findings. Additionally, participant descriptions should adequately describe the sample population so that the consumer can understand the degree to which the participants represent the population from which they were recruited. Participant descriptions should include a substantial number of characteristics related to the topic of the survey. Participant descriptions of students should minimally include (a) race or ethnicity, (b) gender, (c) age, (d) disability status, and (e) grade. Participant descriptions of school counselors should minimally include (a) race or ethnicity, (b) gender, (c) age, (d) counseling experience, (e) highest educational attainment, (f) school setting information, and (g) training related to the content of the survey.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) reported on a sample of 114 school counselors. They reported that 36.8% of the participants worked in elementary schools, 20.2% in middle schools, and 43% in high schools. They also reported the mean years of experience working as school counselors (4.86 years;  $SD = 1.86$ ) and the average school counselor to student ratios in the participants' schools (ranging from 318 to 522 students per

school counselor). The researchers did not report demographic data on any other variables such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, or school setting. Young and Kaffenberger (2011) reported on several variables about the school counselor participants, but the only individual level data reported was experience. The failure to provide a more comprehensive description of the sample limits the generalizability of the findings and prevents replication.

## Descriptive Statistics

Survey research should include descriptive statistics about the survey that provide the reader with a general understanding of how the participants responded on the survey. Examples can include means and standard deviations of responses, histograms of responses, and means and distributions on subscales or factors. The purpose of the descriptive statistics is to help the reader to contextualize the inferential statistics that a researcher uses to analyze and interpret the data. Additionally, researchers should provide any descriptive statistics that are necessary to ensure that the assumptions of inferential statistical procedures were met (Thompson, Diamond, McWilliam, Snyder, & Snyder, 2005). For instance, a researcher may employ a statistical procedure that assumes that the data are normally distributed. In such a case, the normality of the data should be presented with appropriate skewness and kurtosis tests as well as any normalization procedures.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) reported the means, percentages, and standard deviations of responses on the 13 items for the first subscale. They also reported the percentage of respondents that “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the 13 items. The authors provided substantive descriptive data that provided the reader with a complete picture of how the participants responded on the survey. However, the descriptive data were presented by item only, and the descriptive data were the primary findings reported, a limitation of the study. The authors

did not present descriptive statistics associated with the assumptions of ANOVA.

**Appropriate Inferential Statistics** Survey researchers should choose the appropriate inferential statistical procedures to analyze the survey data. The types of statistical analyses should be aligned with the type of data and should include references on the adequacy of the analyses for the data (Thompson et al., 2005). Researchers should provide readers with the assumptions of statistical procedures and an explanation of how the assumptions were met with the data.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) conducted an ANOVA comparing reports for one item “I used data to prepare students for college readiness” by school level: (a) elementary compared to middle, (b) elementary compared to high, and (c) middle compared to high. They reported significant differences between elementary and middle and between elementary and high. There were a number of problems with the analysis. First, the authors did not report how the data met the assumptions for ANOVA. Likert scale data are not continuous data, so the use of ANOVA is not appropriate. Other statistical techniques designed for categorical variables are more appropriate. Second, the authors analyzed the reports on a single item from a survey that did not appear to be valid or reliable. The use of inferential statistics to analyze a single item is questionable but is not appropriate when the survey is not valid or reliable. The authors could have created a composite score of items, and then use ANOVA to examine group differences. Because this was exploratory work, the authors also could have conducted an exploratory factor analysis and established some psychometric properties of the survey, potentially establishing a new line of research for the survey. Third, the authors failed to collect adequate information about the participants, which ultimately prevented the ability to conduct comparative analyses by participant characteristics. The failure to utilize appropriate inferential statistics is a major limitation that potentially leads to spurious findings in this study (Thompson et al., 2005).



## Adequacy of Findings

Clear, concise, and appropriate findings are critical for rigorous survey research in school counseling. Researchers should provide the results in a systematic and organized manner. The results should be aligned with the research questions and should be produced from appropriate statistical procedures. Researchers should also interpret the findings in a clear and concise manner that does not extend beyond the scope of the study or the limits of the data. Survey research is correlational, and researchers should refrain from any language that implies causality. Finally, researchers should discuss the findings in the context of existing research and should describe the specific ways that their study contributed to the knowledge base.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) clearly described and presented the results of the descriptive analyses. However, the lack of appropriate inferential statistical analyses limited the ability to interpret the findings within the context of the current literature base. While the study had the potential to contribute to the understanding of data use and school counseling, the lack of information on school counselor characteristics combined with the utilization of a narrowly defined sample prevented all comparative analyses. As a result, the paper lacked generalizable findings.

## Limitations

Finally, survey researchers should clearly describe the limitations of their studies. This provides the reader with an understanding of the author's perceptions of a study's shortcomings, as well as a means of understanding how the author interprets the generalizability of the findings within the context of the study's limitations.

Young and Kaffenberger (2011) identified the lack of gender and ethnicity information about the participants as a limitation. This statement was accurate; however, the authors should have identified other participant characteristics that also should have been included. The authors also identified the participants as only RAMP counselors, limiting generalizability and impeding comparisons in reporting between RAMP counselors and

non-RAMP counselors. These limitations were accurate and beneficial to the paper. The authors failed to identify the lack of survey development procedures, the lack of validity and reliability procedures, and the inappropriate use of inferential statistics as limitations. Including a more comprehensive list of limitations would have improved the article and increased confidence in the researcher's interpretations of the findings.

## Summary of Survey Article

We reviewed an article on school counselors' use of data. We found that the authors had a strong rationale and clearly defined purpose. They had clear and articulated research questions aligned to the purpose of the study. They reported appropriate recruitment procedures and an acceptable response rate. However, the authors failed to provide information about the survey development procedures or survey validity and reliability procedures. They did not include sufficient information about the participant characteristics. The authors also primarily limited their analyses to descriptive data, and inappropriately utilized inferential statistics on a single item. Finally, the authors failed to include some of the major limitations in the manuscript. Overall, the survey research presented in the paper had some major methodological shortcomings which limited the interpretability of the findings. This school counseling survey research had some strengths but did not meet our proposed standards for methodologically rigorous school counseling survey research.

## Recommendations for Survey Research in School Counseling

School counseling is in a critical time with respect to the advancement of research and the development of evidence-based practices. Decisions made by researchers and policy makers will affect the school lives, the adult lives, and the transition from school to adulthood for all children. Rigorous survey research can be a cornerstone in the field's advancement. By developing and implementing high-quality surveys, researchers can empirically investigate a host of important issues such as (a)

identifying salient issues confronting school counselors, (b) understanding the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors with respect to changes in policy or practice, and (c) examining the variables associated with school counselor support and use of data-driven practices. High-quality survey research can help the field to identify important topics for intervention research as well as to understand perceptions of school counseling practices from all relevant stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, teachers, administrators, etc.).

Additionally, rigorous survey research can be a critical component in international educational research (Sills & Song, 2002) that can inform and improve school counseling practice. As technology diminishes the impact of national borders, international school counseling researchers have the opportunity to share knowledge about school counseling practices, policies, and researches in ways that were impossible just a decade ago. International researchers can now collaborate to develop international surveys that can establish a new body of comparative school counseling research. However, to accomplish these goals, researchers need to develop surveys that are psychometrically sound, culturally and linguistically responsive, and reflective of the shared and unique aspects of the educational systems of different countries. Although the development of rigorous international school counseling surveys is exhaustive, the findings have the potential to dramatically improve our understanding of school counseling and our capacity to improve policies and practices to all children everywhere.

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# Using Mixed Methods to Evaluate Pilot Counselling Provision in Welsh Primary Schools

# 6

Susan Pattison and Maggie Robson

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## Introduction: Research and the Development of Counselling in Schools in Wales

The main focus of this chapter is the research carried out by the authors as part of a larger project to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of counselling and related therapeutic interventions in schools in Wales. The research was commissioned by the Welsh government to support the development of policy to introduce counselling into schools in Wales. For international readers, it is important to note that Wales is a separate country within the UK and as such has its own elected parliament, the Welsh Government. The counselling, play therapy and related interventions were part of a primary school study involving four early years' provisions in Wrexham (Wales). The findings from the four primary school datasets were included as discrete sets of findings in the larger project and contributed to recommendations for the Welsh Government.

We have based this chapter on research forming part of the School-Based Counselling in

Wales Strategy (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008a), a policy developed to provide all children with opportunities to access a trusting adult to talk to in response to the recommendations of the Clywch Inquiry (2004) (on child abuse by a teacher in a school) and the Children's Commissioner for Wales. In 2007 the Welsh Government commissioned a research team led by the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP) and Newcastle University (UK) to evaluate counselling in schools across the UK (Pattison et al., 2007). This report made ten recommendations for developing high-quality school-based counselling in Wales (see Table 6.1), leading to the development of the Welsh National Strategy.

In addition to ensuring that counselling services were available in all Welsh secondary schools, the policy led to the commissioning of pilot studies of primary school services in four local education authorities (LAs).

The primary school pilots were based in Wrexham, Cardiff, Bridgend and Pembrokeshire. Each pilot developed service delivery in different ways and adopted play-based interventions based on children's needs, the school environment, available staff and other resources. In this chapter the authors set out to inform and describe for you the evaluation of the pilot in four primary schools/centres in Wrexham. They also aim to engage you with the concept of how policy can be informed by research and vice versa and what some of the challenges can be. We problematise

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**Table 6.1** Ten recommendations

1.	School counselling services should have sustainable funding
2.	Services should employ professionally qualified counsellors who have experience of working with young people, who access appropriate clinical supervision with experienced supervisors and who take part in regular, relevant continuing professional development
3.	Deliver accessible counselling in an appropriately private but safe setting within the school vicinity
4.	Be seen as non-stigmatising by the school community and a normal part of school provision, which is integrated into the school community
5.	The service is evaluated and monitored by individuals or an agency (in or out of school) with experience in this specialised area of work
6.	Pay due regard to current legislation and guidance, and offer confidentiality within usual ethical and safeguarding limits
7.	Respond flexibly to local needs in respect of diversity (e.g. language) and practicality (e.g. availability during holidays)
8.	Work with and alongside other services and agencies in a collegial manner, while maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality
9.	Counsellors should be members of a professional body and as such have an established ethical framework and complaints procedure
10.	Employ counsellors whose personal qualities will mean that they are approachable, have good listening skills and a manner that encourages a climate for safe and trusting relationships

Pattison et al. (2007)

and reflect upon the methods and the challenges encountered. The research was carried out within a framework of collaboration.

## Research to Inform Policy in Welsh Primary Schools

Governments are increasingly turning to research to inform policy. The aim of this evaluation was to assess the effects of the implementation of therapeutic counselling interventions across the four pilot primary schools/centres to inform Welsh Government policy. A range of interventions were used to improve and support the emotional health

and well-being of children between 3–7 years of age, addressing the over-arching question as ‘Do these interventions enhance the well-being and involvement of the children in the project’? As part of the research design process, we examined methods frequently used in public policy research. Gough, Oliver and Thomas (2013) discuss learning from research and informing policy through systematic reviews. They captured some of the authors’ thoughts around designing a useful and valid evaluation, while providing information to inform policy effectively. Oakley (2000) examines the traditional tensions between qualitative and quantitative paradigms, highlighting the value of both. The authors’ learning from Gough et al. (2013) was embedded in their exploration of the concept ‘systematic’ and their claim that if methods can be shown to follow a well-thought out and designed plan, clearly articulated, then a review is systematic. This core idea was used to inform the evaluation research design for this study.

The evaluation was developed in relation to five main research strands, the findings to further inform the Welsh Government counselling in school policy in relation to young children. The existing policy related specifically to secondary schools (post-11 years). The five strands were developed from early discussions with school staff and counsellors and related to the main Welsh Strategy, representing the first part of a collaborative approach: Strand 1, therapeutic processes and outcomes; Strand 2, developmental process; Strand 3, systems; Strand 4, general process; and Strand 5, strategy/policy. Each of these strands is generated between one to four questions as indicated in Table 6.2.

The questions in Table 6.2 formed the basis for developing the methodology for the study, including the data collection and analysis methods.

The team consisted of four researchers, each actively involved in therapeutic work with children and young people and part of the academic research community (Maggie Robson, Keele University UK; Sue Pattison, Newcastle University UK; Kathryn Hunt, University of Queensland, Australia; Vivienne Dacre, Glyndwr University, Wales). The research design was developed through a collaborative process of discussion with school and

**Table 6.2** Five main research strands and accompanying questions

Strand	Research focus	Accompanying questions
Strand 1	Therapeutic processes and outcomes	Is the therapeutic intervention effective in terms of outcomes? What are the processes involved in the intervention and how well do they work?
Strand 2	Developmental process	Is there evidence that the process of introducing, training workers and implementing the therapeutic intervention is effective and working well? What works and what needs to be changed? Is the information gained from the therapeutic instrument supporting the therapeutic process of the interventions? How can the above processes be further developed?
Strand 3	Systems	What works well in relation to systems around the training and implementation of the intervention? What needs to be further developed?
Strand 4	General process	Is there evidence from the data to support the therapeutic intervention chosen? What are the strengths and difficulties of the therapeutic interventions in place? Are the most vulnerable children being effectively identified for individual therapeutic interventions as part of a whole setting approach to increasing support for children?
Strand 5	Strategy/policy	How does the intervention address the <sup>1</sup> Welsh Government's Ten Recommendations of the 'Counselling in Schools' Agenda?

Source: Information from: Pattison et al. (2011)

local authority staff, with a focus on developing a method that provided opportunities for each school to use strategies that were the best fit for their unique context. This process took place against a background of policymaking based on statistics, searching for a 'one-size-fits-all' approach and the modern therapy research reliance on the randomised controlled trial (RCT) as the research 'gold standard'. The mixed methods approach used challenges the RCT paradigm as the commonly used way of informing policy. To use colloquial language, just as children are individuals and cannot be fitted into boxes, a parallel approach can be taken with research methods. Every school is different, with their own population of children, staff and culture, making for a unique context. Kemm (2001) substantiates this perspective in his editorial in the British Medical Journal with his claim that randomised controlled trials and experimental research methods can be powerful tools; the real world is often too complex and varied to have confidence in results if applied to populations.

McLaughlin (2016) of the Knowledge Alliance discusses the unseen ways that research can influence ideas that lead to policymaking and what researchers should know about the various

ways that research is used in the policymaking context. Her examination of policymaking in a range of specific cases highlights the issue of effective communication of the research process as well as the findings to policymakers with the best evidence being reported in a way that is accessible and 'digestible'. McLaughlin (2016) goes further in her discussion of the different ways that research can inform policy. Research can inform thinking around issues in a conceptual way, and it can be used 'instrumentally' to directly inform policy and practice.

#### Lessons Learned

Through their examination of the literature around research and the way it can inform policy, the type of research and perspectives on validity, the authors felt more confident that the approach taken for the evaluation and study would be robust and fit for purpose. Context was the key and transparent communication of process and findings.

## Interventions, Strategies for Implementation and the Challenges

The choice of strategies and therapeutic interventions offered to the schools was intended as a means to provide sustainable good practice in improving children's well-being. This collaborative process offered schools ownership over the interventions for their particular school and opportunities to adapt and develop these to their unique context. Six different interventions were made available: reflective practice through observation, mindful enquiry, better play training, better play with individuals, better play in groups, and a therapeutic service (see Table 6.3). The staff chose the interventions that they felt best suited their school, and these were implemented by the project therapists, employed by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

**Table 6.3** Interventions made available to schools

Intervention	Nature of intervention
Reflective practice through observation	Staff taught to observe children through play in order to understand their emotional well-being
Mindful enquiry	Staff given opportunities to reflect on their own professional practice and well-being
Better play training	Where staff involved with the children (lunchtime supervisors and classroom staff) were taught play theory and practice
Better play with individuals	Staff trained to provide child-led play sessions
Better play in groups	Where children are free (within a bounded space) to tell their stories to their peers in order to enhance relationship building and self-esteem
Therapeutic service	If, after assessment, it was decided that the child, family or both needed professional interventions, these were arranged

### Lessons Learned

The main challenge we identified early in the project was the individual nature of the intervention choices made and how data could be collected, analysed and reported in a valid and useful way. However, we decided to be flexible and responsive in terms of our role as researchers and follow the schools' lead in deciding on interventions and approaches that were customised to the unique context and nature of the individual school environment in terms of location, population and culture.

## Ethics and Ethical Dilemmas

The research team were committed to researching ethically and gained ethical approval from Glyndwr University. They did not want the evaluation to impact upon the delivery of the interventions and for that reason decided not to interview the parents or carers of the children who were receiving therapy. These children were from families in crisis, and the team did not want to add to their distress or stigmatise them in any way.

The resolution of any ethical dilemmas was based on an application of the ethical principles of non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy, justice and fidelity. Non-maleficence, as 'do no harm', was of paramount importance and along with beneficence or 'doing good for others' was a concept held in mind while conceptualising, developing and carrying out the research. Contributing to the basis of knowledge upon which policy is built can be viewed as 'doing good'. Autonomy requires the concept of an autonomous person and implies freedom of action and freedom of choice and in terms of giving informed consent; the adults responsible were given information sheets and asked to give informed consent to be interviewed or take part in a focus group. One of the challenges with the informed consent process was the low level of lit-

eracy among parents. This was addressed by providing guidance and support through teaching and support staff. Justice is concerned with fairness and treating people equally. Every attempt was made to treat participants equitably and to try and manage any differences in perceptions of power. The concept of fidelity involves faithfulness, promise-keeping and loyalty. Part of the issue of fidelity is about providing adequate information so that a decision can be made regarding participation, and this was done through both a verbal and a written description of the project before informed consent was requested. Confidentiality was ensured with respect to the anonymity of participants. At the end of the project, the researchers responded to participants' wishes to know what the evaluation showed by sending a copy of the report to the local authority and informing the evaluation commissioners of the wishes of the participants

#### Lessons Learned

Research should not harm the recipients of the intervention – in the original research design the intention was to interview the parents of children who were receiving individual therapy. However, on the advice of the therapists who were offering this therapy, the researchers didn't go ahead with this as they felt it might stigmatise the families and add to their distress. It was important to be flexible while carrying out the research in order to ensure the welfare of the participants.

that funding was continued and extended. Copies were also sent to the schools/centres involved in the study.

The study involved a mixed methods approach, and the design was based predominantly on the qualitative perspective. Cresswell (2003, p211) describes four decisions that can be made for mixed method designs based on the implementation sequence of data collection, the method that takes priority during data collection and analysis,

what the integration stage of finding out information involves and whether a theoretical perspective will be used. The design for this study was based on a research problem focused on the question 'how can policy be informed by research in the context of this study and how can our research be informed by existing policy? Cresswell (2003) suggests six possible mixed methods design strategies including sequential explanatory, sequential exploratory, sequential transformative, concurrent triangulation, concurrent nested and concurrent transformative. The concurrent nested approach best fits this study as the purpose of this method is to seek information from different levels. Tracy (2010) suggests that research questions and/or hypotheses can be based on existing literature, knowledge, experience, or the research process. In terms of mixed methodology sample sizes, these can vary according to the actual methods used (Yardley, 2011). This study began by initiating discussions with key staff and identifying eight participants to make up a focus group in each of the four primary schools/centres. Data can legitimately be collected in a mixed method study using any technique available to the researchers that has internal and external validity in relation to the research context and aims (Tracy, 2010). In this study data was collected from interviews, focus groups and therapy outcome results through the provision of therapeutic interventions to schools over the 2-year period April 2009–March 2011. The rationale for these methods was based on the need to capture the views and experiences of key school staff such as head teachers and class teachers who were in daily contact with the children as well as the Foundation Phase (early years) coordinator and LA lead representative. Focus groups provided a way of getting people together and involved in the project early to identify and discuss their views and share experiences. Interviews at the start and end of the pilot studies were carried out with therapists (employed by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), senior school/centre managers, Foundation Phase (early years) head teachers, coordinators and local authority leads (designated lead educationalists employed by the local authority in Wrexham). The interviews were able



to capture data across time and give participants the opportunity to look back and assess where they were at the beginning and end of the project.

Qualitative data from the focus groups and interviews were analysed using a thematic approach, identifying key issues, concepts and themes, an approach referred to by Ritchie and Spencer (2012) as developing a thematic framework. Techniques from grounded theory were used to aid this process. Ritchie and Spencer (2012, p305) in their chapter on qualitative data analysis for applied policy research claim that the wider use of qualitative methods 'is underpinned by the persistent requirement in social policy fields to understand complex behaviours, needs, systems and cultures'. The recordings and transcripts provided a rich and fertile ground for analysis and interpretation. Therapy outcome data was collected using the Therapeutic Intervention Process Instrument (TIPS v2, Hunt & Robson, 2009), developed as part of a collaborative scientific project and piloted in Wales and England. The Welsh Government were keen for us to use this tool, which was developed in Wales and assessed perceived effectiveness of the interventions for individual children by comparing before and after data. The TIPS tool was chosen to compliment and triangulate the qualitative data and to provide a subjective measure of well-being and involvement. This is an ordinal scale; therefore the numbers offer descriptive rather than analytic statistics and can indicate a perceived movement in the child's level of well-being in four domains: psychosocial/emotional well-being, somatic well-

being, involvement and subjective respondent well-being.

The criteria of reliability, validity and generalisability, commonly used to judge quality in quantitative methodology, were not appropriate for this study as this is predominantly qualitative. Instead the quality of the research can be judged through criteria developed to assess rigour in qualitative methodology. While there is still not a consensus as to what makes rigorous qualitative research, a number of authors have contributed to the area, for example, Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, and Davidson (2002), Yardley (2011) and Tracy (2010). Tracy developed eight criteria for judging quality in qualitative research, (1) worthy topic, (2) rich rigour, (3) sincerity, (4) credibility, (5) resonance, (6) significant contribution, (7) ethics and (8) meaningful coherence, and these are the ones we judged our research on. She describes her criteria as 'distinguishing characteristics of qualitative goodness' (2013, p228).

The topic chosen for this study could easily be identified as 'relevant, timely, significant and interesting. The project is very relevant to the development of children's emotional health and well-being. It is timely in that the results are at the right time able to influence policy, significant in that it contributed to knowledge about how children develop and maintain emotional health and well-being and is of interest to a wider audience. The 'rich rigour' referred to by Tracy (2010) is described as when 'the study uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex theoretical constructs, data and time in the field, sample(s), context(s), data collection and analysis processes'. The description here of the methodology supports the authors in believing that we do offer 'rich rigour' and fulfil these criteria. In the planning stage, while involved in the collection and analysis of data and during write-up, the research team regularly communicated with each other to reflect on how the evaluation was going and how researcher involvement and biases may have affected the data collection and analysis and any perceived difficulties. As experienced researchers, the team was familiar with the concept of self-reflexivity, identifying and endeavouring to bracket off their subjectivity, values and

#### Lessons Learned

The authors were satisfied that the data collection methods were a good fit to answer the research question. Quantitative methods alone would not have produced such rich and thick data, and, similarly, pure qualitative methods would not have allowed the emerging changes and trends in well-being and involvement to emerge. It is useful to know that a combination of methods can produce such descriptive and vivid data.



biases. This was done through discussions with colleagues not involved in the project and openly examination of the methods used and the challenges encountered. Tracy (2010) refers to the importance of credibility. This was achieved through ‘thick description’ demonstration of the authors’ knowledge and understanding, triangulation of data, multiple participant voices and their own reflection on the process.

Did the research make a significant contribution? This is a question that requires contextualisation. Not only can the type of contribution be evaluated, the audience and the nature of the context can be assessed in terms of value. This research was for the Welsh Government more specifically, Wrexham Local Authority, and intended to inform policy and practice in terms of service provision. The report was well received and certainly influenced the LA to be supportive of extending the project to other schools in the region. There is value in the findings also to the recipients of the interventions, which helps to address the issue of children’s mental health and well-being. The effects of interventions for children’s well-being in the school context are well documented (Weare, 2015) and are the subject of ongoing research and investigation.

In relation to Tracy’s (2010) criteria, this research does not overtly advance the field conceptually or theoretically. However, it does raise issues around the uniqueness of research participants, in this case children and school staff, research contexts and the type of research design needed to capture data in a meaningful way. This research does not provide what is often referred to by positivists as ‘hard data’ or statistics, often required by policymakers, rather it provides real-life research. It is interesting that policies are most often based on statistics when they are aimed at real, unique individuals. Therefore, this research is also both moral and ethical. Is the research methodology sound? This depends on perspective and subjective opinion. Although there are many ways of judging ‘soundness’ of research methodologies, in the end it comes down to validity and credibility. Here validity is addressed. Does this study demonstrate ‘meaningful coherence’ (Tracy, 2010)? The authors have reflected at length on this concept and come

#### Lessons Learned

- Due to the difficulties in finding times in a busy school day to suit all participants for interviews and focus groups, it is imperative that as researchers we were flexible and ‘fitted in’.
- It is necessary to consider the context of the research before judgements can be made about validity.

back to the aim of the study. The research did achieve what the project set out to do.

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#### Data and the Analytic Process: Questions and Answers

A thematic approach was taken to data analysis using the process of phenomenological reductionism for the interview and focus group data (McLeod, 2001). The analysis focused on answering questions related to the five strands of the research. The TIPS data was collected from those children who had therapy and was analysed by selecting full data sets of pre- and post intervention data, noting the presenting problems, the type of intervention and the pre- and post overall TIPS scores in the four domains of ‘psychosocial/emotional well-being’, ‘somatic well-being’, ‘involvement’ and ‘subjective respondent well-being and involvement assessment’ (see Table 6.4 for a description of the dimensions measured by TIPS).

The TIPS assessment and evaluation tool was offered to the NSPCC therapists in the project by the research team to be used to collect both process and outcome therapeutic intervention data for both the evaluation and as a useful professional tool to record the therapeutic process and inform practice. This was to be administered every 3 months during the project producing eight data sets. However, there were operational difficulties and school/centre staff chose not to use the tool in this way. Feedback indicated that the time required to administer the tool and the administrative load of recording and collecting the information regularly felt burdensome to the therapists. Therefore, the tool

**Table 6.4** Descriptions of the dimensions measured in TIPS

Psychosocial Emotional well-being	'Children (and adults) who are in a state of well-being, feel like 'fish in water'. They are obviously happy. A state of well-being results in a fair amount of self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as a big portion of fighting spirit. People with a high level of well-being have the courage to be and to stand up for themselves and they know how to handle life. They radiate vitality as well as relaxation and inner peace. The prevailing mood in their life is pleasure. They have fun and enjoy each other's company and the things happening to them. They are aware of what they feel, think, wish for and need'. (Laevers, 1999)
Somatic well-being	Children and young people will, from time to time, experience illness and distress. It has been observed that children and young people who experience unusual levels of stress often show distress through their bodies. Examples of this may be excessive crying, frequent bad temper, sleep disturbance, not eating/overeating, chronic rashes, frequent headaches, stomach aches, nausea and bed wetting, clinging behaviour, extreme fear of separation, high levels of restlessness, fear and anxiety, hyperactivity, withdrawal, anger, despair, guilt, tiredness, intrusive thoughts and feeling bad about themselves are all common responses. However, humans are unique, so any unusual physical symptoms should be attended to
Involvement	This refers to the intensity of the activity, the amount of concentration, the extent to which one is 'absorbed' and the ability to give oneself completely, to be enthusiastic, to find pleasure in exploration; all of which allow the child and young person to further his/her development. They are in a special state. They are concentrating and eager to continue with the activity. They feel intrinsically motivated to carry on, because the activity falls in what they want to learn and know their desire to understand and grasp things, to get a grip on reality, to experiment, to invent and to make new things. The raters are offered statements such as 'The child is able to concentrate appropriately' which is scored as either 'Not True', 'Rarely True', 'Somewhat True', 'Mostly True' or 'Always True'. These scores are then assigned a number, e.g. 'Not True' = 1 and 'Always True' = 5, and an overall score can be calculated

was used for a minority of children taking part in the intervention. Ideally, TIPS should be completed during an interview with parents as much of the information required would not be available to a class teacher or other staff member. For the purposes of this study, when used, the TIPS tool was completed by school/centre staff and used by therapists for some of their clients, only occasionally being completed in collaboration with parents.

To give you a flavour of the issues that were addressed during the project, we have included two fictitious case studies below:

### Case Study 1

Carl is 3 years old and lives with his 80-year-old grandma as his mother is in prison for shop lifting. She is a heroin addict, and Carl's father walked out on them when Carl was 6 months old. Carl's grandmother finds Carl very difficult to control, and this morning, on the way to school, he ran away from her and was very nearly run over. Both he and his grandma were very upset by the incident and arrived at school in a distressed state. Once the staff had

realised the situation, Carl was offered one-to-one time with a teaching assistant who had been trained to offer play work. He used the time given to play out his fears of being run over through using toys being buried in the sand. He crashed cars, buried them in the sand and then asked the play worker to help him find them. Through this relationship in which he felt held and understood, he was able to play out his fears.

The staff have noticed for some time that Carl's play in school is very wild and seems to have no boundaries. They understand how unsafe this makes him feel and work hard on enforcing boundaries within school. They encourage him to play freely and also reiterated the rules that he must not hurt himself or others. Gradually Carl's behaviour has improved, and his Grandmother has been encouraged and supported by the staff to maintain boundaries at home.

### Case Study 2

Elizabeth's mother is terminally ill, and she and her sisters are being looked after by her mother's sister. Although she is only 4 years old, she does

understand that her Mum is very ill and not able to look after her. She clings to her aunt and finds it very hard to be left in school. In circle time Elizabeth says to the group that she will soon be alone and have to look after herself as her aunt will be ill too. She is very frightened. The other children are very kind to her, and with the teachers help, they try and reassure her. The teacher talks to the aunt after school and learns that she is not at all ill and intends to adopt the children after the mother's death. The teacher suggests that the aunt talks to Elizabeth and explains in a way that she can understand the

### Lessons Learned

Although TIPS did what was intended in the sense of allowing trends to be seen in the movement of the child's well-being and involvement, it was not used as widely as it could have been. This was due to the difficulty of teachers and parents liaising to complete it, ethical issues described below and the fact that not all parents were literate. In the end, the TIPS tool was completed by therapists for some of their clients, by class teachers and only occasionally in collaboration with parents. For a future project, TIPS could be redesigned to enable completion by therapists or class teachers without parental involvement and/or to be more accessible to individuals with limited literacy skills.

plans for her continued care.

## Linking Policy to Practice: Outcomes of the Research

The findings of the primary pilots are presented in this section and offer answers to the questions posed by the five strands of the research (see Table 6.1). Quotations from the data collected are included and linked specifically to an expressed expectation where it is considered necessary for

purposes of clarity and emphasis for you as reader. In relation to Strand 1, therapeutic process and outcomes, 15 benefits and effectiveness points were identified from the interview data. The quotes in Table 6.5 are from the therapists unless otherwise stated.

As can be seen from Table 6.5, the perception is that the training and implementation of the therapeutic intervention was effective and worked well. This addresses Strand 2, developmental process, and evidence from TIPS also supports this. Tables 6.6 (What works and what needs to be changed?) and 6.7 (Strengths and difficulties of the therapeutic interventions and identification of children) provide evidence to inform Strand 3, systems.

Table 6.7 provides information on the strengths and difficulties of the actual interventions and whether the identification and provision of interventions as part of a whole setting approach were valuable in providing increased support to children.

Due to various practical and operational issues, including inappropriateness in relation to some individual children's therapeutic process and circumstances (ethical practice was at the forefront), the completed TIPS comprised a small sample of the total of children involved in the whole project ( $n = 27$ ). Of the 28 children who had TIPS administered, one was not a complete data set. Therefore, the results are confined to the 27 children who had baseline measures at the start of the project and end of project measures. The TIPS tool was completed with identified vulnerable children receiving both group and individual interventions and school/centre staff and therapists completed the questionnaires pre- and post intervention (between October 2009 & April 2011).

The pre- and post scores in all and the four specific domains of the tool are presented in Fig. 6.1:

These findings, although from a small sample, suggest that children's well-being and involvement improved over the time of the project. As can be seen from the Fig. 6.1 above, all children showed improvement in at least one domain and the majority of children also improved within

**Table 6.5** Perceived effectiveness of the intervention and the processes involved

Very effective in terms of staff expertise and skills and also in identifying vulnerable pupils (Foundation Phase teacher)
Has helped staff to apply boundaries around boisterous play and teach these boundaries to the children
Has helped staff to observe children's play and identify vulnerable children through their play and social interactions
Children who find it difficult to open up, for example, in groups, often do in play. Role play is very good for this
Children's behaviour changed
Children learned how to play and share
Through work with children and teachers, boundary issues were addressed, for example, inappropriate closeness
Children now engage in play, where previously they have been withdrawn
There have been shifts around parental self-worth and increased awareness/appreciation of their child's behaviours in relation to their age and emotional development
The staff have developed insights which they perceive as enabling and empowering for vulnerable children in their care – for all children in their care
The staff are able to engage with children in child-led rather than directed play
The staff have increased understanding of the emotional difficulties experienced by vulnerable children and have increased therapeutic play skills with which to respond
The staff express enhanced self-worth which may enhance the well-being of children in their care
Children whose families could not/would not engage with services could engage with play that is underpinned by play therapy principles. As the intervention is not 'therapy', the child is neither stigmatised nor made a scapegoat
A play rather than play therapy approach when parents do not engage provides a way of assessing children and referring to additional services, perhaps statutory, if found to be very vulnerable
Mindful inquiry with school staff helps them to feel grounded, knowledgeable and affirmed. This creates the best climate for children
Quotes from staff in respect of whether the project met their expectations: 'Totally exceeded my expectations – it's the best thing I've been involved with'. 'Very positive feedback, especially from the Teaching Assistants'. 'Mindful Inquiry has made a big difference to staff. It is confidential and is combined with self-esteem building'. 'I've been to meetings and been involved with educational psychologists, social workers, etc.'. 'It's been brilliant, I am really sorry it has finished. It has been so useful for the children and staff. It was a huge crutch we were able to lean on. I am so sorry it has finished'. 'Yes, it has definitely met expectations. We knew (the therapeutic key staff) anyway and so I was quite confident to start with'. 'It has been very positive and I think it's made a real difference. It's helped the staff to have space to listen and understand children and that's been really excellent'. Linked to quote (a): 'For them it has exceeded their expectations in terms of getting them to look at it from a different perspective. It has perhaps changed a lot of people's minds and perceptions of those types of play'. 'It fits in with Foundation Phase pedagogy perfectly, with children's well being at the centre of everything we do. This project brings the clarity and focus and it empowers teachers to feel confident in their ability to keep children's well being at the centre of teaching and learning'. (b) 'I think with hindsight we did the right thing and I think we have done some quality work in those schools'.

each domain (see Figs. 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5) This evidence, although not demonstrating a causal link, suggests very strongly that the interventions were successful and that children's well-being and involvement improved. These results offer evidence to answer questions posed in all five stands of the evaluation:

#### Lessons Learned

It was useful to be able to see how the results had allowed answered the questions set in the five phases of the evaluation and to be able to offer different kinds of evidence as to the success of the interventions.

**Table 6.6** What works and what needs to be changed

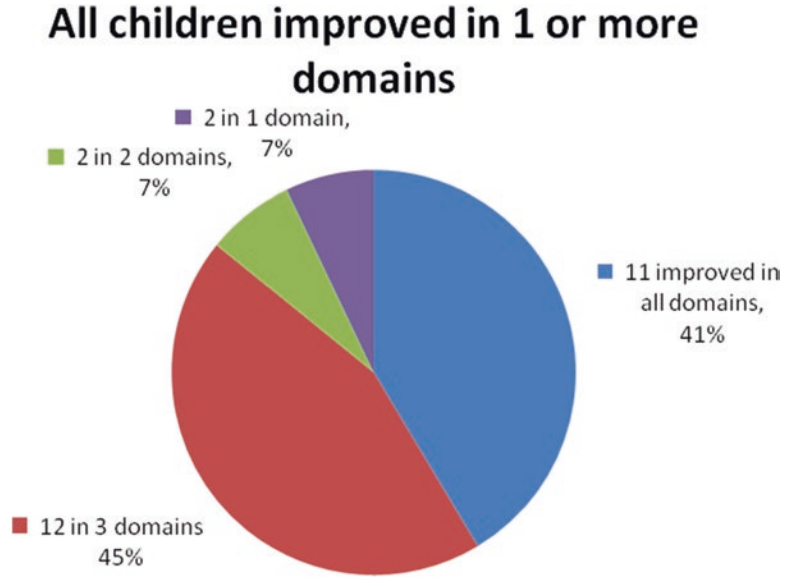
Perceived identified problems	What could be changed	What should stay the same
<p>The use of the TIPs outcome tool was difficult at times, for example, if a parent had problems with literacy. The time involved could be lengthy (school using mindful inquiry)</p>	<p>Extra CPD courses such as child development offered as multi-agency. Quote from Foundation Phase Teacher: ‘Currently there is no cohesion between services and we need to talk to each other’ More training on attachment required</p>	<p>Continue training links with the key therapeutic staff Continue transparency and openness among school staff. Continue the high level of involvement in school and the whole school approach All of the project should stay the same. In terms of sustainability, it works</p>
<p>Replicating the intervention across other schools may be difficult without money being invested in the service and a practitioner who is qualified to carry out the work to a high standard. Quote from post intervention interview with therapist: ‘This is not the cheapest option’ (mindful inquiry)</p>	<p>The use TIPs is a long process, it is a long document and it is difficult if parents have literacy problems. It proves time consuming for staff</p>	<p>Keep the project small and roll out over the Foundation Phase first</p>
<p>The withdrawal of a therapeutic service provider part way through the project caused confusion around what was happening with specific children (end of project interview with acting head and early years teacher)</p> <p>Some parents would not consent to therapeutic intervention. This was problematic when vulnerable children were identified and could not be helped (end of project interview with acting head and early years teacher) (play therapy intervention)</p> <p>Needing parental consent is problematic for some children. Quote from Focus Group with key setting staff: ‘Need to find another way of accessing therapy within the school – along the lines of ChildLine’</p>	<p>Would like to be able to plan for contact times staff and key therapeutic workers in advance There is a place for a part-time counsellor in this field</p>	<p>The key therapeutic workers were excellent. It would be good to keep them The way school members of staff are trained needs to continue</p>
	<p>Not sure but Laever’s well-being and involvement will be the basis for change Would like more feedback on aims and expectations for the child and what timescale to expect change (head of setting interview) Family involvement has been difficult. Perhaps working with parents in groups would be helpful</p>	<p>It’s not rigid and has flexibility to fit in with school and child needs. This needs to continue It is valuable to work with experts in play The service and training should remain based on Laever’s well-being and involvement model Family liaison should be continued</p>

**Table 6.7** Strengths and difficulties of the therapeutic interventions and provision of interventions as part of a whole setting approach to increasing support for children

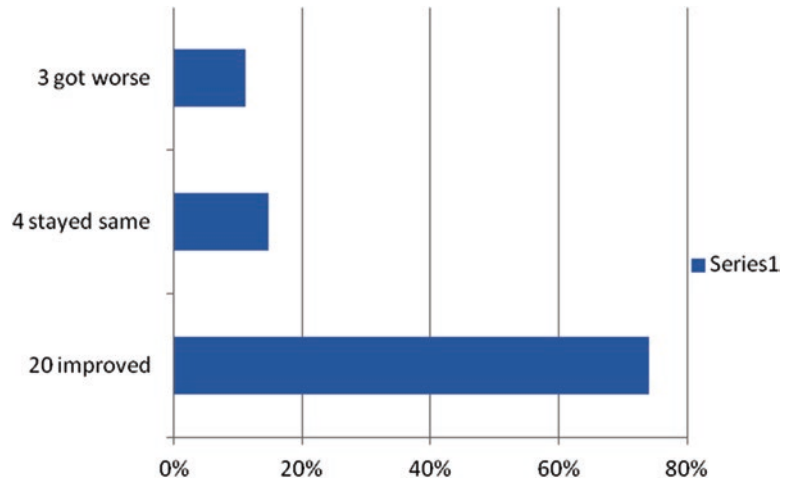
1.	Difficulty in delivering services to identified children when parents refuse permission. Quote from early interview with Foundation Phase Teacher: 'We identify children that need help and it is offered and then parents refuse – so that's really frustrating. Having to have parents' permission is counterproductive'
2.	Frequency of meetings, monthly, between key school staff and therapists works well in keeping each other up to date, sharing information and planning for support for individual children
3.	School staff involvement at all levels, listening to their opinions, views and hearing what they say helps the services to function for the best interests of the child
4.	The use of play as a major part of the intervention is appropriate and essential. Emotional well-being was viewed through play. Quote from Foundation Phase Teacher: '...children don't understand through talking. They understand their experience through play'
5.	Careful and well-thought-out preparation for setting up the service helped to ensure its success. For example, the therapists, school staff and Early Years Coordinator looked at the school environment in terms of play for children – indoor and outdoor. Observations of children's play helped to guide the design and choice of interventions. In this way, the service was not only child centred but school centred
6.	Teaching assistants were trained to work therapeutically with children. This provided a useful resource and helped a greater number of children
7.	A form of therapeutic triage was used to determine the intervention required for individual children. Some children, the majority, were involved in group work and circle time. The more vulnerable children were referred for 1:1 play therapy with a trained therapist
8.	The early identification of vulnerable children was central to the delivery of the service. This worked well. Quote from Foundation Phase Teacher: '...identified vulnerable children – it's not always the boisterous ones that are vulnerable'
9.	In-school ethos for play developed through training and service delivery. Quote from a key setting staff member: 'Rather than say to a child "I'm fed up of seeing you here", I would now say "and how do you feel now that you've been brought back to my office?"' and this leads to a lot of restorative practice'
10.	Provision of mindful inquiry for staff proved to be supportive to the service provision for children
11.	The delivery of service felt embedded in Foundation Phase practice with Key Stage One. Quote from Foundation Phase Teacher: '...(it) doesn't feel like an add-on to our Foundation Phase practice. It helps to clarify our thinking about where we started and where we are going'. Another teacher said 'it complements the Foundation Phase completely – runs parallel with everything we do. It seemed even from the outset as something that would fit rather than be added on. It is helping the majority of children'
12.	The service delivery meets the objectives in responding to individual children's needs and needs at a school-wide level
13.	The key therapeutic staff provided support through telephone calls, emails, provision of resources to use with individual meetings and face to face meetings on a monthly basis. This facilitated the service provision
14.	'Play box sessions' have been a very useful part of the delivery of service. Children and staff have appreciated this part of the interventions. One of the advantages was the practical nature of the play boxes and not having to write copious notes after each session
15.	The need for service provider continuity was highlighted as important to a quality standard of service delivery



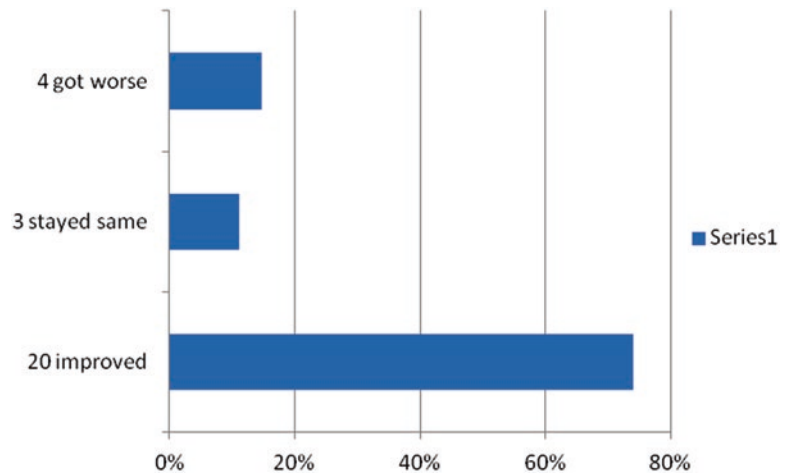
**Fig. 6.1** Improvement in all domains



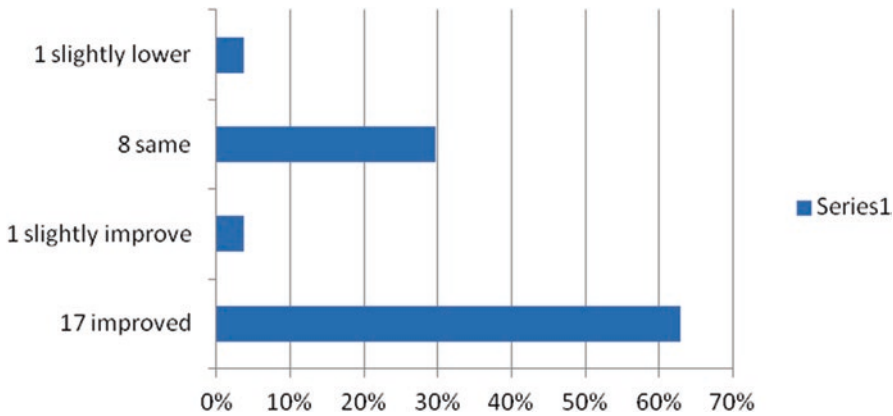
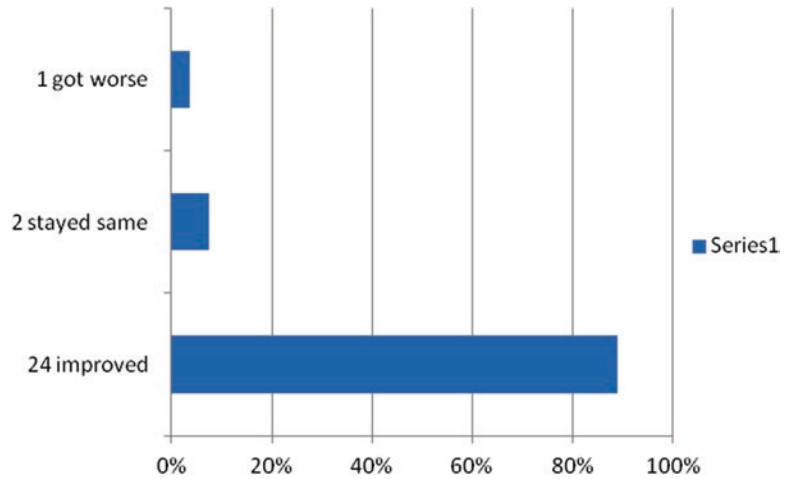
**Fig. 6.2** Domain 1: Psychosocial and emotional well-being



**Fig. 6.3** Domain 2: Somatic well-being



**Fig. 6.4** Domain 3: Involvement



**Fig. 6.5** Domain 4: Subjective respondent well-being and involvement assessment

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### Limitations of Researching Policy and Practice in Welsh Schools

In this section the findings are interrogated in order to help you, as a reader, get a sense of what came out of this project in terms of usefulness in informing policy and the further development of counselling in schools in Wales.

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### What Were the Expectations of the Intervention?

In 2008, the Foundation Phase Framework for Children’s Learning for three- to seven-year-olds in Wales (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008b)

came into effect. The policy Framework states that ‘Children learn through first-hand experiential activities with the serious business of “play” providing the vehicle’ (p4).

The findings of this project indicated that highly motivated, educated, experienced and professional education staff needed to learn more about play and to be able to understand more about a child through the observation of play and once this knowledge and understanding was in place to be able to provide guidance to other staff. In particular, to be able to know more about the links between play and the behaviour of a child. The policy Framework states that ‘Account needs to be taken of barriers to play, to learning and participation caused by

physical, sensory, communication or learning difficulties' (p5).

There was an expectation by school/centre staff in the project that they would learn how to intervene with a child using play to provide emotional and social support in addition to using play to offer educational input in the setting. They hoped that they would be able to incorporate this new learning into their current workload rather than increase the workload (perhaps this is why the use of TIPS was not consistent?). They wished for empowerment and increased confidence in identifying patterns in play that may indicate more serious underlying difficulties and the tools to intervene in unsettled or disturbing play to the benefit of the child. This indicates that there was awareness of the power of play in disclosing underlying issues for a child and knowledge that there is more to know about it and practical skills to learn in how to apply this knowledge for the benefit of the child. The recent emphasis on teaching and learning through play for the policy Foundation Phase in Wales had begun to influence the culture of the settings as play was now validated by the government as the best way for younger children to learn:

For children, play can be (and often is) a very serious business. It needs concentrated attention. It is about children learning through perseverance, attention to detail, and concentration characteristics usually associated with work. Play is not only crucial to the way children become self-aware and the way in which they learn the rules of social behaviour; it is also fundamental to intellectual development. (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008b, p6)

Staff at the schools/centres expressed concerns about the availability of staff to be able to take the time to play with children in busy educational settings. This is indicative of the time pressure staff may be under to deliver the curriculum in school settings. Some had no particular expectations of the project or were unsure and were just waiting to see what transpired. There were some concerns that only a small number of schools would benefit from the intervention.

## **Have the Findings from the Evaluation and Recommendations Set Out in the Final Report Influenced Policy and Practice?**

The authors have not identified counselling provision or interventions, similar to that in secondary schools being implemented in the Foundation Phase/primary schools. However, the Welsh Government provided an additional £1.5 m in 2010–2011 to extend the Counselling in Schools Strategy into school year 6 (Hill et al., 2011, page 22) and put legislation in place in 2013 to continue this provision. Political inclination to make therapeutic support available in primary schools in Wales remains on the agenda. However, no further funds have been forthcoming to support this.

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## **Summary**

The authors were invited to evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions in four schools in Wales. In this chapter they have considered this piece of research in terms of whether the methodology used answered the research question that was and whether the results contributed to policy development. The chapter begins by describing the history of the development of counselling in Welsh schools, which is different from that in the rest of the UK and how the research influenced this. Consideration is given to how the results of the project informed policy. The interventions offered in the schools are outlined as is the methodology that was employed. Ethical dilemmas and their resolution are discussed reflected upon as to whether this research has made a significant contribution to policy. Throughout the authors reflect upon their experience and lessons learned in the 'Lesson Learned' boxes. The chapter concludes by discussing the limitations of researching policy and practice in Welsh schools.

## Conclusion

In this chapter the authors have kept the focus on the research used to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of counselling and related therapeutic interventions in schools in Wales. They have highlighted and worked with the policy basis both for the research and to which the research findings fed into. They have given you, as a reader, a window into how research can be commissioned by governments and other organisations (in this case the Welsh Government) to support the development of policy. The chapter described, examined and discussed research forming part of the School-based Counselling in Wales Strategy (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008a). The authors hope you have engaged with the concept of how policy can be informed by research and vice versa.

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# Conducting Needs Assessments to Identify Necessary School-Based Counseling Services

# 7

Ayşen Köse

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## Introduction

Data-driven decision making has been introduced into the school counseling field over the last decade. Most studies that appear in professional school counseling literature focus on the importance of impact or outcome data evaluation in order to both improve practice and show how the school counseling programs or interventions led to desired changes in students' behavior or achievements. However, much less study has been devoted to the importance of needs assessment data in the field of school counseling, even though needs assessment is the first step in the data-driven decision making process in identifying priorities for improvement strategy for school counseling services. Needs assessment provides valuable information for decision makers, practitioners, school counseling advocate, and training institutions, and it yields many significant results. It provides foundation for an action plan to close the distance between the current situation and the ultimate objective, helps to see common and critical needs of school-aged children, provides rationale to advocate school counseling services,

and helps in the effective use of available resources with future action plan. The purpose of this chapter is to shed light on the role of needs assessments in order to identify necessary school-based counseling services and better serve students within schools.

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## What Is Needs Assessment?

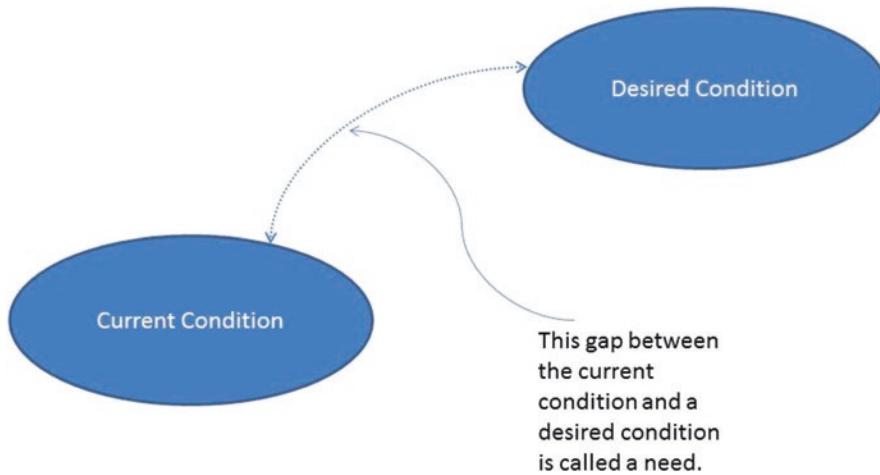
To fully understand needs assessment, there is a need to clarify terms “need” and “assessment” as well as the other terms usually confused with needs assessment such as “solutions,” “evaluation,” and “needs/gap analysis.”

## Need Versus Solution (End Versus Means)

The term “need” is usually confused with the term “solution,” which makes it difficult to understand needs assessment (Altschuld & Eastmond, 2010; Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013). Therefore, clarifying the distinction between those terms is essential to understand the real meaning of needs assessment. Simply stated, a need is a gap between the current conditions and desired conditions (see Fig. 7.1). This definition implies that there is a discrepancy between what is done currently and what ought to be done to be able to reach the ideal, future, or

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**Fig. 7.1** Definition of need (Source: Gupta et al., 2007)

expected performance (Gupta, Sleezer, & Russ-Eft, 2007).

On the other hand, the term “solution” refers to any action taken to close the gap in the ideal, future, or expected performance. Here is an example to illustrate the difference between these two terms. I conducted my doctoral dissertation about high schools located in Midwestern United States. There were two high schools in the area where my research was conducted. There was a perception in the community that one of these schools had traditionally been a college preparatory high school. On the other hand, the second school that I researched had always been considered mostly for children from families with low socioeconomic status, and therefore going to college was not really expected or considered attainable for those students.

Conversation about the lower than average college attendance dominated the counselors’ regular department meetings. Eventually, the school counselors came up with a few strong intervention programs to decrease the traditionally low college attendance rate such as adopting a new career curriculum, doing classroom presentations, providing printed materials for college applications, teaching how to write better college application essays, and identifying students’ career interests. However, after a while they realized these programs had not done enough to significantly change the problem. Finally, they con-

ducted a needs assessment and determined that only a small number of students were actually taking college entrance examination. Students were having difficulty finding basic resources such as money and transportation to enroll in the college entrance exam, go to the exam sites, and visit prospective campuses. Once the real needs were identified, the solutions came much more easily. The counselors created new partnerships with local colleges. As a result of these partnerships, surrounding colleges agreed to bring the required college entrance exam to the high school campuses free of charge and provided a half-day college campus visit for the students. Over the next 2 years, the number of college entrance test taken had tripled, and more importantly, the number of graduates attending local colleges increased dramatically (Kose, 2010).

This example illustrates the distinction between the terms “solution” and “need.” At the very beginning, the school counselors jumped to the “solution” before really assessing the “need.” They couldn’t see the root of the problem, which was that many students didn’t even attempt to take college entrance exams. They thought that students needed career information, guidance in writing better college application essays, or identifying students’ career interests. However, these interventions were neither a necessity nor an effective use of time as first steps. In short, the counselors picked solutions before understanding



the main problems. As well stated by Altschuld and Eastmond (2010), “Keeping two concepts (need and solution) separate takes a focus that is required for real “problem identification” and “problem definition.” This distinction of the difference between need and solution is essential premise of systematic planning and guides us in selecting key problems for solution” (p. 5).

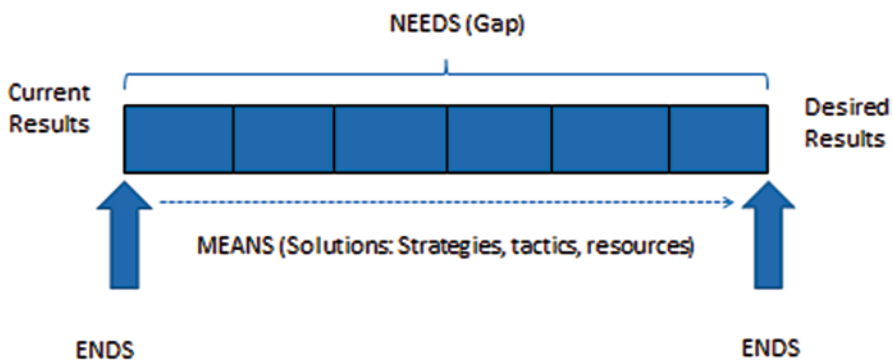
Briefly, the term “need” implies “ends” and “solution” implies “means” (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013). When we ask people what is needed to improve their children’s performance in schools, they tend to list solutions (means) such as more equipment, more extra-curricular activities, more school counselors, better trained teachers, etc. However, in essence, for better schooling, closing the achievement gap is needed, increasing the psychosocial well-being of the student is needed, etc. (Altschuld & Eastmond, 2010). Without making these distinctions, efforts in improving schools might be ineffective. Figure 7.2 demonstrates the distinction between needs (ends) and solutions (means).

### Needs Assessment vs. Needs Analysis

The other term that usually used synonymously with needs assessment is needs analysis. Both needs assessment and needs analysis serve to

improve performance; however, they have distinct processes. Without a needs assessment, it is not possible to do needs analysis. Kaufman and Guerra-Lopez (2013) explain the difference between the two: “as one [needs assessment] seeks to identify gaps in results, while other [needs analysis] seeks to understand the root causes and essential elements of such gaps... Needs analysis should come after a needs assessment in order to provide data about the casual factors of the gaps, therefore critical input about what solution alternatives should be considered to close such gap” (p. 9).

For example, dropout is a common problem in schools that school counselors often deal with. Determining the current status of dropout rates with regard to desired status and deciding if the need has enough priority to allocate resources is needs assessment. On the other hand, identifying the cause(s) of needs (in this case decreasing dropout) in order to select interventions is needs analysis. The cause(s) of the dropout could be school climate, parents’ traditional approach to schooling, students’ school attachment level, etc. Identifying the cause(s) of needs enables the best solution to close the gap between current and desired results. In short, even though these two terms are different, both are needed together to choose most effective intervention or prevention strategies to close the performance gap. In this chapter, I will focus on the importance of needs



**Fig. 7.2** The distinction between needs (ends) and solutions (means) (Source: Adapted from Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013)

assessment in identifying school-based counseling interventions.

### The Importance of Needs Assessment in School Counseling

Needs assessment is considered one of the three legs of evidence-based school counseling practice (see Fig. 7.3) and helps in figuring out the problems that cause discrepancies in expected performance (Dimmit, Carey, & Hatch, 2007).

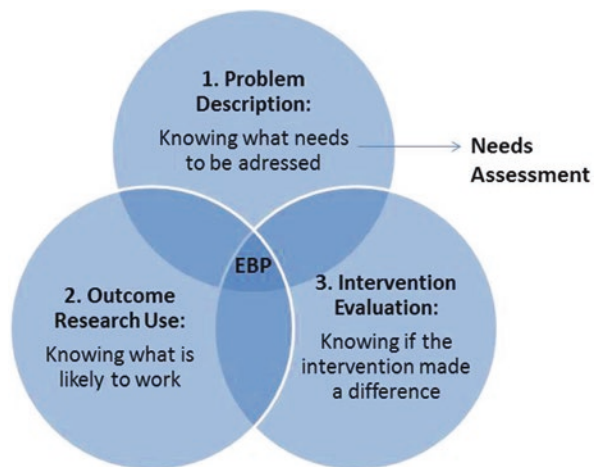
The importance of needs assessment in school counseling has been highlighted by many researchers (Astramovich, 2011; Dimmit et al., 2007; Ekstrom, Elmore, Schafer, Trotter, & Webster, 2004; Hatch, 2014; Kaffenberger & Young, 2013). Needs assessment provides valuable information for decision makers, school counseling advocate institutions such as school counseling associations, and practitioners, and it yields many significant results:

- Needs assessment helps to identify distance between where we are right now and where we want to be. Therefore, needs assessment clarifies the current situation and the ultimate objective. Once the distance between the two is identified, we have the data for decision-

making and the foundation for an action plan to close the gap (Gupta et al., 2007).

- A needs assessment helps to discover previously unforeseen opportunities for providing services (Leigh, Watkins, Platt, & Kaufman, 2000).
- A needs assessment helps school counseling professionals to identify common and critical needs of the school-aged population so they have the foundation to create appropriate school-based counseling services (Astramovich, 2011).
- School counseling professionals as social justice advocates can use needs assessment information as a rationale to advocate for services for minority and underserved students (Astramovich, 2011).
- Needs assessment information can help to align available resources with future action plans (Gupta et al., 2007).
- A needs assessment provides baseline data for the evaluations of school-based counseling interventions (Dimmit et al., 2007).
- A needs assessment facilitates relationships and collaboration among those who have a stake in the issue (Gupta et al., 2007).
- A needs assessment helps decision makers to better see where to invest resources and also organizations can use needs assessment

**Fig. 7.3** A model of evidence-based school practice (EBP) in counseling practice (Source: Dimmit et al., 2007)



information to receive funding for their services through grants (Astramovich, 2011).

### **Finding Appropriate Approach to Needs Assessment in School Counseling**

There are many types of needs assessment approaches defined in the literature. Most of them focus on the identification of the gaps or deficiencies in processes or resources such as training needs, human resources needs, or equipment/material needs (Altschuld & Eastmond, 2010; Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013). However, as previously stated, such things are only means to an end. In other words these are merely solutions to close the gap. Therefore, starting from assessing such needs (e.g., training needs) may lead us to the wrong direction or cause us to waste our efforts because the root cause of the problem may not really come from knowledge or skill deficiency.

Many other approaches to needs assessment have gone further and focused on an individual or a group of individuals' needs in an organization (Leigh et al., 2000). That might be a useful approach to reveal an individual's or small group of students' performance or behavioral deficiencies. However, approaching problems from an individual perspective may cause school counseling professional to perceive the students apart from his or her system. For example, school counselors deal with disciplinary problems and violence issues every day and try to fix the children with individual and small group counseling. However, there are several contextual factors that exist in the school or social systems which might contribute to the dysfunctional behavior of students. If we start a needs assessment on the individual or group level, then we fail to question the larger practices, norms, or policies, which unintentionally perpetuate violence. In addition to that, in such approaches, school counselors only work with limited numbers of individual students who are often times considered problematic (Breen, 1989). School counseling professionals should embrace the "system thinking" approach

because students' problems usually stem from the system. Therefore, making the overall system healthier is essential. Approaching problems from a system perspective helps counselors to figure out the main sources of the big problems and focus on their solutions. After careful assessment, they can meet all students' needs, not just the ones who need special help. Eventually, they can repair the system to make it more conducive for all students to flourish, which makes a greater contribution to overall school or even societal improvement. Therefore, to be able to find an appropriate approach to needs assessment in school counseling, we should be focusing on needs assessment approaches which provides a system perspective and conceptualizes a needs assessment as a tool to contribute to the larger system.

I purposefully chose Kaufman's approach to needs assessment as a framework for this chapter because Kaufman considers needs assessment not only from an individual level but also from a greater perspective, at an organizational and societal level (Leigh et al., 2000). He calls his approach as the "Organizational Elements Model" (OEM) which has five levels: mega, macro, micro, processes, and inputs (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013). He argues that everything you use (Inputs) and do (Processes) as well as individual results (Micro) and organizational contributions (Outputs) deliver useful societal results (Mega) (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013, p. 15). This argument implies that in this system perspective, changes to one of those levels can affect other levels. Detailed information about each level of a needs assessment is given in Table 7.1 which summaries the definition of each element (level) and shows how they link and align.

### **What Is Mega-Level Needs Assessment and How Can It Be Used in School Counseling?**

Needs assessment should begin with a focus on societal results, which Kaufman (2006) calls "mega-level" results and the other levels should

**Table 7.1** Summary of the “Organizational Elements Model” (OEM)

ENDS	Organizational elements	Examples	Needs assessment level	Type of planning	Key stakeholder
	<i>Outcomes:</i> Societal results and consequences (shared vision)	Quality of life, self-sufficiency, gainfully employed graduates	Mega	Strategic planning	Community society
	<i>Outputs:</i> Organizational results	<i>School-wide:</i> Graduation rates, performance on national and state standardized tests, post-secondary placement rates, college and career readiness, overall students' psychosocial well-being, student engagement, enrollment rates, academic growth and proficiency	Macro	Tactical planning	School itself
	<i>Products:</i> En route result or building blocks (note there may be multiple level of products)	Individual or group of students, specific classrooms: student test scores in specific subject areas, student school attendance, student referrals, courses successfully completed	Micro	Operational planning	Individual and group of students/ counselors/teachers
MEANS	<i>Processes:</i> Interventions, solutions, methods	Curriculum, individual counseling, group counseling, individualized learning, trainings, etc.	Quasi	Action planning	Individual and groups of students/ counselors/ teachers
	<i>Inputs:</i> Resources	Money, time, buildings, school counselors, goals, objectives, curriculum materials, etc.	Quasi	Resource planning	Individual and group of students/ counselors/teachers

Source: Adapted from Kaufman and Guerra-Lopez (2013)

follow it. “Mega-level needs assessment is a process for identifying and resolving gaps between the desired and actual accomplishment and contributions of an organization, as measured by the usefulness and value of those accomplishments to the organization’s external clients and our shared society” (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013; p. 29). From the perspective of counseling literature, the role of “societal change agent” is attributed to school counselors (House & Hayes, 2002; Ratts, DeKruyf, & Chen-Hayes, 2007; Crook, Stenger, & Gesselman, 2015), and school counselors are considered to be the ones who have unique position to contribute to the public good (Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015). These are not ambitious arguments about school counselors. In fact, many societal issues such as “poverty, threats to public health, violence, educational inequity, mental health, workforce development and economic development” are being addressed in the school-based counseling services (Martin et al., 2015; p. 305). Problems that often come into a school counselors’ office reflect the problems of the school, the community, and the society (Hayes & Paisley, 2002). In short, school counseling services should be aligned and should add value to society. Therefore, to provide effective school-based counseling services, we should relate to societal outcomes and start with mega-level assessment, which “represents the needs of society in terms of human development” (Altschuld & Kumar, 2010; p. 20).

Identifying an ideal vision for school counseling is the fundamental step of mega-level needs assessment. An ideal vision defines where we should be headed even though we might not get there in the short run. It is a destination we want for future generations and an ideal state of affairs that we are working toward (Kaufman, 2006; Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013).

The ideal vision should be based on fundamental societal needs such as health, safety, and well-being. Kaufman and Guerra-Lopez (2013) use the analogy of “vital signs” as the indicator of ideal vision. Possible mega-level target for schooling could be:

- *No* type of violence in schools
- *No* substance abuse in schools

- *No* achievement gap between mainstream and underrepresented student groups
- *All* students achieve and maintain psychological and social well-being
- *No* dropouts
- *No* discrimination based on irrelevant variables including color, race, creed, sex, religion, national origin, age, or location

All these objectives are linked to societal health, safety, well-being, and social justice as well as the main mission of schooling. Without reaching these objectives, it is difficult to have self-sufficient and self-reliant school graduates (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013). In this chapter, I argue that the policy makers, those who take the lead in school counseling initiatives, as well as practitioners should think about the mega-level when they create school-based counseling services. Therefore, when we conduct a needs assessment, we should not only be focusing on individual and/or a small group of students’ needs but also consider how we position our services to meet the needs of society.

Taking into account societal (mega-level) needs as the basis of school counseling services provides many benefits to both the improvement of the professionals and the effectiveness of their services:

- It helps to create a national-wide vision for school counseling and for strategic planning of counseling services. Having a clear vision for school counseling helps them to find faults in existing policies that fosters many societal problems such as inequality, discrimination, violence, etc., and as a driving force, it improves school counselors’ and practitioners’ political interests and builds their credibility (Jansson, 2011). In turn, school counselors become an agent of change who question present practices, norms, or policies, which may be unintentionally perpetuating societal problems or system-wide problems (Kose, 2010).
- It aligns school counseling practice with the system-wide issues and overall mission of schooling therefore school counselors can

**Table 7.2** Mega-level gaps

What should be	Current status: what is	Gap (it could be national/regional/state/district/school level - based upon the unit of analysis selected)
<i>No</i> students faced with any types of violence in schools	71.5% male students reported that they haven't bullied in the school in the academic year 47.1% female students reported that they haven't bullied in the school in the academic year	28.5% (based on and ideal target of no students faced with any types of violence in schools) 52.9% (based on and ideal target of no students faced with any types of violence in schools)
<i>No</i> students abuse substances	9% of 9th graders, 76.5% of 10th graders, and 62.6% of 12th graders reported no uses of any substances in the last month	8% (based on an ideal target of no students abuse substances) 23.5% (based on an ideal target of no students abuse substances) 37.4% (based on an ideal target of no students abuse substances)
<i>No</i> achievement gap between mainstream and underrepresented student groups	45% of racial minority students are at proficiency level in math measured by standardized test scores, and 88% of mainstream students are at proficiency level at math measured by standardized test scores	43% (based on the ideal target of <i>no</i> achievement gap between mainstream and underrepresented student groups)

Source: Adapted from Kaufman and Guerra-Lopez (2013)

play active, involved, integral, and transformative roles in the education system as opposed to being fragmented and ancillary (Scarborough & Luke, 2008).

- It helps contribute to solving societal problems because schools reflect societal problems. For example, if there is a common health issue in a community such as HIV, then most probably school-aged children are also affected by this problem. It is actually the case in many African countries. The education system cannot ignore such problems because such issues are a threat to the health, safety, and well-being of the people. Therefore, it has to receive priority consideration in the education system. To do so, mega-level thinking is essential.

Identifying the current status as related to ideal vision and determining the gap between desired and current state are important steps of mega planning. At the ideal level, we don't want substance abuse, violence in schools, or an achievement gap between mainstream and disadvantaged groups because these threaten their survival or quality of life and social justice. Therefore, the ideal vision is *no* substance abuse,

violence, and achievement gap when we look from the mega perspective. Identifying the prevalence of substance abuse (or other issues that are important for societal well-being) in school-aged children at national, regional/state, district, and school-wide levels can reveal the real gaps (needs). This data can also be subdivided into sex, race/ethnicity, age, grade level, disability, etc. (see Table 7.2). Especially for policy makers, this needs assessment data at the national and regional/state level, and the comparison and disaggregation of data is critical to make required regulations and legislations.

In order to improve policies in school counseling, I strongly argue that both governmental and non-governmental players in the policymaking process should start with a mega needs assessment, thereby focusing on larger societal needs while making policies. Mega needs can change country to country. In one nation, addressing poverty and associated issues might emerge as a priority, while in another nation, addressing industrial demands might be the priority. However, it is important to stress that I am only talking about fundamental societal needs such as health, safety, and well-being. The development of school-based counseling in Israel well illustrates the link between societal level



needs and school counseling. As Israel faced various significant immigration waves during its history, the society experienced many consequences of immigration. For example, mental health well-being of immigrants became a national issue. School counseling services rearranged based on this national priority to be able to meet mental health needs of immigrant students. Extra school counseling hours were provided; special programs are created in schools and in service training of school counselors recommended by the Ministry of Education in Israel (Karayanni, 1996). As a result, school counselors have taken an active role during such periods of social vulnerability and add value to social change. Other unique needs of Israeli society have also impacted Israeli school counseling services. Israel has been involved in several major armed conflicts and political instability since it was established in 1948. School counselor roles have evolved in response to such social traumas, and counselors have been considered the major source of social support and a facilitator of recovery for students in such difficult times (Abel & Friedman, 2009). The case of latest developments in school counseling in the United States of America are also a good example of how the larger national needs should be used as the basis to shape the development or practice of school counseling (see Box 7.1).

#### **Box 7.1 Example for Mega Thinking**

The widening achievement gap between the racial and ethnic groups become the emerging issue in American society in the beginning of the twenty-first century. The national large data sets revealed the fact that there are significant differences between racial and ethnic groups' academic achievement patterns, which were an indicator of social injustice. The No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation which brought strong accountability requirements to

#### **Box 7.1 (continued)**

schools was lunched to close this gap. Prior to this legislation, school counselors were often seen as ancillary to the mission of the school (House & Hayes, 2002) rather than active, involved, integral, and transformative (Scarborough & Luke, 2008).

To be able to connect the school counseling program to the latest educational reforms, school counseling initiatives such as The Educational Trust's Transforming the School Counseling Initiatives and The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) have called for paradigm shifts in the understanding of the school counselor's role, from a service provider to a key player in the success of all students (Dahir & Stone, 2009). As a result of these efforts, a new understanding of school counseling emerged. The school counselors' role was redefined. Emphases on advocacy, leadership, collaboration, accountability, use of data, and systemic change have infused the school counseling profession. Social justice has been defined as the vision of school counseling services. The national school counseling model which is called ASCA National Model has been adopted by many states. School counselor preparation programs have revised their curricula to reflect these changes.

Briefly, states, school districts, higher education institutions, and school counseling practitioners have aligned their practices with mega needs, which have helped to close the achievement gap between racial and ethnic groups. As a result, adding social value has become the central mission of school counseling, namely, school counselors have been considered as the advocator of social justice. Aligning school counseling with mega needs has provided clear vision to the profession and redefined their role in the education process.

(continued)

## What Is Macro-Level Needs Assessment and How Can It be Used in School Counseling?

Macro-level needs assessment indicates organizational needs (Kaufman, 2006; Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013). Kaufman and Guerra-Lopez (2013) define macro-level needs assessment as “a process for identifying and resolving gaps between the desired and actual accomplishments of an organization, as measured by organizational outputs, regardless of the value those outputs provide to external clients and society” (p. 50). Relevant outputs (indicators that are commonly considered as main elements of school performance) at this level for schooling might be:

- Graduation rates
- Performance on national and state standardized tests
- Post-secondary placement rates
- School achievement
- College and career readiness
- Overall students’ psychosocial well-being
- Student engagement
- Enrollments rates
- Academic growth and proficiency

Kaufman (2006) underlines the importance of building links between the mega- and macro-level needs assessment. For example, if achievement gap between the mainstream and the underrepresented student groups is alarmingly large at the national or regional/state level, this issue has to be addressed at the school level because strategic effectiveness can only be achieved when mega- and macro-level needs assessment results are taken together.

While mega objectives indicate the vision, macro objectives indicate the organizational mission (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013). However, usually schools’ mission statements are not written with specific and measurable terms. Let’s look at this mission statement:

“The mission of Sun Elementary School is to promote academic excellence in a safe, nurturing and positive learning environment and to ensure that each student will experience optimal social-emotional, academic and career success through

a challenging and progressive student-centered educational program.”

- What does “academic excellence” mean?
- How can we be sure that school environment is safe, nurturing and positive?
- How can we be sure that students are experiencing optimal social-emotional, academic and career success?

These unclear terms have to be translated into measurable macro-level results and indicators (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013) such as “Our school will have a 95% (how much) high school graduation rate by 2018 (when),” “The achievement gap will be decreased from 14.88% to 7% (how much) in math and 9.8% to 1% (how much) in science by 2017 (when).” After defining output oriented, clearly defined indicators, it will be possible to track how much closer to the mission they are getting (see Table 7.3). Also it makes easier for school counselors to align their practice with the school mission.

After setting the specific mission indicators, the next step is to identify current status as related to ideal and determining the gap between desired and current state. In this step, especially organizational level (district-level, school-level) data is required to estimate the gap. Otherwise, it is not possible to figure out the macro-level needs. The result of macro-level needs assessment helps to set or revise the mission. For example:

- What is the graduation rate in your school? What should it be?
- Where does your school stand in regard to graduation rates compared to the rest of the school district? What should it be?
- What is the performance of your school on national and state/region/district standardized tests? What should it be?
- What is the career readiness of the students in your school? What should it be?
- What is the prevalence of school bullying in your school? What should it be?.

These questions can be asked for each performance indicator. Based upon the calculated gaps, schools can set up their priority areas that need to

**Table 7.3** The gaps between what should be and what is

Mission elements	Dimensions	Measurable indicators	What it should be	What it is (current status)	Gap
Promote academic excellence	Academic proficiency	The percentage of students who scored at grade level or above level on standardized national/state tests	59%	20%	39%
	College and career readiness	Rate of students who scored satisfactory on career readiness inventory	93%	78%	15%
		Enrollment in higher-level coursework	85%	75%	10%
	Student engagement	Attendance rates	92%	86%	6%
		Graduation rates	85%	67%	18%
A safe, nurturing, and positive learning environment	Number of students who engage in risk behaviors	Smoking	0%	5%	5%
		Drinking	0%	3%	3%
		Drug use	0%	2%	2%
		Early sexual initiation	0%	3%	3%
	School climate	Teacher/student school climatesurvey scores	Average scores in school climatesurvey is at least 4 out of 5	Average scores in school climate survey is 2.4 out of 5	1.6 points
	School bullying	Number of students reported that they have bullied	100	278	178

Source: Adapted from Kaufman and Guerra-Lopez (2013)

be addressed. Therefore, school counselors can easily identify necessary school-based counseling services and program goals by aligning their practice with the mission of the school since the macro needs assessment has revealed the areas that should be focused on.

As for meeting macro needs, each school can provide its own unique input that eventually builds up their ideal vision in specific, measurable terms (Kaufman, Oakley-Brown, Watkins, & Leigh, 2003). If the school counselors align their practice to meet macro needs, they will be the critical change agents who contribute the ideal vision (societal safety and well-being).

**What Is Microlevel Needs Assessment and How Can It be Used in School Counseling?**

“A micro level needs assessment is a process for identifying and prioritizing gaps between desired results versus current results at the individual, group, or department performance level”

(Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013 p. 62). From the microlevel perspective, school counselors are expected to conduct psych educational, counseling, classroom guidance lessons, or individual interventions for students (see Box 7.2). These activities are expected to serve both group and individual students’ needs to enable them to reach the macro and mega objectives. Before running such interventions, there should be rationale for their implementation. Microlevel needs assessment can provide that rationale.

For example, macro-level needs assessment data might indicate that school-wide average dropout rate was 6.73% and your schools mission was to decrease these rates from 6.73% to 3.00% in 2 years. The gap between ideal and current situation is 3.73. However when you disaggregate the data based on students’ socioeconomic backgrounds, you might discover that students from a lower socioeconomic status have an 8% dropout rate. In this case the gap between ideal and current situation is 5.73. This result indicates that the school counseling program should focus its interventions on lower income students.

### Box 7.2 Closing the Gap: A Group Counseling Approach to Improve Test Performance of African-American Students

The research conducted by Bruce, Getch, and Ziomek-Daigle (2009) can be shown as an example of how microlevel needs assessment is taken as a basis to determine school counseling interventions in a rural high school. This school set 87.7% student pass rates for English Language Arts and 74.9% pass rates for Enhanced Math for the 2007–2008 school year (macro-level objectives). Then the authors disaggregated the school-wide achievement data based on students' races. They figured out that there were significant achievement gaps that existed between African-American students and White students during the 2006–2007 school year (see the table below).

	2006–2007 (before the intervention)		2007–2008 (after intervention)	
	Enhanced English (%)	Enhanced Math (%)	Enhanced English (%)	Enhanced Math (%)
All students	90.4	67.3	84.6	69.2
White students	92	70	84.3	70.5
African-American students	74.2	38.7	84.2	63.2

After identifying the achievement gap between white and African-American students (micro-level needs assessment), the authors determined an appropriate intervention for the under-achieving group. They decided to design a special group counseling intervention targeted at African-American students. Eventually, after the implementation, they evaluated the impact of the intervention on the 2007–2008 school year, and they found that African-American students made significant gains in both English Language Arts and Enhanced Math and that the achievement gap between the two groups decreased.

Source: Bruce et al. (2009).

Without doing such a needs assessment, it is not guaranteed that we will be able to determine the most appropriate interventions (means).

### Quasi Needs Assessment

In the beginning of this chapter, it is pointed out that mega, macro, and micro needs assessments indicate the gap between the current and the desirable results (i.e., the ends). On the other hand, inputs (raw materials or resources) and processes (methods and activities) indicate “the means” in order to achieve desirable results (Kaufman, 2006). Quasi needs assessment deal with gaps that are related to means and also linked to the mega-, macro-, and microlevel

needs (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013). For example, defining post-training needs of urban high school counselors or identifying the gaps between how school counselors actually use their time and how they ideally should use their time for most effective school counseling can be considered quasi needs assessment.

Training needs assessment, which can be considered as a means to close a knowledge, performance, or skills gap, is the most popular type of quasi needs assessment. However, the issue or problem may not always come from a skill or knowledge deficiency. In some cases non-training solutions need to be applied because performance deficiency may be caused by lack of motivation, time, resources, environmental problems, or other issues hindering desired

results (Barbazette, 2006; Gupta et al., 2007). Therefore, starting their needs assessment with only a “training needs assessment” may not help to reach desired result (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013).

For example, comprehensive and developmental school counseling programs (CDSCPs) have been highly promoted in many countries to meet the personal, social, educational, and career development needs of all students. However, research points out those school counselors are not always able to successfully implement CDSCPs in their schools. In this case, jumping to training needs assessment to solve the problems may lead to disappointing results. Although school counselors may be competent enough to implement CDSCPs, they might also be forced to do nonschool counseling duties in the schools, or the counselor-student ratio might be much higher than the ideal so these obstacles may be getting in the way of implementing CDSCPs. As stated by Gupta et al. (2007), before launching any training, learning, or development program, it is usually necessary to collect information about the target group(s) and determine whether the deficient performance or problem is caused by a knowledge or skill deficiency or by another factor such as time or work overload.

### **Ensuring Linkages Between Mega, Macro, and Micro Assessment**

At a societal level, people’s survival, health, safety, and well-being need to come before anything else. The things that may threaten a society’s health, safety, and well-being may change from nation to nation, region to region, and community to community. In one nation/region/community, a devastating infectious disease may be the priority such as HIV in African countries. In many Middle Eastern countries, war and refugee issues may be the biggest problem. Gender differences in children’s schooling like in Pakistan and India or an achievement gap between mainstream and underrepresented groups like in the

United States might be a potential menace that has many negative social consequences.

When we conduct needs assessment to identify necessary school-based counseling services, it is vital to ensure linkages between all organizational elements (Kaufman, 2006). Identifying mega-level needs, which refers to societal level needs, provides a direction on what school counseling profession should deliver. It also sets criteria for planning and evaluation of school counseling activities. Then the first step of identifying school-based counseling services is to shift our focus to societal level needs. The number one question we should consider is “What is the issue of greatest importance to our society/region/community?” Mega needs assessment is needed to discover the answer to this question. I associate Mega-level needs assessment with the policy making process. It is the policy makers’ job to bring societal problems into the foreground and make necessary legislations to prevent or solve these problems. As illustrated in Box 7.1, social inequality has one of America’s largest social problems, so the US government brought the issue of the significant differences between racial and ethnic groups’ academic achievement gap into the foreground. Based on this need, counseling programs changed throughout the nation. Eventually, the school counselors’ role was redefined as a challenger of the status quo and advocate of social justice and their practices also changed. However, it is important not to forget that many societal issues are also ignored by policy makers. Issues that often threaten societal well-being such as racism, discrimination, and inequality, whether intentionally or unintentionally, can be promoted by policy reforms. For these reasons, I believe in the importance of having national or local school counseling initiatives such as school counseling associations because these institutions lobby against such policies.

In the following case, I will illustrate how we can link mega, macro, and micro needs assessments. It is well known that suicide is a serious social health problem around the world. Reports suggest more than 800,000 deaths take place

worldwide each year (Nordentoft, Madsen, & Fedyszyn, 2015). It has also been proven that suicide can negatively impact the lives of the people around the person who commits or attempts to commit suicide. Additionally, there is an economic cost. For example, suicide costs American society over \$44.6 billion a year in medical and work loss costs combined (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

Even though suicide is a worldwide public health problem, in some states in America, the suicide rate is much higher than average. Wisconsin is one of those places, especially for youth suicide. Since it is such a significant problem in Wisconsin, suicide prevention strategy have been designed by the local suicide prevention coalitions (The Wisconsin Suicide Prevention Strategy, 2015). They figured out the gap between the current conditions (or results) and desired conditions (or results). Then, they adopted the ideal vision, “Zero Suicide in Wisconsin. If zero isn’t the right number, what is?” (The Wisconsin Suicide Prevention Strategy, 2015).

Policy makers, decision makers, and school counseling professionals used this vision that was adapted after mega needs assessment as the foundation for designing school-based counseling services in Wisconsin. If school counseling professionals used this mega needs assessment as the basis of their planning process, they could be part of a system-wide effort to prevent suicide and add significant value to the community and the society. For example, school districts in Wisconsin can conduct macro needs assessment and identify the rate of students with serious mental health problems and set a specific measurable goal to decrease this rate. For example, “In our school district, 9% of high school students are identified as at risk for suicide, and our aim is to decrease this rate by 4% at the end of the 2017 school year.” With microlevel needs assessments, school counselors in the school districts can screen students regularly, identify gaps in specific areas, set specific goals for identified risk groups, and choose best intervention and prevention strategies to reach these goals. Therefore, they can take a significant role in reducing youth

suicide rates by being proactive within their schools. As leaders in their schools, they can also play an important advocacy role for policy change to prevent those policies that may unintentionally perpetuate youth suicide.

Different levels of needs assessment can be used to guide policy at different levels. For example, mega-level needs assessments can be used to guide national education agenda regarding school-based counseling policies. Macro-level needs assessment can be used to guide local or school-level counseling program policy, strategic priorities, and annual goals. Microlevel needs assessment can be used to guide both group and individual students’ developmental goals in order to meet larger policy ends eventually.

### **Prioritizing Gaps and Driving Recommendations**

So far, I have focused on identifying gaps in results at the mega-, macro-, and microlevel. After identification of gaps, there is a need to prioritize them. This step is an important component of needs assessment. It might not be possible to address all needs at the same time; some might require immediate attention; therefore, it is important to put them in order such as high, moderate, and low priority based on the following criteria (Kaufman, 2006; Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013):

- Which might guide your national/regional/district/school plans (vision and mission) further for the next year or two?
- What is the magnitude/size of the gap?
- What is the cost (financial or nonfinancial) of addressing the gap versus ignoring it?
- What are the possible risks of not meeting the need?
- What additional capital or funds are needed to close the gap?

These criteria should be discussed with a committee and all stakeholders. The discussion should be end-result oriented (not the means or wants)



while prioritizing needs. After prioritization is complete, recommendation can be made for closing each gap. This step can be considered the needs (gap) analysis. Identifying probable causes of gap in results will eventually help to determine solutions, strategies, and resources (the means). Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez (2013). Some propose methods for needs analysis are SWOT analysis, cost-consequences analysis, causal analysis, and methods-means analysis. The school counseling literature also sheds light on identifying possible causes of students' deficiencies in performance within academic, career, and social-emotional areas.

As stated earlier, needs assessment and needs analysis are usually confused with each other. Kaufman (2006) states that "how does one analyze something (such as a need) before they know what should be analyzed? First assess the needs then, analyze them" (177). Therefore, before making any policy or decision or choosing strategy in school counseling, real needs should be identified and prioritized.

### Limitations and Challenges of Conducting Needs Assessment

While acknowledging the indispensability of the needs assessment in strategically designing school-based counseling services, it is important to consider some major limitations and challenges of conducting needs assessment. The following points must be taken into account:

- Needs assessment is only the preliminary stage of continual improving process. It needs to be followed by a development solution, plan implementation, and evaluation (Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013; Dimmit et al., 2007). It is important to recognize that it is just a one element toward comprehensive planning in school counseling services.
- It might be challenging and time-consuming to gather insights from all stakeholders

(Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013; Gupta et al., 2007).

- Needs assessment is relative for a certain period of time; therefore it needs to be regularly updated (Cooper, 2002).
- For a sustainable improvement, follow-up is essential after a needs assessments to ensure that future actions are taken.

### Data Collection Tools for Needs Assessment

The important thing about data collection for needs assessment is that the data used to assess needs should serve to identify gaps in specified and desired result at three levels, mega, macro, and micro. However, many so-called needs assessments only focus on desired processes and resources (Kaufman et al., 2003). Therefore, it is important to mention that whatever data collection tools are used, the data should reveal the gaps in results in terms of our society; in terms of what schools deliver to meet students' needs on academic, career, and psychosocial well-being; and in terms of what individual students or teams/groups' performance on academic, career, and psychosocial well-being.

Sometimes, needs assessment data already exists. For example, through the Internet, it is possible to research technical reports, regional/national census data, etc. Similarly, school/district-level data on students' academic performance should be available. If the data is not available already, it is necessary to collect and identify necessary school-based counseling services strategically. Data collection tools can be developed for the purpose of the needs assessment. Additionally, there are some standards-based need assessment tools specifically designed for needs assessment available for school counseling professionals (Dimmit et al., 2007). These tools are listed in Table 7.4.

**Table 7.4** Standards-based needs assessment tools

Name of the tool	The goal of the tool	Tool characteristics	Developed by
Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development (ASCNPD)	Designed to measure school counselor readiness and progress toward the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs. It can be used as a tool to reveal professional development needs of school counselors	ASCNPD survey questions are divided into six components: school counseling priorities, school setting perceptions, personal social development, career and post-secondary development, academic development, and program management	Dahir and Stone (2003)
Intermediate Elementary School Students Counseling Needs Survey (IESCNS)	Designed to assess the counseling needs of students in the upper grades of an elementary school	IESCNS survey enables computation of a “total counseling need score.” It can be administered to all students in a school to achieve indication of the general (i.e., school-wide and/or classroom) level of counseling needs among the students	Thompson, Loesch, and Serapine (2003)
Dropout and Violence Needs Assessment Survey	Designed for school staff to assess their perceptions about students’ needs in preventing dropouts and violence	This survey questions are divided into six components: school connectedness/positive school climate, causes of disruptive or violent behavior, causes of school disengagement/dropout, intervention for disruptive or violent behavior, interventions for dropout	Miltich, Hunt, and Meyers (2004)
The Comprehensive Career Needs Survey (CCNS)	Designed to assess the career education and support needs of junior high and senior high school students	This survey questions are divided into four components: the perceived resources and needs, educational needs, future goals and aspirations, and students’ perceptions of the effectiveness of career planning providers. This survey also has distinct forms for other school staff to assess their perceived role in adolescent career planning, potential gaps in services, and their perceptions of the involvement and effectiveness of career planning providers	Magnusson and Bernes (2002)

## Summary

The importance of data-driven school counseling has been highlighted in several research articles in last few decades. Needs assessment is considered one of the three legs of evidence-based school counseling. This chapter highlights that policy makers, those leading school counseling initiatives, and practitioners should think from system-wide perspective to conduct needs assessment for creating school-based counseling services. There are many contextual factors that can exist in a school, a community, or larger society that contribute to the behavior or performance of

students. Thus, we cannot separate the student from his or her system. That is why Roger Kaufman’s (2006) framework for needs assessment was chosen for discussion since the Organizational Elements Model uses a system perspective.

Needs assessment answers the “what” question. What is the gap between actual and desired performance? The answer of why this gap occurred and how it can be closed refer to needs analysis. In this chapter, three levels of needs assessment are described: mega, macro, and micro.

Mega-level needs assessment is that which indicates societal needs and is the best place to

start in planning necessary school-based counseling services because there is reciprocal relationship between the school and society. Therefore, school counseling services should be aligned and will be able to add value to society.

Macro-level needs assessment focuses on school-level needs. Specifically the gaps in results in terms of what schools deliver to meet students' needs on academic, career, and psychosocial well-being. Macro needs assessment reveals the focus areas that should be undertaken in order to reach the school's mission and should still be linked in mega needs. If school counselors position themselves as a part of the school rather than ancillary and fragmented and conceptualize themselves as powerful actors who impact the mission, then, they are able to contribute meeting the macro needs and in turn they add value to society.

Microlevel needs assessment focuses on individual and specific group needs. School counselors conduct many individual, group, and classroom interventions. If they base such interventions upon micro needs assessment, they contribute to the school's mission by closing gaps in microlevel which then helps to close gaps at the macro-level.

Policy makers in school counseling, leading school counseling associations, and practitioners should think mega when they create needed school-based counseling services. Policy makers have a special responsibility to bring societal problems to the foreground and make necessary legislation to prevent or solve problems in schools. Then it would be much easier for decision makers and school counseling practitioners to identify and prioritize macro and micro needs and generate solutions to close gaps in schools and students' performance.

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# Using Methodological Reviews and Meta-analyses to Identify Current Best Practices in School-Based Counseling

8

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## Methodological Reviews in School Counseling

Methodological reviews and meta-analyses are two types of systematic reviews that together represent a critical approach for advancing the quality of research in a particular discipline or field. The purpose of a meta-analysis is to combine the quantitative data from multiple studies in order to develop one or multiple conclusions with greater statistical power. Meta-analyses analyze the strength and direction of the findings from a body of research, but do not address the relative methodological quality of the individual studies that comprise the body or research. A methodological review is used to evaluate the quality of the research methods of the body of research on a specific narrow topic such as Student Success Skills. The purpose of the methodological review is to understand the quality of the research by systematically analyzing the various research components of each study and synthesizing the quality of the

research methods across the body of studies. The research in a discipline is advanced by conducting methodological and meta-analytical reviews and by responding to those findings with additional research that is informed by those findings. In the school counseling discipline, methodological reviews should be conducted in order to establish the methodological quality of existing research and should be used prior to conducting a meta-analysis of the existing research. Conducting a methodological review prior to conducting a meta-analysis is recommended because the methodological review informs the field about the quality of the research before informing the field about the findings, which could be spurious because of possible methodological shortcomings.

A methodological review is a systematic analysis of the methods used in a body of experimental research. A methodological review is not a type of research, but a literature review process that focuses on the methodological rigor of existing research. The purpose of a methodological review is to evaluate the methodological rigor of research in order to inform the confidence consumers (and other researchers) can place in specific claims of intervention effectiveness. Thus, experimental studies of a particular school counseling intervention or therapy that meet rigorous methodological standards have the effect of increasing confidence in conclusions about the intervention's effectiveness. Conversely, when a body of experimental studies reveals studies with

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serious methodological flaws, then confidence in claims about the intervention is potentially spurious. If a robust number of studies have methodological rigor, then researcher may conduct a meta-analysis with the rigorous studies to obtain a reliable estimate of intervention effects (because only results from the most rigorous studies would be included).

School counseling may directly benefit from concentrated efforts to review the methodological rigor of bodies of experimental research. For example, the field of special education began a shift toward an evidence-based paradigm in the early 2000s (e.g., Cook, Landrum, Tankersley, and Kauffman, 2003). Subsequently, the field has advanced toward increasing consensus on what interventions, methods, and strategies are supported by high-quality evidence. Furthermore, special education researchers have clarified what areas of research demand further inquiry and which practices are unlikely to produce desired outcomes. School counseling may be in a similar position to pursue the identification of practices that are most likely to confer benefit to the youth served by its professionals. By engaging in careful, objective review of the methodological features of school counseling research, school counseling researchers may similarly clarify what is most likely effective, what gaps continue to exist, and where attention from researchers is still needed. Publication of methodological reviews of extant school counseling intervention research is, therefore, critical. Accordingly, our aim is to provide guidance in carrying out this important review process in order to advance the rigor of school counseling research.

In this chapter, we discuss the process for conducting a methodological review for quantitative research studies. We describe and discuss a set of quality indicators for quantitative research studies (including correlational, experimental, and quasi-experimental designs). We derived the indicators from existing quality indicators in special education and related educational disciplines. We also describe the quality indicators, the purpose and meaning of the indicators, and the components of each of the indicators. This is followed by a description of the process of analyzing a

research article using the indicators with examples from the field. Finally, we present an example of a methodological review using three quantitative studies of school discipline outcomes. We chose school discipline studies because (a) they are closely related to school counseling work, (b) they address critical issues currently facing all schools in the country, and (c) they represent complex studies with varying methodological approaches within a narrow scope of research.

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## **Part 1: Steps for Conducting a Methodological Review**

Before conducting a methodological review, it is necessary to identify the parameters of the research that is going to be reviewed. The researcher should know the literature well and choose a topic that is narrow enough to warrant a methodological review, but broad enough to include a sufficient number of articles to make substantive conclusions about the quality of the existing research. Some examples of topics of existing methodological reviews are (1) studies that have utilized Social Stories™ (Leaf, Oppenheim-Leaf, & Leaf, et al.), (2) respondent techniques for reduction of emotions limiting school adjustment (Misra & Schloss, 1989), and (3) phonological awareness intervention research (Troia, 1999). The authors of these methodological reviews examined 41, 32, and 39 studies, respectively. We reviewed the literature and did not find any methodological reviews conducted in the school counseling discipline. Nonetheless, the three methodological reviews cover content directly related to school counseling and school counseling research.

### **Step One: Establish Methodological Review Criteria**

The first step in conducting a methodological review is to establish the parameters of the methodological review. This should happen before reading any studies during the review process.



Generally, the field uses quality indicators with associated components to guide the methodological review process. A clear example of methodological quality indicators was first established by the Council for Exceptional Children. They developed guidelines for conducting high-quality research (Odom et al., 2005) and quality indicators for conducting experimental and quasi-experimental research (Gersten et al., 2005) and for conducting correlational research designs (Thompson et al., 2005). Another subsequent example of a methodological review and associated quality indicators for single case design was established by Mulcahy and her colleagues (Mulcahy, Krezmien, & Travers, 2016). For this chapter, we adopted a combination of the quality indicators from Gersten et al. (2005), Thompson et al. (2005), and Mulcahy and colleagues (2016). We discuss seven quality indicators and the associated components for each: (1) research basis, (2) sampling procedures, (3) participants and setting, (4) data collection procedures, (5) variables, (6) statistical analyses, and (7) implications and limitations. What follows are a presentation of each of these quality indicators, the rationale for their inclusion in a methodological review, and a discussion about how the indicators are used to evaluate research from a methodological perspective.

### **Indicator 1: Research Basis**

In order to demonstrate an impact on the field of education, a researcher must contextualize a study within the scope of existing related research (Gersten et al., 2005). It is important that researchers describe important works from within the field in order to present a comprehensive overview of what is already known about a research topic (Gersten et al.). When a researcher wants to use an innovative approach to study a subject, she or he must try to form connections between the study being proposed and any studies previously completed that relate to the topic of interest. In order to demonstrate the connection, researchers must describe the purpose and rationale for the research study. A research study may be well designed and well developed, but if it lacks the necessary methodological rigor, it

will not contribute substantial information to the field of education. Researchers should clearly state their research questions and research hypotheses because readers need to understand how the research questions were developed and how the research design utilizes testable and interpretable hypotheses. Research questions and hypotheses should be clearly stated and clearly linked to the rationale and must be related to the research design (Gersten et al.).

Indicator 1 is composed of five components: (1) a clearly articulated purpose based on a review of the literature, (2) a rationale that demonstrates the importance of the work and demonstrates the contribution of the study to field, (3) clearly articulated research questions, and (4) clearly articulated research hypotheses. In order to meet the requirements for Indicator 1, a study must include component 1, component 2, and either component 3 or 4.

### **Indicator 2: Sampling Procedures**

Quantitative studies must clearly describe the sampling procedures. Authors must also provide enough information about the population from which participants were drawn so readers can identify the population of participants to which results might generalize (Gersten et al., 2005) and to understand the degree to which the study sample represents the population from which it was drawn (Gersten et al.). Random sampling and random assignment are the gold standard in quantitative designs but are seldom possible in education research. Consequently, authors usually use other sampling and assignment procedures. Authors must clearly describe the sampling procedures and clearly articulate how participants were assigned to experimental and control conditions. Finally, in situations in which random sampling and random assignment are not possible, the authors must clearly demonstrate that the groups were comparable at the onset of the research study, especially on variables related to the outcomes. Finally, researchers should compare the final sample to the population members who refused to participate to ensure that the sample is representative of the population from which it was drawn (Gersten et al.).

Indicator 2 includes seven components: (1) clear description of the population from which the sample was drawn, (2) use of random sampling, (3) use of random assignment, (4) clear description of the sampling procedures, (5) sampling procedures that are appropriate, (6) experimental and comparison groups that are comparable, and (7) the sample being compared to the individuals who did not participate. In order to meet the requirements for Indicator 2, a study must include all seven components.

### **Indicator 3: Participants and Setting**

Methodologically rigorous research must include sufficient details about participants and settings to allow for replication of the study (Gersten et al., 2005; Mulcahy et al., 2016).

**Participants** Participants should be described using substantial demographic and educational characteristics. This is essential because much of the demonstrated causal or correlational relationships among studied variables are influenced by characteristics of the individuals in the sample, which should be controlled to the maximum extent possible. Replication of quantitative research studies depends upon the capacity to conduct the study with a comparable sample. Furthermore, the ability to generalize findings depends heavily on the reader's knowledge of the well-described sample (Gersten et al., 2005; Hudson, Lewis, Stichter, & Johnson, 2011; Mooney, Epstein, Reid, & Nelson, 2003; Mulcahy et al., 2016).

Indicator 3 includes eight participant components: (1) race, (2) gender, (3) age, (4) grade, (5) socioeconomic status, (6) special education status, (7) achievement and/or behavior scores, and (8) IQ or another measure of aptitude. In order to meet the requirements for participants for Indicator 3, a study must include five of these eight components.

**Setting** Schools and educational settings are complex in nature (Odom et al., 2005). It is essential for authors to provide substantive information about the setting of every research study. This information is important because research-

ers must understand the setting in which the research was conducted in order to replicate the study in a comparable setting. Ideally, the authors of quantitative studies provide detailed descriptions of the setting, including information about the region, the location, the physical makeup, the demographic makeup, the school size, the economic circumstances of students, etc. We recommend a minimum of five components for the setting components of Indicator 3: (1) region, (2) description of the location, (3) size, (4) demographic makeup, and (5) description of the economic status. In order to meet the requirements for setting for Indicator 3, a study must include all five components.

### **Indicator 4: Data Collection**

Methodologically rigorous studies must include clear and specific information about the data collection procedures (Gersten et al., 2005; Mulcahy et al., 2016). Data collection is critical because poor data collection procedures or errors in data collection can be a major flaw that limits interpretability of the findings. All data are critical in quantitative research designs, so the data collection procedures by which the data were collected must be clearly described, adequately controlled, and robust. Inadequate data collection procedures limit interpretability of the data and inhibit replication. If an author implements a correlational study that utilize extant datasets, she or he must describe the data collection procedures of the original dataset as well as the procedures she or he used to use the data for the specific study he or she conducted. In experimental and quasi-experimental group designs, authors must describe the data collection procedures including the procedures for administering any instrument and procedures for conducting observation data or rating scale data. Authors of all quantitative studies must include reliability of data collection and interrater reliability of data collection (Gersten et al., 2005; Thompson et al., 2005). Acceptable standards for interrater agreement range from between 80% (Horner et al., 2005) and 90% (Gersten et al.).

Indicator 4 has five components: (1) data source clearly described, (2) data collection

procedures clearly described, (3) reliability of data collection procedures included, (4) interrater reliability of data collection included, and (5) interrater reliability of data above 80%. In order to meet the requirements for Indicator 4, a study must include all five components.

### **Indicator 5: Variables**

Methodologically rigorous studies include variables that are meaningful, well described, and logically linked to the research questions. Quantitative research studies include independent variables (IV) and dependent variables (DV) as well as other variables of importance (e.g., demographic variables, covariates, etc.). The adequacy and accuracy of the independent, dependent, and other variables affects the outcome of the study, the interpretability of the data, and the ability to replicate (Gersten et al., 2005). Authors must provide precise, operational definitions of all independent, dependent, and other variables utilized in a study (Gersten et al.; Horner et al., 2005). Operational definitions allow for valid interpretation of results and consistent assessment of the constructs being studied (Horner et al., 2005). Additionally, authors must describe the type of DV (e.g., interval, ratio, dichotomous, ordinal, nominal) as well as the instrument used to measure it. Indicator 5 includes eight components: (1) IV is logically linked to the research question, (2) DV is logically linked to the research question, (3) IV is operationalized, (4) DV is operationalized, (5) other variables included in analyses are operationalized, (6) the type of variable is described, (7) instrumentation for IV is described and appropriate, and (8) instrumentation for DV is described and appropriate. In order to meet the requirements for Indicator 5, a study must include all eight components.

### **Indicator 6: Statistical Analyses**

All quantitative research relies on the use of appropriate statistics and meeting the assumptions associated with the statistics utilized. We included five components for Indicator 6: (1) sufficient N/power analysis, (2) descriptive statis-

tics, (3) appropriate statistical analysis, (4) appropriate unit of analysis, and (5) effect sizes and CI of effect sizes. We discuss below each component separately because of the complexity of the issues associated with statistical analyses. In order to meet the requirements for Indicator 6, a study must include all five components.

*Sample Size* Studies should clearly state the sample size and demonstrate there is a sufficient N for conducting the statistical analyses. The authors should also ensure there is a sufficient N within any proposed subgroup included in the analysis to be adequately analyzed using the chosen statistic. For instance, if a researcher is interested in analyzing the effects of gender in a group design intervention study, there must be a sufficient number of each gender in each group to be analyzed using the chosen statistical analysis. Whenever appropriate, the authors should clearly describe and conduct a power analysis and report the power analysis in the method section of their report. There are three criteria for the sample size component: (a) sufficient N, (b) sufficient numbers of any analyzed subgroup, and (c) power analysis described and reported.

*Descriptive Statistics* Authors should conduct and describe descriptive statistics conducted with the data obtained in studies prior to conducting statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics will allow the researcher to ensure that the final data meet the assumptions for the proposed statistical analyses. For instance, descriptive statistics can be used to test the assumptions of normality and to identify outliers in a dataset. When necessary, the authors should conduct and describe normalization procedures and describe how outliers are handled. We recommend five criteria for the descriptive statistics component of Indicator 6: (a) descriptive statistic procedures are described, presented, and discussed, (b) outliers are identified and appropriately addressed, (c) normality of data are checked and normalization procedures conducted as necessary, (d) assumption of statistical analyses are met, and (e) multivariate analyses are used for multivariate data.

*Appropriate Statistical Analyses* Quantitative studies must include appropriate statistical analyses. The method of statistical analysis should always relate directly to established research questions (Gersten et al., 2005). Some studies may utilize multiple statistical analyses, so the authors must meet the standards for each analysis. In order to ensure that the appropriate analysis is conducted, the authors should report the assumptions of the statistical analysis with citations from the field. Authors should also describe how she or he has met the related assumptions. Finally, the analysis must be appropriate to the type of data (e.g., ratio, ordinal, dichotomous, nominal, ordinal) and to the unit of analysis. We recommend five criteria for the appropriate statistical analysis component: (a) analysis is related to the research question, (b) assumptions for statistical analysis are described, (c) assumptions for statistical analysis were met, (d) analysis is appropriate to the type of data, and (e) analysis is appropriate to the unit of analysis.

*Unit of Analysis* Use and analysis of the appropriate unit of analysis is critical to any quantitative study (Gersten et al., 2005). Researchers should clearly identify the unit of analysis and should adopt the appropriate unit of analysis for the associated research question and proposed analysis. The unit of analysis should be the unit used for group assignment. For instance, if classrooms are randomly assigned to an experimental or control condition, the unit of analysis is the class, not the students in the class. We recommend two criteria for the unit of analysis component of Indicator 6: (a) unit of analysis is clearly described, and (b) appropriate unit of analysis is used.

*Effect Size and Confidence Intervals of Effect Size* It is now widely expected that researchers will report effect sizes and confidence intervals of the effect sizes for all quantitative analyses (Thompson et al., 2005). Effect sizes are important in demonstrating the practical importance of a statistically significant finding. In addition to reporting, researchers should interpret the effect sizes and associated confidence intervals and discuss the effects in the context of prior research

(Thompson et al.). We recommend four criteria for the effect size and confidence interval component of Indicator 6: (a) effect sizes are reported, (b) confidence intervals of the effect sizes are reported, (c) effect sizes are interpreted accurately, and (d) confidence intervals of the effect sizes are interpreted accurately.

### **Indicator 7: Implications and Limitations**

The goal of educational research is to create meaningful recommendations that can be used to improve the education of all students. Researchers must clearly identify the implications of their research and describe the significance and impact of their findings within the context of prior research (Odom et al., 2005). Concurrently, researchers must be aware of and report the limitations of their research (Thompson et al., 2005). Limitations may include issues with the design, anticipated and unanticipated procedural problems, threats to internal and external validity, as well as other pertinent limitations. Authors should identify and explain all implications and limitations. We recommend three components for Indicator 7: (1) implications are clearly described, (2) limitations are clearly identified, and (3) limitations are explained. In order to meet the requirements for Indicator 7, a study must include all three components.

### **Step Two: Conduct Search for Articles**

Step two of the methodological review is determining the process for conducting the search for the articles included in the methodological review and conducting the search. It is important to have a systematic process that can be replicated by journal peer reviewers and readers post-publication. In any methodological review, it is critical to conduct an exhaustive literature review to ensure that all of the articles that meet the search criteria are included. The first step in this process is to identify the research question. The second step is to identify the search terms for the search. The third step is to establish the inclusion criteria. The fourth step is to conduct the search.

### Step 1: Research Question

Like any other type of research, a methodological review requires a clearly described research question that demonstrates a need and that is linked to the existing research. Research questions should be related to the quality of the methods used in the reviewed research and should not include statements about new or novel information. The research question should be clear and concise and should be designed in a manner that can be answered by a methodological review. For instance, “What is the methodological quality of the quantitative research conducted on cognitive behavioral therapy in high schools?”

### Step 2: Identify Search Terms

Search terms are informed by and therefore selected after the research questions have been developed. Search terms should be directly related to the topic of interest and be comprehensive. Boolean search terms such as “and” and “or” are often used to ensure a comprehensive search produces relevant results from academic databases. For instance, in a methodological review of quantitative research on school suspensions as they related to race and disability, the following terms are recommended: (1) school discipline *and* race, (2) school discipline *and* school exclusion, (3) school discipline *and* zero tolerance, (4) school discipline *and* disability, (5) school discipline *and* disproportionate, (6) school discipline *and* bias, (7) school discipline *and* expulsion, (8) school discipline *and* referrals, (9) school discipline *and* special education, (10) suspension *and* race, (11) suspension *and* school exclusion, (12) suspension *and* zero tolerance, (13) suspension *and* disability, (14) suspension *and* disproportionate, (15) suspension *and* bias, (16) suspension *and* expulsion, (17) suspension *and* referrals, and (18) suspension *and* special education.

### Step 3: Inclusion Criteria

The third step is to establish inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria are different from the search terms. The inclusion criteria are related to the research question and consist of the types of studies, populations, settings, etc., of interest. For

instance, in a methodological review of quantitative research on school suspensions as they related to race and disability (described above), the inclusion criteria are (1) published in a peer-reviewed journal, (2) included a quantitative research design, (3) included analyses of school age students, and (4) included suspension or expulsion as an outcome variable.

### Step 4: Conduct Search

The search is initiated after the search terms and inclusion criteria are established. Each of the identified search terms will be used in discrete searches. Each time a search is conducted, the researcher should collect all of the identified articles and maintain the list of articles in a folder related to the search. Typically, the number of search returns (i.e., “hits”) for each term and database is reported in the method section. When all searches are completed, the researcher should eliminate all duplicate articles. The researcher then should print out or save the abstracts of each of the studies and read each abstract to determine if the study likely meets all inclusion criteria. In some circumstances, the abstract will not include enough information about the study to determine if it meets inclusion criteria. All such abstracts should be included for further review; only studies that clearly do not meet inclusion criteria may be excluded during this initial screening. The researcher should keep careful records of the review process and keep careful records of the numbers of studies excluded at each step. For instance, the researcher may have “found 142 articles that met the search criteria.” The second researcher reviewed the abstract of the 142 articles and “found 111 articles that did not meet the search criteria.” The second researcher should also describe the reasons that articles were excluded (e.g., there were 21 studies excluded because they did not include a quantitative research design).

After the potential studies are identified, the researcher should read each of the articles and determine if any additional articles should be excluded. The researcher should keep careful records of this process and keep records of the numbers of articles excluded at this step. The



researcher now has identified the number of articles identified through the electronic search.

After the electronic search has been completed, the researcher should identify all of the journals that had an article included in the methodological review. Then, the researcher should conduct an ancestral search by examining all issues of the journals that had an article included in the review. This step is critical because electronic databases often omit specific journal volumes and only make available more recently published studies via electronic search; many other studies that meet inclusion criteria may have not been discovered via electronic database searches. The researcher should examine any abstracts of articles that appear to meet the search criteria and read any articles identified for potential inclusion using the same procedures described above. Once the ancestral search is completed, the researcher will have identified all articles for inclusion in the methodological review.

### Step Three: Begin Methodological Review

After the search and inclusion processes have been completed, the researcher should examine each included article using the indicators described previously. In Part 2, we describe the process for conducting the methodological review and we will provide an example of a

methodological review using three articles on school suspensions.

## Part 2: Conducting a Methodological Review

In Part 2 of this chapter, we conduct an example of methodological review of three articles (Achilles et al., 2007; Krezmien et al., 2006; Sullivan et al., 2013). These three articles focused on disciplinary suspensions in schools. Each of the articles includes a different correlational study with different types of data and different data analyses. We chose this topic because it is an issue often addressed by school counselors. We chose these articles because they represented different designs with unique methodological strengths and limitations to serve as models for the reader.

### Indicator 1: Research Basis

Table 8.1 displays the components for Indicator 1 as applied to the three studies. Authors of all three of the studies included clear purposes and rationales for the studies. Specifically, Achilles et al. (2007) reported they conducted a “comprehensive examination of ecological risk factors and conditions that are associated with suspension and expulsion *to clarify and extend*

**Table 8.1** Findings for Indicator 1

Article	Description of purpose	(1) Purpose	(2) Rationale	(3) Research questions	(4) Research hypothesis
Achilles, McLaughlin, & Croninger, (2007)	To examine factors associated with disciplinary exclusion for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities (EBD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and learning disabilities (LD)	1	1	0	1
Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, (2006)	Examine trends in school suspension practice and changes in suspension rates over time and understand disproportionate suspension of minority students and students with disabilities	1	1	1	0
Sullivan, Klingbeil, & Van Norman, (2013)	Examine how individual and school factors interact to predict the likelihood of a student receiving repeated school suspensions	1	1	0	0



*conceptualizations of previously identified risk and protective factors”* (p.34, emphasis added) among various disability groups most likely to be excluded from school. Only Krezmien et al. (2006) included specific research questions. The absence of research questions makes it difficult for the reader to determine if the research design was logically linked to the research purpose or to the research design. Only Achilles et al. (2007) included a clearly stated research hypothesis, which allowed the reader to infer the research questions. The failure of the authors of the two remaining studies (Krezmien et al., 2006; Sullivan et al., 2013) to include the research hypotheses was problematic because it was possible the authors did not have a clear sense of the findings, which may indicate the researchers sought any statistically significant finding rather than testing an a priori hypothesis derived from extant research.

**Table 8.2** Findings for Indicator 2

Indicator		Achilles et al. (2007)	Krezmien et al. (2006)	Sullivan et al. (2013)
1	Clear description of the sample population	1	1	1
2	Use of random sampling	n/a	n/a	n/a
3	Use of random assignment	n/a	n/a	n/a
4	Clear description of the sampling procedures	1	1	1
5	Sampling procedures are appropriate	1	1	1
6	Experimental and comparison groups are comparable	0	n/a	n/a
7	Sample was compared to those who did not participate	0	n/a	n/a

**Indicator 2: Sampling Procedures**

Quantitative studies must include a clear description of the sampling procedures. Researchers must also provide enough information about the population from which participant samples were drawn so readers can identify the population of participants to which results might generalize (Gersten et al., 2005). Table 8.2 displays the components to Indicator 2. Authors of all three studies included clear descriptions of the sample population. For example, Krezmien and colleagues included all public school students in Maryland and reported:

The racial and ethnic composition of students in this state included a majority of the students classified as White (50.4%), a sizeable minority of students classified as African American (37.9%), and smaller numbers of Hispanic (6.4%), Asian American (6%), and American Indian (0.4%) students. In 2003, boys accounted for 51.3% and girls 48.7% of the school population. Students in general education represented 88% of the school population in 2003, whereas 12% of students were identified as receiving special education services. High school students represented 30%, middle school students represented 23.9%, elementary students represented 43%, and preschool students represented 2.5% of the population. (p. 218)

None of the authors conducted studies that warranted the use of random assignments or random sampling. For instance, Krezmien and colleagues studied all public school students in a single state, so random sampling or assignment was unnecessary. Authors of all three studies included clear descriptions of the sampling procedures, and all included sampling procedures that were appropriate. Achilles et al. (2007) used an extant database but adequately reported the sampling procedures used in the original study, as well as the procedures they used in their analysis of a subset of the dataset. Krezmien et al. (2006) used all the public school students in the state, but clearly articulated the decision for using the population and the process for establishing the study sample. Only Achilles and colleagues (2006) included an experimental and comparison group in their study, but they did not demonstrate the groups were comparable prior to the study. Only Achilles et al. (2007) included a sample that could have been compared to those who did not participate, but they did not demonstrate that the sample was comparable to those who did not participate. Achilles and colleagues used an extant

**Table 8.3** Findings for Indicator 3

Indicator		Achilles et al. (2007)	Krezmien et al. (2006)	Sullivan et al. (2013)
P-1	Race	1	1	1
P-2	Gender	1	1	1
P-3	Age	1	0	1
P-4	Grade	0	1	1
P-5	Socioeconomic status	1	0	1
P-6	Special education status	1	1	1
P-7	Achievement and/or behavior measures	0	0	1
P-8	IQ or another measure of aptitude	0	0	0
S-1	Region	n/a	1	1
S-2	Description of the setting	n/a	1	1
S-3	Size of the setting	n/a	1	1
S-4	Demographic makeup of the setting	n/a	1	0
S-5	Description of socioeconomic status of setting	n/a	0	0

dataset that was collected by other researchers, but they should have reported whether or not the original researchers compared the sample to those who did not participate so that the readers could make an informed decision about the interpretability of the findings.

### Indicator 3: Participants and Setting

Methodologically rigorous research must include sufficient details about participants and settings to allow for replication of the study (Gersten et al., 2005; Mulcahy et al., 2016). Table 8.3 displays the components for Indicator 3. Authors of all three studies provided sufficient detail about the race, gender, and special education status of the participants. Krezmien et al. (2006) failed to include information on the age or socioeconomic status of the participants. Krezmien et al. (2006) indicated that this was a limitation of the study and attributed the failure to the lack of adequate student data in the extant dataset. Only Sullivan et al. (2013) included information on student achievement and/or behavior, and none of the authors included information about the IQ of the participants. The absence of student level data inhibit the capacity to understand the extent to which other factors like socioeconomic status

and student achievement play in risk of suspension and limit the interpretability of the findings.

Achilles and colleagues utilized a national extant dataset, so the setting was not investigated as part of the study. The authors of the other two studies (Krezmien et al., 2006; Sullivan et al., 2013) included sufficient information about the region, the setting description, and the size of the setting. Inclusion of the characteristics allows the reader to understand the context of the study and to make some generalizations to other similar settings. Only Krezmien et al. (2006) included a description of the demographics of the setting. This strengthened the generalizability of their findings. However, neither of the authors included a description of the socioeconomic status of the setting. Krezmien et al. could have described the socioeconomic status of the region, despite not having the socioeconomic status of the study sample. This missing characteristic limits the generalizability of the findings for both studies.

### Indicator 4: Data Collection

Correlational studies require clear and comprehensive descriptions of the data source, the data collection procedures, and the quality of the data (Thompson et al., 2005). Inadequate data collec-

**Table 8.4** Findings for Indicator 4

Indicator		Achilles et al. (2007)	Krezmien et al. (2006)	Sullivan et al. (2013)
1	Data sources clearly described	1	1	0
2	Data collection procedures clearly described	1	1	0
3	Reliability of data collection procedures included	0	1	0
4	Interrater reliability of data collection included	0	1	0
5	Interrater reliability of data above 80%	0	1	0

tion procedures limit interpretability of the data and inhibit replication. Table 8.4 displays the findings for Indicator 4. Only Krezmien met all of the components for Indicator 4, providing a robust description of the dataset and the data collection procedures. Authors of the two remaining studies did not include information on the reliability of collection procedures or interrater reliability of the data collection and did not report interrater reliability standard of 80%. Achilles et al. (2007) described the SEELS database that they used for their study and explained that there was a review for data quality control by experts prior to release of the data. However, they did not report the reliability procedures for the data in their article. Consequently, the authors left the reader to research the reliability of the data, which may not be possible for many readers. Sullivan et al. (2013) did not meet any of the components for the data collection indicator. They reported the data were collected from the school district and from the state website following agreement with the school. They clearly described the state level data source, but did not describe how the data were obtained from the school district. They did not describe how the district collected the data or the accuracy of the

data was maintained. They also did not explain how data from multiple sources were merged or how the reliability of the data entry was maintained. The failure to meet the Indicator 4 components substantially limits the interpretability of the Sullivan et al. findings because the reader does not have sufficient information to trust the accuracy of the data.

**Indicator 5: Variables**

Methodologically rigorous studies must include variables that are meaningful, well described, and logically linked to the research questions. Furthermore, the variables must be operationalized, and the type and instrumentation used must be explicitly described. If the researchers do not have clear and well-established variables, it is impossible to analyze the data in a meaningful way, substantially limiting the interpretability of all findings. The authors of all three studies (Achilles et al., 2007; Krezmien et al., 2006; Sullivan et al., 2013) met all of the components for Indicator 5. Because all of the studies examined suspension outcomes and utilized school and student level demographic data, the instrumentation components were not applicable. The variables for each study were adequately described and operationalized and were clearly linked to the research questions. The quality of the variables in each study enhances the respective studies and the confidence in the findings (Table 8.5).

**Indicator 6: Statistical Analyses**

Correlational studies rely on the use of appropriate statistics and the clear demonstration that the researchers have met the assumptions of the associated statistical procedures. Failure to do so compromises the integrity of the analyses and limits or prevents interpretation of the findings. Table 8.6 displays the five components for indicator. Each of the components is comprised of multiple criteria.

Authors of two of the studies (Krezmien et al., 2006; Sullivan et al., 2013) met all of the criteria

**Table 8.5** Findings for Indicator 5

Indicator		Achilles et al. (2007)	Krezmien et al. (2006)	Sullivan et al. (2013)
1	IV is logically linked to the research question	1	1	1
2	DV is logically linked to the research question	1	1	1
3	IV is operationalized	1	1	1
4	DV is operationalized	1	1	1
5	Other variables included in analyses are operationalized	1	1	1
6	Type of variable is described	1	1	1
7	Instrumentation for IV is described and appropriate	n/a	n/a	n/a
8	Instrumentation for DV is described and appropriate	n/a	n/a	n/a

**Table 8.6** Findings for Indicator 6

Indicator			Achilles et al. (2007)	Krezmien et al. (2006)	Sullivan et al. (2013)
1	A	Sufficient N	1	1	1
	B	Sufficient numbers of any analyzed subgroup	0	1	1
	C	Power analysis described and reported	n/a	n/a	n/a
2	A	Descriptive statistics described, presented, discussed	1	1	1
	B	Outliers are identified and handled	1	n/a	1
	C	Normality checked and addressed	n/a	n/a	1
	D	Multivariate analyses used for multivariate data	1	n/a	1
3	A	Analysis is related to the research question	1	1	1
	B	Assumptions for statistical analysis are described	1	1	1
	C	Assumptions for statistical analysis were met	0	1	1
	D	Analysis is appropriate to the type of data	0	1	1
	E	Analysis is appropriate to the unit of analysis	1	1	1
4	A	Unit of analysis is clearly described	1	1	1
	B	Appropriate unit of analysis is used	1	1	1
5	A	Effect sizes are reported	1	1	1
	B	Confidence intervals of the effect sizes are reported	0	1	0
	C	Effect sizes are interpreted accurately	0	1	1
	D	Confidence intervals are interpreted accurately	0	1	0

for components 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Indicator 6. Consequently, the analyses of both studies are robust, and the reader should have confidence in the findings. Achilles et al. (2007) did not demonstrate there were sufficient numbers in all analyzed subgroups. They reported that the initial sample included 1824 students, with 716 students with LD, 526 students with EBD, and 582 students with ADHD. They excluded 723 participants because of missing data. However, the authors only indicated that more participants with LD were

excluded than students of the other two groups. Consequently, it is impossible to determine how many individuals were in each analyzed group. The missing counts for each group also meant the reader cannot determine if the data met the necessary assumptions for the statistical analyses and, consequently, whether the analyses were appropriate for the data. Based on the reporting of the analyses and the findings, the reader can infer the authors were employing appropriate statistics, but the failure of the authors to describe the proce-

dures and the subgroups should limit reader confidence in findings from the analyses.

Authors of each of the three studies reported effect sizes, which is important for demonstrating the practical importance of the findings. However, only Krezmien et al. (2006) and Sullivan et al. (2013) interpreted the effect sizes, which is critical for helping the reader to understand the effect sizes in the context of prior research. Sullivan et al. (2013) and Achilles et al. (2007) did not include confidence intervals of the effect sizes, which are important for discriminating the degree to which the reported effect sizes are different from 0.

### Indicator 7: Implications and Limitations

All correlational studies depend on researchers to accurately interpret the findings and to make meaningful recommendations based on the findings and their knowledge of the extant literature. Furthermore, it is critical that researchers clearly articulate the limitations to their respective studies so that the reader can interpret the findings and recommendations within the context of the study shortcomings. Table 8.7 displays the findings for Indicator 7. Authors of all three studies met the requirements for all three components for Indicator 7. This means the authors provided clear and adequate limitations and made meaningful recommendations that were supported by the analyses. Subsequently, readers can have confidence in the implications and recommendations of each of these studies.

### Summary of Methodological Review

Table 8.8 displays the number of components for each indicator that were met by each study as well as the total numbers of studies that met criteria for each indicator. In the table, Indicator 3 is represented on two lines, one for participants and one for setting. The number of components met for each is presented, but an article needed to have met both the participant criteria and the setting criteria to meet Indicator 3. None of the studies met the criteria for all seven indicators.

Krezmien et al. (2006) met criteria for six indicators but failed to adequately describe the participants. Although Krezmien and colleagues did adequately describe the setting, they did not meet the criteria for Indicator 3 because they only adequately describe four of the required five components for participants (i.e., both participant and setting components must meet minimum requirements in order for Indicator 3 to be met).

**Table 8.7** Findings for Indicator 7

Indicator		Achilles et al. (2007)	Krezmien et al. (2006)	Sullivan et al. (2013)
1	Implications are clearly described	1	1	1
2	Limitations are clearly identified	1	1	1
3	Limitations are explained	1	1	1

**Table 8.8** Summary of findings for all indicators

Indicator number and name	Achilles et al. (2007)	Krezmien et al. (2006)	Sullivan et al. (2013)	Number of studies that met indicator
Indicator 1: research basis	3/4 <sup>a</sup>	3/4 <sup>a</sup>	2/4	2/3
Indicator 2: sampling procedures	3/5	3/3 <sup>a</sup>	3/3 <sup>a</sup>	2/3
Indicator 3: participants' setting	5/8 <sup>a</sup> n/a	4/8 4/5 <sup>a</sup>	7/8 <sup>a</sup> 3/5	1/3
Indicator 4: data collection	3/6	6/6 <sup>a</sup>	0/6	1/3
Indicator 5: variables	6/6 <sup>a</sup>	6/6 <sup>a</sup>	6/6 <sup>a</sup>	3/3
Indicator 6: statistical analyses	2/5	5/5 <sup>a</sup>	4/5 <sup>a</sup>	2/3
Indicator 7: implications and limitations	3/3 <sup>a</sup>	3/3 <sup>a</sup>	3/3 <sup>a</sup>	3/3
Total indicators met	4/7	6/7	4/7	

<sup>a</sup>Indicates the minimum criteria for the indicator were met

Sullivan et al. (2013) met criteria for four of the seven indicators, but did not provide a sufficient research basis, adequately describe the setting, or adequately describe the data or the data collection procedures (i.e., Indicators 1, 3, and 4). If Sullivan et al. had included clearly articulated research questions or hypotheses, they would have also met Indicator 1. The failure to meet any of the components for Indicator 4 was the most serious shortcoming of this study, representing a major methodological flaw. Because the reader lacked sufficient detail about any aspect of the data or the data collection, it is difficult to accept the adequacy of the data and, subsequently, the reported findings.

Achilles et al. (2007) met four of the seven indicators. Achilles and colleagues did not adequately demonstrate that the sample was comparable to the group from which the sample was drawn, which limited the generalizability of the findings. Achilles et al. (2007) also did not adequately describe the data collection procedures, failing to include information about the reliability of the data. Although the data were drawn from a study conducted by others, the authors should have included information about the reliability from the original study. Finally, Achilles and colleagues did not explicitly demonstrate they had sufficient numbers in the groups analyzed, which undermines confidence that the authors met the assumptions of the statistical analyses and subsequently the analyses themselves. This represented a major methodological flaw that severely limited the interpretability of the findings.

None of the studies met all seven indicators, and two of the studies (Achilles et al., 2007; Sullivan et al., 2013) had major methodological flaws. The major flaws in these two studies could have been avoided if the authors had ensured that they had adequately described the method. For instance, Sullivan et al. (2013) could have described the process by which they obtained the data, created the database they used, and conducted reliability for the data collection procedures. This would have ensured confidence in the adequacy of the data collection procedures and the accuracy of the data. Similarly, Achilles et al.

(2007) could have reported the number of participants in each group and reported how the data met the assumptions of the statistical analyses used. Krezmien et al. (2006) did not meet Indicator 3, but they explained that they did not have more comprehensive data to report on because of the limitations of the dataset. Subsequently, it was clear that the authors attempted to comply with Indicator 3 but lacked adequate data. Nonetheless, this shortcoming limited the generalizability of the findings outside of the population examined in their study.

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### Limitations of Methodological Reviews

Methodological reviews are by nature a very conservative approach to evaluating the quality of a body of experimental research. As quality standards for research evolve, the retrospective application of contemporary standards to previous research often results in older studies not meeting evidence standards. Thus, a limitation of methodological reviews is that results may change as standards evolve— established interventions may be discovered to be less robust than previously understood. Also relevant is the probability that competing quality standards will emerge and evolve as the technology of experimental research advances. Thus, researchers who apply different standards to the same corpus of research may obtain disparate findings and, consequently, report discrepant conclusions about the status of research for a particular practice. For example, a methodological review that applied more stringent criteria may find fewer studies that meet criteria to justify the practice as evidence-based. Conversely, a methodological review that applied more liberal criteria may find more studies that meet standards and, consequently, qualify the same practice as evidence-based.

Variations on processes for carrying out searches, differences in inclusion criteria, and divergence in the procedures for carrying out inclusion/exclusion process can compromise the reliability of conclusions drawn from method-



ological reviews. Mistakes or inconsistencies in evaluating studies for participant characteristics, settings, independent and dependent variables, dependent measures, etc., during the inclusion process will impact results from the review. Similarly, disagreement about the presence of evidence for a particular indicator can significantly influence the results of the methodological review. Although interrater reliability intends to control for this problem, the potential for threats to the validity of the findings cannot be entirely ignored.

An additional limitation of the methodological review is that results obtained from this approach do not necessarily translate to definitive answers about whether an intervention will produce desired outcomes for a particular youth in unique circumstances. Although it is convenient to create a dichotomous categorization of practices (e.g., evidence-based and not evidence-based), such classification may represent an oversimplification of conclusions to be drawn from a body of scientific research. There currently exist no agreed-upon criteria for the amount of high-quality evidence necessary to classifying a practice as evidence-based. Thus, results of methodological reviews are subject to interpretation and idiosyncratic requirements of independent researchers, and policies informed by such conclusions also may be affected by a contingent of researchers convinced a practice should be widely disseminated. Importantly, the methodological review should not be viewed as a tool for classifying practices as much as it is a clarifying lens through which researchers and policymakers may inspect the quality and quantity of evidence and adjust their respective level of confidence about a particular claim. Finally, these limitations should be considered when meta-analyses of group research are conducted following completion of a methodological review. Although a methodological review will have the effect of limiting the data included in meta-analyses that typically follow, reliance only on data from the most methodologically sound studies will produce results with higher reliability and enhance understanding about external validity.

## Implications for School Counseling Practice and Policy

The development of a body of methodological reviews in school counseling will help to shape the future practice by establishing a body of methodologically rigorous research with interpretable and dependable findings. Without these reviews, the field will continue to rely on consumers, school counselors without research backgrounds, to interpret research on a study-by-study basis, which can lead to inappropriate reliance on findings from methodologically suspect research. The studies identified as rigorous through methodological reviews can in turn be further analyzed using meta-analyses which demonstrate the effects of those studies. By clarifying the quality of evidence before proceeding with meta-analyses, policymakers may refine existing policies, discard those that are deemed obsolete, and develop new policies that address informed areas of need. For example, school counselor preparation standards might be adjusted to emphasize practices that are demonstrably effective for addressing the mental health and social-emotional development of youth. State policy might be altered to ensure school counselors are not relegated to quasi-administrative roles and instead are provided with the resources to meet the broad needs of a student body and the specific needs of a targeted group of at-risk youth. School counseling needs a body of methodological reviews and associated meta-analyses to develop and implement school counseling policies based on rigorous and effective empirical research.

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## Conclusion

In this chapter, we described the utility of methodological reviews for advancing the rigor of research in school counseling. We also presented a step-by-step guide for conducting a methodological review. Finally, we provided an example of a methodological review of three studies that school counseling researchers can use as a guide

for conducting methodological reviews in the school counseling discipline. Methodological reviews can be used to evaluate the quality of school counseling research and can help advance and improve the quality of research in the discipline. The development and dissemination of methodological reviews in school counseling will establish baselines of the methodological rigor of existing research and will inform future studies in order to improve the quality of the research method. Due to the integral nature of methodological reviews for an evidence-based discipline, we strongly recommend that the school counseling researchers conduct methodological reviews to understand the quality of existing research. Furthermore, the completion of methodological reviews will inform meta-analysis of the same body of research, thereby further clarifying what interventions and treatments are supported by high-quality evidence. Such an approach can dramatically improve the quality of school counseling research and the associated school counseling practices built on that research and ultimately yield positive impacts on the lives of youth who are served by school counselors.

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# Conducting Intervention Research to Identify Efficacious and Effective Practices in School-Based Counseling

Catherine Griffith and Scott Greenspan

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## Conducting Intervention Research to Identify Efficacious and Effective Practices in School-Based Counseling

Each year, nations enact public policies with significant influences on the work of school counselors. Whether such impacts are manifested within the broader context of the educational paradigm (e.g., a greater schoolwide focus on students' social-emotional needs) or more specific to the field (e.g., calls for increases for the hiring of more school counselors), these decisions tend to be influenced by a blend of local, regional, and national needs, public rhetoric, and budgetary constraints. There is a question, then, as to whether school-based counseling research informs policy or whether policy informs school-based counseling research. Too often, it is a "top-down" approach which guides public policy and its influence on school counselors' work in educational settings, rather than the influence of rigorous research and robust findings originating within the school counselor community itself. Specifically, Carey and Martin (2015) note that school counselor educators in particular must

work to cultivate a greater focus on identifying the practices, interventions, and curricula through outcomes research in order to better inform the development of public policy. In order to improve the relevance and overall quality of public policy in education, there must be a more collaborative relationship in place: namely, stakeholder groups conducting research on the efficacy of school counselor activities to inform public policy and policymakers supporting quality research through federal programs in order to ensure they have the data they need. The result, ideally, is a strategic relationship between governments making better-quality decisions based on the best available evidence provided by researchers, which in turn more accurately addresses the diverse needs of students.

The difficulty, however, lies in the current state of the scholarly knowledge base of what works in our profession. There is a dearth of intervention research in school counseling, and extensive content analyses indicate that in what few published studies there are to identify efficacious and effective practices, these investigations often suffer from a lack of rigor in terms of methodological design (Griffith, Mariani, Zyromski, McMahon, & Greenspan, 2017; McGannon, Carey, & Dimmitt, 2004; Whiston & Sexton, 1998). This issue is echoed within the greater counseling field, as only 6% of published studies within American Counselor Association (ACA) affiliated journals focus on the effectiveness of

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counseling interventions (Ray et al., 2011). Subsequently, existing studies that would meet the level of consideration for having an impact on public policy development are exceedingly rare. Practitioners and policymakers are thus left to rely on data from other related fields such as psychology, teaching, or social work, which serve as poor proxies for the unique work of school counseling.

One popular theory behind the shortage of availability of intervention research rests not in an absence of interest from academics in the field but from a lack of knowledge as to how one goes about creating a methodologically sound intervention study. Anecdotally, during the course of professional development seminars on the “how-to’s” of school-based intervention research offered by the lead author, she has encountered numerous enthusiastic school counselor educators who very much *want* to conduct research on the impact of curriculum and other practices. The issue is, more often than not, a perceived lack of training, little self-efficacy, and even anxiety surrounding where to begin.

It would appear that a key barrier is the need for entry-level knowledge in the more rigorous outcome-based methods. Therefore, in this chapter we hope to provide a primer on conducting research to identify the impact of school-based counseling endeavors. We will address (a) the historical foundations of policy in school-based research in the United States, (b) the basics tenets and processes of experimental and quasi-experimental methodological approaches, (c) examples of international research representing these study designs, (d) general considerations when conducting intervention research in school settings, and (e) concluding thoughts regarding the future relationship between school counseling research and public policy.

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### **Historical Foundations of Policy in School-Based Research in the United States**

We turn our attention to the United States, not only because of the long and rich history of school-based counseling in this country but

because of the numerous examples in which public policy has impacted the work at a national level. It is also the country with which the authors are most familiar in terms of influential policies. Notably, several policies over the years have had both implicit and explicit implications for school-based practitioners’ use of data-based decision making, scientifically based research, and evidence-based practice.

Specifically, school-based counseling in the United States has been shaped tremendously by the following legislative acts: (a) the *National Defense Education Act* (1958), (a) the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (1965), (C) *No Child Left Behind* (2001), and (d) the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (2015). The *National Defense Education Act* (NDEA) assigned the role of pre-college vocational guidance and counseling to secondary school counselors, along with significant funding to increase the number of available school counselors to perform this work. The act pushed innovation within school guidance as a stand-alone profession—with a foundation of data-based decision-making—rather than the teacher-counselor positions we fulfilled in the years prior to NDEA. In 1965, the United States Congress passed President Lyndon B. Johnson’s *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), which solidified school counselors’ role in closing the achievement gap among students from low-income backgrounds. The act has been re-authorized every 5 years since its inception, with each new wave of leadership steadily increasing attention to the demonstration of effectiveness through data. In 2001, the reauthorization of the ESEA under President George W. Bush was known as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). This policy called upon educators to use scientifically based research to guide their decisions pertaining to intervention implementation. In fact, the term scientifically based research is used over 100 times throughout the policy document, with a clear indication that the most highly regarded designs are those employ random assignment.

In 2015, President Barack Obama signed new legislation for the next reauthorization of the ESEA, named the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). The ESSA highlighted the need for

evidence-based practice (EBP), a concept that combines empirical evidence with professional wisdom—the combination of knowledge obtained from prior personal experience and consensus views of what works within a given field. Dimmitt, Carey, and Hatch (2007) proposed a model of evidence-based school counseling which focuses on three primary areas:

1. Generating a problem description: knowing what needs to be addressed at a school site through the combination of institutional data and more comprehensive data from district, statewide, and national sources
2. Review of outcome-based literature: knowing what is likely to work based on scientific consensus and compatibility with the school counselor's current setting
3. Intervention evaluation: knowing if the intervention made a difference through local evaluation, as prior outcomes research is no guarantee of effectiveness for all sites and populations

Figure 9.1 represents not only how accountability and use of data have become more central to school counseling, but unlike other similar models of evidence-based school counseling that focus on problem description and intervention evaluation (e.g., Dahir & Stone, 2003; Isaacs,

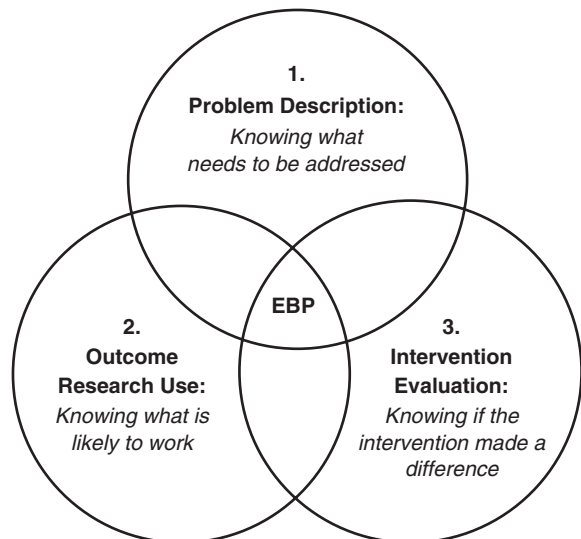
2003; Rowell, 2006), this model stresses the importance of reviewing outcome-based research in order to make determinations about what empirically supported approaches are more likely to be successful.

As one can imagine, however, reviewing outcome-based research as outlined in the second stage of the model becomes quite difficult due to the sparse availability of such studies specific to the field of school counseling. More often than not, school counselors must also make inferences from the fields of psychology, education, social work, and other related professions in order to determine what might be efficacious practice at their own sites in order to meet policy demands. This is far from an ideal situation.

## Policy Reflections

Of the major policies presented, each has called for practitioners in educational environments to incorporate the use of data in order to facilitate more robust decision-making in schools. A trend line has emerged of increasing accountability, holistic focus, and an awareness of prior research on intervention effectiveness. For a long time, it has not been sufficient for school-based counselors to rely on professional wisdom alone or to base a comprehensive guidance program solely

**Fig. 9.1** A model of evidence-based school counseling (Carey, Dimmitt, & Hatch, 2007)



on local needs assessments or program evaluation. The link between public policy and intervention research is clear. Furthermore, the role school counselors and school counselor educators will play in future public policy discussions will depend largely on the strength of the data we bring to the table.

### Intervention Research Designs

Within the greater umbrella of quantitative research, there are four primary categories: descriptive, correlational, causal-comparative/quasi-experimental, and experimental research. The latter two categories may be grouped together as intervention research—the assessment of a hypothesized causal impact of a specific intervention, practice, curriculum, or program on selected participant outcomes. Figure 9.2 provides a visual guide to determining which of the quantitative research categories a given study may fall under, with intervention research falling on the right half of the graph. The key question, you will notice, reads “is there a treatment?” If the answer is yes and you seek to study the impact of that treatment, then you are conducting intervention research.

As the focus of this chapter is on conducting research to identify efficacious and effective practices in school-based counseling, we will

walk the reader through the most robust intervention research designs that are respected by policymakers: randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental design. We will provide a broad overview of each design along with real-life international examples of school-based studies, along with general tips for implementation. Keep in mind that not all research designs are created equal in terms of providing a clear demonstration of an intervention’s effectiveness, and methodological advantages and limitations will be highlighted wherever applicable. Please also note that the information presented is merely intended to be a starting point for those interested in intervention research and that we recommend that readers seek out additional information in the form of books, articles, websites, trainings, and mentors in their pursuit of developing these competencies. The designs presented represent the primary methodologies in school-based intervention research in counseling, but are by no means a comprehensive list of possible approaches to demonstrating effective practices.

### Randomized Controlled Trials

A randomized controlled trial (RCT) is a study design that utilizes random assignment of participants into either a treatment group (those who will be receiving the intervention studied)

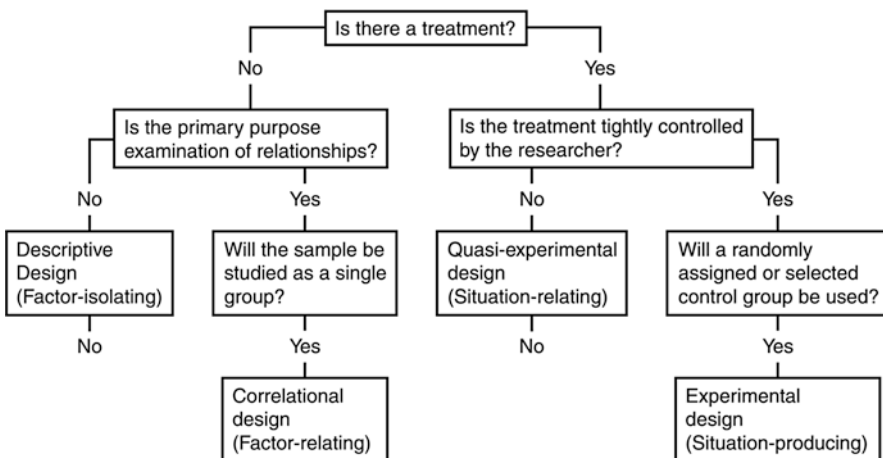


Fig. 9.2 Decision tree matching research design to category of research question (Keele, 2010)



or control group (those who will *not* be receiving the intervention being studied), in order to determine the impact of an intervention. Accordingly, RCTs are referred to as the “gold standard” when contributing to evidence-based practice, as the method represents true experimental design. Randomization protects against selection bias, ensuring that each group is representative of the population being studied and thus providing support that it is the intervention itself responsible for changes in the outcome variables being measured. Without randomization, treatment groups and control groups are less likely to be equally balanced in terms of participant characteristics, a key factor in determining causality of the intervention, and changes may instead be due to other underlying variables. Randomization is no haphazard process and in modern research is achieved by using computer software to ensure that each participant is as equally likely as every other participant to be placed in either the treatment group or the control group. Ideally, if the intervention is effective and the study is methodologically sound, we would see no differences in outcome variables between the treatment group and control group at pretest (before individuals participate in the intervention), no difference between pretest and posttest for the control group (as they did not receive the benefits of the intervention), and significant differences at posttest for the intervention group (demonstrating causality for the efficacy of the intervention).

Adaptations of RCTs may also include comparison groups, wherein the participants would receive an alternative intervention to the primary treatment being studied in order to determine its effectiveness when compared to other methods. We may be curious about how our intervention stacks up to other approaches that differ in terms of expense and resources required, length of time, and theoretical or pedagogical approaches. In order for all participants to eventually receive the benefits of the intervention, researchers may also employ waitlist control groups, wherein the participants that are randomized into the control group would eventually receive the treatment protocol *after* the study has concluded.

Researchers may also want to incorporate more than a simple pretest and posttest design in their RCT. Additional assessment points increase the power of a study (the likelihood of detecting statistically significant differences in a sample if it exists). Moreover, mid-point assessments can also help determine the effectiveness of specific intervention components or the amount received (i.e., the “dose”), while post-posttests at a determined point after the intervention has concluded can help ascertain the longitudinal benefits of the intervention’s impact on participant outcomes. In addition, the randomization process itself can also be adapted. Researchers use stratified sampling to first identify participants by relevant subgroups (e.g., school site, gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.) prior to randomization in order to reduce the likelihood of selection bias occurring by chance.

Despite the reputation of RCTs as the gold standard in research design, we do want to remind our readers that RCTs in educational settings differ somewhat than those conducted in other fields. We must address the myth of “control” in experimental school-based studies and the differences between “efficacy research” versus “effectiveness research.” Efficacy studies employ randomized clinical trials of procedures and are designed to show whether the intervention produces the desired clinical outcome under *optimal* conditions. Such efficacy research requires strict control of as many variables as possible. By contrast, effectiveness trials focus on whether a given practice works under *usual* circumstances. The individuals represent a broader group of typical participants, the study protocols are more flexible to accommodate a realistic range of environmental conditions, and there is more tolerance for variability of practice. Therefore, the term effectiveness research, rather than efficacy research, is likely to be a more appropriate designation due to the focus on a necessary level of flexibility of implementation and practical applications in the field. What we lose in internal validity, however, we gain in external validity.

Likewise, it should also be noted that there is some disagreement as to whether we can actually call our nontreatment group a control group, as

the term indicates a precise level of control over outside influences as one might see under laboratory, or even clinical conditions. Consequently, you may read alternate terminology for nontreatment groups in some publications, such as “business-as-usual” groups, “usual care” groups, or “status quo” groups, to reflect that groups that do *not* receive the intervention are still likely to be encountering other resources, setbacks, and positive developments as they live their daily lives. That said, the term control group continues to be used as standard nomenclature for the participants who are not receiving an intentional intervention as an element of the study design.

RCTs are not abundant in the field of school-based counseling, though robust studies do exist. For example, Cooper et al. (2010) conducted a school-based randomized controlled trial with young people (ages 13–15) to determine the impact of humanistic counseling on the reduction of emotional distress. Students were recruited from four secondary schools within Great Britain: two in England and two in Scotland. After the study received ethics board approval, parent/guardians and students provided their informed consent, and potential participants were pre-screened to see if they met predetermined inclusion or exclusion criteria. Once these preliminary procedures were carried out, participants ( $n = 32$ ) were randomly selected to either take part in six weekly humanistic counseling sessions with a trained professional at their school ( $n = 16$ ), or to a waitlist control group ( $n = 16$ ), using stratified randomization to ensure there were the same number of participants per school. Pretests and posttests were administered for several outcome variables related to emotional distress. Ultimately, the study contained mixed results, as students in the intervention group showed significantly greater improvements in pro-social behavior when compared to the waitlist control group, but no significant differences between groups in regard to emotional symptoms.

The implications for public policy here are twofold. Firstly, a humanistic approach can be subjected to robust scientific inquiry to determine its effectiveness using control groups and randomization. We have wealth of data on counsel-

ing techniques that lend themselves to manualization (such as cognitive-behavioral therapy) but much less strong evidence in support of more flexible theoretical methods like humanistic counseling. Secondly, we can derive that addressing the social-emotional needs of students comprises an important component to school-based counseling. Further research on humanistic counseling in schools, with higher sample sizes and diverse populations, may have an impact on the types of school-based studies that are funded and the language of public policy when addressing desired activities of school counselors.

### Cluster Randomized Controlled Trials

Another type of RCT uses cluster random assignment, which may have more utility in educational settings than traditional RCTs due to the method of randomly selecting groups of participants (clusters) rather than individuals. Wright (2014) explains:

Frequently it may not be feasible to collect data needed for a random sample from a population. This may be a problem of logistics and staff support or one of access. One solution is to examine the population for the existence of naturally occurring clusters. (p. 244)

In Nepal, Jordans et al. (2010) assessed the impact of a classroom-based psychosocial intervention through a cluster randomized controlled trial. In response to a climate of ongoing violence in the country, researchers created a 5-week group counseling intervention consisting of 15 one hour sessions that focused on the reduction of psychosocial problems and fostering empowerment and resilience through creative expression, experiential engagement, cooperative play, and cognitive behavioral therapy. A three-step cluster randomization was followed: (1) districts were randomly assigned to the treatment group or waitlist control group; (2) two schools were randomly selected for participation in each district from the list of eligible schools; and (3) children (ages 11–14) were placed in groups via random selection. Prescreening resulted in 325 eligible participants, with 164 students in the treatment group and 161 students in the waitlist control group. Though there were no differences between treatment and control groups in terms of

psychological difficulties, there were reductions in aggression and psychological difficulties for male participants, increases in prosocial behavior for female participants, and increases in hopefulness (an indicator of resilience) for older students, which supports the efficacy of the intervention.

The primary advantage of a cluster randomized controlled trial is that the design prevents against contamination, a threat to internal validity that occurs when individuals in treatment and control groups communicate with one another, thereby “muddying that waters” between group effects (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Researchers must keep in mind, however, that the use of cluster random assignment introduces the issue of interdependency of the data and that more sophisticated means of data analysis—such as multi-level modeling—are needed to account for this interdependency. After all, any two students from the same school are more likely to have similar outcomes than any two students from a different school due to matches in other variables unrelated to the study. Therefore, higher sample sizes and multiple groups are needed to accommodate more accurate analysis. Where this is not possible, researchers may want to instead consider quasi-experimental designs.

## Quasi-Experimental Designs

Like RCTs, quasi-experimental designs are used to determine the impact of an intervention and provide a framework of causality toward its effectiveness. Yet, by definition, quasi-experimental studies lack participant randomization, which is a key ingredient to true experimental design. Instead of using a control group in which each participant has an equal likelihood of being placed, researchers use pretests and posttests to determine the impact on a larger group or identify a comparison group that is as closely matched as possible to the treatment group in regard to participant characteristics, or some combination of both techniques. This, in turn, negatively impacts the generalizability of the study as without random

assignment there are likely greater issues with internal validity related to selection bias.

That said, within a school-based framework, there are many occasions where a quasi-experimental design would be a more feasible, even preferable method of choice. Take into consideration that randomly assigning participants to a treatment or a control group in a school tends to be curtailed by the fact that students typically cannot be moved from one classroom to another for every study that researchers hope to implement. For researchers, this level of control over randomization would be such stuff as dreams are made of, but alas, that would simply represent too big of a disruption in the lives of students. The work of school-based counselors can regularly take place in a classroom setting, so any research on determining the efficacy of classroom guidance lessons for students and professional development trainings for staff would find quasi-experimental design more fitting to the task.

There is also the issue of when it might be unethical to deny a participant school-based counseling services, which negates the ability to employ randomization, or even a comparison group. It is to this end that quasi-experimental studies tend to represent a less demanding, more streamlined, and ethical approach to school-based research when seeking to determine the impact of an intervention. Quasi-experimental studies are also generally considered to be robust enough to warrant external funding from both educational and psychological institutes that use such data to inform public policy. There are several types of quasi-experimental designs, though two are most common in school-based counseling outcomes research: nonequivalent group design and pretest-posttest design.

### Nonequivalent Group Design

In a nonequivalent group quasi-experimental design, existing groups are naturally occurring and as such are not divided either for purposes of convenience or ethics. This is the most common form of quasi-experimental design. For example, Krol, Slegers, Veenman, and Voeten (2008) studied the implementation effects of a staff development program on cooperative learning for Dutch

elementary school teachers. All teachers in the treatment schools participated in the staff development program, while the comparison school teachers did not. Both the treatment and comparison schools were selected and verified to be similar in regard to location, school size, and interest in receiving training in cooperative learning techniques. Variables pertaining to instructional behaviors during cooperative lessons were assessed, including structuring positive interdependence, individual accountability, social skills, and evaluation of the group process. Teachers in the treatment group scored statistically higher than teachers in the control group on the activation of prior academic knowledge.

As this study illustrates, randomization would have been difficult both logistically (in having only some of the teachers at the school site receive the training) and perhaps ethically (in that only some of the students would receive the benefit of more highly trained educators in innovative teaching methods). Therefore, a quasi-experimental design presents an ideal choice.

Nonetheless, in such studies it is imperative to demonstrate group similarity prior to the start of the intervention. Not only does this occur during the participant selection process but through statistical calculations at baseline as well; depending on the scope of baseline differences, adjustments (such as controlling for confounding factors) may be necessary in order to satisfy baseline equivalence. It is important to remember, however, that though group similarity may be demonstrated on observable characteristics, there is no way to determine equivalence in hidden or unknown variables, which only randomization protects for.

### **Pretest-Posttest Design**

In pretest-posttest quasi-experimental designs, the researcher looks at the impact of treatment by measuring just prior to the intervention (pretest) and following the intervention (posttest). No comparison group is used, and effectiveness is solely determined by the changes identified within participants before and after the intervention. Naturally, there are several issues with this approach. Without a control or comparison group, we are unable to determine whether the outcomes of the intervention can be attributed to the inter-

vention alone. In school environments where outside circumstances abound, studies that use pretest-posttest designs are particularly vulnerable to threats of internal validity. Although there are many, the two most prevalent threats to internal validity are: (a) history, when an unanticipated outside event unduly impacts the outcome variables being measured (e.g., a death of a student impacts participant scores in depression); and (b) maturation, in which normal developmental processes take place over time that impact outcome variables (e.g., spending more time in school impacts participant scores in school connectedness). Time series design, an adaptation of this method to include more than two assessment points, helps somewhat with these issues with validity, though does not entirely correct for them.

Nevertheless, there are some instances in which pretest-posttest and time series design can be a justifiable approach. Take, for example, a study conducted in the United States by Riggle, Gonzalez, Rostosky, and Black (2014) which focused on young adults that are identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and allies (LGBTQA). Participants responded to a brief intervention designed to impact their positive LGBTQA identity, collective self-esteem, and individual self-esteem ( $n = 52$ ). Participants completed a pretest prior to the intervention, then watched a short presentation on aspects of cultivating an affirming LGBTQA identity, and were next instructed to write a narrative essay on the ways in which they experience their own LGBTQ identities as positive and empowering. Immediately afterward, participants completed the posttest and 1 month later completed a post-posttest. The participants were shown to have responded positively to the intervention, with significantly higher scores at posttest in all three constructs measured when compared to pretest results, but did not sustain those results and returned to baseline when assessed 1 month later.

In this example, the intervention was brief and the stakes were low. Findings from this study might be helpful in early-stage intervention development. This activity was examined as a stand-alone component, but could eventually become part of a more complex, multi-faceted curriculum

(e.g., a support group using a number of activities). Researchers may decide then, based on these results, to modify this activity or exclude it altogether from a larger intervention in favor of another activity that has a more long-lasting impact on participants' LGBTQA identity and self-esteem. Alternatively, they may decide to keep the activity with the assumption that in combination with other components, it will have a larger effect. In short, pretest-posttest designs can be a useful means of determining proof of concept for new innovations without yet engaging in the time, cost, and energy it takes to conduct a more robust study. It should go without saying, though, that this is not the kind of study that could (or should) be expected to contribute to the development of public policy in any meaningful way on its own.

Overall, researchers must keep in mind that the term quasi-experimental covers a wide array of study designs, with some being much more robust approaches than others. In particular, it is the combination of nonequivalent groups and pretest-posttest design that are mostly likely to receive funding or have a substantial impact on school-based public policy.

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### **Additional Considerations for Conducting School-Based Intervention Research**

Throughout this chapter, we have highlighted the primary means through which efficacious and effective practices can be identified in school-based counseling specifically using experimental and quasi-experimental methods. We wish to restate, however, that what we have presented is by no means an exhaustive list of all of the methods available to researchers when designing your intervention studies. We encourage you to explore topics not covered here, such as (a) single-case research designs, a novel approach to studying the impact of interventions with small or understudied populations where participants serve as their *own* controls rather than using another individual or group; (b) action research, a means in which researchers collaborate to discover solutions to local problems; (c) mixed methods

research, which incorporate qualitative data to inform the development of studies and/or enrich the results; and (d) broader adaptations of each of these primary methods (e.g., regression discontinuity design, natural experiments, case studies, changing criterion design, to name but a few).

No matter which design you select in service of validating an intervention, be mindful that conducting research in schools with child and adolescent participants represents its own unique challenges when compared to other forms of social science research. We offer the following tips for your consideration:

- Develop your awareness of laws and professional ethical standards impacting your ability to conduct research with those who are legally identified as minors, especially as they pertain to informed consent and parent/guardian permission.
- Note that multiple processes may be involved in gaining permission to conduct school-based research. Several countries not only require approval from an ethics board, but individual school sites may also have their own approval processes. Plan for these steps in your study timeline, and know that they may take longer than you anticipate.
- In order to foster participant and stakeholder buy-in, when developing your research questions, consider what may be of direct interest to the communities where your study will be taking place.
- Know that both prior collaboration with a school site and incorporating direct benefits into the study protocol itself will also help you to acquire permission to conduct your research. These incentives may include professional development trainings, helping to analyze site-specific data, and providing resources that the school will be able to continue to use after the study has concluded.
- In experimental research, resistance from school personnel and stakeholders is to be expected, especially out of concerns of fairness and leaving students out. Whenever possible, use waitlist control groups rather than nontreatment control groups to ensure that all



participants may eventually receive the benefits of the intervention.

- Incorporate face-to-face recruitment strategies, as these are generally more successful than passive strategies such as flyers or postings. Participants are more likely to volunteer for studies when they have a sense of who you are.
- Reduce stigma by avoiding the use of the research term “intervention” around participants, as it has a negative connotation in many cultures. It also helps to market your project as a tool for positive development rather than for correcting a deficit.
- Ensure that in addition to using psychometrically sound instruments, you also attempt to locate youth-appropriate assessments that have been normed with the population and age group you are studying.
- Reduce the likelihood of testing fatigue as a threat to internal validity by selecting short-form/brief versions of instruments, and keep the assessment battery to a minimum. The younger your participants, the more important this is.
- Reduce the likelihood of participant attrition by ensuring any intervention facilitators create a nonjudgmental atmosphere, and provide reminders whenever students must be somewhere other than where they normally are in the course of their school day.
- Incorporate a means of measuring treatment fidelity, as perfect implementation is highly unlikely given the myriad issues and complications that have the potential to disrupt your study’s protocol. You will want to be aware of how much or how little your study may have been impacted by these deviations from ideal implementation.
- In the analysis of your data, absolutely do not rely on statistical significance alone as the only benchmark of success. Effect size, otherwise referred to as “practical significance,” is key in determining whether the time, cost, and resources needed by a school to implement an intervention are worth it.
- Finally, consider what data you can ethically make available to stakeholders. School per-

sonnel are understandably curious about the results of your study.

Of course, these suggestions only represent a fraction of what you’ll likely learn yourself as you embark on creating your own intervention studies. Notably, these tips are primarily derived from the context of conducting outcomes research in the United States. Unique considerations will vary widely between nations, as schools and school counseling are highly diverse based on where in the world the research is taking place.

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## Concluding Thoughts

We hope that we have spurred your interest in intervention research and have provided you with some helpful preliminary information to guide you on your way. Keep in mind that selecting an appropriate intervention method flows directly from your research questions and what data may or may not already exist. For example, even though RCTs are considered to be the gold standard in intervention research, true experimental design does require a higher investment of time and resources when compared to other approaches. For completely untested intervention components (e.g., original and innovative activities), in which there is also little to infer from other helping professions in regard to its likely success, a simple pretest-posttest design to first demonstrate proof of concept may instead be the desired starting point. Feasibility of implementation in schools also represents a key concern in designing your study. Again, though RCTs are the most robust in terms of attributing causality to the intervention, random assignment may be impossible. Therefore, quasi-experimental studies often represent the middle ground between what is methodologically strong and what also can be realistically carried out in a school setting. We recommend that these interventions eventually be studied through RCTs whenever possible, however, as true experimental design is the most methodologically sound barometer in identifying evidence-based practice.



In short, if it's plausible to conduct an RCT, then by all means do so—there is no better indicator of the effectiveness of an intervention and generalizability of the findings. Barring that, several other outcome-based methods are at your disposal. What's most important is that we begin to shift the culture of school counselors' limited engagement with intervention research. Indeed, it is imperative that intervention research in school-based counseling improve in both quality and quantity in order to ensure that school counselors have a voice in public policy decisions. In terms of topics, because of the dearth in research related to efficacious and effective practices in school-based counseling, potential research questions abound! There is much we need to know in regard to ideal school counselor staffing patterns, use of time between direct and indirect services, usefulness of comprehensive model approaches, effectiveness of student and family-focused interventions, and other issues that are of interest to policymakers.

Specifically, Carey and Martin (2015) note a primary difficulty of school counselor practitioners is being spread too thin. School counselors attend to a number of duties, including helping students plan for postsecondary schooling options, improving academic achievement, decreasing disciplinary issues, assisting with social-emotional concerns, facilitating career development, and cultivating student engagement—to name a few—so perhaps “school counselors are doing so many things that they cannot do much of any one thing” (p. 56). Many school counselors feel overwhelmed by their myriad responsibilities. Our profession would benefit immensely from research that identifies where school counselors' time is best spent (which can be expected to vary widely depending on the area of the world being studied) and subsequent public policy to support these activities. For school counselor educators seeking to contribute to the development of constructive public policy, you need to look no farther than conducting intervention research in these key areas.

School counselor educators must also look within our own academic systems in regard to how we go about producing new researchers. How are we fostering not only identities as

researchers but developing *specific* competencies in knowing how to conduct intervention research in schools? Do we encourage our students to conduct rigorous intervention studies as a part of their dissertations, theses, and capstone projects, or do we instead promote the status quo with platitudes like “a good dissertation is a done dissertation”? Of course, some nervousness and feelings of low self-efficacy around developing these skills can be expected, as the majority of researchers originally entered the school counseling profession due to their strong relational skills rather than their methodological savviness. And yet, it is intervention research that tends to fulfill the need of researchers-in-training to feel as though they are having a direct impact on student success, even as they transition from careers as practitioners to the professoriate. We suggest that learning to become an intervention researcher best occurs while one is still in school, where students are likely to receive superior mentorship and support when compared to their independent lives as faculty members, outside of university training.

In order to have a voice in policymaking, we must also commit as a profession to wider dissemination of our study results. Too often, key findings are occurring in a vacuum, buried deep within journals that only other academics have free access to, couched in inaccessible scholarly jargon. Without a concerted effort toward public engagement and clear, straightforward descriptions of our work, we fulfill the “ivory tower” stereotype, and we can't reasonably expect policymakers to know or care about the important evidence we've accumulated. Consequently, we must not be shy about engaging with policymakers directly in regard to our findings. Whitehurst (2004) explains:

Members of the research community often assume that any political involvement in research is inappropriate. That perspective loses sight of the source of funding for research ... and it ignores, in the case of education research, the intensely and appropriately political nature of education itself. Questions of what, when, and how students are to be taught, and with what resources are decided at the local, state, and federal level by elected officials. ... Researchers have some reason for moral

outrage if political action determines topical priorities for funding. ... Congress and state legislatures don't generate the phenomena that biochemists study. They do in education. Education researchers who feel that they—rather than politicians—should determine what is important to study misconstrue their field as a basic science discipline in which scientists are best equipped to know what is important. (p. 17)

Whitehurst goes one to describe the importance of researcher input as “a check on the fad and fancy that derives from ideologically driven policy” (p. 21). Essentially, we need ideas about education reform that incorporate robust findings derived from rigorous, experimental studies and to remind policymakers that a good argument is no substitute for good evidence.

We opened this chapter by exploring whether school-based counseling research informs policy or if policy informs school-based counseling research. As of now, it is clear that policymakers have a much greater influence in this partnership. However, if we commit as researchers to conducting rigorous intervention research that is not only more robust and prevalent but also accessible to those in other fields, it is our hope that our expertise will begin to shape the policies we must abide by.

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# Conducting Large-Scale Evaluation Studies to Identify Characteristics of Effective Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

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## Conducting Large-Scale Evaluation Studies to Identify Characteristics of Effective Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

For several decades now, the call for heightened educational accountability continues to grow from multiple camps and key stakeholders, including policymakers and legislators as well as parent/caregiver and educator groups. Many prominent school counseling leaders and researchers also championed this position, advocating for results-based programming and stricter professional accountability (e.g., Atkinson, Furlong, & Janoff, 1979; Aubrey, 1984; Borders & Drury, 1992; Dahir & Stone, 2003; Erford, 2015a; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Myrick, 1984; Trevisan, 2001). Although accountability research has been conducted for decades (e.g., Kranzler, 1968; Tamminen & Miller, 1968), small- and large-scale evaluation studies are considered an essential method to appraise the utility and cost-effectiveness of educational programming and associated interventions (e.g., Carey & Dimmitt, 2008; Erford, 2015b; Lee & Goodnough, 2015; Sink, 2009). As discussed in a later section,

since the 1990s, a series of state-level evaluation studies investigating the efficacy of comprehensive school counseling programs (CSCPs) have been published in respected journals and other scholarly venues in an attempt to meet these long-term objectives: (a) to develop consistent and meaningful policies supporting CSCP design, implementation, and revisions, (b) to discern which counseling- and program-related practices are most beneficial for the preponderance of students and their families, and (c) to detect counselor competence in facilitating program services, activities, and interventions (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). Given their range, the considerable expense, and the logistical challenges of these CSCP evaluations, the number of extant studies is understandably sparse to fully accomplish these purposes. As such, interested readers must glean from these investigations the most consequential findings, interpreting them cautiously, particularly in light of their research caveats.

With this chapter, we intend to raise awareness of statewide CSCP evaluations and their value to policymakers to identify structural and operational characteristics of effective school-based counseling programs. To do so, we first review three major orientations to comprehensive school counseling programs in the USA, outlining their theoretical/conceptual underpinning, key components, and issues related to program evaluation. Second, survey research

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methodologies are elucidated. Third, 11 state-level studies are summarized, focusing on their research methods and implications for CSCP policy. We identify areas of coherence and disagreement as well as call attention to the major research limitations. In closing, applications to advancing knowledge of CSCP efficacy and to policymaking and recommendations for future research are explored.

### Conceptual Underpinnings and Componential Characteristics

The inklings of a more structured, systemic, and proactive orientation to guidance counseling – now referred to as professional school counseling – emerged, in various forms, as far back as the 1950s and 1960s. Guidance leaders and professionals at that time expressed concern that the existing approach to support students, namely, the reactive pupil personnel services (i.e., position focused) model, was largely ineffective (Ballast & Shoemaker, 1978; Dinkmeyer & Owens, 1969; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Hoyt, 1965; Tamminen & Miller, 1968). Taking its cue from these sources and researchers, leadership in the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 1974) issued a policy statement suggesting that the profession change course. Despite the lack of training available to school counselors, ASCA policy and professional publications encouraged school counselors to implement guidance and counseling program in their districts. Albeit oversimplified, these varying perspectives lacked a well-articulated, systemic approach to school counseling work (Cinotti, 2014), opening the door in the 1970s and 1980s for two major and relatively similar conceptual orientations to CSCPs to materialize. Literature generally refers to them as the Life Career Development Model (Gysbers & Henderson) and Developmental Guidance and Counseling Model (Myrick, 2011; see Brown & Trusty, 2005 and Schmidt, 2008, for a summary of the historical roots of the school counseling profession and CSCPs). By the turn of the century, features of each were modified and distilled

into a third organizational framework, the ASCA (2003, 2012) National Model. To orient the rest of the chapter, we comment on the frameworks' defining characteristics, including their conceptual or theoretical grounding as well as those configural features that are most amenable to program evaluation and accountability research.

### Life Career Development Model

The most well-known and researched framework was developed by career guidance scholar Norman Gysbers and his colleagues (e.g., Gysbers & Moore, 1974, 1981, 1988; Gysbers, 1990; Gysbers & Henderson, 1988, 2012; Mitchell & Gysbers, 1978). By 2000, Gysbers and Henderson's systemic approach to school guidance and counseling was established in most, if not all, Missouri school districts (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1998) and adapted and employed across numerous states and individual school districts and buildings (MacDonald & Sink, 1999). The framework has been implemented internationally as well (e.g., Lee, Suh, Yang, & Jang, 2012). As a matter of record, the Missouri framework was originally referred to as a career guidance program. In time, this designation was expanded to Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program (MCGP; e.g., Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997), suggesting to policymakers and educators that students ought to receive a broader range of school-based counseling services, including career, personal-social, and educational assistance.

Since the Life Career Development Model as operationalized by the MCGP is fully documented in the literature (see, e.g., Gysbers, 1990; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Gysbers, Lapan, Blair, Starr, & Wilmes, 1999; Gysbers, Stanley, Kosteck-Bunch, Magnuson, & Starr, 2011; Starr & Gysbers, 1993), we need to only summarize its basic premises, characteristics, and components. First, the model's hallmarks include: (a) program content involving measureable developmental standards or competencies designed to maximize positive student functioning; (b) a clear organizational configuration, including structural components (program definitions, assumptions, and

rationale), program components (classroom guidance, individual student planning, responsive services [e.g., 1:1 and small group counseling], and system support); (c) adequate resources (personnel, financial, and political); and (d) process elements (e.g., program development, management, and accountability activities). In fact, the evolution of a fully functioning district-wide CSCP, like the MCGP, requires upward of 5 or more years and progresses through a clearly specified sequence of overlapping phases: planning, designing, implementing, evaluating, and revising (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). In short, an effective school counseling program should be developmental in nature, systemic, as well as comprehensive (K-12) in scope and structure. They should also be standards-based, highly collaborative, and lead by advocates for change (Cinotti, 2014; Gysbers, 1990).

Gysbers and Henderson's (2012) theoretical grounding looks to be a confluence of vocational guidance and career counseling theory, systems thinking, and well-accepted principles of human development. Regrettably, there are only a few indications of how these influences informed their model. Specific theories and their originators are largely absent from the narrative. However, the program's conceptual-organizational scaffold and its four central components (guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and systems support) are well delineated. Sharply put, specific foundational theories and their contributions to the program were given short shrift in lieu of useful discussions outlining its conceptual framework, structural components, and implications for school counselor practice.

Returning to the subject of program evaluation, Gysbers and Henderson (2012) made this area one of the framework's mainstays, particularly as an avenue to foster program improvement and school guidance personnel accountability. Regular appraisal of program outcomes is thought to influence policymaking from the local to the national level (Gysbers, Lapan, & Jones, 2000). What makes the Missouri Guidance and Counseling Model so appealing to researchers and practitioners are its measureable program

outcomes and well-thought out counselor and student competencies. For counselors conducting action research with the Missouri Model, its multiple user-friendly assessment tools are commendable. Nevertheless, the lack of theoretical detail renders the model challenging for researchers to evaluate the guidance program's theoretical fecundity and fidelity. Without explicit documentation of the model's theoretical foundation, gauging its real-world operationalization and application is unnecessarily problematic (MacDonald & Sink, 1999). Policymakers and model administrators are at a loss, especially when considering programmatic and practical revisions that are aligned with various theoretical constructs.

### **Developmental Guidance and Counseling Model**

Around the same period that Gysbers and his collaborators were formulating their guidance model, a number of school counseling scholars affirmed the value of incorporating developmental theory and research into school-based counseling activities and services (e.g., Blocher, 1968; Dinkmeyer, 1966; Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Caldwell, 1970; Gum, 1979; Gum, Tamminen, & Smaby, 1973; Peters & Farwell, 1959; Sprinthall, 1972, 1974; Super, 1964; Tuma, 1974; Zaccaria, 1965). Although Gysbers and Henderson (2012) took into account developmental psychology, other school counseling scholars (e.g., Dinkmeyer, 1966; Gum, 1969; Myrick, 1989, 1993, 2011; Paisley & Benschhoff, 1996) were far more explicit in their discussions, citing recognized developmental theories (e.g., Erikson, Kohlberg, Piaget, Super) and tasks (e.g., Havighurst, 1953) that should guide all facets of comprehensive school counseling programs. In fact, ASCA's (1979) governing board embraced these ideas characterizing developmental guidance as follows:

... is that component of all guidance efforts which fosters planned intervention within the educational and other human development services programs at all points in the human life cycle to vigorously



stimulate and actively facilitate the total development of individuals in all areas—personal, social, emotional, career, moral-ethical, cognitive, aesthetic—and to promote the integration of the several components into an individual lifestyle. (as cited in Myrick, 2003, p. 83)

By the early 1990s, the developmental approach to comprehensive school counseling was firmly established in the literature and not much later integrated into elementary school counseling practice (Borders & Drury, 1992; Gum, 1969; Myrick, 2003, 1997, 2011; Paisley & Peace, 1995). Myrick's (2011) well-known textbook and its previous editions are perhaps the most complete summary of this CSCP orientation, stressing both theoretical and practical dimensions. In contrast to Gysbers and Henderson (2012), Myrick's model operationalization is more loosely structured and detailed. That is to say, as an organizational framework for systemic practice, Myrick's developmental guidance and counseling approach and its overall conceptual blueprint are less than fully explained. More specific guidance and counseling activities and services, however, are coherently presented and practitioner oriented.

A developmental guidance and counseling orientation includes a number of essential features (e.g., Myrick, 2003, 2011; Paisley & Peace, 1995). Similar to Gysbers and Henderson (2012), it rests upon well-researched and documented developmental assumptions, needs, and principles (see Myrick, 2003, 2011, for an extensive overview). The developmental guidance component, reflecting ASCA's (1979) position statement quoted above, is for all students, involves all school personnel, has an organized and planned curriculum, and is integrated into total educational enterprise (Myrick, 2003).

Perhaps most importantly in terms of program evaluation, development guidance and counseling supports more effective and efficient student learning. That is, guidance and counseling personnel are encouraged to understand students' cognitions, emotions, and behaviors through lens of developmental stage theories (e.g., cognitive, moral, psychosocial, and career). In particular, all

humans progress at varying rates through hierarchical phases of growth, with each stage having its own developmental tasks to accomplish.

Myrick (2003) also proposed eight developmental goals that characterize almost all developmental guidance and counseling programs. Generally stated these include students learning to navigate the school environment, understanding themselves and others, and knowing about their attitudes and the impact of their behavior. Other goals speak to community involvement and participation in career and educational planning. From these goals, general and specific student objectives are structured.

Finally, the developmental approach focuses on the expanded role and functions of school counselors. As developmental specialists, counselors are to provide six basic interventions (called responsive services in Gysbers & Henderson, 2012), including individual and small group counseling, large group guidance, peer facilitator training, consultation, and coordinator of guidance services. Moreover, school counselors should conduct accountability studies to measure the impact of their work on the students they serve.

It is important to reiterate here one of the key differences between the Missouri Model (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012) and the one depicted by Myrick (2003, 2011) and other developmentalists; the latter approach explicates the developmental features in considerable depth, making a program evaluation of the model's theoretical underpinnings more feasible. However, Myrick's developmental guidance and counseling model has only a skeletal organizational structure, making program audits more complicated. As with Missouri Model, this approach emphasizes the attainment of multiple student goals, operationalized by specific psychosocial, career, and educational objectives. As such, program evaluators looking at outcomes from both models should be able to at least detect significant improvements in student functioning, particularly between those students attending schools with comprehensive school counseling programs and those pupils who do not (e.g., Sink & Stroh, 2003).



## ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs

As referred to earlier, ASCA leadership supported the implementation of comprehensive guidance and counseling at least as far back as the 1970s. In 1997 the developmentally based ASCA National Standards for student behavior were published (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). These provided overall standards, competencies, and specific benchmarks for “optimal” student functioning within these domains: personal-social (social-emotional), career-vocational planning, and educational behavior. Subsequently, in an attempt to create a unified national identity for the school counseling profession, ASCA, with substantial input from school counseling scholars and leading practitioners, produced its own framework in 2003, merging primarily elements of the Missouri Model, as described, in large part, by Gysbers and Henderson (1998, 2000) and some elements of the developmental guidance and counseling model (e.g., Dinkmeyer et al., 1970; Myrick, 2003). Brown and Trusty (2005) aptly compared an early version of the National Model to the Gysbers and Henderson framework, reporting only modest differences. For the sake of brevity, only the latest iteration of the National Model (ASCA, 2012) and its defining attributes are reviewed.

Moving away from Gysbers and Henderson’s (e.g., 1998) conceptual scaffold, framers of the ASCA (2012) Model created its own visual depiction and intentionally streamlining program documentation and descriptions. Using a four quadrant diamond shape, the model has these components: (1) foundation (underlying program focus and student [ASCA Student Standards] and professional competencies [ASCA School Counselor Competencies]); (2) management (assessment tools, assorted working documents, etc.); (3) delivery, including direct (e.g., counseling, individual planning, guidance curriculum) and indirect services (e.g., referrals, consultation) on behalf of student and their families; and (4) accountability (e.g., analysis of school profile and use of time, program outcomes, evaluation of counselor competencies, overall program). As a

benefit for program evaluators, the National Model requires school counselors to be data driven and evidence based, offering practitioners numerous informal tools to measure specified student and program outcomes.

Similar to the Life Career Development Model as depicted in Gysbers and Henderson (2012), ASCA’s (2012) school counseling framework is a practical document, replete with counselor-focused information. Curiously, after reviewing the three editions of the National Model, each refers to a theoretical basis without providing evidence to support it, citing no specific theories or theorists. For instance, Henderson (2012), who was charged with writing the section for the most recent version, provided a list of questions and associated ASCA Model Principles, suggesting that these describe “the theory base” (p. 137). One assumes, perhaps, that these principles rest upon specific theories but, again, they are not referenced, nor are they available on ASCA’s website. As a program evaluator or accountability specialist, these principles might become testable if they were converted into specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic goals. Put another way, these “theoretical” principles must have concrete criteria for measuring progress toward meeting them as goals.

As an aside, a careful reader of ASCA (2012) National Model will note the National Standards (ASCA, 1997; Stevens & Wilkerson, 2010; also called the ASCA Student Standards) are not included in the manual. These have been discarded and in their stead the ASCA (2014) Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success are now to be used. To ASCA’s (2014) credit, the writers of the new standards incorporate a large array of college and career readiness research, standards, and best practices particularly as they relate to improving student academic outcomes. Moreover, the current standards are noticeably focused on academic and career development. Of the many sources referenced for the development of the Mindsets and Behaviors, only two were directly linked to research advances in student social and emotional learning and other noncognitive factors influencing academic performance. For evaluators and accountability researchers, the

mindset and behavior standards have two significant downsides. First, at present, there are no explicit benchmarks to ascertain whether students are actually meeting the standards and assessment tools are noticeably absent. Second, the standards are only vaguely connected to the National Model (2012). In other words, it is not entirely clear which aspects of the National Model address specific mindset and behavior standards.

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## Introduction to Large-Scale Evaluation Methods and Analyses

Before specifically addressing the statewide CSCP program evaluations, a brief recap of three major survey designs utilized in these studies is provided.<sup>1</sup> First, most basic survey approach is descriptive in nature. In this design, survey data (numerical or narrative or mixed) are collected from respondents in hopes that they accurately characterize or portray participants' actual attitudes, beliefs, or views related to measureable construct or constructs (e.g., motivation to achieve, empathy). Ideally, prior to the survey's distribution to a wider and representative sample, the instrument should be examined for test reliability and validity and piloted with a small developmental group. Since inferential statistics are not used in basic descriptive investigations, there should be no attempt to generalize the findings to a wider population. With numerical data, descriptive statistics are generally reported, including measures of central tendency (e.g., *M*, *Mdn*) and score variability (e.g., *SD*, range, kurtosis, skew). Moreover, it is commonplace to depict the numerical data as frequency tables and bar graphs with error bars. Qualitative narrative data can be summarized in overarching themes with representative quotes from respondents.

A second survey method commonly used in statewide program evaluations is referred to as a correlational design. Fundamentally, the aim of

such a program evaluation is to examine potential relationships among salient variables, such as respondent demographics (e.g., gender, age, grade level, socioeconomic status, ethnicity) and pertinent outcome measures (e.g., grade point average, test scores, motivation, career attitudes, social and emotional variables). This approach incorporates aspects of basic descriptive survey studies, adding another layer of complexity, namely, the use of inferential statistics. Depending on the research questions posed, after reporting the key descriptive statistics, evaluators may choose to only analyze the data using bivariate measures of association (e.g., Pearson's *r*) and ordinary least squares regression or opt for advanced multivariate tools, such as canonical correlational analysis, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, multiple linear regression (e.g., hierarchical linear regression [HLR]), logistic regression, and hierarchical linear modeling (HLM).

Some of the correlational designs used in statewide CSCP evaluations utilize higher-order correlational/regression methods. Specifically, HLR was deployed in two studies (Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Hoffman, 2012; Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Stevenson, 2012) and HLM in two Missouri evaluation studies (Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997, Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001). HLR is a relatively common multiple regression procedure used to statistically control for the influence of certain predictors variables on the criterion variable, HLM is less well deployed and understood. As such, it warrants some explanation. Albeit oversimplified, Lapan and his colleagues deployed this statistical procedure to analyze hierarchical, or nested, data structures (e.g., data collected from teachers, nested within schools, nested within school districts) (Osborne, 2000). In other words, large-scale evaluation studies typically gather survey data from students, teachers, and caregivers who are not randomly selected from the larger population. Moreover, student and teachers are not randomly assigned to classrooms. When data sets are then aggregated across classrooms, schools, and districts, any group comparisons made on various dependent variables will be

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<sup>1</sup>For more extensive information on survey research and associated methods, the reader might consult Creswell (2014) and Fowler (2014).

problematic, for the assumption of independence of observations is violated. Namely, cross-level data, if not properly dealt with, confounds the survey results, potentially under- or overestimating the observed relationships between variables. In short, HLM allows researchers to test possible associations among, for example, student outcome variables, by statistically controlling for the nesting problem.

Several of the evaluation studies summarized below used a causal-comparative or *ex post facto* research design (e.g., Sink & Stroh, 2003; Sink, Akos, Turnbull, & Mvududu, 2008). Similar to a correlational design, this quantitative approach incorporates elements of a basic descriptive evaluation study but also attempts to measure potential respondent group differences on various outcome variables following intervention (i.e., CSCP implementation). Primarily due to logistical reasons, there is frequently limited or no pretesting or the collection of participant baseline data prior to CSCP implementation. As a consequence, internal validity can be compromised. Data from outcome instruments (“posttests”) are gathered from students in the CSCP intervention group and from those in non-CSCP schools. Again, based on the research questions, potential group differences and interaction effects are tested using appropriate inferential statistics, ranging from independent or paired *t*-tests to variations on the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) procedure.

Although the term causal-comparative is used with this third research method, cause and effect cannot be firmly established unless the investigator designs a large-scale experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation study that at least minimizes threats to internal and external validity. Because such a rigorous design is so challenging to conduct in state-controlled and funded schools, none of the 11 studies reviewed below used a quasi- or true experimental design. Should such an approach be possible in the future, evaluators would attempt, at a minimum, to include experimental and control groups (e.g., students, parents, caregivers, teachers) randomly selected from large representative populations. Random assignment to groups would also be optimal as

well. To establish baseline data, the participants would be “pretested” (i.e., before the implementation of a school- or district-based CSCP) on desired outcomes. Subsequently, after a sufficient period of time (e.g., 6 months to 1 school year) for the benefits of CSCP implementation to accrue, the survey(s) would be readministered. This posttesting could continue at regular intervals. Germane student-related outcome data could be maintained and collected from school and state records (archival data), allowing for supplemental group comparisons.

Although program evaluation standards for methodological quality are available from a variety of sources, they are not altogether in agreement. Farrington’s (2003) five standards are both readily interpretable and comprehensive and thus applicable to our analysis of the statewide CSCP studies. Beyond internal validity (i.e., relates to the methodological rigor of the study and controlling for confounding variables) and external validity (i.e., generalizability of possible causal relationships and operational definitions of interventions and outcomes), three other standards should be considered. Quantitative evaluation research should also possess adequate (a) construct validity (i.e., adequacy of the operational definition and measurement of the theoretical constructs that underlie the intervention and the outcome variables), (b) statistical conclusion validity (i.e., effect sizes are reported as a way to estimate whether the presumed cause [CSCP implementation] and the presumed effect (survey respondent outcomes) are related), and (c) descriptive validity (i.e., refers to the adequacy of the presentation of the major elements of an evaluation research report). In the research caveats section below, we consider these standards in more detail.

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## Summary of Statewide Evaluations

With above context in mind, 11 statewide CSCP evaluations are summarized, elucidating primarily their methodological quality, rigor, and reach. The more obvious commonalities, differences, and limitations with reference to program

evaluation research are briefly considered as well. A thorough critique of specific research findings is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead we later explore the manner in which the most germane results can be positioned to influence policymaking at the national, state, and local levels. Readers interested in an extensive summary and analysis of the state-level results will want to consult Carey and Martin (2015).

It should be mentioned that the school counseling profession has a relatively lengthy history of conducting accountability and program evaluations (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). Several lesser known studies have investigated various dimensions of guidance programs and counseling services (e.g., Kranzler, 2015). For instance, in Minnesota a comprehensive statewide evaluation of guidance functions and their impact were examined (Tamminen & Miller, 1968), reporting negligible positive student outcomes. Not unexpectedly, the most effective guidance input concerned the quality of interactions between school counselors and students and their colleagues. The most meaningful and helpful relationships produced favorable guidance-related outcomes. Mirroring in part the research findings reported decades later (e.g., Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Ockerman, Patrikakou, & Feiker Hollenbeck, 2015), the Minnesota investigation concluded that counselors ought to devote far less time delivering reactive student services. In their place, guidance personnel need to spend more time promoting and facilitating the development of the whole student. Even though these early evaluations were not altogether exacting in design, limited in its purview, and insufficiently documented, they did set a clear precedence for school counseling researchers to engage in program evaluations and, in turn, develop evidence-based practices.

The statewide program evaluations reviewed below are broad based in nature, mostly correlational and *ex post facto* in design, and assess distal noncausative effects (e.g., overall improvement in grades for high school students, percentage increase in attendance of children designated as being “at risk” for school failure). By approximately 2010, ten states had developed program

evaluation systems with only a few requiring stringent standards, processes, and procedures (Martin, Carey, & DeCoster, 2009). At present, we found 11 state-level studies that merited a closer examination. Numerous other accountability studies have been conducted in the USA, but only those that reached these criteria were included here: statewide in reach, demonstrated a reasonable level of methodological quality, and published in relevant peer-reviewed journals.

## Commonalities and Differences

Table 10.1 summarizes these investigations utilizing various categories: (a) state where the accountability study was conducted and its authors, (b) the school counseling program model(s) or framework(s) addressed, (c) methodological issues (research design, sample, sampling, and instrumentation) deployed, (d) most salient findings, and (e) major research limitations. Three studies were conducted with Missouri secondary school students using dimensions of the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program (MCGP) as their conceptual framework. Two Washington state investigations were published reflecting an assortment of comprehensive school counseling program frameworks; one was elementary focused and the other sampled middle school counselors and students. The authors of the two statewide evaluation studies conducted in Nebraska reported that the MCSP and ASCA National Model were their organizational blueprints. While the 2005 study was directed toward K-12 counselors’ opinions, the 2012 investigation surveyed only high school counselors. The remaining state-level studies published in 2012 were conducted in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Utah, and Wisconsin, evaluating for the most part high school counselors’ perspectives on their respective comprehensive school counseling program. Furthermore, the investigations relied on self-report data, canvassing school counselors either using an investigator-constructed measure or an established school counseling program survey. Some archival data were used in most of the studies. Two Missouri and both Washington state

**Table 10.1** Summary of published statewide investigations of comprehensive school counseling programs

State and authors	CSCP model	Research design	Sampling method and sample (convenience). Sample: drawn from 12 HSs	Measure(s)	Salient findings	Major limitations
MO: Hughey, Gysbers, & Starr (1993)	MCGP	Survey, descriptive	Sampling: Nonprobability (convenience). Sample: drawn from 12 HSs (N = 555). Students in grades 9–12, n = 280, 45%; parents n = 125 (22.52%); teachers n = 150 (27.03%)	Investigator designed survey measuring respondent attitudes toward school-related success	Respondents overall reported positive attitudes related to dimensions of student success (e.g., educational and career exploration planning)	Sampling, self-report data, generalizability; underreported demographic characteristics of respondents; cause and effect cannot be estimated
MO: Lapan et al. (1997)	MCGP	Survey, predictive correlational, causal-comparative; key data analysis procedure: HLM to control for within and between school variance	Sampling: Statewide, stratified random (1992–1995). Sample: drawn from 236 HSs. Students N = 22,964 (female 50%; F/RL 24%; minorities 11%). SC N = 434 (female 60%, largely White; graduate degree 95%)	Secondary student survey (SSQ); school counselors to measure implementation level of comprehensive guidance program	Students attending schools with high MCGP implementation viewed their school climate more positively than students attending a low MCGP implementation schools. Former group (a) reported higher ratings of belonging and safety, (b) viewed their classes as less likely to be disrupted, (c) thought their peers behaved better, and (d) highly valued receiving college and career information	Self-report data; inherent weaknesses of HLM procedure (see Osborne, 2000); cause and effect cannot be estimated
MO: Lapan et al. (2001)	MCGP	Survey, predictive correlational, causal-comparative; key data analysis procedure: HLM to control for between-school SES differences and enrollment size	Sampling: Statewide, stratified random (1992–1996). Sample drawn from 184 MSs. Students in Grade 7 N = 22,601 (female 50%, minorities 16%). MS teachers N = 4868 (female 69%, White 94%, graduate degree 46%)	CRT: Missouri's School Improvement Program (MSIP)	Students with high MCGP usage significantly predicted (a) higher student safety perceptions; (b) better relationships, student-teacher relations; (c) higher educational/ school satisfaction; (d) higher valuing of their schooling; and (e) earning higher grades. Overall, high MCGP implementation benefited all 7th graders regardless of SES	Self-report data; inherent weaknesses of HLM procedure; small effect sizes; cause and effect cannot be estimated

(continued)



**Table 10.1** (continued)

State and authors	CSCP model	Research design	Sampling method and sample	Measure(s)	Salient findings	Major limitations
WA: Sink & Stroh (2003)	WA CGCP; MCGP (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000)	Survey, causal-comparative; key data analysis: MANCOVA controlling for SES	Sampling: Statewide, stratified random (2000–2001). Sample: 150 ES participated. SC $n = 119$ (female 79%, White 93%, $M_{age}[SD_{age}] = 45.5[9.6]$ , graduate degree 95%). Students in grades 3–4 $N = 20,131$ (White 72%, male 52%).	Comp. Guid. & Counseling Programs & Student Success in WA State. ESs; academic NRT: Iowa Basic Skills-Form M, CRT: WA Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)	Over time, after controlling for SES, ES students did better on academic NRT and CRT than their non-CSCP school peers. ES children benefited academically, by remaining in well-established (5+ implementation years) CSCP schools for multiple years (3+ years)	Self-report data collected from SCs; some small effect sizes; inconsistent use of CSCP; cause and effect cannot be estimated
NE: Barnes et al. (2005)	MCGP (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000); ASCA National Model; 2000 NE School Counsel. Guide for Planning & Program Improvement	Survey, descriptive	Sampling: Statewide nonprobability (convenience?). Sample drawn from: $N = 917$ K-12 SCs with SC $n = 423$ (fall, 2002); response rate = 46.7%	Nebraska Department of Education survey of comp. School guidance programs; items asked whether SCs agreed with statement ( <i>yes, no, or unsure</i> )	Overall, SCs viewed their system support, responsive services, individual student planning, and guidance curriculum positively, rating most items with a “yes.” SCs were not well prepared for accountability functioning	Sampling; self-report data; limited generalizability; underreported respondents’ characteristics; vague sampling and sample explanations; vague findings; survey did not distinguish between preventative and remedial counseling; cause and effect cannot be estimated
WA: Sink et al. (2008)	WA CGCP; MCGP (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000); ASCA National Model	Survey, causal-comparative design; key data analysis: MANCOVA controlling for SES	Sampling: Statewide, stratified random (2000–2001). Sample drawn from: 146 MS ( $N = 187$ , 77% WA MSs). SC $n = 146$ (female 69.5%, White 86.7%, $M_{age}[SD_{age}] = 43.8[9.8]$ , graduate degree 100%). Students in grades 6–8 $N = 60,331$ (White 71.5%, male 51.6%). Return rate, 85%	Comp. Guid. & Counseling Programs and Student Success in WA State MSs; academic NRT: Iowa Test of Basic Skills; CRT: WA Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)	High-CSCP implementation schools had outperformed non-CSCP schools on Grade 6 ITBS language, math, and core total scores and on Grade 7 reading and math WASL scores. High-CSCP implementation schools outperformed low-CSCP implementation schools on academic tests	Self-report data collected from SCs; small effect sizes; inconsistent use of CSCP; cause and effect cannot be estimated



WI: Burkard et al. (2012)	WI Comp. School Counseling Model (WCSCM) adapted from ASCA (2005) National Model	Survey, descriptive, correlational	Sampling: Statewide convenience/purposeful. Sample drawn from: HS SCs ( $N = 888$ , 514 public HSs). SC: $n = 166$ . Return rate. ~20%	Survey of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (SCSCP); Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2006) measuring CSCP implementation and time spent on school counseling delivery services and non-school counseling tasks in MO	Correlations between school counselor SCSCP ratings and student outcome measures were largely nonsignificant and weak ( $r$ s ranged from .01 to .34). Implementation levels of various CSCP components were not different between SCs with no training and SCs with basic or advanced CSCP implementation training	Self-report; low return rate; limited demographics on respondents; limited generalizability; used percentage data not raw data; high levels of irregularities in the reported demographic variables; cause and effect cannot be estimated
NE: Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Hoffman (2012)	ASCA (2012) National Model	Survey, descriptive, correlational. Duplicated UT study by Carey et al. (2012). Key data analysis: HLR controlled for demographic differences between HSs	Sampling: Statewide convenience/purposeful. Sample drawn from: HS SCs ( $N = 276$ ). SC: $n = 206$ . Return rate, 76%	School Counseling Program Implementation Survey (SCPIS; Elsner & Carey, 2005)	School counseling program facets aligned with ASCA National Model explained significant of variance in student outcomes (e.g., suspension rates, discipline rates, attendance rates, math and reading proficiency); weak correlations between time use categories and student outcomes	Self-report; data response, reporting, and collection irregularities; minimal demographic respondent information reported; limited generalizability; cause and effect cannot be estimated
UT: Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Stevenson (2012)	UT Model with ASCA (2012) National Model updates	Survey, descriptive, and causal-comparative. Key data analysis: HLR controlled for demographic differences between HSs	Sampling: Statewide convenience/purposeful. Sample drawn from: HSs ( $N = 144$ HSs). SC $n = 88$ (only 39 SCs completed entire survey). Return rate, 61%	School Counseling Program Implementation Survey (SCPIS; Elsner & Carey, 2005)	After controlling for school demographic variability, school counseling program facets aligned with ASCA National Model explained significant of variance in student outcomes (e.g., % of students reaching math and reading proficiency, % of students taking ACT and higher ACT mean scores, student graduation rate for Utah Perkins Program, etc.); a higher student-to-school counselor ratio was significantly correlated to higher attendance and lower discipline rates; weak correlations between time use categories and student outcomes; longer school counseling program implementation correlated with higher attendance and lower suspension rates	Self-report; small sample size; data response, reporting, and collection irregularities; minimal demographic respondent information reported; limited generalizability; cause and effect cannot be estimated

(continued)

**Table 10.1** (continued)

State and authors	CSCP model	Research design	Sampling method and sample	Measure(s)	Salient findings	Major limitations
RI: Dimmitt and Wilkerson (2012)	RI Frame-work for Comp. K-12 School Counseling Programs (2005)	Survey, descriptive, correlational	Sampling: Statewide convenience/purposeful. Sample drawn from (2007–2008): MSs & HSs (2007 $n = 51$ , 2008 $n = 46$ ). Details about respondents (counselor, student and parents) sparse. Return rate, 61%	RI School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) survey	Widespread, largely consistent, and significant (low-moderate) correlations between comprehensive counseling services and various salient educational outcomes for 2007–2008	Self-report; data reporting, response, and collection irregularities; minimal demographic respondent information reported; limited generalizability; cause and effect cannot be estimated
CT: Lapan, Whitcomb, and Aleman (2012)	CT Comprehensive Model	Survey, descriptive, correlational/predictive. Key data analysis: hierarchical multiple regression	Sampling: Statewide convenience/purposeful. Some archival data used. Sample drawn from: HSs $n = 96$ HSs. SCs $n = 72$ , guidance directors $n = 24$ , principals $n = 35$ . Return rate, 61%	Principal and Counselor Survey (Lapan & Carey, 2007; unreferenced)	HS counselors with lower caseloads have significantly lower rates of student suspicions and fewer disciplinary problems; HSs providing more college and career counseling and responsive services reported less behavior issues; HS principals reported higher levels of college and career counseling services for students, and attendance and graduation rates were higher	Self-report; small sample size; data reporting, response, and collection irregularities; minimal demographic respondent information reported; limited generalizability; cause and effect cannot be estimated

*CGCP* Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program, *CSCP* Comprehensive School Counseling Program, *MGCP* Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program, *HLM* hierarchical linear modeling, *HLR* hierarchical linear regression, *F/RL* free and/or reduced lunch, *SC* school counselor, *ES, MS, HS* elementary, middle, high schools, respectively, *NRT* norm-referenced test, *CRT* criterion-referenced test, *SES* socioeconomic status

evaluations applied some type of random sampling procedure, with the remainder trusting convenience and purposeful sampling techniques.

## Notable Results

Given the varying research methods deployed in the state-level studies and their inherent complications, as well as other more specific limitations (see below), any overarching conclusions derived from the findings must be cautiously averred and judiciously viewed. Overall, each of the studies showed to some extent that counselors who reported working in CSCP schools appeared to be contributing positively to student development and school climate. In particular, across the 11 investigations that were mainly secondary school focused, certain CSCP elements were associated with improving student outcomes in the academic/educational and career domains. Counselors repeatedly suggested that skill development activities were beneficial. Some of the program evaluation outcomes corroborated these perceptions. Whether these encouraging gains extended to improving students' social and emotional functioning is questionable. However defined, schools with more fully implemented CSCPs and heightened program-based training for school counselors seem to be yielding the largest improvements in various outcomes (e.g., Sink & Stroh, 2003). Regrettably, the manner in which these beneficial practices were operationalized and measured at the school level was inconsistent. Lastly and perhaps most significant for policymakers, lower school counselor to student ratios in CSCP schools may contribute to better program and student outcomes (Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Hoffman, 2012; Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Stevenson, 2012).

In summary, among 11 studies reviewed, two Missouri (Lapan et al., 1997, 2001) and two Washington state studies (Sink & Stroh, 2003; Sink et al., 2008) were most rigorously designed and, as such, generated the fairly robust results. Each deployed some type of random sampling and surveyed a large sample using multisources (students, teachers, and school counselors), as

well as attempted to control for confounding variables using multivariate statistical procedures (multivariate analysis of covariance [MANCOVA] or HLM). A discussion of the research limitations are provided next.

## Research Caveats

As alluded to previously, and certainly not unique to these studies, each statewide evaluation was methodologically flawed in some respects. The most glaring caveats should be considered, especially as they confound research findings and limit policymakers' ability to make evidence-based decisions and recommend program enhancements. First and foremost, in terms of Farrington's (2003) Methodological Quality Standards for Evaluation Research, each investigation failed to meet all rigorous standards. Construct validity was jeopardized in all the studies because CSCPs' theoretical underpinnings are largely under-described and operationalized. Furthermore, given their lack of methodological precision, the survey studies generally possessed deficient internal validity. Relatedly, descriptive validity was marginal at best, for several studies grossly underreported sample demographic characteristics, deployed less than optimal sampling procedures, and included anomalies in the data collection process. Socioeconomic status, gender, and ethnic group findings were inconsistently expressed as well. Moreover, where effect sizes could have been generated in the studies, they were not included, reducing statistical conclusion validity. Finally, the external validity standard was compromised in those studies deploying nonprobability sampling. In these evaluations, the representativeness of the respondent samples to the general populations was equivocal. Only four studies with random sampling could external validity be relatively assured.

Other notable research limitations decreased the validity of the findings. For instance, researchers depended largely on counselors' perceptions of their programs and practices. Self-report data by their very nature are commonly seen as biased, reflecting to a degree social desirability responding.

It is understandable that counselors want to be perceived as comprehensive school counseling advocates and supporters, but, as a consequence, they may have overestimated the degree of CSCP implementation. Curiously, to triangulate school counselor and teacher perspectives, student, parent/caregiver, and other stakeholder opinions were seldom reported. The studies were also fraught with potentially confounding variables (i.e., unaccounted sources of variance in student, school, and school district outcome variables), making their findings less than definite.

In conclusion, as school counseling leaders aim to establish new or modify existing CSCP policies, any decisions in this regard should be founded on empirically based research, involving at some level high-quality experimental or quasi-experimental research (Creswell, 2014; Farrington, 2003). As large-scale school-based evaluations apparently cannot, at present, meet this robust standard due to a myriad of district-related logistical concerns as well as various sociopolitical and ethical barriers, investigators had to settle for designs that were descriptive, correlational, causal-comparative, or a combination of one or more. With such methodologies, researchers were only able to posit tentative conclusions.

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## Implications for Policy-Related Initiatives

Carey, Harrington, Martin, and Stevenson (2012) reiterated the sentiments of earlier researchers (e.g., Borders & Drury, 1992), insisting that state-level program research is beneficial in several respects. For instance, such investigations are able to detect needed CSCP enhancements, leading in turn to profession-wide projects to address minor and serious gaps in program elements and services. The evaluations offer tangible evidence; these programs are advantageous for students and their families. Furthermore, program renewal, on a regular basis, is essential for sustaining effective holistic and individualized school counseling services in response to shifting school demographics and community needs. Put

differently, revisiting program outcome data on a regular basis not only allows school counselors to be more responsive and adaptable to stakeholders concerns, it also affords policymakers with current data to inform their decision-making. Without evidence-based practices, professional advocacy efforts may be less likely to effect change in school-based counseling policy (Borders & Drury; Galassi & Akos, 2004; Sink & MacDonald, 1998).

Each of the reviewed program evaluations incorporated salient recommendations that have implications for CSCP policies and their enactment. State and district guidance and counseling leadership would do well to heed this input, particularly as a way to revitalize and amend substandard program infrastructures, procedures, processes, and practices. For instance, several state-level investigations (Missouri and Washington; e.g., Lapan et al., 1997; Sink & Stroh, 2003; Sink et al., 2008) indicated, among other recommendations, that fully implemented CSCPs, however operationalized, were positively correlated with better efficacy-related outcomes. State and local leadership teams, as a result, must ensure that the CSCP policy documents applicable to program implementation, management, and evaluation practices underscore the value of increased fidelity to the model's conceptual framework and established guidelines for practice. The Utah study (Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Stevenson, 2012) also generated specific recommendations with policy implications, among them composing a State Superintendent of Education-generated School Counseling and Career and Technical Education policy statement to be remitted to all school districts and notifying a statewide interdisciplinary committee with managerial authority to improve the Grade 12 experience.

For those school administrators involved with CSCP management in Nebraska, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, and Connecticut, the evaluators also proposed several modifications to improve policy implementation and assessment. For example, whereas Barnes, Scofield, and Vrbka (2005) advised Nebraskan CSCP leadership to reinforce various system support features in many of the

state's schools, Carey, Harrington, Martin, and Hoffman (2012) intimated that (a) career and technical education (CTE) needs to be integrated into district-level programs aligned with the ASCA National Model, (b) CTE practices should be routinely inspected, and (c) standardized measurement tools are needed, particularly when evaluators appraise and compare stakeholder and program outcomes across Nebraska's school districts and between state frameworks. Following their analysis of Rhode Island state CSCP data, Dimmitt and Wilkerson (2012) concluded that policymakers must address the disproportionality in program delivery. Namely, higher percentages of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch and from traditionally underserved racial/ethnic groups were not experiencing the level and perhaps the quality of CSCP services as those students attending economically advantaged CSCP schools. Implementation inequity is a social justice issue for organizational leadership to closely attend to and institute requisite changes. After surveying Wisconsin high school counselors, Burkard, Gillen, Martinez, and Skytte (2012) indicated that state and district CSCP policies and their applications should reflect (a) the priority of equal implementation of program services and components across schools, (b) the need for additional uniform school counselor CSCP training, and (c) the importance of program evaluation and accountability work. Finally, the Connecticut study has major implications for policy development. The study emphasized, for example, the importance of lower high school counselor caseloads, for lower ratios were associated with fewer student behavior infractions (Lapan, Whitcomb, & Aleman, 2012). Next, various proposals for enhancing statewide CSCP evaluation ventures particularly as they may influence policy development and implementation are supplied.

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## Recommendations

From the previous discussion, state-level CSCP evaluation efforts are largely generating favorable student outcomes. Whether they are influencing state CSCP policies and procedures is an

open question. Whatever the case may be, school-based counseling experts must continue to advocate for improvements in efficacy and accountability research. The suggestions presented here should be viewed as talking points for state and local educational leaders, counselors, counseling scholars, program administrators, ASCA leadership, and other key stakeholders. First, before CSCPs can be more fully evaluated, their underlying theoretical orientations and constructs need to be explicated in finer detail (MacDonald & Sink, 1999). With the ASCA (2012) National Model, for example, program framers appear to be conflating philosophical assumptions with theoretical statements. Researchers must understand how the varying CSCP components reflect evidence-based theories.

Second, a national coordinated research effort is required to guide large-scale program evaluation work. Whereas the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) has admirably led the profession in this regard, ASCA as a national organization has yet to fully contribute to this initiative. Should these organizations and others like them establish a viable research consortium and closely coordinate their efforts and funding, higher-quality program evaluation studies should result. Additionally, state-level private school CSCP data should be collected. Findings from both private and public schools would then better inform existing and future program policies and practices. In short, improved research collaboration among relevant organizations will enhance policymaking and program efficacy.

A top priority of a coordinated national evaluation initiative should include a systematic appraisal of the latest version of the ASCA (2012) National Model and its impact on students and schools (Martin & Carey, 2014). The Utah and Nebraska investigations of a previous version of the National Model reported on the educational and career planning benefits to high school students (Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Hoffman, 2012). However, for reasons discussed previously, these hopeful findings should be viewed with some circumspection. Researchers must

continue to substantiate the value of the National Model's program implementation, management, and accountability strategies. Moreover, efficacy data remain sparse as to whether the National Model or other state frameworks increase students' social and emotional functioning and the extent to which these programs improve school and classroom climate. Finally, subsequent evaluations of the National Model must account for differences in student demographics, particularly racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities between school communities.

Although cross-sectional survey studies using descriptive, correlational, and causal-comparative designs have their place, forthcoming evaluations should utilize more rigorous and longitudinal research designs and data analysis procedures that attempt to meet Farrington's (2003) quality standards. For example, surveys used as outcome tools should be reliable and valid, sampling and data collection procedures should be standardized, and the reporting of findings should be enhanced. Whenever feasible probability sampling, and at least, quasi-experimental designs with control or comparison groups should be utilized. Broadening the participant pool to preK-12 students, parents/caregivers, teachers, administrators, and support staff is critical. Mixed methods are also extremely useful, incorporating qualitative data into the evaluation process (e.g., Martin & Carey, 2012). Effect sizes should always be reported with significant statistical findings.

Complex as they are, advancements in statistical methods allow for more effective ways to analyze large data sets. Multivariate statistical procedures such as multidimensional scaling, cluster analysis, multilevel linear modeling, and structural equation modeling are important tools to analyze complicated data sets (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Logistic regression can be used when the evaluator wants to categorize schools as either CSCP or non-CSCP buildings using categorical data.

Finally, state-level program research should employ an evaluation framework to guide the process. Numerous school counseling-based approaches exist, each with own their strengths and aims. The frameworks emphasize results-

based evaluations, assessing in systematic ways various CSCP components and their impact on students and other stakeholders (e.g., Astramovich & Coker, 2007; Eschenauer & Chen-Hayes, 2005; Lapan, 2001; Lapan & Kosciulek, 2003; Martin & Carey, 2014). For example, useful evaluation structures for large-scale studies would include Lapan's approach. Established, in part, on Johnson and Johnson's (1982) competency-based model, Lapan's framework stresses the evaluation of (a) CSCP's structural and program components, as well as aspects of the counselor's work (e.g., distribution of time and resources); (b) organization of effective school environments; and (c) student development within demographic, cultural, economic, and political contexts. Six planning and evaluation processes are included as well.

Another option for these state-level CSCP evaluations is the logic model of Frechtling (2007). In fact, Martin and Carey (2014) deployed this approach in a general evaluation of the ASCA (2012) National Model. Specifically, this framework allows researchers to analyze CSCP *inputs* (foundational elements and program resources), *school counseling-related activities* (e.g., direct and indirect services, school counselor personnel evaluation, management), *outputs* (e.g., student change, parent involvement, administrator support), and program *outcomes* (e.g., student achievement, systemic change and school improvement). Logic modeling should be incorporated into CSCP policy development and program revision planning.

With increasing school district restrictions on data collection, two complementary evaluation approaches may be more feasible for counselors to initiate. Astramovich and Coker (2007) developed the Accountability Bridge Counseling Program Evaluation Model primarily as a framework for individual K-12 schools to deploy. In a systematic way, school counselors can assess themselves, looking, for example, at their effectiveness in planning and delivering services to students and whether they have made any impact on school and learner-related outcomes. Similarly, Eschenauer and Chen-Hayes (2005) created an accountability method called the



Transformative Individual School Counseling evaluation model. It focuses on counselors conducting functional behavior assessments on students to define problems as well as single-case study designs to document intervention success. Whether the evaluation is relatively small or large in scope, it is incumbent on program evaluation leadership to select the most suitable approach to answer the research questions. With a strong organizational framework to formulate and direct large-scale CSCP evaluations, needed policy revisions and refinements in implementation strategies should be readily discernable.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we argued that school counseling program policy and practice need to be informed by high-quality accountability research findings. State-level evaluation studies considered above have generated encouraging results for students and schools. Despite their importance, this research continues to raise more questions about the effectiveness of CSCPs than they have answered. The ASCA (2012) National Model, for instance, remains understudied and its actual impact on student functioning and school-related outcomes is uncertain. It was suggested that prospective investigations must incorporate advancements in research methods, relying more heavily on quasi-experimental and longitudinal designs and multivariate analysis techniques. Clearly, much of the onus to assist with implementation of these research enhancements falls on school and district leadership. Federal and state educational departments must encourage administrators to be more receptive to large-scale studies, providing schools with tangible inducements to offset their costs. Without a meaningful partnership among national, state, and local counseling and educational entities, these policy-educating studies will continue to be less than optimal. The evaluation horizon is promising and school counselors have much to be proud of; however, this work is still in its infancy and further high-quality research is needed to firmly establish the efficacy of comprehensive school counseling programs for all stakeholders.

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# Identifying and Using Secondary Datasets to Answer Policy Questions Related to School-Based Counseling: A Step-by-Step Guide

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## Identifying and Using Secondary Datasets to Answer Policy Questions Related to School-Based Counseling: A Step-by-Step Guide

Researchers have demonstrated the pivotal role that school counseling plays in addressing the academic, socio-emotional, and college-career needs of students (Carey & Martin, 2015). School counseling has been linked to increased college applications (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011), greater school bonding or connectedness (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Gaenzle, Kim, Lin, & Na, 2012; Lapan, Wells, Petersen, & McCann, 2014; Lee & Smith-Adcock, 2005), better academic achievement (Carey & Martin, 2015), and higher school attendance (Carey & Martin, 2015). However, a need exists for more rigorous and policy-relevant research to demonstrate the effect of school

counseling practices and programs on student academic, socio-emotional, and college-career outcomes (Bryan, Day-Vines, Holcomb-McCoy, & Moore-Thomas, 2010; Carey & Martin, 2015; Whiston, 2002).

National secondary datasets represent potential gold mines of data for researchers. Federal government agencies and private foundations fund these datasets and make them available to researchers to conduct policy research about a wide range of education; medical, socio-emotional, and mental health; cognitive and non-cognitive, and family and community constructs and issues related to children, youth, and adults. These national secondary datasets present a valuable source of data that could be used to conduct policy-relevant research on education and mental health issues related to school counseling as well as the effects of school counseling practices on student outcomes (Bryan, Day-Vines, Holcomb-McCoy, & Moore-Thomas, 2010; Carey & Martin, 2015). While a plethora of national secondary datasets exist that are designed for policy-relevant research related to K-12 and higher education, mental health, and public health, little use of these secondary datasets has been used in school counseling research. In 2010, in their article *Using National Education Longitudinal Datasets in School Counseling Research*, Bryan, Day-Vines, Holcomb-McCoy, and Moore-Thomas highlighted the low use of secondary education datasets by school counseling

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researchers. At that time, few school counseling-related studies (i.e., Adams, Benschoff, & Harrington, 2007; Bryan, Holcomb-McCoy, Moore-Thomas, & Day-Vines, 2009; Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, Holcomb-McCoy, & Mitchell, 2009; Coker & Borders, 2001; Lee & Smith-Adcock, 2005; Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007; Trusty, 2002; Trusty & Niles, 2003, 2004) had been conducted using the Department of Education's National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) datasets, such as the National Educational Longitudinal Survey 1988 (NELS:88) and the Educational Longitudinal Survey 2002 (ELS 2002). Since then, a few more studies related to school counseling have been conducted (i.e., Bryan, Day-Vines, Griffin, & Moore-Thomas, 2012; Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011; Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Gaenzle, Kim, Lin, & Na, 2012; Cholewa, Burkhardt, & Hull, 2015). Yet, such secondary datasets like the ones developed by NCES could be used to answer a wider range of questions concerning the effects of school counselors and some school counseling practices on student outcomes. Indeed, the current relevance of school counseling is indicated by NCES' inclusion of a survey of school counselors in its latest study, the High School Longitudinal Study 2009 (HSLs 2009). An inclusion of a national survey of school counselors in the HSLs 2009 is a recognition of the critical role school counselors play in promoting students' high school, post-secondary, and early career decisions.

The purpose of this chapter is to increase school counseling researchers' knowledge regarding how to access and analyze national secondary datasets. Our aim is to promote the use of national secondary datasets to extend school counseling outcome research on what school counseling practices work or do not work and to help school counselors and other educators understand broadly the education and mental health characteristics of students, families, and communities that they serve. In this chapter we discuss the benefits and challenges of using these datasets, describe some of the existing datasets, delineate a research process to facilitate the

process of using the datasets, and briefly explore some of the policy-relevant questions that could be answered with the datasets. We hope that readers will develop a clear understanding of the logistics and steps involved in conducting sound research studies with national secondary datasets.

## The Benefits of Using Secondary Datasets

Research based on large national or international datasets often provides important insights for education policy-makers and decision-makers seeking to address students' academic, personal/social, and career issues. Further, they provide researchers with rich opportunities to examine academic gaps, inequitable educational opportunities, and factors related to education and counseling. Table 11.3 in the Appendix contains a list and descriptions of some of the datasets frequently used in school-based, youth, and mental health-related research. The American Psychological Association (APA) also provides a website with links to secondary datasets and data repositories suitable for educational, psychological, and youth-related research (see <http://www.apa.org/research/responsible/data-links.aspx>). These datasets are easily accessible to researchers who are interested in generalizing research findings to the larger target populations, exploring patterns among subpopulations in the representative data, and analyzing complex issues within multiple contexts and levels (Hahs-Vaugh, 2005; Osborne, 2011). Given the difficulties in collecting data from large samples due to cost and time, secondary datasets are also helpful for tenure-track and junior researchers allowing them to utilize data typically from larger samples to answer research questions related to counseling and educational issues (Osborn, 2011). Below, we expand on some of the benefits researchers derive from using national and international secondary datasets. Table 11.1 provides a summary of the benefits of using these datasets.



**Table 11.1** Benefits and challenges of using existing secondary national and international datasets

Benefits	Cost-effectiveness	Save time and cost required to collect lots of data including standardized test scores and socio-emotional and behavior indicators Effective tool for junior faculty to conduct research given constrained pre-tenure time period
	Generalizability	The nationally representative sample enhances the generalizability of the target population
	Multiple data sources, contexts, and levels	Provide opportunities to investigate ecological and multiple factors with multiple data sources (e.g., standardized test scores, transcripts, and college enrollment), multiple individuals (e.g., students, administrators, parents, and school counselors), and multiple contexts (school, home, and community)
	Interdisciplinary studies	Allow the incorporation of different views from different fields such as education, sociology, and educational psychology that impact policy and practice
	Exploratory and comparative studies	Increase analysis options such as cross-sectional and longitudinal (or panel) comparison studies with national and international datasets
	Longitudinal investigation and causal inference	Allow the examination of causal relationships and longitudinal effects
	Advanced research design and methodology	Provide opportunities for developing or applying knowledge and skills that likely contribute to advance research design and methodology
	Methodological issues	Need to understand and develop knowledge of complex sampling design
	Fit between the data and research questions	Impossible to have control over data collection Difficulty in finding variables that are compatible with theoretical frameworks or constructs Difficulty in examining specific local or district issues
	Limiting validity and reliability	Single item or short scales that may reduce construct validity and internal reliability
	Nuances of datasets	Need to understand codebooks and manuals to address nuances of datasets such as response categories, skip patterns, and missing data
	Knowledge of the datasets	Need to invest time and energy to be knowledgeable about the datasets
	Advanced statistical analysis	Learning statistical techniques from workshops, online trainings, and special seminars Require knowledge and use of advanced statistical analysis Beneficial to have a research study team
Challenges		

### **Cost-Effectiveness**

Secondary datasets offer researchers a cost-effective means of accessing large representative samples and multiple data sources such as standardized test scores, follow-up test scores, and data on students, parents, and school personnel like teachers and counselors and data on neighborhood and community factors (Hahs-Vaughn, 2007; Hofferth, 2005; Kluwin & Morris, 2006; Mueller & Hart, 2011; Nathans, Nimon, & Walker, 2013). Indeed, researchers likely save numerous time and cost in the data collection process due to public access of these already existing data (Kluwin & Morris, 2006). The availability of these datasets is important for junior faculty who are under pressure in the tenure and promotion process to publish substantive papers in a timely manner (Hofferth, 2005). For instance, NCES datasets such as the High School Longitudinal Study 2009 (HSLs 2009) provide students' standardized test scores and scores on a diverse range of socio-emotional and behavioral indicators that enable researchers to examine important relationships about student outcomes through various conceptual frameworks. The findings produced by these large-scale secondary data analyses may provide policy-makers and practitioners with valuable information to help improve student academic and mental health outcomes.

### **Generalizability**

Many national and international secondary datasets design their data collection to produce nationally representative data from large samples. Nationally representative samples enhance the generalizability of findings from studies using these data (Kluwin & Morris, 2006; Nathans, Nimon & Walker, 2013; Strayhorn, 2009). Large samples that represent broad populations lead to greater precision in statistical estimation and increased generalizability (Hofferth, 2005). For instance, the Parent and Family Involvement in Education (PFI) survey from the National Household Education Surveys (NHES) developed by NCES addresses parents' and families' educational involvement, parents' postsecondary educational plans for their children, and factors

related to parent educational participation and involvement (Herrold & O'Donnell, 2008). Using such data, researchers may draw generalizations about parents' involvement patterns and trends in relationship to their children's academic, socio-emotional, and college and career outcomes in the general population (Strayhorn, 2009).

### **Multiple Data Sources, Contexts, and Levels**

Data on individuals in large national datasets are typically collected from multiple data sources. For example, in the ELS 2002 and HSLs 2009, data on students are collected from surveys of students themselves, parents, teachers and counselors, other school personnel, and school administrators, as well as directly from student records. These data provide researchers with information about students in multiple contexts such as the classroom, family, and even neighborhood contexts. As a result, researchers are able to use these data about classroom, school, family, and community characteristics to explore the influence of systemic or ecological factors on students' academic, socio-emotional, college, and career development (Mueller & Hart, 2011). For example, Espelage (2014) emphasizes the importance of using secondary datasets to examine bullying from an ecological perspective. Indeed, school counseling has increasingly emphasized an ecological framework, that is, the influence of student, family, school, and community characteristics and stakeholders and their interactions on students' lives and in addressing students' needs and problems (Bryan & Henry, 2012; McMahan, Mason, Daluga-Guenther, & Ruiz, 2014). Information about multiple contexts (e.g., home, school, and community environments), from multiple data sources (e.g., standardized test scores, transcripts, and postsecondary enrollment) and from multiple individuals (e.g., parents, teachers, school administrators, and students), allow researchers a unique opportunity to explore how ecological factors impact student outcomes. These rich data

allow counseling researchers to test theories and models that can provide substantive information for counselors to guide the development of comprehensive and systemic interventions.

### **Interdisciplinary Studies**

Secondary data may provide researchers in multiple disciplines with opportunities to explore educational or counseling topics from different research perspectives (Mueller & Hart, 2011). That is, national representative datasets allow interdisciplinary research from various counseling or educational disciplines, in which findings may provide valuable information to guide policy and practice in school-based counseling.

### **Exploratory and Comparative Studies**

Numerous data analysis options exist with secondary datasets. The types of analyses vary with whether the data are cross sectional (e.g., National Survey of American Life) or longitudinal (or panel; e.g., NELS:88, ELS 2002, HSLs 2009) and whether it is structured to allow comparisons with other secondary datasets. See Table 11.3 in the Appendix to see which datasets are cross sectional or longitudinal in nature. Four types of comparison are possible: (a) cross-sectional comparisons in which one compares individuals and groups on data collected at one point, (b) longitudinal (or panel) comparisons in which one compares individuals and groups on data collected at more than one point in time (i.e., allows examination of changes over time or individual heterogeneity), (c) inter-cohort comparisons in which one compares individuals and groups across datasets on the same variables (e.g., NELS:88, ELS 2002, HSLs 2009), and (d) international comparisons in which one compares individuals and groups across countries (e.g., the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS); Orletsky, Middleton, & Sloane, 2015, p. 316). National secondary datasets often enable researchers to compare issues in the USA to international contexts to provide insightful

information on policy-relevant issues important to the worldwide community (Hahs-Vaughn, 2007; Wennberg, 2005). For instance, scholars can explore the academic performance of U.S. students to other countries using datasets such as National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) or PISA.

### **Longitudinal Investigation and Casual Inference**

Longitudinal data collected at multiple time points from the same samples provide opportunities to examine change over time as well as antecedent or mediator variables in statistical models with rigorous analysis. For instance, researchers can conduct longitudinal investigation on a college-going culture and identify precursors or other factors that predict later college enrollments in circumstance that cannot be manipulated experimentally (Grammer, Coffman, Ornstein, & Morrison, 2013). Due to the range of variables available in the dataset, researchers are also able to, in examining causal relationships, statistically control for confounding variables and selection bias that may affect results when using observational (nonexperimental) data (Schneider, Carnoy, Kilpatrick, Schmidt, & Shavelson, 2007).

### **Advanced Research Design and Methodology**

Secondary datasets provide opportunities for doctoral and junior faculty researchers to acquire advanced knowledge and skills in dealing with large samples and amounts of data and applying advanced statistical procedures (Hofferth, 2005). Researchers can increase their knowledge and skills regarding complex sampling design and weighting issues and the use of newly acquired knowledge of statistical analyses such as multi-level modeling (Stapleton & Thomas, 2008). Moreover, large longitudinal and representative samples enable scholars to use various statistical methodologies that may not be possible in the small sample sizes typically found with collection of primary data.

## The Challenges of Using Secondary Datasets

Despite the many benefits, it is important that researchers understand and consider challenges to use secondary data. Below are detailed descriptions to be taken into consideration for using secondary datasets. Table 11.1 provides a summary of both the benefits and challenges of using these datasets.

### Methodological Issues

Secondary data have methodological challenges that must be addressed by researchers who are concerned with generalizing findings to the intended population. Most samples in large national and international datasets are generally collected by cluster, stratified, or multistage sampling, rather than by random sampling (Bryan, Day-Vines, Holcomb-McCoy, & Moore-Thomas, 2010; Hahs-Vaughn, 2005, 2006). This type of complex sampling design creates statistical challenges such as larger standard errors and increased risk of Type I error, resulting in a need to use provided sample weights and consider the design effects. Therefore, researchers must take the time to understand complex sampling design and how to correct for design effects and apply sample weights (Hahs-Vaughn, 2007; Nathans, Nimon & Walker, 2013; Osborne, 2011). For instance, NCES data were collected using complex sampling designs, that is, multistage sampling including cluster and stratified sampling to ensure representation of the student population in the USA. This complex sampling design makes it important to employ appropriate analyses that produce accurate estimations of variances so as to avoid inaccurate results (Hahs-Vaughn, 2005, 2006, 2007). Further, to represent the intended target population, these data are often collected using oversampling procedures to increase the numbers of small groups in the population (e.g., minority groups). Hence, researchers should use the weights provided and proper weighting techniques (e.g., statistical software that allows application of weights) so as to arrive at accurate parameter estimates and findings that are gener-

alizable to the population (Hahs-Vaughn, 2007; Orletsky, Middleton, & Sloane, 2015).

### Fit Between the Data and Research Questions

Compared to primary data sources, secondary data were not designed for counselors only, so researchers have little control over data collection including the types of variables and questions that are explored (Bryan, Day-Vines, Holcomb-McCoy, & Moore-Thomas, 2010; Strayhorn, 2009). Therefore, researchers may have difficulty in finding specific variables in the secondary dataset that are compatible with their theoretical frameworks or constructs (Hofferth, 2005; Mueller & Hart, 2011). That is, the dataset may not include variables that fit the research question that a researcher wants to examine. For instance, when a researcher is interested in students' sense of purpose, it may be hard to find appropriate items for identifying or operationalizing the construct. Also, nationally representative samples may not reflect specific issues in particular contexts or populations (Strayhorn, 2009). For instance, when researchers are interested in educational issues in school districts and the effects of local policies or neighborhood factors on academic achievement, it may be difficult to use national secondary data to gain specific information at the district or state levels (Warren, 2015).

### Limiting Validity and Reliability

Another challenge with datasets is that often only a single item or a few items are available to measure a construct. For example, researchers often measure concepts or constructs relevant to school counseling issues, such as social capital, student-counselor contact, and parent empowerment, with single items and short scales. This may mean that a theoretical construct is measured incompletely (Grammer, Coffman, Ornstein, & Morrison, 2013). Thus, these single items and short scales may decrease the construct validity and internal reliability of the measures used and may impact the degree of precision and error with which researchers measure the construct they want to measure (Hofferth, 2005; Wennberg, 2005).

## Nuances of Datasets

Researchers need to be familiar with codebooks and technical manuals to understand and address the nuances of datasets such as handling missing data and coding procedures (Hahs-Vaughn, 2007). For instance, the variables of interests may need to be recoded as alphanumeric scaled and Likert-type items (Hahs-Vaughn, 2007). Also, it is important to understand complex skip patterns and patterns of missing data so as to establish statistical plans to deal with them in data analysis.

## Knowledge on the Datasets

Although the secondary datasets are a cost-effective tool, it is still necessary to invest time and energy to understand the data collection process, documentation, and structure of the data files in order to utilize the datasets appropriately and accurately (Hofferth, 2005; Strayhorn, 2009). Some training may be necessary to learn strategies and techniques for conducting secondary data analysis with existing datasets. NCES, American Institute of Research (AIR), and American Educational Research Association (AERA) offer workshops, online trainings, and special seminars to equip education researchers with the skills to access and use datasets (Bryan et al., 2010; Hahs-Vaughn, 2007).

## Advanced Statistical Analysis

The complex dataset may make it difficult to conduct a simple study. The nature of the datasets, especially those comprising longitudinal and multiple samples, better lend themselves to advanced statistical analyses, especially in instances when scholars are interested in long-term follow-up of participants and complex contextual factors (Hofferth, 2005). For example, researchers may need to use multilevel modeling analysis in order to answer research questions on the roles of specific levels of the school environment in students' academic, social, and career outcomes. Collaborating with a research team and acquiring funding are beneficial when undertaking intensive studies with these datasets (Grammer, Coffman, Ornstein, & Morrison, 2013).

## Identifying and Using the Datasets: The Research Process

A large number of datasets are available that provide wonderful opportunities for researchers to conduct substantive theory-driven and model testing studies that contribute to existing knowledge. Table 11.3 in the Appendix provides a list and description of some of the more common datasets used in counseling, education, and mental health-related fields. To help researchers take advantage of these opportunities, in this section we describe what we consider to be a step-by-step research process to conducting studies with these datasets.

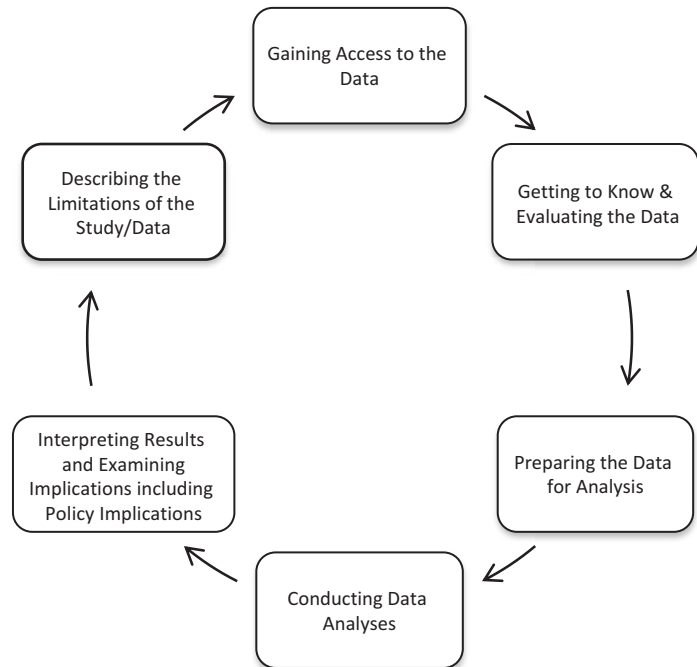
### The Six-Step Research Process for Using and Evaluating Secondary Datasets

Bryan, Day-Vines, Holcomb-McCoy, and Moore-Thomas (2010) and Hofferth (2005) provided a six-step research process and a number of useful questions to guide research with national secondary datasets. Here, we update and expand Bryan et al.'s (2010) and Hofferth's (2005) discussions under the following revised framework: (a) gaining access to the dataset, (b) getting to know the data and evaluating its suitability for the study, (c) preparing the data for analysis, (d) conducting appropriate data analyses, (e) interpreting results and examining implications including policy implications, and (f) considering and describing the limitations of the data. Figure 11.1 shows the six steps in the research process, while Table 11.2 delineates the important tasks and subtasks at each stage of the research process using secondary datasets.

#### Step 1: Gaining Access to the Dataset Accessing the Data

The first step in the research process is for researchers to identify and gain access to the appropriate dataset(s). Table 11.3 in the Appendix describes a wide range of secondary datasets with information about their purpose, the nature of the data, and where information about the data

**Fig. 11.1** Six-step research process for using and evaluating secondary datasets



may be obtained. Data repositories such as the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES), the Institute of Social Research (ISR) including the Inter-university Consortium Center of Political and Social Research (ICPSR), and the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) at Cornell University house a large number of national and international secondary datasets that allow researchers to examine educational, mental, and public health and socio-political questions and issues pertaining to children and their caregivers such as parents, school counselors, and other school personnel (See Table 11.3). Many of these datasets are public use datasets and available through the websites of these organizations. Some datasets contain restricted data such as identifiers of schools and zip codes that could lead to researchers identifying participants with some effort (Strayhorn, 2009). When datasets contain these types of identifying data, the owners of the datasets often restrict access to these datasets or to the identifying variables. To gain access to restricted data, researchers must apply for restricted use licenses.

In most cases, restricted data must be housed in a secure location at the researchers' institution and on computers without access to the Internet and available only to researchers named on the license.

### Gathering Information

Researchers typically start with tentative questions based on their research interests, and the more information they gather about the dataset(s) will help them to determine its suitability for their research in the early stages of the research process. The information-gathering step is integral to understanding the dataset. The first steps in gathering information entail going to the websites and manual to read about the datasets and examine the surveys used to collect the data and the codebooks to see what variables are found in the dataset. Secondly, researchers should read journal articles about studies utilizing the dataset. In addition, numerous articles exist on how to use secondary datasets in addition to this chapter. See our reference list for a wide variety of articles on using secondary datasets. Although



**Table 11.2** The process of using large secondary datasets

Stages of the research process	Steps/tasks at each stage of the process	Important subtasks at each step
Step 1: Gaining access to the dataset	<p>Accessing the data</p> <p>Gathering information</p> <p>Finding training opportunities</p>	<p>Accessing public use data of interest (usually available on a website) Applying for access to restricted data (Applying for a license)</p> <p>Gathering information with your research interests and questions in mind Reading manuals, survey questionnaires, and literature that describe and explain the methodological features of the studies used to collect the data Reading journals and research literature that used the dataset Reading articles on how to use secondary datasets</p> <p>Researching opportunities for online training and/or face-to-face training Checking the due dates for training applications</p>
Step 2: Getting to know the data and evaluating its utility/suitability to your study	<p>Becoming familiar with the dataset</p> <p>Determining appropriate research questions and the suitability of the dataset for the study</p> <p>Developing the conceptual framework (iterative process)</p> <p>Challenging the conceptual frameworks through which you examine marginalized groups</p>	<p>Determining whether dataset has variables related to your research questions Understanding items and what they measure (how variables are operationalized) Becoming familiar with previous research and how previous researchers measured similar constructs</p> <p>Identifying and refining appropriate questions Evaluating suitability of data for answering these questions Considering the policy relevance of the research questions</p> <p>Examining frameworks used by previous researchers who used the dataset Examining researcher positionality Challenging conceptual frameworks for study of marginalized groups</p> <p>Examining research positionality on marginalized groups Being cautious presenting ethnic variation within minority groups</p>

(continued)

**Table 11.2** (continued)

Stages of the research process	Steps/tasks at each stage of the process	Important subtasks at each step
Step 3: Preparing the data for analysis	<p>Creating a usable dataset</p> <p>Using sampling weights and strata and cluster variables to control for complex data effects</p> <p>Selecting appropriate statistical software</p>	<p>Setting up the data appropriately</p> <p>Making sure one is familiar with previous studies/data analyses using the dataset</p> <p>Keeping a copy of the working file so can start over from scratch if necessary</p> <p>Choosing correct weight for analysis</p> <p>Choosing computer software vs manual application of weight to adjust for design effects</p> <p>Recognizing that using software to adjust for design effects is more accurate</p> <p>Choosing appropriate statistical software that allows application of weights, strata, and cluster variables</p>
	<p>Handling missing data and determining the analytic sample</p> <p>Choosing items and creating composites</p>	<p>Using best practices for missing data management (e.g., multiple imputation, maximum likelihood estimation)</p> <p>Choosing items based on theory</p> <p>Creating composites using factor analysis and/or theory</p> <p>Comparing use of the same or similar items in other studies</p>
Step 4: Conducting appropriate data analyses	<p>Building analysis from foundation up to more complex analyses</p> <p>Using more advanced statistical methods</p> <p>Replicate your studies</p>	<p>Using multiple methods to answer the research questions (to tell the story/create a fuller picture)</p> <p>Beginning with single-level and univariate analyses and then move to multivariate and multilevel analyses</p> <p>Examining individual heterogeneity (within variance) using multilevel approaches (e.g., HLM)</p>
Step 5: Interpreting the results and examining the implications including policy implications	<p>Writing policy implications</p>	<p>Replicating or encouraging replication of your studies</p> <p>Comparing results of other similar studies using similar methods</p> <p>Making connections between findings and policy implications in practical, relevant, and concrete ways</p> <p>Thinking about policy relevance from the outset of research</p>
Step 6: Considering and describing the limitations of study	<p>Limitations of secondary data sources</p>	<p>Understanding the secondary data as proxies for the construct researchers intend to measure</p> <p>Unable to capture the quality of the relationships in the items</p> <p>Not overstretching from the results</p> <p>Not overgeneralizing to those not represented by the sample</p>

researchers are eager to get their hands on the datasets and get started on analyses, it would be a huge mistake to begin data analysis without gathering information about the methodology behind the data and reading the research literature on studies completed using the same or similar data (Lauritsen, 2015).

### **Finding Training Opportunities**

While organizations that own national datasets and their affiliates often conduct trainings for some datasets, some trainings are currently conducted online. For example, prior to 2013, NCES conducted annual onsite trainings for researchers. Now researchers can engage in self-directed trainings for the many NCES datasets using their Distance Learning Dataset Training (DLDT) website found at <https://nces.ed.gov/training/datauser/>, which comprises modules on the NCES datasets. These modules introduce you to each dataset, its purpose, information on the data collection, sampling design, sampling weights, and data analysis considerations. Trainings on some of the most recent NCES datasets are also conducted at a number of national conferences each year including the American Educational Research Association (AERA) national conference. In addition, AERA conducts an annual Institute on Statistical Analysis to promote researchers' use of current NCES datasets to examine policy-related questions of interest in a particular area (e.g., postsecondary transitions, mathematics education). Applications to the Statistical Institute are usually due in January each year. The Association for Institutional Research (AIR) also provides online and face-to-face education on NCES datasets including an annual NCES Data Institute, cosponsored by NCES. Applications for the Data Institute are typically due in February each year. The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) also offers a number of courses each year in its summer school that focus on selected datasets such as a four-week summer workshop on Quantitative Analysis of Crime and Criminal Justice sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

## **Step 2: Getting to Know the Data and Evaluating Its Utility/Suitability to Your Study**

### **Becoming Familiar with the Dataset**

Once you have gained access to the data, perhaps the most important step of all is getting to know the data. Researchers should begin by reading the manuals and reports that describe the data. For example, NCES provides a detailed manual describing background, instrumentation, sample design, coding systems, and sample weights for all of its surveys (see <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/>). It is imperative that researchers understand how survey items were worded and structured, what participants' responses to the survey items of interest mean, what the response options were, and who actually answered the question (Wells, 2016; Wennberg, 2005). Sometimes the item is not really measuring what it appears to be measuring. Taking the time to explore these measurement issues will help researchers determine the extent to which the items may be used to measure the variables in their proposed study and address their research questions. Further, researchers will find it helpful to become familiar with previous research and how other researchers have used the same items in published studies, especially studies that used the same dataset or similar ones (Hofferth, 2005; Wells, 2016).

### **Determining Appropriate Research Questions and the Suitability of the Dataset for the Study**

Appropriate research questions emerge when researchers engage in an iterative process of immersing themselves in the theoretical and empirical literature and closely examining the manuals and survey questions of one or more secondary datasets in order to determine their suitability for their research interests. If the dataset is not suitable for answering the research questions, researchers may need to reconceptualize the study and/or seek new data (Hofferth, 2005). While researchers should pursue the research questions that capture their interest, as they decide on their questions, they should also

consider how their questions and study could contribute to policy related to students, families, and school-based counseling.

### **Developing the Conceptual (or Theoretical) Framework**

As with any other research, researchers who are conducting studies with secondary datasets should be guided by strong conceptual/theoretical frameworks. A strong conceptual/theoretical framework improves researchers' decisions about what variables to use, what constructs to measure, and what items define these constructs, the type of appropriate data analyses, and interpretation of results. Conceptual or theoretical frameworks emerge from the conceptual and empirical literature on these ideas, concepts, and variables as well as from researchers' own personal experiences. All of this together forms a "tentative theory" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 36) of what you think is going on between and among the concepts, ideas, factors, and variables of interest. Research without a conceptual framework is simply data mining (Zhang, 2010). In large datasets, researchers will inevitably find relationships between variables, but a lack of consistent theoretical/conceptual underpinnings that explain the relationships among the variables will undermine the credibility of their study. Taking time to be immersed in the literature and develop a conceptual framework will improve one's research goals, research questions, justification for the study, methodological decisions, selection and validity of the measures, and interpretation of the results.

In the extant research, counseling researchers have used a variety of conceptual frameworks to develop studies with secondary datasets. These frameworks include school bonding (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Gaenzle, Kim, Lin, & Na, 2012; Lee & Smith-Adcock, 2005), social capital (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011; Croninger & Lee, 2001; Perna & Titus, 2005), parent empowerment (Kim & Bryan, 2017), discipline disproportionality (Bryan, Day-Vines, Griffin, & Moore-Thomas, 2012), and college opportunity structure (Engberg

& Gilbert, 2014). These conceptual frameworks helped researchers bring new insights to the problems studied.

### **Challenging the Conceptual Frameworks Through which You Examine Marginalized Groups**

In conducting research with large datasets, we caution researchers to examine their views or positionality about the research participants or the problem they are studying. Researchers' positionality refers to researchers' worldview and beliefs that affect the stance they take to the research and the problem they are studying (Foote & Bartell, 2011; Milner, 2007). Their positionality influences the language and narratives they use to describe marginalized groups (e.g., female, racial or ethnic minority, immigrant, poor, urban, or rural students and families). Researchers must be careful not to perpetuate the negative attributes and stereotypes of people of color and other marginalized groups (Milner, 2007). For example, often education researchers define children as "at risk" or "problematic" without examining the complexities of the problem or realities of the participants, or the profound impact of the labels on children (Swadner, 1990). Although researcher positionality is a term used mostly in the qualitative research literature, it is important for all researchers to be critical of their use of language and how they are presenting their findings.

Relatedly, it is important to be cautious about presenting marginalized groups as monolithic groups. The tendency for researchers to ignore ethnic variation within minority groups may hinder a deeper understanding of educational processes among racial/ethnic groups. For example, studying Black children as one racial group fails to take into account the difference in history, cultures, social, and family experiences among Black children (Griffith, Neighbors, & Johnson, 2009; O'Connor, Lewis, & Mueller, 2007). Yet, the experiences of Caribbean, African, African-American, and Hispanic Black children differ in many ways.

### Step 3: Preparing the Data for Analysis

#### Creating a Useable Dataset

Preparing a useable dataset for analysis from a national secondary dataset takes an investment of time and thought. Researchers must first create a working dataset that contains the variables and sample they want to use in their study and that is ready for analysis (Willms, 2011). This working file should include any sample weights, cluster, strata, and identification variables. The weight, cluster, and strata variables are particularly important for use in data analyses with complex samples. Researchers should make sure that all missing values and label values are coded correctly. It is wise to keep a copy of this working dataset in case the need arises to revert to it to start analyses over from the beginning.

#### Using Sampling Weights and Strata and Cluster Variables to Control for Complex Sample Design Effects

Data in most large national datasets are collected from complex samples meaning that the samples were selected using stratified, cluster, or multistage sampling or a combination of both. Therefore, the data cannot be treated like a simple random sample. A large number of articles discuss the importance of using sampling weights in the statistical analysis of complex samples and specific procedures for doing so (Hahs-Vaughn 2005, 2006, 2007; Hahs-Vaughn, McWayne, Bulotsky-Shearer, Wen, & Faria, 2011a, 2011b; Osborne, 2011; Wells, Lynch, & Seifert, 2011). When sample weights are applied, the sample size increases to represent the population (Osborne, 2011). For example, the 21,444 students in the HSLs 2009 are representative of over three million students, and when the student sample weight is applied, the sample size in analyses is extremely large. As a result of these large sample sizes, data analyses that do not account for the complex design effects will produce smaller standard errors or increased Type I error (Bryan et al., 2010; Hahs-Vaughn, 2005, 2006). Therefore, researchers must make a correction for these artificially

small standard errors that increase the likelihood of significant results (Type I error). To correct for the complex sample design effects, researchers must choose and apply the appropriate sampling weight for their analysis. When the software allows it, they should also apply the strata and cluster (primary sampling unit) variables. This process requires selecting the appropriate statistical software, choosing the appropriate weight for the analytic samples, and selecting the strata and cluster variables provided in the datasets.

#### Selecting Appropriate Statistical Software

Numerous statistical software packages now accommodate complex samples, such as SPSS, SAS, Stata, MPlus, HLM, and Latent Gold (Hahs-Vaughn, McWayne, Bulotsky-Shearer, Wen, & Faria, 2011a). These software packages allow researchers to specify the weight, strata variable, and cluster variable (also called primary sampling unit or PSU in some datasets). These software allow researchers to conduct analyses that automatically adjust for the complex design effects and result in more accurate analyses. However, when one does not have statistical software for complex survey data or when one only has the sampling weight (e.g., strata and cluster variables are withheld in some restricted datasets such as HSLs 2009), researchers may make corrections manually (Bryan et al., 2010). Previous practices for manually adjusting the sample weight include scaling (or re-normalizing) the weight to adjust the sample size (Hahs-Vaughn, 2005, 2006; Osborne, 2011). For example, most NCES datasets include two types of design effects. Researchers can use these NCES-derived design effects: (1) the root design effect (*deft*) to adjust the standard errors of test statistics or (2) the average design effects (*deff*) to create a new weight, that is, to renormalize the weight. Researchers who wish to manually adjust and apply the weight may use either one of these design effects to renormalize the appropriate weight. These calculations are described in detail elsewhere (Bryan et al., 2010; Hahs-Vaughn, 2005, 2006).

## Handling Missing Data and Determining the Analytic Sample

The analytic sample is the sample on which you will conduct your analyses on and is arrived at by cleaning the data, selecting all the relevant data, and handling missing data (Bryan et al., 2010). Too much missing data will limit the generalizability of a study's findings; hence, researchers should make decisions about which procedure they will use to deal with missing data (Bryan et al., 2010; Hahs-Vaughn, 2007; Wells, 2016). Some traditional methods include dropping observations using listwise or pairwise deletion and mean substitution (i.e., replacing missing values on a variable with the mean of the variable). However, these methods can lead to reduced sample size and limited variability and may affect your findings; therefore, it is better to use model-based methods to handle missing data such as multiple imputation and maximum likelihood estimation procedures. See the following work (Allison, 2003; Baraldi & Enders, 2010; Peugh & Enders, 2004; Schlomer, Bauman, & Card, 2010) for an in-depth discussion of strategies for managing missing data.

## Choosing Items and Creating Composites

Choosing items and creating composite variables to represent variables should not be done haphazardly, but should be guided by researchers' conceptual framework and, wherever possible, a factor analytic approach (e.g., principal components analysis, principal factor analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis). For example, if a researcher is measuring school bonding or school connectedness, both his/her conceptual framework and a factor analysis will be helpful in determining which items to select, how to name the factors or components, and the validity (i.e., whether a measure or factor actually measures what it purports to measure) of your measures. Many national datasets contain categorical measures; therefore, researchers may need to use a nonlinear factor analysis method for nominal or ordinal items such as nonlinear (or categorical) principal component analysis (also known as CATPCA). For examples of CATPCA with datasets, see Hahs-Vaughn (2017) and Kim and Bryan (2017). When researchers

need to select a single item or a few items as a proxy for a construct they wish to measure, it is equally important that they use theory as well as a comparison of how other researchers use these same items or similar ones in studies that measure the same construct or variable.

## Step 4: Conducting Appropriate Data Analyses

After selecting appropriate software; determining the appropriate weights, cluster, and strata variables; and conducting a missing data analysis to arrive at their analytic sample, researchers are be ready to analyze the data using statistical methods that are suitable for their research questions and the type of data (Bryan et al., 2010; Wells, 2016). Researchers should not be discouraged if they do not have the statistical knowledge necessary to conduct all of the analyses we highlight in this section. Statistics are mere tools to answer questions, and this knowledge can be required through taking online and face-to-face courses and workshops as well as through reading of some of the user-friendly texts and articles we recommend later in this section. Researchers should also collaborate with colleagues who are knowledgeable about the statistical methods they desire to use to answer their research question. Information on webinars and short courses and workshops can be found at websites such as the Analysis Factor (<http://www.theanalysisfactor.com/about/>) and Statistical Horizons (<http://statisticalhorizons.com>) and at a number of university summer programs in quantitative methods, such as ICPSR's Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research (<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/sumprog/index.jsp>) and the Odum Institute (<http://www.odum.unc.edu/odum/contentSubpage.jsp?nodeid=21>).

## Building Analyses Foundation Up to More Complex Analyses

Researchers should use multiple methods to tell a story, to answer the research question, and to paint a full picture of the phenomenon and relationships under study (Wells, Lynch & Seiffert, 2011). Rather than yielding to the temptation to jump straight to the more complex analyses (e.g.,



factor analysis, multiple regression, structural equation modeling, multilevel modeling, and latent class analysis), it is important to build the house from the bottom up (Willms, 2011). Starting with simple methods such as descriptive analyses (e.g., mean, median, mode, skewness, standard deviation, frequencies, and proportions) and correlational analyses allows one to disaggregate the data and provide greater insight about outliers, differences among the subgroups in the sample, and linear and nonlinear associations among the variables. These analyses help researchers to tell the story and to paint the big picture and, ultimately, allow researchers to better understand and explain results from their more advanced analyses, often uncovering any underlying patterns and meanings in the more complex results (Bryan et al., 2010).

### Using More Advanced Statistical Methods

In particular, national secondary datasets are most suitable to more advanced statistical techniques (Bryan et al., 2010; Wells, 2016). The most common analyses with secondary datasets appear to be multivariate analyses, like multiple linear regression and logistic and ordinal regression analyses. Multiple regression can be a useful lens for examining findings from national datasets (Nathans, Nimon, & Walker, 2013). However, many datasets comprise data collected from groups of individuals (e.g., students, parents, and teachers) who are clustered or nested within higher level units (e.g., classrooms, schools, colleges, neighborhoods, organizations, and countries) or they comprise repeated observations on individuals over time (i.e., observations nested in individuals). These multilevel data violate the independence assumption in many traditional statistical procedures such as multiple regression because individuals in the same cluster (e.g., students in the same classroom) are more alike (or homogeneous) and their scores are dependent. This lack of independence may result in increased Type I error rates and incorrect results when using statistical procedures based on the independence assumption (Peugh, 2010; Zhang, 2010). Multilevel modeling (also called hierarchical linear modeling [HLM]) allows researchers to take

advantage of these nested data to examine change within persons (i.e., individual differences or heterogeneity) or within units (Cheslock & Aguilar, 2011; Lynch, 2012; Peugh, 2010; Zhang, 2010). Counseling researchers should explore the benefits of more advanced statistical procedures such as structural equation modeling (Byrne, 2016), multilevel modeling or hierarchical linear modeling (Lynch, 2012; O'Connell & McCoach, 2008; Peugh, 2010; Snijders & Bosker, 2012), and latent class analysis (LCA; Collins & Lanza, 2013; Lanza & Cooper, 2016; Lanza & Rhoades, 2013) where appropriate for answering their research questions.

### Replication of Studies

We encourage researchers who use secondary datasets to replicate their studies with other datasets to build a knowledge base and test previous findings. The fact that many secondary datasets collect the same or similar data on participants over a period of time allows for replication to see if findings are consistent. For example, Dumais (2009, 2008) compared teenagers in the NELS:88 and ELS:2002 cohorts and found consistent patterns in academic attitudes, extracurricular participation, and math achievement among 12th graders. The lack of replication of studies in school-based education and counseling often makes it difficult for researchers to make strong conclusions (Makel & Plucker, 2014). Replication builds on previous research while at the same time working to establish a body of credible knowledge about a particular phenomenon (Nathans, Nimon, & Walker, 2013, p. 26–27). Indeed, the replication of studies with these datasets provides a more credible knowledge base from which to make policy and practice recommendations (Makel & Plucker, 2014).

### Step 5: Interpreting the Results and Examining the Implications Including Policy Implications

Often counseling researchers fail to provide policy implications from their research. Like many researchers, they identify implications for practice and future research, but fail to go a step further to identify policy-relevant conclusions or to

present them in a persuasive manner (Glover, 2002). However, when counseling researchers conduct studies with national secondary datasets, they must recognize that these datasets are often constructed to guide policy on pertinent educational and mental health problems facing schools, families, communities, and governments. Hence, policy-makers are interested in the policy implications from these studies (Bryan et al., 2010; St. John, 2004). Therefore, it is important that researchers think carefully about the policy implications of their studies with these datasets rather than providing broad recommendations and vague conclusions that could fit almost any topic on school-based counseling (e.g., the school should increase the number of school counselors..., or school counselors need more training to..., or school counselors should consider these findings when...). In presenting the findings and implications, it is important to ask oneself whether a policy-maker (the audience) would find this paper credible, be clear about what action needs to be taken, and see the recommendations as practical, relevant, and concrete (Glover, 2002; Wilcox & Hirschfield, 2007). To be successful in producing policy-relevant research and implications, policy should not be an afterthought at the end of the study. Indeed, it is important that counseling researchers think about the policy relevance and implications of their research from the outset as they develop their research plan and design.

### **Step 6: Considering and Describing the Limitations of the Study**

Researchers must be transparent about limitations that exist with the use of data from national and international secondary datasets. Although secondary datasets have many strengths, they also bring some limitations as reflected in the challenges discussed earlier in this chapter. First, researchers are constrained by the fact that the data is collected by someone else and they often have to use items to measure constructs which the items may not have been intended to measure (Bryan et al., 2010; Kluwin & Morris, 2006; Wennberg, 2005). This results in researchers utilizing items as proxies for complex constructs,

for example, school bonding (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Gaenzle, Kim, Lin, & Na, 2012; Lee & Smith-Adcock, 2005), social capital (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011; Croninger & Lee, 2001; Perna & Titus, 2005), and parent empowerment (Kim & Bryan, 2017). These measurement issues highlight the importance of a strong conceptual or theoretical framework to guide researchers' operationalization of variables as well as the importance of comparing items used to measure similar or related constructs across studies that utilized secondary datasets (Bryan et al., 2010; Wells, 2016). Relationships, such as counselor-student relationships and students' contact with school counselors and other helping professionals in schools, are of great interest to school counseling researchers. While these data allow researchers to examine the effect of students' or parents' contact with these professionals, they do not reveal the quality or extent of these interactions (Bryan et al., 2010). Moreover, in some cases, researchers are limited to one item in measuring student-counselor contact (see Bryan, Holcomb-McCoy, Moore-Thomas, & Day-Vines, 2009; Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011) or parent-counselor contact (see Kim & Bryan, 2017). Not only does the use of one or two items to measure a variable affect the construct validity and reliability of the variable; it also limits the conclusions and rich interpretations researchers may make. In general, researchers must be careful about overstressing their conclusions and should openly discuss these limitations (Wells, Lynch & Seiffert, 2011).

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### **Potential Research Questions Related to Policy Issues on School-Based Counseling**

To date, counseling researchers have examined a number of problems and issues pertinent to schools with national secondary datasets. These issues include predictors of students' contact with the school counselor for college information (Bryan, Holcomb-McCoy, Moore-Thomas, & Day-Vines, 2009) and for counseling services

(Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, Holcomb-McCoy, & Mitchell, 2009), predictors of high school dropout (Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007), effects of parent empowerment on academic achievement (Kim & Bryan, 2017), effects of school counselor-student contact on college application rates (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011), effects of school bonding on academic achievement (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Gaenzle, Kim, Lin, & Na, 2012), predictors of school counselors' influence on underrepresented students' thoughts about post-secondary education (Cholewa, Burkhardt, & Hull, 2015), and how counseling opportunity structure varies among schools and affects their college enrollment rates (Engberg & Gilbert, 2014). However, greater understanding of these issues as well as a number of other important policy-relevant issues could be developed through thoughtful secondary data research using the six-step research process in this chapter.

Notably, policy-makers are concerned with critical issues such as closing academic gaps, reducing educational inequity, and promoting college and career readiness in American schools. Potential research could provide valuable information for policy-makers to make decisions about what educational programs and strategies are effective to promote student academic, social/emotional, and career/college development. Below, we briefly discuss potential areas of school counseling research that have direct policy implications for school-based counseling practice.

### **Relationship between School Counseling Practices and Student Outcomes**

School counseling research could examine factors related to school counseling practices/interventions and students' academic and college outcomes. Given the importance of the roles school counselors play in promoting academic and college outcomes, school counselors and policy-makers are interested in the effectiveness of school counseling practices and interventions to best serve all students. Some national datasets

provide variables explicitly suited to examine connections between counseling-related activities and student outcomes. Specifically, the HSLs:2009 includes school counselor questionnaires about school counseling practices and interventions related to college and career readiness. Using this dataset, school counseling researchers could examine counseling factors that may influence college readiness (e.g., school counselor-student contact, GPA, SAT, and taking advanced courses), college choices (e.g., application to 2-year vs. 4-year colleges or to nonselective vs. selective universities), and college enrollment. Further, the research could identify how school counseling practices may affect traditionally underrepresented students' outcomes (e.g., immigrant students, students from lower SES families, first-generation college students, English language learners, and students with disabilities). Such research could provide specific information on which practices and interventions might be most beneficial to students and how counselors can better serve and advocate for students who are underrepresented in schools.

### **Noncognitive Variables that Influence Students' Academic and College Outcomes**

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2014) has recently called attention to the noncognitive factors or the academic mindsets that are integral to students' performance and college readiness. "*Academic mindsets* are beliefs, attitudes, or ways of perceiving oneself in relation to learning and intellectual work that promote academic performance" (Nagaoka, Farrington, Roderick, Allensworth, Keyes, Johnson, & Beechum, 2013, p. 49). Researchers from the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research has highlighted the importance of noncognitive factors to academic success (Farrington, Roderick, Allensworth, Nagaoka, Keyes, Johnson, & Beechum, 2012; Nagaoka, Farrington, Roderick, Allensworth, Keyes, Johnson, & Beechum, 2013). Thus, future school counseling research could explore the

influence of specific variables (e.g., self-concept, sense of belonging, perseverance, self-efficacy, sense of purpose) on student academic and college outcomes. For instance, Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, and Holcomb-McCoy (2011) examined the relationship between school bonding and high school students' academic outcomes using educational longitudinal dataset (ELS:02). Future investigations could replicate the school bonding research regarding students' college choices and enrollment. Moreover, school counseling research could examine the relationship of academic mindsets (e.g., sense of belonging, self-efficacy) and college readiness to college enrollment and retention.

### **Students' College and Career Pathways**

President Obama's administration called for educators to ensure that all students are well prepared for college and careers (Bryan, Young, Griffin, & Henry, 2016). School counselors are at an optimal position to help address students' college access and attainment as well as their career preparation. Indeed, school counselors play crucial roles in planning and preparing students for postsecondary education, including 2-year and 4-year colleges and technical and vocational schools (Bryan, Young, Griffin, & Henry, 2016). However, in the current school counseling literature, very little school counseling research exists on counseling factors that may influence students' postsecondary application and enrollment decisions, their choice of major in college, and their future career pathways. School counseling research could examine postsecondary variables (e.g., postsecondary aspirations, career aspirations, application to various types of postsecondary institutions, work and career experiences, college enrollment, and degree attainment) that influence students' college and career pathways. For instance, given the importance of STEM enrollment for the country's continued prosperity, more research is warranted about the factors that could potentially influence students'

STEM-related college/vocational/career major choices. Important implications for school counselors' practice and programming and policies related to students' college and career development may emerge from this research.

### **School Violence and Bullying**

School violence and bullying always have been issues of concern in U.S. schools. About a third of middle and high school students are physically bullied and over half are verbally bullied (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). However, most of the articles focus on offering recommendations, strategies, and interventions for school counselors, parents, teachers, communities, and legal systems (Allen, 2010). Very little research exists that provides national findings about what school counseling services could help address school violence and bullying issues. National data allow researchers to investigate how ecological factors, including school counseling practices, may contribute to school violence and bullying. Further, school counseling researchers could examine the relationships and effects of bully victimization and school violence to and on students' academic, behavioral, and college outcomes across multiple contexts (e.g., family, school, and community). For instance, NCES datasets (e.g., Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS), ELS 2002, and HSLA 2009) include student items that assess school violence, bullying victimization, problem behaviors, peer influence, and school safety (Espelage, 2014, 2015). Moreover, the School Crime and Safety (SCS) survey would allow researchers to explore how promotive, protective, and risk factors might be conducive to creating positive or negative environments that discourage school violence and bullying (Espelage, 2014, 2015). Further, these datasets can be used to explore how perceptions of teachers, parents, and school adults may mediate school violence and student outcomes (Espelage, 2014, 2015). Such investigations may provide information for school counselors that inform how the design of prevention efforts for reducing school violence and bullying.

## Conclusion

Our aim has been to provide step-by step logistics to help researchers conduct school counseling research that impact policy decisions utilizing national secondary datasets. We offer a six-step research process that school counseling researchers may follow to conduct research to examine the effects of school counseling and school practices and programs on student academic, socio-emotional, and college-career outcomes. While they may present several challenges in terms of the learning curve needed to understand methodological and statistical issues, these datasets provide valuable and cost-effective opportunities to conduct rigorous, generalizable, longitudinal, and casual studies to advance

knowledge. The six-step research process may act as a map which guides researchers to their final research goals by delineating tasks at each step of the process and informing how to complete them. In the six-step process, we emphasize the importance of a theoretical framework, researcher positionality, and policy implications that researchers should consider and challenge throughout the entire process. If researchers desire to conduct school counseling research with national secondary datasets, they could examine school counseling and other educational factors related to academic or opportunity gaps and educational inequities, and academic, college/career, and mental health outcomes, which all have implications for developing effective school counseling interventions and practices.

## Appendix

**Table 11.3** A summary of national datasets suitable for counseling research

Dataset	Brief description	Cross-sectional/longitudinal (#of waves)	Participants in the study	Country data collected in	Where data housed	Websites
<i>Educational longitudinal studies</i>						
High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL: 09)	Nationally representative, longitudinal study of 23,000+ 9th graders from 944 schools in 2009, students followed throughout secondary and postsecondary years	Longitudinal (three waves: base year 2009, first follow-up 2012, second follow-up planned for 2016)	Students, parents, math and science teachers, school administrators, and school counselors	USA	NCES	<a href="https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/hsls09/index.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/hsls09/index.asp</a>
Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2002)	Nationally representative, longitudinal study that followed a sample of 15,000 tenth graders in 2002 and 12th graders in 2004 throughout their secondary and postsecondary years.	Longitudinal (four waves: base year 2002, first follow-up 2004, second follow-up 2006, third follow-up 2012)	Students, parents, math and English teachers, and school administrators	USA	NCES	<a href="http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/els2002/">http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/els2002/</a>
National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88)	Nationally representative study of 24,599 eighth graders from 1035 schools on the following topics: school, work, and home experiences, educational resources and support, the role in education of their parents and peers, neighborhood characteristics, educational and occupational aspirations, and other student perceptions.	Longitudinal; five waves: Based year: 1988 First follow-up: 1990 Second follow-up: 1992 Third follow-up: 1994 Fourth follow-up: 2000	Students, teachers, parents, and school administrators	USA	NCES	<a href="https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/nels88/">https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/nels88/</a>
Early Childhood Longitudinal Program (ECLS)-Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999 (ECLS-K)	Nationally representative study of 22,666 children from the beginning of their kindergarten through middle school (5-13 years old). Focuses on children's status at entry to school, their transition into school, and their progression through 8th grade	Longitudinal; five waves: Base year: 1998-1999 First follow-up: 1999-2000 Second follow-up: 2002 Third follow-up: 2004 Fourth follow-up: 2007	Students, parents, teachers and school administrators	USA	NCES	<a href="https://nces.ed.gov/ecls/kindergarten.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/ecls/kindergarten.asp</a>



Early Childhood Longitudinal Study 2010–2011 (ECLS-K: 2011)	Nationally representative study of 20,000 kindergartners through fifth grade (5–10 years old). Focuses on descriptive information on children's status at entry to school, their transition into school, and their progression through the elementary grades	Longitudinal; five waves: Base year: 2010–2011 First follow-up: 2011–2012 Second follow-up: 2012–2013 Third follow-up: 2014 Fourth follow-up: 2015 Fifth follow-up: planned for 2016	Children, their families, teachers, schools, and care providers	USA	NCES	<a href="https://nces.ed.gov/ecls/kindergarten2011.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/ecls/kindergarten2011.asp</a>
National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS-2)	Nationally representative study of 11,500 students (13–16 years old) in 2000 as they moved from secondary school into adulthood	Longitudinal; five waves: Wave I: 2001 Wave2: 2003 Wave3: 2005 Wave4: 2007 Wave5: 2009	Students, parents, and teachers and principals	USA	IES	<a href="http://www.nlts2.org">http://www.nlts2.org</a> and <a href="http://ies.ed.gov/nctser/projects/nlts2/index.asp">http://ies.ed.gov/nctser/projects/nlts2/index.asp</a>
National Longitudinal Transition Study-2012 (NLTS: 2012)	Nationally representative study of 15,000 students as they transition to young adults. The goal is to better understand how school programs are supporting all students in this transition period, including those with special needs.	Longitudinal; two waves: Wave I: 2012–2013 Wave II: 2014	Students, parents, teachers, and school administrators	USA	IES	<a href="http://ies.ed.gov/nctser/index.asp">http://ies.ed.gov/nctser/index.asp</a>
National Household Education Surveys (NHES)	Nationally representative study of all ages (early childhood through school age to adulthood). Focuses on descriptive information about educational activities and condition of education in the USA	Cross sectional; data collected in 1991, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2003, and 2005	Students and parents	USA	NCES	<a href="http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/index.asp">http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/index.asp</a>
NHES Parent and Family Involvement in Education (PFI-NHES): 2007, 2012	PFI-NHES is one of the major repeating surveys on school-age children in the NHES program. PFI focuses on parent and family involvement in children's education	Data collected in 1996, 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2012	Parents or guardians	USA	NCES	<a href="https://nces.ed.gov/nhes/surveytopics_school.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/nhes/surveytopics_school.asp</a>
<i>Longitudinal studies of children and youth</i>						
The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (ADD Health)	The ADD Health followed a nationally representative sample of adolescents in grades 7–12 until they reached young adulthood, providing data on respondents' social, economic, psychological, and physical well-being	Longitudinal, five waves: Wave I: 1994–1995 Wave II: 1996 Wave III: 2001–2002 Wave IV: 2008–2009 Wave V: planned for 2016–2018	Adolescent students, parents, school administrators	USA	University of North Carolina	<a href="http://www.epc.unc.edu/projects/addhealth">http://www.epc.unc.edu/projects/addhealth</a>

(continued)

**Table 11.3** (continued)

Dataset	Brief description	Cross-sectional/longitudinal (#of waves)	Participants in the study	Country data collected in	Where data housed	Websites
Fragile Families and Child-Wellbeing Study (FFCWS)	FFCWS is designed to address (1) what are the conditions and capabilities of unmarried parents, especially fathers, (2) what is the nature of the relationships between unmarried parents, (3) how do children born into these families fare, and (4) how do policies and environmental conditions affect families and children	Five waves of publicly available data including baseline (at birth) and year one, three, five, and nine	Follows a cohort of nearly 5000 children born in large US cities between 1998 and 2000. Both mothers and fathers are interviewed	USA	Joint effort by Princeton University and Columbia University	<a href="http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu">http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu</a>
Monitoring the Future	8th, 10th, and 12th grade students respond to drug use and demographic questions, as well as to additional questions on a variety of subjects, including attitudes toward religion, parental influences, changing roles of women, educational aspirations, self-esteem, exposure to sex and drug education, and violence and crime – both in and out of school	Ongoing yearly study of the behaviors, attitudes, and values of American secondary school students, college students, and young adults	Each year, a total of approximately 50,000 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students are surveyed (12th graders since 1975 and 8th and 10th graders since 1991)	USA	Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan	<a href="https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/35">https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/35</a> and <a href="http://www.monitoringthefuture.org">http://www.monitoringthefuture.org</a>
Longitudinal Study of American Youth (LSAY)	A national study to allow the nation to understand the thinking and the life experiences of Generation X	Longitudinal; two cohorts: 1987–1994, merged cohort: 2007 New 7th grade cohort: 2015	Students, parents, science and math teachers, and principals	USA	University of Michigan	<a href="http://lsay.org">http://lsay.org</a>
Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE)	LSYPE was set up to gather evidence about the transitions young people make from secondary and tertiary education or training to economic roles in early adulthood, enhance the ability to monitor and evaluate the effects of existing policy and provide a strong information base for future policy development; and contextualize the implementation of new policies in terms of young people's current lives	Longitudinal; seven waves	Students and parents	England	Department of Education in UK	<a href="https://www.education.gov.uk/lsype/workspaces/public/wiki/LSYPE">https://www.education.gov.uk/lsype/workspaces/public/wiki/LSYPE</a>

Longitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect (LONGSCAN)	LONGSCAN is funded by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect to permit study of critical issues of child maltreatment. Assessments can be used alone or combined for pooled analysis.	Longitudinal. Starting in 1990, data were collected every 2 years from children (and their parents and teachers) at ages 4, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, and 18 years	Students, parents, and teachers	USA	University of North Carolina Chapel Hill	<a href="http://www.unc.edu/depts/sph/longscan/">http://www.unc.edu/depts/sph/longscan/</a> Can also be found at the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) <a href="http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu">http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu</a>
Current Population Survey Civic Engagement Supplement	Provide information on communication with others, interaction with public institutions and private enterprises, forming positive relationships with others, participation in groups, extent of political action, and frequency of gaining news and information from media sources	November 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2014	Adult participants	USA	US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census; Sponsored by Bureau of Labor Statistics and Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)	<a href="https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/current-population-survey-civic-engagement-supplement">https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/current-population-survey-civic-engagement-supplement</a>
The Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge Youth Post-Election Survey 2012	A study of 4483 participants aged 18–24 about their political participation and their educational experiences	Interviews began the day after the 2012 presidential election and continued on for 6 weeks after the election	Youth aged 18–24	USA	Turfs University Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)	<a href="http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/civicleads/studies/35012#datasetsSection">http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/civicleads/studies/35012#datasetsSection</a>
<i>National datasets on mental health, violence, and delinquency</i>						
National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)	As the nation's primary source of information on criminal victimization, the NCVS provides the largest national forum for victims to describe the impact of crime and characteristics of violent offenders	Cross sectional; ongoing yearly data available from 1973 to 2014	12 years + in each sampled household	USA	University of Michigan and Bureau of Justice Statistics	<a href="http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/95">http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/95</a> and <a href="http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=dcdetail&amp;iid=245">http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=dcdetail&amp;iid=245</a>

(continued)

**Table 11.3** (continued)

Dataset	Brief description	Cross-sectional/longitudinal (#of waves)	Participants in the study	Country data collected in	Where data housed	Websites
School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (SCS/NCVS)	Using a national survey with about 6500 students (12–18 years old), SCS collects information about victimization, crime, and safety at school in US public and private elementary, middle, and high schools	The SCS was conducted in 1989, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013	Students aged 12–18	USA	NCES	<a href="https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/student_data.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/student_data.asp</a>
2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)	With annual nation and state-wide interviews with 70,000 participants, NSDUH provides information on the use of tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs, and mental health in the USA	Annual survey since 1988	Youth of Ages 12 and above	USA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)	SAMHSA <a href="https://nsduhweb.rti.org/respweb/homepage.cfm">https://nsduhweb.rti.org/respweb/homepage.cfm</a>
National Survey of American Life (NSAL)	The primary goal of the NSAL was to gather data about the physical, emotional, mental, structural, and economic conditions of Black Americans at the beginning of the new century	Cross sectional; 1 year	African-American, Afro-Caribbean, and non-Hispanic white adults, age 18+ residing in households in the coterminous USA. Exclusions include institutionalized persons, those living on military bases, and non-English speakers	USA	University of Michigan	<a href="http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/CPES/">http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/CPES/</a>

National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS)	The NLAAS provides national information on the similarities and differences in mental illness and service use of Latinos and Asian Americans.	Cross sectional	Latino and Asian-American adults, age 18+ residing in households in the coterminous USA, Alaska, and Hawaii. Exclusions include institutionalized persons and those living on military bases.	USA	Center for Multicultural Mental Health Research	<a href="http://www.multiculturalmentalhealth.org/nlaas.asp">http://www.multiculturalmentalhealth.org/nlaas.asp</a> and <a href="http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/CPES/files/nlaas">http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/CPES/files/nlaas</a>
Pathways to Desistance study	The Pathways to Desistance study is a multisite, longitudinal study of serious adolescent offenders as they transition from adolescence into early adulthood	Longitudinal	Adjudicated youths between 14 and 18 years old	USA	University of Michigan	<a href="http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NAHDAP/series/260">http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NAHDAP/series/260</a>
<i>International education datasets</i>						
The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)	TIMSS provides reliable and timely data on the mathematics and science achievement of US students compared to that of students in other countries. Data have been collected from 4th and 8th graders since 1995 every 4 years, generally	Cross sectional	Students (math and science)	More than 60 countries and other education systems	Boston College	<a href="http://timssandpirls.bc.edu">http://timssandpirls.bc.edu</a>
Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)	International assessment that measures 15-year-old students' reading, mathematics, and science literacy every 3 years	Cross sectional	Students (major domain of study rotates between mathematics, science, and reading in each cycle)	More than 70 countries and educational jurisdictions	OECD	<a href="http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/">http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/</a>

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# Evaluating the Impact of National and State Policies on School-Based Counseling Practices and Student Outcomes

# 12

Michael S. Trevisan

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## The Promise of Effective School-Based Counseling Programs

There is perhaps no other time in recent history that provides such a compelling case for the essential role of school-based counselors as today. Advocates of school-based counselors have stressed the importance of organizational structure to school-based counseling programs, a core curriculum, and program evaluation for improvement and accountability. The Comprehensive Developmental Guidance (CDG) program developed by Gysbers and colleagues (e.g., Gysbers & Moore, 1981; Gysbers & Henderson, 1994) and the more recent national models developed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) provide the frameworks and standards for the development of effective school-based counseling programs (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2012). These models have the potential to place the school counselor in a clear, transparent, and useful light, particularly against the backdrop of continual K-12 education reform. (Note: The word “comprehensive” will be used whenever both CDG and the ASCA National Model are being referred to.)

The most recent document by the ASCA articulates a promise for those willing to adopt comprehensive school-based counseling programs; namely, good things for students will happen as a result of the work of these programs (ASCA, 2012). There is some evidence that in fact positive student outcomes are achieved through properly organized, comprehensive school-based counseling programs (Carey & Martin, 2015; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; McGannon, Carey, & Dimmitt, 2005). The evidence most telling and focused on student outcomes has been obtained through statewide evaluation studies.

Realizing the power and potential of statewide evaluations to inform policy and practice, a group of state school counseling leaders referred to as the National Leadership Cadre (NLC) developed and promoted a statewide evaluation model that could be used by other states for statewide evaluation (National Leadership Cadre [NLC], 2007). Several researchers have also recommended that states conduct systematic evaluation of school counseling programs (e.g., Borders & Drury, 1992; Carey & Martin, 2015; Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001; Martin, Carey, & DeCoster, 2012; Martin & Rallis, 2014; Martin & Carey, 2009; McGannon et al., 2005). Their rationale is that states are in the strongest position to exercise leadership in developing policy that will promote comprehensive school-based counseling programs and effective practices. And thus, statewide evaluation is foundational in achieving the outcomes of this policy intent.

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This chapter will focus on statewide evaluations of comprehensive school-based counseling programs. The thinking here is that statewide evaluations provide the leverage needed for policymakers to bring about positive change within their respective state's schools. To this end, statewide school-based counseling evaluation studies were obtained, and a content analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which these studies are aligned with the model proposed by the NLC. Based on these findings and informed by the literature, several recommendations are offered for improvement of statewide school-based counseling evaluation studies. To set the context, I will first briefly review the policy research landscape in school-based counseling and discuss how the drive for scientific evidence at the national level is likely impacting policy research studies in school-based counseling and the absence of school-based counseling in national education reform policy. The chapter then progresses to a description of the search process and findings and finishes with recommendations.

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### **School Counseling Policy Studies 2000–2014**

Carey and Martin (2015) provide the most comprehensive, thorough, and up-to-date review and analysis of the policy research landscape with respect to changes in school-based counseling, changes compelled by recent national K-12 education reform efforts and the move in school counseling to comprehensive programs. In a review of the policy research literature, the authors identified 37 documents that they grouped and organized by type of policy study (e.g., literature review, survey research, statewide evaluations). This sweeping analysis of policy research provides a picture of changes in school-based counseling that is somewhat fragmented as there is no single, systematic research effort that investigates all elements of school counseling practice and student outcomes. The studies provide pieces of a puzzle, however, that are beginning to provide at least a partial picture of effective school counseling.

The analysis by Carey and Martin (2015) also provides detail with respect to the types of research designs, instruments, and statistical methods used in the documents that comprise the review paper as well as some of the limitations inherent in various studies. The discussion of research strategies signals the warrant for claims made by the various authors of studies included in the review. Nearly all studies would not meet the criterion of scientifically based research, recommended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Collectively, however, Carey and Martin (2015) argue that the findings suggest that comprehensive programs provide some impact on student achievement. Further, the authors indicate that the strongest positive impact of comprehensive programs is on student engagement and behavior. In short, time with a school counselor increases a student's interest in school and compels productive behavior. Nearly all studies are focused on school counselors in high schools. Carey and Martin recommend that more policy studies at the elementary and middle school level are needed.

Based on their review, Carey and Martin (2015) suggest that the role, expectations, and tasks of a school counselor in high schools today may be too broad to make a positive difference in the lives of young people. In a provocative set of recommendations, Carey and Martin (2015) propose a variety of options for rethinking the school counselor role, including school counselors that specialize in some aspect of school counseling work and the use of school counseling paraprofessionals. In addition, evidence for the optimum ratio of students to school counselors is uncertain. Simply adding more school counselors to high-enrolled high schools may not be the best approach. The authors further argue that comprehensive programs may not be the only workable model available or the most beneficial model. Other models for organizing the work of school counselors may be a more viable approach. In the end, there are gaps in the evidence for comprehensive programs, and the research literature as a whole is somewhat scattered and thin, leaving some uncertainty about the potential and promise of comprehensive programs in an intense educational environment focused squarely on student



outcomes. More policy research work is needed on this matter.

While the authors found research on the impact of the comprehensive program model, few articles address school counseling practices. Carey and Martin (2015) indicate that the ASCA National Model (2012) can be thought of as a framework that organizes various practices. Practices could differ from school to school even within a school district that has adopted the ASCA National Model (2012). The authors state that “More rigorous research and development is needed before school counselors can identify the interventions, curricula, and practices that result in the best student outcomes” (p. 73). Finally, the authors make a strong recommendation for each state to evaluate its school counseling programs as a starting point in developing and implementing effective school counseling programs and practices and supporting sound policy.

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### **The Drive for Scientific Evidence in Support of Education Policy**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandates the use of scientifically based research to justify education policy and practice for all federally funded programs. Following this legislation, a book was published by the National Research Council titled, *Scientific Research in Education* (National Research Council [NRC], 2002). This book set off a firestorm of discussions, debates, and papers about the role and place of education research, what constitutes scientific evidence, and the use of experiments in education (see, e.g., Feuer, Towne, & Shavelson, 2002; Pellegrino & Goldman, 2002; Erickson & Gutierrez, 2002). This debate continues today.

The net effect of this legislation with respect to education research is that the experiment has become the “gold standard” among research methodologies in education research. In education policy research, for example, random assignment of participants to treatment and control has the potential to provide a nearly unambiguous estimate of policy impact. The Institute for Education Sciences of the US Department of

Education strongly promotes the use of the experiment in education research in large part by prioritizing research funding for proposals that employ experiments. Recently, the Institute of Education Science and the National Science Foundation developed a set of guidelines for education research and development (Institute of Education Sciences, 2013). Known as the common guidelines, the report further reinforces the experiment as the methodology of choice for determining impact.

While there are a variety of practical issues with mounting experimental research in education, a key issue is that they are expensive. With little available funding for education research, the choice is often to conduct no research if one thinks that anything less than an experiment has no warrant for claims made from this work. Or, conduct research that is nonexperimental and attempt to justify the work, making tentative, almost apologetic claims for impact or what works. A quick read of school-based counseling research reveals the latter approach.

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### **The Absence of School-Based Counseling in Education Policy and Research**

Historically, school counseling has not been included in national education policy debates, initiatives, and research (Dahir, 2004). The relatively small number of school counselors nationally and the uncertain role of the school counselor are factors explaining much of this situation. To further illustrate, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) is the dominant education research professional organization with more than 15,000 members that span government, think tanks, research firms, and universities. One would be hard-pressed to find any reference to the potential contribution school-based counselors could make to education reform in any of the news articles, forums, or publications. As a clear example, in 2009, AERA produced the *Handbook of Education Policy Research*, edited by Gary Sykes, Barbara Schneider, and David N. Plank and published by Routledge Publishers.



This important contribution sought to address the major education policy concerns in the USA and methods used for education policy research and articulate the major issues and concerns that will be the focus of policy and policy research in the future. The handbook is a 978-page tome, with 62 chapters and 14 commentaries, organized into seven sections that deal with broad features of education policy and esoteric details of policy research. While I have not read the entire book, I have read many of the chapters and commentaries, and I have yet to find even the words “school-based counseling” in the chapters. Based on the chapter titles, I doubt these words are used or referred to in the handbook. I will come back to this point in the recommendation section.

Some scholars in the school counseling literature have argued that the No Child Left Behind 2001 legislation provides a potential opportunity for school-based counselors to make a case for their contribution and importance in education reform efforts. And rightly so. The architecture for this legislation is likely the chapter by Smith and O’Day (1991) that argues for the school building as the unit of change in reform efforts. The school-based counselor, working in a coordinated fashion with the building principal and teachers, could have much to offer in support of positive student outcomes.

Smith and O’Day argued for education reform policy that includes strong leadership from the state, revised governance structures, challenging curricular frameworks, testing for accountability, and professional support for teachers. All of these features are included in the NCLB legislation. Smith and O’Day (1991) argued that teachers and principals are the main actors in school building reform efforts. School-based counselors were not mentioned.

As an extension of the No Child Left Behind 2001 legislation, the federal government has recently targeted the 5% lowest performing schools for strong intervention in order to improve performance. The interventions are pre-specified and broadly referred to as turnaround models with funding available through School Improvement Grants as well as *Race to the Top* funding. In a new edited volume on state and dis-

trict turnaround work, school counselors were noticeably absent from the many examples and policy recommendations contained in the book (Rhim & Redding, 2014).

There is hope however, that the potential for the contribution of school-based counselors could be realized, and this hope is based on real data. Salina et al. (2013) illustrate and animate the positive role school-based counselors can take in improving academic achievement in a low-income high school. Working under the requirements of a federal School Improvement Grant for consistently low-performing schools, in this case a turnaround school as classified by the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act (Redding & Rhim, 2014), the authors implemented a program called All Hands on Deck (AHOD). This program recasts the role of the school counselor as an essential professional and stakeholder in the school reform effort through the development of an ASCA National Model (2012). Further, AHOD was designed to increase expectations for students as an expansion of what is referred to as academic press; provide social support for students at the school; and establish relational trust among teachers, parents, students, and school counselors. At a predominantly Hispanic, high-poverty high school, school counselors were instrumental in helping to significantly decrease the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate.

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## **The State’s Role in Evaluation of School-Based Counseling Programs and Policies**

Understanding the power and potential of statewide evaluation studies, the National Leadership Cadre (NLC), composed of nine state-level education agency school counseling coordinators, set out to advise and promote statewide evaluations across the USA. Building on the earlier work of Missouri in evaluating its school counseling programs, the NLC developed a school counseling outcome evaluation model that could be adopted by states in evaluating school counseling programs (NLC, 2007). The main

premise of this model is simple in structure and clear in its presentation. Namely, “Sound state education policy should be based on solid, reliable information about the relationships between school counseling program characteristics and practices and student outcomes” (NLC, 2007; p. 9).

The NLC outcome evaluation model is multi-level as it requires data from different levels of the school system, namely, student, school, and state. The model requires collection of four types of data (NLC, 2007). These are (1) school descriptive data that captures demographic information that will likely influence student outcomes; (2) school counseling program descriptive data that will ultimately impact student outcomes; (3) proximal student outcome data that reflects near-term changes to student knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that result from the work of the school counseling program; and (4) distal student outcome data, both achievement-related and nonachievement-related data, which reflect long-term changes resulting from the school counseling program.

The NLC envisions that data are to be used in strategic ways and proportions and statistically analyzed to estimate impact of the school counseling program. In brief, school descriptive data are covariates that must be controlled for, and school counseling program data are independent variables, while distal outcomes are dependent variables. (Note that the NLC (2007) document suggests that proximal data are used locally.)

The influence of social science research on the decision-making processes used by national and state policymakers has always been a challenge. Political interest, time, accessibility of the research, and whether policymakers view the work as credible have all been factors that affect whether social science research is used to inform policy. In the US context, there is a dynamic tension between the role of the state government and federal government as it pertains to education policy. To be sure, the USA is a geographically large country with over 300 million people. Thus, the federal government would be challenged to mandate education policy and practice for all states. Moreover, each of the 50 states is respon-

sible for providing public education to its students, and, thus, each state believes that curriculum, instruction, and education policy, in general, are the state’s responsibility and right to develop, mandate, and manage. In short, states want to exercise local control on this matter and typically don’t want federal intervention as it pertains to education policy and practice. As a consequence, state education policy can differ from what the federal government might like to see but also differ from state to state.

Miller (2006) and Gysbers (2006) articulate how state leadership with respect to school counseling policy and practice can effectively bring about positive change. This is accomplished through collaborative work with a state leader and local school district personnel to build the capacity of the school counseling profession within their respective state. In addition, an effective state leader can work with state policymakers to make the case for school-based counseling and the necessary support needed for a viable state-wide program. And while it is argued that past federal legislation has had the largest single impact on the school counseling field (i.e., the National Defense Act of 1958 and the use of funds for guidance, counseling, and testing (Miller, 2006)), implementation of policy and practice occurs at the local level, and its success is predicated on local conditions (Spillane, Gomez, & Mesler, 2009). These conditions vary from state to state and the federal government has little influence on these matters. Thus, to implement policy and change practice, an effective state leader will work with school and district personnel as well as state policymakers to remove barriers, infuse resources, and build capacity. The result is positive and sustained change in a way not possible through the federal government.

As a tool of policy formation and implementation, statewide evaluation studies of school counseling programs tend to have a greater chance of influencing state policymakers (over national evaluations) for the following reasons. One, instituting accountability mechanisms, particularly in education and social programs, is seen as a means to gain public trust in government-sponsored programs. Evaluation is the mechanism

most widely used for accountability, and, therefore, policymakers will at least acknowledge the work, if not be influenced by it. Two, state-level evaluation is generally more locally responsive and, as a consequence, seen as more relevant particularly in comparison to national evaluation and therefore more likely to bring about positive change. Thus, state policymaking process tends to give some deference to state-level evaluation studies. Third, statewide evaluations are usually state expenditures. The use of state taxpayer money compels the use of the evaluation.

Given the aforementioned discussion, I searched for statewide evaluations that could shed some light on the impact of school counseling programs and practices on student outcomes. I compared the work of each evaluation study to the NLC (2007) evaluation model to determine the extent to which there was a match between the state evaluation and the NLC model. It is hoped that this exercise will show what has been done, what still needs work, and illustrate the potential of the NLC evaluation model in supporting strong school counseling policy.

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## Search Strategy and Content Analysis

An Internet search was conducted for statewide evaluation studies that address student outcomes. Logical key terms were used such as “statewide evaluation studies,” “school counseling,” and “student outcomes.” Branching techniques were also used to locate articles. The search spanned the years 2003–2014. The primary rationale for the timeframe is that 2003 was the year in which the ASCA model was first promoted nationally. Thus, the timeframe is focused on statewide evaluation during the time of promotion and adoption of the ASCA program model. Secondly, statewide evaluation articles in the literature prior to 2003 almost exclusively deal with the implementation and impact of the CDG model in Missouri, arguably the state in the forefront of the drive toward program reform in school counseling. These studies are well addressed in the school counseling literature.

In all, 11 documents were retained, spanning nine states. Nine documents are published in the peer-reviewed literature. Two documents are evaluation reports and were obtained through branching from another article. Note that two statewide evaluation reports conducted by the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation (CSCORE) for Utah and Nebraska in 2010, respectively, were located. Each has a corresponding journal article produced by authors affiliated with CSCORE in *Professional School Counseling*. The journal articles were retained for this chapter. In addition, an evaluation report produced by the Washington School Research Center for Washington State was found. This report also had a corresponding journal article in *Professional School Counseling* and the journal article was retained for this analysis. The clear advantage with peer-reviewed journal articles for this chapter over unpublished reports is that the peer-reviewed process compels a level of rigor in method and analysis as well as a precision in language and scholarly writing, often not found in unpublished works. All studies published as journal articles were published in the journal, *Professional School Counseling*.

A content analysis of the documents was conducted by identifying the kind of data collected based on the NLC (2007) suggestions. In addition, variables within each broad category of data were identified. The identification of the above characteristics was straightforward in each document and its determination unambiguous. The content analysis data is contained in four tables: (1) overall statewide evaluation characteristics, (2) school descriptive data, (3) school counseling practices, and (4) distal outcome data.

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## Findings

### Overall Statewide Evaluation Characteristics

Table 12.1 shows the school level in which each study was conducted and the type of data collected based on the NLC (2007) suggestions. Most studies (7 of 11) are exclusively focused on

**Table 12.1** School level and type of NLC data collected

Date	State	Authors	School level			NLC evaluation framework				
			Elem	Middle/ Jr. high	High school	Schad desc. data	SC prog. desc. data	Proximal outcomes	Distal outcomes	
2003	California	California Department of Education	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓
2012	Connecticut	Lapan, Whitcomb, Aleman			✓	✓		✓		✓
2013	Indiana	Wilkerson, Perusse, Hughes	✓			✓				✓
2012	Missouri	Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley, Pierce			✓	✓				✓
2012	Nebraska	Carey, Harrington, Martin, Hoffiman			✓	✓		✓		✓
2012	Rhode Island	Dimmitt, Wilkerson		✓		✓		✓		✓
2007	Utah	Nelson, Fox, Haslam, Gardner		✓	✓			✓		✓
2012	Utah	Carey, Harrington, Martin, Stevenson			✓			✓		✓
2003	Washington	Sink, Stroh	✓			✓		✓		✓
2008	Washington	Sink, Akos, Turnbull, Mvududu		✓		✓		✓		✓
2012	Wisconsin	Burkard, Gillen, Martinez, Skytte			✓			✓		✓

<sup>1</sup>Data reported at the district level and across school psychologists, social workers, school nurses, and school counselors

student outcomes at the high school level, a phenomenon found in most school-based counseling policy-oriented research noted in the review by Carey and Martin (2015). Ten studies collected school descriptive data. Eight studies reported school counseling program data. Note that one state evaluation report, California Department of Education (CDE) (2003), reported on proximal data. However, this data was reported by type of district (elementary, unified, high school). In addition, the evaluation report dealt with a variety of pupil services personnel and programs (i.e., school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses). It was not possible to determine the unique contribution of school counselors to school building proximal outcomes.

All studies employed state databases to obtain distal outcome data for students. This finding corroborates statements by the NLC framework document arguing that states often collect achievement and achievement-related school-level data. This data can be efficiently obtained and at low cost for statewide school counseling evaluation studies focused on student outcomes (NLC, 2007).

### School Descriptive Data

An examination of the school descriptive data, the first component of the NLC-recommended framework for statewide evaluations, is provided in Table 12.2. Findings show that nine studies provide data on school setting and eight studies report data on socioeconomic status. However, the data reported for other important demographic variables is uneven and often absent. Specifically, six studies reported race/ethnicity data, two studies reported data on gender, four studies reported data on disability, and four studies reported data on English language learners. In short, much of the key demographic data that should be controlled for when accounting for attribution of student outcomes, as recommended by NLC (2007), was not collected.

### School Counseling Program Data

School counseling program data was collected in various ways and detail across all studies. The Missouri and Indiana studies did not collect specific school counseling program data. The Missouri study exclusively addressed the effect of student-to-school counselor ratios on achievement and achievement-related high school student outcomes (Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley, & Pierce, 2012). The Indiana study sought to determine impact on student achievement outcomes by comparing elementary schools that have implemented comprehensive school counseling programs and designated as Recognized ASCA Model Programs (RAMP) with non-RAMP schools (Wilkerson, Perusse, & Hughes, 2013). The Connecticut study employed a questionnaire asking school counselors and principals to identify whether various aspects of the ASCA National Model (2012) had been implemented, though specifics were not provided in the study. The study, however, was focused on the effect of student-to-school counselor ratios, college and career counseling services, and responsive services (Lapan, Whitcomb, & Aleman, 2012).

Other studies used surveys to obtain a variety of detail about the presence or absence of specific program components or the degree to which specific components have been implemented. The Washington evaluation studies employed surveys that asked whether the school had implemented a comprehensive school counseling program, and if so, there were additional questions about specific aspects of the program, though specific program features and their respective effect on student outcomes were not part of the study. The length of time the school had a comprehensive school counseling program was a key component of the Washington studies and clearly specified in the articles (Sink & Stroh, 2003; Sink, Akos, Turnbull, & Mvududu, 2008).

The most detailed approaches to collecting data on the implementation of various aspects of the school counseling program were employed in the Wisconsin, Utah, and Nebraska studies.

**Table 12.2** School descriptive data

Date	State	Authors	School setting (rural, suburban, urban)	Race/ethnicity	Socioeconomic status	Gender	Special education	ELL
2003	California	California Department of Education						
2012	Connecticut	Lapan, Whitcomb, Aleman	√		√			
2013	Indiana	Wilkerson, Perusse, Hughes	√	√	√			
2012	Missouri	Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley, Pierce	√		√			
2012	Nebraska	Carey, Harrington, Martin, Hoffman	√	√	√		√	√
2012	Rhode Island	Dimmitt, Wilkerson		√	√		√	
2007	Utah	Nelson, Fox, Haslam, Gardner						
2012	Utah	Carey, Harrington, Martin, Stevenson	√	√	√		√	√
2003	Washington	Sink, Stroh	√	√	√	√		
2008	Washington	Sink, Akos, Turnbull, Mvududu	√	√	√	√	√	√
2012	Wisconsin	Burkard, Gillen, Martinez, Skytte	√					



These studies employed previously developed instruments that asked numerous questions about programs. In the Wisconsin study, the Survey of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2006) was used while the Utah and Nebraska studies employed the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey (Elsner & Carey, 2005). The California evaluation study used detailed surveys that sought input from various stakeholders such as parents, principals, teachers, and school counselors (CDE, 2003).

Despite the variability in detail with respect to features of comprehensive school counseling programs evaluated, all studies attempted to address the impact of one or more practices on student outcomes. Five studies addressed the extent to which the ASCA National Model (2012) was implemented, five studies dealt with student-to-school counselor ratios, and four studies addressed counselor time use. Other practices found in the studies include career and technical education (e.g., Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Hoffman, 2012), college and career-readiness services, activities related to promoting academic success, parent involvement (e.g., Nelson, Fox, Haslam, & Gardner, 2007), and the foundation component to the ASCA National Model (2012). Table 12.3 lists the practices investigated by study.

### Distal Outcomes

All 11 studies provided achievement and achievement-related distal outcomes. It was clear in all studies that the outcome measures were obtained from state-collected or publicly available data. The measures were typically provided as rates or percentages. Common achievement outcomes reported are pass rates on state tests and the percentage of students categorized as proficient on nationally standardized tests or college admissions tests (e.g., Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Stevenson, 2012). Common achievement-related measures include attendance rates, suspension rates, and discipline incident rates. Six states reported both achievement

and achievement-related outcome measures, four states reported achievement measures only, and one state reported achievement-related measures only. Table 12.4 provides a listing of the distal outcome measures used in each study (i.e., Dimmit & Wilkerson, 2012).

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## Analysis and Discussion

The statewide evaluation studies identified for this review encompass nine states. Other states may have conducted statewide evaluations of their school-based counseling programs during the timeframe for this chapter. However, this could not be ascertained through keyword searches of the Internet, searches of state department of education websites, or gleaned from the existing school-based counseling research and evaluation literature.

No state evaluation report followed the NLC (2007) evaluation recommendations completely though some nearly so (e.g., NE, UT, WA). Proximal data was missing from almost all evaluations (except CA as previously mentioned), a phenomenon anticipated given that this information is typically not collected at the state level (NLC, 2007). School descriptive data, while collected in various ways by most evaluations, was not consistent across studies. For most studies, data was obtained from publicly available databases in the respective state.

There are a number of common limitations in the evaluation studies addressed in this chapter, most of which were identified by authors of other studies (e.g., Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Carey & Martin, 2015). These limitations diminish the warrant from these studies so that, collectively, the findings are arguably tentative, rather than definitive. One, the samples are either too low to make meaningful generalizations or so high that the study renders statistical significance testing meaningless. Two, most studies are at least partially based on self-report data. These self-reports are usually from principals and school counselors, sometimes from teachers, as they rate specific features of the school counseling program in their school. The veracity of self-report data is

**Table 12.3** School counseling practices

Date	State	Authors	Practices
2003	California	California Department of Education	Student-to-school counselor ratios
2012	Connecticut	Lapan, Whitcomb, Aleman	Student-to-school counselor ratios College and career-readiness services Activities related to promoting academic success
2013	Indiana	Wilkerson, Perusse, Hughes	ASCA National Model program implementation (RAMP schools)
2012	Missouri	Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley, Pierce	Student-to-school counselor ratios
2012	Nebraska	Carey, Harrington, Martin, Hoffman	Student-to-school counselor ratios Counselor time use Career and technical education ASCA National Model program implementation
2012	Rhode Island	Dimmitt, Wilkerson	Data use College and career-readiness services Activities related to promoting academic success Parent involvement
2007	Utah	Nelson, Fox, Haslam, Gardner	Student planning Extent of services Program coordination Parent involvement Policy and job definition Departmental productivity Career exploration Information management Clarity of purpose Guidance curriculum Time management Funding Personnel management Program support Teacher preparation Use of SEOP information Use of career exploration resources Community involvement
2012	Utah	Carey, Harrington, Martin, Stevenson	Data use Student-to-school counselor ratios Counselor time use ASCA National Model program implementation (includes structures and routines related to planning, management, accountability) ASCA National Model program implementation (length of time)
2003	Washington	Sink, Stroh	ASCA National Model program implementation ASCA National Model program implementation (length of time)
2008	Washington	Sink, Akos, Turnbull, Mvududu	ASCA National Model program implementation
2012	Wisconsin	Burkard, Gillen, Martinez, Skytte	Foundation Counselor time use

often uncertain. Without some type of check on validity, it is difficult to know how trustworthy the data are. Third, the distal outcome data are not consistent across studies and reflect data previously collected by the state for other purposes. These measures may be measuring different

aspects of the same achievement or achievement-related outcome or different outcomes altogether. For example, the definitions for dropout, absence, attendance, and behavior often differ from state to state, sometimes from district to district within a state. Thus, comparisons across states for the

**Table 12.4** Distal outcomes

Date	State	Authors	Distal outcomes
2003	California	California Department of Education	Attendance School safety Academic performance index Stanford 9 scores – Reading Stanford 9 scores – Math Stanford 9 scores – Language Standards Test Scores – English/language arts Standards Test Scores – Mathematics Graduates with UC/CSU courses
2012	Connecticut	Lapan, Whitcomb, Aleman	Yearly suspension rates per 100 students Total disciplinary incidents per year for each high school Average daily attendance High school graduation rates
2013	Indiana	Wilkerson, Perusse, Hughes	English/language arts pass rates on state criterion referenced tests Mathematics pass rates on state criterion referenced tests
2012	Missouri	Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley, Pierce	Percentage of students graduating from high school Suspension rates per 100 students Average daily attendance ACT composite scores Connecticut 2013 Yearly suspension rates per 100 students Total disciplinary incidents per year for each high school Average daily attendance High school graduation rates
2012	Nebraska	Carey, Harrington, Martin, Hoffman	Suspension rate Discipline incidence rate Attendance rate Dropout rate Graduate rate Average ACT score Percentage of students scoring proficient in math on the state standardized test Percentage of students scoring proficient in reading on the state standardized test Percent proficient in technical skills (Perkins data) Percent program completion (Perkins data) Nontraditional program participation rate (Perkins data) Nontraditional program completion rate (Perkins data)
2012	Rhode Island	Dimmitt, Wilkerson	Average daily attendance Discipline/suspension rate
2007	Utah	Nelson, Fox, Haslam, Gardner	ITRS ITED ACT assessment ACT Student Profile Data

(continued)

**Table 12.4** (continued)

Date	State	Authors	Distal outcomes
2012	Utah	Carey, Harrington, Martin, Stevenson	Suspension rate Discipline incidence rate Attendance rate Graduation/dropout rate Average ACT score Percentage of students taking the ACT Percentage of students scoring proficient in math on state standardized tests Percentage of students scoring proficient in reading on state standardized tests Percentage of students taking Advanced Placement courses Percent proficient in reading (Perkins data) Percent proficient in math (Perkins data) Percent proficient in technical skills (Perkins data) Percent proficient program completion (Perkins data) Percent graduation (Perkins data) Percent placed (Perkins data) Nontraditional program participation rate (Perkins data) Nontraditional program completion rate (Perkins data)
2003	Washington	Sink, Stroh	Average ITBS scores in vocabulary, comprehension, reading, and mathematics Average scale scores on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning in listening, reading, writing, and mathematics
2008	Washington	Sink, Akos, Turnbull, Mvududu	ITBS reading, math, language arts Average scale scores on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning in writing, reading, and mathematics
2012	Wisconsin	Burkard, Gillen, Martinez, Skytte	Daily attendance rates Truancy and suspension rates Retention and graduation rates Percentage passing at the advanced level for reading and mathematics on state tests

same measures or attempts at statements of collective impact are tentative, if not ambiguous. In addition, researchers must assume that the data was collected in a sound manner and that the data are actual representations of student or building performance. However, without a check on validity, it is simply not possible to know. Fourth, the statistical methods used are largely correlation-based. Correlations show that a relationship exists but cannot indicate why nor can they indicate impact. Fifth, the designs are typically ex post facto and cross-sectional. Defensible statements of impact are challenging with these designs. Further, cross-sectional data do not provide a longitudinal view of change and growth that is desired for distal outcomes.

### Recommendations for Further Statewide Evaluation Policy Research

What follows are a set of recommendations that, if acted on, could enhance the quality and usefulness of evaluations of state school-based counseling policies that seek to increase student outcomes and identify effective school counseling practices. The recommendations are offered in the following light. One, state dollars available to support school counseling programs and practices are limited, and, thus, securing long-term state commitment for evaluation is a challenge. Realized efficiency in the evaluation effort might

help to gain support. Providing useful information that policymakers can act on could also help. Two, there are a variety of strategies for evaluation that when properly conducted and coordinated productively drive toward realizing impact. One might think of these strategies as indirectly tied to outcomes and practices or evaluation strategies that support the ultimate evaluation of outcomes and identification of effective practices. Three, the main rationale for evaluation in this context is that the findings are used in some way so that school-based counseling programs are enabled and compelled to provide the support needed in schools for students to excel (American Evaluation Association, 2004; Patton, 2008; Wholey, 1979; Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2011). Providing evaluation results to key users in a way that is understood by them will help utilization of the evaluation. Four, the school counseling research community can further the argument for the essential role of school-based counselors by promoting and publishing their work in broader education policy and policy research circles. My central thesis is that the ideas and strategies offered here complement and support one another and should all be part of a comprehensive statewide school-based counseling policy evaluation plan and policy research agenda.

### **Recommendation 1: Expand Cost-Effective, Statewide Evaluation Work**

With respect to statewide evaluations, more could clearly be done. The ideal would be that more states realize the benefit of school counseling programs for student academic well-being and take leadership for statewide evaluation in support of school-based counseling programs. The evaluations should be done regularly and focus on school buildings as the unit of change. In an analysis of state school counseling models, Martin, Carey, and DeCoster (2009) identified the lack of a solid prototype for statewide school counseling evaluation as a key factor in explaining the dearth of statewide evaluation support. The NLC (2007) outcome evaluation model, with

proper revision, could become the prototype that Martin et al. (2009) called for. The NLC evaluation model could be expanded to a more comprehensive evaluation model that would support the use of evaluation data by key stakeholders and, thus, embraced more broadly.

Understandably, evaluation is also a resource issue for many states strapped for finances. To bring the evaluation in line with available resources, a variety of sampling arrangements are possible and could be considered. While no examples could be found in the literature, one possibility would be to conduct evaluation of school levels on a periodic but routine basis, e.g., elementary schools year 1, middle or junior high schools year 2, and high schools year 3. This 3-year cycle would then be repeated. More specifically, since distal outcomes summarized at the school level are the ultimate focus of comprehensive school counseling programs (NLC, 2007), school building data on test measures and the like could be collected for one grade per school level, grades 4, 7, and 11, for example, as was recommended for recent education reform policies that place the school building as the unit of change (Smith & O'Day, 1990).

Martin et al. (2009) identified local control as a key factor in determining comprehensive school-based counseling model development and implementation. Martin and Carey (2012) contrasted the evaluation systems in Missouri and Utah as states with local control versus centralized decision-making. In a state with local control (Missouri), the main initiator of comprehensive program development would be done by school districts with some statewide policy to get things going and perhaps incentives such as grants to support this work. In a state with centralized decision-making (Utah), most of this work would be initiated by the state. The idea of local control versus state control could be extended to a revised NLC evaluation model, providing states a way to gauge possibilities for a statewide evaluation system based on the decision-making approach used in a particular state.

And given tight state and local resources, a state could develop a cooperative arrangement

with local school counseling programs and divide responsibilities for the aforementioned evaluation components. Thus, flexibility would be needed in the evaluation prototype offered by the NLC. If done strategically, flexibility would also foster evaluations that better meet user needs. The obvious arrangement to me is that school counselors focus on implementation evaluation and formative evaluation (discussed below). In this way, school counselors are more likely to obtain evaluation data that will help them ensure that the program is implemented appropriately and improvements are being made as needed. Martin and Rallis (2014) provide further explication of this idea and argue that external evaluation (in this case, statewide evaluation) is enhanced by this arrangement. In short, school-based counselors would be focusing their evaluation work on things that they have some control and responsibility for. The statewide evaluation would then be focused more on accountability and system monitoring of outcomes. If done well, policymakers would have sound, reliable information to make important decisions about school counseling programs in the state, exercising the leadership that many have called for in support of quality school counseling programs (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Carey & Martin, 2015; NLC, 2007; Trevisan, 2000).

### **Recommendation 2: Employ Evaluation Strategies that Support Outcome Evaluation**

There are a set of evaluation strategies that could be employed in preparation for an eventual outcome evaluation. These strategies are implementation evaluation, formative evaluation, and evaluability assessment. Collectively, these strategies help to ensure that programs are developed, implemented, and supported in ways that ensure a productive and informative outcome evaluation. While implementation and formative evaluation have been acknowledged in the school counseling literature (e.g., Dimmitt, 2009), evaluability assessment has not. All are offered as essential elements of a revised statewide school

counseling evaluation prototype mentioned in the previous section.

### **Implementation Evaluation**

Many of the articles reviewed for this chapter assume that if school-based counselors adopt the ASCA National Model (2012), comprehensive school counseling programs are implemented as intended and the school building counselor is appropriately conducting specified tasks and apportioning time as recommended by ASCA. Lapan, Gysbers et al. (2012) urge caution in making this assumption. They indicate that although Missouri is a state categorized as a high implementation state of ASCA school counseling programs (Martin et al., 2009), there remains considerable variability among schools with respect to how closely the school counseling programs align with ASCA standards. It is likely that other states also have this kind of variability among implemented ASCA model programs. An evaluation focus on implementation would help to ensure that in fact programs have been established as expected. Carey, Harrity, and Dimmitt (2005) developed a pre-implementation self-assessment that could be used by school counselors, building principals, and other district administrators to measure the extent to which a school district is ready to implement the ASCA National Model. The survey instrument contains 54 items keyed to seven readiness domains. Each item is rated with a 3-point scale (“like my district” = 1; “somewhat like my district” = 2; “not like my district” = 3) (Carey et al., 2005). Results can be averaged in a variety of ways and act to generate discussion about problems in implementation or constraints that need to be addressed. Other instruments and processes surely exist. And implementation evaluation can be labor intensive. However, the work is worth the effort to ensure sound, stable program implementation aligned with the ASCA National Model (2012).

### **Formative Evaluation**

Little in the way of formative evaluation examples were found in the literature. Formative evaluation addresses the questions: What is working well in the program? What needs change? What



improvements to the program could be made? Formative evaluation is focused on near-term changes to the program that could be done on an ongoing basis so that the chances of obtaining distal outcomes are increased with a constantly improving, well-functioning school counseling program. Feedback from stakeholders such as teachers, the principal, and parents, for example, is a key aspect of formative evaluation. Since proximal outcomes are directly tied to counselor practices and interventions (NLC, 2007), formative evaluation would complement and inform the examination of proximal outcome data. Ultimately what is desired from any evaluation is that it is acted on in some way. The evaluation literature is clear that if evaluation that informs revisions to a program is to be acted on, program personnel must have a central role in constructing the evaluation and collecting and interpreting the data (Weiss, 1988, 1998). Thus, school counselors would most productively conduct formative evaluation.

### **Evaluability Assessment**

Another evaluation tool that could be employed is evaluability assessment (EA). Originally developed to ascertain the readiness of a program for a productive outcome evaluation, it is now recognized that EA can be used for a variety of different purposes that support implementation and the ongoing needs of the program for improvement (Trevisan & Walser, 2015). By examining internal documents about the program, EA produces an initial or ideal program theory. Observation data from the program in operation and stakeholder feedback is then obtained to determine whether the initial or ideal program theory for a school counseling program is consonant with the program theory in reality. EA could be productively employed with school counselors to determine the extent to which a program is implemented with respect to ASCA standards and whether the program is aligned with a program theory. Martin and Carey (2014) offer a logic model or graphic representation of the program theory that guides the evaluation of the ASCA National Model (2012). EA can test this idea empirically. Also, there may be components

to a program or collection of programs that are additions to the ASCA model or articulated internally to a program in different ways. Either case would compel the need to test whether the program operates as intended and in a way that maximizes the probability of reaching distal outcomes. Further benefits accrue with the deliberate and active involvement of school counselors in the EA process.

### **Recommendation 3: Widen the Use of Methodological Approaches and Evaluation Strategies**

There are a variety of methodological approaches and evaluation strategies that are available to researchers conducting statewide evaluation studies that are, to date, scarce or not present in the school counseling research literature, depending on the strategy. There is not space to present all of them and full explication of these strategies is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, three are mentioned here as they could quickly become productive additions to the school counseling research enterprise, particularly statewide policy evaluation work. These are (1) quasi-experimental designs, (2) case studies, and (3) multisite evaluations.

### **Quasi-experimental Designs**

As mentioned the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has specified the experimental design as the gold standard of research methods as it provides the strongest warrant for impact and claims of best practice. A good deal of discussion and debate has occurred over this promulgation in the education and research policy literature. It is clear that school counseling researchers are cognizant of this standard. For school counseling research studies, a core issue is likely the difficulty in randomly assigning (not random selection) students, teachers, school counselors, or other appropriate research participants to treatment and control groups. Without random assignment, it is not possible to unequivocally attribute differences observed between groups to the treatment. Without random assignment, self-selection

becomes a variable confounded with the treatment effect and, thus, a threat to internal validity.

There are, however, quasi-experimental research strategies that now have empirical evidence for reducing the challenges of bias and imprecision in estimates and, thereby, increase the warrant associated with findings from these types of designs (Shadish, 2000). One design that I briefly discuss is the regression-discontinuity design (RDD) as it is a strong quasi-experimental strategy, and there is an example of its use in the school counseling literature. Hurwitz and Howell (2014) used data from the National Center for Education Statistics' Schools and Staffing Survey to estimate the impact of an additional school counselor on a 4-year college enrollment. To employ an RDD, a cutoff score of some type is needed which allows comparisons before and after the cutoff score. In this case, all sample states in the survey had policies which specified enrollment thresholds for high schools that would require the addition of a school counselor once the threshold was met. The real benefit of using RDD is that the sample before and after the cutoff score, e.g., in the Hurwitz and Howell (2014) study, before and after the addition of a school counselor, is virtually the same and, thus, self-selection is no longer a validity threat to estimating impact.

The regression-discontinuity design can be quite complicated in application as it is technically possible to have multiple cutoff scores in one design. Nevertheless, this is a strategy that could be useful in the toolbox of school counseling policy researchers conducting statewide evaluation impact studies. For more detail on quasi-experimental designs and RDD, see Shadish, Cook, and Campbell (2002), likely the most authoritative text on the subject. Also the Institute of Education Science in the US Department of Education sponsors yearly research design workshops to broaden and deepen the skills of education researchers. The Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University is a provider of some of these workshops. The workshop on quasi-experimental design has been presented several times through

this unit. Materials, including PowerPoint presentations from past workshops, are posted at the following URL: <http://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/workshops/past-workshops/>.

### Case Studies

Case studies have been a part of the evaluator toolkit for many years, and, more recently, there have been numerous methodological developments in case study methodology (Byrne, 2013). Most case study research is qualitative in nature with observation as a key data element of this strategy. Some of the methodological improvements include better validity arguments through the use of plausible, rival explanations; triangulation; logic models; and improved generalization of findings with the use of one or more theories (Yin, 2013). Case studies offer a low-cost alternative to most statistical impact studies for policy evaluation. On the one hand, users must believe that impact can be teased out through carefully crafted case studies. On the other hand, there is simply no better alternative to understanding context and dealing with complexity. Moreover, while experiments provide the best estimates of impact on prespecified outcomes, case studies provide best estimates of unintended outcomes and a sense of what might be possible or not imagined in programs, above and beyond prespecified student outcomes (Patton, 2015).

Cronbach (1982) argued that external validity (rather internal validity) is of most importance for evaluators providing data for policymakers, as policymakers are interested in whether or not a policy intervention works in a variety of contexts. The case study is best suited for addressing this concern. For school counseling statewide evaluation work, a few well-selected cases could provide the kind of information many key stakeholders need. And this could be done with a good deal less expense than many alternative quantitative strategies (for more detail on case studies, see Yin, 1989, 1993).

### Multisite Evaluations

Conducting multisite evaluations (MSEs) is a common approach used at the federal level for evaluating government-sponsored programs and

used by foundations in evaluating foundation initiatives. There is a small, emerging body of work on MSEs in the evaluation literature. In short, MSEs are not just single-site evaluation designs applied to multiple sites. MSEs also include cross-site collaboration, cross-site and individual site analyses, and attention to differences among sites (Rog, 2010). MSEs can be used for a variety of purposes which include examining variation in program implementation as well as to conduct randomized clinical trials. A particular type of multisite evaluation is referred to as cluster evaluation (Straw & Herrell, 2002). Cluster evaluations could be employed in statewide evaluations of school counseling programs particularly in the early phases of adoption and implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs. Two to three site visits are typically conducted each year as well as 1–2 networking conferences in which evaluation information is shared and project personnel (school counselors) can learn from one another.

Reasons to employ cluster evaluations for statewide school counseling programs include a focused, uniform look at a bounded set of programs. Ten to 15 school counseling programs could form a cluster. These programs might, for example, all be at about the same point of adoption and implementation. Further, cluster evaluations could foster the accumulation of implementation knowledge more quickly, identify early signs of impact, and increase the rate of systematic change. (For further detail on multisite and cluster evaluations, see Barley & Jenness, 1993; Worthen & Schmitz, 1997; Herrell & Straw, 2002; Rog, 2010.)

#### **Recommendation 4: Be Deliberate in Evaluation of Promising Practices**

As mentioned, few studies exist on the interventions, curricula, and practices that comprise much of the day-to-day work of a school counselor (Carey & Martin, 2015). Given that most statewide evaluation studies focus on the impact of the entire comprehensive school counseling program, Carey and Martin (2015) point out that the

ASCA National Model (2012) can be regarded as a framework and that the elements that flesh out the framework could differ from school to school, district to district, and state to state. This variability suggests in part that context matters. In more practical terms, an intervention in one school may not be as beneficial in another.

A starting place to think about evaluation could be the expanded NLC evaluation framework discussed earlier. Evaluation done at the program level could focus on implementation and formative evaluation of the intervention, curriculum, or practice, as previously argued. Once fully implemented, tested locally, and revised as necessary, an impact study that controls for other program elements could be conducted. In other words, a bounded strategy to isolate the practice being evaluated for impact will be required to attribute outcomes to this practice.

Any of the aforementioned evaluation strategies could be employed. Case studies, for example, would be particularly useful in working to understand the impact a particular practice has on student outcomes, given context and separating or isolating the practice from other program elements. Further, should several schools within a school district or across the state employ a particular curriculum, a multisite cluster evaluation could be productively used.

#### **Recommendation 5: Meet Stakeholder Needs by Focusing on Evaluation Use**

In a recent volume, Mayne (2014) summarizes over 40 years of evaluation use research in the literature. Evaluation use is easily the most researched construct in the evaluation field. And for good reason. If evaluations are not used in some way, it is hard to justify expenditures for this work.

There are a variety of classification schemes for use in the literature. The classification scheme offered by Mayne (2014) is comprehensive, detailed, and recent so will be highlighted here. The classification scheme offered by Mayne (2014) includes the following five types of evalu-

ation use: (1) instrumental use, (2) enlightenment use, (3) persuasive use, (4) process use, and (5) symbolic use. Each will be briefly described with an example of how it could be fostered within a school-based counseling policy evaluation plan.

Instrumental use is done by simply following through on a recommendation from an evaluation. It is likely the most common way in which we have thought of evaluation use over the years. In the statewide evaluation study of Nebraska school counseling programs, Carey, Harrington, Martin, and Hoffman (2012) found a variety of beneficial student outcomes and recommended the development and implementation of the comprehensive developmental guidance model, the establishment of more favorable student-to-school counselor ratios, and the provision of career and technical education. States and school districts following through with one or more of these recommendations would be a straightforward example of instrumental use.

Enlightenment use of evaluation occurs when individuals learn about a program, think about the program in different ways, and/or reflect on features of the program in which new understanding can emerge. Enlightenment use would occur if, for example, a member of a state legislature read an evaluation report and took the report seriously enough to consider ways in which school counselors could be best deployed to optimally support students. Enlightenment use is somewhat subtle in comparison to other evaluation uses but potentially powerful in helping school counselors gain a foothold in education reform policies and efforts.

Persuasive use occurs when an evaluation is used to argue for a certain program or persuade others regarding the benefit of a specific program. Most statewide evaluation studies examined in this chapter have an element of persuasive use. These articles argue for the role and place of the school counselor in school education reform work and further argue for the use of the ASCA National Model (2012) to organize school counseling services.

Process use occurs, for example, when school counselors and/or other stakeholders use the evaluation to increase organizational learning.

The evaluation work could include evaluation conceptualization, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Salina et al. (2013) illustrate process use in the implementation and monitoring of the All Hands on Deck program. School counselors used data to help revise the role of the school counselor and monitor the implementation of the program as they sought to help a low-achieving high school. The results were noteworthy as decreased dropout rates and increased graduation rates were well documented and in part due to data-driven activities and services.

Symbolic use is use of evaluation for political purposes. Since evaluation always occurs in a political context to one degree or another, one could argue that all evaluations have at least overtones of symbolic use. In a more clear sense of the term, symbolic use of evaluation occurs when attempting to justify a prior decision, e.g., to implement or eliminate a program.

An evaluation could be employed for more than one use. Most statewide evaluation studies in this chapter could be employed to foster enlightenment and persuasive use as the authors seek to help readers understand the benefits of school-based counseling and the current means of organizing services as well as persuade others of the importance of school-based counseling to student success. The important point here is to identify desired evaluation use in a particular study and be deliberate in developing and implementing ways to foster this use.

### **Recommendation 6: Inferring Impact from a Collection of Disparate, Single Studies**

All studies in the literature, whether evaluation or research-oriented, convey two things. One, findings were provided that show some evidence attributing productive practices or positive student outcomes to the development and implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs. Two, each study provided a fairly detailed list of study limitations with the usual cautionary note to not overinterpret the results.

To be sure, the studies found for this chapter can be described as a collection of uncoordinated single research studies. Moreover, the studies employed a variety of research strategies, none of which are experiments, making arguments for impact difficult or impossible, and, in turn, constrain efforts to assemble the studies into a coherent statement of policy impact. Given NCLB legislation that advocates for (a) research-based practices and (b) its admonition that the randomized control trial provides the strongest approach for making impact claims, the statewide evaluation studies reviewed for this chapter tend to communicate an apology for not meeting this methodological standard.

However, the studies provide uniformly positive findings concerning key aspects of comprehensive school-based counseling programs. And although the research methods used vary by study and often rely on existing data that can be conveniently obtained, the methods were used well, with good intention, and carefully discussed in the context of each individual study. While stitching together these studies to provide a coherent and persuasive policy picture is challenging, the studies taken as a whole suggest that comprehensive school-based counseling programs, fully implemented and supported by building staff, could provide a strong component to education reform efforts.

In a review and commentary of a collection of articles about policy research that reflect several different disciplines (e.g., economics, sociology, political science), Feuer (2009) provides a cogent and compelling argument for moving forward with solutions to complex educational problems even if the research that supports these solutions hasn't met the highest standards of the disciplines involved or practices in the field. Feuer conveys the argument this way:

To hold out for research that “clinches” rather than “vouches for” certain policy choices (Cartwright, 2007), or to insist on “optimal” rather than reasonably good solutions (Feuer, 2006), is to risk raising the evidentiary bar just high enough to discourage – if not disqualify – any action whatsoever. The problems of education require dedicated attention by scholars of many disciplines and traditions, and are just too urgent to be deferred until interdis-

ciplinary research is permanently cleansed of its inevitable uncertainties and imperfections. (p. 105)

Although Feuer was specifically referring to interdisciplinary education policy research, the argument about the problem of holding out for the highest evidentiary standard applies well to all education policy research, including school counseling policy research. Feuer's argument provides a path forward among school counseling policy researchers to take advantage of, rather than apologize for, the well-established school counseling policy research studies found in the literature to date. Whiston, Tai, Rahardja, and Eder (2011) provide an example of Feuer's thinking as they argue for the positive impact of many school counseling interventions, despite the uneven nature of outcome research in this area.

### **Recommendation 7: Reach Out to the Broader Education Research and Policymaking Community**

Nine of the 11 statewide school counseling evaluation studies were published in the journal, *Professional School Counseling*. Nearly all of the school counseling research studies that were read in preparation for this chapter or included in this chapter were published either in the aforementioned journal or the *Journal of Counseling and Development*. Most of this work can be thought of as sound, well-thought research accomplished under resource constraints. It is also insular to school counseling. As a consequence, much if not most of the broader education research and policymaking community is unaware of this work. Publication of future studies in broader education research and practitioner journals could help to (a) make the case for school counselors as a viable component to school reform efforts, (b) illustrate the good research work done by the school counseling academic community, and (c) place school counseling in the mainstream of K-12 education research and policymaking discussions and debates. Publishing statewide evaluation studies in these outlets is a



form of enlightenment use as it seeks to influence researchers and policymakers about the importance and impact school-based counseling can have in the lives of young people.

Education research journals that could be considered include *Educational Researcher*, *American Educational Research Journal*, and *Review of Educational Research*. These are top-tier AERA journals that have wide readership among prominent education researchers nationally. More school counseling researchers could include in their professional conference work, presentation of their research at the annual AERA meeting. These meetings often have 12,000 attendees or more that include K-12 personnel, state and national education staffers and policymakers, professionals from think tanks and private research firms, and, of course, academics from around the world. By regularly presenting at the AERA annual meeting, the school counseling discipline could begin to make a strong claim for school counseling as an important area for research, resources, and a fundamental component to reform efforts, particularly reform that places the school building as the unit of change. *Kappan* is a policy- and practice-oriented journal that has wide readership. One will likely find *Kappan* in every school or college of education, most school district offices, as well as state offices of education. The articles are written to reach a wide audience and are likely a key venue for making the case for school counseling and its impacts on achievement and achievement-related student outcomes.

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## Application to Other Countries

Evaluation is always done in a political, economic, and social context. Thus, whether the aforementioned evaluation recommendations could be applied in other countries is an open question. Application will also depend on how the role of school-based counseling is conceptualized and organized within schools and school systems in other countries. The chapter on policy research on school-based counseling in Australia by Campbell (2016) provides an opportunity for

an interesting thought experiment for international policymakers in considering the possible application of evaluation recommended in this chapter. Campbell (2016) cogently describes the historical development of the school counseling professional as surprisingly similar to the USA. The desire to improve the lives of young people, the use of standardized testing as a tool to help identify special needs for students, and the national push to develop and connect students to vocational interests are all phenomena that have occurred in the USA. In addition, the country is organized with semiautonomous states that govern schools and schooling, as is the case with the USA. Campbell (2016) is clear, however, in differentiating school-based counseling in Australia from the USA in that there is not an organized program to deliver school-based counseling services in Australia, as is the case in the USA. The school-based counselor in Australia is a professional role, sometimes identified with different names, and, in recent years, a role with increasing tasks. Further, nearly all schools have access to school-based counseling services so comparison between schools with school-based counseling services to schools without is not possible. While Campbell (2016) suggests that evaluation could be useful for school-based counseling as a profession, there has been little interest in doing so in Australia and little in the way of available resources for evaluation. In short, the recommendations offered in this chapter will likely not work well in Australia, without significant revisions to account for contextual factors.

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## Conclusion

The school counseling policy and research community has done wonderful work investigating the impact of comprehensive programs and making a solid argument for the importance of school-based counselors in K-12 education reform. There are a number of states that have worked to implement the ASCA National Model (2012) or its predecessor, the CDG. Impact evidence, though tentative, and limited to a few states, is compelling. And I will bet most if not all of this



work was done under enormous resource constraints. I further wager that education policy researchers and policymakers throughout the country will be keenly interested in this work and the possibilities school counselors can offer. A key challenge is getting this work in front of them in a way they can understand and act on.

The recommendations offered are based on application in the USA, given the historical, political, and economic context. Other countries considering the adoption of any of the recommendations should carefully assess the extent to which the recommendations could be applied given the contextual issues within their respective country.

I have argued that statewide evaluation studies are likely the strongest avenue for developing a body of evidence about what works, how it works, and under what conditions. I have also argued that statewide evaluation studies are likely the best strategy for moving school counseling policy forward. The NLC (2007) outcome evaluation framework is a strong starting point. With revisions to include local school counseling program evaluation work, the framework could and should be promoted to all state school counseling coordinators and done so in a variety of ways so that these busy professionals will see the power and significance of what the framework offers.

K-12 education in the USA continues to face headwinds with regard to stable and sufficient budgets, staffing, rapidly changing student populations, students with enormous challenges in their homelife and community, unrealistic expectations, and a general public skeptical of the work of educators. And to complicate matters further, much of this general public holds little understanding of what is required to be an educator in our schools today. I think the work of school counselors done through a comprehensive program can provide new energy to K-12 education reform efforts throughout the USA. Statewide policy implementation and evaluation will be critical to seeing school counselors as a viable and accepted professional in schools throughout the country.

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# Using Qualitative Methods to Evaluate Policy Implementation in School-Based Counseling

# 13

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## Introduction and Background

The need to reposition school-based counselling to meet the challenges of the twenty-first-century system of education is imperative in Africa in particular and around the globe in general. Policy and policy research related directly to school-based counselling around the globe are relatively scarce (Carey, 2016; Nakamura 1887). This is due largely to the fact that many countries of the world do not seem to appreciate the connections between school-based counselling and national priorities. In addition, the educational policies of most countries seem to be what determines the direction and quality of school-based counselling in such countries. In Nigeria, for instance, until recently when an attempt is being made to develop a framework for guidance and counselling services in Nigerian schools, only a terse statement was made on guidance and counselling in the national policy on education (Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017).

According to Harris (2013), school-based counselling around the world shows great variability in terms of focus, role, training, and models. The school child in many African countries,

for instance, has many challenges arising from his fast-changing environment, thus making adjustment difficult. The present-day educational system in many African countries is faced with many challenges such as poorly motivated teachers and students, lack of infrastructure, poor funding, policy summersaults by successive governments, etc. If, however, school-based counselling is properly conceived and implemented in each country of the world, it can serve as a tool to enhance the total development of learners. Hence, there is the need for a more holistic and well-articulated school-based counselling programs for school children around the world.

Qualitative research methods constitute a very important mechanism for evaluating policy implementation in Africa as well as other parts of the world. Qualitative methodology is a systematic subjective approach that involves gathering of information that is not necessarily in numerical form Denzin & Lincoln (2000). Although in most situations, numbers are necessary for analysis, qualitative methods can provide in-depth information that is not possible with quantitative methods. Qualitative methods are useful in gathering comprehensive information on how people feel and think about a particular program or activity. Qualitative methods involve a correct description of participant responses; this helps evaluators to gain insight into the life experiences of a group of people and at the same time to be able to give meaning to those experiences.

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This process is a broad methodological approach that involves a systematic rigorous investigation of a situation or problem in order to generate new knowledge or validate existing knowledge (McLeod, 2008). Qualitative process can also be described as an inductive approach, which aims at evaluating and gaining deeper understanding on how a policy has been implemented (Hunt, 2015). This process seeks answers to questions, gathers evidence, discovers facts, and grasps the understanding of a given problem from the perspectives of the participants.

Qualitative research is especially effective and provides the best option in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of a particular population (Paton, 2002). It is important to note that the appropriateness of any given school-based counselling practice or policy must be considered within its context. Understanding the context is necessary for the success of intentional efforts to promote the development of school-based counselling through policy and advocacy (Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015).

Procedures in qualitative method are based on social constructivism perspective, while data are gathered through interview, observation, and archival content. These procedures rely heavily on the collection of data that are non-numeric in nature, such as words and pictures, and, at the same time, help to access participants' experiences on issues. This method can help to offer multifaceted descriptions of people's understanding on the subject matter. It is also important to mention that when qualitative researches are poorly done, the results might not be useful, so the researcher must ensure that everything is done right to get the best results. In using the qualitative research, the trained evaluator must review enough literature on the research area and identify if the qualitative approach will be appropriate to gather required information or not in the given circumstances (Kothari & Garg, 2014; Glaser & Strauss 1967).

## **Methods of Collecting Qualitative Data**

### **Interviews**

The interview method of collecting data involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses. This method can be used through personal interviews and sometimes through telephone interviews (Kothari & Garg, 2014). A personal interview requires a person known as the interviewer asking questions generally in a face-to-face contact to other person or persons referred to as interviewee (usually the interviewer starts the interview and collects the information). The use of interviews as a data collection method begins with the assumption that the participants' perspectives are meaningful and useful to the research. There are basically two types of interviews – in-depth interviews and structured interviews.

### **In-Depth Interviews**

In-depth interview is a major means of gathering qualitative data. It is a process that captures the respondents' opinions in their own words, a very desirable strategy in qualitative data collection Rubin & Rubin (1995). This allows the evaluator to present the importance of such experience from the respondent's perspective. In-depth interviews are conducted within individuals or with small groups of people. An in-depth interview in a face-to-face dialogue between a skilled interviewer and an interviewee with the aim of obtaining useful information could be used for data analysis (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

In-depth interviews sometimes involve the use of open-ended questions, where interviewees can answer questions on their own terms and in as much detail as they like. This process involves much probing and open-ended questions. The evaluators prepare a systematic and compressive



catalogue of questions on issues to be discussed. This process must be pin down to a guided conversation where the evaluator becomes an attentive listener. The nonverbal skills of the respondents must be taken into consideration (Patton, 1990). The evaluator must be trained personnel who are sensitive, empathetic, and able to establish a nonthreatening environment in which participants feel comfortable. In order to gather relevant information, the evaluator must understand the techniques of paraphrasing and reflection. In-depth interviews can be used at any stage of the evaluation process. Interview data can be recorded on tape with the permission of the participants.

The types of questions used in interviews could depend on the purpose of the data gathering. For instance, they could be:

- Knowledge based, e.g., what did you learn during the session
- Experience based, e.g., in what ways have things changed in your community since this program began
- Practice based, e.g., in what ways, if any, has this training influenced your attitude to work
- Opinion based, e.g., what do you think of the program
- Feeling based, e.g., how do you feel participating in the program

A good interviewer should be sensitive to the mood and feelings of the interviewee, listens well, and encourages them to elaborate on the topic discussed. A lot of preparation and rehearsal is required on the part of the interviewer.

### **Structured Interview**

Structured interviews contain a standardized means of getting information. Such interviews involve the use of predetermined questions and highly standardized techniques of recording. The interviewer in a structured interview follows a rigid procedure laid down, asking questions in a form and order already prescribed. They are sometimes done through the adminis-

tration of questionnaire that contains the same set of carefully worded and ordered set of questions used for each of the respondent. This technique places less emphasis on the skill required by the interviewer to do a good job and also reduces the level of the influence of the interviewer on the interview process. Structured interviews are useful where several people are conducting the interviews. On the other hand, it gives less opportunity to learn about the individual differences of the respondents.

### **Semi-structured Interview**

A semi-structured approach to interviewing represents a compromise between standardization and flexibility. In this case, an interview guide is used which is usually a checklist of the issues explored during the interview. There is typically no set order in the way the topics are arranged, and specific questions are not necessarily worked out ahead of time.

### **Unstructured Interview**

The unstructured interview is more like an informal conversation, where questions are generated during the natural flow of the conversation. Unstructured interviews are generally characterized by a flexibility approach to questioning. They usually do not follow a system of predetermined questions and standardized techniques of recording information. Although certain topics are covered, there are no predetermined questions. This can be tailored more to cater for individual differences. The data collected can vary with each person interviewed. The strength of this interview method is that the interviewer can tailor the approach and line of questioning to each individual. In a nonstructured interview, the interviewer is allowed greater freedom to ask questions and even come up with supplementary questions if need be. Sometimes he or she may change the sequence or even omit questions if the situation so requires. But this sort of flexibility leads to lack of comparability of one interview



with another. It also makes the analyses of unstructured responses a lot more cumbersome and time consuming.

Despite the variations in interview techniques, the major advantages and disadvantages of the interview method can be enumerated in a general way. The advantages of the interview method are as follows:

- A lot more information can be obtained in greater depth.
- Personal information can be obtained under this method easily.
- The language of the interview can be adopted to the ability or educational level of the interviewee.
- The interviewer can collect supplementary information about the respondent's personal characteristics and environment which is often of great value in interpreting results.
- The interviewer can usually control which person or persons will answer what questions.
- There is greater flexibility under the interview method to restructure questions especially in the case of unstructured question.

Notwithstanding the advantages of the interview method, there are a number of limitations to the method. The disadvantages are as follows:

- It is a very expensive method, especially when large and widely spread geographical sample is taken.
- There is always the possibility of bias on the part of both the interviewer and the interviewee.
- Certain types of respondents may not be easily approachable, e.g., important officials, chief executives, etc.
- This method is relatively more time consuming especially when large samples are involved and recall from respondents is necessary.
- The presence of the interviewer on the spot may overstimulate the respondent.
- Effective and quality interview is premised on proper rapport with respondents, and this is very often not automatic.

## Focus Groups

A focus group is like an interview with a small group of people rather than just one person. Typically a semi-structured approach is adopted with six to ten people or slightly more are interviewed together. Information is gathered through interview and observation. Patton (1990) noted that the focus group is all about interviewing the participants in order to gather relevant information concerning a case study or event/situation. Focus group discussion uses the group interaction process to generate data, and it is closely related to in-depth interview because it gives you the opportunity to generate new ideas.

The focus group technique is a highly efficient way to collect data. It gives you the opportunity to receive the opinions of several people at the same time. The social setting provides a measure of validation for the information, since extreme or false views tend to be challenged by others in the group. The process is often audiotaped and transcribed. A skilled facilitator can guide the group's dynamics so that participants stay on course and focused on the topic. It also creates opportunity for people who are shy or who have less popular opinion to open up and speak up.

## Observations

The observation method is the most commonly used method especially in studies relating to behavioral sciences. Typically we all observe things around us, but this sort of observation is not scientific observation. Observation becomes a scientific tool and the method of data collection for the researcher, when it is systematically planned and recorded and is subjected to checks and controls.

Observational techniques are methods by which the evaluators gather first-hand information about a program. It is another way of collecting qualitative data by actually going on-site to observe what is going on. The evaluators have the opportunity to gather data on different range of behavior and at the same time learn specific things that others may never take note of.

Depending on the needs for the evaluation, everything can be captured, including the physical environment, social organization, program activities, as well as behaviors and interactions of people. Or the evaluator can decide to take a more narrow focus.

Observation method can be used to assess the program and the effect of policies on the organization; this process is usually unstructured and flexible. However, the evaluator must be well informed about the program. Observers should constantly record their findings, and this will be judged against a continuum of expectations. Observations are channeled through an organized protocol describing events in a narrative form. The evaluator must take into cognizance the location of the program and the organization and administration of the program of activities. In recording events, the evaluator should be able to describe the setting, identify people, document interactions, and at the same time focus on the event that needs attention in the program. The descriptions must be factual, accurate, and thorough. When many observers are used at the same time, it gives the researchers an ample opportunity to have access to a large volume of data, therefore preventing observer bias (Nouria & Judith, 2016). However, Patton (1990) noted that observational data helps to *describe* the setting that was observed, the activities that took place in that setting, the people who participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspective of those observed. There is a need to take record of the physical settings and the activities of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

The observation method could be in different forms. When observation is characterized by careful definition of units to be observed, standardized conditions of observation and selection of pertinent data of observation, then the observation is called *structured observation*. But when observation is to take place without these characteristics to be thought out in advance, the same is referred to as *unstructured observation*. There are also the *participant* and *nonparticipant* forms of observation. If the observer observes by making himself more or less a member of the group

he is observing so that he can experience what members of the group experience, the observation is called the *participant observation*. But when the observer observes as a detached emissary without any attempt on his part to experience through participation what others feel, the observation type is often called *nonparticipant observation*. If observation takes place in a natural setting, it may be termed as *uncontrolled observation*, but when observation takes place according to definite prearranged plans, involving experimental procedure, the same is referred to as *controlled observation* (Kothari & Garg, 2014). Each of these forms of observation has its merits and demerits.

The advantages of the observation method when done accurately include the following:

- Subjective bias is largely eliminated.
- The information obtained relates to what is currently happening, and it is not affected by either the past behavior or future intentions or attitudes.
- It is independent of respondents' willingness to respond and as such is relatively less demanding of active cooperation on the part of respondents as in the case of other methods.

The observation method has a number of limitations as well. They include:

- It is a relatively expensive method.
- The information provided by this method is sometimes limited.
- Sometimes unforeseen factors may interfere with observational task. At times the fact that some people are hardly accessible to direct observation can create obstacle for effective data collection.

## Document Studies/Secondary Data

Secondary data means data that are already available. They refer to the data, which have already been collected and analyzed by someone else. Secondary data may either be published data or

unpublished data. Usually published and unpublished data are available in the following forms:

- Publications of federal, state, and local governments
- Publications of foreign governments, international bodies, development partners, and their subsidiary organizations
- Various academic, technical, and trade journals
- Books, magazines, and newspapers
- Reports and publications of various associations
- Reports prepared by research institutes, universities, scholars, etc. in different fields
- Public records and statistics, historical documents, and other sources of published information
- Websites
- Diaries, letters, and unpublished biographies and autobiographies
- Trade associations, labor bureaus, and other public/private individual and organizations

Evaluators can retrieve information from past official records. This can include documents that are stored in the library, computer, web pages, employee policy manuals, academic calendars, committee minutes, correspondence, memoranda or reports, student handbooks, etc.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined a document as “any written or recorded material” not prepared for the purposes of the evaluation or at the request of the inquirer. The public records are materials generated and kept for the purpose of confirming an event. The source of information can be external (census report, newspaper) or internal (transcripts, historical account, minutes of meetings, etc.). This can assist an evaluator in gathering information about the larger community and relevant trends. Such materials can be helpful in assessing the school-based counseling program. They can help the evaluator understand the institution’s resources, values, processes, priorities, and concerns. Personal documents are personal experiences, which can be documented in diaries, portfolios, photographs, artworks, schedules, scrapbooks, or poetry. Personal docu-

ments can assist the evaluator to have robust information about the participants.

Before using any secondary data, evaluators and researchers must ensure that such data possess the following characteristics:

- Reliability of data: The reliability of the data can be tested by finding out things about the data such as who collected the data, what were the sources of the data, were the data collected using proper methods, at what time were the data collected, was there any bias in the compiler of the data, etc.
- Suitability of data: Check to see that the data available is suitable. Data may be suitable for one enquiry and may not necessarily be found suitable in another enquiry.
- Adequacy of data: If the level of accuracy achieved in the data is found to be inadequate, such data should be considered inadequate and should be discarded.

### **Review of Continuous Assessment Practices in Nigerian Schools Using Qualitative Methods**

Eseré and Idowu (2011) conducted a qualitative investigation of policy investigation that serves a good model. One policy that cuts across all levels of the educational system in Nigeria is the policy on continuous assessment. In Sect. 1 of the *National Policy on Education* (revised 2004), which deals with the philosophy and goals of education in Nigeria, Paragraph 9(g) states that “educational assessment and evaluation shall be liberalized by their being based in whole or in part on continuous assessment of the progress of the individual” (p. 9). This statement is well amplified in subsequent sections of the document dealing with primary education (Sect. 4), secondary education (Sect. 5), and tertiary education and finally in Sect. 12 which deals with the planning, administration, and supervision of education.

In an attempt to ascertain the effectiveness or otherwise of continuous assessment practices in selected schools in Nigeria, a policy-related study titled “Continuous assessment

practices in Nigerian schools: A review” was carried out using qualitative methods to assess and review continuous assessment practices in selected Nigerian schools (Esere & Idowu, 2011). Qualitative research is particularly appropriate for a study of this nature as it can give depth and details of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods (Flick, 2002). The focus group technique employed in this study is a highly efficient way to collect data. It gives one the opportunity to receive the opinions of several people at the same time. The social setting provides a measure of validation for the information, since extreme or false views tend to be challenged by others in the group. The process is often audiotaped and transcribed. A skilled facilitator can generally guide the group’s dynamics so that participants stay on course and focused on the topic. It also creates opportunity for people who are shy or who have less popular opinion to open up and speak up.

Recruitment of participants for the study was by stratified random selection, guided by the information provided by the Kwara State Teaching Service Commission. Thus, the participants for the study comprised 500 teachers (age range 30–55 years, male = 198, female = 302). Procedure for data collection: Prior to the commencement of the program, permission to conduct the study was sought from principals of the selected secondary schools where the study was carried out. Thereafter, the participants’ consent was sought and obtained. They were equally assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The data collection exercise was mainly through focus group discussions (FGDs). Litosseliti (2003) points out that compared with other qualitative methods where meaning emerges from the participants, focus groups have an element of flexibility and adaptability. Toward this end, ten focus group discussions (one for each school) were held with the participants. Each discussion lasted for an average of 1 h and revolved around one major theme: Teachers’ continuous assessment practices in relation to the four major attributes that characterize continuous assessment (systematic, comprehensive, cumulative, and guidance oriented). Data collection was through

interviews and focus group discussion, which centered on the teachers’ continuous assessment practices. The recording of the FGD sessions was made through note-taking and also by the use of audiocassette recorders.

Descriptive analysis was used for the demographic characteristics of the participants and to present the participants’ responses on their continuous assessment practices. The transcription of the recorded audiocassettes, together with the recorded field notes, provided data for the thematic analysis. Transcripts were read and annotated. Multiple readings of the transcripts were undertaken to identify major themes or ideas revealed by the group members as well as critical words, phrases, and examples. The experiences of the participants were compared and contrasted, searching for patterns either made explicitly by participants or derived implicitly. Important and frequently expressed ideas or themes were then studied for pattern of connection and grouped into broader categories. The main themes in the data formed a picture that reflected the assessment practices of all the teachers in the study. The findings of the study are very revealing. Results show that the continuous assessment practices of most of the teachers were faulty and deviated markedly from policy guidelines. The study recommended that in-service training be organized for secondary school teachers in Nigeria, to educate them more on continuous assessment guidelines as spelt out in National Policy on Education for the attainment of the overall educational goals. This study demonstrates the utility of qualitative methods in surfacing rich and useful information to evaluate and improve policy implementation.

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## Conclusions

In summary, the qualitative methods discussed in this chapter can be used either singly or together in the evaluation of policy implementation in school-based counselling by helping to explain the steps between intervention and the final outcome, including implementation and intermediate outcomes. This can help capture results not con-

tained in the quantitative measures. Documents, interviews, and focus group discussions can help determine how well a school-based counselling program has been implemented. Qualitative methods can help check on how well the program activities have been carried out and also determine the intermediate effect of the intervention Guba & Lincoln (2005).

Qualitative methods can be used to complement and also verify quantitative measures. Although in most situations, numbers are necessary for analysis, qualitative methods can provide in-depth information that is not possible with quantitative methods Bogdan & Biklen (1992). Qualitative methods are useful in gathering comprehensive information on how people feel and think about a particular program or activity. It can help to identify unintended outcomes. Interviews and possibly observations can prove to be very effective in identifying unintended outcomes. Interviews can be particularly efficient in measuring the reactions of participants to particular types of intervention. Qualitative methods can help to explain lack of success of a promising intervention, for instance. In most cases, policies are developed as a tool to impact the lives of people in one form or the other. Policies are meant to ultimately affect the lives of people. The best way therefore to assess the effectiveness of any policy is to talk to people that the policy is designed for. There are a lot of stories about the way people feel, the attitudes of people, and sometimes the general disposition of people that figures will never be able to tell. The different qualitative methods discussed in this chapter provide a window into an important aspect of policy assessment especially as it relates to the well-being of people.

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# Using Cost-Benefit Analyses in School-Based Counseling Policy Research

# 14

Sang Min Lee and Mijin Chung

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## Introduction

School counselors who do not have the knowledge of cost-benefit analysis may experience difficulty in presenting the benefit of their practices to their stakeholders, students, parents, school administrators, and policy makers. Understanding basic cost-benefit analysis procedures is vital for school counselors to efficiently manage their school counseling program and explain the outcome to their stakeholders. This chapter introduces the readers the use of basic concepts of cost-benefit analyses when conducting school counseling program evaluation and writing grant proposal.

Cost-benefit analyses are all around us. In fact, it would be difficult to go through daily life without calculating costs and benefits. By analyzing costs and benefits, we buy a smartphone, invest stock, and plan our budgets. The most basic form of cost benefit analyses is to estimate the expected balance of costs and benefits. The cost-benefit analyses are defined as a systematic process for calculating and comparing costs and benefits of

public policy, important decisions, projects, or programs in monetary terms. The cost-benefit analyses determine options that provide the best approach for the adoption and practice in terms of benefits in labor, time, and cost savings. Cost-benefit analysis can estimate both the costs and consequences of counseling interventions in monetary units. The results are stated either in the form of a ratio of costs to benefits or as a simple sum presenting the net benefit of using one counseling intervention over another intervention.

Most researchers mention increased requests for school counseling services, good quality of counseling services, and counseling effectiveness as successful outcomes of school counselor placement. As psychological outcomes of this placement, benefits students, teachers, and parents would receive from those outcomes are discussed. However, the outcomes described above are just theoretically and academically expected results, and thus, the results do not provide the outcomes of counseling with concrete evidence. There are not only advantages but also limitations in analyzing the outcomes of school counseling services using frequency analysis on counseling services or previous studies on the effectiveness of individual and group counseling. For the result analysis that utilizes counseling service frequency and the number of counseling sessions, it would be difficult to estimate the whole frequency of counseling services due to a lack of standards and criteria for measuring counseling

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frequency based on the areas for counseling services and systematic descriptions of counselor's duties. For instance, we may have failed to estimate the performance of a whole group of counselors instead of an individual counselor because all data on numbers of counseling services cannot be consolidated without common standards and regulations. Although previous research on group counseling programs revealed the difference between students who received group counseling and those who did not receive group counseling, the outcome analysis based on whether students participate in group counseling or not is effectiveness verification on a single counseling program. It would be far too risky to generalize from the analysis introduced above. Thus, another ways to examine the effectiveness and outcomes of school counseling system need to be considered.

Especially, school counseling system is a national project, which is operated with taxpayer money, objective, and quantitative data that are required for transparency in budget execution. In order to determine if social and economic resources are utilized effectively in implementing the school counseling system, we need to estimate the real value of school counseling system and its effectiveness. If we would like to consider the expansion of the school counseling system, by calculating the economic value of the school counseling system and school counselor's counseling performance, we need to quantify the outcomes of the school counseling system and school counselor's counseling performance and also need to prepare supporting documents used in estimating costs and benefits.

Among several economic valuation methods, this chapter focuses on the cost-benefit analysis. The readers probably already know more than they think about the cost-benefit analysis.

### **Economic and Social Costs of Mental Health Problems**

Ten to twenty percent of children and adolescents worldwide experience mental disorders. Half of all mental illnesses begin by the age of 14 and three-

quarters by mid-20s. Beyond a mental disorder, school-aged children and adolescents often experience difficulties not only in interpersonal relationships, including friendship, teacher-student relationship, and family and romantic relationship, but also in their career decision. Due to academic and career pressure, middle and high school students especially show high levels of stress that often results in school violence, substance abuse, Internet addiction, and suicidal depression. Those who have such mental health problems and lack of motivation to work may become NEET (NEET— not currently engaged in education, employment or training). Considering 30% of NEET are isolated individuals, there have been increased needs for developing a prevention and a psychological intervention within and outside the school. Children and teenagers who are psychologically challenging or/ and struggle from mental health problems often tend to experience more difficulties in their career development. As a result, children and teenagers may feel powerless and become unmotivated to work, which may lead to the unemployment of young people. How much the social cost we would pay for having these children and adolescents being unemployed? Statistical data clearly reveals the seriousness of young people's mental health problems. According to recent statistics, suicide is the first leading cause of death for teens and young adults in their 20s. This shows the current status of global mental health and how dangerously unstable it is. It is shocking that the highest suicide death rate by age group is a group of adolescents and young adults who are the driving force of economic growth. It is expected the economic cost of suicide death would be considerably high.

Kim (2006) divided a social cost for mental health diseases into two categories (i.e., direct cost, indirect cost) and estimated the social costs of mental illness based on the data of health insurance and Medicare consumers. Kim's study includes not only all types of mental disorders categorized in ICD-10, including schizophrenic disorders, borderline disorders, affective disorder, and neurological disorders, but also indirect costs, such as fees for medical services, medicine, transportation, admission to the facility, and program operation. Additional items for indirect

costs include a loss of job as well as productivity loss due to death and suicide. According to Kim's study results, the social costs of mental illness for 2003 were approximately 336 million and 3899 thousand dollars that are equal to 0.5% of GDP. The direct cost is 98 million and 9459 thousand dollars, whereas the indirect cost is 237 million and 4352 thousand dollars, which is two times higher than the direct cost. The highest rate of total cost is the cost for productivity loss due to mental illness, death, and suicide, which is 42% (i.e., 141 million and 7127 thousand dollars) of total cost. The above results may not be considered as an absolute predictor because each researcher selects different methods including various items to estimate the social cost. However, the results may be useful when estimating the social cost of mental illness in limited areas.

Despite numerous difficulties faced in calculating the social cost, several attempts have been made by researchers across the globe to calculate the social cost of problematic behaviors, such as alcohol and substance abuse and crime (Kim & Ju, 2006). As the world has become more aware of common concerns about mental health problems, many researchers have paid attention to monetary estimates of the social costs of mental health problems (Carr, Neil, Halpin, Holmes, & Lewin, 2003; Rice, Kelman, & Miller, 1991; Rice & Miller, 1998; Layard, 2004; Stephens & Joubert, 2001). According to these studies, the social cost of all mental illness categorized in ICD-9 and ICD-9-CM in the United States was 670 million dollars for the direct cost, 749 million dollars for the indirect cost, and 1479 million dollars for the total social cost in 1990. The total social cost of mental illness in Australia was 202 million and 202 thousand dollars in 2000 (Kim, 2006), whereas the social cost of mental illness in Canada was 30 million dollars for the indirect cost and 63 million dollars for the direct cost in 1998 (Stephens & Joubert, 2001).

To estimate the social costs of important phenomena and/or problematic behaviors, we need to examine the meaning and effects of such phenomena and problems our society may have. By estimating the social costs, we can obtain preliminary data on an objective that influences a

certain problem the national economy may have, which can be used as guidelines for establishing directions and goals for the national policy in the future. In addition, the social costs provide valuable evidences in prioritizing interventions for various problems (Park, Park, & Song, 2007). As mental health problems become a main topic to discuss in today's modern society, the estimated social costs of mental health problems may be used a reference in establishing mental health service policy as well as in developing an effective program intervention. In addition, with a hard quantitative data, we can utilize these social costs to make the general public and policy to be aware of the importance of mental health problems and to be proactive not reactive.

As discussed earlier, not only students' stress, such as economic burden of unemployment and tuition and adjustment problems in their school years, but also students' mental health status are closely associated with social and economic costs. However, the estimated economic and social costs of mental health problem have insufficient information to make decisions on the mental health budget and policy. When making a decision on budget and policy, we may need to take into serious consideration an analysis of how much mental health budget can reduce mental health social costs (World Health Organization, 2007). For instance, although dementia is rapidly increasing worldwide, it has been reported that mental health treatment and educational interventions for people who struggle from dementia can reduce a very low level of social costs. The treatment and interventions for dementia have been found to be ineffective in terms of cost-effectiveness (World Health Organization, 2006). Consequently, we need to consider both the social costs and the cost-effectiveness when estimating the economic costs of college students' mental health.

## Economic Valuation Methods

Bosmans et al. (2008) reported many patients who receive mental health services prefer psychotherapy to drug treatment because they believe that psychotherapy is relatively less stigmatized.

Researchers stated a cost-effective analysis on drugs, such as antidepressants, has been done, whereas there has been a lack of a cost-effective analysis on psychotherapy services. Thus, it is important to analyze systemically the economic value of psychotherapy and prevention services. Particularly, we need to examine the economic value of preventions and counseling programs offered at counseling centers in school settings by analyzing the costs and benefits. This cost-benefit analysis can help us determine which counseling intervention is the most effective in estimating the budget of mental health-related centers, such as school counseling centers. For example, this cost-benefit analysis can answer the following policy-making questions: (1) Do we need to spend more money to treat psychological symptoms, such as depression using drugs? (2) Do we need to invest more money on counseling and psychotherapy services? (3) Do we need to budget more money to prevent someone from problematic behaviors? (4) Do we need to utilize more resources to minimize the fundamental causes of depression and juvenile delinquency, such as family issues and ADHD (Brand & Price, 2000)? For instance, the cost of drug treatment that was provided to 20 individuals who have problematic behaviors is equal to the cost of prevention programs for 5,000 individuals. If these prevention programs reduced 30 incidents of problem behaviors and the social cost of 30 problematic behaviors is lower than the cost of providing prevention programs to 5,000 individuals, the prevention programs are more cost-effective than the treatment programs.

Generally, the economic value cost is estimated as direct and indirect costs separately; the costs for intangible service, such as counseling, should be estimated considering the value of a human life and disease. In other words, the values of preventing and/or reducing diseases are determined based on the values of a human life. It would be difficult to put the monetary terms on the value of a human life because it varies depending on numerous subjective judgments. Therefore, valuation methods, such as the human capital approach and the willingness to pay approach, are widely used to analyze intangible or indirect costs, such as external effect and benefits (Jung & Ko, 2004). As analyzed and

suggested in previous studies on mental health-related topics, the human capital approach is used when estimating the indirect costs (Jung & Ko, 2004; Koopmanschap & van Ineveld, 1992; Koopmanschap & Rutten, 1993; Liljas, 1998; Yun & Bae, 2003). The details of valuation methods are as follows.

First, the human capital approach (HCA) is one of the valuation methods. This approach supposes that human beings are main producers, and it considers the loss cost of death and diseases as the loss of one's total future earnings when he or she is healthy (Kim, 2006). For instance, if a student failed to get a job because of his or her mental health problems, we can estimate the amount of his or her economic loss comparing with the amount of his or her total earnings while he or she is healthy. Because this method allows us to estimate a potential loss of diseases, it is widely used when estimating the costs of diseases as well as the value of a human life (Koopmanschap, Rutten, van Ineveld, & van Roijen, 1995). Despite its disadvantage in overestimating the actual amount of the loss and its limited consideration of the indirect costs, HCA is widely used not only because it is a convenient tool, but also it clearly presents the amount of future reduced income of mental health problems (Koopmanschap et al., 1995).

Secondly, the friction cost approach (FCA) is an alternative way of HCA. This approach believes that the amount of productivity loss of mental health problems depends on the time required to recover the loss to the initial productivity level (Koopmanschap et al., 1995). In other words, FCA is based on the hypothesis of the labor market; the actual loss can be minimized by replacing the person, who stays away from workforce due to one's illness or death, with another (Liljas, 1998). However, FCA has shortcomings in estimating the cost of friction accurately because this approach ignores the traditional principles of microeconomics theory and also requires a data on absence from work due to illness, which does not consider most elements of the indirect costs (Kim, 2006).

Lastly, the willingness to pay approach (WTP) or the willingness to accept approach (WAA) is used as a valuation method. This approach mea-

asures how much money individuals would be willing to pay to make their lifestyles healthy, including decreasing physical illness, the death rate, and mental health problems. This approach may be effective when drawing social preference in public policy. It may also be used as an indicator of measuring one's value on life and health (Rice, 1994). The following question can be directly asked: "how much will you be willing to pay if your mental health problems, such as depression or anxiety, can be treated successfully?" Since WPA tends to depend on the rater's intention and/or capability, the problem has been addressed in estimating individual's subjective judgment consistently (Kim, 2006; Kim & Ju, 2006). However, this approach can be applied to various targets, which makes it effective in supplementing the shortcoming of the friction cost approach (FCA). For cost-benefit analysis, the willingness to pay approach (WTP) of contingent valuation method (CVM; Mitchell & Carson, 1989) is the major method employed and WTP measures the direct economic value estimates of nonmarket goods (e.g., environmental goods and health-care services; Bockstael, Freeman, Kopp, Portney, & Smith, 2000).

### Contingent Valuation Method

As introduced earlier in this chapter, generally economic values are calculated through both direct and indirect costs, whereas the human capital approach or willingness to pay approach, one of the contingent valuation methods, is often used when estimating intangible subjects, such as policy or counseling services. The willingness to pay approach (WTP), one of the CVMs which measure the economic cost of non-commodity, measures the economic value by examining how much people would be willing to pay for unpriced policy and/or intangible services (Rice, 1994). For example, we can estimate the economic value of policy and intangible services by investigating the individual's willingness to pay using the following questions: "What is the maximum amount of money you would be willing to pay for the system operation?" "How much would you be

willing to pay for counseling services if your career concerns are resolved?"

WTP is known as the only way to estimate the value of non-commodity using the amount of money that respondents would be willing to pay, and this approach can be used regardless of objects to measure, such as impact of environmental change, effect of system and service, and value of natural ecosystem (Hanemann, 1994).

CVM involves the use of sample surveys (questionnaires) to elicit the willingness of respondents to pay for (generally) hypothetical projects or programs (Portney, 1994). In the process, direct, indirect, and intangible treatment effects (i.e., economic values) can be evaluated. There are various elicitation methods for CVM, such as open-ended questions, bidding games, payment cards, and dichotomous choice format (Klose, 1999).

Open-ended questions are employed to ask the maximum amount respondents are willing to pay for nonmarket goods or services. However, it is often considered too difficult for respondents to answer the direct question (Johannesson, Jonsson, & Borgquist, 1991) because people do not think about specific amounts or values of nonmarket goods or services before the survey. In the bidding game, an interviewer presents a specific amount of money to respondents and asks whether they are willing to pay to receive intangible services or not (e.g., *yes* or *no*). If a respondent's answer is *yes*, the larger amount of money continuously pops up until the respondent responds *no* to the question. When *no* is answered at first, the amount decreases until the respondent answers *yes* to the question. This continuous process helps to estimate the respondents' maximum WTP. Payment cards are visual aids to provide amounts of money from zero to a large amount of money, and the WTP responses are usually affected by the range of the presented amounts (Konig & Wettstein, 2002).

Bounded dichotomous choices include single-bounded dichotomous choices and double-bounded dichotomous choices. In single-bounded dichotomous choices, the respondents answer *yes* or *no* depending on their willingness to pay with the amount presented. The procedure is similar to



that of the bidding game, but a *no* answer to the suggested amount would be the higher or lower bound of the respondent's real WTP (Hanemann, Loomis, & Kanninen, 1991). In double-bounded dichotomous choices, an interviewer asks the same question twice with different amounts. Even though the same respondents are asked twice, more information is expected to be gained when the respondents are asked repeatedly in comparison to the single-bounded dichotomous choices.

### Research Examples: Estimating the Economic Value of School Counseling Services

Previous sections have theoretically illustrated the ways to perform CVM (contingent valuation method) for cost-benefit analysis. In this section, we show the research example for estimating the perceived economic value of school counseling services. Specifically, we show how to employ the CVM to estimate Korean parents' WTP (willingness to pay) for school counseling services. Because counseling professionals use CVM infrequently, it might be helpful to observe the interpretation of an example CVM output. The highly applied style of this section is intended to provide a step-by-step guide for applied researchers and those seeking initial exposure to the method. The readers can find an example of previous research using CVM in several studies (e.g., Choi et al., 2013). I hope this section can bridge an actual research with helpful teaching and instruction. Rather than duplicating an existing research, data have been created to reflect findings from this research while providing some additional learning avenues unavailable in the previous data set.

### Participants

In order to determine the WTP for school counseling services, the researchers first conducted the survey with 2,910 parents who have children in elementary, middle, and high schools. All

these parents participated in the study voluntarily and signed an informed consent form. Among these 2,910 parents, 81% were female, and the mean age was 36.5 (SD = 4.40). In addition, 69% had two children, 28% had one child, and 3% had three and more children. Further, 23.4% reported his or her child had experienced interpersonal and personality difficulties. Most parents (86.9%) and children (84.8%) indicated that they had never sought counseling services.

### Procedure for Estimating WTP Through Survey Method

The researchers elicited the participants' WTP for school counseling services by using the CVM in conjunction with double-bounded dichotomous choices (DBDCs). The researchers randomly assigned each participant (about 300 per group) to one of six initial bids: USD 100.00 (KW 100,000), USD 150.00 (KW 150,000), USD 200.00 (KW 200,000), USD 250.00 (KW 250,000), USD 300.00 (KW 300,000), and USD 350.00 (KW 350,000) (USD 1 was equivalent to approximately KW 1000). We based these initial bids (USD 100.00) on the expected cost of school counseling, which was determined through a pilot study using an open-ended CVM survey.

If the participant answered *yes* to the initial bid, then the researcher determined his or her willingness to pay double the initial bid. If the participant answered *no*, then the researcher determined his or her willingness to pay half the initial bid. For example, if the participant answered *yes* to the first bid USD 100.00, then the researcher asked him or her the same question with the bid USD 200.00. However, if the participant answered *no*, then the researcher reduced the bid by half to USD 50.00. If the participant answered *yes* to the second bid, then his or her WTP was considered to have a lower limit reflecting the average of the second bid and infinity. If the participant answered *no*, then his or her WTP was considered to have an upper limit reflecting the average of zero and the second bid. After answering WTP questions, the participants indicated their age, gender, family income, and



counseling experience and rated the perception of the level of their child’s difficulty, their attitudes toward counseling, and perception of counseling effectiveness.

**Data Analysis**

A survival analysis was used to estimate the perceived economic value of school counseling services. This analytical method is not only widely used in medicine and psychology but also widely applied in engineering and social sciences. One of the major advantages of this method is that it can analyze incomplete data such as censored data. For this reason, it is suitable for analyzing DBDCs, which reflect censored (incomplete) data (Hong, 1998). For the survival analysis, we employed the SAS software package (Version 8.2). SAS estimates coefficients by using the maximum likelihood method. The researchers calculated the predicted median WTP for the dependent variable as the sample mean of the response interval between the first WTP response and the second one for school counseling to represent the participants’ perception of the value of school counseling.

**Results**

Table 14.1 shows the initial bids and the numbers/percentages of the participants who were willing to pay for school counseling in response

to the initial bid. In general, the participants with a higher initial bid were less willing to pay for school counseling. Table 14.2 shows the results of the multivariate survival analysis using the two regression models. The criterion variable was the interval between the first WTP response and the second one. The predictor variables were four sociodemographic factors (the participant’s age, gender, family income, and counseling experience) and three psychological factors (the participant’s perception of the level of their child’s difficulty, attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help, and perception of counseling effectiveness). The results for Model 1 (sociodemographic factors only) indicate that the participants’ counseling experience had a significant effect on their WTP. However, the other sociodemographic factors had no significant effects. The results for Model 2 (sociodemographic as well as psychological factors) indicate that their attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help had significant effects on their WTP.

The results of the multivariate survival analysis indicate that the mean WTP for school counseling varied because of the difference in the variables between the two models. Although Model 1 had fewer variables for individual school counseling than Model 2, its mean WTP was higher than that of Model 2. These results imply that the participants were willing to pay between USD 175.02 (KRW 175,020; Model 2) and USD 173.54 (KRW 173,540; Model 1) per session for school counseling.

**Table 14.1** WTP for school counseling: the initial bid

Willingness to pay	Initial bid												
	USD 100.00 (KW 100,000)		USD 150.00 (KW 150,000)		USD 200.00 (KW 200,000)		USD 250.00 (KR 250,000)		USD 300.00 (KW 300,000)		USD 350.00 (KW 350,000)		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Not willing to pay	20	4	200	41.7	390	79.6	390	76.5	410	89.1	380	80.9	1790
Willing to pay	480	96	280	58.3	100	20.4	120	23.5	50	10.9	90	19.1	1120

**Table 14.2** Survival analysis of WTP for school counseling ( $n = 2910$ )

Variable	Model 1 <sup>a</sup>			Model 2 <sup>b</sup>		
	Coefficient	Standard error	$t$	Coefficient	Standard error	$t$
Intercept	-2567.51	16536.12	-0.16*	-30916.7	21146.97	-1.46**
Age	975.87	808.64	1.21*	1097.50	838.1007	1.31**
Gender	904.30	2638.39	0.34*	163.52	2790.363	0.06**
Family income	0.0028	0.003	0.97*	0.002	0.0031	0.65**
Personal disposable income	0.0018	0.005	0.4*	0.003	0.0048	0.63**
Counseling experience	378.71	285.62	2.15**	-995.17	2678.701	-0.37**
Perception of the level of difficulty				-278.17	1049.741	-0.26**
Attitudes toward counseling				9536.18	4092.066	2.33**
Perception of counseling effectiveness				-178.98	1750.741	-0.1**
Scale	7773.67			7770.44		
Log likelihood	-236.87			-225.97		
WTP	\$175.02 (KW 175,020)			\$173.54 (KW 173,540)		

<sup>a</sup>Model 1 includes only sociodemographic variables

<sup>b</sup>Model 2 includes all variables

\* $p < .05$

\*\* $p < .01$

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# Focusing on Context Within International School-Based Counseling Research

# 15

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and John C. Carey

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## Introduction

Learning about school-based counseling activities around the world is supremely interesting and new (Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015). It is exciting to think about students gaining access to caring professionals within very different educational systems. There is also great potential in learning about and comparing practices across borders. In this scenario, it would be feasible to imagine practitioners from South Korea adopting a counseling strategy first developed in Malaysia. Welcoming new ideas from around the world strengthens the field of school-based counseling and opens up a whole new world of innovation. While learning about international school-based counseling seems like a fairly straightforward task, to do the work well, we must take into account the complex contextual realities present within

different education systems. Vulliamy and Webb (2009) warn, “To have a good chance of success, educational policies or innovations, whether initiated by national policy makers or by international organizations, need to be in tune with the everyday realities of the classroom....” (p. 400). Therefore, if we truly want to learn about, understand, or share practices, we need more tools and strategies that are sensitive to contextual factors. This chapter is dedicated to promoting the importance of context within the study of international school-based counseling. We start by sharing our national and international work experiences and how they led to the realization of the importance of context. We then situate comparative education as a field doing important work on context and describe three potential methodological frameworks that promote the understanding of context. Finally we discuss the implications of focusing on context for the future of international school-based counseling research.

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## How Did We Get Here?

While investigating school counseling policy in the USA, we have become increasingly aware of the contextual factors that shaped our current policy landscape. These contextual factors included national educational needs, issues related to general shifts in educational policy (i.e., the standards-based movement), and responses to these

shifts within school counseling research, professional associations, counselor education, and school counseling practice within different regions. Gaining a better understanding of the relationships among these contextual factors helped to surface important policy practices that contain clear implications for enhancing school counseling practice in the USA.

Surfacing and organizing these contextual factors in our own work was not a straightforward endeavor and is best described as an iterative process. In fact, when we first set out to investigate state school counseling models across the USA (Martin, Carey, & DeCoster, 2009), we operated under an assumption that we would find some uniformity of model implementation across the USA. During the time of the study, the adoption of a state model based upon the American School Counseling Association's National Model was a popular state department of education strategy to improve school counseling services and enhance the position of school counseling within K-12 education. However, the study we conducted indicated that few states could be characterized as having made the educational policy, structural, and regulatory changes to actually promote full implementation of the state models. This variability in implementation was surprising and forced us to look deeper into the factors that supported model implementation and evaluation.

In Martin and Carey (2012), we investigated two cases of states with successful yet very different approaches to implementing and evaluating their respective state programs. The largely qualitative methodology of the study required us to delve deeply into the local contexts that shaped these different approaches. In the state of Utah, we found that evaluation capacity-building activities were made possible by the Utah State Department of Education's ability to sustain centralized administrative authority over program evaluation requirements. For example, the state only funded programs that met rigorous evaluation requirements that included expedited annual reports, periodic full panel reviews, and external evaluation studies required by the state legislature. On the other hand, the Missouri State Department of Education was not able to man-

date specific evaluation capacity-building strategies because of the state's local-control educational policy environment. Within states like Missouri which are characterized as "locally controlled," the vast majority of educational decisions are left to local school districts. Because of this contextual factor, the Missouri Department of Education supported effective evaluation practices through the creation of an award system, offered practitioner evaluation trainings, and outreach to local school administrators. This study was important because it identified differing educational policy contexts and helped to explain why very different practices came into being. Additionally, it cautioned against simply adopting strategies from other states without first accounting for context. Both Utah and Missouri state departments were successful in promoting model implementation, but the approaches that each took were not interchangeable.

The above experiences further perked our interest in school counseling policy and motivated us to look more comprehensively at school counseling policy within the USA. For example, we recently completed a policy review (Martin & Carey, 2015) of school counseling studies from 2000 to 2014 that were either intentionally created for or frequently used to influence policy decision-making. Some of the specific findings of the above review are discussed in another chapter of this handbook, but we would like to mention here that the experience reviewing such a large number of studies only strengthened our conviction that context is important when considering the relevance of educational research and policy. In fact, one of our major suggestions from this review urged the field to question the appropriateness of a unitary focus for the profession. This notion is supported by the wide range of policy objectives proposed by various US school counseling organizations (i.e., academic achievement, mental health, wellness, college access, college counseling) and the very different needs presented by different school contexts (i.e., rural schools, urban schools, large schools, small schools, schools serving affluent students, schools serving economically disadvantaged students). From this perspective, we advocated for a more nuanced conception of school counseling

that involves school counselors developing the right mixture of services and interventions that are most appropriate for their specific school contexts.

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## International Work

In our US-based work, we have taken great care to promote a more contextualized conception of school counseling research and policy. We feel this perspective is a strength and hope to transfer this appreciation for context as we branch out into studying international school-based counseling. We say “school-based counseling” because it is less bound to a specific profession and may be broad enough to capture international research and policy attempts to address counseling-related needs within schools.

Similar to the iterative process that guided our US work, our international interests have grown organically. Two of the authors have fairly extensive international experience as travelers, visiting scholars, researchers, and conference presenters. One author is a Fulbright specialist and the other works at an institution that supplies funds for traveling internationally with graduate students. The third author has researched academic and mental health-related issues in Bangladeshi schools and learned the importance of context in introducing school counseling in a country that suffers from serious financial and human resource constraints and cultural stigma attached to counseling services.

An early international experience that captures the importance of context and culture was the *Eccomi Pronto* program (Bertolani, Mortari, & Carey, 2014). In collaboration with colleagues in Italy, the program was designed to enhance early childhood preliteracy through a combination of evidence-based positive psychology constructs and children’s stories. While originally conceived by the developers as a series of short 20–30 min discussion-based classroom activities, the actual implementation of the program in Italian schools grew into multiple hour-long presentations complete with dramatic embellishment, role-playing, and expressive arts. These unintended adaptations by Italian educators ultimately became one of the

most interesting features of the program. This was an important lesson because it helped us to see how different educational systems either enhance or constrict specific educational endeavors.

Based on our experiences observing school-based counseling work in different educational systems, we began to think more systematically about how school-based counseling develops in different places around the world. We soon found that prior efforts to make sense of school-based counseling development made far-reaching theoretical assumptions without engaging in clear forms of systematic inquiry. Faced with this reality, we set out to systematically mine the current international literature for descriptions of school-based counseling developed in different national contexts to unearth the factors that affect school-based counseling development. The resulting study (Martin et al., 2015) employed a grounded theory approach and involved analyzing over 50 descriptions of school-based counseling from around the globe. After completing three distinct stages of coding on 25 select national descriptions, we reached code saturation (e.g., no new codes were generated from our last five descriptions). We then used a constant comparison process to determine the relationships among the theoretical codes within and then across sources to further articulate the analytic framework. Finally, we also engaged in several processes to advance the credibility of the study, including *epocé*, triangulation, and peer debriefing. The ensuing 11-factor analytic framework consists of (1) cultural factors, (2) national needs, (3) larger societal movements, (4) models of school counseling, (5) laws and educational policy, (6) characteristics of the public education system, (7) the counseling profession, (8) research and evaluation, (9) related professions, (10) community organizations or NGO coalitions, and (11) local stakeholder perceptions. We believe that contextual differences related to these factors shape the development and practice of school-based counseling in different national contexts.

For example, we can better understand how cultural factors related to Nigeria’s pre-Western traditional counseling (Alika, 2012) affected development there, or how shifts in national needs linked to Venezuela’s burgeoning oil industry prompted the need for school-based



counseling (Vera, 2011), or how the passage of education acts in South Korea impacted the profession by providing funds for university training and the development of school-based counseling services (Lee & Yang, 2008). Our motivation for collecting these examples and organizing the analytic framework is to create a useful tool, and eventual theory, for explaining why school-based counseling develops differently in different national contexts, for explaining differences in how school counseling is practiced in different national contexts, and for directing efforts to intentionally support the development of school-based counseling through policy research and advocacy.

We speculate the next steps of this research involve intentionally pursuing opportunities for international comparative analyses of the development of school-based counseling. While we hope that future authors studying and describing the development of school-based counseling within a given country will use the 11-factor framework to organize their work, this chapter delves deeper into the types of studies and methodologies that may best support theory development and operationalize the 11-factor framework. Furthermore, we propose that the construction of single and/or multiple case studies of school-based counseling within specific national contexts is a good vehicle for carrying out this important work. The following sections outline several relevant strategies and tools for creating robust case studies and cross-case comparisons. We conclude the chapter with a case study example and discussion of implications related to future comparative work within international school-based counseling.

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## Comparative Education

While reading international descriptions of school-based counseling in the literature, we noticed a thread of logic that positioned US-based school counseling models, training programs, professional associations, and accrediting bodies as the golden standard toward which other countries should aspire. This notion was largely based on the length of time that US models and systems have been in place, the status of counselor train-

ing within US universities, and the international work of US counselor educators. Recently, there was an inquiry into the existence of international standards for school counseling on a US-based counselor education listserv. A prominent figure in our field responded, “Where wouldn’t the ASCA National Model work?” Based upon our experience, we would answer: wherever improving academic achievement within a standards-based educational system is not the main goal of education. Based on our understanding of the importance of context and the complex array of contextual factors that affect practice, we have come to believe that it is important to reject the notion that internationalizing school counseling simply involves “exporting” established practices from the USA to countries where school counseling is less “developed.”

The field of comparative education, we discovered, has much to offer international school-based policy research because of the ways that context has come to be understood and considered within this discipline. Comparative education is a vast and complex interdisciplinary field with roots in educational history, anthropology, and philosophy:

While broadly situated to study the forces shaping education around the world, the field of comparative education lends itself naturally to a multidisciplinary approach and is continuously recasting itself as new partners enter the field. Hence, its boundaries are much more flexible and pliant (Cook, Hite, & Epstein, 2004, p.145).

We attempted to determine how school-based counseling has been studied and understood within a comparative education framework. Since the late 1950s and early 1960s, the most prominent journal in the field, the *Comparative Education Review*, published periodic annual bibliographies (Easton, 2014). Each bibliography highlights hundreds of journal articles from around the world that contain significant implications for the understanding or practice of comparative education during a specific calendar year. We focused on the most recent editions (Easton, 2014; Raby, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010; Stambach, Raby & Cappy, 2011). While psychology/counseling can be considered a minor category within compara-

tive education, the number of international articles (typically categorized as those published outside of the USA) has grown in recent years. For example, eight psychology/counseling articles were included in the 2005 bibliography (Raby, 2007), compared to twenty-three articles in the 2009 review (Raby, 2010). To put these numbers in perspective, the most robust categories in comparative education from 1979 to 2013 were primary and early childhood education (566 articles), teacher education and training (812 articles), multilingual and multicultural education (672 articles), comparative education (698 articles), indigenous and minority education (720 articles), and educational technology and online learning (591 articles) (Easton, 2014).

While comparative education thus far has not included school-based counseling in a major way, we are interested in both increasing the number of cross-national school-based counseling studies and learning more about how the field addresses issues of context in general. The earliest comparative education pioneers placed great importance on contextual factors. For example, in the 1930s Kandel's historical functionalism methodology involved critically analyzing a nation's specific social, economic, political, religious, and cultural histories in order to generate meaningful comparisons of educational systems and valid (contextualized) understandings of effective practices. Furthermore, Kandel's methodology did not position one educational system above another, but treated each as unique with its own strengths and challenges (Musa & Agbaire, 2013). More specific to context, "Kandel's thinking is that analysis of context should embrace every aspect of a nation that contributes in determining the entire educational system" (Musa & Agbaire, 2013 p.351). Kandel warned against "exporting" effective educational practices without first carefully considering the sociopolitical contextual factors operating on both sides of the transaction (Musa & Agbaire, 2013). After more than 80 years, Kandel's ideas and methods are still tremendously relevant and reinforce the notion that carefully and objectively analyzing cases of international school-based counseling to unearth contextual factors has merit.

## Jumping into Comparative Frameworks and Methods

As noted, the field and study of comparative education are vast. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide an overview of all the theoretical, conceptual, or methodological possibilities within comparative education. Instead we would like to present a set of useful frameworks and methods that take context into account and enable the construction of comparative policy research that yields valid findings and recommendations.

As we begin to think how to go about, comparing examples of international school-based counseling is important to avoid against comparing apples to oranges. A very prominent tool designed to aid comparative work is Bray and Thomas' (1995) three-dimensional cube for multilevel analysis. The first dimension consists of seven levels (world regions/continents, countries, states/provinces, districts, schools, classrooms, and individuals); the second dimension includes demographic groupings (ethnicity, religion, age, gender, and population); and the third dimension contains factors related to education and society (curriculum, teaching methods, finance, management structures, political change, and labor markets).

The three dimensions help to pinpoint what is being compared. For example, a study may investigate a country's vocational counseling curriculum for high school students. Mapping this study onto the cube dimensions indicates that it is focused at the level of the "country," studies the "curriculum," as it exists for the "secondary school students." By placing a study within the framework dimensions, it becomes feasible to compare the findings with other studies that investigated similar phenomenon within differing contexts.

We see this framework as being an excellent starting point for comparing cases of international school-based counseling. When combined with the 11-factor framework (Martin et al., 2015) described earlier, it offers great opportunities to organize the work. For instance, most of the existing descriptions of school-based counseling have focused on the country or nation-state as the main unit of analysis (geographical/location dimension: level 2), and the 11-factor

framework specifically addresses issues related to school-based counseling within the second dimension (aspects of education and society), and, finally, the third dimension (nonlocational demographic groups) allows some flexibility to compare counseling services within particular student groups.

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## Vertical Case Studies

Vertical case studies (VCS) are also especially appropriate ways for enabling rich contextualized comparisons. The VCS puts attention on local contexts as central or obligatory, not as an optional or supplementary part of research, in order to create knowledge that is trustworthy (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006). It is usually grounded in one or more principal research site such as a school, community, specific educational institution, or so on. But it does not consider these local contexts as geographically or demographically separate realities. Rather, the VCS considers local contexts as integral parts of larger social, cultural, and political structure, policies, and forces (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006). The VCS is conceptually grounded in several theoretical research traditions, namely, sociocultural studies, actor-network theory, multisited ethnography, and policyscape (for detailed theoretical description see Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014). Thus, unlike traditional case study, which often studies specific context divorced of its larger social structure and considered as not worthy of generating comparative knowledge, vertical case study provides a rich understanding of global, national, and local aspects in an interconnected thread and provides better potential to generate findings that are valid.

Although named VCS, this research approach actually has three important dimensions (Bartlett, 2014). First, its vertical dimension provides macro-, meso-, and micro-level analysis of a phenomenon. In an increasingly globalized world, where national and regional policies are progressively being influenced by global policies, priorities, and actions, this vertical analysis is very important. Second, the horizontal or cross-sectional dimension analyzes how similar policies

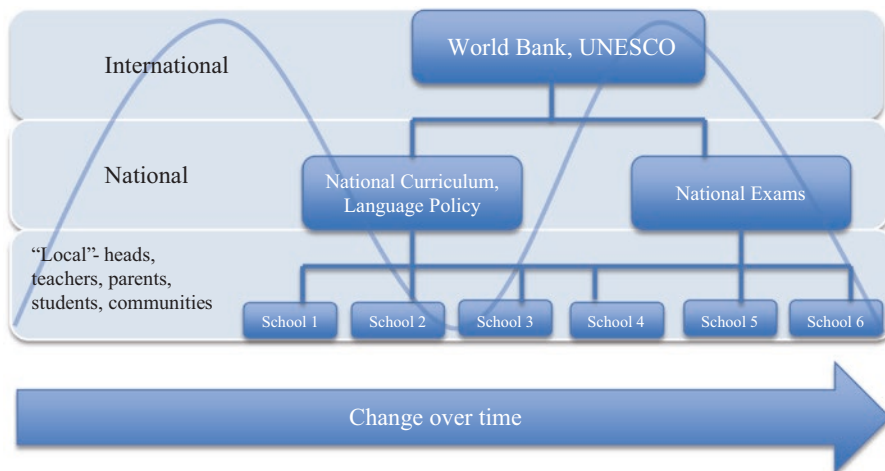
or global or national forces create differential influences in different locations or socially produced contexts. Thus, this dimension provides rich cross-sectional or cross-case analyses as related to its national or global influencers. Finally, the transversal dimension looks at the educational policy and practices in specific context(s) as a historically situated process and compares and traces the appropriation and changes in educational policies and practices across time and space.

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## Vertical Case Study Example

Unfortunately, VCS had not yet been used in school-based counseling research. An example study related to pedagogy is described in Fig. 15.1 to illustrate the VCS approach. Bartlett and Vavrus (2014) explicitly explored the above VCS study dimensions when investigating how learner-centered pedagogy (LPC) was promoted by influential organizations, adopted by the government, and implemented in a sample of six secondary Tanzanian schools. The study is best described as a highly collaborative and phased multisite ethnographic case study. Qualitative data collection and analysis strategies ranged from critical discourse analysis (CDA) of collected documents and literature, structured teacher focus group discussions, and research team observations to multiple structured and/or comprehensive interviews with teachers and school leaders. Filtering the data through the VCS theoretical framework generated themes and findings. The figure below provides a visual illustration of the VCS approach.

Within the study, the researchers first focused on the “transversal” dimension by reviewing international and local (national) policy from 1995–2010. This review helped to locate specific policy instances where national policy was abandoned or altered to better align with global or international priorities. When viewed through this historical lens, the researchers were able to demonstrate how macro-level shifts in policy impacted teacher training and familiarity with LCP approaches.



**Fig. 15.1** Multisited vertical case study of Tanzanian secondary school teachers on LCP from Bartlett and Vavrus (2014, p. 136)

Next the researchers shifted to constructing “vertical” assemblages that examined the formation and appropriation of educational policy. For example, the national curriculum was heavily influenced by donor support (World Bank) and emphasized the use of LCP, yet the national assessment branch still relied heavily on rote memorization and high-stakes testing. Furthermore, because teacher accountability and school resources were severely tied to student test performance, teachers were caught in a very precarious position that forced them to wrestle with the tensions created by contrasting educational policies. Within this section, the researchers were able to position teachers as policy actors that were forced to interpret and weigh policy implications on a daily basis.

Finally, the researchers presented the “horizontal” dimension by comparing the implementation of LCP within six Tanzanian high schools. This section focused explicitly on the material and organization differences present within the schools. It became clear that different international funding sources and affiliations greatly affected the ways in which LCP strategies were approached and supported in schools. For example, one school was sponsored by an American nonprofit organization and was able to provide its teachers and students with, “Extensive professional development in learner-centered pedagogy,

a life skills program for students, a sizable library with materials for developing inquiry-based projects, and relative material wealth as reflected in the availability of books, handouts, paper, photocopiers, and Internet access” (p. 142).

This material and resource wealth contrasted with other religiously affiliated schools that struggled with both less resources and organizational factors related to religious piety, language proficiency, and gender norms when implementing LPC. The cases provided within the study offered a more acute understanding of how specific schools and teachers appropriate national policies and international influences into practice.

It is our hope that this example provides some insight into the benefits associated with the VCS approach. This example of VCS provides useful comparisons at different dimensions such as international, national, and local comparisons at vertical level, cross-sectional comparison among different schools situated within a country at horizontal level, and comparison across history and space at transversal level. Imagine for a moment this approach being applied to studying the implementation of a school-based suicide prevention program in South Korea. In this case the “vertical” level would closely examine the national educational system. The “horizontal” would examine the actual conditions present within schools that implemented the program.

And finally, the “transversal” dimension would involve studying culture, policies related to high-stakes testing, and statistics related to the youth suicidal ideation. Thus, this approach provides a promise of rich case analysis that has the potential to yield comprehensive scrutiny of different interconnected entities of educational policy and practice.

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## Implications

As illustrated by Bartlett and Vavrus’ (2014) example, context within comparative education has been complicated by efforts related to large agency attempts to improve education or educational access within developing countries. For example, as of 2013, the World Bank “manages a 9 billion US dollar portfolio” of educational operations in 71 developing countries (World Bank, 2015). Similarly, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have invested billions of dollars in the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiatives alone. While these humanitarian efforts offer tremendous benefits, there is evidence that these larger entities tend to set the development agenda and lack appropriate sensitivity to local contextual and cultural factors (Crossley, 2010; Jones, 2007; King, 2007). There is also evidence that this insensitively affects the efficacy and implementation of these global initiatives (Brock-Utne, 2007; Le Fanu, 2013; Samoff, 2008). It is clear from these examples that the international educational landscape includes big players and small players.

Given the extent to which these phenomena are recognized within comparative education, it would be naïve to assume school-based counseling develops independently across the world or that different national contexts do not wrestle with the same challenges associated with globalization and geopolitics experienced in developing countries. Taking a cue from Crossley (2010), we assume this work in developing countries will involve enhancing local research capacity and balancing

partnerships between local constituencies and international development agencies. Because school-based counseling takes place in schools, it is imperative that policy research identifies the national and international forces at play within educational policy that affect educational systems and practices.

Implied within this recommendation is the notion that constructing new case studies of school-based counseling will increase the presence of school-based counseling within the field of comparative education. Within the US context, school counselors have struggled to explicitly link practice with national policy (Carey & Martin, 2015), and this helps to explain the relatively peripheral status of school counseling within US educational policy. By analogy if international school-based counseling fails to explicitly place practice within national and international policy contexts, it runs the risk of remaining on the outside looking in (as evidenced by the near complete omission of school-based counseling in comparative education literature). Therefore, new case studies should strive to investigate the complex interplay between practice and policy for counseling in schools. School-based counselors help students with developmental, personal, social, academic, or behavioral challenges to become more successful in school and eventually work. We believe that this important work needs to be inserted into the discussion of how to improve education for all across the globe. Case studies that better align with comparative education perspectives will document important outcomes, identify effective practices, and thereby enhance the visibility of school-based counseling contributions to the attainment of national educational and development goals within specific contexts.

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## Conclusion and Summary

Within this chapter, three tools were presented to aid in constructing context-rich cases of school-based counseling: (1) the 11-factor framework, (2) the three-dimensional cube for comparative analy-



sis, and (3) vertical case studies. All three offer ways to better surface contextual factors and build toward opportunities for comparative policy research on school-based counseling. Employing these tools and frameworks requires hardwork by researchers and scholars. Crossley (2010) recognize collaboration as a key component within their work in comparative education. Given the new perspectives presented in this chapter and the current state of comparative analysis in school-based counseling, we hope that those interested in constructing case studies will seek out opportunities to partner with others to conduct this important work. We envision teams of like-minded individuals constructing contextualized case studies around the world to understand effective practice in context. Of course this work requires coordination and leadership. Structures, to support this work, are currently lacking. Policy research on school-based counseling now takes place within national or state contexts and is not designed to yield the rich information that comparative research that accounts for context can produce.

This chapter and the resources contained within were created in an effort to put a spotlight on the potential of contextually sensitive comparative research and to motivate the development of cross-national collaborations. Our work in the USA and internationally continually reinforces the notion that good things come from investigating practices in context. The field of comparative education has made important inroads into creating tools and frameworks that value context. There are great benefits associated with following their lead. More specifically, it is important to recognize the complex interplay between national policy, international influences, and how practitioners are the true moderators of how these layers are expressed in practice. The careful construction of international school-based counseling cases offers tremendous learning and advocacy opportunities. While this is a call to action, we must recognize this work may require greater efforts to organize and collaborate. The importance of developing a network of researchers invested in seeing this work is a crucial next step.

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**Part III**  
**Current Findings**

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# Policy, Capacity Building and School-Based Counselling in Nigeria

# 16

Oyaziwo Aluede, Florence Iyamu,  
Andrew Adubale, and Emmanuel U. Oramah

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## Introduction

Policymaking as a vital and an important phenomenon of all socio-political systems helps in articulating or shaping the different opinions and directions of governance. Invariably, right policies coupled with equal purposeful implementations would be necessary for the advancement of good governance. In this atmosphere, therefore, policy research becomes a necessary tool for advocacy towards shaping the opinions of government on issues and problems affecting the general public. In this direction, policy research institutionalises policy monitoring and evaluation in a given clime. In view of the fact that every society provides the context for the interplay of policy initiatives and outcome, Nigeria

which is currently the most populous black nation in the world has got her own share of policies that affect and also define governance and the well-being of the populace. Based on the philosophy inherent in policy research, this chapter focuses on the policy, capacity building and school-based counselling in Nigeria and neighbouring countries. The structure of this chapter is as follows: Firstly, the historical and policy-related dimensions are presented. Secondly, we sketched known crisis and problems that affect education generally and counselling as well. Next in line are the summary and evaluation of important policy research and also the impact of capacity building on school-based counselling in Nigeria. Finally, the future outlook for school-based counselling in Nigeria completes the picture.

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## History and Policy on School-Based Counselling in Nigeria

Education as a vital component for the development of any nation would certainly involve effective and efficient planning and service delivery. Consequently, different governments and policy-makers have sought to utilise education as a vehicle for capacity building and social reintegration within the society. Towards achieving these objectives, education in Nigeria has undergone a series of changes through different policies by different governments. Worthy of note is that the

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history and policy of school-based counselling is inherent in the history and policy of education in Nigeria. To have a clear understanding of the subject matter, a reference to the different policies on education, from the colonial era to the present day, would be necessary. Nigeria, officially known as the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FGN), is a vast and diverse country, a federation of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT; Abuja). The federal and state governments placed a high premium on education as both regard education as a catalyst for development. Nigerian educational system took its root from the missionary education, which dates back to the colonial era in the 1840s. This missionary education was vehemently criticised by the Nigerian elites who saw it as watery, religiously oriented and non-productive. Consequently, the elites demanded for a better educational system that would make the citizens useful in all spheres of human endeavour. To sustain a better education, various education ordinances and codes (1882, 1887, 1916, 1926, 1946 and 1926) in form of policies were set up by the colonial masters. This brought great developmental strides in Nigerian educational system.

First among such ordinances was the 1882 Education Ordinance, which was enacted to check the excesses of the missionaries' education and to promote and assist education in the Gold Coast Colony that comprises the present-day Nigeria and Ghana. The ordinance saw the constitution of a general board of education whose aim was to control the missions' schools and also give financial support in form of grant-in-aids to schools (Fafunwa, 1995). This ordinance did not also meet the educational need of the African nationalists who saw the colonial masters as paying lip service to education. As a result, the 1887 ordinance was enacted to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the promotion of education in Lagos Colony. This was the first attempt by the colonial masters to promote education and control the teeming expansion of schools by the missions. The ordinance that had a new board of education was empowered to handle the issues of grants in the infant, primary, secondary and the industrial schools. For the first time, the colonial

government accepted some responsibilities for secondary school education. For example:

1. They provided grant-in-aids.
2. Teachers were to be trained, examined and awarded certificates.
3. Teachers were to receive stipulated salaries, thus teaching became a career (Oshokoya, 2002).

Also, in 1906, the protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the colony of Lagos were merged and that gave rise to another educational ordinance for the areas in 1908. The educational department was reorganised to enable it to cover all areas of education in the new protectorate. But these efforts made by the colonial government in the way of ordinances, establishment of schools, supervision and funding of education, among others, appeared to have made little or no impact on educational system in Nigeria and other West African countries. Based on this, Lord Lugard (the then governor of the protectorate) came up with another education ordinance and code in 1916 to improve education in the Nigerian protectorates. The ordinance had the following items: grant-in-aid to be offered, nature of school, discipline and moral instruction in schools. Lugard's effort brought no respite to the nationalists who became very vocal in their criticism, and their agitations were put in print and in the audio media across the globe. These agitations birthed the Phelps-Stokes Commission, which was set up to upgrade the system. The commission gave rise to the 1926 Education Ordinance which was a landmark in the development of education in Nigeria. There was yet another education ordinance in 1942. Though it was short-lived, it considered a 100% salary grants for teachers without reference to the efficiency of schools. This ordinance was cancelled by the advisory committee. By 1948 another ordinance came up. The main provisions included the registration of all teachers, the procedure for opening a new school and closing a school and the right of inspectors in schools. This ordinance contributed to educational development in Nigeria. The 1952 Education Ordinance was enacted to promote

education in the newly created Eastern, Western and Northern regions, and it became an education law for the country. Yet, in all these ordinances or policies, school-based counselling was never considered from 1840 to 1958. See Table 16.1 for the summary of the ordinances or policies.

In 1959 the minister of education then set up a commission on the post institution and higher education to examine Nigeria's needs in the field of post school certificate and higher education over the next 20 years. While this process was going on, some Catholic reverend sisters at St. Theresa's College, Oke-Ado, Ibadan, 1959, brought school-based counselling to limelight via vocational counselling. The history and policy of school-based counselling in Nigeria is traced to this group of Catholic sisters in St. Theresa's College Oke-Ado, Ibadan, in 1959. They saw the need to educate their final-year students on vocational issues such as employment, world of work and the right attitude towards work. One outcome

of this meeting was the distribution of 54 out of the 60 graduating students' career information that enabled the students to gain employment after graduation (Ipaye, 1983 as cited in Aluede, 2000). The career information efforts included experts in different fields who had made their marks in various professions and gave talks to the graduating students. The success of the programme facilitated other schools in Ibadan and other towns around Ibadan to embark upon same career talks for their senior students and also establish of the Ibadan Career Council. As would be expected, career masters and mistresses sprang up. They were assigned the job of collation and disseminating career information to students. In spite of the tremendous effort of these reverend sisters, counselling did not grow beyond career planning.

Another important era in the policy formulation during the colonial period was the Ashby commission of 1960, also known as investment

**Table 16.1** Summary of the provisions of education ordinances or policies

Ordinances/policies	Summary
1882 Education Ordinance	In this ordinance general board to control schools was constituted Schools were distinguished into two groups: the government and the assisted schools Religious instructions in schools were made optional Grants for government and assisted schools
1887 Education Ordinance	General board comprising the governor, legislative council and inspectors of schools were constituted Grants in form of aid to assist both government and assisted schools Protection against religious and racial discrimination Certification for teachers and establishment of scholarship for secondary and technical education
1916 Education Ordinance	This ordinance came after amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria Full participation of the colonial government in education Increased in financial assistance both to government and assisted schools
1926 Education Ordinance	Phelps-Stokes Commission gave rise to the ordinance Registration of teachers was established Opening new and closing down non-functioning school were under the jurisdiction of the director and the board of education Financial aid to school was based on the efficiency of the schools Teachers were paid according to the laid down rate in the code
1942 Education Ordinance	Though short-lived, it considered 100% grants of teachers' salary in respective of the efficiency of school
1948 Education Ordinance	All teachers were registered The procedures of opening and closing The rights of the inspectors of schools
1952 Education Ordinance	The membership of the central board and the regional boards was revised The Colonial Board was eradicated Inspectors were appointed for all schools

in education. The Ashby commission made a big impression on Nigeria's education system. The report of the commission led to a high level of consultation with top professional officers of the ministries of education, and it became the basis of educational development. The effects of the report were characterised by the expansion in the primary education, diversified secondary school curricula, fresh efforts in technical and agricultural education, variety of services and courses and considerable expansion in university education. Perhaps as fallout from Ashby commission, 16 Nigerian educators visited Sweden, France and the USA in 1962, partly to acquire information on career counselling. The Nigerian Career Council (NCC) also organised a workshop for career masters/mistresses and principals on vocational courses and for guidance teachers in 1967 (Makinde, 1983). By 1969 a conference on curriculum development was held in Lagos. The conference was planned to deal with the following: the objectives of education, the content of curriculum, the methods and the material equipment. The conference also covered primary, secondary, university, teacher education, education for women and science and technology in national development. Surprisingly, school-based counselling was not officially included in the conference. But, the activities of the Nigerian Career Council (NCC), which was spearheaded by the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON), publicised counselling in the country's education sector, to the extent that an Inspector of Education was appointed for vocational and educational guidance in 1972 (Iwuama, 1991). The curriculum conference of 1969 gave rise to the philosophy of the Nigerian education.

After the Nigerian Civil War, attempt by the Federal Military Government (FMG) towards utilising a policy framework for the sustenance of education saw the launch of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976. It was meant to be the foundation upon which other levels of education were to be built. The policy was predicated on the assumption that every Nigerian has a right to a minimum of 6 years education if he/she is to function effectively as a citizen of Nigeria that is

free and democratic, just and egalitarian, united and self-reliant, with full opportunities for all citizens (Fafunwa, 1995). The policy had its objectives that included the following:

1. Inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively
2. The laying of sound basics of effective thinking
3. Citizenship education as a basis of effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society
4. Character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes
5. Developing children's ability to adapt to their changing environment

This policy paved way for massive enrolment of pupils into schools. The implementation of the policy solely concentrated on the cognitive development without a relative action on the affective development of school children. Counselling mechanism, which could have helped the affective development of children that were massively enrolled into school, was ignored. It would have been expected that the vehicle for achieving the fourth and fifth objective should be a well-funded school-based counselling. But school-based counselling got no explicit attention or mention in the policy document. Expectedly, the policy was heavily criticised for lack of proper planning which led to inadequate educational facilities/classrooms, insufficient trained teachers to cater for the massive number of students that came forward to benefit from the free education and total neglect of mental health mechanism of these individuals.

By 1977, the National Policy on Education (NPE) was introduced by the Federal Military Government led by retired General Obasanjo. The federal government saw the need to promote a functional technology-based type, not the British colonial type that could not uphold the economy. This policy introduced the 6-3-3-4 education policy. It stipulated 6 years of primary education, 3 years of junior secondary education, 3 years of senior secondary education and 4 years of university educations for the country. Cognisance of the



fact that we live in the age of technology, the 6-3-3-4 education policy was envisaged to entrench scientific outlook and culture in the country. Towards entrenching this trend in science and technology education, government went as far as directing universities to enforce the policy of 60:40 ratios in admission for science to other disciplines (Ajeyalemi & Ejiogu, 1987). In addition it was felt that graduates did not seem to possess the required marketable skills to succeed in the labour world. Consequently, the 6-3-3-4 education policy failed to address the apparent imbalance or mismatch between education and employment realities (Ajeyalemi & Ejiogu, 1987). The NPE of 1977 was then revised in 1981 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981). It marked a great change from the British system of education which Nigeria inherited at independence in 1960 on education system that stipulated 6 years in the primary school, 5 years in the secondary and 4 years in the university (6-5-4) to the implementation of 6-3-3-4 American system of education, that is, 6 years of primary education, 3 years of junior secondary school, 3 years of senior secondary school and 4 years of university education. For the first time, guidance and counselling was included in the policy document of the National Policy on Education (1981). This inclusion of counselling in the National Policy on Education perhaps may be due to the activities of the career masters and mistresses in post-primary schools. Though the article for guidance and counselling in the National Policy on Education (NPE) was written in few lines in Paragraph 83 (II) of the policy document, at least the Federal Government of Nigeria recognised the importance of counselling. The article reads in part:

In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects, and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post-primary institution.... Guidance and Counseling will also feature in teacher education programmes. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981, p.30)

There is no doubt that the policy planners had a wrong orientation of what guidance and counselling is all about. Their narrow mindedness

about the profession could be the main reason for the way school-based counselling was handled in the policy. For example, the policy statement should involve the three foci of counselling that are education, vocational and personal-social. It should, likewise, clearly define the aims of guidance and counselling as it affects the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Though the policy statement on counselling in the policy document seems to streamline counselling to career development, it also shows that the federal government agents on education are aware of the growing need of counselling among young people. By the year 2004, the policy was revised and it states:

In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects, and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors shall continue to make provisions for the training of interested teachers in guidance and counselling. Guidance and Counselling shall also feature in teacher education programmes. Proprietors of schools shall provide guidance counsellors in adequate number in each primary and post-primary school. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004)

The statement above indicated that the federal government became aware of the importance of school counselling and the plight of young people in school. It therefore recommended that school-based counselling should be made available across the education levels, and also interested teachers should be trained in guidance and counselling. This led to the inclusion of counselling in teachers' programme in most of the tertiary institutions in the country.

The 2011–2015 strategic plans for the development of education sector proposed by the Federal Ministry of Education were the direct result of the pressing need to revise the National Policy on Education (NPE). In the fifth edition (2008), six areas were marked to receive special attention during the period in questions. They were:

1. Nigerian Education Management Information System (NEMIS)
2. Teachers' Development Needs Assessment (TDNA) System
3. Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA)

- 4. Guidance and Counselling (G&C) system
- 5. Quality Assurance (QA) system
- 6. School-Based Management Committee (SBMC)

Obviously, the fourth item dwells on guidance and counselling, and to adduce reasons for including guidance and counselling, the drafters of the policy state inter alia:

Nigeria public schools generally lack co-ordinated and effective system of guidance and counselling of students. As a result of this, students pass through the system without the necessary guidance that might enhance their academic, personal and professional development. The result of this is the large number of school leavers going into higher education without the necessary preparation on how to approach future challenges. It is, therefore, necessary that steps are taken to urgently integrate guidance and counselling services into public education sector across levels. (P. 7)

These reasons seem more genuine and germane to warrant institutionalising guidance and counselling in schools. Hitherto, students went through the system without the necessary guidance that might enhance their academic, personal and professional development. This meant that large number of students who leave schools probably went into higher education without the necessary preparation on how to approach future challenges. Apart from helping school children to clarify issues that affect their cognitive, psychomotor and affective domain, counselling services also provide physical, social and psychological atmosphere and setting within which help can be given to school children. However, this latest policy is yet to be implemented for unexplained reasons.

Meanwhile, the activities of Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) have been a major boost to the development of school-based counselling in Nigeria. Their efforts have made it possible for the National Council on Education (NCE), the highest policymaking body on educational matters, to approve full-time practice for counsellors in post-primary institutions. Additionally, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) has set a

**Table 16.2** Summary of national policy on school-based counselling from 1977 to 2004

National Policy on Education	Summary of the policies
1977	6-3-3-4 education policy was enacted. Policy on school-based counselling was not inclusive
1981	In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post-primary institution.... Guidance and counselling will also feature in teacher education programmes
2004	In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors shall continue to make provisions for the training of interested teachers in guidance and counselling. Guidance and counselling shall also feature in teacher education programmes. Proprietors of schools shall provide guidance counsellors in adequate number in each primary and post-primary school (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004)

minimum academic standard required for training counsellors. The association also developed a scheme that contains counselling needs of students from pre-primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The purpose of the scheme is for counsellors to have a reference point for counselling and teaching at the various institutions (Table 16.2).

### Challenges to School-Based Counselling in Nigeria

School-based counselling in Nigeria is faced with several challenges that include:

1. Absence of professional identity: In Nigeria, school-based counselling like other counselling specialties is to assume professional status. So far, there is no legislation recognising counselling as a profession in Nigeria. As it

- stands today, anybody can lay claim and ascribe the title of counsellor to himself/herself.
2. Lack of professional regulatory body: So far, there is no agency in Nigeria solely established and vested with authority to regulate the training, certification and practice of counsellor in Nigeria. So, you are likely to find a huge variation in the training patterns of counsellors from one university to another across Nigeria. Presently, only the National Universities Commission (NUC) accredits all programmes in Nigerian universities. This effort ought to be complemented by the counsellor regulatory body. Unfortunately, the act establishing the counselling of professional council of Nigeria is yet to be promulgated into law in Nigeria.
  3. Majority of the school in Nigeria do not have well-articulated guidance curriculum largely because of the absence of trained counsellors. Even in few schools that have counsellors, most of them are saddled with ancillary responsibilities. And in other cases, developmental guidance materials are scattered throughout the school time, thus making counselling lack accountability (Aluede, Adomeh & Akpaida, 2004; Aluede, McEachern & Kenny, 2005; Hui, 2000).

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### **Crises and Problems in Nigeria**

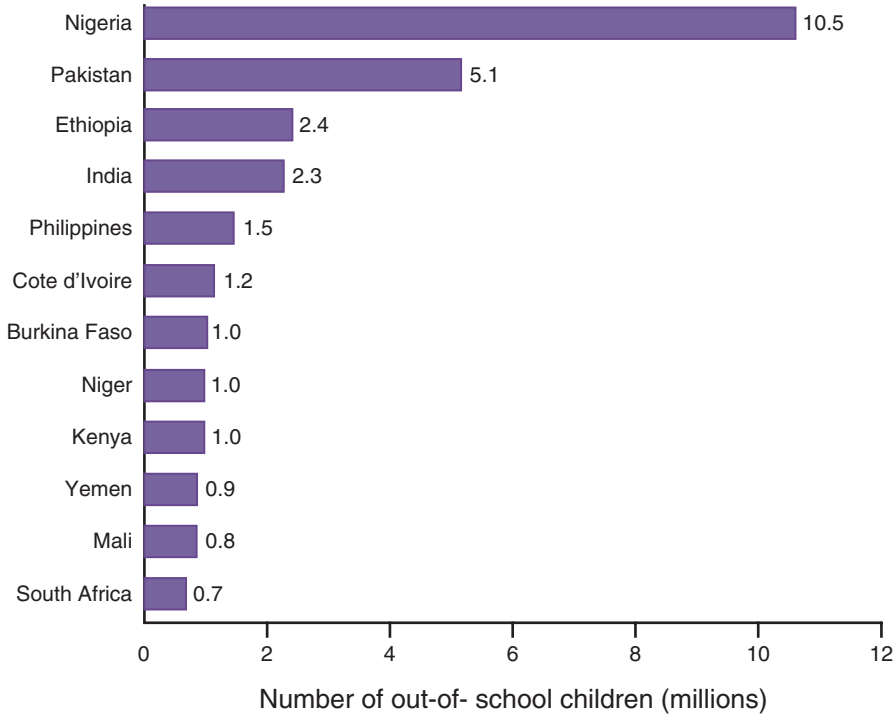
The crises in the education system in Nigeria are attributed to the long period of unplanned, uncoordinated policies of the system in Nigeria. It could be traced to the long period of undemocratic military regimes of military rule. In the 55 years of Nigeria's independence from British colonial masters, the military ruled for 26 years and 4 years of unstable governance (interim regime), making a total of 30 undemocratic and unstable years. The situation nurtured and ushered the inconsistency and the crises in the education system in Nigeria today. A peculiar trait of the military during those years of their rule was the release of many educational policies in the form of decrees and edicts that were not implemented due

to sudden and unstable change in the government leadership occasioned by coup d'états. Besides, the present crises in education have been attributed to the poor and unstable national leadership. This is characteristic of the different regimes in the past. Each new regime tends to commence new policies and projects with little or no attention given to the projects that the previous administration started. Consequently, a lot of unfinished and abandoned projects and facilities abound. Sequel to the above situation, the education system has become vulnerable to crises.

Besides this is the shortage of sufficient fund to finance education programmes at all levels in the country. This has partly led to the incessant strike actions by University lecturers under the aegis of Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU) and even secondary school teachers in some states of the federation. More so, there appear to be educational imbalances in Nigeria arising from the colonial elitist approach which was sustained after independence by Nigerian leaders. However, efforts have been made to redress the educational imbalances. According to Ityavyar (1985), in an attempt to change the structure of Nigerian education, the government established polytechnics and colleges of technology in each of the states of the federation. These changes were not sufficient to match the phenomenal growth in Nigeria.

Although many Nigerians have access to education now and literacy rate has increased, the problems of illiteracy still exist. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2010) asserts that about 10.5 million children between the ages of 8 and 15 years in Nigeria are out of school, so Nigeria is said to dominate 12 other countries Pakistan (5.1 million), Ethiopia (2.4 million), India (2.3 million), Philippines (1.5 million), Cote d'Ivoire (1.2 million), Burkina Faso (1 million), Niger (1 million), Kenya (1 million), Yemen (0.9 million), Mali (0.8 million) and South Africa (0.7 million) as the country accounts for 47% of the global out-of-school population (Premium times, June 11, 2013). A bar chart of this is presented in Fig. 16.1.

This implies that one out of every five Nigerian children is out of school. So, the problem of



**Fig. 16.1** World's out-of-school children in 12 most affected countries. Number of out-of-school children (millions)

inequalities of effective access to education has not been adequately addressed in some parts of the country.

Meanwhile, the criticisms that trailed different education policies point much more to the presence of crisis and problems in the system. Realistically, the educational policy landscape and outlook have always appeared undulating and uneven (Oramah, 2012; Nwabueze, 1995). It has been a bumpy ride for policy initiators and students alike. The crises stem largely from inadequate funding, diversion of funds or corruption and inattention or lopsided implementation of policies. In fact, policies are more likely to be terminated or replaced with another one by another government under the guise of providing a more comprehensive policy framework.

While government's policy on Universal Primary Education (UPE) was receiving knocks and criticisms, another contentious decision came to light. Government takeover of schools through the Schools Takeover (validation) Decree No. 48 of 1977 has been very contentious in the

country. People have remained divided on the merits and demerits of that decision/policy by the then military regime. The general outcry has been that the fallen standard of education in the country should be blamed on the forceful takeover of schools from the lack of seriousness by governments. Meanwhile, recent events in some states (notably Anambra, Delta and Imo states) in the country show that some state governments have returned or are beginning to return such schools to their original owners with the conviction that it will help raise the standards again. In other words, there is an apparent realisation now by some states in Nigeria that they are no longer fettered by policies that facilitated the takeover of schools in the past. This could be a possible recognition of the fact that diversity in education delivery is needed to maintain individuality and variety in character, opinions and modes of conduct among people (Nwabueze, 1995).

Research evidence points also to the *overcentralisation* policy frameworks as part of the root causes of education crisis and problems in the

country (Adamolekun, 2013). Invariably, the federal governments through different policies have always usurped the roles of the states and local governments towards primary education as enshrined in the Nigerian constitution. In other words, in defiance to the provisions of the 1999 constitution that assign the sole responsibility for primary education to the states and local governments, the federal government through policies, like Universal Basic Education (UBE), keeps the basic foundational education under its care and responsibility. Meanwhile, states and local governments are actually the governments that are very near to the people. Implementing education policies at the grassroots cannot be carried out very effectively by someone who is not at the grassroots level. This may have informed the opinion that the problem with education in Nigeria does not lie with policies but with their implementation by the successive governments (Nzeh, 2014).

There seems to be a regular desire to revise a policy that is in place by the government of the day without proper evaluation. In effect, education policies are not allowed to run their full course or lifespan as envisaged. For example, the Universal Primary Education of 1977 was revised in 1981. Then the Universal Basic Education came in 1999 and was revised in 2004. Since then, more revisions have been carried out. The present government through the then Minister of Education (Prof. Ruqqayatu Rufa'i) issued a 4-year education plan for the country in 2011. She has since been replaced as the Minister of Education. Therefore, she is no longer in position to oversee the implementation of a policy framework she brought out. Such policy may never be fully implemented. Lofty ideas and decisions are more likely to be abandoned by those who are not privy to them. They may be starved of funds either for political, religious or ethnic reasons. Starvation of funds could, however, come from economic reason. For example, allocation of funds to education reduced drastically in the 1980s and 1990s due to the sever decline in the oil market and the infamous Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) (Odukoya, 2014). It is obvious that an economy that is heavily

dependent on a single commodity (oil) could have challenges when there is volatility in the international domain.

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### **Summary and Evaluation of the Important Policy Research in Nigeria**

It is apparent that educational policy research in Nigeria is still an emerging area. Such fact could be accountable for by the current trend whereby available literature understandably focused largely on the implementation and impact aspects of the policy frameworks in Nigeria. Therefore, researches have followed the path of critical analysis of governments' actions and responsibilities towards uplifting the level of education in the country. Some of the analyses include the following.

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### **Allocation and Policies on Nigeria's Educational System**

Nzeh (2014) while examining the impact of government's budgetary allocation and policies on Nigeria's educational system observed that the current level of development, technological capacity and capability is still very low and worrisome. This is not unexpected because Nigeria has not consistently met the UNESCO budgetary allocation benchmark of 26% to education. Consequently, he notes that a constant policy change is less an issue in comparison to the proper allocation and administration of funds or resource to the education sector.

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### **Universal Basic Education (UBE) Policy**

In a critical analysis of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy from the sociological perspective, Etuk, Ering and Ajake (2012) noted that despite its laudable objectives, the policy failed to take into consideration the current realities of Nigeria's socio-economic and already



existing educational conditions. Consequently, they reasoned that the implementation of the policy was bedevilled by problems of dearth of qualified teachers to handle the expanded number of pupils, lack of motivation and incentives for teachers, inadequate facilities and infrastructure and corruption. Removal of these hiccups would have made a lot of difference on the implementation of UBE policy in the country. Still on the impact of the government policy on education, Duze (2012) examined the effect of policy/programmes on the attrition or dropout rates in the primary schools. The author observes that the much-touted Education for All (EFA) by 2015 may suffer the same setbacks that inflicted the Universal Primary Education (UPE) which was conceived to uplift the foundation level of education and reduce drastically the incidence of dropout among school pupils.

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### **Comparative Analysis on Counselling Policy**

Meanwhile in a separate study, Ndum and Onukwugha (2012) gave a descriptive analysis on certain areas of congruence in the policy and practice of guidance and counselling between Nigeria and America. They observed that in both countries, vocational guidance was the bedrock of policies that were aimed at reducing problems related to unemployment. They, however, recognised the possible influence of American vocational movement on the advent of guidance and counselling in Nigeria in the 1950s as an identifiable aspect of Nigerian educational enterprise.

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### **The Situation of Guidance and Counselling on the National Policy on Education**

Durosaro and Adeoye (2010) in their analysis on the policy structure of guidance and counselling on the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) declared that though the federal government considers counselling as very important school service in the education sector, the policy programme was not properly

implemented. This resulted from the fact that government failed to provide enough empowerment for the operators of the services of guidance and counselling in the school system. Thus, the gap caused by poor policy articulation, poor implementation as well as fallible administrative approach has been conceived as reasons for poor performance of guidance and counselling policy in the Nigerian education system. They also opined that the federal government's establishment of the guidance and counselling programme in the National Policy on Education (1981, 2004) was a plausible idea. However, this effort still requires much of government's honest commitment to facilitate the growth of the profession.

Omoni (2013) in her own observation summed up that though guidance and counselling as a profession has not been properly defined as it were, it should have been considered in the National Policy on Education as one of the educational services facilitating the implementation of educational policy, the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of the educational system. In the same vein, Arhedo, Adomeh and Aluede (2009) argue that this inadequacy of the sketchy representation of guidance counselling in the National Policy on Education could have been the reason for the profession not properly appreciated and accorded the recognition it deserves in the education industry.

Achebe and Nwoye (as cited by Alutu, 2007) assessing the essence of guidance and counselling in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) believe that the non-inclusion of counselling services in the early child education by the federal government in Nigeria might be responsible for most misconduct of younger persons in the primary schools. Similarly, Alutu (2002) observes that though the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) explicitly stated the objectives of primary education, the problem of lack of implementation has worsened the challenges in the primary education.

Idowu (2013) in his research on guidance and counselling on the National Policy on Education observed that the skeletal statement made about guidance and counselling in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004)



has relegated the profession to a mere process instead of the systematic process of assisting students with their personal, social, academic, emotional and career issues. He further stressed that educational process has three key factors that include the teachers, administrator/principal and the guidance counsellors. The teacher is preoccupied with instruction (cognitive and objective), the principal/administrator takes charge of the coordination which involves well-being of the entire school system whose components are persons, the physical plant, processes and products, while the guidance counsellors facilitate the affective and subjective curriculum. When all these three factors operate in unison, the contribution of education towards the realisation of the country's educational objectives would have been realised.

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### **The Federal Government Commitment to Guidance and Counselling**

Alao (2009) posits that despite the priority, attention and financial commitment of the federal government to education sector, not so much have been achieved in meeting the goal and objective of education in Nigeria. Examining the new policy on National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the author stated that the delivery of education in Nigeria has suffered structural defect. The insufficient human resources especially in vocational and technical teachers to run the 6-3-3-4 system of education, coupled with the skeletal guidance and counselling services in the school system, have contributed immensely to the failure of the system. Alao (2009) further lamented the neglect of the vital benefits of counselling in meeting the goals and objectives of National Policy on Education. Accordingly, Alao (2009) argued that the essence of guidance and counselling in the furtherance of educational goals is being undermined in the National Policy on Education. The relevance of counselling by far outwits career counselling as stated in the National Policy on Education. Furthermore, it was noted that there

are some other services of counselling which the federal government has not brought to glare. Areas such as the personal/social and academic counselling are imperative to the all-round development of the students (Alao, 2009).

It is, however, regrettable that proper policy on guidance and counselling has never been formulated; what is available is a policy on education where a terse statement is made on guidance counselling. With the frantic efforts of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON), it is hoped that a proper policy on guidance and counselling will be formulated and school-based counselling will take her rightful place in education sector in Nigeria.

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### **Impact of Capacity Building on School-Based Counselling in Nigeria**

The concept of capacity building is very vital to education in general and schools in particular. It is pertinent as it energises the quality of education and educational services. Capacity building is a strong tool for sustainable development in all facets of a nation's life. It serves as the leverage that enhances the educational system. It includes the use of available technology to enhance learning and execute educational process. Capacity building involves how people use and apply their knowledge to uplift and develop their environment constructively. In recognition of the importance of capacity building, the United Nations declared the years 2005–2014 as the Decade for Education and Sustainable Development. In furtherance of this, Tambuwal (2009) asserts that we (stakeholders and educationists) should learn constantly about ourselves, our potentials, our limitations, our relationships, our society, our environment and our world. The essence of capacity building in education was partly mentioned by Tony Blair in his valedictory speech of his presidency of the European Union in 2006 as aptly cited by Tambuwal (2009) thus:

The new world we find ourselves inhabiting us, indifferent to tradition and past reputations, unforgiving of facility and ignorant of custom.... The

task of modern government is to ensure that our countries can rise to these challenges... in science, education and lifelong learning to make... and to create a true knowledge....

Thus, in capacity building, information is very essential. Any individual who is not informed could act erroneously. Information is seen as the heartbeat of counselling, as counselling helps to update the people's knowledge to improve. Hence, school-based counselling assists students to identify and know special aptitudes and abilities to make appropriate choice of careers. Nigerian government acknowledges the importance of school-based counselling; hence, it is included in the curriculum for teachers' preparation programmes.

Counselling as an educational service is very vital to capacity building because it aims at assisting students to discover themselves, their worth and their capability. Sequel to this, the Federal Government of Nigeria recommended that every secondary school should have school-based counsellors in the school. The school-based counsellors would help the students to address various issues and resolve the concerns and problems of students in school. It is obvious that the rapid technological development and globalisation trend have led to radical changes in the world today. Besides, there is a great disparity between skills imparted by the educational system and the demand of the workplace. More so, disparity exists in educational sector in Nigeria between the participation of males and females and the Northern and Southern regions of the country. Disparity exists between the urban and rural schools and between institutions owned by the federal government and those controlled or owned by the state and private individuals. There exists an enormous lack of infrastructure/instructional materials for effective teaching and learning that appear to have negative effects in the quality of education at all levels.

Through school-based counselling, these different disparities would be addressed and the negative effects reduced if not completely removed. The obvious mismatch between the impart of education and the world of work could be traced to the inadequate and improper place-

ment of students in the secondary schools. When counselling is accorded its rightful and proper place in the education system, the issue of identifying talents, training the students on the right skills and placing them appropriately would have been resolved. So, school-based counselling would help to guide students from the primary school level to the university level on the type of courses to pursue for a living based on their aptitude, attitude and interest. Similarly, those who are not able to catch up with the rigours and challenges of academic work, suitable placement would be made for them to assist and put them in the right career in line with their ability and attitude towards work and livelihood. Thus, counselling remains a vital part of the educational system. It enhances self-reliance and sense of industry and builds people's capacity towards ultimately reducing economic frustration. The issue of human capacity building entails the production and empowering of individuals who have the competence to develop physical capacity for the nation. Denga (2009) asserts that counselling within education is potentially equipped to identify talents which can be developed to produce the necessary manpower to improve and develop the nation's infrastructure.

The contributions of school-based counsellors in Nigeria are found in their involvement in various aspects of administration in the school system in areas such as psychological test administration and career guidance. Tests, such as aptitude/achievement and interest, are appropriate for the placement of students in education programmes which enhance capacity building and avoid waste. School-based counselling in Nigeria could develop appropriate programmes for the training of adolescent youths or students to address the country's infrastructural needs for sustainable development.

The objective of education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) is to achieve sustainable development of both human and materials. This can easily and reasonably be achieved through school counselling services in Nigeria. This according to Omohan and Maliki (2007) involves deliberate effort by a particular group of people (school

counsellors) to help people cope better, understand more, and be more effective on any activity they are engaged in. All these are captured in the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2000) declaration that says that the aims of counselling within the context of education is to “facilitate the smooth transition of children (students) from primary to secondary school, from secondary to post-secondary educational institutions and to the world of work”.

Ultimately, school-based counselling cannot be effective if the personnel or school counsellors are not retrained or exposed to the latest developments within their area of operation. Recognising this fact, Tambuwal (2009) opines that towards meeting the challenges of the educational reforms within the basic education level in Nigeria, there is need for capacity building and professional development of counsellors so that they become abreast with modern trends comparable with any standards in the world. This belief may have informed one of the stated objectives as contained in the 4-year strategic plan for the education sector 2011–2015 by the Federal Ministry of Education. It states the need to “recruit and/or retrain staff with particular attention in ensuring person and job specific recruitment”. This policy statement is an obvious improvement on the one that is contained in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) which states that “since qualified personnel in this category is scarce, government will continue to make provision for training of interested teachers in guidance and counselling and counselling will continue to feature in teacher education programme”. This statement does suggest that government may have realised that school-based counselling is a specialised endeavour and not just one of the courses to be taught by “interested teachers” in a classroom. Perceiving counselling as a mere “course” and not a professional endeavour may have led to the seemingly palpable inattention on the part of the government to commit and specifically train and retrain willing personnel in school counselling.

Realistically, a non-provision of training that focuses on capacity building for school counsel-

lors will continue to be the bane or the drawback for the full entrenchment of school-based counselling. Regrettably, various state governments and multinational corporate bodies in Nigeria are making scholarships available annually for science-based courses only. The same are not specifically made available towards training interested candidates in school-based counselling. By implication school counsellors that are currently working in some schools in the country actually trained and are retraining themselves without government intervention of any kind. Such prevailing atmosphere may have led to fewer school counsellors available to cater for the current large number of students in schools nationwide. Some schools have one or two school counsellors at most for a population of over 1000 students.

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### **Future Outlook for School-Based Counselling in Nigeria**

In line with the reality of globalisation, it must be said that the policy landscape in Nigeria is beginning to shape up despite a rather seemingly lopsided implementation. Based on the fact that Nigeria has pursued or maintained a positive response to the social demands of education through different policies (Nwagwu, 1997), some glimmer of hope could be seen on the horizon in Nigeria. Some emerging factors on the ground seem to give strong indication that the future is bright.

The first overriding strong factor that projects a positive outlook regarding education policies is that Nigeria desired to be governed and is currently being governed by acceptable, stable and democratically elected governments. Nigeria now has respite from military regimes over a number of years which translated to uninterrupted civilian rule in the region. Such atmosphere has enabled Nigeria to develop and implement both short-term and long-term policies without fear of being jettisoned or abandoned by unelected governments as experienced in the past. Stable government is sure to provide stable policy environment in a given clime.

The content of a good policy may either be subverted or supported by the context or atmosphere of the implementation. Therefore, a stable democratic atmosphere could support a stable policy formulation and implementation. Expressing the same fact, Egonmwan (1991) believes that just as the content of a policy is an important factor in determining the outcome of implementation, so also is the context of policy implementation. The political landscape in Nigeria has remained stable, and it seems that education policies among others will surely no longer suffer lack of coordination and lack of continuity.

Another scenario that presents a rather positive future is that Nigerian government is currently placing strong emphasis on Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Vocational and Technical Education (VTE). Most universities in Nigeria have partnered with their various governments towards producing skilled manpower in the areas of technology and information management. Corroborating this fact, Ifenkwe (2013) notes that a number of policies which actually emphasise scientific, technical and vocational education and more funding in research and development have been adopted as pathways for achieving technological and scientific transformation of Nigeria.

## Concluding Remarks

Policies on school-based counselling rarely exist in Nigeria. This absence has obviously affected the training, retraining, practice and future direction of school-based counselling in Nigeria. It is hoped that concerted efforts would be made by stakeholders, including government at all levels in Nigeria to ensure that existing policies on school-based counselling are strengthened and new ones are promulgated, that would positively affect school-based counselling practices in Nigeria. Therefore, the following policy research questions related to school-based counselling are very critical for Nigeria at this time:

- “What are the competencies that school-based counsellors must possess to be effective in schools?”

- “What knowledge, attitudes and skills should be addressed in a national school counselling curriculum?”
- “What special direction should school-based counselling be focused on to be able to play a pivotal role in the emerging mental health agenda in Nigeria?”
- “What programmes should be initiated by school-based counselling in Nigeria to effectively interface and key into the transnational school-based school counselling milieu?”

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# Policy and Challenges of Contextualization for School- Based Counselling in Countries in Eastern and Southern Africa

# 17

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## Introduction

Counselling services are provided for school-based learners based on the motto that 'counseling is for all people'. Hence, no one is exempted from accessing counselling services. In African nations, particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa, counselling services are mainly provided under the umbrella of 'guidance and counselling' (Ajowi & Simatwa, 2010; Ganie, 1997; Harris, 2013; Makinde, 1993, Senyonyi, Ochieng, & Sells, 2012; Wango, 2006). The main objective for the provision of guidance and counselling services apart from education needs has been to address the prevalence of psychological stressors such as effects of trauma

arising from constant war and conflict, post election turbulences, sexual abuse, unemployment, crime, teenage pregnancy and substance abuse, poverty and hunger including academic difficulties, career choice, work placement and diseases, particularly in the face of HIV/AIDS pandemic among many others (Okech & Kimemia, 2012; Wango, 2006).

Additionally, the increased urbanization of the society within these African regions has slowly resulted in a breakdown of the extended family system of support accelerating the need for an organized support system to meet the learners' needs, which were traditionally met by means of the extended family system (Bhusumane, Maphorisa, Motswaledi, & Nyati, 1990; Okasha, 2002). In fact, the list of situations that guidance and counselling ideally attend to is endless. In this regard, the combination guidance and counselling refers to the cluster of formalized educational services designed by schools to assist students to achieve self-knowledge or self-understanding which is necessary for them to attain the fullest self-development and self-realization of their potential (Denga, 2001; Harris, 2013; Wango, 2006). In similar vein, many other authors have testified that guidance and counselling services are developmental in nature with the aim of assisting the individual or group of individuals understand who they are and to use their potentials effectively and thus become responsible citizens (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Harris, 2013; UNESCO, 2000a, 2000b).

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Therefore, guidance and counselling as provided for the school-based learners is meant to facilitate services that enable them to find direction in life, particularly in the resolution of educational, vocational, personal and social-psychological problems. It is a program that is holistic with emphasis on preventive, promotive and developmental approaches to life issues (Ganie, 1997).

Each country within Eastern and Southern Africa has a unique story of how school-based counselling practice came to be, with or without appropriate policies guiding its practices. UNESCO (2000a, 2000b) traces the beginning of school-based guidance programs for some of the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa to the period of early 1960s, particularly for Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Swaziland. Some scholars claim that the beginning of school-based counselling in these countries reflected similar needs as was felt in the United States in the 1920s (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Wambu & Fisher, 2015), which was predominantly a vocational guidance. Accordingly, the past and present school-based counselling in most countries of the region focuses on the provision of guidance (direction) for learners of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. For example, Rwanda in 1994 began initiating guidance and counselling programs in school as a means to arrest the devastating aftermath of the genocide experience, particularly for school pupils and students (Olij, 2005). Zambia UNICEF report indicates that school-based counselling was taken more seriously since 2006 as a way of mitigating against high prevalence of HIV and AIDS epidemic. To date many countries in Eastern and Southern Africa have instituted school-based counselling as mandatory (Harris, 2013).

However, in spite of the laudable efforts made by the government of these countries within Eastern and Southern Africa regions through their various ministries of education to initiate school-based counselling, seemingly there is no existence of a very formidable policy on school-based counselling. In the same way, there has been paucity of research focusing on policy research for school-based counselling, and what this means is that more research engagement is

needed in order to evaluate practice and policy as well as ensure further improvement. In fact, school-based counselling is still in its formative stage within the region; therefore, it is perceived as a recent educational development within some of these countries; as a result it continues to struggle to find its feet. Although credit could be given to South Africa, where there has been a longer and persistent policy of practice, the crux of the matter is that it was previously addressing largely the white population (Ganie, 1997; Kay & Fretwell, 2003; Leach, Akhurst, & Basson, 2003) and, therefore, not completely taking care of the other half of the country's population until much later. Taken together, it could be claimed that tracking the history of school-based counselling policy in these countries is a bit elusive presenting a gap of formulation and implementation of policy framework and research.

Given this dire situation, it has become necessary to devote attention to the way forward in establishing a well appropriate policy that ought to monitor and regulate the practice of school-based counselling in these regions of Africa. However, it should be duly acknowledged that proposing a school-based counselling policy for the regions of Eastern and Southern Africa might be too ambitious a venture to achieve. In a similar vein, it should be recognized that such a proposal should better be seen as a springboard for ongoing evaluation, reformation and reorientation leading to constant research and advancement. Consequently, the present chapter surveys what is already in practice in terms of policies and suggests a way forward towards improvement and implementation with the single aim of attracting the school learners to perceive school-based counselling as a friendly service provided for their holistic development. In addition, the proposal will focus greatly on contextual issues in order to address the peculiar features of school-based counselling within these regions of Africa. No doubt, this contribution will add to available literature in informing the various ministries of education and all stakeholders about the pressing need towards instituting a formidable policy framework for the provision of school-based counselling.

## Survey of School-Based Counselling in Some Countries of Eastern and Southern Africa

Given the number of countries within Eastern and Southern Africa, it would be an overwhelming task to evaluate each country's school-based counselling practices including policy (if any). Therefore, this chapter would do a random selection of some countries' history of school-based counselling and policies. There are no predetermined parameters for the selection of countries other than availability of literature. Hence, the countries whose school-based practice cum policies are presented here are the ones whose literature is easily accessible.

### Kenya

In early 1970s, the Kenyan Ministry of Education established a guidance and counselling unit at the ministry headquarters. This establishment of school-based counselling among Kenyan schools was a thought that emerged from Ominde Report of 1964, which highlighted the need for inaugurating counselling services in schools (Okech & Kimemia, 2013; Republic of Kenya, 1964; Wambu & Fisher, 2015; Wango, 2006). Accordingly, it was in 1971 that Kenyan government through its ministry of education instituted school-based counselling as an active feature of school activity (MOE, 2010). In fact, the Kenyan National Committee report on Educational Objectives and Policies of 1976 recommends that guidance and counselling be taught as a subject like Religious Education, Social Education and Ethics to enable the school to promote the growth of self-discipline among students (Republic of Kenya, 1976). Again, this view was supported in 2005 when a policy document of Kenya Education Sector Support Program [KESSP] re-emphasized the need to institute guidance and counselling as one of the areas requiring support towards accomplishing educational objectives (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2005). In this view, Harris (2013) presents Kenya as one of the countries where provision of counselling services is evidently part of school programme.

Consequently, the initial aim for the provision of school-based counselling within Kenyan schools was to aid the educational sector to achieve its set objectives, but along the line of its development, many other needs had been identified as well. These other needs that contributed to the rapid growth of school-based counselling were the emergence of the HIV and AIDS epidemic and the resulting widespread establishment of voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) centres, outbreaks of students' unrest and the government-instituted Kenya National Youth Policy, which identified a key obligation to the youth of the country as the 'provision of guidance and counselling' in social and academic settings (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2005). In addition, there was the need to address students' adherence to drug and substance abuse, which was becoming rampant (MOEST, 2005).

In line with these developments, Kenyan school-based counselling received renewed and vigorous attention in the 1980s and 1990s after the country witnessed the worst arson cases within school settings (Government of Kenya, n.d.). Some of these cases were as follows: in 1999, 17 girls were killed and 70 others raped in a co-ed boarding school. In March 2000, 26 girls were killed in an arson attack at the Bombolulu girls' secondary school (Daily Nation, 2000). In 2001, 67 boys were burnt to death in a boarding school by their colleagues as they were sleeping (East African Standard Team, 2001). These and many other incidents grabbed the attention of the government and all stakeholders in education to the urgent need for in cooperation of school-based counselling. Consequently, a commission was set up to investigate the causes of the rising spate of unrest. Following the findings of the commission, reflected in the Report of the Task Force on Student Discipline and Unrest in Secondary Schools, the government recommended that guidance and counselling programs be implemented in all schools (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Additionally, several other authors and organizations continued to make similar calls (see, for instance, Human Rights Watch, 1999; Kenyatta, 1961; Kithyo & Petrina, 2002; Sindabi,

1992). Thus, it became imperative that school-based counselling is a need that cannot be delayed any longer.

Given such beginnings, it is important to recognize that school-based counselling in Kenyan schools was primarily established to help students overcome a number of challenges they experience at home and at school (MOE, 2010; Nziramasanga, 1999; Okech & Kimemia, 2013; Oyieyo, 2012; Wambu & Fisher, 2015; Wango, 2006). Therefore, the scope of school-based counselling services mainly focused on helping children and young people deal with educational, vocational/career and personal-social issues they might encounter as they grow and develop. Responding to such demands, the ministry of education and school administrators could not help but coopt school teachers who either have expressed interest or slightest inclination to act as school guidance counsellor (Oyieyo, 2012; Wambu & Fisher, 2015; Wango, 2006). This was similar to the contextual situations in the United States in the 1920s, where guidance teachers were given a list of duties to perform in addition to their regular teaching duties (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). Consequently, the initial beginning and ongoing school-based counselling services in Kenya are conducted with or without much formal organizational structure. This kind of situation has strong implication for policy formation and implementation.

In this view, Koech Commission affirms that there is a wide gap between the need that the learners have for counselling and the inability of the schools in providing the appropriate opportunity for counselling due to lack of skilled professionals (Republic of Kenya, 1999). In a similar vein, Ajowi and Simatwa (2010) in reporting the findings of a study carried out in Kisumu region of Kenya, examining the role of counselling and guidance in promoting student's discipline, reported that one of the biggest challenges facing the provision of services is the lack of trained professionals. In addition, they noted that 'there were no policy guidelines from the Ministry of Education on how the schools could use guidance and counselling to manage the student disciplinary cases' (p.263). Recently, there are still opin-

ions recognizing that school-based counselling in Kenya is still being left in the hand of teacher counsellors due to lack of trained professionals (Owino & Odera, 2014; Oyieyo, 2012; Wambu & Fisher, 2015; Wango, 2006). This gap of lack of personnel could lead to lack of uniform practice across schools indicating greater need for policy formulation and implementation. Thus, Wango (2006, p.283) states:

It is important to stress that formal guidance and counselling in the school may not have as readily been implemented as would have been expected by policy. It is useful to remind ourselves that teachers and schools, who may have had the responsibility and inclination to engage in guidance and counselling, might have to contend with several issues including lack of facilities such as counselling rooms, and lack of understanding of the counselling process itself among students and other staff.

What this means is that school-based counselling in Kenya schools encounters much challenge that needs to be addressed in order to bring it appropriately to the level where it ought to be. These challenges include the need for trained personnel, provision of proper facilities and development of policy to guide provision of services. It might also have greater implication since it could also mean that there is lack of policy both at its formation stage and implementation to monitor counsellor's practice and/or provide licensure certificate to deserving members, which if not available may frustrate the best interest of guidance and counselling in the school setting. Although Kenyans have a robust existence of at least six different association bodies that falls under Kenya Counselling and Psychological Association (KCPA), to which counsellors could be registered members, the challenge is that these bodies more often than not act as entities, with little or no uniformed monitory process including independent examination certification for its members. Such kind of situation pose some problems for counselling professionals including the school-based counsellors. Therefore, in spite of Kenyan government's good intention and support offered to school-based counselling, more effort is needed towards formulation and implementation of appropriate guiding policy that ought to direct and regulate the provision of school-based

counselling. Having acknowledged the need for a more formidable counselling policy for Kenyan schools, we now turn to look at the picture that its neighbour Tanzania presents.

### **Tanzania**

School-based counselling in Tanzania is traced back to early colonial days with the emergence of vocational education (Biswalo, 1996). It is believed that the colonial masters initiated the process of vocational guidance to young men and women, which often was given in the form of advice. However, Biswalo (1996) is of the opinion that school-based counselling took off in 1984 following the government's initiative to incorporate counselling as an integral part of educational system. The aim of school-based counselling at this initial stage primarily focused on providing career development assistance to students as ways of ensuring that they make informed choices in choosing appropriate occupation to sustain their livelihood. In the process of its development, other social needs such as emergence of HIV and AIDS epidemic, changing patterns of family life which sometimes lead students to indulge in substance abuse and other varying social ills have necessitated the greater need for intensifying school-based counselling as an imperative (Kakoko, 2006; Pfaff & De Beer, 2011).

Consequently, the scope of area of services provided at the school level is large, ranging from educational, vocational and psychosocial services. The school counsellor is charged with the task of assisting children and young people find direction in life in terms of managing the different challenges they encounter at home and in the school. This is clearly articulated in the Tanzania secondary school curriculum document (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2007, p.38), as follows:

Guidance and counselling services shall be established in schools to help students to face the life challenges and become responsible and committed members of the community. Learners need guidance in selecting appropriate carriers (sic) upon completion of their studies. They also need counselling services that will help them to cope with the

prevailing situations in the community and addressing various problems and challenges. Guidance and counselling skills provided in schools shall help learners to develop abilities such as negotiation, assertiveness, communication, decision making, coping with peer pressure and development of attitudes such as compassion, self-esteem, tolerance and role-modelling.

The above quote is an indication that the Tanzanian government, through its ministry of education, has interest in making school-based counselling become a viable means of ensuring that educational objective of producing responsible young adults, who are not only responsible but also contribute meaningfully to the society. However, it is important to note that like Kenya, school-based counselling in Tanzania faces the problem of lack of trained professional to provide the needed services (Biswalo, 1996; Nkuba & Kyaruzi, 2015). Subsequently, the school-based counselling activities are left in the hands of subject teachers who combine their teaching load with counselling, making it impossible for counselling services to be skilfully provided (Mabula, & Edna, 2015). Secondly, most of the trained counsellors are certificate holders, who may be needing further training (Mabula & Edna, 2015).

Furthermore, Kessler and Agert (2012) testify that quite often the few trained professional in the country are predominately concerned with HIV- and AIDS-related issues. Hence, indirectly to some extent overlooking the pressing needs of school-based counselling. This lack of trained counsellors is primarily a source of challenge couple with de facto lack of uniform policy to monitor practice and provision of service. This prevalent situation has greater implication for policy formation and implementation including the need for an independent body to certify counsellors as legible providers of school-based counselling.

### **Uganda**

In Uganda, the department of Guidance and Counselling was established in 2008 following the restructuring of the Ministry of Education and Sports. The department was mandated:

To provide strategic and technical leadership, guidance, advice and strategies in all matters of

Guidance, Counseling, including HIV/AIDS Mitigation and Psychosocial Concerns and Support Services within the entire Education and Training Sector, in collaboration with the relevant organs/stakeholders. (Republic of Uganda, 2015)

Basically, the above quote demonstrates the importance that Ugandan Ministry of Education places on the provision of guidance and counselling at the school level. However, there is always a gap between theory and practice in terms of articulation of desires and its implementation. In this regard, Ssenkumba (2010), in presenting a baseline survey of needs specifically for secondary schools located in northern Uganda, portrays a list of problems that impact on the implementation of the directive from the Department of Guidance and Counselling. The list includes the following:

- Lack of adequate trained personnel to provide guidance and counselling in all schools
- Heavy workload for teachers of guidance and counselling
- Inadequate monitoring and supervision of the process
- Inadequate physical space to hold counselling sessions
- Too much focus on academics alone in some schools
- Inability of the counsellors to constantly update themselves

On a positive note, a more recent study carried out in Gulu region of Uganda by Mbabazi and Bagaya (2013) reported that both individual/group guidance and counselling are indeed being commonly used in schools, and this has a moderate impact on the learners' conformity with the code of conduct (discipline). This indicates that in spite of the setbacks, there is some hope for improvement and continual development for school-based counselling. Besides, the school-based counsellors are doing their little best in spite of challenges to help children and young people find direction in life particularly in making appropriate career choices and attend positively to their personal-social issues in order to turn out responsible individuals for the society and themselves (Chireshe, 2008; Mbabazi &

Bagaya, 2013). So, there is no doubt that Uganda schools encounter similar problem of lack of trained professionals to provide the needed guidance and counselling services needed in school (Chireshe, 2008). This lack of trained personnel is closely linked to absence of informed policy for practice, which greatly calls for attention.

Previewing the three countries of Eastern Africa presented above, it could be argued that there is availability of school-based counselling which strongly focus on helping children and young people make informed choices regarding their educational, vocational/career and personal-social issues with the aim of assisting them live meaningful and well-adjusted lives. By and large, it seems that the biggest challenge is featured in the areas of lack of qualified personnel and adequate infrastructure including policy framing and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of professionalism of guidance and counselling personnel. These needs are threatening forces against the full realization of school-based counselling services, particularly as it impacts on the position of having trained counsellors who in the first place are needed to ensure that counselling programmes are more appropriately provided. This lack of trained professionals somehow could hinder the possibility of contextualization of counselling services. What this means is that if this region of Africa does not have enough trained personnel to offer guidance and counselling at the school level; then it is likely that there will not be enough engagement with the specificities of the cultural context. In one way or the other, the counselling services provided might appear alien to the socio-cultural situations including possible lack of literature. This kind of scenario leaves much to be desired. In order to address such lacuna, there is a need for guidelines insisting on creating more space for training counselling personnel to take up the challenge.

### **Southern Africa Region**

Having looked at the countries within the region of Eastern Africa, we now turn to examine briefly the counselling situation in some of the countries



of Southern Africa. Specifically, the countries that are represented here are as follows: Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa. This selection is based on prevailing literature available from these countries.

### **Botswana**

In Botswana, the initial efforts to launch guidance and counselling services at the school-based level were ignited through the provision of career guidance information to students in secondary schools around 1963, when a workshop was held to train a selected group of secondary school teachers in career guidance (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). As a result of that workshop, 'career masters/mistresses' were designated and assigned to secondary schools to provide career information (Navin, 1992; Republic of Botswana Ministry of Education, 1996). Since this inception in 1963, the provision of guidance and counselling services has made tremendous mile stone achievement towards establishing a more progressive practice following government involvement. However, this initial beginning was during colonial days (Stockton et al., 2010).

Gradual development of school-based counselling has been witnessed since 1985 as the government of Botswana made the move to sponsor a policy direction seminar attended by senior educational officials. One of the outcomes of the seminar was the recommendation that career guidance services be expanded to include social, educational and personal needs of learners, including the need to train professional counsellors for the provision of services needed (Stockton et al., 2010). This move led to further development in the provision of guidance and counselling services, and in 1994 Botswana educational ministry made more concrete efforts towards revising its National Policy on Education, which clearly identified that the provision of counselling services be expanded to take up a more holistic approach towards addressing the multiple issues that the school learner might present including mental health issues outside the education system, particularly in the face of HIV and AIDS pandemic (Republic of Botswana Ministry of Education, 1994).

However, there are challenges encountered in terms of training professionals, and this kind of challenges indirectly reflects to some extent the lack of creditable policy guidelines. In other words, it will not be an exaggeration to say that the provision of counselling services in Botswana is still in its cradle stage as is evident in most of the other countries within the region. However, the country launched its counselling association on 26 June 2004. This establishment of Botswana counselling association is a laudable achievement which seems to give hope towards birthing of a professional body that could monitor the provision of counselling services. All the same, Botswana schools still face lack of professionals to take up the task of providing counselling services (Kcabona, 2008; Terry, Stockton, & Nitza, 2007). Associated with lack of trained personnel is the constant deficiency in the services provided as well as inability to deal with contextual issues in terms of integrating indigenous knowledge system. In support, Stockton et al. (2010) have noted that African counsellors need to integrate the traditional African perspective into practice and, therefore, need to network with traditional healers in order to make the African client feel at home with the counselling services provided. In order to achieve such a venture, the African counsellor needs to be skilled in professional counselling so as to explore ways of integrating indigenous knowledge system. Other challenges could also be reflected in the continuous lack of policy framework and implementation as was seen surfaced in other countries of Eastern Africa.

### **South Africa**

South Africa has a unique history of counselling which dates back to 1936 and was particularly devoted to serving the white population (Kay & Fretwell, 2003; Mashile, 2000; Moolla, 2011). These services were only made available to the black community in the 1980s (Ganie, 1997). Based on this unequal distribution of services, it has been argued that the provision of school counselling within South Africa in spite of its laudable beginnings is derelict, reflecting to some extent similar situations that were obtainable from other Africa nations, since the services did



not cater for the majority of the school population (NEPI: Support Services, 1992). For example, there are claims that Life Orientation teachers in the rural areas of South Africa are the ones who take up the task of providing career guidance education to students (Louw, 2002; Prinsloo, 2007; Rosenberg et al., 2009).

In addition, there are opinions saying that schools in disadvantaged communities in South Africa are underutilizing the career guidance programmes (Maree & Beck, 2004). This affirms the findings of Cosser and Du Toit (2002) which state that 60% of the learners in South Africa had not received career guidance and counselling at school. No doubt, Maree (2009) argues that many learners who passed their matric examinations had not received career counselling, resulting in their inability to apply for enrolment into popular areas of study at higher education institutions. In other words, one of the popular counselling services that school learners enjoy in most of the other countries within the region of Eastern and Southern Africa, in terms of provision of career guidance, is easily not provided in South Africa schools despite the long history of counselling as a professional practice in the country.

The peculiar situation of South Africa presents a different kind of challenge surfacing that although counselling services are currently provided at the school level, these services are different for each school based on race and availability of resources (De Jong, Gaine, Naidoo, & Prinsloo, 1994; Louw, 2002; Mashile, 2000). Hence, it can be said that political and economic factors have influence the provision of guidance and counselling services in South Africa. Due to social discrepancy, some South African schools still lack trained and dedicated school counsellors. Those who are available are unable to perform their duties as expected, because they are also charged with other duties such as teaching other school subjects (Gaine, 1997). Evidently, subject teachers in some South Africa schools are the ones who take up the task of providing counselling services to children and young people, particularly in black schools. This inefficiency raises the concern of having a uniform policy to

guide the provision of guidance and counselling equally, cutting across different schools irrespective of race. Consequently, the contextual issue for South Africa reflects an urgent need for formulation of uniformed policy to monitor and guide the provision of school-based counselling (Ganie, 1997).

However, it is important to note that South Africa is one of the countries where there exists a monitoring body that oversees the provision of counselling services. This body is known as Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), and the requirements to be a registered counsellor are as follows: a 4-year Bachelor of Psychology professional degree approved by the HPCSA, including a 720 h practicum and successful completion of the National Examination of the Professional Board for Psychology in the Registered Counsellor category (HPCSA, 2005).

## Zimbabwe

Popular opinion argues that for the Republic of Zimbabwe, counselling practice dates back to precolonial days wherein traditional healers, spiritual leaders and elders provided guidance and advice to community members and individuals, particularly to cure or alleviate mental illness and family problems among many others (Charema & Shizha, 2008; Gelfand, Mavi, Drummond, & Ndemera, 1985; Mpfu & Harley, 2002; Shoko, 2007). However, formalized counselling services began to be a reality with the arrival of colonial settlers who brought with them the innovation of counselling psychology, which primarily excluded the people of colour in its provision of services (Chase, 1977; Fanon, 1967; Simone, 1993). Agreeably, school-based counselling services for Zimbabweans started with the provision of counselling services to white schools around 1970s which was manned by school teachers (Kimberly, Athanas, Saunsuray, Mphande, & Dupwa, 2012). Primarily, these school teachers were charged with the responsibility of providing career advice to students including conducting psychological test and provision of assistance to disable students (Kimberly et al., 2012). This looks very

similar to the situation of South Africa where initial counselling services were provided for the white South African school children.

From 1980 to 1990s, Zimbabwean schools witnessed a greater integration of counselling services for all schools though there are still some limitations as some schools still witness the absence of professional counsellors (Boswell, Sangiwa, & Kamenga, 2002; Kimberly et al., 2012; Machironi, 2010; Richards, 2003). Other challenge that attempts to smoothen the provision of school-based counselling apart from lack of training is the seemingly absence of certification and monitoring body to ensure that services are regulated (Boswell et al., 2002; Kimberly et al., 2012; Machironi, 2010; Richards, 2003). Therefore, there is need to attend to such challenges which is interfaced with the urgent need of ensuring that there is a well-articulated national policy to guide the provision of school-based counselling services.

But the good news is that the government through its ministry of education is making effort to train counsellors since 1987, which Kimberly et al. (2012, p.103) describe as follows:

Counselor training began in Zimbabwe in 1987 through the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare's (MOHCW) National AIDS Control Program. The aim of this training was to provide counselors with the skills to help clients reduce HIV transmission, morbidity, and mortality, and to address related psychological issues. Since 1987, MOHCW has trained thousands of health care workers and community caregivers in counseling skills. These counselors have made a positive impact on the lives of their clients and introduced the concept of counseling nationwide.

Although the quote vividly indicates that there are multiple reasons leading to the training of counsellors, the mere fact that efforts are made to train counsellors is a plus, which has greatly improved the trajectory of the provision of guidance and counselling in Zimbabwe schools with particular focus of attending to student's educational, vocational and personal-social needs.

Generally, the services provided at the school level include personal-social, which attends to interpersonal and problem-solving skills for stu-

dents (Badza, 2005; Chivonivoni, 2006; Mudhumani, 2005; Nyanungo, 2005), and educational services facilitating students' academic performance, achievement and persistence (Mudhumani, 2005; Nziramasanga, 1999). Besides, it has been pointed out that school-based counsellors have immensely helped students to appreciate better their career development in terms of helping them match career choices with ability, interest and aptitude including development of effective study habit (Badza, 2005; Chireshe, 2006; Mapfumo, 2001; Mudhumani, 2005). Convincingly, it can be said that in accordance with the objectives of UNESCO (2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2002), Zimbabwean school-based counselling has provided the needed help of assisting children and young people face the challenges of life they might encounter in making adjustment to life and growing into responsible adults.

Conclusively, it can be argued that in spite of a slow beginning and multiple setbacks, there is evidence of prevalence of school-based counselling for countries within the region of Eastern and Southern Africa. Research findings indicate that the recipients of these school-based counselling within this region of Africa are children and young people, although the counselling services are mostly provided by teachers who acted as counsellors (Chireshe, 2006; Gaine, 1997; Harris, 2013; Kimberly et al., 2012; Wango, 2006). This lack of trained professional counsellors within the region is not far from the reality witnessed in the United States in the 1920s (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012), wherein teachers were mandated to dispense counselling services such as helping students make right choices for subject selection, career choices and dealing with personal-social problems. As such, the school-based counsellors encounter lack of a practical development plan for formulation and implementation of school counselling programs, including issues of role ambiguity and absence of a monitoring body to certify the suitability of personnel. Therefore, what the school-based counsellors within the region of Eastern and Southern African need is continual effort towards developing

policy guidelines and establishment of certification and monitoring body to regulate the provision of services.

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### **Focus on Policy Research Within the Region of Eastern and Southern Africa**

Based on the fact that school-based counselling is still in its infancy within the region of Eastern and Southern Africa points to the possibility that there is scarcity of research in general and particularly for policy research. Despite scarcity of research within the region, there are a number of progressive research activities which give hope for a better future if the status quo is kept alive. In the recent past, the region could boast of research activities as presented in Table 17.1.

Table 17.1 cannot claim to have reflected every single research activity that scholars within the region of Eastern and Southern Africa are engaging with; however, the impression it creates is that some more research activities are needed regarding school-based counselling, specifically in the area of policy formulation and implementation. Interestingly, apart from Wango's (2006) doctoral dissertation, no other seems to have focused on policy formulation and implementation. Wango (2006) research findings indicated that there is constant mixed up between policy formulation and implementation leading to fragmentation in the scope of services provided wherein schools are left unmonitored in the provision of counselling services. The study recommends the need for a more comprehensive guidance and counselling policy with reference to professional training, establishment of comprehensive programme and code of conduct for counsellors. Likewise, a country report from South Africa sponsored by World Bank projecting a framework for the design of career information, guidance and counselling services in developing countries, among many other things, laid strong emphasis on the need to develop a policy framework for the provision of guidance

and counselling not only in school but also for the wider population of people in the society at large (Kay & Fretwell, 2003). Therefore, we the authors of this chapter wish to emphasize that there is need for additional research engagement in the areas of policy formulation and implementation, including supervision and ethical issues in order to create a valuable literature that will inform practice as well as serve as means of evaluation.

Other research engagement that might seem urgently needed is the focus on integration of contextual knowledge and techniques as essential aspects of counselling within the region. Many scholars have argued that the counselling psychology and all its related concepts taught at higher education in Africa have seemed predominately western based (Eze, 2015b; Jamison, 2008; Nwoye, 2014; Oguine, 2008; Priebe, 2006), leaving the African psychologists and counsellors challenged when it comes to matters of contextualization. To address such missing gap, the provision of school-based counselling services may flourish better if research activities extend to exploring the place of African world-views and its relevance to school-based counselling.

On this basis, this chapter continues to reiterate that there is a greater need to work towards policy research including integration of cultural foundations for school-based counselling within the region of Eastern and Southern Africa in spite of the challenges that might come with it. Specifically, some of these challenges are reflected in the areas of financing such a wide scope of study as well as the inability to cover such a latitude of study. In response to these challenges, we concur by emphasizing that the academia (including ministry of education) in each of the country in the region continue to fine-tune their engagements in research and work towards extending research to exploring issues of policy formulation, implementation and contextualization. Splendidly, such research engagements will facilitate and push the frontiers of school-based counselling forward within the region.

**Table 17.1** Summary of research activities

Research Focus	Type	Author	Country	Published	Unpublished
Need for school counselling	PGDE	Amukoa (1984)	Kenya		X
Analysis of guidance and counselling programs in secondary schools	PhD thesis	Sindabi (1992)	Kenya		X
Organization and management of guidance and counselling programmes in schools	Master's thesis	Muthiya (1996)	Kenya		X
An investigation of the perceived needs for school counselling services in primary and secondary schools in Botswana	Masters' thesis	Muchado (2002)	Botswana		X
Guidance and counselling services in high schools: problems, implications and solutions	Master's thesis	Muribwathoho (2003)	South Africa		X
Problems faced by school counsellors	BSc thesis	Maturure (2004)	Zimbabwe		X
Secondary school teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of guidance and counselling	BSc thesis	Mukamwi's (2005)	Zimbabwe		X
Factors that affect school leavers in choosing careers	BSc thesis	Mudhumani (2005)	Zimbabwe		X
Hindrance to effective implementation of guidance and counselling in secondary schools	Master's thesis	Okola (2005)	Kenya		X
Effectiveness of school guidance and counselling services	PhD Thesis	Chireshe (2006)	Zimbabwe		X
Perception of secondary school counselling	BSc thesis	Chivomivoni (2006)	Zimbabwe		X
Policy and practice in guidance and counselling in secondary schools	PhD thesis	Wango (2006)	Kenya		X
Hindrance to effective implementation of guidance and counselling in secondary schools	Master's thesis	Nderitu (2007)	Kenya		X
Guidance and counselling needs assessment	Nongovernmental organization research	Chireshe (2008)	Northern Uganda		X
Implementation strategies of guidance and counselling programme in schools	Master's thesis	Kcabona (2008)	Botswana		X
Career services and its role on career decision-making among high school students in Tanzania	Master's thesis	Nkuba (2010)	Tanzania		X
The role of school psychologists in school development in South Africa: the challenge of intersectoral collaboration	PhD thesis	Moolla (2011)	South Africa		X
Students' and teachers' perception of guidance and counselling services in Eastern Uganda	Masters	Nyan (2011)	Uganda		X
Determinants of career decision-making among secondary school students in Tanzania	Master's thesis	Mbilinyi (2012)	Tanzania		X
Influence of guidance and counselling on students' discipline in secondary schools	Master's thesis	Oyeyo (2012)	Kenya		X
The role of school counsellors in supporting teaching and learning in schools	Masters	Daniels (2013)	South Africa		X
Factors associated with career choice and predictors of career intention among undergraduate students in Tanzania	PhD thesis	Amani (2014)	Tanzania		X
In-school psychosocial counselling support for orphans in Gaborone west junior secondary schools	Masters	Molefe (2015)	Botswana		X

## The Way Forward

In spite of the meaningful concerns expressed by various nations within Eastern and Southern Africa through their ministries of education towards the inclusion of counselling as one of the core features of school programmes, there is not yet much emphasis laid on establishing and integrating policies that ought to guide the practice and provision of guidance and counselling services for schools (Biswalo, 1996; Owino, 2013; Oyieyo, 2012; Wambu & Fisher, 2015; Wango, 2006). As a result, there is a great need for policy formulation and implementation strategy to facilitate the provision of services. This is a big challenge that needs to be addressed.

In fact, the State University of Zanzibar in publishing a document with reference to the origin and development of guidance and counselling in Tanzania (2012) maintains that there is evidently a lack of policy guiding the provision of counselling services within schools in Tanzania, which leaves different counselling professionals at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education with the awesome task of doing what they deem best. In other words, each school does what they think is appropriate, which certainly is not a big issue, but in terms of quality control, there could be some implications. This picture of no uniform policy to guide school-based counselling might not only be peculiar to Tanzania.

Similar situation may prevail in other Eastern and Southern Africa nations. It is equally important to note that in situations where these policies exist, often the policy may not be elaborated, let alone be adhered to. Linked closely to policy research is also the unavailability of licensure, the legislative body that ought to control and monitor practice including offering an independent certification examination to deserving counsellors irrespective of the degree they obtain from higher education. In this way, quality can be maintained. For example, although Kenya has an official body designated as Kenya Counselling and Psychological Association (KCPA) which has operated in the last 20 years, it has not incorporated licensure as part of its duties (Otieno, 2015). Appropriately, counsellors in Kenya are

registered with the association, but no form of examination as a way of accreditation takes place. As it stands presently, South Africa seems to be the sole country within the region that has an organized licensure procedure. However, the region of Southern Africa made the noble attempt in 1994 to form a counselling association (SACA), charged with the duty of formulating code of ethics for counsellors in Zimbabwe, including installing a certification board that ought to advocate for the inclusion of professional counsellors in the health professions council registers (Kimberly et al., 2012). But the other side of the story is that SACA has not thrived as anticipated. Largely, this kind of situation persistently call for attention of counselling professionals within these regions of Africa to engage with the different ministries of education to work towards framing of policies and inauguration of licensure to ensure further certification of school-based counsellor.

On the other hand, one cannot say that there are absolutely no policies of school-based counselling within these nations, but somehow the greatest challenge lies with the seeming lack of national network for coordinating these policies. In this regard, much of the available counselling policies might need to be pulled together, maybe not specifically school-based counselling but counselling in general. For example, it is a common experience to access policies of counselling with regard to persons living with HIV and AIDs (PLWHA) (Sima, 2004) etc. On this basis many African psychologists and counsellors make excuses that counselling is still an emerging young profession within the continent (1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Guidance & Counselling, 2002). This kind of voice was initially echoed by the first Pan African Conference on the Education of Girls that was held in Ouagadougou in 1993. In a similar perspective, in a country like South Africa, where formal counselling has existed since 1936 and further extended by the National Education Policy Act (39) of 1967, yet it is not quite explicit what the position is, with regard to school-based counselling, though the country registers well-established instances of practice are worrisome. From all



indication, much of it focuses on general counselling in consultation with health professional council (Department of Education & Department of Health, 2012; National School Health Policy and Implementation Guidelines, 2002); therefore, serious commitment is needed to ensure that school-based counselling policies are generated and adhered to.

Generating school-based policy will, hopefully, put an end to the struggles individual schools within these countries find themselves in, particularly as they strive to launch their own guidelines of operation which in itself is not out of place, but there is a greater need to have some kind of a set of general guiding principles which ought to act as a spring board on which the sub-systems function. Otherwise, there is bound to be a lack of uniformity which might militate against the core values of counselling. Based on such a wide spread situation, this paper argues that African nations within the region of Eastern and Southern Africa need to rethink their stand on formulating national policies for school-based counselling and provision of service. Thus, in the next section, we present the proposal for school-based counselling policy.

### **Proposing Counselling Policy for Schools**

Having presented some insight into understanding the origin and provision of school-based counselling in some countries of Eastern and Southern Africa, including challenges encountered in terms of putting in place policies of practice, this paper now turns to make some proposals. These proposals are primarily geared towards creating schedule and itinerary of activities that need to be put in place in order to foster a guiding policy for the provision of school-based counselling. In this regard, the proposal will predominantly feature the following: qualification of counsellors with particular emphasis on training and specialization, code of practice and licensure, supervision, research, ethical and legal issues, provision of adequate counselling facili-

ties and time allocation. In addition, cultural and environmental context will be addressed as an important factor that needs to be attended to while constructing an operative policy in order to ensure that school-based counselling reflects the reality of the context in which it intends to serve.

### **Qualification of Counsellors**

Following the prevalent situation of lack of qualification for school-based counselling as presented by some of the countries within Eastern and Southern Africa in the above survey, it becomes an imperative that there is a need for a policy that insists on the supply of qualified counsellors as the starting point. To achieve this, there is an urgent need to formulate a policy on the basis of ensuring that a certain requirement is maintained in view of qualification and specialization of who should serve as a school-based counsellor. This requirement must be seriously adhered to, as there is a likelihood of devastating problems of having quasi-counsellors provide the most needed services. In this context, the quasi-counsellor could refer to those counsellors who do not have the appropriate professional training to act as counsellors. For example, when a subject teacher without counselling professional training, combines teaching and counselling students based on interest or due to the fact that she had taken an elective course in counselling during training as a teacher.

In this perspective, we recognize other qualifications that many counsellors in the region may have received, such as certificate or diploma in counselling, for example, in Zimbabwe CONNECT. CONNECT in affiliation with Tavistock Clinic in London run short courses on counselling spanning a period of 6–12 months or slightly longer in order to offer certificates or diplomas in counselling (Kimberly et al., 2012). Also, in Kenya, the Amani counselling centre offers certificate and diploma courses for period of 1–2 years (Counselling – Amani Centre, 1979). It is anticipated that there might be such opportunities across other countries within the region of Eastern and Southern Africa. The authors' position is that the recipients of such certification



should be mandated to pursue further development, for example, to work towards getting B.A, BSc or even higher diplomas whenever possible. In this way, the provision of counselling at the school level is not left in the hands of quasi-counsellors who may struggle to be competent.

Consequently, it is of essence that each country within Eastern and Southern Africa through their various ministries of education should demand a certain educational qualification requirement for all those who act as school-based counsellors. Although this demand might be stressful given the fact that counselling is an emerging profession within the continent, it falls in line with global professional requirements. Therefore, this requirement should not be seen as overbearing; after all every career has always set the benchmark for what is legitimate for anyone to be recognized as a creditable professional, and school-based counselling is not an exception. As a result, the educational qualifications and specialization of a school-based counsellor ought to include the following:

- An accredited 4-year B. Psych. degree or an equivalent honours degree in counselling psychology or guidance and counselling (including other relevant profession such as pastoral counselling education).
- Apart from the degrees, an accredited Masters' degree in counselling psychology or guidance and counselling should be encouraged.
- When an accredited PhD degree in counselling psychology or guidance and counselling though is possible, this might seem too ambitious but not unachievable. (Counsellors with higher qualifications such as Masters and PhD could easily qualify to be supervisors.)

In general, this educational requirement needs to include an in-depth consideration for the course loads/modules that had been completed. It should reflect modules such as developmental psychology, basic counselling skills, theories of counselling, adolescence psychology, professional ethics and conduct, career development skills, interviewing techniques, client observation skills,

family therapy, report writing, conceptualization skills, biopsychological and systems theory as appropriate for community interventions, structured trauma counselling, community understanding and intervention. In addition, modules of psychometric testing (within their scope of practice), cultural beliefs and diversity, language sensitivity, entrepreneurial skills, psycho-educational skills and a thorough grounding in ethical conduct, human rights and other relevant legislation should be an advantage.

Above all, special considerations must be given to candidates (counsellors) who are trained in specified core domains such as school counselling, career/educational counselling and personal-social counselling. It is not that other domains such as trauma counselling, family counselling, sport counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling, human resources, pastoral counselling and employee wellbeing among many others cannot suitably act as school-based counsellors but they might not possess the required skills. Therefore, it is anticipated that preference be given to those who possess the expertise needed for effective and efficient school-based counselling.

### **Practice/Supervision**

It should be a requirement that any counsellor designated as school-based counsellor must have had adequate experiences in terms of practice. This kind of experiences should not only come from knowledge gained during or through practicum attachment but go further to at least a minimum practice of 2 years under a more experienced counsellor. What it means is that qualified trained counsellors should have been an intern under someone, whereby he/she is monitored and mentored. This opens up the discussion on supervision, expressing the greater need of availing new trained counsellors the opportunities to be observed, directed and guided. The main aim of such supervision is to enable the newly trained counsellor acquire the mastery skills of counselling through ongoing practice and supervision. It does not mean that newly trained counsellors do not have the skills but surely they will do better when guided at the beginning stage. In this context, the pedagogy

of ongoing learning becomes a resource for efficiency of practice. No doubt, beginning and ongoing counsellors who are supervised will embrace what it takes to familiarize themselves with proper adaptation to developing the appropriate skills needed for improving counsellor and client's relationship including application of theory to practice and maintenance of ethical and professional standards.

Basically, supervision is a mandatory requirement and should be written into any contract signed with a school-based counsellor (ACA, 2013). Professional supervision is a method of consultancy which facilitates the maintenance of adequate standards of counselling and, accordingly, widens the horizons of efficiency for beginning counsellors as well as affords the experienced practitioner the space to share and be abreast with emerging trends of counselling. It opens up the space for regular discussion and consultancy with other colleagues in the profession. In this context, it serves multiple purposes of ensuring that practice is directed towards proficiency by ensuring that counsellors relate practice to theory and vice versa, as well as enabling counsellors to grow and learn. Otherwise, counsellors could be overwhelmed by the intensifying demands of sharing the client's burden alone, which may impact on their emotional or psychological wellbeing. Thus, it is essential that not only the beginning counsellors be supervised but also experienced counsellors should avail themselves to this noble opportunities of sharing with the other their experiences of practice.

However, the authors are very aware of the fact that one of the severe challenges to this requirement is the persistent lack of trained counsellors within the region of Eastern and Southern Africa. As a result of this lack of current practicing counsellors, it would be difficult to have at hand equipped older professionally trained counsellors to mentor emerging counsellors. On this note, the way forward would always be to acknowledge the need, whilst managing with what is available, hoping that once there is an availability of older trained counsellors, the policy should be made to adopt what is best to do.

## **Ethical and Legal Policies**

Each professional organization observes certain ethical standards which guide the performance of its members, including preparation for training. Therefore, school-based counselling is no exception. It is imperative that school-based counselling ought to map out policies representing a set of code of conducts and ethics to regulate the provision of services. In this regard, the chapter presents ethical and legal requirement as advocated by Denga (2001) as follows:

- (i) The general professional ethics
- (ii) Ethics on appraisal/testing
- (iii) Relationship between counsellor and client
- (iv) Relationship between counsellor and the public
- (v) Conduct in research/publication
- (vi) Consultancy and private practice

In what follows, taking each of the required units above, we give brief details of the demands therein.

## **The General Professional Ethics**

The school-based counsellor is expected to be an active member of a counselling association in areas where their school is located, if any such bodies exist. In this way, the counsellor is expected to live up to the expectations of professional ethics of counselling. He/she should be committed to the policies, practices and rules that govern the institution (school) in which he/she is employed unless the institutional policies are at variance with counselling ethics or personal beliefs/philosophy. In such case, the counsellor must consider leaving the organization. In the same perspective, counsellors must be law-abiding citizens including when they serve in foreign nations. In addition, the counsellor must not make professional claims beyond their qualifications.

## **Ethics on Appraisal/Testing**

Test and non-test data are administered by counsellors to obtain descriptive and objective information regarding students' educational, vocational and personal-social decision

(Denga, 2001). Therefore, the counsellor who administers such test must treat the results confidentially, also assuring that the test was properly administered and released. This includes making sure that the test is valid and credible and the manner of presentation of the result was appropriately released to the client or other relevant individuals who need to know the results, with the consent of the client.

### **Relationship Between Counsellor and Client**

Counsellors believe in the worth and dignity of everyone (Rogers, 1961); therefore, school-based counsellors in relationship with clients must recognize this important requirement. Hence, they must create friendly, empathetic relationship with client based on unconditional positive regard. Accordingly, the following must be adhered to strictly:

- (a) Counsellor must respect the integrity and worth of each client.
- (b) Counsellor must maintain confidentiality of what is said within and during counselling sessions. Hence, counsellor must ensure that he/she elicits the client's consent before inviting a third party to session or divulging any shared information.
- (c) Counsellor shall not counsel students for remunerative purposes.
- (d) Counsellor must make appropriate and immediate referral when need be.
- (e) Counsellor must respect the boundaries of relationship with clients.
- (f) No client should be treated differently based on race, belief system, economic status, etc.

### **Relationship Between Counsellor and the Public**

Ethical consideration in terms of relationship with the public could go as far as including the general public such as family, church members, social groupings and colleagues, particularly those that the counsellor works with in the school setting. The counsellor should maintain good relationship with colleagues in school and in all forms of relationship with others; he/she should

not be a politician (one who allows political affiliation to becloud her/his practice) either within the school premises or otherwise (Denga, 2001). He/she is entitled to their political affiliation but not to make such affiliation a subject of public discussion. As well, the counsellor should not feed the school administration or the public with false information.

### **Conduct in Research/Publication**

School-based counsellors must be active in conducting research which helps them to be abreast with current research findings as well as be prolific authors of their own research findings. This kind of engagement will help, in no small measure, to improve efficiency of the services provided. However, the school-based counsellor should ensure that his/her engagement with research respects the ethical consideration for human dignity since most of the counselling research deals with human subjects. The research findings must be genuine, and all contributors need to be duly acknowledged.

### **Consultancy and Private Practice**

The school-based counsellor could hold private practice in the form of consultancy, but the counsellor should not render such services within the official designated time of the institution where he/she is employed, either should he/she use the facilities provided for school counselling. In other words, the counsellor should endeavour to separate school counselling services from private practice and at the same time maintain all ethical requirement of counselling.

Hopefully, it is anticipated that each of the above subunits constitute all-inclusive part of what the counselling professional at the school-base level need to adhere to in order to maintain the ethical and legal requirement of service provision. These ethical issues serve a twofold measure in terms of protecting the counsellor in practice and also the student who may present him/herself as a client. As long as the counsellor keeps to the ethical requirements, it is assumed that practice will flow smoothly leading to effective provision of counselling services at the school-based level.

## Research

Research is the key to knowledge both in the form of acquisition and exploration of new facts including building up of a body of literature. The school-based counsellor involvement in research is an urgent need, which hopefully should extend to include research on policy formulation and implementation. In this context, research for school-based counsellors ought not to focus mainly on issues influencing children and young people's educational, social and behavioural problem, or perception of the school-based guidance and counselling programme as has been extensively researched upon (Chireshe, 2006, 2008; Chivonivoni, 2006; Kimberly et al., 2012; Stockton et al., 2010), but must go beyond to explore issues concerning policy formation/implementation and licensure of the counsellor (Wango, 2006). In addition, the research activity for counsellors within the region ought to include active exploration of knowledge regarding integrating African worldview into counselling at the school-based level (Eze, 2015a, 2015b; Nwoye, 2014). Besides, school-based counselling is not reserved to attending to students' needs alone. Part of the process of counselling in schools involves research and publication; therefore, the counsellor requires adequate time space in order to be effective and efficient researcher. In this way, school counsellors will become bona fide researchers who co-construct knowledge regarding policy guidelines for the wellbeing of the services they provide.

This kind of call has been echoed by counselling professionals within the region (Chireshe, 2012; Oyieyo, 2012; Wambu & Fisher, 2015; Wango, 2003, 2006). Therefore, it is essential that school-based counsellors should be research oriented. The act of engaging with research should form a vital part of their service provision. As such, they are able to discover new knowledge that aid their provision of service as well as share with others these new discoveries or problems they encounter in practice. Consequently, the school-based counsellor who engages in research

facilitates the process of systematic inquiry directed towards understanding, predicting or controlling with some expectation that the result can be generalized to other settings or to other people (Denga, 2001).

In similar ways, it is assumed that the school-based counsellor who researches and publishes would in turn read what others are publishing, resulting in him/her keeping abreast with what is latest discoveries including dealing with cutting-edge deliberations, particularly in the areas of application of theory in therapeutic processes. Other possible areas of research for the school-based counsellor could include career aspirations and all its related variables, motivation, learning, human behaviour and development, and traditional counselling among many others. Hence, counsellors contribute to foundational and innovative research. On this basis, we strongly maintain that research must be included in the development of any school-based counselling policies in order to foster in the counsellor the ethos of publication and cultivation of a reading culture.

## Time Allocation to Counselling Services

Addressing the issue of time allocation for counselling service is multidimensional, particularly in terms of the physical time slotted in for counselling, especially if the school-based counsellor is a subject teacher who could only attend to the students during free time. It is of extreme importance to ensure that adequate time space is located to school-based counselling. This reflects the strong need to allow the school-based counsellor ample time for practice. In fact, the ideal is to ensure that the school-based counsellor is not a subject teacher; otherwise he/she will not have the needed time to attend to students' counselling needs. As has been observed from the review presented in this chapter regarding what is in practice in most countries of Eastern and Southern Africa, it is obvious that counselling services in schools are provided by subject teachers.

Vividly, this implies that the school-based counsellor is not able to devote enough time to counselling students who may have counselling needs. Otherwise, school-based counsellor, who acts as both subject teacher and counsellor, may seem to appear as 'jack of all trade' making them inaccurate in what they teach, including the varying instances of appearing as unskilled counsellor. If nothing happens, there is no doubt that school-based counselling has and would continue to suffer some set back in terms of not having adequate time to address counselling needs of the students. Therefore, it is an imperative that any school-based counselling policy should consider 'time space' as a dire need that must be addressed.

Accordingly, school-based counselling policies ought to promote instances of having counsellors who are fully dedicated to providing counselling services. In this consideration, counsellors need not act as subject teachers as well as school counsellors. In fact, the policies need to emphasize the need of having two designated counsellors, with these two portfolios of having one act as educational and career counsellor and the other as personal-social counsellor. In this regard, the school-based counsellors are able to handle the students' diverse concerns meritoriously, be it in the areas of issues reflecting academic performance, career choices or personal issues such as family relationships and its related topics and mental health.

### **School Facilities**

As much as time has become a need that must be factored into the construction of any school-based counselling policy, so also is the availability of school facilities, which aids easy provision of counselling services. In this regard, there should be physical space provided for the smooth flow of school counselling services. This physical space should include the office space, cabinet for filing away documents, tables and chairs, TV sets and books among many others. It is important that the office location is sited in areas that

afford the counselling session the required atmosphere for organizing, administrating and evaluating guidance services to ensure that the purpose for which these services are established is being achieved. Primarily, it is important that the office is situated in such a way as to provide space for confidential discussions; thus there should be rooms clearly labelled as counselling room(s).

The authors of this chapter absolutely understand that resources are scarce, particularly within Africa where the counselling profession is still struggling to develop. It is essential to appreciate the fact that within Eastern and Southern Africa, the provision of counselling office may not require the provision of fabulous physical spaces but it is fitting to make some attempt towards providing the appropriate bare minimum of a physical office space. When possible, space should be provided for students to be seated in a relaxed position and also for anyone who may come around the counselling office. In all, such arrangement gives the school-counselling office an inviting atmosphere that welcomes students, creating a friendly space through which provision of counselling services may thrive. This means that there must be an adequate budget devoted to the provision of counselling services in schools.

### **Counselling Budget**

School counselling services must have sufficient budget on which it can run. No counselling services will achieve its objectives without the backing of resources to facilitate its smooth day-day running cost. This budget should be inclusive of all resources such as funding research and publications and provision of office working materials among many others (Denga, 2001; Mapfumo, 2001). Hence for school counselling policies to thrive, effort must be made to ensure that resources are provided for the smooth running of the counselling office. And the provision of such resources should be the task of school administrators and all stakeholders.



## Cultural Context and Environmental Influence

The provision of any counselling service is always culturally sensitive; therefore, school-based counselling within the region of Eastern and Southern Africa ought to respect the cultural context where it is located. To achieve this, it is mandatory that the provision of counselling takes into detailed account all that makes each culture unique. This is particularly essential within the context of Africa where much of the counselling theories and practices have been heavily Westernized (Nwoye, 2013, 2014). Hence, the African counsellor must negotiate ways of integrating his/her cultural views and values into practice.

It means that the counsellor and client's relationship must be viewed through the lens of their cultural perspective. For this to happen, the counsellor must be skilled as multicultural professional dating back to the type of training he/she received. This kind of demand surfaces the need of policy to influence the teaching curriculum of higher education in Africa, particularly within Eastern and Southern Africa. The school-based counsellor needs to be exposed to the type of training that integrates African cultural values, norms and ethos into its teaching curriculum with single aim of nurturing cultural awareness (Eze, 2015a, 2015b; Nwoye, 2013, 2014). In this regard, school counsellors would groom themselves towards exploring their personal as well as others' cultural realities and make every attempt to integrate them in their day to day approach of counselling services (Pillacy, 2011). Consequently, counselling policies may have to emphasize the urgent demand of ensuring that counsellors are exposed to multicultural concerns. As a result, one of the bases for the provision of school-based counselling should be to foster an approach of counselling in which the cultural background of not only the client but also that of the counsellor is respected (Sue & Sue, 2007).

In addition, school-based counselling should explore possible ways of integrating or liaising with traditional healers towards provision of services (Eze, 2015a, 2015b; Nwoye, 2013, 2014). Within these regions of Africa, it has become

essential to reconsider the position of traditional healers in provision of counselling services. To this end, the formulation of any school-based counselling policy ought to consider how/what kind of orientation and training should be given to traditional healers in order to equip them in assisting and/or serving as school counsellor. Traditional healers form an important group of personnel that cannot be neglected as far as help relationship services are concerned. Therefore, the need for their inclusion as counselling service providers ought to be addressed. However, their inclusion could be challenging but need to be addressed based on its contextual demands for these regions of Africa.

## Licensure

Professional certification is a requirement for counsellors who have been certified by their educational institutions as qualified. Thus, the starting point for Eastern and Southern African counsellors is the procurement of certification from accredited higher educational institution inside/outside their regions, besides which they must go further to write professional examination organized and administered by professional counselling bodies. What this means is that in each of these regions, there ought to exist a professional examination body, in charge of organizing and administering the professional examination to all qualified counsellors. The primary aim of such an examination is not to undermine the certification already awarded by higher educational institution but to affirm and as well ensure that qualified counsellors are legible to practice in this case as school counsellors. Clearly, such confirmation process will go a long way to address some of the issues already encountered in the regions with regard to having teachers act as school counsellors. In this case, teachers who have the interest/desire to continue to operate as school counsellors may go further and obtain initial training requiring that they sit for professional examination. In this way, the school-based counsellor will be a skilled counsellor who constantly engages with ongoing professional development.



However, there are some anticipating challenges that arise from this requirement. One such challenge is the non-existence of such bodies within the region. So far apart from South Africa, no other country within the region seems to have a professional examination body. Therefore, there is a need, within the region, to negotiate ways of setting up professional examination bodies. Having said this, we recognize the fact that lack of trained counsellors within the region is an interfacing problem that impacts on establishment of such examination body. The question is how does a country who lacks qualified counsellors institute certifying examination bodies to run licensure and certification examination? To whom are these examination meant to be administered? As much as this might seem insurmountable, our take on this matter is that already existing qualified counsellors need to start giving serious attention to the urgent need of certification via an independent examination body apart from the certification received from higher education. The presence of such an examination body helps in no small measures to streamline practice and provision of services. This is a need that must not be overlooked.

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## Conclusion

Going by the above submissions, there is no doubt that if the canons of provision for the school-based counselling go unchecked, there is bound to be some consequences which could be summed up as follows:

Presently, there is a lack of trained counsellors to provide the needed school-based counselling within African schools, particularly for the regions of Eastern and Southern Africa. Therefore, there is an urgent need to train qualified guidance and counselling personnel to fill in the gap of lack of trained personnel to supply the demand for school-based counsellors. Otherwise, school-based counselling might be left in the hands of untrained professionals which in the long run will militate against the quality of counselling services at the school-based level. What this means is that the provision of counselling services might

continue to be left in the hands of subject teachers who are not only untrained but are also bothered by the burden of teaching their various subjects alongside serving as counsellors for which they have little or no expertise. It is not an exaggeration to say that without adequate training, there will continue to be lack of efficacy among school-based counsellors, which is very much needed for valued provision of services (Atici, 2014). Therefore, the provision of appropriate counselling training is a prerequisite for professional counselling at the school-based counselling. Consequently, Ministries of Education and NGOs and all stakeholders need to make rigorous effort to ensure that counsellors who serve at the school-level are adequately trained.

Similarly, there is a need for instituting monitoring and evaluation of counselling programme at the school-based level. Basically, such evaluative structure should be multilevel, both within the school internal sphere and at the ministerial level including monitoring that comes from professional association level. The essence is to ensure that counselling services are provided within the peripheral of the required policy and ethical considerations. In this way, school-based counselling will adhere to guiding policies within the region of operation.

In addition, the monitoring and evaluation process had to include the operations of a licensure body that ought to grant further certification to school-based counsellors within the region. It does not mean that there will be one licensure body for the whole region but each country in the region ought to institute its own licensure process. It is essential that quality is maintained through this independent examination body, particularly as counselling in this region is still in its formative years. Hence, it is a prerequisite that excellence is upheld by observing counselling principles and ethics.

To achieve much of these requirements, money is needed. It means that provision of counselling services at the school-based level is capital intensive, including resources for in-service training, provision of office equipment and books, etc. Particularly, within African context, adequate resources are needed for research and publication,

in order to stimulate the African emerging counsellor to be involved and committed. In this way, the school-based counselling services will be sustained. In addition, resources are needed for ongoing evaluation and policy implementations.

To sum up, it is an imperative that if school-based counselling aims at helping students to understand better 'who they are' and 'are becoming', then the counsellors who are meant to provide these services be trained and monitored in order to ensure that services are tailored towards achieving its set objectives. In this context, policies are needed to guide and regulate the provision of services which in the perspective of educational objectives facilitate the students' achievement of mental health leading to emergence of individuals who are responsible and self-reliant. From all indication, the process of formulating school-based counselling policy must pay special attention to cultural issues of respecting the context in which the counselling services are provided. In this regard, school based counselling must treat the provision of home-grown trained counsellors as an urgent demand that will facilitate effective and efficient provision of school-based counselling.

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# School-Based Counseling Policy, Policy Research, and Implications: Findings from Hong Kong and Japan

# 18

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## Introduction

The chapter provides an overview of the existing policy landscape in Hong Kong and Japan. Key issues in school counseling are identified in each region, and the rationale underpinning policies for school-based counseling is discussed. The impact of policy on school practices is considered, and issues arising are identified. Relevant research findings are cited, and implications for future policy research considered. The chapter

consists of three sections: (1) “[Introduction](#),” school-based counseling in Hong Kong was prepared by Mantak Yuen and Queenie A. Y. Lee; (2) “[School-Based Counseling in Hong Kong](#),” school-based counseling in Japan was prepared by Raymond M. C. Chan and Shinji Kurihara; and (3) “[School-Based Counseling in Japan \(Raymond M. C. Chan and Shinji Kurihara\)](#),” school-based counseling in East Asia: Integrative regional summary was prepared by Mantak Yuen and Queenie A. Y. Lee.

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## School-Based Counseling in Hong Kong

In this section, the evolution and implementation of existing policies associated with school counseling in Hong Kong are summarized, and key issues in school counseling are identified. The impact of policy on school practices is considered. Relevant research findings related to a whole-school approach to comprehensive guidance are also discussed; and the authors delineate the need for further studies on school-based counseling practices in this region.

## Existing Context and Policies

School-based counseling and guidance programs have a relatively short history in Hong Kong. Specific guidance and counseling programs, and



career advice, did not commence in schools until 1959; and associated services such as remedial teaching and school social work service were not launched until the 1970s (Yuen et al., 2014). However, two important milestones can be traced in Hong Kong. First is the appointment of career guidance masters in secondary schools, together with the establishment of the Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters (HKACMGM) in 1959. Second is the adoption of the whole-school approach (WSA) as the underpinning philosophy for the implementation of all school-based guidance programs. WSA was recommended by the Education Commission in its *Report No. 4* (Hong Kong Education Commission, 1990). These events resulted in a more structured implementation of school guidance, steered by governmental policy, practiced by all staff members in Hong Kong schools, and supported by a professional teacher body.

As the name clearly implies, the whole-school approach to guidance denotes that the responsibility for guiding and counseling students should involve *all teachers* and is not the sole responsibility of one teacher or counselor in a school. The concept of involving all teachers was developed from the *Guidance Teacher Model*, established in the territory in 1986. Under this model, “guidance teachers” are usually full-time subject teachers who also shoulder the additional responsibility of planning and implementing guidance and counseling activities and dealing with discipline (Yuen, 2002). In 1990, the whole-school approach was promulgated by the Hong Kong Government with the intention of informing schools that all teachers were to take up such school counseling and guidance work, in addition to the existing guidance masters and mistresses.

The whole-school approach has resulted in a paradigm shift in the concept of how best to deal with matters related to students’ personal and academic development and with any personal, social, and emotional problems they may have. The shift has been from a reactive, “remedial” approach to a more proactive “developmental” and “preventive” approach (Yuen et al., 2014). Modeled after the comprehensive guidance and

counseling programs popular in North America, the key elements of the school guidance program in Hong Kong include: (1) a guidance curriculum that covers students’ personal, social, and career development; (2) organization and planning of guidance activities; (3) development, management, and accountability for the guidance program; and (4) manpower and resources issues (Yuen et al., 2010a, 2010b). The two goals of this comprehensive program are to assist students to acquire competencies to handle issues that may affect their growth and development and to develop “career consciousness” in students so that they are able to visualize and plan their future life roles (Gysbers, 1998; Yuen Chan et al., 2007). To address this second goal, there is now greater attention given to career guidance and counseling in current policies.

In order to understand the evolution of WSA in guidance, it is relevant to consider developments in primary schools and secondary schools separately. The points below indicate similarities and areas of differences in policies and practices at the two age levels.

### **Comprehensive Guidance Program in Primary Schools**

The historical development of guidance and counseling in primary schools in Hong Kong is similar to that of secondary schools. Specific programs officially began in the 1970s when the first “guidance officers” were appointed to serve in primary schools (Yuen et al., 2007a, 2007b). In the 1980s, more resources were allocated for fostering student development in these schools, and teacher-to-student ratios in classes were improved (Yau, 1998). However, the main focus remained the provision of services to students with learning difficulties who were in need of remedial support (Lee, 2005). Change processes gained momentum at the start of the new millennium, with the introduction of education reforms in Hong Kong. The Education and Manpower Bureau policy now required primary schools to focus on the design and implementation of well-planned developmental and preventive guidance activities—to supplement, rather than replace, existing

remedial support. The policy change has meant that all schools must develop a comprehensive student guidance program with four essential features: (1) an emphasis on creating a caring culture, (2) attention given to all students' personal growth and life skill development, (3) responsive services for students who are identified to be at risk (provided through individual or group counseling), and (4) support service for teachers and parents (Yuen et al., 2007a, 2007b).

### **Career Guidance and Life Planning in Secondary Schools**

As stated above, career guidance was initially implemented in Hong Kong in 1959—a time when there was a surge in the number of junior secondary school leavers needing vocational advice and service when they entered the job market. To respond to this societal need, the Hong Kong Association of Career Masters and Guidance Masters was established with the support of the Hong Kong Government (Ho, 2008). Guidance masters or mistresses are usually subject teachers, and they have multiple roles to play in the delivery of services such as disseminating career information to the students, organizing career-related workshops or seminars, and tracking the pathway to employment for students, and follow-up when they leave school.

According to Li (2007), there are five core roles that need to be played by career teachers; but in reality, these aspects of career guidance in Hong Kong schools can still be criticized as fragmented and superficial. It seems that, instead of providing professional career counseling to individual students, the teachers are mainly involved in administrative work such as organizing and overseeing large-scale school programs (Leung, 2002). There is still a long way to go to improve the efficiency of the service at the individual student level in most schools.

It was not until recent years that the government paid more attention to the implementation of “life planning education” and “career education” in secondary schools. A few important milestones in the past decade are worthy of note. First is a major curriculum reform in 2000, where senior secondary education is now linked with work-related

experiences for students. Second is a policy paper titled *Action for the Future: Career-oriented Studies and the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure for Special Schools* (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2006). This mandated career education as an integral part of the new senior secondary curriculum. Third is the publication of the *Guide on Life Planning Education and Career Guidance for Secondary Schools* (Education Bureau, 2014), which specifies the vision and practicalities of career education in Hong Kong secondary schools. In sum, career guidance and life planning in Hong Kong have now received more official recognition and support and are developing well as part of the local school-based counseling landscape.

### **Research Findings**

Table 18.1 summarizes some selected research associated with school counseling in Hong Kong.

#### **Research on the Whole-School Approach to School Counseling**

As mentioned already, the whole-school approach (WSA) was advocated by the Education Commission in 1990, when it was recognized that schools should adopt a more proactive and preventive orientation in terms of guidance services (Hui, 1998a). Against this background, researchers have investigated the implementation and effectiveness of the whole-school approach in Hong Kong. In one of her works, Hui (1998a) examined the focus of guidance work in 32 secondary schools. The results of her quantitative analyses indicated that 16 schools had a clearly stated policy with mainly remedial guidance focus, five were preventive in focus, and in the remaining 11 the alleged focus did not match their actual guidance practices. In terms of services offered by guidance teachers, it was found that they spent most of their time handling cases referred by other teachers (often for matters of discipline or other problems), followed by organizing mass programs (e.g., large group lectures) that aimed at developing students' life skills or providing information.

**Table 18.1** Summary of research associated with school counseling policies and practices in Hong Kong

Reference	Major questions	Method	Sources of data	Level/location	Major findings
Hui (1998a)	What is the focus of guidance in Hong Kong schools?	Stage 1: Individual interview and Kelly's Repertory Grid technique Stage 2: Survey	Nine educational psychologists and educational counselors in stage 1 Guidance heads from 31 secondary schools in stage 2	Secondary schools; Hong Kong	Major constructs of guidance services were identified. Survey revealed that handling cases and organizing developmental mass programs were the most common guidance services offered. Majority of the schools researched were mainly remedial in focus, and a smaller number of schools were preventive in focus
Hui (1998b)	What are students' and teachers' beliefs in (i) the meaning of guidance, (ii) the helpfulness of guidance services, (iii) guidance roles of teachers, and (iv) school improvement of guidance?	Questionnaire	2,045 junior secondary school (S1 to 3) students and 267 teachers and tutors	Secondary schools; Hong Kong	Students and teachers shared similar views on various aspects of guidance although the magnitude of agreement varied. For example, students saw guidance as problem solving, whereas teachers saw it as helping students' personal growth. The perceptions of the roles of guidance teachers, helpfulness of guidance programs, and ways to improve programs were similar among students and teachers
Hui (2002)	What is the meaning of a whole-school approach to guidance to teachers and the actual practice in schools as perceived by the teachers?	Individual interview (Phase 1) and survey (Phase 2)	Guidance heads from 30 schools in Phase 1 895 teachers from 222 schools in Phase 2	Secondary schools; Hong Kong	Teachers perceived a whole-school approach (WSA) to guidance as an endeavor which should involve all teachers, aiming at fostering student development, and it is a system of management. The conception of WSA has become more sophisticated among Hong Kong teachers although the actual implementation did not seem to match their perceptions. Also, there was a shift in the focus of school guidance from remedial casework to preventive/development guidance among the schools
Yuen (2002)	What are the positive beliefs about school counseling and guidance among secondary school guidance teachers?	Focus groups	24 guidance teachers from different schools who were nominated as "effective" guidance teachers by their colleagues	Secondary schools; Hong Kong	Nearly all teachers had positive beliefs in school counseling and guidance. Five major categories of positive beliefs emerged: (1) importance of care and concern for students, (2) guidance for whole-person education, (3) guidance should meet students' individual needs for growth, (4) growth and change in the helping process, and (5) guidance and counseling training is needed by all school personnel

Yuen et al. (2006a)	(1) How confident are primary school students in their ability to apply life skills? (2) To what extent is students' life skills development positively related to personal and family characteristics?	Survey	13,660 primary 4-6 students	Primary schools; Hong Kong	Students possessed reasonably positive views of their own self-efficacy in the four life skills domains. Students' self-efficacy scores seemed to decline slightly with age. Good family and school relationships were consistent predictors in students' self-efficacy
Yuen et al. (2007a)	(1) To what extent are P.6 students' self-efficacy scores in Time 2 related to student characteristics in Time 1? (2) To what extent have students' self-efficacy beliefs changed after 12 months?	Survey	3,813 primary 6 students from 55 schools, of which 3,160 could be identified as participants in the 2006 study	Primary schools; Hong Kong	Correlation coefficients between self-efficacy scores in Time 1 and student characteristics in Time 2 were small though statistically significant. Over the 12-month period, students' confidence in applying life skills remained reasonably stable
Yuen et al. (2006b)	(1) How confident are secondary-age students in their ability to apply life skills? (2) To what extent is students' life skills development positively related to personal and family characteristics?	Survey	15,113 secondary 1-3 students from 87 schools	Secondary schools; Hong Kong	Students possessed reasonably positive views of their own self-efficacy in the four life skills domains, although they rated themselves as less confident in leadership, coping with bullying and time management. No statistical significant difference was found between boys and girls. Good family and school relationships were consistent predictors in students' self-efficacy in all domains
Yuen et al. (2007b)	(1) To what extent are S.2 students' self-efficacy scores in Time 2 related to student characteristics in Time 1? (2) To what extent have students' self-efficacy beliefs changed after 12 months?	Survey	4,932 secondary 2 students who participated in the 2006 study	Secondary schools; Hong Kong	Correlation coefficients between self-efficacy scores in Time 1 and student characteristics in Time 2 were small though statistically significant. Positive relationships with family and school were moderately associated with higher life skills self-efficacy. Over the 12-month period, students' confidence in applying life skills remained reasonable; however, some significant declines were noted in the scores in the academic, social, as well as career and talent development domains

(continued)

Table 18.1 (continued)

Reference	Major questions	Method	Sources of data	Level/location	Major findings
Yuen et al. (2008)	(1) How confident are senior secondary school students in their ability to apply life skills? (2) To what extent is students' life skills development positively related to personal and family characteristics?	Survey	12,241 secondary 4 and 6 students from 84 schools	Secondary schools; Hong Kong	Students possessed reasonably positive views of their self-efficacy in academic, personal-social, and career development. Boys reported higher self-efficacy in personal-social and career development. Parents support school connectedness and participation in extracurricular activities/voluntary services were consistent predictors in self-efficacy
Yuen et al. (2009)	(1) To what extent are senior secondary students' self-efficacy scores in Time 2 related to student characteristics in Time 1? (2) To what extent have students' self-efficacy beliefs changed after 12 months?	Survey	4,050 secondary 5 and 7 students who participated in the 2008 study	Secondary schools; Hong Kong	Correlation coefficients between self-efficacy scores in Time 1 and student characteristics in Time 2 were small though statistically significant in most cases. Parents support, peer connectedness, and teacher connectedness were moderately associated with higher life skills self-efficacy Over the 12-month period, students' confidence in applying life skills in academic and personal-social development increased slightly. Slight decline in S.5 students' confidence to apply career life skills
Yuen et al. (2010)	(1) How confident are primary school students in their ability to apply life skills? (2) How connected do students feel to their parents, school, peers, and teachers? (3) To what extent is students' life skills development positively related to personal and family characteristics?	Survey	13,490 primary 3 and 5 students	Primary schools; Hong Kong	Students possessed reasonably positive views of their own self-efficacy in the four life skills domains. Girls reported higher self-efficacy in academic, personal, and social life skills domains. P.3 students reported higher self-efficacy than P.5 students in academic, social, and career development. Connectedness to parents and school were consistent predictors in students' self-efficacy

Yuen et al. (2012)	(1) To what extent are primary school students' self-efficacy scores in Time 2 related to student characteristics in Time 1? (2) To what extent have students changed in their connectedness to parents, peers, and school? (3) To what extent have students' self-efficacy beliefs changed after 12 months?	Survey	12,221 primary 4 and 6 students from 68 schools	Primary schools; Hong Kong	Self-efficacy in academic, personal, and social efficacy in Time 2 was associated with father's education, parents' care, and connectedness to school. Self-efficacy in career and talent development was associated with mother's education, parents' care, connectedness to family and school, and physical exercise Over the 12-month period, there was a very slight increase in students' connectedness. Self-efficacy scores in most domains remained quite stable though not high. Slight increase was reported in academic and personal-social domains, and career and talent development domain for P.6 students
Lam & Hui, (2010)	How do regular teachers make sense of education, guidance and counseling, and their respective roles? What are teachers actually doing in guidance/counseling and what are their constraints and struggles?	Interview	12 teachers from 3 different schools	Secondary schools; Hong Kong	Teachers held a belief in the whole-person approach to education, and they saw an interlocking relationship between education, guidance, and counseling. They had a sense of ownership in the whole-school approach to guidance though they were stifled by the lack of skills and heavy workload in the delivery of guidance
Chan et al. (2011)	What are the relationships between teacher care and students' life skills development and academic achievement? Is there any gender difference in the effect of teacher care on students' life skills development?	Survey	15,113 junior secondary school students and 635 teachers from 86 schools participated	Secondary schools; Hong Kong	The effect of teacher care was significant on all four domains of life skills development. A clear gender difference was observed as effects of teacher care were not significant on boys' personal, academic, and career and talent development. Effect of teacher care was significant in academic achievement in all three core subjects in both genders



In two subsequent studies, Hui (1998b, 2002) examined how students and/or teachers perceived the quality and value of school guidance in Hong Kong. In the first study, Hui (1998b) found that, overall, students and teachers shared a reasonable consensus as to what guidance is or should be—that guidance helps with students' personal growth and is a form of values teaching and that it involves teachers listening to students and helping them resolve problems. There were a few differences between the two samples; for example, teachers seemed to see guidance as more “developmental” in nature; and teachers believed that guidance activities are more helpful to students than the students actually thought or felt them to be. This suggests that teachers need to take more account of the way that students perceive activities within guidance programs, to ensure that the purposes and value of an activity are fully understood by the participants.

The largest disparity between teachers' and students' views on school guidance was that students did not perceive the support as helping them resolve emotional and behavioral problems. Again, the teachers presented a much more positive view and believed that they did help their students develop strategies to deal with problems in school and in life and that case work constituted the largest share of their workload (Hui, 1998a). This difference may reflect students' common resistance to being referred to a “specialist” and seen as “problem students.” Such an attitude may make it difficult for students to decide objectively if such a referral has helped them.

To explore more deeply how teachers perceive the whole-school approach, Hui (2002) used mixed-method research to discover teachers' personal beliefs about WSA and the actual practices used in the schools. These teachers were heads of the guidance team in 30 secondary schools in Hong Kong. The result of the qualitative enquiry showed that teachers accepted the principle that WSA should involve all staff members in school guidance, including the head teacher, all subject teachers, and supporting staff in a school. At the ideological level, teachers believed that WSA should positively influence the school ethos and mission; and to achieve guidance goals at the

implementation level, it must involve constant communication and collaboration between teachers of different functional teams. Hui (2002) used principal components analysis and found two factors that represented the teachers' interpretation of WSA—that WSA is seen as an endeavor to foster student development and that WSA is a system of management. This finding can be viewed as supportive of WSA as it is entirely compatible with the principle that a comprehensive guidance program must focus on students' whole-person development while at the same time be managed efficiently and be accountable.

It should be viewed as depressing that despite teachers' sound understanding of the scope and purpose of WSA, the implementation of the approach in their respective schools often fell short of the mark. It was found that there was a significant mismatch between teachers' personal beliefs concerning WSA and the school reality. Few teachers believed that their school was actually implementing WSA effectively. There was often a difference between how guidance heads viewed WSA and how their colleagues attempted to enact it. As Hui (2002) observed at the time, it is encouraging that fostering student development has become a belief among guidance teachers, but at the moment a whole-school approach to guidance is more an ideal than a reality in Hong Kong.

Yuen (2002) extended the work of Hui (1998a, 1998b) by exploring Hong Kong guidance teachers' positive beliefs in greater depth. By conducting five focus groups with 24 effective guidance teachers from secondary schools across the territory, five categories of belief emerged from over 700 responses. The categories of belief were (1) care and concern for students as essential elements in student-teacher relationships, (2) guidance is for educating the whole person, (3) guidance should aim to meet students' individual needs, (4) students can grow and change through a helping process, and (5) guidance and counseling training is essential for every teacher and school administrator. The significance of Yuen's (2002) work is that it fully supports a view that guidance teachers hold positive beliefs concerning school guidance and counseling and that

these echo the assumptions and principles of Hong Kong Education Department policies (1993, 1995, 2001). The findings also indicate that Hong Kong teachers perceive school guidance as developmental in orientation and they value the importance of teacher participation in student guidance.

Lam and Hui (2010) examined factors that affect the involvement of teachers in guidance and counseling in a whole-school approach. Using a qualitative approach, they interviewed 12 subject teachers from various secondary schools in Hong Kong to uncover their perceptions of education, guidance, and counseling. The results indicated that teachers subscribed to a belief in the whole-person approach to education, and they believed there was an interlocking relationship between education, guidance, and counseling. Although the respondents were not guidance teachers, they felt it was part of their role to provide guidance and counseling to students; they saw this as an integral part of education. In spite of the strong commitment of the teachers to student guidance, the study also uncovered constraints faced by the teachers in delivering effective guidance service. The data revealed that teachers were limited by (1) a lack of skills in handling cases, (2) heavy workload (which included high teacher-student ratio and much additional paperwork resulting from the education reforms), (3) insufficient training in guidance and counseling in teacher education programs, and (4) mental and physical exhaustion (Lam & Hui, 2010). The factors identified above may help to explain why the principle of WSA has been difficult to translate into practice. The message here must be that policy-makers and school administrators must provide teachers with more system support and management if they are to provide more effective guidance service to their students.

### **Research on the Implementation of Comprehensive Guidance Program in Primary Schools**

One of the main aims of the Comprehensive Guidance Program is to increase students' acquisition of life skills. A student's "life skills" com-

prise a set of everyday competencies and perceived self-efficacy that facilitate academic progress, personal and social development, and career planning (Yuen et al., 2010a, 2010b). Yuen and colleagues (2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2010a, 2010b, 2012) conducted a series of studies to investigate life skills development among primary school students in Hong Kong. In their 2006 study, they examined how confident primary school students were in applying life skills and to what extent their life skills development was related to a number of specified influences (e.g., personal and family characteristics; interpersonal relationships at school and at home). From a large sample of 13,660 upper primary school students from Years 4, 5, and 6, it was found that these students were fairly confident in their own ability to apply specified life skills in the academic, personal, social, and career and talent development domains. Girls seemed to be more confident than boys in applying life skills. Positive interpersonal relationships at school seemed to be associated with students' heightened confidence levels (Yuen et al., 2006a, 2006b); but it is noteworthy that there appeared to be a decline in confidence level as students grew older.

In their follow-up survey conducted one year later, Yuen and his associates (2007a) tracked more than 5,000 students from Year 5 who had taken part in the earlier study. They were able to match 3,160 students who had completed the questionnaire at Time 1. The result of the follow-up study showed that there were some small yet statistically significant correlations between students' self-efficacy scores at Time 2 and student characteristics collected at Time 1—for example, students' family and school relationships seemed to associate with their self-efficacy scores in applying life skills. In addition, it was found that students' self-efficacy had remained quite stable after 12 months, and in certain cases there was an increase in self-efficacy scores. These findings are encouraging and may indicate that the comprehensive student guidance program is yielding some positive outcomes.

Yuen et al. (2010a, 2010b) conducted another round of research to investigate the relationships

between primary school students' "connectedness" and life skills development. The researchers again examined the confidence levels of primary school students (Year 3 and Year 5) in applying life skills, but this time also investigated their connectedness with the school and family, and the relationships between their life skills development and individual as well as family characteristics. It was found that the upper primary school students possessed positive views of their self-efficacy in applying life skills and that connectedness to parents and school was a consistent predictor of their self-efficacy. In a follow-up survey conducted 1 year later, it was found that the students' self-efficacy scores were still associated with family characteristics and connectedness to school collected in Time 1. Over a 12-month period, the researchers also found that there was a slight increase in the students' connectedness and their self-rated efficacy. The study established a link between positive connectedness to family and school, and students' confidence in applying life skills. This strengthens a view that the practice of creating a caring culture on a school campus helps to foster student development, which is an essential feature of Hong Kong's whole-school approach (Yuen et al., 2012). Connectedness is also likely to be enhanced by closer cooperation between schools and parents—referred to in some countries as a "parent-professional partnership."

In addition to researching outcomes from comprehensive guidance programs in Hong Kong primary schools, Yuen et al. (2007a, 2007b) have also investigated teachers' perceptions and involvement in such programs. One study involving 433 teachers found that teachers generally believed that comprehensive programs are now being implemented to some extent in all primary schools; but as in the case of whole-school approach, their effectiveness varies. Regarding the actual involvement of teachers in these programs, it was found that both class teachers and guidance teachers do take part, but the nature of their tasks and the magnitude of their involvement varied. For example, class teachers reported that they were performing multiple roles in the delivery of guidance activities—such as teaching

the guidance curriculum, planning with individual students, and providing system support. The guidance teachers, now known as Life Education Coordinators, were much more heavily involved in providing and managing responsive services (Yuen et al., 2007a, 2007b). The study also investigated if teachers' perceptions of the guidance and counseling programs were affected by gender and professional position, as well as their involvement in teaching the guidance curriculum. Results showed that whereas teachers' gender and position in a school did not affect their overall perceptions, their views on how well guidance curriculum in their schools was implemented did differ. Those who have to teach the guidance curriculum, and the Life Education Coordinators responsible for designing that curriculum, reported a higher level of implementation of the guidance program.

The study by Yuen et al. (2007a, 2007b) also found that class teachers and guidance teachers (Life Education Coordinators) both lack adequate professional training in guidance and counseling knowledge and skills. For example, approximately 31% of class teachers and 15% of Life Education Coordinators had not received *any training* in the field, and only 7% of class teachers and 26% of Coordinators had received training of 60 hours or more (Yuen et al., 2007a, 2007b). These numbers certainly point to a pressing need for teachers, especially those who are in charge of student guidance work, to receive proper and adequate training in the theory and practices of school guidance and counseling.

### **Research on the Implementation of Career Guidance and Life Planning in Secondary Schools**

In Hong Kong there has only been limited research so far on how school factors contribute to students' academic achievement and life skill development. Yuen and colleagues (Chan, Lau & Yuen, 2011; Yuen et al., 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2009) are among the few who have studied life skills development of secondary school students and the possible impact of the comprehensive guidance program put in place by the Hong Kong Education Department. Between 2005 and 2006,

life skills development of junior secondary school students was examined (Secondary Years 1–3). In the first year, 15,113 junior secondary school students from 87 schools across the territory were sampled. The research explored how confident the students were in their ability to apply life skills in various situations and to what extent their life skill development was related to personal and family characteristics. The results showed that these junior secondary school students possessed reasonably positive views of their self-efficacy in the domains of academic, personal, social, and career planning, and talent development. It was found that students' self-efficacy in life skills was consistently linked with positive relationships within the family and school. However, their confidence level seemed to decline slightly as they moved upward through the three grade levels. This may simply reflect a more realistic awareness of one's personal abilities during adolescence or a natural loss of confidence as a young person experiences more of life.

In a follow-up survey conducted 12 months later, involving 4,932 students who had by then been promoted from Secondary 1 to Secondary 2, it was found that their self-efficacy scores had a small yet statistically significant correlation with student characteristics collected at Time 1. Most notably, students' positive relationship with family and school continued to associate moderately with their life skills self-efficacy. There was a slight to significant decline in students' self-efficacy scores over time, particularly in academic, career, and talent development domains. This decline is perhaps explained by the increasing demand from schoolwork and a more realistic appraisal of one's abilities.

The Life Skills Development Project team conducted a similar survey on *senior* secondary school students (Secondary 4 and 6) in Hong Kong from 2007 to 2008 (Yuen et al., 2008). The aim was to investigate the outcomes from the comprehensive guidance program on students' life skills development. Similar to their junior secondary school counterparts, these senior secondary school students possessed reasonably positive views of their self-efficacy in the academic, personal-social, and career development

domains. Boys reported higher self-efficacy than girls in personal-social and career development, but not in academic development. Results from regression analysis suggested that good parental support, school connectedness, and participation in extracurricular and social services were consistent predictors of these students' self-efficacy.

In a follow-up survey conducted with the same cohorts of students 1 year later (Secondary 5 and 7), the researchers found that the correlation coefficients between students' self-efficacy scores in Time 2 and student characteristics collected in Time 1 were small but statistically significant. Second, there was a slight increase in students' self-efficacy scores in the academic and personal-social domains, although there was a drop in confidence in the career domain. It could be speculated that pressure to consider the need to transit from school to work, and uncertainties associated with job hunting, may explain partly why senior secondary students were now less confident in career development. The findings indicate that the comprehensive guidance program may need to provide more systematic career planning opportunities for adolescents to increase their confidence in this area (Yuen et al., 2009).

### Teacher Care

"Teacher care" is an important component of all guidance and counseling work in schools and is regarded as important within a comprehensive program that addresses whole-person development. Chan et al. (2011) explored interrelationships among teacher care, students' life skills development, and their academic achievement. They solicited information from 635 secondary school teachers concerning their perception of the extent and quality of teacher care in their school. This was accompanied by data from 15,113 junior secondary school students on their life skills development, as measured by the *Life Skills Development Self-Efficacy Inventories* (LSD-SI). The students also provided information on their academic achievement in three core subjects—Chinese language, English language, and Mathematics. It was found that the effects of teacher care were significant in all four domains measured in the inventories, with the effect of

teacher care on social development being the highest (Chan et al., 2011). As for academic achievement, it was found that the effects of teacher care were significant to both boys and girls and the achievement in all three core school subjects. This study is viewed as pioneering research in Hong Kong to document the influence of teacher care on students' academic achievement and life skills development. The results lend support to the value of cultivating a "caring culture" on campus as an important cornerstone of effective guidance programs.

## **Discussion of Key Issues and Implications**

### **Teacher Involvement, Training, and Effectiveness**

Existing policies and practices in school guidance and counseling in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong have created important issues that deserve further attention from the government, researchers, and educators. The first key issue is to determine to what extent the whole-school approach to guidance is really being implemented in Hong Kong. Summarizing the research presented in "[Prefectures as Policy Intermediaries](#)," it can be seen that most, if not all, teachers do share a consensus that all personnel in a school should participate in a whole-school approach to foster student growth and development. They believe that school guidance is an integral part of education and that as professionals they should be involved in pastoral care, no matter what role or position they are in (Lam & Hui, 2010). In spite of these positive beliefs held by teachers, there are many constraints that prevent them from completely fulfilling their roles within the whole-school model. One of the main constraints is an extremely heavy workload from teaching and administrative duties. It is clear that much better support and management of WSA is needed, both territory-wide and at school level. If school guidance programs are to become fully effective, teachers require support that will give them more time and energy to deliver pastoral care to students (e.g., a lighter

teaching load, more clerical assistance, less routine administrative paperwork).

Another key issue is the lack of specific professional training in school guidance and counseling for teachers. Surveys by Yuen et al. (2007a, 2007b) revealed that nearly one-third of class teachers in primary schools and more than 50% in secondary schools were without any training at all in guidance and counseling (Yuen, Chan, Lau, Yu, & Chan, 2010). Given that WSA assumes that all teachers will participate fully in the approach, it is evident that lack of training is a major obstacle that must be overcome. There is an urgent need for more in-service professional training in guidance and counseling for existing teachers. For preservice teachers, such professional training can be mandated as an essential part of their preparation so that all trainee teachers acquire basic counseling knowledge and skills to handle student problems.

### **Student Engagement, Affective, and Academic Outcomes**

Results of the studies conducted with primary and secondary school students in Hong Kong have shown that guidance programs have yielded some positive effects. Research carried out by the Life Skills Development Project team reveals that students from Primary 3 to Secondary 7 were moderately confident in their own ability to apply life skills in academic, personal, social, career, and talent development areas. These findings are encouraging in that the comprehensive guidance program seems to be making a positive contribution to students' life skills development, despite its relatively short history. However, students' confidence levels in life skills revealed across the grades were "moderate" rather than "high," so it is evident that students could still be helped to develop greater confidence in their life skills if the guidance program deliberately gives this topic a stronger focus in the guidance curriculum. This may also help to prevent the noted decline in confidence as students move up through the grade levels. Students were least confident in the "career and talent development" domain, again suggesting that more systematic individual planning and career-related guidance activities should



be put in place. This is particularly important for senior students beyond Year 7. Leung (2002) has commented that career counselors in Hong Kong usually focus too much on “information giving” rather than running practical workshops, group counseling, and individual counseling to build confidence in the career domain.

The advent of the HK New Senior Secondary Curriculum in September 2009 requires students to have “Other Learning Experiences” (OLE) in addition to the traditional school subjects and to compile a “Student Learning Profile.” These changes give teachers (particularly those who are in charge of career and guidance) the opportunity to help students explore their strengths, interests, and talents, gradually linking these to possible future career pathways. It is thus important that a school’s comprehensive guidance program forge close links with these aspects of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum.

### Further Studies Needed

In view of the research so far completed in the realm of school guidance and counseling in Hong Kong, some additional studies are recommended. First, there should be more systematic examination of the effectiveness of the guidance programs as currently implemented in Hong Kong schools. Much of the original research was conducted when the whole-school approach was still in its early days (Hui, 1998a). At that time, developmental guidance was cited as a good model, but not yet an official policy endorsed by the Education Department. Now that two decades have passed since the official endorsement (1995), more studies should be conducted to examine the practicalities of the approach in the Hong Kong context. In particular, it is important to discover whether the guidance focus differs from school to school (perhaps reflecting the characteristics and needs of the local community) and also to assess objectively the academic and affective outcomes for each school. It is important to identify any school-based factors that may enhance the delivery of guidance support to students (e.g., time-tabling, teachers’ workload, resource allocation, school ethos).

There is also a need for the government and various stakeholders to specify and assess the

qualifications and effectiveness of teachers in the delivery of guidance programs. It has been stated above that there needs to be better training for teachers at both in-service and preservice stages. In addition, future efforts should be made to examine the *content* of teachers’ professional training in school guidance and counseling and the suitability of procedures to assess teachers’ skills and to offer certification where appropriate. It would be ideal if future studies could identify the specific knowledge, skills, and strategies exhibited by the most effective guidance teachers (and others), so that teacher trainers could endeavor to focus on such good practices in their courses.

Lastly, future research might investigate how guidance programs can be most effectively integrated into the New Senior Secondary Curriculum and, for senior students particularly, how the new curriculum and comprehensive guidance activities together can develop career plans for students and enhance their ultimate employability in an ever-changing work environment (Gysbers & Hendersen, 2006).

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### School-Based Counseling in Japan (Raymond M. C. Chan and Shinji Kurihara)

This section examines the school-based counseling policy in Japan. In part 1, national policy of implementation is discussed, with attention given to school level implementation in part 2. Here the working relationships among different counseling specialists and teaching professionals are examined. In part 3, a summary of research studies and projects associated with the development of school-based counseling is reported. To conclude the discussion, key issues and challenges concerning the future enhancement of school-based counseling in Japan are discussed in part 4 (School-Based Counseling Policy in Japan).

### Decentralization Policy

In Japan, a “decentralized policy” has been adopted as part of the Basic Plan for the Promotion



of Education (MEXT, 2008). Under this policy, the central government delegates the power to the prefectures (representing local governments, which are sometimes collectively referred to as *to-dō-fu-ken* (都道府県)). The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) takes up the key role in formulating the national education policy, while local governments (prefectures and/or designated city governments) are responsible for “implementing education that suits the need and circumstances of respective regions” and are “in charge of the majority of education-related administrative works” (“Introduction,” Chap. 3, MEXT, 2008). This system allows each prefecture to formulate its own education planning and implementation strategy by following the prefecture’s policy decision.

### Prefectures as Policy Intermediaries

According to Lane and Hamann (2003), a policy intermediary is “an individual (or organization) who understands his/her dual role as a policy-maker and policy implementer and who actively facilitates his/her own and others’ understanding and interpretation of a given education policy” (p. 20). An effective policy intermediary should:

- Possess a keen awareness of the role as an intermediary (role awareness)
- Be able to utilize resources and networks efficiently and strategically (system and networks approach)
- Build and sustain relationships with other implementers at the state, district, or school level (relationship building)
- Consistently be aware of local conditions that may influence the policy (contextualized understanding)

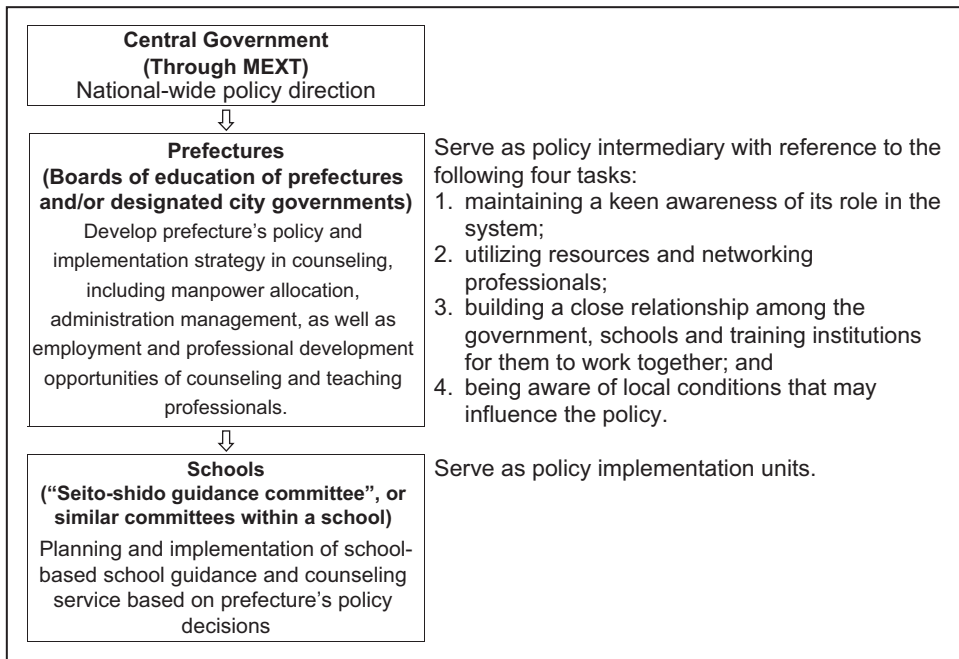
In examining the Japan system with reference to the above framework, the boards of education in different prefectures or cities are authorized to take up the role as the policy intermediary to elaborate the purpose of a policy and support communication of policy so that “local adaptation,

appropriation, and finally implementation of policy is coherent at the local level, ... and providing a link between in-the-field practitioners and individuals at more removed levels of the system” (p. 21). The boards of education in different prefectures are therefore responsible for undertaking the four roles listed above (Fig. 18.1).

Following this system, the Board of Education of each prefecture will be responsible for the development of the district-level counseling policy and implementation strategy and provide its own training program for school teachers and administrators.

### Implementation of School-Based Counseling

At the school level, the school guidance and counseling policy, goals, and implementation strategy are determined by the school leader (Zaffuto, 2004). In practice, a “seitoshidou committee” (student guidance committee) or a committee with a similar name is established in each school to take charge of all the work related to school-based counseling services. Senior school teachers and experienced teachers are appointed by the school principal to join the committee (Chan et al., 2015). However, currently there are no special qualification requirements or compulsory on-the-job training for teachers who join the committee as a member or even the chairperson (Chan et al., 2015). At the implementation level, the concept of “whole-school approach” is adopted, requiring all teachers to be involved in students’ personal, social, academic, and career development. It is the teachers’ responsibility to give students the experience of joy, of understanding themselves and others, through classroom activities designed for learning autonomy, to develop practical and healthy attitudes, and enhancing the skills of career decision-making, problem solving, and academic learning (MEXT, 2010). Developmental counseling and guidance work is integrated into teachers’ daily working agenda through the role as “homeroom teachers.” Teachers are also expected to take up their guidance role outside normal



**Fig. 18.1** Implementation of school-based counseling policy in Japan

class-teaching hours or through a variety of extracurricular activities in facilitating students' growth and development (Chan, Kurihara, Yukiko, & Yamasaki, 2015; Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999; Yagi, 2008). In this respect, guidance and counseling services provided by teachers are generally individual based and nonsystematic and largely depend on the teachers' own initiative and professional judgement. Professional workers (e.g., school counselor, school social workers, and school nurse) are considered "counseling specialists" by providing remedial counseling services to students with diverse needs, giving advice to parents and teachers, and providing additional external counseling resources to the schools (Ito, 2014).

### Involvement of School Counseling Professionals

Different counseling-related professionals are involved in school counseling and guidance work. These include the school counselors, school social workers, school nurses, and career counselors.

### School Counselor

Compared to the Western countries, the development of school counselors in the Japanese counseling professional has a rather short history. The school counselor system entered the school in 1995 (Ito, 2014; Grabosky, Ishii, & Mase, 2013; Yagi, 2008). Before 1995, only a very limited number of private schools had school counselors. Since the mid-1990s, Japanese society has become deeply concerned with the significant increase of adolescent problematic behaviors such as violence, bullying, class breakdown at schools, suicide, and school refusal (Erbe, 2003; Foljanty-Jost & Metzler, 2003). A series of actions were then taken in which the provision of professional counseling service at school is one measure to prevent delinquency (Nakano, 2003). Since 2013, school counselors are deployed at all public high schools, and 65% of public elementary schools were allocated funds to enable deployments (MEXT, 2012a). However, all school counselors are part-time staff. They are supposed to stay at a school for only 4–8 hours per week (Grabosky et al., 2012). In addition, professional development requirement is not mandatory for school counselors, and supervision

of practice has not been systematically developed (Grabosky et al., 2013; Nakano, 2003; Yagi, 2008).

### School Social Worker

Another counseling-related professional, titled the “school social worker,” was established in 2008. They are expected to provide comprehensive support to students facing different life challenges which may involve families and/or legal issues that cannot be resolved within the school context (Ito, 2014). The school social workers also serve as resource persons who can utilize multiple resources in the community (Chan et al., 2015). However, the deployment of school social workers is not as common as school counselors. Only 1,113 social workers were employed to serve in around 20,000 elementary schools and 10,000 junior high schools in 2012, on a part-time basis with 8 hours per section (MEXT, 2012a; MEXT, 2012b). In 2013, MEXT subsidized all prefectures and designated cities and core cities to deploy 1,355 social workers (MEXT, 2012a).

### School Nurse

Other than school counselors and school social workers, school nurses are also involved in school-based counseling and guidance service. The school nurse system was first introduced to Japan education system in 1947 (Ito, 2014). In 2007, 96% of public primary and 95.3% of public middle schools employed full-time school nurses. Different from school counselors and school social workers, school nurses are full-time staff working in schools. All school nurses have received both teacher training and nurse training and are qualified for taking up teaching and other teaching-related responsibilities (Chan et al., 2015). The school nurse is responsible for all school health services being delivered in the overall context of the child, the family, and the child’s overall health plan. Since students are more willing to talk to the school nurse in the health room where the atmosphere is different from a classroom, school nurses have become important assets

in taking up the responsibility for identifying at-risk students and providing referrals to the school counselor (Yagi, 2008) and detecting abuse and bullying cases (Kawaijuku, 2008). Currently some schools are starting to appoint school nurses as special education coordinators focusing on students with special learning needs (Ito, 2014).

### Career Counselor

Beginning in the late 1990s, due to social incidents related to the young generation’s problems with their career choice and decision, the government has become more concerned about the provision of career education and guidance. In 1999, it was proposed that career education should be implemented across a 12-year period. A professional tier titled the “career counselor” was then employed to provide career education and guidance for young people. However, only a few career counselors work at the school setting. In 2008, out of about 23,000 career counselors, only 2% were working in secondary school settings (Tatsumi, 2010). Therefore, although career guidance is proposed to be strengthened, it is mainly the homeroom teacher who is still involved in career-related services, even though they may not have enough knowledge or experiences in the field of career guidance (Tatsumi, 2010). Starting from 2011, the central government proposed the establishment of a “career guidance” program within the school curriculum (Tatsumi, 2010).

### Researches and Studies in School-Based Counseling

In Japan, a wide variety of institutions, including national, prefectural, municipal, and private institutions, are actively involved in research in school-based counseling or related issues. Among these, the departments within the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the National Institute for Education Policy Research (NIER) are two major institutions/organizations which

conduct research for future policy decision-making (Numano et al., 2002). Other than NIER and MEXT, in collaboration with prefectural, municipal, and different professional associations, researchers from different institutions also conducted different research projects in the realm of school-based counseling.

### Researches and Projects Conducted by MEXT and NIER

Hierarchically, the National Institute for Education Policy Research (NIER) is one of the research organizations under MEXT's jurisdiction (MEXT, n.d.). In 2001, the National Institute for Education Policy Research (NIER) has established the "Pupil Guidance Center" (Numano et al., 2002) (now named the "Guidance and Counseling Research Center") with the aim to conduct studies and research that contribute to the planning and formulation of guidance and counseling policies and provide expert support and consultation for schools, boards of education, and other entities (National Institute for Education Policy Research, 2014a, b, c).

This Center has conducted a number of nationwide projects with both a research component and practical functions. In general, research and projects in school counseling and guidance can be classified into three major categories in which

each of them has its own function in supporting the development and implementation of school guidance work (Fig. 18.2).

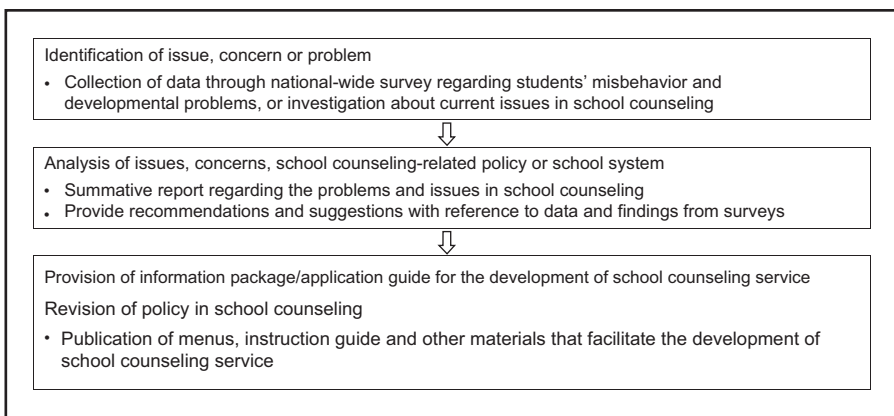
**Category 1: Identification of Issues, Concerns, or Problems** Several longitudinal studies were conducted to examine students' behavioral problems. Some examples are:

1. Nonschool attendance in secondary 1 students (NIER, 2003)
2. Bully survey 2007–2009 (NIER, 2010)
3. Bully survey 2010–2012 (NIER, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c)
4. Nonattendance survey and report titled *Reducing non-attendance and absenteeism Q and A: Suggestions to schools and the Board of Education* (NIER, 2012a, 2012b)
5. Student guidance resource 4: *Bullying survey, prevention strategy and activities for students* (NIER 2013a, 2013b, 2013c)

**Category 2: Analysis of Current Issues and Concerns and/or Other Counseling-Related Policies**

1. Project that examined the student guidance system

In 2006 a research report titled *Examination of student guidance system* was published (NIER, 2006). Questionnaires were collected



**Fig. 18.2** Three major categories of research and projects by MEXT and NIER

from boards of education of 47 prefectures and 2,163 cities. This study examined the role of the board of education in supporting school guidance service. Specifically, the provision of support in teacher training in special issues, quality assurance mechanism, evaluation of student guidance, and their involvement in supporting school guidance services were examined. Besides, other than information about basic knowledge regarding the establishment of school guidance system, recommendations and suggestions for system implementation were also made.

2. Project that summarized students' developmental problems

A document titled *Student guidance information package volume 1* (Revised version): *Trends, issues and future development of student guidance* was published in 2009 (NIER, 2009). This document provided a comprehensive examination of students' developmental problems from 2003 to 2009 (e.g., habitual problems, nonattendance, school dropout, bullying, violence behavior, drug abuse, delinquency, and suicide), which provided help to teachers who may need a better understanding of students' developmental problems.

3. Project that examined the provision of student counseling service at elementary and secondary schools

Concerning the provision of student counseling service at elementary and secondary schools, MEXT published a handbook titled *Student guidance outline* in 2010. It provided very comprehensive information for school teachers and administrator for the development of school-based counseling work (MEXT, 2010). The content includes:

- (i) Basic principles in student guidance
- (ii) Relationship between education curriculum with student guidance
- (iii) Understanding our students
- (iv) School counseling and guidance system
- (v) Educational counseling
- (vi) Management in student guidance
- (vii) Policy and administration

- (viii) Connecting the school with the family and community

Category 3: Provision of Information Package/Application Guide for the Development of School Counseling Service Starting from 2012, with the support of NIER, a series of publication titled *Leaf Over the Theory and Practice on Seitoshidou* (student guidance) was published. It covers a wide range of knowledge and skills for the implementation of school-based counseling:

1. Leaf over the theory and practice on Seitoshidou—Leaf 1: What is student guidance? (NIER, 2011)
2. Leaf over the theory and practice on Seitoshidou—Leaf 3: School guidance work for students with learning difficulties (NIER, 2012a, 2012b)
3. Leaf over the theory and practice on Seitoshidou (student guidance) Volume 1 (NIER, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c)
4. Leaf over the theory and practice on Seitoshidou (student guidance) Volume 2 (2014c)

### Other Research Projects in School-Based Counseling

Other than research projects conducted by NIER and MEXT, in collaboration with prefectural, municipal, and different professional associations, researchers from different institutions also conducted different research projects with different foci. Examples include:

1. Evaluation of a school counseling program Zaffuto (2004) conducted a qualitative study to examine the school counseling program of a Japanese high school.
2. Role of teachers in school-based counseling A study by Ito (2011) was conducted to examine the role of homeroom teachers in establishing a positive classroom climate.

## Issues and Concerns

### Preservice Preparation and In-Service Professional Development for Counseling-Related Staff

In general, preservice preparation and in-service professional development for both counseling professionals and school teachers are inadequate.

As mentioned, school counselors also expected to serve as an expert in the school, providing all-round professional support in school guidance and counseling. Therefore, it is important for them to collaborate well with diverse specialists as a team (MEXT, 2009b, 2009c). However, most school counselors are clinical psychologists. Their training has more or less focused on the assessment and treatment with problematic students, and they do not necessarily have training in school guidance and counseling program planning and other basic knowledge such as principles of education, school administration, education policy, and school working culture. Besides, as part-time “outsiders,” it would be difficult for them to take up consultation and supervisory roles (Chan et al., 2015).

School administrators and leaders of the school counseling team also suffer from the problem of inadequate training and development opportunities. At the management level, the student guidance team of the school is supposed to lead the development of school-based counseling program and planning of the whole-school counseling curriculum. The team leader must have strong leadership skills with sound knowledge in school guidance and counseling, especially for program planning, curriculum implementation, manpower management, resource allocation, and with a clear vision on the school mission so that he/she can facilitate all professionals to work together to achieve the common goals (Chan et al., 2015). However, there are no national qualification requirements for the training of the guidance team leader.

Training and development opportunities for frontline teachers are also limited, and they are also different across different prefectures. As

mentioned, teachers are expected to take up a crucial role in supporting school guidance work. However, teachers usually have only very basic training in school guidance and counseling in both their initial teacher training and continuing professional development. This eventually affects the quality of school counseling and guidance work.

### The Employment Structure Makes the Work of School-Based Counseling More Difficult

According to Japan’s current employment system, both school counselors and school social workers are employed by prefectures and are assigned to work as part-time staff for a maximum of 8 hours per week at a school (Grabosky, et al., 2013; MEXT, 2012a). Under such an employment system, school administrators and teachers may just consider themselves as “external experts.” It would be extremely difficult for them to serve as in-group leaders. Besides, with reference to MEXT (MEXT, 2007), school counselors have a great variety of professional responsibilities which includes direct counseling services to students and parents, indirect professional support in school-based counseling, and guidance work such as counseling supervision and consultation. Only 8-hour professional service for one school is obviously inadequate to perform all necessary tasks.

Besides, the continuation of school-based counseling system is often affected by the nationwide compulsory job rotation system for school teachers and school administrators. According to the Japanese education policy, school principals, vice-principals, and teachers are normally required to transfer to another new school every 3 to 5 years (Zaffuto, 2004), although there are exceptions due to each respective school’s location and nature whereby the period of school rotation can be extended to 5–7 years. This policy affects the stability of administrative and teaching staff working in the same school, hindering the continuation of a consistent guidance and counseling system in a school (Zaffuto, 2004).



### **Lacking a Nationwide School Counseling Curriculum and School-Based System to Ensure Basic Quality Standard of School Counseling Services**

Unlike Hong Kong and some Western countries (e.g., the USA), instead of providing a nationwide school counseling and guidance model, the Japan central government allows prefectures to exercise their autonomy in developing their own counseling system and implementation strategy, including model development, program planning, manpower allocation, administration management, as well as employment and professional development opportunities of counseling and teaching professionals. However, there are pros and cons for this system. The beauty of this policy is each prefecture is allowed to develop the best model that fits the society's need. However, without a national framework, there are big differences in the provision of school-based counseling work among different prefectures.

### **Concerns About Researches on School-Based Counseling**

Among the numerous studies and projects conducted by MEXT and NIER, there are statistical data and reports which reflect students' various developmental problems. Among these a great number of studies are for the purpose of producing deliverables such as leaflets and menus for teachers. There still appears a shortage of empirical studies that examine school-based counseling, particularly research that focus on school-based counseling program planning and implementation.

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### **School-Based Counseling in East Asia: Integrative Regional Summary**

In this section of the chapter, we compare and discuss the rationales underpinning policies for school-based counseling in Japan and Hong Kong. The impacts of policies on school practices and issues arising are further evaluated. Implications for future policy research in Hong Kong, Japan, and other East Asian regions are discussed.

### **Rationales Underpinning School-Based Counseling Policies**

Similarities and differences in the rationales underpinning school-based counseling policies of the two regions will now be discussed. In fact, Hong Kong and Japan do share some areas of similarity; for example, the schools have—to a certain extent—the autonomy to decide the counseling activities to be implemented. The school principal in Hong Kong and Japanese schools has the say over what is to be offered and how guidance activities are to be implemented. Moreover, all teachers in both places are expected to participate in school guidance activities, which echoes the notion of the whole-school approach (WSA) as advocated by Gysbers (1998; Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). To better coordinate guidance activities, there is an establishment of the school guidance committee in both places (known as “seitoshidou guidance committee” in Japan). Lastly, the class teacher (known as the “home-room teacher” in Japan) is responsible for overseeing the learning and psychological development of all students in his or her class. In a way, this is similar to the situation in Hong Kong where class teachers of primary and secondary schools, as the person-in-charge and primary caregiver of the class, act as a front liners in identifying and solving students' personal and emotional problems.

In spite of the similarities, there appear to be some big differences in the policy-making and implementation of school-based counseling between Hong Kong and Japan. The first difference lies in the intermediary through which school guidance activities are formulated. In Japan, the prefectures can make categorical decisions about the guidance curriculum that is suitable for the school children based on the unique culture and characteristics of the locality. This is quite a contrast to Hong Kong where the government (Education Bureau) provides an overall theoretical model (the comprehensive guidance program model), and within it individual schools can decide on guidance activities that suit the developmental level and needs of the students. Schools in both locations

have reasonable autonomy in tailoring the guidance and counseling activities to suit local conditions, but this is possibly easier in Hong Kong because it is a territory comprising one main city, while Japan is obviously a nation with multiple prefectures and counties. Because of its geographical size and political administration on a national level, the prefecture-as-intermediary school counseling policy in Japan is deemed necessary and suitable.

Hong Kong and Japan schools also differ in the theoretical framework which guides and informs school-based counseling. Japan seems to be following a more traditional, responsive model (or even a medical model) because clinical psychologists are major counseling service providers in the schools and school nurses are seen as service providers within the special educational needs field. In contrast, Hong Kong seems to have moved away from a “responsive” or “remedial” model to a more positive, “developmental” model in recent years (Hui, 2002). One point to note, however, is that even though some teachers in Hong Kong perceive the guidance curriculum and services as “developmental” in nature, in practice still a fraction of teachers believe that the approach can still be “remedial” or a mix of both “remedial” and “developmental” (Hui, 1998a, 2002). If a “developmental” model is the desired goal to achieve in guidance work, then there still appears to be a way to go before Hong Kong and Japan reach that ideal.

### Impacts of the Policies

In Japan, guidance and counseling activities are designated by the prefectures and student counseling work is mainly shouldered by outside-school professionals like clinical psychologists and school social workers. The main tasks of these counseling professionals are casework through which students with behavioral and/or emotional problems are diagnosed and treated. In Hong Kong, as all teachers are supposed to participate actively in student guidance work, most teachers are directly involved in guidance and

counseling activities and developmental mass programs, although a smaller fraction of teachers—who are usually more senior in position and bear the title of “counseling team head” or “career master/mistress”—are responsible for handling more serious cases.

The descriptions from both locations point out the issue of teachers’ lack of adequate training and competencies in guidance and counseling. In Hong Kong and Japan (and similarly in Mainland China and Taiwan), it has been reported that the lack of professional training of frontline teachers is one major hindrance to the effective implementation of the guidance curriculum and handling of problem cases (Hsu, 2013; Wang, Ni, Ding & Yi, 2015). As reported by Chan and Kurihara, there are no national standards or compulsory requirements for the training of guidance team leaders in Japan. Likewise in Hong Kong, nearly one-third of class teachers and more than one-tenth of guidance team heads in primary schools had not received any training in the field (Yuen et al., 2007a, 2007b). Quite unarguably, the inadequacy of counseling-rated training among teachers points to the problems of ineffective counseling and guidance work, doubts, and queries—both of the self and from other stakeholders—of teachers’ competence as school counseling service providers and, the more important, far-reaching ethical issues in counseling and psychotherapy. For sure, these matters should be looked into by policy-makers and policy implementers if school guidance and counseling work are to be effective and helpful to the students and society at large.

Besides the above issues, it is of logic to evaluate the impacts of school-based counseling policies in terms of the outcomes yielded. As reported by Chan and Kurihara, the decades-long school counseling policies in Japan have been linked to the prevention of bullying, absenteeism, drug abuse, and suicide in recent years. Whereas in Hong Kong, researchers have yet to discover the link between school-based counseling policies and developmental problems in adolescents, researchers like Yuen et al. (2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2012) have found quite consistently that the school guidance

curriculum based on the comprehensive guidance model framework is associated with students' perceived self-efficacy in all the major domains in life skills development.

### **Implications for Future Research in Japan, Hong Kong, and Other East Asian Regions**

Based on the discussion in this chapter, implications for future research in the realm of school-based counseling in the East Asian regions can be drawn. First, future research can focus on the impact that school-based guidance and counseling activities have on the academic attainment, social-emotional behavior, and career development of students. Such research would reveal the effectiveness of the guidance curriculum and programs in the school and point out directions for fine-tuning or adjustments that may be needed. The need to constantly review and modify school-based counseling programs is justified, because there are ever-increasing challenges to young people as they move from junior school to middle/high school and from youth to adulthood. The challenges facing the younger generation in the twenty-first century are unprecedented due to the advent of technological advancements and scientific revolutions in virtually all aspects of life and to changing moral attitudes and behaviors. In order to be accountable, education and services provided to the youth should respond to changing societal phenomena and demands in order to cater for the learning and developmental needs of children and adolescents. When policies are formulated in any country, their aims and content need to be reviewed and reformed from time to time, to keep pace with changes in the real world.

Second, as reported, the lack of professional training is one major obstacle among teachers in Hong Kong, Japan, and other neighboring regions like Mainland China and Taiwan. There is a pressing need that research be conducted to investigate the type of training that should be provided to best equip teachers for undertaking guidance and counseling roles; and later the

effectiveness of such training programs should be fully evaluated.

Of equal importance would be the evaluation of the need to mandate the training required on the part of preservice and in-service teachers in future policy research. This should provide more empirical data and possibly solution to the discrepancy between the pressing demand for counseling professionals working in the school setting and the lack of manpower who are well trained and qualified for the positions.

Third, both Hong Kong and Japanese students seem to be obedient and conforming to their parents and authority figures in the school. Although the two places differ in geographical location, culture and language, the people of the two places are likely to be influenced by collectivist values whereby the family precedes an individual's honor and achievement and one's value and status is judged in the context of the family or clan as a whole rather than exclusively on his or her own as in individualistic societies like the USA. One possible explanation of this phenomenon could be people from Japan and Hong Kong (and China at large) are under the influence of Confucian beliefs, ones that have been in place for centuries, but nonetheless core values like filial piety and obedience to the authority are still affecting the mindset and behavior of people in the everyday life. One direction for future research is to explore the possible relationship between Confucian beliefs and adolescent behavior and achievement, and whether guidance programs that endorse and are designed on such beliefs are posing an influence on student development and/or education attainment.

Last but not least, we have not seen from the studies in Hong Kong the direct relationships between school guidance and developmental problems of students such as drug addiction, Internet addictions, bullying, and suicide. Whereas past research has focused more on students' acquisition of life skills from school-based guidance programs, future research could focus on the interrelationships between school guidance and adolescents' developmental problems to assess the effectiveness of the policies and school guidance programs.

## Conclusions

The comparison of school-based counseling programs in Hong Kong and Japan is one of the pioneers in the field of school guidance and counseling. Whereas both places seem to share a similar Confucian cultural heritage and reasonable proximity, there exist quite remarkable differences in the rationales and implementation of school-based counseling programs. Future research can continue to examine the trends and development of school counseling programs in the two regions as well as other parts of Asia.

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# School-Based Counseling Policy, Policy Research, and Implications: Findings from South Korea

# 19

Sang Min Lee and NaYeon Yang

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## School-Based Counseling in South Korea

In this chapter, we describe the development of school counseling practice and review the existing research on school-based counseling in South Korea. School counseling in South Korea had its inception in the 1950s, when the US educational delegation initiated educational missions in South Korea (Lee & Yang, 2008). The US educational delegation taught Korean educators about counseling and guidance theories and methods, which were different from the traditional discipline approaches (e.g., corporal punishment) in South Korea. These activities gave rise to progressive movements that initiated the 1963 Education Act from the Ministry of Education. Although this education policy guideline created an influx of counseling and guidance teachers in school, and training programs in school districts, the role of the guidance teacher was ill defined and provided little direction for 40 years (Yu, Suh, & Lee, 2014). In 2004, through the passing of the Elementary and Secondary School Education Act (ESSEA), schools started to hire full-time school counselors. Currently, most secondary schools

that have full-time school counselors have a school-based counseling office called the WEE (We + Education + Emotion) Class. In addition, the majority of school districts have set up a community-based counseling hub called the WEE center, which provides comprehensive mental health services for children and adolescents (Lee, Suh, Yang, & Jang, 2012a).

## Existing Context and Policies

School-based counseling is a relatively new profession in South Korea, with full-time school counselors appointed in secondary schools for just over a decade. School counselors may therefore struggle with their professional identities due to factors such as diverse expectations of stakeholders, a lack of professional training programs, and an absence of legislation to support the profession (Yu et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the growth in school-based counseling as a profession is promising (Seo, Kim, & Kim, 2007), given evidence suggesting that many school students are struggling with a variety of issues (e.g., Internet addiction, depression, and school violence). Two acts governing educational policies related to school counselor employment and training - the revised 2004 Elementary and Secondary School Education Act and the revised 2011 No Violence in Schools Act - have provided a sound foundation for school counseling to build

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upon and expand. Both of these acts have the potential to serve as an impetus for the further development of the school counseling profession in the future. In addition, a rigorous examination system designed to select and recruit the best-qualified school counselors enhances the public credibility of school counselors and their profession.

Until 2015, school-based counselors in most secondary schools (middle/high schools) and school districts held a total of 6,870 posts. Of those about 780 school counselors work in school districts, and 6,090 are employed as middle and high school counselors. The employment of school counselors matches the geographical distribution of the general population. Most school counselors work more than 40 h per week; this work includes the performance of school duties (i.e., paperwork) above and beyond counseling tasks. While counselors in middle and high schools work the traditional 9–10-month school year with a 2–3-month vacation during summer and winter, counselors employed by school boards to work in the districts work about 11–12 months without a long vacation. Approximately one fourth of school counselors (25%) obtain tenure because they have passed the aforementioned rigorous national exam. Tenure laws prevent these school counselors from being fired without just cause and due process. Therefore, tenure does provide job security for these school counselors in South Korea. However, the majority (75%) are employed by individual schools on 2-year contracts.

The traditional route to becoming a full-time tenured school counselor involves completing either a bachelor's degree from a counseling-related department (e.g., psychology department) or a master's degree from a counseling program of a graduate school of education. Traditional education programs for school counselors include the courses designed specifically for those preparing to apply for counselor positions. These courses include psychological assessment, personality psychology, counseling students with disabilities, group counseling, family counseling, and career counseling as well as counseling theory and practice. In addition, students need to

experience a 4-week practicum, which are organized through partnerships between universities and middle or high schools. Practicum experiences combine theory and practice and allow the students to experience a school counselor's tasks firsthand under professional guidance and supervision. However, several researchers have argued that a 4-week practicum is insufficient to facilitate enough opportunities for the development of clinical skills and to promote understanding of practical issues in school counseling (Lee & Yang, 2008). Moreover, systematic supervision is not offered during the school counseling practicum. Some supervisors in practicum sites may also be in the early stages of their professional development and therefore unable to respond sensitively to certain counseling issues. Therefore, a lack of experience among field supervisors can inhibit the effective training of school counselors, including, most importantly, the ethical practice of school counselors in training.

Since 2011, the Korean government has trained senior teachers to become school career counselors. This is because most universities in South Korea have introduced a new more holistic admissions system, which assesses students' applications more holistically, not just in terms of their test scores. The Korean government posits this new system enables colleges to more easily recruit creative and talented students (Yu et al., 2014). Alongside introducing the new college admission system, the Korean government has also trained 5,000 teachers and placed them in schools as career counselors. Kim (2013) reported that there are some areas of overlap between school counselors and school career counselors. The former often work with students who have career development problems as well as mental health issues, whereas school career counselors primarily work with students regarding their career development. The issue is that school career counselors may possibly be engaged in modes of intervention that have traditionally been considered the domain of school counselors (i.e., career development and counseling), which could be a threat to school counselors, especially those in high schools.

## Research Findings

### Research on Outcomes of School Counseling Programs

Table 19.1 provides an overview of the findings from outcome studies of counseling conducted with elementary, middle, and high school students in South Korea. These have shown that individual counseling (e.g., Park & Cheon, 2009), group counseling (e.g., Park, Yu, & Cho, 2013), classroom guidance (e.g., Kwon & Lee, 2011), and parental education programs (e.g., Go, Yu, & Cho, 2009) provided by school counselors were effective. To date, most outcome research into school counseling published in respected journals and other scholarly sites have examined the effectiveness of a single program (e.g., individual and group counseling). In 2010, the Ministry of Education conducted a cost-benefit analysis by collecting data from 2,229 parents to investigate the benefits of hiring one school counselor per school. The results indicated that hiring one school counselor per school produced economic benefit of somewhere between ten trillion eighty-three billion won (10,500,000,000,000) and twenty five trillion five hundred eighty billion won (25,580,000,000,000) (Ministry of Education, 2010). The Ministry of Education continuously encourages administrators to be more receptive to large-scale studies on school counseling programs, providing schools with tangible compensation to offset their costs.

Because school counseling is a relatively young profession in South Korea, there is no comprehensive school counseling program (CSCP) model developed on a national level for school counselors. Most of the schools run their counseling program autonomously and internally, depending on each school principal's point of view about school counseling (Yu et al., 2014). Therefore, there is a need to develop a comprehensive school counseling program model, potentially with collaboration between schools and the existing national school counseling research institutes (e.g., the WEE research institute). The components of a newly developed comprehensive school counseling program model drafted by national school counseling

research institutes should be accepted by practicing school counselors. Future researchers need to examine their effectiveness after developing a comprehensive school counseling program (CSCP). The establishment of a comprehensive school counseling program model would provide a foundation for advocating for the services that a school counselor provides and for clarifying the nature of collaboration with other stakeholders (Yu et al., 2014).

### Research on the Role of School Counselors

Finding consensus on the roles of counselors in schools is a major challenge addressed in several studies (Keum, 2007; Kim, 2009; Kim & Jo, 2010; Lee, Kim, et al., 2012). These studies indicated that, as reported elsewhere, role ambiguity is the issue for school counselors and that in Korea school counselors' identity is ambiguous at the present time. When school counselors' identity is not well established and embraced by the school counselors themselves, it is difficult to expect stakeholders to recognize school counseling as a distinguished profession deserving their respect (Yu et al., 2014). This lack of identity can naturally lead to role confusion among school counselors and a lack of capacity to advocate for what school counselors should do to help students in need of their help, as well as how to collaborate with teachers and administrators in schools (Lee, Oh, & Suh, 2007; Lee & Yang, 2008).

As shown in Table 19.2, the Ministry of Education (2010) performed a job analysis and outlined the tasks of school counselors in detail. However, most schools did not adopt its recommendation. Most of the schools run counseling programs autonomously that is heavily contingent on each school principal's views about the role of counseling in this school. Some school principals want the school counselors to focus on the administrative tasks (e.g., paperwork). The tasks of school counselors vary from school to school. These role ambiguities often result from the diverse perspectives of school administrators, teachers, students, and school counselors themselves. Thus, the perspectives of all

**Table 19.1** Summary of research associated with school counseling in South Korea

Category	Reference	Major questions	Method	Source of data	Level/location	Major findings
Role of school counselors	(2007)	Do the levels of expectations and the anticipation of the roles of school counselors have a significant difference?	Multivariate analysis and T-test	Self-questionnaire	Professional school counselors/ South Korea	The level of expected school counselor roles was higher than the level of anticipated school counselor roles
Role of school counselors	Kim (2009)	What are the current state and problems of the professional school counselor system in South Korea?	Descriptive statistics	Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development and Ministry of Education and Science Technology	Professional school counselors/ South Korea	Problems of the professional school counselor system in South Korea were as follows: non-systematic education system, invalidity of curriculum and selection process, deficit of job description and continuing education, and short of treatment for and understanding of professional counselor teacher Arrangement of education system, settlement of curriculum and selection process, duty of systematic continuing education, and efforts for enhancement of treatment and understanding were proposed as development plans for the professional school counselor system in South Korea
Role of school counselors	Kim and Jo (2010)	What is a duty of a professional school counselor, and what kind of ability is demanded to accomplish the duties for school counselors?	DACUM method	17 articles, interviews, and a professional committee	A professional council/South Korea	The following tasks were defined as a job of school counselors: counseling, education, connection, administration, and competency development. Competencies for each job and task are presented as knowledge, skill, and attitude
Role of school counselors	Lee, Kim, and Lee (2012b)	What are the duties of professional school counselors, and what kind of educational needs are demanded to promote the expertise of professional school counselors?	Factor analysis	Self-questionnaire	Professional school counselors/ South Korea	Professional school counselors reported that they demand to be reeducated for small group counseling, large group guidance, education of parents and teachers, career and academic area
Ethics of school counselors	Kang, Lee, and Son (2007)	What are common ethical dilemmas that school counselors encounter in counseling sessions? What are the ways to cope with such ethical dilemmas?	Descriptive statistics	Self-questionnaire	Professional school counselors/ South Korea	Major ethical dilemmas that school counselors encountered were as follows: ensuring the right to self-direction, respecting client's values and beliefs, professional relationships with faculty, uncertain ethical behavior of colleagues, and legal responsibility. School counselors followed the ethical code when dealing with the major ethical dilemmas, and they relied on their professional judgments when dealing with other ethical dilemmas

Ethics of school counselors	Kang, Lee, Yu, and Son (2007)	Do school counselors have a knowledge of ethical issues in school counseling? What kind of ethical issues are these school counselors aware of?	Chi-square test	Self-questionnaire	Professional school counselors/South Korea	School counselors were informed in the following ethical issues: testing, exceptions of confidentiality, professionalism, contribution to the profession, dual relationships, and child abuse. However, they reported confidentiality, confidentiality with parents, and sharing information with other professionals were difficult ethical issues to deal with
Ethics of school counselors	Choi, Koh, Park, Shin, and Kang (2012)	What are the common ethical dilemmas that school counselors deal with? What are the limitations and should be amended for the current ethical code of the Korean School Counseling Association?	Focus group interview	Focus group interview, self-questionnaire	School counselors school counseling researchers/South Korea	Researchers asserted that these issues should be considered when revising the ethical codes for the Korean School Counseling Association: (1) the current ethical code does not fully cover issues regarding the unique features of the Korean education system and a counseling setting, (2) a revised ethical code needs to offer well-defined guidelines regarding the confidentiality of clients and their parents' "right to know," and (3) if informed consent from parents is not received, problems including legal issues may occur
Outcome research	Kwon and Lee (2011)	Do elementary school students who participated in a classroom-based academic counseling program improve their academic motivation and academic skills?	Repeated measures ANOVA	Self-questionnaire	Fifth grade/Gyeonggi Province	The academic counseling program made significant positive effects on the academic development, both the academic motivation and skills of the students who participated in the program
Outcome research	Park and Cheon (2009)	What is the impact of the short-term school individual counseling model on achieving counseling goals and increasing the ability to solve problems?	Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) and Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM)	Self-questionnaire	High school students/South Korea	The model had a positive impact on achieving counseling goals, increasing the ability of solving problems, decreasing students' mental symptoms, and changing the students' self-image
Outcome research	Yu (2012)	Does the career searching group counseling program improve career maturity, motivation, and career development of maladjusted middle school students?	ANOVA and ANCOVA	Self-questionnaire	Middle school students/South Korea	The career maturity of maladjusted students was enhanced after participating in the program. Among five sub-factors, decisiveness, involvement, and independence significantly improved, while compromise and attitude of choice did not improve. Thus, the participants of the program can understand themselves and investigate information on their future career, which will ultimately enhance their career maturity, give them motivation, and facilitate their career development

(continued)

**Table 19.1** (continued)

Category	Reference	Major questions	Method	Source of data	Level/location	Major findings
Multicultural school counseling issues	Gao, Hwang, and Kang (2010)	Does the social skill group counseling program improve self-understanding, self-acceptance, self-confidence, cultural identity, and the relations with others of ethnic minority children?	Programs and Interview	Interview on multicultural counselors, multicultural students and their advisors; self-questionnaire	Multicultural elementary school students/ Gyeonggi province	The children had positive changes in self-understanding, self-acceptance, the self-confidence, cultural identity, and the relationship with their parents, teachers, and friends after participating in the program
Multicultural school counseling issues	Lee and Lee (2009)	Does the adaptability program for elementary students of lower grades from multicultural family improve their school adjustment higher than those who have not participated in the program?	T-test and ANCOVA	Self-questionnaire	Multicultural elementary school students/ South Korea	The experimental group that participated in the school adaptability program showed more significant improvement in school adjustment and peer relationship than the control group
Multicultural school counseling issues	Kim, Yu, and Nam (2014)	Does a group counseling program improve the ability of interpersonal relation of multicultural students of upper grades in elementary school?	ANCOVA	Self-questionnaire and the observation report	Multicultural elementary school students/ Chungcheong Province	Students who participated in the group counseling program had higher ability of interpersonal relation than those who did not participate in the program. Moreover, openness and trust factors of the participants in the group counseling program were significantly higher than those who did not participate in the program



**Table 19.2** Job analysis of school counseling in South Korea

First tier	Second tier	Third tier	Task	Rate	
Direct service (60–80%)	Individual activities (45–55%)	Individual counseling	School adjustment	40–45% (16–18 h per week)	
			Individual counseling		
			Academic individual counseling		
		Individual appraisal	Career individual counseling		
			Mental health assessment		5–10% (2–4 h per week)
			Academic assessment		
	Career assessment				
	Group activities (15–25%)	Group counseling	School adjustment group counseling	10–15% (4–6 h per week)	
			Academic group counseling		
			Career group counseling		
Classroom guidance		Character guidance	5–10% (2–4 h per week)		
		Academic guidance			
		Career guidance			
Indirect service (20–40%)	Consultation (10–20%)	Individual consultation	Teacher consultation	5–10% (2–4 h per week)	
			Parent consultation		
			Agency consultation		
		Group consultation	Teacher education	5–10% (2–4 h per week)	
			Parent education		
		Coordination (10–20%)		Case note	10–20% (6 h per week)
	Office management and advertisement				
	Counseling planning and administration				

individuals involved in school systems need to be considered in defining the specific roles of school counselors.

Yu et al. (2014) reported three major reasons that cause role ambiguity in school counselors. First, there is currently no nationally developed comprehensive school counseling program model in South Korea. Second, Yu and colleagues (2014) pointed out the need for more courses to be added to training programs and count toward certification (e.g., introduction to school counseling, consultation, and school counseling program management), as most training programs for school counselors do not fully represent the work of the counseling professional. Finally, the current practicum or internship course (1-month period) does not provide enough opportunities to experience the variety of roles performed as a school counselor or to receive appropriate supervision.

### Research on Ethical Issues

As shown in Table 19.1, several researchers (Choi et al., 2012; Kang, Lee, & Son, 2007; Kang, Lee, Yu, & Son, 2007) reported the ethical issues relevant to school counselors. Because school counseling is a relatively new profession, Korean school counselors frequently face ethical and legal challenges (Yu et al., 2014). Although some counselors have been practicing counseling for years, legal and ethical challenges can still unsettle and disturb them. Currently, no unified ethical standards for school counselors have been developed. Due to this absence, school counselors are advised to refer to the code of ethics for general counselors prescribed by the professional counseling associations, such as the Korean Counseling Association or that prescribed by the American School Counselors Association (Lee & Yang, 2008). However, the practical values of

these ethical standards are limited because they are not developed with the consideration of unique situations in Korean school settings. Moreover, having knowledge in these ethical standards cannot sufficiently prepare school counselors to deal with the ethical issues raised in school settings.

From confidentiality issues to records' maintenance, from the duty of care to sexual harassment issues, a school counselor's legal and ethical questions can spring up from every corner. Maintaining confidentiality with minors can be more challenging for school counselors in South Korea. Traditionally, before the introduction of formal school counseling, teachers in South Korea performed this role, though in a limited capacity, and teachers are still closely involved with students' personal and social issues. This often helps school counselors to get support from teachers, yet also makes them challenging to keep confidentiality. Another example concerns record keeping. The lack of consensus on the ethical practice of record keeping creates confusion about how to keep records, for how long, and who has access to the counseling records (Lee & Yang, 2008). The development of ethical standards and training in dealing with ethical dilemmas is a critical issue for school counselors in South Korea.

### **Research on Multicultural School Counseling Issues**

According to the Ministry of Public Administration and Security (2015), 1,741,910 ethnic minorities lived in South Korea in 2015, accounting for 3.4 % of the entire population. Most of them were migrant workers, North Korean refugees, migrant spouses, and the children of biracial families. By the year 2020, 20% of the students in South Korean schools will be racially or ethnically different (Kim, 2009). This emergence of students from multicultural ethnic groups (e.g., children of foreign workers, North Korean student-refugees, and children of mixed marriage families) calls upon school counselors to be equipped with well-developed multicultural school counseling competencies. Song and Kang (2011) stated that school counselors in South

Korea need to place much energy and time into developing multicultural counseling techniques and intervention strategies that are readily applicable to these target populations because classic counseling approaches, such as psychoanalytic, behavioristic, humanistic, and cognitive approaches, were formed through Western concepts and principles more in keeping with their values, philosophical assumptions, and language usage.

As shown in Table 19.1, several Korean researchers (Gao et al., 2010; Lee & Lee, 2009; Kim, Yu, & Nam, 2014) developed and evaluated individual and group counseling programs on cultural adaptation for children and adolescents of multicultural ethnic groups. Sometimes, school counselors need to serve as advocates for securing funding for necessary social services for these underserved populations (Lee, Suh, Yang, & Jang, 2012a). To date, only a few counseling programs offered the multicultural school counseling courses in South Korea. Counseling programs in graduate schools need to include multicultural school counseling courses in their curriculum and must be designed to enhance multicultural competences, including multicultural awareness, attitudes, and skills (Lee, Suh, Yang, & Jang, 2012a).

### **Discussion of Key Issues and Implications**

The two law acts, the revised 2004 Elementary and Secondary School Education Act and the revised 2011 No Violence in Schools Act, governing educational policies related to school counselor employment, drove the rapid increase of school counselors and school counseling services for students (Yu et al., 2014). Despite quantitative growth in school counseling programs, there is no comprehensive school counseling program model developed on a national level that outlines the specific roles and activities that each school counselor should perform. Several researchers (Lee et al., 2007; Lee & Yang, 2008; Yu et al., 2014) stated that a national comprehensive school counseling model would help school

counselors to perform their roles effectively and deal with practical issues in school settings. In addition, orienting the school personnel such as teachers and students to the roles and functions of school counselors is critical (Lee et al., 2012b). Research on the development of comprehensive school counseling program models can offer a theoretical basis for intervention areas and activities of school counselors (Lee & Yang, 2008).

As the school counseling profession grows into a recognized field, ethical issues would be critical matters to consider (Choi et al., 2012). To date, no united ethical standards for school counselors have been developed. In order to properly develop the ethical standards, well-organized collective efforts between the researchers and practitioners in the school counseling field are needed. First, the national research institute of school counseling needs to take a leadership role in establishing a task force that would develop ethical standards and codes for school counselors potentially within the existing school counselor association (e.g., Korean School Counseling Association). The ethical codes for professional school counselors drafted by the task force should be accepted by school counselors in schools.

It is predicted that school counseling in South Korea will continue to grow and develop over the next 10–20 years. For this to happen, rigorous and practical research is needed. For example, the research on evidence-based interventions and practices clarifies the way in which school counselors should make decisions by identifying evidence-based practices and rating them according to how scientifically sound they may be. These studies could be the guidelines used to eliminate unsound or excessively risky practices in favor of those that have better outcomes. In addition, research on multiculturally relevant programs can help extending a foundation for intervention areas and activities that school counselors need to perform when working with ethnic minorities. Future studies need to identify the specific multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills exhibited by the most effective school counselors. In addition, policy research into school counseling (e.g., legislation for school counselors) should be conducted in order to systematically expand the school counseling profession.

School counseling professionals need to become more involved in public affairs and continue to promote policy change that supports the profession. A meaningful partnership between policy makers, school administrators, and academic societies is vital to produce substantial effects and improve the school counseling profession. With this partnership, the concerns and challenges that Korean school counseling currently encounter can serve to inform the evolving field of school counseling in South Korea (Yu et al., 2014).

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## Introduction

School counseling in India is a relatively new field, and the professional identity of a school counselor is still quite ambiguous. There is no regulatory body, licensing, or standardized training for school counselors in India, and therefore the practice of school counseling varies across schools. The primary stakeholders also hold differing views on what school counseling should entail. School administrators expect school counselors to engage in many non-counseling duties that aid the general running of the school. Parents and teachers, on the other hand, expect school counselors to focus on student issues like academic advising, career choice, discipline issues, remedial teaching, etc. Students want school counselors to focus on issues like career choice and crisis counseling, to pay attention to disadvantaged groups and children with special needs, and to engage in advocacy and community services. Counselors believe that their main purpose is to deal with student issues like crisis

counseling and interventions, tackling behavior problems and to some extent engaging in advocacy (Venkatesan & Shyam, 2015). In the West, some countries have standardized school counseling programs developed and ratified by professional organizations, such as ASCA and CACREP in the USA, or clearly defined competencies for school-based counseling that are promoted and required by professional bodies, such as UKCP and BACP in the UK. However, in India, there are no standardized models or bodies that inform the practice of school counseling. Although currently there is a policy that suggests that all schools have school counselors, it does not articulate how they should function or how the school counseling program needs to be implemented. Therefore there is an urgent need to clarify the roles and expectations from a school counselor in India.

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## History of School Counseling in India

School counseling in India, in its crudest form, dates back to the guru shishya parampara during the Vedic period, where the Guru was a mentor who led his students to enlightenment. The gurus were responsible for the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth of their students. In reality, only male upper caste students had access to education in those days. However, enormous

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changes in the education system over thousands of years have led to a system based on education for all children, irrespective of their background. Perhaps the most significant changes to the Indian education system were brought about during the British occupation of India. Western education was introduced, and many schools and institutions of higher learning were set up across the country. Once independent from British rule, the Indian government began to introduce various policies for education in India. As “education for all” became more of a reality, schools were primarily expected to focus on academic development. Only recently has the need to address the mental health and social and personal development of school children become pertinent. Rapid globalization in India has brought with it a host of issues that young people are grappling with. Single-parent families, body image, substance use, relationship issues, sexuality, adolescent pregnancy, and mental health issues are just few of them (George & Thomas, 2013). It is in this context that the profession of school counseling has taken root in India.

It is difficult to trace the exact origins of school counseling since independence. What is evident, however, is the active engagement of three ministries in policy development related to the physical and emotional well-being of children and young people. Each of these ministries is set up by the central government and is responsible for policy making and program development at a national level. State governments are expected to follow through with the recommendations of these ministries. However, state governments do have some amount of autonomy in how they implement these recommendations. Although the Ministries of Human Resource Development (Education), Health and Family Welfare, and Women and Child Development have different foci, their point of convergence is the development of the child. Despite the absence of specific recommendations for school counseling in most of their policies, many of the issues they address imply the need for one. This chapter will now examine the policy landscape in India, both historically and in the present, in order to trace the origins and development of counseling as it is currently practiced in schools.

## **Contributions of the Ministry of Women and Child Development**

The Ministry of Women and Child Development was set up by the Government of India as a separate ministry with effect from January 30, 2006. Prior to this since 1985, it was a department (Department of Women and Child Development) under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The broad mandate of the ministry is to ensure holistic development of women and children. As a nodal ministry for the advancement of women and children, the ministry formulates plans, policies, and programs, enacts/amends legislation, guides, and coordinates the efforts of both governmental and nongovernmental organizations working in the field of Women and Child Development. Besides, playing its nodal role, the ministry implements certain innovative programs for women and children. These programs cover welfare and support services, training for employment and income generation, awareness generation, and gender sensitization. These programs play a supplementary and complementary role to the other general developmental programs in the sectors of health, education, rural development, etc. All these efforts are directed to ensure that women are empowered both economically and socially and thus become equal partners in national development along with men. For the holistic development of the child, the ministry has been implementing what is termed as the world’s largest and most unique outreach program of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

## **ICDS Scheme**

The Integrated Child Development Services scheme was launched in 1975 to focus on early childhood care and development. The scheme aimed to improve the nutritional and health status of children aged 0–6 years and to lay the foundation for their psychological, physical, and social development. Furthermore, it attempted to reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition, and school dropout (Gupta, Gupta & Baridalyne, 2013).



The ICDS is organized to run from an Anganwadi (village courtyard) and is run by an Anganwadi worker, supported by a helper. The ICDS offers six services which include supplementary nutrition, preschool nonformal education, nutrition and health education, immunization, health checkup, and referral services. The ICDS scheme has made early childhood care and education much more accessible across the country especially to lower-income groups. In a project aiming to improve child mental health, Anganwadi workers were trained to identify behavioral and emotional problems in young children. They were also asked to report issues such as mental retardation, hearing impairment, and visual and locomotor difficulties in children. They were also taught how to identify and refer cases of enuresis, hyperactivity, and speech problems (Kapur, 2005). The project showed that the Anganwadi workers (teachers) are ideal resources to help in the early identification and referral of disabilities and mental health problems in children.

In September 2013, the Ministry of Human Resource Development brought out a National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Education. It identified the ICDS scheme as one of the key programmatic interventions for expanding early childhood care and education. A report published in 2014 showed that the number of projects under the ICDS scheme has increased from 4068 to 7025 projects during the period 2001–2002 to 2012–2013. Also, the total number of children aged 3–5 years, who received preschool education in Anganwadi centers increased by 112% (from 16.7 million to 35.3 million) during the period 2001–2002 to 2012–2013 (National University of Educational Planning and Administration, 2014).

*The National Policy for Children* (The Department of Social Welfare, Government of India, 1974).

This was the first national document that was concerned with the needs and rights of children. One of the recommendations was that children should be covered by a comprehensive health and nutrition program. All children up to the age of 14 were given free education and had to compul-

sorily attend school. Schools were required to incorporate games, sports, and other recreational and cultural activities into the curriculum to promote the overall development of the child. Special attention needed to be given to children from disadvantaged background and special programs had to be conducted for gifted children from these backgrounds. The policy also recommended special treatment, education, and rehabilitation of children who were emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded (original term used in the policy), and physically handicapped. All children were to be protected from neglect, harm, or abuse, and existing laws were to be amended so that the best interests of the child were given priority. Thus aspects of child advocacy, protection of child rights school improvement, and interventions for children were some of the issues this policy touched upon. However, this policy was quite limited in its scope and did not adequately cover the extent of issues concerning children.

In 2013, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, brought out a new National Policy for Children. The policy was an outcome of growing awareness of the need for child rights and child protection. The key priorities in this national policy were survival (due to high infant mortality rates, female infanticide, etc.) health, nutrition, development, education, protection, and participation.

Recommendations specific to education and development were to:

1. Provide universal and equitable early childhood care and education for all children below 6 years of age
2. Ensure every child between the ages of 6 and 14 was in school and enjoyed the fundamental right to education
3. Promote affordable and accessible quality education up to secondary level
4. Provide career counseling, vocational training, and guidance that were age and gender specific
5. Address discrimination in all forms in schools and ensure equal opportunities

6. Create enabling environments for children from disadvantaged groups through legislative measures, policy, and provisions
7. Be concerned with the physical safety of the child and provide a safe learning environment
8. Ensure child-friendly teaching and learning processes
9. Enable children to develop holistically, bringing out their aspirations with a focus on their strengths
10. Ensure no child is subjected to physical punishment and mental harassment
11. Provide services to children with special needs in regular schools and ensure inclusive education with trained teachers and special educators
12. Promote engagement of families and community with the school system to promote the all-round development of the child

This new policy therefore covered a broader range of issues: equality of education for all, inclusive education, holistic development, student safety, career counseling, and family engagement among other things. This policy highlighted the need for trained personnel in addition to the classroom teacher to carry out many of its recommendations and therefore legitimated the role of school counselor.

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### **Contributions of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Education)**

The ministry concerned with education has brought out a number of policies/curriculum frameworks related to guidance and counseling in schools. It has emphasized the role of trained personnel or teachers and also the training of teachers *for* this purpose. A brief review of the various policies has been presented below.

*Secondary Education Commission* (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1952–1953).

Also known as the Mudaliar Commission, this was the first Education Commission in indepen-

dent India. The commission recognized that guidance was an important part of education. It stated that all students, through their education, should be able to plan their own future, given all that they know about themselves and the world. They pointed out that guidance was required at every stage of the youth's development and should be a joint effort of all the primary stakeholders, including parents, teachers, principals, and guidance officers. It did, however, emphasize the need for guidance officers and "career masters" at all educational institutions. The guidance officer was expected to be empathic, understand the lives and concerns of young boys and girls, and be proficient in counseling methods, mental hygiene, and the use of tests. They should also be able to provide vocational guidance. The career master was expected to have received some training in order to function as a vocational counselor in schools. The commission recommended setting up institutions for the training of career masters and guidance officers. As an outcome of the recommendations of the commission, the Central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance (CBEVG) was set up in 1954 under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, with similar bureaus at state level. The idea of providing guidance services throughout the country in an organized manner took off from here.

In response, the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) started the first postgraduate diploma course in Guidance and Counseling in 1958. The program in Educational and Vocational Guidance was a 9-month full-time program. It was intended to train postgraduates in psychology and education to work with school students and state-level guidance agencies, mostly in the area of careers and guidance. Around 425 counselors completed the program in a 15-year period (1980–1995) and found employment. However, a study by Joneja (2006) on 125 of these counselors revealed that they faced some challenges in their role and in establishing their identity as a counselor. They also felt that a 3-month program was insufficient and emphasized the need for a longer program of 2.5 years with better internship opportunities.

Currently, there are quite a few universities running a 2-year master's degree program in counseling/counseling psychology in India.

*Education Commission* (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1964–1966).

This commission known as the Kothari Commission also recognized the need for guidance and counseling services in schools. They understood the differential requirements of students based on their developmental stage and suggested that guidance and counseling began in primary school. They believed this would enable young children to make a satisfactory transition from home to school, to diagnose learning difficulties in children, and to identify children who required special education. At secondary school level, they perceived that the emphasis would be on the identification and development of the interests and abilities of adolescent pupils. While they understood the need for a specialist counselor, they were equally aware of the limitations of available resources and manpower needed to achieve this aim. They therefore recommended that one school counselor be appointed to serve ten schools in a geographic area. Training for career masters and guidance workers was also recommended, and it was envisaged that this should take place through each state's bureau for vocational guidance. According to Kodad and Kazi (2014), in 1966, around 3000 schools were providing some form of guidance services. However this was restricted to vocational guidance by a career master. School counseling was still not considered an important program.

In 1986, the National Policy on Education was framed. While this policy covered many areas, here again there was no mention of the need for a school counselor. In 2002, however, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), one of the largest education boards in India, sent a circular to all its schools urging them to start counseling services to help students build their self-concept, self-image, acceptability, ability to withstand pressures, sportsmanship, etc. In 2008, another circular from the CBSE to its schools made a recommendation that

at secondary and senior secondary stages at least twenty sessions of psychological counseling must be provided to every student in an academic session. Parents and teachers may also be involved in such sessions. (Central Board of Secondary Education, 2008)

While this was a much-appreciated mandate, there was little clarity about the actual role of the counselor, and this is still the case. They also started telephone counseling in various cities to provide help for students during examination periods. They trained almost 40 principals and school counselors to provide telephone counseling to students in the month preceding their examinations and the month the results were published. A manual for telephone counseling was also published.

It wasn't until 2005 that the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) was developed which overtly mentioned the role of trained personnel to enhance the overall development of students. The National Curriculum Framework has been discussed below.

*National Curriculum Framework* (National Council for Educational Research and Training [NCERT], 2005).

This document highlighted the need for a trained teacher or counselor to facilitate student development at the primary, secondary, and higher secondary level. For primary schools, it said

Teachers with a background in guidance and counseling can design and lead activities to meet the developmental needs of children, thus laying the foundation for the necessary attitudes and perceptions towards the self and the world of work. They can also provide the needed support and guidance to children belonging to various strata of society for their sustenance through the elementary school years. (68 p.)

At a secondary school level, it stated students “discover their own interests and aptitudes and begin to form ideas on what courses of study and related work they might like to pursue later” (68 p.). They believed intervention by trained teachers or professional counselors could help young people achieve their vocational goals. In relation to higher secondary schools, the NCF states

Given the developmental nature of this stage, guidance and counseling by trained professionals must be made available to children. Interventions to enhance self/career awareness, career exploration and planning are also essential. Besides, this stage coincides with adolescence, a period in an individual's life that is marked by personal, social and emotional crises created due to the demands of adjustment required in the family, peer group and school situations. The provision of these services in schools would help create the support system required to cope with increasing academic and social pressures. (p.70)

The NCF also stated that teacher education should help teachers

develop the needed counseling skills and competencies to be a 'facilitator' for and 'helper' of children needing specific kinds of help in finding solutions for day-to-day problems related to educational, personal and social situations. (108 p.)

In reference to reducing stress and enhancing success in class X and XII examinations, they suggest that,

Guidance and counseling be made available in schools to deal with stress related problems and to guide students, parents and teachers to lessen the students stress. Helplines in boards can also help students and parents. (113 p.)

They emphasize the responsibility of the States in order to successfully accomplish these recommendations as follows:

The roles and functions of SCERTs need to include providing support not only in purely academic areas but psychological aspects as well. SCERTs must take steps to strengthen the guidance bureaus/units already existing with them by setting them up as resource centres at the state level for in-service teacher training in this area, production of psychological tools/ tests, career literature, etc. and make counseling services available at district/block and school levels by positioning professionally trained guidance personnel. (121 p.)

This was probably the first document to outline at least to some extent the functions of counselors at every stage of school education. It also outlined the need for teacher training and the responsibility of the states to carry out this recommendation. The recommendations of the NCF have still not been implemented in all states nor have any evaluation studies been done.

In 2009, a scheme called Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) (<http://mhrd.gov.in/rmsa>) was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The objective of this scheme was to enhance access to secondary education and improve its quality. The RMSA clearly identified the need for counseling services in schools. Although attempts had been made to develop state guidance/counseling bureaus, it was found that only a few existed across the country and even they were playing only a limited role. Therefore in 2015, the RMSA project cell and NCERT drafted guidelines for guidance and counseling for the different states and union territories in India (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2015). Some of the aspects they emphasized were strengthening the state-level guidance agencies by ensuring that they create a cadre of trained guidance officers, appointment of full-time counselors by the state government and union territories at a district level, utilizing teachers trained in guidance to offer training at state level, in-service training for teachers, sensitization of principals, and adequate funding for state guidance bureaus for appointment of staff, developing resources, and conducting training programs. They also suggest ways of implementing guidance and counseling in schools using a developmental framework. This is probably the most elaborate document on guidance and counseling services in schools. However, it is still early days, and the effect of the document in terms of its implementation is not known.

In summary, the Ministry of Human Resource Development emphasized primarily on the need for vocational guidance, and bureaus were set up for the training of guidance officers and career masters. A career teacher approach was and still is the most widely accepted model in schools. These teachers have 3–4 weeks of training, and they deal only with career information and guidance. Only recently has the ministry recommended that specialist counselors be available in schools to cater to the varied needs (not just vocational) of students in school, and these recommendations are still in the process of being implemented.

## Contributions of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had four departments (Department of Health and Family Welfare, Department of AYUSH, Department of Health Research, and Department of AIDS Control) until 2014. Subsequent to 2014, structural changes were made, and currently there are two departments under the ministry, namely, the Department of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Health Research). The ministry is in charge of overseeing all matters related to health services in the country (<http://www.mohfw.nic.in/>).

*National Health Policy* (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, 1983).

The emphasis was on primary health care, but it brought preventive, promotive, and rehabilitative aspects into the spotlight. However, child mental health was not directly addressed, although under problems that required immediate attention, there was a mention of the need for a school-based health program with general, preventative, and curative services.

## School Mental Health Programs

Work in the area of school mental health began in the late 1970s. It was taken up mostly in the metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore. These initiatives can be classified as initiatives to train adults (like teachers) to provide services to children and young people, initiatives that targeted groups of young children, and individual-focused initiatives.

An example of an initiative that was targeted at adults was the initiative of the Child Psychiatry Unit of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) which started an orientation program for teachers in 1976, spearheaded by Dr. M Kapur and Dr. I Cariappa. The aim of the program was to orient both primary and secondary school teachers to childhood and adolescent mental health problems. This was deemed necessary because the awareness about

mental health in India at that time was very less and several child and adolescent mental health issues such as learning disability could be addressed more effectively in the school system. They were also trained in basic counseling skills so that they could identify mental health issues in students, intervene at the school level, and refer cases to mental health professionals when required.

Another initiative that targeted teachers as the providers of services for children by the Department of Psychiatry at NIMHANS is a Model of Life Skills Education for secondary school students. This was developed after doing extensive needs assessment and focus groups with all relevant stakeholders. Resource materials were also developed for teachers in secondary schools, who were required to serve as life skills facilitators. The model was also tested for its effectiveness on a sample of 605 adolescents. It was found that in comparison to a control group, adolescents in the program had better levels of adjustment, perceived adequate coping, prosocial behavior, and better self-esteem (Srikala & Kumar, 2010).

In Delhi, a comprehensive school mental health program was set up by Dr. Nagpal Prasad. NCERT and the Ministry of Human Resource Development helped with the technical aspects. This school-based project was divided into a junior section (under 10 years) and an adolescent section (10–19 years). For the junior section, teachers, parents, and counselors were sensitized to developmental, emotional, and behavioral problems common in childhood. They were provided with skills to manage these issues in the classroom and family. In the adolescent group, life skills education was used. Here also teachers were trained as life skills educators. There was also an option for interested students to volunteer and to be trained as peer educators.

An initiative that was targeted directly at groups of children was a program by the Community Mental Health Unit of NIMHANS which started a Student Enrichment Program for rural adolescents in secondary schools. Guidance was provided over 25 sessions in the areas of effective study methods, preparing for examina-



tions, taking care of one's health, understanding self and others, interpersonal relations, planning for the future, and so on. An evaluation of the program was done using outcome measures including academic scores and knowledge, attitude, and belief questionnaires. This was well received (Srikala, Kishore, & Mukesh, 2008).

An example of an individual-focused program was the school mental health in Bombay (now Mumbai) that was initiated by Dr. H.S. Dhavale of the Nair Children's Hospital in 1979. Here a multidisciplinary team of psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and psychiatric social workers provided direct consultation to school children. They also provided inputs to parents and teachers in relation to psychological issues in children. Student enrichment programs were also done in Bombay.

Although various school mental health programs have been introduced across the country ranging in its content and outcomes, there is a lack of specific policy and program for school mental health. It is important that school mental health programs look at both health promotion through life skills education and prevention and remediation through mental health orientation and counseling. The main contribution of the mental health policies was that it emphasized looking at general preventative and curative services for children in schools. Until the advent of school mental health programs, services for children in schools, to a large extent, focused primarily on academic and vocational issues. Mental health of children in schools has come into focus through these policies and therefore strengthened recognition of the need for specialist input in the role of a trained person.

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### Existing Policy Research Base

There is very little policy research that directly relates to school counseling in India, as discussed in the previous section. The Mental Health Act (1987) paved the way for several pieces of epidemiological and evaluative research, and the authors have summarized below those with implications for the practice of school counsel-

ing. What is useful to note here is that several of these studies used school children as the sample and schools as the context for their research. In fact, in a systematic review, Bhola and Kapur (2003) identified 23 school-based studies conducted in India between 1978 and 2002. These studies reported prevalence rates of mental health disorders ranging from 3.23% to 36.50% in some of the reviewed studies. The most prevalent disorders were enuresis, mental retardation (this term was used in classifications of mental health disorders), externalizing disorders such as conduct disorders, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders. According to the authors of this review, school-based studies have not looked at other disorders of concern such as specific learning disabilities. Moreover, they suggest that rates of specific disorders at preschool, middle school, and high school need to be reported separately. This they contend will enable policy makers to suggest developmentally appropriate interventions in schools.

In 2005, the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) published a monograph of mental health research conducted by over 100 experts from all over India (ICMR, 2005). The research presented in the monograph was meant to inform mental health care in India and enable policy makers and planners "to advance the cause of mental health care in the country" (vii p.). The ICMR studies were part of a recommendation made by the ICMR Advisory Committee on mental health as early as 1975 when task force groups and working groups were formed with the objective of conducting operational research that informs mental health practice in India. Among the various projects undertaken, child and adolescent mental health formed one area ripe for investigation. A multisite study was conducted (Bangalore, Delhi, Lucknow, and Waltair) on a sample of children below the age of 16. These research participants were attending child psychiatric outpatient clinics and did not include any children affected by "mental retardation"<sup>1</sup>. School-related stress and disturbance were reported among a range of psychosocial issues

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<sup>1</sup>The term mental retardation is used in the original source.



presented by the children with psychiatric morbidity, although the extent of this varied by city: Bangalore, 19%; Delhi, 11%; Lucknow, 2%; and Waltair, 4%.

The Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, conducted a study to look at the

extent and nature of psychiatric symptoms in school children and understand the course of these symptoms during development, and to study psychosocial determinants of developmental psychopathology in children with special reference to temperament of children, life stress, patterns of parental handling of children. (ICMR, 2005, 93 p.)

The study used a longitudinal design, and the findings indicated that school children required focused services in schools. It was also found that mental health needs varied between public schools and private schools. The reasons for these differences are not very clear. They might be rooted in the socioeconomic contexts of the children who attend public schools versus private schools. Children who attend public schools hail from lower economic groups, are often prone to more environmental deprivation and stress, and are more vulnerable to mental health problems. This group of researchers then devised programs to address these needs (ICMR, 2005).

In a systematic review of epidemiological research of psychiatric disorders in India, Math and Srinivasaraju (2010) reported that children and adolescents in India are at high risk of developing psychiatric disorders. From studies that seemed to be of high quality, methodologically they cite prevalence rates of 94 per 1000 in a rural Indian sample of children aged 8–12 years (Varghese and Baig, 1974, cited in Math & Srinivasaraju, 2010) and 12.5% in a study sponsored by ICMR (Srinath et al., 2005, cited in Math & Srinivasaraju, 2010) of children between 0 and 16 years.

In a more recent systematic meta-analytic review, Malhotra and Patra (2014) evaluated epidemiological studies on children. Sixteen community-based studies (covering 14,954 children) and seven school-based studies (covering 567 children and adolescents) were analyzed.

The summary of the metanalysis revealed that the prevalence rate of child and adolescent psychiatric disorders in the community was reported to be 6.46% (95% confidence interval 6.08% - 6.88%) and in the school, it was reported to be 23.33% (95% confidence interval 22.25% - 24.45%).

The authors offer several explanations for the possible variation in prevalence rates starting from the definition of disorders used in the studies reviewed to sensitivity of the tools of data collection and the methods of collection of data. The authors state that the reporting systems of psychiatric disorders in children in India are inadequate. This might account for the variability in prevalence rates across studies included in the meta-analysis. What is significant, however, is that school-based studies yield higher prevalence rates. This indicates that schools are important spaces for the development of school counseling services to address the mental health needs of children.

While the aforementioned research base is diagnostic in nature with an emphasis on identifying mental health problems, research also exists related to the prevention and promotion of positive mental health in schools. For instance, Vranda (2015) reported on the development of a training manual for promoting the mental health and well-being of adolescents in schools. The manual offered a strategy for enhancing student's psychosocial competencies, using teachers as the facilitators in schools. The author made it clear that teachers were not expected to take the role of school counselor. However, topics included in the manual are similar in focus to the expertise required of school counselors, such as promoting positive mental health, enhancing resilience, handling academic stressors, practicing healthy lifestyles, and reproductive health issues.

A suitable conclusion to the findings of these research surveys is formulated in a draft document of 21 recommendations meant for policy makers (Srikala et al., 2008). The document outlines several recommendations and clinical practice models for school mental health programs in India. They highlighted the importance of a multidisciplinary team of professionals in schools:

All schools – run by the government or private should have a Health Professional Team on roles consisting of a Paediatrician, School Counselor, Special Educator and a Mental Health Professional”

and they also identify the need for private, confidential spaces for school counseling services.

In summary, current research from school-based epidemiological studies in India indicates the need for comprehensive mental health services, both preventative and remedial, in schools in India. What is clear from the data is that mental health concerns are significant in schools and that schools do not have the necessary competencies to address these needs. Policy makers therefore need to consider building competencies in school counselors directed toward addressing the mental health needs of children and adolescents in Indian schools.

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### **Evaluation of Policy Gaps and Future Recommendations**

A review of the past and present policies from the various ministries and departments has shown that guidance and counseling is not a new concept. However, despite recognition of its importance for more than half a century, it is still not being delivered in schools in an organized or systematic manner. One of the reasons for this could be the fact that none of these policies has been evaluated adequately, nor its effectiveness ascertained. This is a huge lacuna that future policy research needs to pay attention to. Another reason could be due to certain gaps that the policies have failed to address. There are various domains of child development, whereas to a large extent policies have primarily focused on a child’s academic and vocational development. While this is essential in the school context, if one subscribes to the holistic development of the child, then a broader focus from vocational counseling alone toward a more comprehensive and integrated program may be necessary.

Most of the policies also suggest that teachers be trained to provide counseling services and

vocational guidance. While the recommendation is understandable due to the shortage of trained professionals and human resources, this is not a feasible option. With the increase in class sizes and a larger number of student enrolments in schools, they may be able to continue the career guidance role. Considering what it entails to play a specialist counselor role, it is unlikely that teachers will have the competence to provide intensive services to students without adequate training. What is necessary is that trained counseling professionals be employed in schools to provide counseling services.

While there have been recommendations by the Central Board for Secondary Education to employ school counselors in all its schools, it is important that all other education boards also make similar recommendations. It is also necessary that they clearly articulate the role of the school counselor so there are no overlaps between the roles of teachers and counselors. Recently, some state governments have introduced policies for school counseling, but information about these policies is not in the public domain. Clearly defining a school counselor’s job profile and then determining the competencies they require to carry out their role are urgent tasks that must be undertaken.

However, the most important recommendation one could make at this juncture is to stress the importance of high-quality school counseling training programs. As mentioned by Joneja (2006), many counselors who completed a 9-month diploma in counseling did not feel equipped to practice as a counselor. This is probably because a school counselor’s role is broader than vocational guidance alone. With the myriad changes that are taking place in our society due to globalization and its effects, children have to deal with a lot more stressors that they used to before. Mental health issues have come to the fore. It is, therefore, important that a school counselor is able to tackle a range of issues concerning the child at school. Therefore they need to be highly competent and well equipped. It is imperative therefore that competency-based graduate pro-

grams are introduced across the country to enable more students to take up school counseling as a profession.

In terms of specific policy research that needs to be conducted in order to strengthen school counseling services in India, the following studies are recommended:

1. Identifying educational and health policy objectives that can be achieved by having counselors in schools
2. An evaluation of current policies and frameworks like the NCF (2005) to determine to what extent recommendations have been implemented, the challenges in implementation, and its effectiveness in promoting school counseling services
3. An evaluation of the guidelines for guidance and counseling for the different states and union territories, drafted by the RMSA project cell and NCERT, to determine feasibility implementation and comprehensiveness
4. Conducting a needs assessment for counseling services in schools by surveying all relevant stakeholders that include students, teachers, parents, administrators, and school policy makers
5. Identification of competencies that are required by the personnel who engage in school counseling activities in India based on a needs assessment
6. An evaluation of current programs in school counseling and vocational guidance to determine they are effective in developing competent professionals
7. Development of a competency-based school counseling program and standardized training
8. Surveying what guidance officers and counselors in school actually do, their challenges, and their preferred role

Policy research is not adequate in India. While new policies are developed from time to time, there is not sufficient research done on the effectiveness of these policies. We have therefore seen the same recommendations made in policies time and again. Policies need to be progressive and make changes in society.

Systematic implementation and evaluation of policy can help us move forward and give impetus to the school counseling agenda.

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# Policy and Practice of School-Based Counseling in Bangladesh: Current Provisions and Future Directions

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## Overview of School Education in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a South Asian country with a population of over 170 million (United States Census Bureau, 2015) in an area of about 56,000 square miles. This makes Bangladesh the eighth most populous country on Earth (United States Census Bureau, 2015). At school level, Bangladesh has 1 year preprimary, 5 years primary, and 7 years secondary education. At present Bangladesh has 5 years of compulsory primary education. Currently legislative approval process is going on to extend compulsory primary education from 5 years to 8 years. Primary education in Bangladesh has two major streams, i.e., general and madrasah.<sup>1</sup> With a number of 122,176 schools, 527,798 teachers, and more than 19 million students, primary education system in Bangladesh is one of the largest in the world (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics [BANBEIS], 2016, p. 42). Secondary education has three streams, i.e., general, madrasah, and technical-vocational. As of 2016, students have to pass a compulsory public exam examination at

the end of grade 5 in order to get promoted in secondary education. Secondary education has three substages, i.e. junior-secondary (grades 6–8), secondary (grades 9 and 10), and higher secondary (grades 11 and 12). The secondary education system of Bangladesh is also very large comprising more than 20,000 schools, 243,000 teachers, and over 9.74 million students (BANBEIS, 2016, p. 54). As of 2016, at the end of each sublevel, students must pass a public exam for securing promotion to the next level. For availing higher education, students also need to pass a public exam at the end of higher secondary and sit for highly competitive university entrance examinations. Besides the general, madrasah, and technical-vocational education streams, there are several English medium schools in the country that do not follow national curriculum of Bangladesh. These schools follow international curriculums such as Cambridge International Examinations, Edexcel International Baccalaureate, and so on.

The educational issues and challenges of the country largely include issues of access, quality, and equity. While Bangladesh has achieved almost 98% of net enrollment in primary education (BANBEIS, 2016, p. 46), the completion rate is still only 75.1% (BANBEIS, 2016, p. 46). Besides the issues of access, the country is also concerned with educational quality as the student achievement level has been found very unsatisfactory in both primary and secondary levels

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(Campaign for Popular Education [CAMPE], 2008, 2009; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2015). Although success rate in public examinations has increased in recent years, educationists seriously doubt the validity and quality of the public examinations in assessing student achievement appropriately. Analysis from studies further revealed that serious equity issues such as difference in access and achievement of students based on different geographical locations, gender, and school type are also prevalent in both primary and secondary levels (CAMPE, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2013; UNESCO, 2015; World Bank, 2013). Inadequate resources, insufficient and unqualified teachers, lack of stakeholder involvement, corruption (Richards et al., 2008), unequal distribution of educational institution, poorly implemented curriculum, hierarchical nature of educational management, and so on (CAMPE, 2008, 2009) are also mentioned as major issues of education in Bangladesh. There is a lack of comprehensive or nationwide research on issues such as mental health and career relevancy of curriculum. But educationists feel these areas among other important areas which need immediate attention.

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## Counseling in Bangladesh

Counseling service was first started in Bangladesh in the late twentieth century by several national and international human rights organizations working for the betterment of disenfranchised women and children (Islam, 2012). This service was mainly targeted toward the survival and integration of women and children who suffered domestic violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, exploitation, and other reoccurring man-made and natural disasters (Islam, 2012). However, the counselors that provided such service were largely unskilled, and the service they rendered can be regarded more as guidance and advice than professional psychological counseling. The first major milestone for developing a professional counseling service was the establishment of counseling services at the Student Counseling and Guidance

Center at the University of Dhaka<sup>2</sup> by its clinical psychology department in 1996. A short training on basic and specific counseling skills was introduced in 1997 (Islam, 2012). Afterward, introduction of professional course on educational psychology in 2006 created opportunities for extending psychological services in schools, child development centers, and NGOs. In 2009, the University of Dhaka started offering MS course in Counseling Psychology, and in 2011 Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology was established in the psychology department of the university. As of 2012, 37 students earned master's degree on educational psychology and 25 on counseling psychology from these two programs (Islam, 2012). Besides, the Institute of Education and Research at the University of Dhaka also runs M.Ed. degree program on educational psychology and guidance. Courses on counseling are also offered in some other universities including the University of Rajshahi as part of their academic programs in psychology. Besides academic institutions, a nationally recognized NGO named Ain o Salish Kendra is offering 1-year-long diploma in counseling since 2006. Postgraduate medical colleges run a 6-month-long course on psychotherapy (Islam, 2012). The Teacher Development Institute (TDI) also provides long-term training to people who aspire to be a counselor. However, there is no accrediting body in the country for licensing the counselors.

At government institutional level, Pabna Mental Hospital, National Institute of Mental Health, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Dhaka Medical College, and National Trauma Center provide psychosocial counseling services. Besides, psychiatric departments of most of the public and private medical colleges also provide counseling services. Ain o Salish Kendra, INCIDIN Bangladesh, Bangladesh National Women Lawyer's Association, Acid Survivors Foundations, and several other nongovernment organizations also provide counseling services (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2015). BRAC Institute of Educational

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<sup>2</sup>This is the oldest university in the country which was established in 1921.



Development provides psychosocial counseling services for garments sector workers, vulnerable adolescents, unprivileged children, and transgender youth. Another notable non-government organization Sajida Foundation provides psychosocial counseling at individual and group settings on various marriage, family, mental health and life crisis issues. It also provides psychosocial counseling and awareness programs for community wellness, women empowerment, and child abuse prevention. These are some examples of counseling services that are available in government, private and non-government institutions. Apart from these and few other institutional supports, counseling services are limited to professional counselors who are engaged in private counseling practices. But their number is few and very insufficient compared to the need of the large population of the country.

Bangladesh has a serious need of developing capacity of human resource in mental health and allocating more financial resources. According to the Fourth Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Conference 2014, there are only 118 psychiatrists, 43 clinical psychologists, 138 assistant clinical psychologists, 61 counseling psychologists, 49 educational psychologists, 144 occupational therapists, 60 speech therapists, 55 clinical social workers, and 15 psychotherapists (as cited in Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2015). This indicates a dire need for developing human resource on an urgent basis to provide sufficient and quality mental health service for a country which has more than 170 million people. Besides, the mental health budget is also very insignificant. Expenditure in mental health is less than 0.5% of total health budget of the country (Islam & Biswas, 2015).

There is a policy need to extend a quality mental health service in the country. The first notable policy initiative in the country to promote mental health services was initiated in 2006 when a Strategic Plan for Surveillance and Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases in Bangladesh was formulated and provision of mental health was mentioned. The strategic plan emphasized for a community-based mental health approach which included advocacy to community, empowerment

of community, and social support strategies to strengthen community organizations as critical components (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2007). The most recent policy development in the field involves an ongoing process of developing a psychosocial counseling policy which is now at its draft stage. The draft psychosocial counseling policy outlines major guidelines for counseling in family, profession, charity and social welfare institutions, media and communications, special needs population, and emergency situations (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2016). It also calls for developing appropriate implementation strategy, formulation of legislation, financing, publicity, transparency and accountability, and research, monitoring, and evaluation for successful implementation of the policy.

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### **School Counseling in Bangladesh: Policy Provisions**

There is no specific policy for school-based counseling in Bangladesh. However, there are policies and programs related to health, education, and child development where there are some mentions about school-based counseling. Government initiative on school-based counseling is largely limited to this policy rhetoric. The author of this chapter reviewed several policy documents including National Education Policy 2010, National Children Policy 2011, draft National Psychosocial Counseling Policy 2016, National Health Policy 2011, Pre-primary Education Operational Framework, Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Framework 2013, Third Primary Education Development Program, Secondary Education Sector Development Program, and Strategic Plan for Surveillance and Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases in Bangladesh. This review found that even in policy rhetoric, the mention of school counseling provision is very limited and generic. Out of the policies mentioned above, in only three policies, there was some mention about school counseling. The school counseling policy provisions in these three policies are described below.

## National Children Policy 2011

In the National Children Policy 2011, school counseling was mentioned as an important way to ensure overall children growth, “*Initiatives for providing counseling services at the educational institutions for development of mental health of the adolescents*” (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2011, p. 5). Here the focus is on adolescent development, and the rhetoric is generic and nondirectional.

## National Education Policy 2010

In the National Education Policy 2010, there is a section dedicated on student welfare and counseling. School counseling is largely seen as a way to improve educational environment in schools and increase the quality of education (Ministry of Education, 2010). In this policy the aims of student welfare and counseling are mentioned as:

- “to determine and implement effective systems directed toward the development of academic environment in the primary and secondary schools and also to create an improved environment for higher education;
- all human beings, irrespective of sex, race, ethnic roots, socio-economic situations and physical or mental conditions are eligible for equal human rights. This very sense will be infused into the students right from the primary level;
- to provide primary health services for students of all levels, extensive development in health services will be strengthened in higher educational institutions particularly in the universities;
- to make students' assistance available at all levels of education as per necessity;
- to encourage the students to study in achieving the objectives of education through reduction of educational expenses; to provide hostel facilities; to create opportunities of extra-curricular activities for the students” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 61).

As we can see, student welfare and counseling is mainly aimed at directing toward improvement of academic environment, promoting respect for equity and equality, providing and improving health services, rendering supports to students,

and helping them achieve educational objectives. To achieve these aims, several strategies have also been mentioned. The strategies that are directly related to school-based counseling are:

- “student welfare and counseling will be initiated and strengthened at all educational levels;
- teachers delivering counseling will be properly trained;
- the existing counseling and instructive services of the universities will be strengthened. Training programs will be arranged for the teacher-counselors. Effective counseling and instructional programs will be made available in other educational institutions;
- importance will be attached to establish a national student welfare counseling and advisory centre to guide the teacher-counselors and facilitate training programs for them so that they can provide better help for the students” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 61).

The strategies largely call for developing school counseling services, initiating and improving capacity of human resources in school counseling, and establishing a national advisory board that will provide guideline and oversee the training. However, the review of national-level planning and implementation documents such as Pre-primary Education Operational Framework, Third Primary Education Development Program, and Secondary Education Sector Development Program revealed that any concrete plan or action for establishing such provisions were inexistent in these planning and implementation documents. This suggests that school counseling policy provisions are still largely limited in rhetoric and there is a gap between policy commitment and the actual implementation of it.

## Draft National Psychosocial Counseling Policy 2016

It is to be mentioned that the National Psychosocial Policy is still at its draft stage and has not received legislative approval yet. So, any policy guideline or suggestion mentioned here cannot be considered as final. However, it is still helpful to learn how the issue of counseling is framed in this policy. The policy stressed on four

objectives for psychosocial counseling in schools: *“to prevent drop out, nurturing creativity, to ensure joyful environment for teaching-learning, and ensuring good teacher-student relation in educational institution”* (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2016, p. 4). Strategies for ensuring psychosocial counseling in educational institutions are mentioned under the section “psychosocial counseling in professional life.” Four specific strategies were mentioned to ensure psychosocial counseling in educational institutions. First strategy aims at developing rapport between students, teachers, and staffs. It suggests for separate part-time psychosocial counselors for students and teachers so that they can deal with professional and academic stress and manage behavioral and emotional problems. Besides, it also calls for training two teachers from each school on psychosocial counseling. The second strategy stresses on teachers’ capacity development so that they can do awareness counseling to parents and guardians. In order to achieve this, the policy calls for psychological and awareness counseling course in Teacher’s Training College curriculum. The third strategy suggests the introduction of peer counseling by providing peer counseling training to one student from each class. It also recommends for introducing topics on adolescent issues and peer role in resolving these issues in curriculum of grade 8 onward. Finally, the fourth strategy calls for psychosocial counseling for members of School Management Committee for their stress management (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2016, p. 8).

Besides these strategies, the policy also suggests for parental awareness counseling in educational institutions on developmental needs of children at different stages of their childhood. Specifically, counseling of parents was highly recommended for making them aware of issues of puberty and adolescence. Recruitment of skilled psychosocial counselors in secondary and higher secondary schools was also suggested to help adolescents deal with physical and psychological issues of adolescence and provide them with sex education so that they can be aware of sexual abuse, rape, and teen pregnancy (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2016, p. 8).

From the description above, two themes emerge. First, this policy calls for psychosocial counseling for service providers such as teachers, staff, and management committee so that student-teacher relation can be improved and stress can be managed well. Second, it emphasizes on student and parental counseling for promoting children’s development in general and dealing with adolescent issues in particular. However, it is not clear how the strategies mentioned above would help the mentioned objectives of the policy such as preventing drop out and nurturing creativity.

In a nutshell, the policy provisions for school counseling are limited and not comprehensive enough to provide sufficient guideline for development of a holistic school counseling service. Different policies have different focus and there is a need to mention how they can be harmonized or at least can complement each other. While the Child Development Policy generally stresses for introducing counseling in schools, education policy focused more on creating service provisions and strengthening training to create human resource to ensure student success and promote better academic environment. This policy limits itself within student counseling only. Although education policy stressed for student counseling, the planning and implementation documents for primary and secondary education do not reflect this commitment in action. The draft psychosocial counseling policy includes teachers, school management, students, and parents for counseling service and focuses more on psychosocial issues than learning. There is also a gap between the stated objectives and strategies mentioned in the psychosocial policy.

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### **School-Based Counseling Practice in Bangladesh**

In general, Bangladeshi schools do not have formal school counseling services with few exceptions. There is also a lack of research on school counseling in schools. The study that is available confirmed the lack of school-based counseling. The study was conducted by Hossain and Faisal (2013). They performed a qualitative study on

different types of primary and secondary schools including government primary and secondary, nongovernment primary and secondary, cadet schools, technical and vocational schools, English medium schools, nonformal schools, madrasahs, and Bangladesh Academy of Sports Education. A total of 20 schools, 2 from each category mentioned above, were selected. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, teachers, and school administrators, and school documents were reviewed. The study aimed at learning about guidance and counseling service provided in the schools in the forms of orientation, information, counseling, career and placement, referral, remedial, follow-up, and evaluation services. Their findings suggested that there is a lack of formal guidance and counseling services in Bangladeshi schools. The services that are provided by teachers are not planned or organized and the school lacked trained counselors. Besides, the services provided were not intent to meet the counseling needs and standards, and there was no provision for addressing individual needs. To be more specific, schools in general provided orientation service in the form of leaflet containing information on schools. Observance of orientation day was found in some private schools but not in government schools. Except cadet schools and sports academy, schools did not typically provide personal-social information of students. Although all the schools provided information on academic progress of students, they lacked a systematic and holistic analysis of the achievement data. Information was also not compiled and analyzed in a manner that could be readily used. Trained counselor was not found in any schools except in sports academy where a sport psychologist was assigned to guide the students. Counseling is provided by either teachers or senior students in an informal manner. Follow-up and tracking service were available in cadet school and sports academy only. Career service and placement service were found in nonformal school only, but the scope was limited. Besides, cadet schools which are targeted to prepare students for a military career occasionally got visits from military personnel to inform them about available military career.

Referral or remedial services were also not found in any schools. Since there was no formal counseling and guidance service available in the schools, evaluation services were also nonexistent.

This is the general scenario of guidance and counseling services in most of the schools in the country. However, a few elite private and English medium schools are exceptions. These schools mostly follow international curriculum and have professional school counselors. The counselors typically provide individualized counseling on academic, social and emotional development, learning skills, college and career counseling, and crisis interventions. They also work with the school administration and teachers for betterment of school environment. Few non-government organizations also provide some psychosocial counseling services in schools. For example, BRAC Institute of Educational Development provides psychosocial counseling services in some selected secondary schools and works on capacity development of teachers to provide such services. Sajida Foundation provides psychosocial counseling awareness programs for primary and secondary school students, parents and teachers. However, the number of such schools is very few and is not a representative of the majority of the schools in the country.

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## Future Directions

This section discusses the future directions for developing school-based counseling in Bangladesh. The discussion is arranged under two themes. The first theme discusses the future directions for the development of the profession such as establishment of school counseling association, development of human resources, and establishment of government department on school-based counseling. Second theme discusses future directions for policy research, with an emphasis on key intervention areas such as access and retention, student academic development, equity, mental health and social-emotional development, and further education and career counseling.

## **Future Directions for the Development of the Profession**

### **Development of a School Counseling Association**

There is an urgent need to establish a professional association that would pioneer and guide in developing the school counseling system in the country. Since the government attention on school-based counseling is still weak in Bangladesh, a professional association can, at least at an initial level, compensate for this insufficient attention by taking part in activities that are typically done by the government. The typical activities that government assumes include credentialing of professionals, developing standards for practice, and supporting professional development education (Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015). The association needs to advocate with the government and donor agencies for budget allocation, policy formulation, structural and legal arrangement, and changes needed in the school system. It would also work for creating plans for developing enough human resource in the field through consulting and advocating with government ministries and higher education institutions, act as a licensure body, and provide resource and support network for the school counselors. Another important aspect of the association would be to develop the profession further by setting minimum standards, ethical and professional guidelines of practice, implementation, referral, monitoring, and evaluation of school counseling service. The association also needs to initiate policy research that would help learn more about the needs of the field. The association would also engage in organizing grassroots campaign to create awareness among parents, community, and educational stakeholders about the need and importance of school counseling services. Since there is a stigma attached to formal counseling, promoting the development of cultural sensitivity on how to address these issues is crucial. The awareness campaign needs to address this cultural stigma and learn about the concerns of the people and make plans on how to address these concerns if

school counseling is to be successfully implemented. The association would also need to establish network with other professional organizations and education service providers such as teacher's associations and NGOs to ensure better sharing and dissemination of learning.

### **Human Resource Development**

Developing a comprehensive plan for human resource development would be absolutely crucial for promoting school-based counseling in Bangladesh. As the author has already mentioned earlier, there is a severe shortage of trained counselors in the field to meet the need of an education system that is one of the largest in the world. Without formulating a human resource development system, the promise of school counseling cannot be met. There is a need to determine a counselor/student ratio and formulate long-term plans to achieve this. For interim arrangement there was discussion going on in Bangladesh on appointing teacher-counselors or peer counselors. These interventions should be considered carefully. For example, a much discussed alternative model in the country is to train selected school teachers to work as a teacher-counselor. However, such initiatives need to consider the real issues such as the overburden of teacher, very high teacher-student ratio, and teacher motivation. There is also a need to consider the cultural construct of teacher-student relationship in Bangladesh as hierarchical and respectful and to understand how student can share their concern with a person to whom s/he is connected in a hierarchical relationship. Moreover, there is a need to consider the issue of conflict of interest because how students would deal with issues if it is related to teachers as they may find it difficult to raise the issue with the teacher-counselor.

### **Establishment of Government Department/Unit on School-Based Counseling**

While professional association can play a pioneering role in introducing school-based counseling at the initial level, for the initiative to be sustainable and implemented throughout the country, establishment of government depart-



ment or unit under the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Primary and Mass Education would be crucial. The government department would help develop necessary legal and policy frameworks, provide credentialing of professionals, and develop guidelines for standards for practice and roles and responsibilities of counselors. It can work closely with professional association and other relevant government ministries and departments to achieve these goals. The government department would also provide funding to the public universities for developing enough human resource, extend support for professional education, provide funding and resources for implementing school-based counseling in schools, recruit counselors, and monitor, supervise, and evaluate the implementation and quality assurance of it. It would also need to carry out awareness raising campaign in local communities about school counseling and ensure community participation and input in planning and implementing school-based counseling initiatives at school level.

### **Future Directions for Policy Research**

At present there is no policy research directly related to school-based counseling. Thorough and comprehensive policy research is required for development of school counseling service. The professional association can take a pioneering role in initiating policy research that would help learn more about the needs of the field. While the association can compensate for insufficient government attention, it still needs to generate knowledge informed by substantial policy research to advocate for and promote school-based counseling in the country. Eventually, this can lead toward convincing government to take initiative for establishing a school counseling department or unit within the ministries of education. In the case of Bangladesh, often international and national organizations, donors, and academia have created initial knowledge and practice base for educational interventions which eventually led toward government assuming

more responsibility and establishing legal and organizational arrangements for mass implementation of the intervention nationwide. Once established, government unit or department on school-based counseling can also play a crucial role in furthering the research and knowledge base in the field of school counseling. The research should investigate the needs to develop school counseling as a profession in the country which include studying the human resource development needs, financial and resource needs, structural arrangement needs within the school system, and professional standards needs. The policy research should also look at the key areas of intervention where school counseling can be most beneficial for students, teachers, and other stakeholders of education. These include, but are not limited to, looking at areas of access and retention, academic achievement, equity, social-emotional development, and counseling on further education and career. The research should also aim at learning community needs and perspectives about introducing counseling in schools and find ways how to work with the community for its successful introduction in the school. Although there is lack of research on school counseling, there is existing research and experiential wisdom available in government, NGO, donor organizations, and academia that worked on access, quality, and equity issues in education. They can be a valuable resource in learning about the needs of the field. Below I briefly discuss several possible areas of intervention for counseling and call for further research to learn more about these issues and how school counseling can be used to address them.

### **Access and Retention**

Bangladesh has achieved about 98% enrollment and reduced annual dropout rate to 4.1% in primary education (BANBEIS, 2016, pp. 46–47). However, statistics suggest worrying figures in other key areas of retention. For example, the school absenteeism is 13.1% (BANBEIS, 2016, pp. 52). Cohort studies suggest that student survival rate to grade 5 and primary completion rate is only 77.7% and 75.1%, respectively



(UNESCO, 2015, pp. 19–20). Although secondary education is not compulsory, Bangladesh government is currently undertaking legislative approval process to extend compulsory primary education from 5 years to 8 years. This means there will be a need to ensure full enrollment and completion rate in grades 6–8. However, research suggests that net enrollment rate in lower secondary level is only 50% (UNESCO, 2015, p. 25). The rate even declines to only 20% in higher secondary (UNESCO, 2015, p. 25). This suggests that there will be a need for substantial intervention to gain full enrollment rate in secondary education, particularly in lower secondary which will be changed to compulsory primary education soon. The dropout rate of students at the end of secondary cycle (grades 6–10) is staggering 54.15% (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. ix). Given this scenario, school counseling service can be critical to ensure access, attendance, and completion of students in primary and secondary education. There is already some research in access issues. Besides, government, NGOs, and academia can provide valuable insight into the issue. However, further research is needed to understand how to prepare counseling service to address the issues of access and retention and how to harmonize counselor responsibility with other service-providing personnel.

### Student Academic Development

Another major area where school counseling can play a vital role is helping students' academic development. Although results in primary- and secondary-level public examinations improved significantly in recent years, educationists have questioned the quality of the assessment system. Research suggests that there are significant concerns in student achievement in Bangladesh. For example, national assessment which assessed students' primary level competency achievement in Bangla and mathematics for grades 3 and 5 students found that only 8% of students of grade 3 and 25% of students of grade 5 fully achieve competencies for Bangla set for their respective grades. For mathematics the full achievement of competencies is only 3% and 25% for grades 3

and 5 students, respectively (Directorate of Primary Education, 2013, pp. ix–x). Similar study conducted at the end of grade 8 found that only 44% of students achieve full competencies in Bangla and 35% in mathematics (UNESCO, 2015, p. 48). Other studies such as CAMPE (2008) found unsatisfactory performances in subjects such as Bangla, English, math, and science. These findings suggest that school counselors can play a crucial role in addressing student academic achievement, particularly in subjects on language and mathematics. Research is needed to learn how counselors can collaborate with teachers, students, parents, and school administration to provide counseling to support enhance academic achievement. There is also a need to systematically keep, analyze, and communicate data related to student academic performances so that this data can serve as a source for important educational and career decision-making for students. Besides academic achievement, there is further need for research on how school counselors can help develop good study habits and routines to further student academic development.

### Equity

Ensuring educational equity is an important area where school counselors can be of much help. Difference in student enrollment and performance can be observed based on student economic situation, gender, and special education needs. World Bank study (2013, p. xvii) found that about 5 million children in Bangladesh are still out of school that have either never enrolled or dropped out very early. These children are largely from poorest 20% of families. Children in urban slums are also suffering serious access and equity issues in schools (World Bank, 2013, p. xvii). In terms of gender, girls are ahead of boys in enrollment, survival, attendance, and completion in primary level (BANBEIS, 2016). Boys also face grade repetition more than girls in primary level (BANBEIS, 2016). However, in secondary education, dropout is higher for girls than boys, and survival and completion rate is higher for boys than girls (Ministry of Education, 2013). Research also shows that as of 2010, only 59.4% of children with disability aged 3–14 have

enrolled in school although there has been significant progress in the recent years to ensure educational rights for them (UNESCO, 2015, p. 42). Equity issues remain for children from diverse ethnic minority groups as well. Not only in access, equity issues are found in learning as well based on geographical locations, school type, household characteristics, and financial situation (World Bank, 2013). Policy, financial, curricular, infrastructural, and awareness interventions are going on to promote equity in schools. However, school counselors can engage with officials, school administration, teachers, students, and parents to ensure maximum enrollment, retention, and achievement of these groups of children. Of course, there is a need for research on how school counselors can best serve the students and do so in a harmonized manner with other personnel working on this issue.

### **Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development**

There is a serious lack of research on mental health and social-emotional development needs in school. Limited existing research suggests there are considerable mental health issues among children. Hossain, Ahmed, Chowdhury, Niessen, and Alam (2014) found that prevalence of mental health issues is 22.9% among children population. Among school population, Morshed and Ahsan (2010) studied rural seventh and eighth graders and found that almost 21% of the students reported either abnormal or borderline behavior on Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire which measured emotional problems, hyperactivity, conduct problems, and peer problems. The mean score on behavioral difficulties was 11.48 which was higher than the norms of developed countries. For example, the mean of total difficulties score is 10.3 in the United Kingdom (Meltzer, Gatward, Goodman, & Ford, 2000), 7.1 in the USA (National Center for Health Statistics [NHIS], 2001), and 8.6 in Australia (Mellor, 2005) for the same age group. Morshed and Ahsan (2010) also found a weak but significant inverse correlation between behavioral difficulties and academic achievement. In another research Morshed (2014) studied math

anxiety among rural junior-secondary-level students and found that a high level of math anxiety is present among students. Math anxiety was also found significantly inversely correlated with math achievement. These researches suggest that school counselor interventions are needed for helping students deal with their general mental health issues as well as specific subject-related anxieties and stresses. However, there is a need of national-scale research on school-going population on general mental health and academic stress-related issues so that school counselors can better serve the needs of students. Besides, promoting health does not mean alleviating the negative only. School counselors can also help students nurture positive social-emotional development such as developing awareness among children and parents on adolescent needs as stressed in national psychosocial policy, helping improve relationship skills, collaborating and working together, respectful interaction, management of emotion toward positive direction, creating a sense of belongingness, and so on. However, further research is needed on how and in which capacity school counselors can work to promote social-emotional development. There is also a need to harmonize their role with other service providers such as public health personnel in order to provide quality mental health and social-emotional development experiences in schools.

### **Further Education and Career Counseling**

There are no formal counseling services in schools to help students decide about their further education and career. Students largely decide about these without any systematic informational help from school. This issue has been widely discussed among educationists and stakeholders; however, there is a lack of research on this topic. Author's experiential knowledge suggest that student's choice of further education is largely determined by parental will, societal pressure, and perceived economic value of some selected professions. Students' aptitude or interest are rarely acknowledged in their future education and career choice. At grade 9, students have to

### Key Policy Research Questions

- What are the legal, policy, financial, organizational, infrastructural, and human resource needs in order to introduce school-based counseling throughout the country? What resources are currently available and how can the gaps be met?
- What form of school counseling, if at all, exists in different types of schools in Bangladesh?
- What is the local community's social and cultural perception about introducing counseling in schools and how to work with the community for successful implementation of counseling in the school?
- What short-, mid-, and long-term planning, strategies, and activities need to be carried out for successful implementation of school-based counseling throughout the country?
- What is the most effective model for developing human resources for school counseling, and what should be the mechanism for their recruitment, placement, and career development and professional development education?
- What should be the educational requirement, credential mechanism, and professional standards for counselors? What should be their roles and responsibilities?
- What should be the goals and objectives of school-based counseling? What are the key areas where school-based counselors can provide crucial support for teachers, students, and other stakeholders in education?
- How to prepare counseling service to address the issues of access and retention? How to harmonize counselor responsibility with other service-providing personnel and organization working on these issues?
- How can counselors work with teachers, students, parents, and school administration to provide counseling to ensure better academic development? How to systematically record, analyze, and communicate data related to student academic performances in order to serve as a source for important educational and career decision-making for students?
- What should be the role of school counselors to ensure educational access and quality of children from diverse needs and backgrounds in order to promote equity?
- What is the mental health situation of school-going population? What are key mental health and social-emotional issues in school? How and in which capacity school counselors can work to improve mental health and promote social-emotional development?
- What are the current formal and informal channels for students to get advice on further education and career? How best school counselors can contribute in providing effective counseling on further education and career?
- How to harmonize counselor responsibility and develop a system of collaboration with other service-providing personnel and organizations working on the issues of access and retention, student academic development, equity, mental health and social-emotional development, and further education and career counseling?
- What are the existing strengths and resources that different government organizations, academia, international and national NGOs, grassroots, and community organizations can offer? How can government work with them in promoting school-based counseling?
- What monitoring, supervision, and evaluation mechanism needs to be developed for school-based counseling? How can this mechanism maximize learning within the profession?

make a major decision whether they want to study science, commerce, or humanities, and there are no counseling services from school to guide them make proper decision in this regard. Similar scenario can be observed in college and university admission also. Students get information about college and university largely from senior students, peers, guardians, or private coaching centers. But informing students about their college options and guiding them from school to choose the right college and further education are highly needed. Similarly, students do not get any formal career advice or guidance from schools. The country has a big informal economy, but the formal economic sector is also growing. Besides, many youths migrate overseas to get a job and need appropriate skill training, information support, negotiation skills, and cultural competence. Therefore, school counseling can be a very helpful intervention for students to learn and find their place in a changing and complex landscape of jobs and career. However, there is a need to conduct sufficient research about students' further education and career counseling needs and how best school counselors can contribute in this field.

The table below provides a list of key policy research questions that need to be addressed for successful introduction and implementation of school-based counseling in Bangladesh.

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## Conclusion

As discussed above, there is no formal existence of school-based counseling in general education stream of Bangladesh as yet. The prospective initiatives are still largely limited to the policy rhetoric and without a firm and concrete action plan on how to design, implement, and follow up counseling services at school levels. Teachers and peers in general stream schools that follow national curriculum may informally provide some sort of counseling service. But they do not have formal school counseling training. Comprehensive

research should be conducted to identify school-based counseling needs, challenges, strengths, and possibilities in Bangladesh. Initially, existing research on systemic issues in education, current human resource capacity, access, retention, student achievement, mental health, and career can be a good starting point for gathering data on school-based counseling needs in Bangladesh. Developing policies and mechanisms to produce enough skilled school counselors and establishing professional association and relevant government department would be critical to make a systemic progress on school-based counseling in Bangladesh.

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# School-Based Counseling in Malaysia as Southeast Asian Country

# 22

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## Education Systems in Southeast Asian Countries

Southeast Asia is made up of 11 countries, which include Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam, as well as Malaysia. The total population of Southeast Asian countries is around 540 million (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2014). Each of the countries differs on the total number of population, geography, culture, and level of socioeconomic development.

Education systems in Southeast Asian countries basically consist of several stages: preschool, primary school, lower and upper secondary school, and higher education level (Human Rights Education in the School System in Southeast Asia, 2009). The education systems in the ASEAN are managed by a ministry of education in each country. These countries are similar in their aim to develop their human resource as the key means of

developing and improving their countries economically (Education New Zealand, 2013). They realized that education is of great value to countries as a means of developing their human resources. These countries are focused on ensuring that equal opportunity is given to all children and citizens in their countries (Human Rights Education in the School System in Southeast Asia, 2009). According to Lee and Nanthavong (2009), a common policy across countries in the Southeast Asian region is promoting quality and equity education for all citizens at all levels of education.

### Brunei

Brunei has the smallest population of the Southeast Asian Countries. This country clearly sets out its education policy aiming for quality education for all citizens. One of its main aims is to provide a minimum of 12 years of education for every child in Brunei, covering 7 years in pre- and primary school, 3 years in lower secondary school, and 2 years in upper secondary or a vocational school (UNESCO, 2014).

### Cambodia

In Cambodia, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS) is the responsible authority for managing the education system at all levels.

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The educational system in Cambodia consists of preschool, primary school, lower and upper secondary school, and higher education levels. Students in Cambodia will take 9 years in basic education from lower secondary school to upper secondary school. In 2009 there were 8,644 students in public universities and schools in Cambodia. According to Chet (2006), higher education in Cambodia is a recent development. Cambodia also identifies their main education policy as improving and having equitable access to education for all citizens (Chet, 2006).

### **The Philippines**

In the Philippines, the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS) is responsible for education and manpower development. According to Art. XIV, Sec. 1, “the State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education available to all” (Ballestamon, Bernadette, Maribel, Gonda, & Prado, 2000). The education system of the Philippines consists of elementary, secondary, vocational, and tertiary components. The education in the Philippines is offered through formal and nonformal systems. However, the main issue is to ensure equality of education quality for the most impoverished individuals and communities (Ballestamon et al., 2000).

### **Vietnam**

Vietnam also has a policy to ensure social equity in education and training for their citizens. The government believes that everyone should be given the same education opportunities in primary and secondary school, as well as in higher education (Anon, 2005). All citizens, regardless of race, religion, belief, sex, family background, social status, and financial situation, are equal in study opportunities (Lee, 2004).

### **Lao PDR**

In Lao PDR, the Ministry of Education also adheres to the policy of quality education for all (Uy, 2011). According to a report from the Ministry of Education (Lee & Nanthavong, 2009), the education system in Lao focuses on basic education to enable citizens to read and write and have basic knowledge to apply to modern technologies and in the production process and therefore to develop the country’s socioeconomic situation. They stress the importance of education for developing their own human resources in terms of skills and knowledge to compete in the local, regional, or international marketplace alongside other developed countries (Lee & Nanthavong, 2009).

### **Thailand**

According to Wongvaree (2009), there were 11 million students and 32,340 schools in Thailand. Quality improvement has become the critical goal of the Thai education system to ensure and sustain equity and social justice. The system believes that success in terms of equity in education without attention to quality will not benefit Thailand in its quest to succeed as a knowledge-based economy (Wongvaree, 2009).

### **Indonesia**

In Indonesia, the national education system increased access to school to achieve 9 years’ compulsory basic education by 2008 (UNESCO, 2014). Besides improving their quality of education, they are facing major challenges in providing equitable access to education and a high-quality, relevant curriculum.

### **Singapore**

Singapore, one of the most developed countries in the region, has redefined their education mission

and vision (UNESCO, 2014). Its mission is to form the future of the nation by shaping the development of the very people who will determine its future. The Singaporeans have developed their vision for education, the Thinking Schools, Learning Nation (TSLN) which latterly has been used as a main descriptor of their education system in order to meet the needs of the twenty-first century.

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## Education in Malaysia

Education in Malaysia has been consistently improving to achieve the education vision and mission. Thus, the education system in Malaysia was designed to create a united, democratic, liberal, and progressive society. Malaysia aims to develop a world-class quality education system, which will realize the full potential of individuals and fulfill the aspirations of the Malaysian nation. This is because the Ministry of Education believes that education plays an important role in achieving the country's vision of attaining the status of a fully developed nation in terms of its economic development, social justice, and spiritual, moral, and ethical strength and is moving toward creating a society that is united, democratic, liberal, and dynamic.

Malaysia has focused consistently on the quality of education for all citizens (Education Act 1996; Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2004). According to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2015), there are 10,159 schools including primary and secondary schools. Developing a curriculum in accordance with the National Education Philosophy is essential in that it reflects the image of the nation (Saad et al. 2011). On January 31, 2012, there were 9713 school counselors employed in primary and secondary schools. Of these 4033 are school counselors in primary schools and 5680 of them in secondary schools.2011

## Counseling Services in Malaysia

Counseling services are growing in Malaysia and have been indicated in school settings since the 1960s. Counseling services are also available for clients in drug rehabilitation facilities, moral rehabilitation centers, and nongovernment agencies (NGO). In recent years, counseling services have been developing in public service departments as people gain awareness of their need for psychological support through counseling. In the following sections, the authors will briefly describe counseling developments in Malaysia.

### Malaysian Counseling Association (PERKAMA)

In the 1980s mental health professionals experienced a significant change with the establishment of the Malaysian Counseling Association, also known as Persatuan Kaunseling Malaysia (PERKAMA), alongside the establishment of PERCEMA (Malaysian Psychologists Association) and APECA (Asian Psychologists and Educational Counselors Association). These professional associations provide a platform for exchange of knowledge, advocacy, and development of the profession. For example, the Malaysian Counseling Association was founded in 1980 by a group of college and school counselors and has currently over 1,500 members. Although most members are school counselors, the Association has broadened its membership base (Glamcevski, 2008).

As part of professionalizing the counseling profession, the Association has encouraged counselor practitioners, graduate students, and counselor educators to publish textbooks and articles in relation to counseling and psychotherapy. PERKAMA published their first issue of its official journal in 1984 PERKAMA (an abbreviation of PERsatuan KAunseling MALaysia). Contributors to the first issue of PERKAMA were

members of the Association, and the articles covered a wide range of theoretical (e.g., relationship building) and practical (such as drug counseling) issues in counseling (Glamcevski, 2008).

PERKAMA has increased in membership lately and is actively organizing workshops, an annual conference, journals, and training events that relate to counseling services. PERKAMA also played a critical role in response to the aviation tragedy that involved Malaysia Airlines missing plane MH370 and air crash MH17 in 2014. PERKAMA was proactive in leading the Malaysian Crisis Intervention Team (MCIT), which involves voluntary support programs in collaboration with other NGOs, to provide psychological and immediate support to relatives of missing passengers. PERKAMA members, who were counselor practitioners from government agencies, NGOs, and counselor educators, worked in shifts.

### **Counselor Act 580 (1998)**

In addition to the establishment of the PERKAMA association, the 1998 Counselor Act (Act 580) provided some protection for the Malaysian counseling profession by protecting the workforce of counselors (Counselor Act 580, 2006). It provided the legal and social framework for counselors and counseling in Malaysia. Malaysia was one of the first nations in the Southeast Asian and Australasian region to have an act to regulate the profession (Counselor Act 580, 2006). The Board of Counselors also published ethical codes for Malaysian counselors, which are divided into several parts: part A elaborates the helping relationship; part B explains confidentiality, communication, privilege, and privacy; part C, professional responsibility; part D, relationships with other professionals; part E, assessment, evaluation, and interpretation; part F, supervision, training, and teaching pedagogy; part G, research and publication; and part H, resolving ethical issues. (Board of Counselors, 2011). The Counselor Act 580 can be considered as well-conceived and clearly written legislation but

will probably need some revisions, particularly in regard to overseas credentials. Unfortunately, years after the Act was passed, it has rarely been enforced (Glamcevski, 2008).

### **School Counseling**

School guidance and counseling services in Malaysia started in 1962, influenced by the development of the US counseling system (Ahmad 2004). However, in Malaysia, counseling training programs were also offered at undergraduate level as opposed to the American system where such programs are only offered at graduate (Masters) level. Lloyd (1987) also mentioned that counseling and guidance reached Malaysia at the same time as the rest of the world. In 1963, the Ministry of Education recognized and accepted the importance of guidance and counseling for students due to various factors (Amir & Latif, 1984). Sipon (2007) noted that these needs increased because of social change, industrialization, urbanization, technological advances, and changes in the role and function of the family.

In 1980 an organizational shift within the Guidance and Counseling Section in the Ministry of Education was noteworthy, as it led to a more comprehensive and systematic implementation of programs to train in-service teachers to be guidance counselors and counselor teachers (Othman & Awang, 1993). In 1982, the Guidance and Counseling Section implemented mandatory requirements concerning teaching-counseling hours and duties. This mandated that teacher-counselors teach for 12 periods per week and the numbers of teacher-counselors be allocated according to the size of the respective schools (Lim & McNon, 1982).

However, these school counselors were not registered as counselors as their counseling program, which took 9 months (Postgraduate Teaching Course or *Kursus Perguruan Lepaslan Ijazah – KPLI*), did not meet minimum standards, as outlined by the Counselor Act 580. The Ministry of Education, on the other hand, stated that school counselors received a “blanket license” for counseling practice, but according to the school system, this did not necessarily follow

**Table 22.1** Summary of the history of counseling in Malaysia

Years	History of counseling in Malaysia
1960s	Importance of guidance and counseling emphasized and implemented in schools Conceptualization of the definition of “guidance” First series of training for teachers The University of Malaya offered Masters in Counseling (and only Malaysian Institution to offer a Doctoral-level training in counseling)
1970s	Teacher training and seminars steadily increased Department of Psychology established in the University of Malaya (UM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) Cabinet report – counseling should go beyond career guidance and mental health services
1980s	More comprehensive training to be guidance counselors Each secondary school mandated to have at least one guidance counselor UPM launched Bachelor of Education in Guidance and Counseling Growing momentum in training and upgrading skills sets of counselors Malaysian Psychiatrists Association acknowledged the importance of counseling for Malaysian mental health Counseling as an avenue to combat social ills-drug prevention, education, drug abuse counseling for the addicts and families Teacher Education Division (Ministry of Education) started the Specialist Training Certificate Program Persatuan Kaunseling Malaysia (PERKAMA) – Malaysian Counseling Association was established
1990s	Counseling as a profession grew – counseling service offered in schools, industry, health systems, and the public Extensive training modules – training of hospital and health staff in basic counseling skills Mental Health Life Skills Training Programs implemented Clinics were established for Mental Health Life Skills Training Programs – offered practical counseling services to the Malaysian public A total of 129 mental health counseling centers nationwide offer a range of services – psychosocial, rehabilitation, vocational training, and mental health and life skills training Mental health education materials was produced and distributed nationwide Counselor Act 580 -- written legislation to regulate the counseling profession
2000–present	Comprehensive promotion of mental health themed “Healthy Lifestyle” Forums to facilitate establishment and coordination of committees for mental health National Plan of Action for the implementation of the Mental Health Program

(Source: Adapted from Glamcevski, 2008)

through on the Counselor Act 580. According to the Board of Counselors, non-registered counselors should not have conducted any counseling unless under regulation of Counselor Act 580. However, there is no evidence of enforcement by MBC (Table 22.1).

### School-Based Counseling (SBC) in Malaysia

In recent years, school-based counseling has become increasingly acknowledged by national governments across the world as an important activity to support and enhance children and young people’s journey through compulsory education. In Singapore, school-based counseling

began in the 1960s. School-based counseling has steadily evolved over the years to become a credible, trusted, and accessible service as mental health support for school (Yeo & Lee, 2014). This service has been found relevant and sensitive to the social and emotional needs of students in the education system (Yeo & Lee, 2014). Thus, school-based counseling in Singapore plays a very important part in the Singaporean education system in order to safeguard and promote the social, emotional, and psychological well-being of students and raise future generations of citizens who are holistically nurtured and empowered to make contributions toward the development of their country.

School-based counseling services in Malaysia were started in 1939 (Ministry of Education

Malaysia, 2012). The Ministry of Education was then known as the Education Department of The Straits Settlements, and the Federated Malay States published a career guideline book for students in primary schools titled *A Guide to Careers in Malaya for Parents, Teachers and Pupils*. The book was published to follow the education system in the United States which has developed career guidance and counseling in their school.

Then, in 1966 the Ministry of Education published a book titled *School Guidance Services*. This book was financed by UNESCO and written by experts in career guidance and counseling, RK McKenzie from Canada together with officers from Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri (JPN) across Malaysia. Since then, the ministry has acknowledged school counseling services as mandatory for every primary and secondary school.

According to “Surat Pekeliling KP 5209/30(13) dated September 1, 1968” and “Surat Pekeliling Ikhtisas Bil 5/1976/1975,” counseling was then known as “guidance services.” In 1975, the Ministry of Education Malaysia synchronized all counseling and guidance services in schools. Then, in 1984, Surat Pekeliling KP 5209/34(4) was published and stated “we are suggested to all school to appoint a counselor in both primary and secondary school” (Bokhari, 2014).

In 1963, the Malaysian Ministry of Education introduced the Guidance and Counseling Section of the Education Planning and Research Division. This gave counseling services in Malaysian schools greater importance in the school education system. Secondary school counseling services are now well established in Malaysia where most of the schools have at least one full-time counselor (Low, Kok, & Lee, 2013). Rahman, Isa, and Atan, (2013) referred to the circular from the Ministry of Education dated March 18, 1996 – KP (BS-HEP) 8543/60/(91), which stated that there are *four* main functions of a school counselor in public schools: (1) academic guidance (choosing subjects, studying skills, placement), (2) career guidance (career’s interest inventory, career information and choices), (3) psychosocial and mental health (personality development, psychosocial skills, self-defense skills), and (4) family matters.

However, the job scope of school counselor is not limited to these responsibilities. In addition, there are another 25 responsibilities for activities which involve program planning and implementation, counseling sessions, consultation, and staff networks (Rahman, Zubaidah, Jais, & Isa, 2014). The details on the roles of the schools’ counselors are explained below:

1. To plan for the annual program and activities for the guidance and counseling services in the school
2. To identify the needs for guidance and counseling services through research, questionnaires, interview, and discussion with the students, teachers, management, staffs, parents, and former students
3. To plan, oversee, and update the students’ records and inventory
4. To collect, supervise, and inform students about guidance and counseling using any suitable media
5. To manage and implement the activity of guidance and cluster counseling and to coach (instructional) students in order to achieve optimal progress
6. To plan, implement, and supervise individual guidance and counseling services with professionalism and attention to ethical considerations
7. To plan, implement, and supervise study skills activities for all students
8. To plan, implement, supervise, and evaluate programs and information distribution on the open certificate package offer and the requirements of the institute for higher learning education
9. To become a committee member of the drug, inhalant, cigarette, alcohol, and HIV/AIDS prevention programs
10. To plan, implement, supervise, and evaluate programs and activities to prepare and expose students to the information and chance of further studies in the institute for higher learning education within the country or overseas
11. To plan, implement, supervise, and evaluate programs, consultation, and reference ser-



- vices related to guidance and counseling, career, and education on drug prevention
12. To plan, implement, supervise, and evaluate programs and activity for conferences with parents, teachers, non-teacher staffs, and government and nongovernment agencies that are involved in the education and development process of the students
  13. To review the activity modules, instrument, and professionalism of the guidance and counseling services offered in the school
  14. To plan, coordinate, and review the resources of the guidance and counseling services
  15. To become the secretariat to the Coordinating Committee of the Guidance and Counseling Services
  16. To become the main coordinator in the in-house training program to spread the knowledge and understanding and to enhance the professionalism of the guidance and counseling services in the school
  17. To offer crisis counseling to the students, teachers, staffs, and parents
  18. To act as the personnel in relating to other schools and other related agencies
  19. To become an ex-officio member of the curriculum committee and parent-teacher committee of the school
  20. To become a member of the planning council of the school, the discipline board of the school, as well as the board committee/prefect body
  21. To become a coordinator in the mentor-mentee program of the school
  22. To become a coordinator in the student's enhancement programs, cocurriculum, motivation program, self-success, and leadership camp, as well as courses on polity
  23. To become the secretariat to the Safe School program, Compulsory Education Policy, Mathematics and Science in English and Additional Language Policy, and the placement committee (admission) of students
  24. To become the coordinator of programs organized by the Guidance and Counseling Unit under the State's Department of Education

25. To carry out duties as appointed by the head of department over time

Early in the development of school-based counseling in Malaysia, the focus was on student's career and academic guidance. In 1996, the Ministry of Education Malaysia clarified the roles and functions of school counselors in school. The ministry emphasized three main areas that school counselors needed to focus on, such as academic-related issues, career guidance and development issues, and psychosocial and mental health-related issues (See & Ng, 2010). This is because previously the ministry had not clearly defined the exact role and function of counselors. During that time, counselors executed their roles in school without any specific instruction or guidance related to their roles and responsibilities (See & Ng, 2010).

Thus, the Ministry of Education Malaysia officially announced in "Surat Pekeliling KP(BS-HEP)8543/60(91)" dated March 18, 1996, that school counselors in secondary schools would be recruited as full-time counselors according to the agreement of the Malaysian Cabinet through the Minister of Education. After that, in 2001, the Ministry of Education Malaysia realized there was a need to appoint full-time school counselors in primary schools. Then, once again the ministry gave instructions to appoint full-time counselors in primary schools through "Surat Pekeliling KP (BS-HEP) 8543/019/Jld.3" dated November 27, 2001. Every primary and secondary school therefore has at least one full-time school counselor to handle guidance and counseling activities for students (See & Ng, 2010).

The ratio for school counselors to students is 1:500 for secondary schools. In primary schools the ratio is one counselor for 300–850 students (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012). In Malaysia, school counselors are encouraged to register under the Malaysian Board of Counselors, which is subjected to the Counselors Act 1998 or Act 850 of the Laws of Malaysia (Boon, Wan, & Maznah, 2016). As mentioned earlier, a key event for the profession of counseling in Malaysia was the Ministry of Education's 1963 policy to have guidance (including counseling) in schools (Glamcevski, 2008).



According to Othman and Awang (1993), the Ministry of Education (MOE) Circular KP 5209/35/ (4) was a catalyst that resulted in the Guidance and Counseling Section being established under the Ministry of Education. The Guidance and Counseling Section, established in 1963, provided the foundations for the introduction of formal counseling services into the Malaysian education system. An important step in providing these services was the conceptualization and formal definition of “guidance” (which encompassed counseling) provided by the Guidance and Counseling Section in 1968 (Othman & Awang, 1993).

Over the decade from 1969 to 1979, the counseling profession gained momentum. The number of teachers, services provided, and the training offered to teachers for guidance and counseling steadily increased. By the end of the 1970s, the counseling field began playing as a significant contributor to children’s education in the school system. A clear indicator of this was the 1979 Report of the Cabinet Committee on the Study of the Implementation of the National Education Policy (Recommendation 239.1), which drew attention to the role of counseling. It recommended that counseling should go beyond career guidance (counseling) and provide a broad range of mental health services to schools (Glancevski, 2008; Othman & Awang, 1993; Pope et al., 2002). Counselors’ self-efficacy and proactive attitude in searching for best practices through research are necessary in sustaining the effectiveness of psychological services and counseling in Malaysian schools (Low et al., 2013, p. 199).

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## Implications

The main idea of having a student counselor at the school is to fully focus on the work of counseling and guidance on a full-time basis. However, in reality, a number of counselors were required to teach due to a shortage of teachers in the schools involved. Although the involvement of counselor “outreach” is appropriate, the involvement of counselors should not negatively affect their own duties (Department of Higher Education, 2011).

More discussions are needed between the Malaysian Board of Counselors and higher education institutions which offer counseling programs in order to clarify the needs of the Board and Ministry of Education. Both the Board of Counselors and Malaysian Quality Assurance (MQA) act as gatekeepers of standards for academic programs in higher education and might have their own expectations of counseling programs; there is a need to synchronize their views. However, there was no synchronization within ministry of education, particularly related to counseling programs (Department of Higher Education, 2011).

A study by Low et al. (2013) on school counseling services indicated that negative stigmatization existed within the community. Students who attended counseling sessions were stigmatized. As a result, these students and parents were embarrassed to seek counseling services because they considered these services as being for problem students’ event though they acknowledged they benefitted from the counseling experience. This stigmatization causes a great deal of frustration for school counselors (Low et al., 2013). Examples of school counselors’ experiences included in the Low, Kok and Lee study highlight the problem: “if we invite them to come in when their children have behavioral problems, they feel we are against their child and they do not think they can play a part in their child’s development” and “some parents have this misunderstanding that having to meet with school counselor is quite problematic . . . It’s no use, let my child just go through the disciplinary procedure” (Low et al., 2013, p. 194). In short, stigmatization is seen as a serious problem faced by most counselors.

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## Future Direction

The roles of school counselors are recognized as imperative, but the actual performance of these roles is mismatched. There is certainly awareness and recognition of the importance of the functions of school counselors in meeting the needs of students, but there is also criticism that school counselors are not performing critical roles identified as priorities. School

counselors may experience a lack of professional training and may not have the necessary skills to perform these role functions. School counselors are charged with many tasks and the possibility of neglecting some of these primary roles. There is certainly a need to redefine the role of school counselors and to avoid impeding their work with unnecessary duties (See, 2004).

The achievement of school counseling depends on the availability of qualified, skilled, and well-trained full-time counselors in the school setting. To guarantee the effectiveness of the school counseling program, school counselors' training programs at teacher training colleges and universities have to adopt the scientist-practitioner paradigm and analyze the curriculum to conform to the prerequisites for accreditation. There must be assurances of adequate, professional, and competent supervision of novice counselors during training. The roles of these school counselors need to be redefined and made accountable. Integrating these elements into current policies for school counseling will enhance the effectiveness of school counseling in Malaysia (See, 2004, p. 20).

In order to provide effective school counseling services, collaboration needs to be improved amongst all stakeholders within the educational and local community. Previous studies identified low levels of cooperation and collaboration from all stakeholders involved in the growth and psychological development of Malaysian school children (Low et al., 2013). In order to enhance public school counseling services in Malaysia, it is necessary to develop a partnership model to involve different stakeholders. Adopting a holistic model that acknowledges the school community, family, the local community, and the government would allow for greater integration of school psychological services in Malaysia (Low et al., 2013).

The Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, police, and other government agencies should also be included in the design of comprehensive school counseling programs. Although it is necessary for all secondary schools to have full-time counselors, with a ratio of one counselor for every 500 secondary school students,

the uneven distribution of trained counselors by the Ministry of Education results in some large schools not having sufficient provision of counselors. This might be problematic when counselors have to deal with crisis intervention and resolution. Hence, the Ministry of Education should set standards for the provision of psychological services in schools and provide continuous professional development opportunities for counselors. At the same time, the standards have to act in accordance with school psychology frameworks to ensure best practice and effective services for all children.

Through training, conferences, seminars, and workshops, school counselors will be better able to provide the services needed and have the opportunity to learn new skills and interventions. In addition, these opportunities could create spaces for peer discussion and open communication between policymakers and practitioners. These favorable conditions could further improve the counselors' self-efficacy and the provision of psychological services in school and school-related settings in Malaysia (Low et al., 2013).

See (2004) also acknowledged the future of school counseling in Malaysia is dependent on high-quality clinical supervision for school counselors. Another aspect that needs to be considered crucial to any training is the clinical/internship supervision where this is a missing component in this country. In Malaysia, the internship/practicum is a component of teacher training and degree programs in public universities. The lecturers themselves carry out most of the supervision. Supervisors are "gatekeepers" of the skills training process – they pass on professional standards of practice and assure that quality services are provided to the community and, therefore, protect client's safety when seeing counselors-in-training; and they also have long-term effects on a counselor's development. Therefore, the supervisor plays a very important role in the skill-training component of the counselor's training program. Thus, clinical supervision is a central element in the skill training of school counselors, since expertise in counseling is the keystone of the counseling profession (See, 2004).

## Conclusion

It appears that there has been a lot of policy developments but little focused policy research and evaluation conducted in Malaysia to assess outcomes or ways in which government policies and expectation have been met in relation to the practice of school-based counseling. However, school counseling in Malaysia has been researched widely, in areas such as career development (Halit, 2014; Noraini Ismail & Kadir, 2010; Lau et al., 2011), guidance and counseling services (Mohamad, Mokhtar, & Samah, 2011; Khan et al., 2015; Shanthi Bavani et al., 2012), clinical supervision (Lee, 2004; See, 2004; See & Ng, 2010), bullying issues (Ahmad Sudan, 2015; Hassan & Ee, 2015; Salleh & Zainal, 2014; Shafie et al., 2011; Wi & Tan, 2010), multicultural competences (Amat et al., 2013; Anuar, Rozubi, & Abdullah, 2015), spiritual competence (Ahmad & Mustafa, 2011; Bakri & Mustafa, 2013; Dagang, Ibrahim, & Bakar Mohd, 2014; Mohamad et al., 2011), malpractice, ethics, and licensure (Boon et al., 2016; Har & Jusoh, 2015).

This body of research has the potential to provide valuable information for policymakers through the Ministry of Education (MOE). Further, such research can inform the Board of Counselors and counselor educators, so that they can continue to empower the workforce and professionalize school-based counseling practice. Policymakers at large need the vision and direction of Malaysian policy research for school-based counseling to fulfill the needs of the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013–2025. Targeted research needs to be undertaken to ensure that school counseling is achieving the Ministry's goals and objectives and that current models of staffing, delivery, and practice are well suited to the Malaysian context.

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## The Education System in the United Kingdom

The British educational system is compulsory for all children between the ages of 5 (4 in Northern Ireland) and 16 (18 in England for all children born 1 September 1997). It is divided up into five stages that individuals progress through as they enter different periods of their life. Table 23.1 provides a summary of these stages alongside the typical age ranges that they cater for.

As is evident in Table 23.1, there are slight differences to the ways in which the different countries that make up the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) apply their educational policies. This trend towards devolution has gathered momentum over recent decades and increased the potential for cross-national divergence in educational policy (Raffe, 2015). As a consequence of this, mapping policy research in the UK has become evermore complex as each nation heads in its individualised direction.

When using the term ‘school-based counselling’, it is the primary and secondary education stages noted in Table 23.1 that are typically being referred to in the UK context. Primary school provision is commonly delivered by the public

sector, and these institutions typically take both boys and girls in mixed classes. Within Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, secondary schools (or post-primary schools as they are known in Northern Ireland) are also most commonly provided by the public sector. In England, the secondary sector has become increasingly market driven (Gillard, 2011). Whereas a majority of schools were state run (commonly called comprehensive schools) before the turn of the century, there has been a sea change politically, in which independent schools (called academies or free schools) have become increasingly prevalent. These latter schools are publicly funded but have more freedom than state-run schools to decide how they manage both their syllabus and budgetary requirements. Such a move also appears to be moving into the primary sector.

The emotional wellbeing and mental health of individuals in both primary and secondary educational stages have received substantial attention in recent years. Studies looking at the prevalence of mental health issues highlight the commonplace nature of such difficulties. For instance, one in ten 5–15-year-olds is believed to experience mental health problems (equating to three individuals in each UK classroom) (Green, McGinnity, Meltzer, Ford, & Goodman, 2005), and concerns are highlighted regarding the long-term impact of such issues, with 50% of all mental ill health in adult life being thought to start before the age of 15 (Murphy & Fonagy, 2012).

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**Table 23.1** The stages within the British education system

Stage	Ages catered for
Early years education	3–4-year-olds. The start and amount of this provision vary slightly in the different countries in the UK
Primary education	5–11 (or 12 in Scotland)-year-olds. This is compulsory for all individuals between these ages
Secondary education	Typically catering for 11 (12 in Scotland)- to 16-year-olds. This is compulsory for all individuals between these ages
Further education	Typically over 16
Higher education	Typically over 18 – offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes

As such, the need for teachers to be informed about common mental health issues has been acknowledged within initial teacher education programmes (Carter, 2015), and the focus upon student's social and emotional learning appears to have become of heightened importance (e.g. Department for Education, 2015b; Welsh Assembly Government, 2010).

Humphrey (2013) notes that social and emotional learning strategies have received much interest in the UK due to the potential for them to (a) prevent individuals from negative outcomes, such as emotional and behavioural difficulties, (b) promote a range of desirable outcomes such as increased social competence and (c) combine these two elements to help develop more effective learners and thus improve academic attainment. Such sentiments are clearly evident within the guidance documentation for a recent whole school initiative called the *social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme* in English schools – a national strategy in England to enhance social and emotional wellbeing, mental health and behavioural skills in schools (Humphrey, Lendrum, & Wigelsworth, 2013). In this document teachers were informed that, through the implementation of the programme, they could expect:

better academic results for all pupils and schools; more reflective learning... higher motivation; better behaviour; higher school attendance; more responsible pupils, who are better citizens and

more able to contribute to society; lower levels of stress and anxiety; higher morale, performance and retention of staff; [and] a more positive school ethos. (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007, pp. 8–9)

The momentum noted above has been clearly evident in the initiatives that have emerged in recent educational practices. For example, the SEAL programme was being implemented in approximately two-thirds of primary schools and 15% of secondary schools (Humphrey, Lendrum, & Wigelsworth, 2010; Weare, 2010). Additionally, complementing the SEAL programme was the Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) initiative (Wolpert et al., 2015). This initiative aimed to provide more focused support in the form of individual or group work interventions for those identified to be in need of additional support. More recently still, further acknowledgement of the need for mental health services and education providers to be working together in the best interests of young people is clearly evident in the *Future in Mind* report, a report looking to promote, protect and improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing (Department of Health, 2015). In contrast to the picture in England however, and a reflection of the devolved nature of provision, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have notably invested their efforts in slightly different ways. Although there are clear interests in social and emotional learning within all countries, as is noted in the next section below, the investment in school-based counselling proves variable at the present time.

As a consequence of the wide variety of initiatives aiming to support the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people, numerous professionals offer support services within school settings. These include educational/school psychologists, career guidance officers (offering support around vocational issues), teachers, youth workers, school nurses, social workers and even the police. Counselling commonly sits separate to these disciplines and might be defined as follows:

People become engaged in counselling when a person, occupying regularly the role of counsellor, offers and agrees explicitly to give time, attention

and respect to another person, or persons, who will be temporarily in the role of the client. (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), 2002, p. 3)

The broad nature of this definition means that numerous professional groupings are included here when referring to school-based counselling. The specific nuances of such work are discussed further below; however, professionals who offer school-based counselling might describe themselves as counsellors, counselling psychologists, psychotherapists and therapists.

### History of School-Based Counselling in the UK

The growth and development of school-based counselling in the UK has occurred over a long period of time. Its emergence can be viewed as a response to the tradition of pastoral care in schools, work that can be dated back to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (King, 1999). Although a range of support structures have developed in school settings, a key date in the creation of formal school-based psychological services in the UK is 1913. Within this year, the first educational/school psychologist, Cyril Burt (later Sir Cyril Burt), was appointed by the London County Council (see Milner, 1974 for an overview). His role was to select children who would benefit from the new forms of specialist schooling that were being established and to also advise on matters relating to individual educational attainment and educational policy (Lindsey, 1989).

Following on from the appointment of Cyril Burt, the principles of the child guidance movement, originally developed in the 1920's America, were soon imported to the UK (Sampson, 1980). This led to the establishment of the first child guidance clinic in London in 1927. The clinic was set up to meet the emotional, behavioural, psychological and educational needs of the children that attended it. In contrast, although educational psychology and child guidance services had started to become embedded in the work of schools, and there

was an increasingly deep interest in pastoral care from teachers (C. McLaughlin, 2014), school-based counselling did not appear until much later.

The 1960s saw the emergence of counselling in schools in the UK. The governmental report, *Half Our Future* (Newsom, 1963), investigated the education of children aged 13–16 of average and less than average ability. It proposed the appointment of counsellors in schools to support pupils who were deemed vulnerable to underachievement and ultimately led to the establishment of training courses at universities in both Keele and Reading from 1965. These courses were established to train teachers with a minimum of 5 years professional experience (Bor, Ebner-Landy, Gill, & Brace, 2002) and were generally framed around Carl Rogers' client-centred therapeutic approach (Rogers, 1951). Thereafter, school-based counselling grew considerably and continued to expand throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s (Mabey & Sorensen, 1995).

A shift in the political climate occurred during the mid-1980s. The new Conservative government focused on assessment within schools and the national curriculum becomes centre stage. Further, the report of the European Community Action Programme (1985) stated that guidance and counselling should be embedded into school activities, rather than viewed separately. This changing thinking, coupled with a lack of co-ordination (Lang, 1999) and the complexity of the economic situation at the time, led to a notable decline in school-based counselling services (Robinson, 1996). Baginsky (2004) notes that these services almost disappeared completely during this time.

The late 1990s and the 2000s have seen resurgence in school-based counselling services in the UK (McLaughlin, 2014). This change can, in part, be attributed to a broader 'therapeutic turn' within British culture (see Ecclestone & Hayes, 2008 for a critical reflection of this within educational settings) alongside policy changes that come as a consequence of the revised Children Act 2004 (Jenkins & Polat, 2008). This Act primarily came to fruition as a consequence of an inquiry into the tragic death of a child (see HM

Government, 2003) and ultimately aimed to make the UK safer for children. As such, it stipulated the need for professionals, counsellors included, to work effectively together towards this common goal. Further, it can also be viewed as a policy that has led counselling services to be more explicitly aligned with the work of other professionals and thus increased the awareness of such provision within educational settings.

During this latter period of school-based counselling's history, it has retained a core link to humanistic traditions (e.g. Prever, 2010). As an extension to this, it has also been notably influenced by developing theories of therapeutic integration (e.g. Hanley, Humphrey, & Lennie, 2013). The prevalence of such services has varied greatly from region to region however. For instance, the Welsh government published their National Strategy for school-based counselling services in 2008 which outlined that all secondary schools in Wales were to have access to counsellors (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008). The services that were developed have been systematically evaluated at various stages (Hill et al., 2011; Pattison et al., 2007; see also Phillips & Smith, 2011), and the final report concluded that:

Participation in counselling was associated with large reductions in psychological distress; with levels of improvement that, on average, were somewhat greater than those found in previous evaluations of UK school-based counselling. Key recommendations are that permanent funding mechanisms should be established to embed counselling in the Welsh secondary school sector, with consideration given to its roll-out into primary schools. (Hill et al., 2011, p. 8)

In a similar vein, the development of counselling services in all secondary schools in Northern Ireland has been committed to since 2007 (Department of Education, 2012). In contrast, there is no such political mandate for school-based counselling within England and Scotland at present, and the information about the prevalence of such services is limited. It is estimated that in England approximately 61–85% of secondary schools have access to counselling and in Scotland 64–80% offer a similar provision (Hanley, Jenkins, Barlow, Humphrey, & Wigelsworth, 2013). Presently there is less infor-

mation regarding the provision within primary settings. Research around the prevalence of school-based counselling in the UK is returned to later in this chapter.

## The Roles and Responsibilities of the School-Based Counsellor

The delivery of school-based counselling varies greatly across the different regions of the world. For instance, a scoping review of international school-based counselling outlined that individuals with a variety of professional roles and qualifications work in this capacity (Harris, 2013). In contrast, although the term 'counselling' is not a protected title in the UK, as indicated above within the BACP's definition, it is commonly viewed as a profession in its own right. Further, Cooper (2013b), in his review of the literature around school-based counselling in the UK, notes that the term is 'Increasingly... being reserved for the activities of professionally trained counsellors' (p. 3). It is therefore common practice that counsellors avoid having dual roles such as combining counselling with teaching duties.

School-based counselling in the UK is predominantly delivered in a one-to-one modality and characterised by a relational approach which focuses upon the mental wellbeing of the individual (Cooper, 2013b). This differs to the delivery of school-based counselling in many other regions of the world, for instance, within the USA, where services are commonly offered to groups or families and the emphasis might be viewed as being oriented towards educational and vocational guidance (Cooper, 2013b). Such differences reflect the wide variety of ways that schools make use of counselling and emphasise the relatively distinct way in which UK schools work.

To end this section, it is important to consider developments within the wider field of children and young people's mental health services. In recent years this has undergone some significant developments. For example, the Children and Young People's Improving Access to

Psychological Therapies (CYP-IAPT) programme was developed, a programme delivered by the National Health Service in England (Department of Health, 2011). This aimed to improve existing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) by placing a strong emphasis on the participation of children and young people, as well as focusing on routine outcome monitoring and evidence-based practice. Whilst the CYP-IAPT programme does not target school-based counselling specifically, extra funds have enabled the inclusion of a workstream to support counselling services for children and young people (Cooper, 2013b).

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## Policy Research

At this juncture we turn to reflect upon the policy research that has been conducted around school-based counselling in the UK. To begin with we reflect upon the organisations and individuals that have been conducting policy research around school-based counselling. Following on from this, we then provide a summary of the two major types of research that have been conducted: (1) the research which provides snapshots of the current situation and (2) an overview of the outcome research related to school-based counselling.

### Who Is Researching School-Based Counselling in the UK?

The policy research into school-based counselling has received limited yet significant funding. It is evident, as with many areas of research, that this has been dominated by organisations and individuals who have a vested interest in the proliferation of such work. In particular, the BACP, one of UK's leading organisations promoting the talking therapies, has played a major part in promoting research around this area. In relation to school-based counselling, they have proactively funded research projects and developed a prac-

tice research network to encourage practitioners to develop systematic ways of evaluating the work that they engage in. In addition, and sometimes in conjunction with the BACP, other leading therapy organisations have been involved in funding research in this area. For instance, large charitable organisations such as Barnardo's (e.g. Cooper, Stewart, Sparks, & Bunting, 2013), Relate (e.g. Hanley, Sefi, & Lennie, 2011) and a Place2be (e.g. Lee, Tiley, & White, 2009) have also been involved in funding and/or supporting school-based counselling research. On a smaller scale, individual researchers/practitioners have also been involved in completing research projects in this area. A majority of these have completed their research as a part of the masters or doctorate level studies. Although this should not be ignored, much of this work has been relatively idiosyncratic in its focus and examines specific localised issues.

Finally, in addition to organisations and individuals working in this area, research initiatives have been developed and funded in areas where school-based counselling has been piloted on a larger scale. For instance, research into school-based counselling within the Strathclyde region of Scotland was funded by the Local Health Board (Cooper, 2004a, 2006), and the Welsh school-based counselling project was funded by the Welsh government (Hill et al., 2011; Pattison et al., 2009). Predominantly, such projects have focused upon the exploration of real-world, practice-based therapeutic work, rather than the implementation of more controlled experimental designs. Such an omission is viewed as a weakness in the argument for advocating school-based counselling (Cooper, 2013a), and pilot trials have now been conducted in attempts to address this (Cooper et al., 2010; McArthur, Cooper, & Berdondini, 2013). With the view of continuing this work, researchers have recently been successful in obtaining funding from the Economic and Social Research Council to fund a larger project investigating the efficacy of humanistic school-based counselling.

## Snapshots of the Current Situation

School-based counselling has gone through a number of phases in the UK. This section aims to reflect upon the current situation by examining the policy-related research related to the prevalence of this work, the perceptions and experiences of key stakeholders and the way it interacts with the work of other professionals.

### The Prevalence of School-Based Counselling

Earlier in this chapter, we outlined that the different countries that make up the UK have embraced school-based counselling to varying degrees. In recent years, Northern Ireland and Wales have moved towards incorporating such services in all secondary/post-primary schools. In contrast England and Scotland, in 2012–2013, had between 61–85% and 64–80%, respectively (Hanley, Jenkins, et al., 2013). Such figures appear to represent a significant shift for Wales and Northern Ireland but a relative plateau for England, with figures from 2003 to 2004 being estimated at 75% (Jenkins & Polat, 2005). Further, estimates have been made which suggest that between 70,000 and 90,000, episodes of counselling are delivered in the UK each year (Cooper, 2013b). Presently it is not possible to gauge the prevalence of school-based counselling within primary settings.

### Perceptions and Experiences of School-Based Counselling

On the whole, key stakeholders provide positive feedback related to the services that they are engaged with. For instance, service users consistently report that counselling has been helpful (Cooper, 2009; Fox & Butler, 2007; Hill et al., 2011; McKenzie, Murray, Prior, & Stark, 2011). Likewise, school staff (e.g. Hanley, Jenkins, et al., 2013) and students more generally (e.g. Hill et al., 2011) report views that indicate that they feel the services have value and are helpful to those attending. There is little research around the viewpoints of parents and carers.

When asked whether groups are satisfied with school-based counselling services, once again

positive opinions are generally expressed. These include those of service users (Cooper, 2009; Hill et al., 2011) and staff in schools (Hanley, Jenkins, et al., 2013; Hill et al., 2011). In relation to the latter, it is notable that school-based services often have much shorter waiting times (generally reported as 1 week or less) than those within statutory counterparts. In addition to the independence and expertise of the counsellor (Loynd, Cooper, & Hough, 2005), these quick response times, alongside the convenience of the location, are viewed as some of the major factors related to these positive viewpoints. In contrast, concern is expressed that pupils might abuse the counselling service or it might not fully integrate with other services (Loynd et al., 2005).

### Working Alongside Other Professionals

Multiagency working is commonly viewed as a core tenet of therapeutic work with children and young people. Research examining the working relationships that counsellors have with other professionals in schools suggests that the quality of these relationships is likely to impact upon the therapeutic work itself (Cromarty & Richards, 2009). Although research outlines the need for professionals to communicate more effectively between themselves (e.g. Cooper, Evans, & Pybis, 2016), numerous challenges are still encountered. For counsellors, these commonly include dispelling myths about the nature of the work that counsellors do and working to educate others about the work that school-based counsellors undertake.

### Outcome Research in School-Based Counselling

In recent years there has been growing pressure in the UK to demonstrate the effectiveness of school-based counselling through objective outcome measures. Such an emphasis has emerged as a consequence of the demand for such services appearing to increase, and the constraints on resources become more pressured, in part due to the present economic climate of austerity. As is evident above, a number of large-scale reports



have been commissioned summarising the outcome research in school-based counselling (Cooper, 2013b; Department for Education, 2015a; Hill et al., 2011; Phillips & Smith, 2011). These have collected and evaluated the effectiveness of school-based counselling using information from a variety of sources (young people, parents, teachers, educational attainment records and attendance rates) to build up a picture of the different ways in which counselling may be impacting on the young person and their broader community. As a result, there is a growing substantiated evidence base supporting the implementation of school-based counselling, of which an overview will be presented below.

### **School-Based Counselling in Secondary Education**

The majority of outcome studies in school-based counselling in the UK have focused upon secondary education (e.g. Cooper, 2004a, 2006). Further, a substantial national review of the evidence concluded that counselling within secondary schools has shown to bring about significant reductions in psychological distress in the short term and help young people move closer towards their personal goals (Department for Education, 2015a). For instance, results from six service evaluations suggest that around 45% of clients falling within clinical ranges at the start of counselling show recovery to within normal ranges by its end, with around 10% showing clinical deterioration (Cooper, 2013b).

Data from two large studies combining over 5000 episodes of school-based counselling report large treatment effects (effect sizes of 0.81 and 1.09) (Cooper, 2009; Hill et al., 2011), a figure comparable to adults receiving psychological therapies in the National Health Service (Stiles, Barkham, Twigg, Mellor-Clark, & Cooper, 2006). Some caution is however needed as the magnitude of change reported varied significantly depending on which outcome measures that were used. The findings from outcome studies have also demonstrated that reductions in psychological distress are maintained and suggest

ongoing improvement 3 months from the completion of counselling (Fox & Butler, 2007). However, the longer-term effects are unknown.

Another area of development has been the move to evidence school-based counselling using more controlled research designs. In recent years a series of randomised controlled trials have been conducted investigating the impact of humanistic school-based counselling in secondary schools (Cooper et al., 2010; McArthur et al., 2013). Although initial work in this area highlighted some of the challenges of undertaking such work, continued work has proven positive, with an effect size of 1.14 being reported on the primary outcome measure (McArthur et al., 2013).

### **School-Based Counselling Within Primary Education**

Although limited, there is evidence that counselling can be associated with reductions in the psychological difficulties of primary age children. There is however a dearth in multisite research studies, and a causal link between counselling for primary school children and psychological wellbeing has yet to be fully established (Daniunaite, Cooper, & Forster, 2015). Studies investigating the effectiveness of primary school-based counselling do however show positive impacts on children's health, wellbeing, attitude to school and ability to enjoy learning (Kernaghan & Stewart, 2016; Webb, Stewart, Bunting, & Regan, 2012). An evaluation of a primary school-based counselling initiative implemented in England and Scotland, 'Place2Be', resulted in parents reporting 74% improvement in wellbeing (Lee et al., 2009). A similar initiative across 14 schools in Northern Ireland called 'Time 4 Me' was associated with significant improvements in wellbeing from the beginning of counselling to its end based on the children's own ratings (reporting an effect size of 1.49). 88.7% showed clinical improvement. In addition, parents' and teachers' ratings of the young person's perceived psychological distress, strengths and difficulties indicated significant improvements following counselling (S. McLaughlin, 2010).



### **Educational Achievement**

To date, only one small-scale study of 54 pupils has explored objective educational indicators to assess the impact of school-based counselling (Cooper, 2006). The study found no statistically significant differences in attendance rates and numbers of exclusions from the beginning to end of counselling, although there was a trend in favour of the intervention. More commonly, although reports acknowledge the potential of such interventions to impact upon academic attainment (e.g. Department for Education, 2015a), the impact of counselling upon such achievement is generally viewed as secondary in nature (Rupani, Haughey, & Cooper, 2012; Ryan, 2007). For instance, supporting an individual to improve relationships with their parents may lead to a more fruitful environment for accessing learning.

### **Predictors of Outcomes**

There is presently no evidence that outcomes of school-based counselling vary according to clients' gender, age, ethnicity, presenting problems or total number of sessions (Cooper, 2004a, 2006; Killips, Cooper, Freire, & McGinnis, 2012). In addition, factors associated with the school, such as school size, denominational status and level of deprivation, have not been linked to outcomes of counselling (Cooper, 2006). The one exception to be noted is that young people who have better rates of attendance at counselling (not necessarily more sessions) have shown improved outcomes compared against those with lower attendance rates (Cooper, 2006).

### **Difficulties in Evaluating School-Based Counselling and Recommended Outcome Measures in the UK**

The practice-based evidence that makes up many of the outcome studies noted above can be messy and needs to be interpreted carefully. The linear nature of findings presented in outcome studies can be open to question due to the turbulent nature of adolescence itself (Hanley et al., 2011). Likewise the potential for young people to make

improvements without support also needs to be considered (Daniunaite, Ahmad Ali, & Cooper, 2012). Further, the systematic evaluation of school-based counselling in the UK is difficult due to differences in the type of data collected and the lack of routine outcome measures. The majority of school-based counselling research in the UK has focused upon the perceived satisfaction of services by service users and relevant parties, collected through interviews and questionnaires rather than standardised outcome measures (Department for Education, 2015a). A scoping review indicated only approximately 7% of schools in England were using a standardised outcome measure, with a further 18% using some form of service questionnaire (Hanley, Jenkins, et al., 2013). In Wales between 2009 and 2011, all school-based counselling services were required to formally evaluate their outcomes, which resulted in 33% of services providing data (Hill et al., 2011). This lack of information has made it difficult to measure the effectiveness of interventions at improving personal and social wellbeing and educational attainment.

In attempts to address the limited evaluation, organisations have been proactive in promoting the use of standardised processes and measures. For instance, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy has created a toolkit for collecting routine information (BACP, 2013). This has been further bolstered in the policy guidelines for school-based counselling published by respective governmental bodies. It is therefore recommended that routine outcome measures should be collected to assess the impact of counselling on the young person and evaluate the service as a whole (e.g. Department for Education, 2015a; Welsh Assembly Government, 2008). The guidelines recommend that measures such as the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997) are used in primary schools before and after counselling and the Young Person's CORE (Twigg et al., 2009) is used in secondary schools at every counselling session so progress can be monitored over time.

## Policy Questions that Need Further Attention

As is evident from the discussions above, the policy research around school-based counselling in the UK is still developing. Influential professional bodies and organisations have helped to guide agendas and consolidate school-based counselling's place within the infrastructure of many UK schools. It is recommended that this joined up strategic thinking be continued in the future, with organisations such as the BACP and interested academics orchestrating the direction of research in response to the viewpoints of the stakeholders impacted by such work.

Despite this growth in recent years, there are numerous areas that need further attention. A number of arenas are noted below.

### School-Based Counselling as Part of a Multidisciplinary System

The place that school-based counselling has within educational settings remains unclear. The lack of wholesale statutory funding places school-based counselling in a somewhat liminal space, with some school providing services and others not. This situation is likely to be further complicated by the continued devolution of schools. Further emphasis upon how schools might develop integrated systems that make use of the wide variety of professionals that offer mental health support is needed. These need to take account of whole school initiatives and more targeted interventions, both within school and in other settings. Policy guidelines emphasise the need for effective multidisciplinary working of this kind, but research still demonstrates that we are some way of achieving a fully workable system that meets the needs of schools.

### The Silent Voices in the Research

Much of the policy research into school-based counselling has been conducted and directed by

adult experts in field. With the intention of building a more rounded body of literature, there is a clear need to embed more voices of children and young people into the process of developing appropriate services. Although research has sought the views of service users at times, there is still more scope for developing this area with a view to directing policy and developing youth friendly services. This becomes particularly evident when considering the views of under-represented groups of individuals such as those with learning difficulties or those from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. Likewise, other areas that require further attention include the views of parents and carers and the experiences of those linked to primary schools.

### The Omissions to the Outcome Studies

As indicated in the sections above, the research into therapeutic outcomes is still growing. Presently much of the research is based upon practice-based evidence. This naturalistic information has strength to it, notably it is ecologically sound, but the lack of more controlled studies that use experimental designs is viewed as a limitation. It is anticipated that, in the future, more randomised controlled trials are likely to be completed to fill this gap and help to inform practice. As such, researchers entering into these domains will face new challenges that come with the territory. For instance, 'What psychological approaches work most effectively in these settings?' and, 'How are commonly used responsive/integrative approaches of therapy viewed through this lens?' Additionally, consideration of the types of outcome that take priority (e.g. mental health orientated or academic attainment orientated) and from what vantage point (parent, teacher, child/young person) needs to be considered alongside the evaluation of any longer-term impacts. This latter point raises a much broader consideration of the economical impact of school-based counselling in the long term. Such research would prove compelling and add to the educational literature considering equity in schools that might be considered within advantaged and disadvantaged areas.

## Embracing Technology

Increasingly the concept of school-based counselling is encountering a new frontier of the Internet. Schools in the UK are beginning to use and buy in access to online counselling services (sometimes blended with more traditional face-to-face services). This provision proves promising in numerous ways (e.g. helping access different groups of individuals and bridging holiday periods) but also poses new challenges. Due to its limited use at present, this chapter has not touched upon such work. It will however be an area for policy-makers to consider seriously as services become more commonplace.

## Conclusion

School-based counselling might be viewed as reaching late adolescence within the UK. It is a profession that has gathered momentum over the past 20 years and has now become a common part of the school infrastructure. As a consequence of this growth, all schools in Northern Ireland and Wales now have access to a counsellor, and England and Scotland appear to be showing a great deal of good will towards such practice. To support such a move, research has been used by organisations to demonstrate the extent that schools make use of counselling services and to emphasise the positive role that such work can have in educational settings (both for individuals and the broader community). The identity of school-based counselling is still however forming. Although research has been successful in informing our answers to a number of important questions, there are still plenty of gaps that have yet to be filled. Specifically, there are limitations to the research examining how professionals from different disciplines should be working together. Further, the effectiveness and efficacy of such work are growing but still relatively under examined. Thus, in summary, policy research related to school-based counselling in the UK now appears to have shifted from the questions of ‘What is being done already?’ and ‘Should we do it?’ to ‘How can we do it better?’

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# Policy, Research and the Development of School Counselling in Malta: Lessons Learnt in a Small-Island Community

# 24

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Malta is a southern member of the European Union (EU) located in the Mediterranean. It is 80 km south of Sicily, 284 km east of Tunisia and 333 km north of Libya. With an area of 316 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of just over 450,000, Malta is one of the world's smallest and most densely populated countries and comprised of two main islands, Malta and Gozo. Most have Maltese as their mother tongue, whilst the rest are either totally English speaking or bilingual or use Maltese and English interchangeably (Borg, Mifsud, & Schirirha, 1996; Camilleri, 1996). Malta was under British rule from 1800, became independent in 1964 and became a republic in 1974. Its justice system, educational system and the profession of counselling are all based on the British model (Farrugia, 1992; Sultana, 2006).

Schools in Malta can be run by the state, the church or as independent institutions. State

schools are geographically divided into ten colleges, and counsellors are assigned to several schools within a college. There are a total of 62 primary schools (ages 4–11), with one middle (ages 11–13) and one secondary school (ages 13–16) per college. Each state college is responsible for about 3000 students and would have a maximum of one principal counsellor, one counsellor and two trainee counsellors. Guidance teachers, on the other hand, belong to secondary schools but go to primary schools within their college once a week and utilise their helping skills, as assigned by the principal counsellor in each college. Presently there is an average of one guidance teacher per 200 secondary or middle school students depending on school profiles. Further, Malta hosts 33 church and 13 private primary and secondary schools. Both church and independent schools recruit their own counsellors.

This unique snapshot is at the core of how school counselling developed in this small-island community. Given our friends-of-friends networks (Boissevain, 1974) and the fact that everyone is, at most, three steps away from the President or the Prime Minister, it tends to be much easier for a good idea to spread and be implemented. Jeremy Boissevain's (1974) the Friends of Friends theory reflects this reality, stating that it is possible for those employed in

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this young profession to know the whole network of counsellors. According to Boissevain (1974), such a network includes two major characteristics: high density and highly complex connections, where multiple roles are played out and links are entangled beyond kinship. Such connections, explains Boissevain (1974), are more restricting and more normative than those of friendship, family or work. Unique stories of success are quickly known by everybody, with serendipity taking over small talk in small groups. On the other hand, our insularity may have led to school counselling starting in Malta much later than in the UK, due to the delayed accessibility of knowledge and training.

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### Setting the Context

Historically, counselling in Malta was introduced by the Catholic Church in the 1950s to support couples and families. School counselling was then launched by two teachers in the 1970s, leading to an increase in services through the 1980s and 1990s (Galea, 2012; Sultana, 1992). This was followed by the setting up of the Malta Association for the Counselling Profession (Malta Association for the Counselling Profession [MACP], 2016) in January 2002. MACP subsequently started to promote counselling in areas other than school counselling. In 2008, the University of Malta (UoM) offered the first master's level training in counselling. Malta is unique, in that Counselling is regulated by parliament as a warranted profession. The Counselling Profession Act (CPA) was tabled in parliament by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity in 2015. Hence, the birth and growth of school counselling fall within these sociological and anthropological constructs. One could conclude that, in Malta, school counselling was actually responsible for the growth of the counselling profession.

### Current Trends in School-Based Counselling

Schools have long been a place which incorporates teaching as well as other activities. The Maltese 1988 Education Act indicates that schools need to “cater for the full development of the whole personality” (p. 4). This evolution was a consequence of countries and communities choosing to provide support in schools in relation to issues such as careers, personal and social skills and other competencies (Sultana, 1992). During the last 20 years, demand for counselling services in schools has increased (Briggs & Kelso-Wright, 2012; Curtis, Hunley, & Grier, 2004; Moyer, 2011). Malta embraces the British model of counselling, a person-centred and humanistic approach, encouraging students to explore and reflect upon their feelings (Galea, 2012; Micallef, 2016).

Within the EU, guidance and counselling provision varies greatly across countries. Anderson (2007) notes that although all countries offer counselling and guidance to some degree, most focus on student's choice of study programmes and the qualifications needed for these specific programmes. He explains that in some member countries, services are “highly centralised and run as organisational entities placed outside the institutions, [whilst] in others services are embedded in the individual institution and taken care of by professional administrative staff or teachers, performing this task as part of their responsibilities, alongside tutorial work and teaching specific topics” (p. 350). In Malta state and church schools tend to use the former model and independent schools the latter.

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### Local Definitions of Counselling

In the local context, there are three definitions of counselling (MACP, 2016; CPA, 2015; Council of the Counselling Profession [CCP], (2016). These are complementary and overlap. The three definitions indicate that counselling:

- (a) Is a means of relating and responding to clients with the aim of giving them a safe space and time to explore their feelings, beliefs, thoughts and behaviour
- (b) Can help develop and/or broaden clients' thoughts and awareness
- (c) Explores alternatives for clients to take informed decisions
- (d) May be held with individuals, couples, families and groups

Since present or past MACP Executive Council members are also members of the Executive Council of the International Association for Counselling (IAC), there is congruence and continuity between Maltese and international definitions of counselling.

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## History of Maltese School Counselling

Counselling in Maltese schools is not a new concept, despite having a shorter history than other countries. Galea (2012) reports that counselling in Malta seems to have, until recently, followed the path of counselling in Britain. The difference is that in Malta counselling started from the spiritual arena rather than the educational sector. Mifsud (2004) notes that prior to 1968, counselling in Malta was only practiced within the Catholic Church, the dominant religion in Malta (Abela, 2001). De Giovanni (1997) states that, during this period, counselling addressed spiritual direction and pastoral care issues within the context of the marital relationship.

DeGiovanni (1987) traces another historical necessity within the context of vocational guidance and counselling. As far back as 1918 to 1930, the Superintendent of Immigration, Casolani, complained that the educational system in Malta produced only “clerks to work with the British forces and did not take into consideration the emerging needs of the local economy or the economy of the countries that Maltese immigrants were migrating to” (Reports of the Working of Government Departments 1924–5, C2, para. 9 cited by Sultana (1992, pp. 130–131).

DeGiovanni (1987) and Sultana (1992) interpret this complaint as the first document referring to the need for direction and professional reflection in “empowering school leavers towards desired employment within the contextual job market” (p. 29). Sultana (1998) explores how economic development impinged on the way guidance, particularly career guidance, developed in Malta. Following a recommendation by a UNESCO consultant (Lewis, 1967), the Guidance and Counselling Unit (GCU) within the Education Department was launched in 1968. This led to the Education Department sending teachers for counsellor training in Britain, Canada, New Zealand and America. The Guidance and Counselling Services (GCS) were formalised between 1974 and 1975, introducing an education officer (Guidance and Counselling), counsellors and guidance teachers targeting secondary and post-secondary sectors. It was one of the first instances where boundaries between two similar yet different disciplines were reflected in government posts. The need for more qualified personnel called for formal qualification and the UoM organised the first diploma course in educational guidance and counselling in 1990 (De Giovanni, 1997). Between 1993 and 2006, the UoM ran a diploma in school counselling. All candidates had to be teachers to be eligible for these diplomas.

Furthermore, the 1994 GCS report states that at the time there was a complement of “nine counsellors, 103 guidance teachers and 113 personal and social education teachers with guidance-related functions serving 48 state secondary schools and one post-secondary institution, and a 2% share of the total Education Budget” (p. 2). Counselling was initially provided in secondary and post-secondary schools, and all counsellors were specifically referred to as school counsellors and all had professional training and experience in education; they were teachers. In 2010, Falzon and Camilleri (2010) noted that Maltese schools had a total of 34 professionals working as school counsellors. Only 18 of them were actually trained as counsellors; the rest were psychologists or psychotherapists. 15 of these professionals worked in state schools

and 11 in church schools. Presently the Maltese state educational system hosts a total of 13 counsellors and 13 trainee counsellors – around three in each college, whilst the church hosts a team of nine counsellors, each of whom take care of four to five church schools.

As recommended in the Debono, Camilleri, Galea and Gravina (2007) policy report, the last decade has seen a shift in Malta, whereby the service has developed to include guidance teachers, career advisors and counsellors, filling in the former gap such that counsellors can focus on the social and emotional aspects of children's experience. These changes had a direct impact on the counsellor's role in school and how Maltese teachers perceive counsellors' roles. The profession was then further empowered when it was regulated, making it the first in Europe to be a legally recognised and warranted profession (CPA, 2015).

Given that in the 1990s, no local CPD was provided, a substantial number of counsellors and guidance teachers felt the need to participate in courses and seminars in Europe and other countries as part of their personal and professional development (Sammut, 1997). MACP, established in January 2002, also addressed this need and organised its first annual CPD in September 2004, on the theme of ethics.

Through the Master in Counselling (MCouns.) and Master of Arts in Transcultural Counselling (TCouns.) – offered since 2011 – courses offered by the UoM as well as the Maltese CPA regulating the counselling profession (CPA, 2015), counselling is presently provided by master's-level trained professionals or trainee professionals. Again, Malta is also unique in Europe, in that it is the only country which requires a master's level training for entry into the profession. Our experience also indicates that a specialisation in school counselling would be very beneficial for professionals who aspire to work in this field. The Department of Counselling indicates that it intends to design and run post-master's certificates in specialisation areas, as required by the CPA (2015).

## Maltese School Counselling Today

The state's GCS in schools presently falls under the Directorate for Students' Services (DSS)'s responsibility within the Directorate of Educational Services (DES). Counsellors, guidance teachers, social workers, psychologists, psychotherapists and other mental health professionals work hand in hand to provide psychosocial services to students, with the aim of helping them achieve success in their academic and personal goals according to national standards and schools' aims, visions, missions and development plans. Maltese school counselling services enjoy the collaborative efforts of administrators, teachers, students and the general community (McGannon, Carey & Dimmitt, 2005; Sammut, 2016).

The DSS promotes the holistic development of students by providing ongoing prevention and intervention services in schools. Maltese school counsellors embrace five main roles: (1) running a GCS in all the schools within a college, (2) communicating on a regular basis with the service manager on issues of guidance and counselling, (3) providing career guidance, (4) collaborating with the heads of schools and staff regarding students' profiling and (5) referring to other specialised services. Counsellors are also expected to work towards the implementation of the school development plan and school mission, together with other stakeholders (Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment [MEYE], 2007).

Counsellors work in both primary and secondary schools, normally within one college. Prior to this, the service used to be offered to secondary school students only. Whilst this decision was beneficial to students with psychological and educational difficulties at a young age, as issues could be identified and dealt with as early as possible, this service created new difficulties for school counsellors. They now have to extend their services to primary and secondary students presenting with a variety of issues, requiring different interventions according to age, level of understanding and complexity.

The state notes a need for more counsellors and periodically seeks to recruit new counsellors. However, applications always fall short on numbers. The fact that counsellors' contracts have changed in the last 3 years, and no longer embrace teachers' contact hours, may have hindered increased numbers of counsellors in state schools. Teachers who have trained to become counsellors seem to prefer to remain teachers or apply to be guidance teachers rather than applying for counselling posts. There may be several reasons for this. Here we present three possibilities:

- (a) Guidance teachers remain attached to one school and feel that they belong to the school, whereas counsellors are assigned to more than one school and are answerable to the college principals' office, belonging to the college.
- (b) Guidance teachers have teachers' conditions of work and are expected to be on school premises when students are present – until 15:00. Counsellors, however, work office hours, until 17:00, and through school holidays.
- (c) Due to the dearth of counsellors in state schools, all counsellors end up being bogged down with a lot of administration and recording work to the detriment of actual counselling work. Counsellors are incessantly expressing concern about this situation.

Whilst this situation could actually be improving guidance services, since guidance teachers also have training in counselling, it may not be promoting the counselling profession, as counselling is also being carried out by professionals whose post is that of "guidance teacher", leading to a lack of transparency in terms of services. Malta does not provide enough job opportunities for such professionals to move to other school systems, except for church or independent schools, which are very limited in number and job opportunities.

Any qualified teacher with a minimum of 5 years' teaching experience can become a

guidance teacher. The state used to provide helping skills training to newly appointed guidance teachers. This has not been carried out this year. Guidance teachers who are also counselling master's graduates are normally encouraged by their superiors to do counselling sessions, despite this not being part of their job description. There are still not enough counsellors working in schools, despite the fact that many new counsellors are graduating with master's degrees from the UoM (Table 24.1). At date of publication, the Ministry for Education and Employment issued a call for senior education support practitioners (counsellor) and education support practitioners (trainee counsellor).

### **An Outreach Model**

Malta also has a statutory subject, Personal and Social Development (PSD), which is regarded as preventative, supportive and empowering for students (Falzon & Muscat, 2009) and works hand in hand with counselling services at the school level. PSD pedagogy – helping skills, processing and the Experiential Learning Cycle (Falzon & Muscat, 2009; Heron, 1999; Kolb, 2014; Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001) – is grounded in and arose from counselling. Local research indicates that students' PSD experiences facilitate access to counselling (e.g. Falzon & Camilleri, 2010; Falzon & Muscat, 2009; Muscat, 2006).

PSD's conceptual framework, ethos and pedagogy embrace counselling principles (Falzon & Muscat, 2009). "The inherent philosophy and implementation of the subject promotes universally regarded positive values such as respect for self and others, diversity, critical thinking, problem solving and democracy" (Falzon & Muscat, 2009, p. 9) and interpersonal relationships, independence and interdependence, self-awareness and self-esteem. We propose that guidance teachers should at least be PSD-trained due to their extensive training in and utilisation of helping skills.

**Table 24.1** List of graduates – master’s courses in counselling at the University of Malta

Graduate/Course	Course	Amount	Course	Number of graduates/ students
2012	MCouns.	25	TCouns.	First opened in 2011. 2013 first graduation
	PG diploma	02	TCouns.	
2013	MCouns.	01	TCouns.	13
2014	MCouns.	16	TCouns.	09
2015	MCouns.	01	TCouns.	05
	PG diploma	01		
2016	MCouns.	22	TCouns.	09
2014–2018	MCouns.	20	TCouns.	09 <sup>a</sup>
2016–2020	MCouns.	17	TCouns.	11 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Correct to date of publication

## Working with Teachers

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) (2010) recommends that school counsellors “should be able to work collaboratively with the teaching personnel to create and maintain a continuum of services to support all students’ attainment of academic, social, emotional, and behavioural goals” (p. 11). Research findings evidence that implementing counselling in schools and working collaboratively with teachers who teach kindergarten to year 6 children target both the children and their families who may be struggling with challenging life situations (e.g. Goldstein & Brooks, 2007; Levine, 2007; MacBeath, Galton, Steward, MacBeath, & Page, 2006). Collaboration strengthens the provision of a professional counselling service and complements other interventions in school that support young people and promote their emotional health and wellbeing (Hill et al., 2011). This is reflected in the Maltese counsellor’s job description (MEYE, 2007).

In a culture where counsellors had originally also been teachers, schools are for the first time facing situations where their counsellors do not have a school background. This change still needs to be researched, but informal conversations and anecdotes from professionals highlight new challenges being faced by teachers, counsellors and senior management teams working as a team. This is also confirmed by two of us who presently work in schools as a guidance teacher

(Micallef) and a child safety service guidance teacher (Sammut). This diversity can be used as a platform for professional growth and help teachers experience different perspectives and be informative agents for counsellors.

Cooper, Hough and Loynd (2005) acknowledge that “teachers represent the largest body of professionals on whom the success of a school-based counselling service is likely to depend” (p. 122). Due to time constraints, work pressure and lack of adequate training, teachers often feel that they are not able to adequately attend to students’ wellbeing. This evidences the need for collaboration and collegiality (Howieson & Semple, 2000; Tatar, 1998). A main teachers’ expectation is for counsellors to have a positive impact on students and on the schools’ counselling services (Clark & Ametea, 2004; Fitch, Newby, Ballesterio, & Marshall, 2001; Sammut, 2016). Further, teachers’ views of counsellors’ role are affected by the perceptions and expectations of administrators, parents and students which, in turn, affect the counselling service itself (Cuomo, 2014; Reiner, Colbert, & Perusse, 2009; Sammut, 2016).

Conversely, Jenkins and Polat (2005) argue that having expectations might sometimes create conflicting challenges, such as counsellor’s confidential setting and the need for teachers to access information. This becomes more salient in the Maltese context, due to multiple complex relationships in a small-island community context (Boissevain, 1974; Gabriel, 2005; Mifsud, 2004; Syme, 2003). These challenges seem to be more evident in primary schools since teachers



spend most of their time with the same group of children, hence the potential “expectation” of information about pupils and their counselling sessions (Cuomo, 2014; Sammut, 2016).

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## Teachers’ Referrals to Counsellors

To date, studies on why and how teachers refer their students to school counsellors is limited on a national (Cuomo, 2014; Sammut, 2016) and international level (Jackson, 2000; Adams, Benschoff, & Harrington, 2007). This dearth was the inspiration for two master’s dissertations (Cuomo, 2014; Sammut, 2016). Jackson (2000) reveals that primary school teachers relied on school counsellors to solve their problems. The findings show that although the school counsellor’s role is not to directly discipline students (American School Counselor Association (ASCA), 2005), teachers usually refer disruptive children to counsellors as another means of support. Likewise, Cuomo (2014) concludes that 65.8% of Maltese teachers refer students because of behavioural issues at school. She further notes that Maltese teachers are likely to refer students for counselling because of “family-related difficulties” (78.1%), “suspected child abuse” (77.8%), “sudden and unusual change in behaviour” (77.2%), “behavioural difficulties at school” (65.8%) and “self-esteem issues” (61.4%). Falzon and Camilleri (2010) note that the main reasons why students were referred to counsellors are “self-esteem and sadness. Dyslexia and learning/academic difficulties were also mentioned as a reason for referral” (p. 310). Their study also focused on how referrals are processed in schools and concludes that clients are “either self-referred or through written assessments forwarded by parents or school administration due to concern over low achievement of students” (p. 310). Sammut (2016) describes a similar experience for primary school teachers.

Technically, Maltese teachers present their concerns to schools’ senior management teams (SMT), who in turn refer students to their counsellors. Practically, this depends on the rapport established by the counsellor with the teachers. If

this is strong, teachers consult with counsellors when they have concerns and ultimately refer directly to counsellors, subject to the head of school’s approval of such procedures. Some heads of school, however, prefer that all referrals go through them.

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## A Counselling Supervision Model: The Maltese Schools’ Experience

At the moment, there are not enough counsellor supervisors on the island, and the CPA (2015) addresses this lacuna by stating that, “eligible professionals practice counselling under the supervision of a supervisor whose profession is related to the counselling profession” (Micallef, 2016, p. 31).

Models of school counselling supervision have developed on the same lines as other models of supervision: Developmental, Psychotherapy-based and Integrative. In line with a psychodynamic model, supervision can serve as a container of feelings, including conscious and unconscious elements of student experiences that affect the counselling process (Briggs & Kelso-Wright, 2012). Winnicott (1958) and Bion (1967) present supervision as a transitional space. Supervisors work in the transitional space between school counsellors and the educational system, becoming the container that exists between the two. Counsellors can only contain students if they are held in supervision (Briggs & Kelso-Wright, 2012).

The discrimination model of supervision (Bernard, 1979; Luke & Bernard, 2006) would also fit current Maltese school counselling. This model focuses on three areas of supervision: intervention skills, including counsellor behaviour and counselling strategies; conceptualisation skills including choosing interventions, organising client themes and establishing goals; and personalisation skills focusing on the use of self, interpersonal warmth and building on clients’ strengths (Luke & Bernard, 2006 p. 284). Supervisors take three different roles. In the teacher position, they instruct, model, give feedback and evaluate. As counsellors, they invite supervisees to reflect on their thoughts, actions



and internal reality, and as consultants they share responsibility for the learning and professional development of counsellors (Luke & Bernard, 2006).

Maltese school counsellors need to constantly take quick decisions regarding counselling strategies that they deem fit for situations that many times are presented to them as urgent. Thus they would need to make a good assessment of the situation, organise important client themes, choose appropriate interventions and establish short- and long-term goals. Also, working with students in their early years or in their teenage years, school counsellors would primarily need to focus on interpersonal warmth and on discovering and building on students' strengths (Luke & Bernard, 2006).

School counsellors are finding themselves in need of new and updated skills to meet the unique demands of different student groups (Bradely & Ladany, 2010) and to deal with complex issues presented (Walley, Grothaus, & Craigen, 2009). Supervision is needed to keep up with current research and professional development and for school counsellors to attend to their wellbeing, especially by preventing and managing job-related pressures and stress that could lead to motivation depletion and burnout (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). In view of difficulties related to the availability of traditional one-to-one supervision (Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2012), peer supervision (Agnew, Vaught, Getz, & Fortune, 2000) and group supervision (Despenser, 2011), technology-mediated supervision (Clingerman & Bernard, 2004) should be considered in the local scenario.

### **Supervision in Maltese State School Counselling**

Until July 2015, Maltese state school counsellors had DSS-provided supervision and support, both individually and in groups. However, the shortage of professional supervisors meant that this service was initially provided by two and then only one supervisor for all counsellors. Currently, that post is vacant. In the absence of supervision, peer supervision was then promoted

with counsellors working in state schools. In answer to a parliamentary question, the DSS noted that, according to the Maltese CPA (2015), counsellors are required to find their own professional supervision and present it to the CCP, in order to become legally warranted (Parliamentary Questions on Counselling [PQ] 21138, [pq.gov.mt](http://pq.gov.mt), 2015). It is in the interests not only of counsellors but all helping professionals who work in schools, including guidance teachers, to be supported by supervision in their reflection about their practice (Carroll, 2007). To date of publication, state-provided supervision was still absent and counsellors working in schools either paid for their own supervision or did not go to supervision at all.

There are a number of difficulties in having a very limited number of supervisors. Counsellors do not have the option to choose supervisors according to their particular counselling needs, the service might not be regular, and supervisors might not be readily available in times of crisis (Thielking, 2006). Besides, supervision is effective through the relationship that is built between supervisors and supervisees. Considering the multiple relationships that exist on our small island (Abela & Sammut Scerri, 2010; Micallef, 2016; Mifsud, 2004), having a very restricted service can put some school counsellors in an uncomfortable situation due to dual or multiple roles.

Maltese counsellors are required to monitor and support guidance teachers, both individually and in groups. They are also expected to support school staff and administration with issues of a psychosocial nature, which can sometimes be very complex (MEYE, 2007). However, whilst this may indicate that the counsellor's role is being given its due value and respect from the DSS, counsellors cannot support others if they are not themselves adequately supported (Westefeld, 2009). Thus, the need for supervision as well as supervision training in Malta is imperative (Micallef, 2016).

Micallef (2016) notes that "On listening to their anguish... I was impacted by the value that [Maltese counsellors] gave to supervision. They appreciated the former service, even though it was conducted by only one supervisor" (p. 70).

Micallef's counsellor-participants wanted to improve their service, thus mirroring their impending request for quality supervision. They needed supervision for their professional growth and wellbeing and to provide the best services for the students (Gerald & Gerald, 2001; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). Indeed, Micallef (2016) notes that, "[p]articipants felt the need to receive regular supervision to get the support they needed in order to deal with stress in a productive way, to feel valued and satisfied in their job and to be more confident in using their skills... being happy at work and avoiding excessive stress and burn-out" (p. 71). Micallef also refers to participants' awareness that it is unethical to be expected to do counselling work without supervision – "It's like expecting me to work in a ship-yard without a helmet or protective gear" (p. 71). This highlights the need for a solid structure of supervision to be provided by the DSS. Counsellors seem to indicate that, when they need supervision, they make sure to receive it, even if they have to pay (Evans & Payne, 2008; Micallef, 2016).

It might be argued that, because of other priorities or lack of resources in the Maltese educational system, commitment for the promotion of professional wellbeing is lacking. Maltese counsellors working in schools need to advocate towards the development of a system that is more supportive and that encourages collaborative practice between employers and employees (Lambie & Sias, 2005). This experience is not unique to the Maltese context. Lack of supervision in school counselling has been a topic for discussion in international fora for many years (Boyd & Walter, 1975; Micallef, 2016; Murphy & Kaffenberger, 2007; Somody, Henderson, Cook, & Zambrano, 2008).

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### **Ethical and Legal Issues in Maltese Counselling Supervision**

The MACP requires its members to engage in supervision in order to monitor their effectiveness as professionals and to improve their competences. The MACP Code of Ethics (2011) speaks about the functions and necessity of

supervision when it explains the principle of beneficence. This is reiterated by the Maltese CPA (2015, par. 22).

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### **Lessons Learnt**

The history and present situation of counselling in Maltese state schools leads to four main lessons learnt: (1) the need for a local model for school counselling, (2) a need for more counsellors, (3) a supervision framework and (4) a serious consideration of dual relationships. The history of counselling indicates a move towards acculturation of the counselling profession to the Maltese context. This is also evident in comparisons of the Maltese MACP Code of Ethics (MACP, 2011) with those of other countries. Locally, it was important for the Maltese counselling profession to be governed by law through the use of parliament and state infrastructures to (a) address the friends-of-friends phenomenon (Boissevain, 1974) and (b) the enmeshed dual-relationship issue (Mifsud, 2004), as well as to (c) follow the trend of other helping professions.

### **A Model for Maltese School Counselling**

Maltese counselling research is in its inception, so comparative studies with regard to counselling services in Maltese schools are lacking. Whilst the job description handbook in Malta (MEYE, 2007) clearly defines the role of counsellors in schools, the absence of a school counselling framework within the context of Maltese schools' psychosocial teams remains.

Local research within primary (Cuomo, 2014; Sammut 2016) and secondary (Cuomo, 2014) school teachers concludes that teachers need to have greater awareness and understanding of the role of counsellors, in order to be able to promote counselling with their students. Sammut (2016) notes that teachers feel it is the counsellor's role to promote their services with teachers. Nevertheless, Maltese teachers are aware of counsellor's valuable contribution to students'

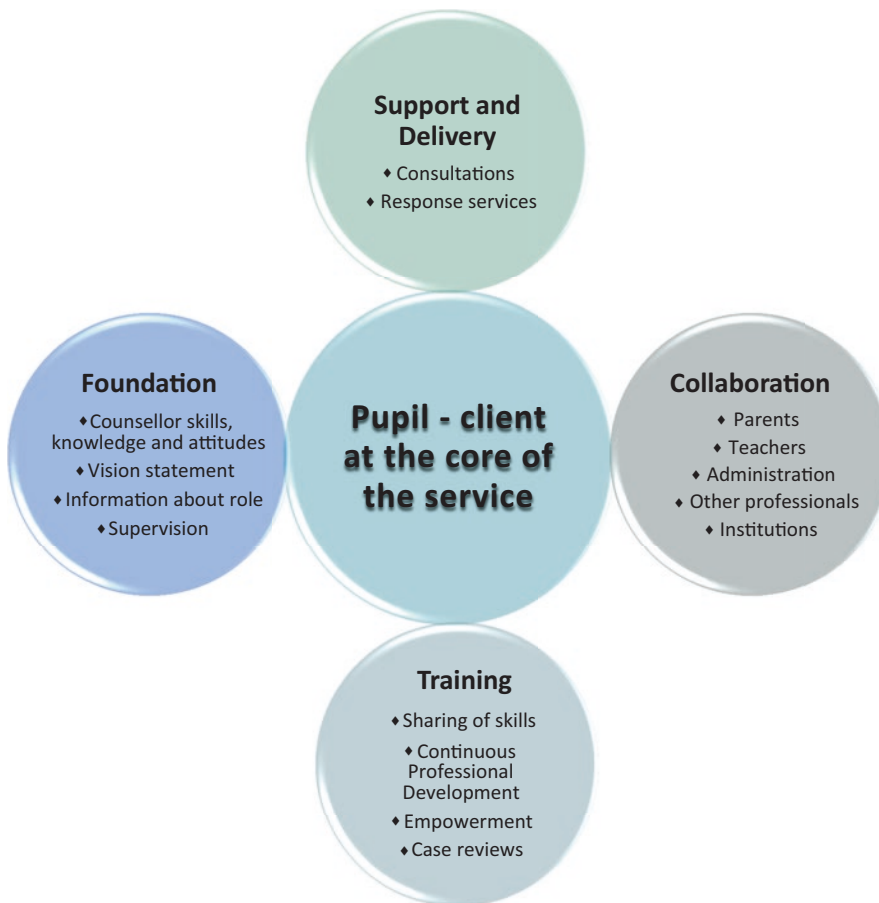
wellbeing. They view counsellors as professionals with adequate training, who cannot do their job as well as they need to, due to a lack of personnel. Teachers also seem to value the benefits of early intervention and suggest that counsellors could organise training for teachers on issues related to emotional development. Finally, they caution that it is important for counsellors to understand school culture, since they have to work with other professionals within schools.

Drawing from Cuomo’s (2014) and her own conclusions, Sammut (2016) notes that, despite improvements in schools with regard to counselling, the service provided still feels rather “scattered” (p. 99). Sammut (2016) proposes a model (Fig. 24.1) that highlights the importance of having full-time in-house counsellors in schools (Clark & Amatea, 2005) and focuses

upon “transdisciplinarity (Nicolescu, 1999), collaboration (Clark & Amatea, 2004), and role-release (McGonigel, Woodruff, & Roszmann-Millican, 1994) within Maltese definitions of counselling (CCP, 2015; CPA, 2015; MACP, 2016). Further, this model illustrates the need for connections to be built between professions and “focuses on four main pillars: Foundation, Support and Delivery, Collaboration, and Training” (p. 99).

### Need for More Counsellors

A significant limitation within our state school’s counselling provision is the shortage of counsellors – presently three counsellors/trainee-counsellor for every 3000 students (National



**Fig. 24.1** The loop model for school counselling (Sammut, 2016)

Statistics Office [NSO], 2016). We are aware that Maltese students' support needs are much better catered for now than they used to be in the past. However, much more needs to be done to ensure that there are no waiting lists and that students can access an appropriate number of counselling sessions that are regular and consistent. Further, depending on the catchment areas and community profiles, some colleges may need more counsellors than others, a concern which is currently being addressed by the DSS.

The increase in counselling graduates (Table 24.1) is still not reflected in the number of counsellors within the state school system. On the other hand, professional counsellors are carrying out relevant counselling work in their roles as guidance teachers or as personnel working within the safe schools programme, comprising of child safety service, anti-bullying and anti-substance (GCS, 2016). The state needs to value the significance of counselling services and support the growth of the counselling profession in school. We suggest that this should be taken up by the MACP as a trade union. A compromise between counsellors' current working conditions and those of teachers who do counselling work needs to be sought, such that these professionals' work is acknowledged and reflected in the nomenclature of their profession.

The MACP has voiced several concerns with the state as newly qualified counsellors seem to prefer to remain teachers and do counselling during their hours as guidance teachers in order to retain teachers' conditions. This has led to a ripple effect: there is a dearth of counsellors in schools in a context where the profile of students' background in the local post-graduate counselling programmes has seen a decrease in teachers applying for the master's programmes. The 2016–2020 cohorts of these master's courses only include two students with a background in teaching.

### **Supervision Framework for Maltese Counsellors Working in School**

The only study on Maltese school counselling and supervision was carried out by one of the co-authors (Micallef, 2016). Her counsellor-participants were

all working in state schools and concluded that they needed supervision to address the number and complexity of client issues, time constraints, ethical dilemmas, working with the school system and in isolation and coping with administrative duties. They felt that lack of supervision services has left them alone and in a situation where they have no one with whom to process and acknowledge difficulties. Micallef (2016) proposes that a solid structure of supervision is conceptualised and implemented as part of job requirements. Micallef (2016) suggests that counsellors should be given the choice to choose their own supervisor within or beyond the school system. Additionally, she proposes the setting up of a local supervision structure to embrace policy and practice. To this aim, she puts forward as a possibility the cultural adaptation of Hawkins and Shohet's (2012) seven-step process model (Table 24.2). Micallef (2016) notes that this model would build upon the supervision service that was already in use in the past and introduce possible areas for future development. This structure complements the loop model (Fig. 24.1).

### **Addressing Multiple Relationships in a Small-Island Community**

Despite the fact that multiple relationships are often considered to impair counsellors' objectivity and competence in performing their role, such reality is inevitable in a small-island context (Stockman, 1990; Werth, Hastings, & Riding-Malon, 2010). Counsellors might meet their clients at church during Sunday mass, or they might do their shopping at the same supermarket. This poses ethical challenges, not simply because of the presence of multiple interactions but primarily because of the risk of impaired objectivity and harm to the client (Werth et al., 2010). In particular, engaging in a dual relationship might cause a loss of professionalism by the counsellor, which could potentially lead to poor judgement and decision-making (Brownlee, 1996), as well as exploitation (Gross, 2005). Further, possible solutions to such circumstances might create dynamics that further impinge on client-counsellor relationship. For example, if the counsellor decides to change

**Table 24.2** Supervision model for the Maltese context (Adapted from Hawkins and Shohet (2012), Helbok, Marinelli, and Walls, (2006))

<p>Step 1: Appreciation of what has already been done and what professionals have achieved so far.</p> <p>Step 2: Evaluation of the extent to which lack of supervision is seen by professionals as problematic and how much they will own the solution.</p> <p>Step 3: Experimentation with different types of supervision practices, not excluding the fact that the DSS might work in collaboration with other entities to train some of its school-counsellors themselves in the area of supervision, until more UoM-trained counsellor-supervisors are available, hopefully as from July 2019.</p> <p>Step 4: Acknowledgement of and addressing resistance to the setup of a new framework, with counsellors' involvement along the whole process. This would give them the opportunity to respond to and understand the rationale behind decisions proposed and to adapt to future necessities</p> <p>Step 5: The development of a clear statement of policy on supervision: the purpose and functions of supervision, minimum standards of conduct, contracts to include frequency of supervision and agenda setting, rights and responsibilities of both supervisees and supervisors, and the type of confidentiality expected and guaranteed (Kemshall, 1995).</p> <p>Step 6: Assuring ongoing supervision, learning and development for supervisors and supervisees within the DSS, including sharing of experiences, collective knowledge and wisdom about supervision and quality service. This should be carried out in collaboration with the UoM and the MACP in order to pool resources.</p> <p>Step 7: A review process conducted every year, and a more thorough evaluation every three years where supervisor contracts could also be reviewed. This review could include: where, what and how much supervision are taking place, supervisees' satisfaction with the quality of supervision offered and the impact of supervision on the counselling service.</p>
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their routine time for attending church mass service so that it does not coincide with the client's, the latter might interpret that as a rejection, which would in turn have repercussions for the therapeutic relationship.

It is not unusual for clients to see counsellors and their partners or families at social events. It is very easy for clients to, deliberately or

inadvertently, learn information about their counsellors. Whilst this might feel awkward at best, it often creates feelings of tension and lack of privacy, as counsellors might feel they need to create a flawless image of themselves and the life they lead (Helbok, Marinelli, & Walls, 2006). Additionally, it might trigger irritation and a sense of limitation in counsellors, as they

might feel they have to change their ordinary life activities (Werth et al., 2010), potentially separating their private and public lives (Helbok et al., 2006). Burgard (2013) speaks of the “concern that can arise from the high visibility of the therapist’s private life in rural communities” (p. 73) and highlights the need felt by counsellors for a separation of social and professional lives. However, this becomes logistically impossible once counsellors have a wide client base. Hence, the issue of managing multiple relationships assumes primary importance.

Confidentiality is another thorny issue. Bajada (2016) researched clients’ attitudes to counselling in Gozo, Malta’s sister island. She discovered that clients generally preferred to see counsellors who they did not have any connection to. Given that Malta provides significant opportunities for social networking, this might pose limitations on the choice of counsellor. This is even more pronounced in schools, where there are often limited options regarding which counsellor students get. Counsellors are encouraged to set a model of openness and willingness to discuss the relationship itself. This in turn provides students with permission to talk about any uncomfortable feelings they might be experiencing and indeed enriches the therapeutic bond.

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### Selected Foci for Policy Research

The birth and development of school counselling in Malta lead us to a number of queries for policy research:

- (a) The UoM intends to run a post-master’s specialisation course in supervision. What impact will this have on the quality of supervision for school-based counsellors? How can the current dearth of supervision be addressed?
- (b) There are presently not enough counsellors in schools. What impact does this have on service provision and students’ quality of life? How many counsellors should be placed in schools, taking into consideration schools’ demographic profiles?
- (c) What is the difference in service provision between counsellors with and without a teaching background?
- (d) What is the most effective balance between administrative work and student contact?
- (e) What is the effect of school counsellors not working in one school all the time? How does that impact the sense of belonging and relationships with other school professionals, parents and the school community?
- (f) Changes always need to be accepted by the relevant professionals. It is therefore important to research school counsellors’ perceived benefits and limitations of the proposed loop model, to be able to present recommendations to the government.

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### Final Thought

It has been a privilege to engage in this historical and reflective journey upon the current situation of school counselling in Maltese state schools. With the introduction and implementation of the eagerly anticipated CPA (2015), it is hoped that any helping professional working in the post of counsellor is actually a qualified counsellor. Independent schools are taking the implications of the Act on board, and these last 18 months have seen a small increase in the employment of trained counsellors. This augurs well for the profession.

We are also pleased to acknowledge that Malta has seen a surge in school counselling research due to studies carried out by MCouns.’ and TCouns.’ master’s students. These graduates should be given due credit as pioneers of Maltese school counselling research. We also celebrate the tenacity of the first school counsellors who often worked alone within a system which had not yet understood their role.

School counselling has come a long way since the 1960s. The next development has to do with enhancing service user’s awareness of the role and benefits of counselling. To this end, several avenues could be utilised, including social media and developing online services which could provide greater counselling accessibility. Finally, we



strongly recommend that all state schools collaborate to ensure good counselling practice for students. In particular, school counsellors should be supported through the provision of adequate supervision and better working conditions. Only then could we confidently state that counselling in schools is considered and validated by the government as a valuable resource for the wellbeing of students and teachers alike. As Sultana (2003) observes, some of Malta's "initiatives have been showcased as examples of good practice from which others can draw inspiration. Malta, however has also much to learn in its attempts to provide all its citizens alike with a service that facilitates both the private good and the public one" (p. 120). It is in this spirit that we invite readers to peruse this chapter.

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# School-Based Counseling, Policy, Policy Research, and Implications in Turkey and Other Middle Eastern Countries

25

Ayşen Köse

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## Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore policy regarding school-based counseling in Middle Eastern countries, namely, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, and Israel. These countries were chosen because each represents a unique culture within the Middle Eastern region and has relatively more developed school-based counseling services than the rest of the region. Turkey will be examined more closely, since the author is of Turkish origin, and it was therefore possible to access more research articles in both Turkish and English. A brief history of school counseling in these countries will be provided in order to understand current policy implementation, challenges and barriers to advancement, and policy and research needs for the future development of the profession.

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## A Brief History of School Counseling in Turkey

The modern Republic of Turkey was established in 1923 after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey is located at the meeting point of Europe and Asia and is considered a bridge between the

two continents. Turkey has been a candidate for European Union (EU) membership since 1999. Although some notable progress has been made in the last two decades, full membership in the European Union has not yet been achieved. Turkey is a secular democratic republic, in which the majority of people are Muslim. Today, Turkey has a population of 77,695,904 (Turkish Statistical Institute [TUIK], 2014). Turkey has a relatively young population – the median age is 30.7 (TUIK, 2014), and school-aged children comprise 22.6% of the total population. Education is compulsory in Turkey until the 12th grade and kindergarten is not part of compulsory education.

School counseling as a profession in Turkey began as early as the 1950s, in parallel with Turkey's rapprochement to the United States between 1945 and 1950. During that time period, the United States supported Turkey through the Marshall Plan. As a part of the Marshall Plan, educational exchanges between the two countries were promoted (Pişkin, 2006; Yeşilyaprak, 2009). Hence, counselor educators from the United States visited Turkey in 1950 and conducted a series of seminars on the concept of counseling during their visit (Doğan, 2000). In the following years, experienced educators were sent to the United States to study counseling through the Ministry of National Education (Doğan, 2000). Therefore, it is possible to say that the development of school counseling in

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Turkey was influenced by American theories and practices (Doğan, 2000; Korkut-Owen, Owen, & Ballestero, 2009). During the mid-1960s, both graduate and undergraduate counseling programs were established in some Turkish universities.

The 1970s was considered a “golden era” of school counseling in Turkey (Doğan, 1998). Two events had a profound impact on the development of school counseling during this period. First, 90 school counselors were employed for the first time in 24 secondary schools between the years of 1970 and 1971. Second, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) took a step toward establishing counseling services countrywide at the secondary school level and decided to provide two counseling hours weekly for each grade level during the 1974–1975 academic year (Doğan, 1998). In 1996, MoNE also started to employ school counselors in elementary schools for the first time (Doğan, 2000). From this time forward, school counseling in Turkey has been mandatory at all grade levels.

The 1980s in Turkey witnessed a rapid increase in the number of undergraduate and graduate programs in counseling (Doğan, 1998). In 1989, the Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association (TPCGA) was founded. Following its foundation, it began to take a proactive role in improving the quality of the profession in the country. It began by publishing the *Journal of Counseling and Guidance* in 1990 and *Psychological Counseling and Guidance* bulletin in 1997. It also held the first National Psychological Counseling and Guidance Congress in 1991 and outlined ethical standards of the profession in 1995 (Doğan, 2000). The Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association still plays a notable role in advocating school counseling. Another effort to advocate for the profession was established by school counselor institution’s department chairs. They began to hold nationwide yearly meetings in 2000 to discuss the problems faced in the school counseling field and to lobby for practices and policies that enhance the profession (Korkut, 2007; Stockton & Güneri, 2011).

Thus far, noteworthy milestones in the progress of Turkish school counseling (from its inception until the end of the 1990s) have been briefly

introduced. In the following section, detailed information about current policy, practice, and research in the field of school counseling in Turkey will be discussed, starting from the 2000s.

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## School Counselor Education in Turkey

School counselors in Turkey are trained at undergraduate level. School counseling preparation programs, often termed “Guidance and Psychological Counseling,” are housed in the Department of Educational Sciences, with Departments of Education. Undergraduate programs in “Guidance and Psychological Counseling” are designed primarily to train practicing school counselors to meet public schools’ needs in the nation (Korkut, 2007). However, upon completion of 4 years of undergraduate study, students are awarded the title of “guidance teacher,” rather than “school counselor” or “psychological counselor.”

The debate as to which title graduates should be authorized under has been ongoing since the 1990s. The Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association and program leaders have been involved in advocacy efforts to change the professional title from “guidance teacher” to “psychological counselor” on graduates’ diplomas since 1997 (Pişkin, 2006). They argue that the specialty title of “guidance teacher” led to misunderstandings of the counselor’s role in schools, since the term “teacher” assumes more responsibility for teaching and discipline. In addition, this title restricts the scope of work opportunities for graduates to only schools, even though they should be allowed to apply for and be recruited by not just the Ministry of Education but also the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Family, due to the need for counselors in these fields.

Turkey has a very centralized educational system. The Turkish Higher Education Council (HEC) is the only authority that regulates higher education policies and all higher education institutions tied to the HEC. In 2007, with the aim of standardization of counselor education programs throughout the nation, the HEC mandated a uniform curriculum



for all school counseling training programs across the country, without soliciting sufficient input from the counselor educators (Korkut-Owen & Güneri, 2013). Although the need for uniformity in counselor education had already been discussed in school counseling literature before 2007, the HEC's requirement aroused indignation among academics as their voice was ignored (Stockton & Güneri, 2011). This new national curriculum was criticized by counselor education program leaders, since it was not designed to ensure school counselor competencies (Poyrazlı, Doğan, & Eskin, 2013), but rather it was based on areas of competency designed for teachers (Stockton & Güneri, 2011). As of 2016, redesigning of school counseling training curriculum has again taken HEC's agenda, and new changes are expected yet not announced officially.

Weak communication and management between MoNE and HEC also creates some complicated situations in terms of school counselors' training. For instance, while HEC determines the curriculum for school counselor education programs, MoNE sets the role and functions of school counselors. Their decisions are often disparate, since close unitary alignment between these governmental units is insufficient. Additional collaborative efforts are needed in order to make sure that school counseling policies are aligned and a variety of key stakeholder's voices heard at each stage of the policy development process.

In addition to the lack of alignment with MoNE guidelines, HEC's mandated curriculum is also criticized as not creating an inclusive and multicultural counseling course, even though Turkey has a diverse population (Bektaş, 2006; Kağnıcı, 2011). Furthermore, although it is argued that the applied clinical courses and supervision during counselor training programs are not sufficient to help students develop necessary skills for practice (Korkut, 2007), limited research exists regarding the supervision practices of school counselors in training (Aladağ, 2013).

Some common core courses in the HEC curriculum include: Theories of Counseling; Individual, Group, and Career Counseling; Ethics; Psychological Testing; Cognitive Psychology; Abnormal Psychology; Developmental Psychology;

Research Methods; Statistics; Measurement and Evaluation; Classroom Management; Teaching Principles and Methods; Curriculum Development; and the History of Turkish Education and Educational Management (HEC, nd).

There are currently 70 public and foundation universities that offer undergraduate degrees in Guidance and Psychological Counseling (Turkish Council of Higher Education Student Selection and Placement Center, 2015). Guidance and Psychological Counseling undergraduate programs accept students based on a two-staged central examination held by the HEC's Center for Student Selection and Placement (CSSP). In 2015, 6108 students placed in Guidance and Psychological Counseling undergraduate programs (author's calculations based on Turkish Council of Higher Education Student Selection and Placement Center, 2015). There are 602 faculty members (113 full professors, 110 associate professors, 379 assistant professors) employed in Guidance and Psychological Counseling programs (author's calculations based on Turkish Council of Higher Education Student Selection and Placement Center, 2015).

As of 2011, 21 universities offer master's and 14 offer doctorate degrees in Guidance and Psychological Counseling (Korkut-Owen & Güneri, 2013). As stated above, undergraduate "Guidance and Psychological Counseling" programs are specifically designed to train school counselors and graduates to achieve the title of "guidance teacher." On the other hand, master's and doctorate degrees are more generic to the field of counseling (Korkut, 2007), and there are currently no specializations in graduate programs (e.g., Mental Health Counseling; Marital, Couple, and Family Counseling; Career Counseling; Rehabilitation Counseling; etc.) with the exception of two universities, which offer specialized training in career counseling in their Business and Human Resources departments (Korkut-Owen & Güneri, 2013). Currently, training at master's level is seen as an "intermediate step toward doctoral work" or as a prerequisite to obtain work as an "administrator of guidance services." In addition, "a doctoral degree is necessary to become a counselor educator or a consultant for the Ministry of National Education" (Korkut, 2007, p. 14).

The level of training needed (e.g., undergraduate degree or graduate degree) in school counselor preparation has been an ongoing debate for a long time in Turkey. Some argue that undergraduate degrees in school counseling are necessary to avoid a school counselor shortage (Akkoyun, 1995; Doğan, 2000) (currently, it is estimated that number of school counselors will soon exceed the hiring capacity of MoNE).

In Turkey, the Department of In-Service Training in the Ministry of National Education is responsible of providing professional development needs of educators in public school system including school counselors in practice. Until 1993, in-service trainings had planned and delivered as centrally (nationally); however, this system was found to be inefficient in many ways. Therefore the MoNE delegated this responsibility to the local national educational directories at 1993 to be able to better identify the in-service training needs of local teachers and make it more feasible in terms of the budget (Bayrakçı, 2009), although there are still insufficient school counselors in practice, both related to the quantity and quality of in-service training provision (Sezer, 2006). Recent research revealed that practicing school counselors' top four professional development needs are bullying prevention and intervention programs, conflict management education in schools, preventing sexual harassment, and cyberbullying and inclusive education (Köse Şirin & Diker Coşkun, 2015).

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### **Program Accreditation and School Counselor Licensure in Turkey**

As stated, HEC-mandated uniform curriculum for school counselor preparation programs was introduced without a concrete definition of core competencies of school counselors. This regulation only created unity in course titles and credit/hours, not in content (Poyrazlı et al., 2013). Due to this policy and practice gap, school counselor training institutions lack a common understanding of student knowledge and skills outcomes, course characteristics, and content change from one university to other (Akkoyun, 1995; Aladağ,

2013; Doğan, 2000; Korkut, 2007). Given the variation that exists in school counselor training, defining training standards for school counselors and building an accreditation body for counselor education seems an important policy action for the development of the profession.

The discussion of a need for professional standards and accreditation of school counselor training programs has been continually promoted by TPCGA and program leaders since 1995 (Korkut, 2007; Korkut & Mızıkacı, 2008); however, there have been no concrete steps taken yet. Korkut and Mızıkacı (2008) argue that Turkey's integration of the Bologna Declaration, which aims to create a common understanding and the ability to transfer qualifications in higher education within European countries, might be the force needed to drive the setting of standardized criteria for school counselor training.

There are also no licensure requirements for school counselors in Turkey. Most Guidance and Psychological Counseling program graduates are employed by MoNE and work in educational settings (Korkut-Owen & Güneri, 2013). MoNE regulates recruitment of school counselor candidates. Those who wish to serve as school counselors in public K-12 schools are required to take a central and highly competitive exam called the Civil Service Personnel Selection Exam and are appointed by MoNE based on test scores. This policy began in 2002. Nevertheless, this exam is not considered a licensure examination for counselors since it is a generic examination for anyone who wants to work in civil service.

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### **Need for School Counselors in Turkey**

As of November 2014, 27,798 school counselors work in the Turkish public K-12 education system. Considering that there are about 17.3 million students in formal education in Turkey, the school-counselor-to-student ratio is about 650 (Education Reform Initiative, 2015). Based on 2011 statistics, MoNE actually needs 38,556 school counselors in total, which means 19,728 more counselors are needed to meet the shortage

(TPCGA, nd). However, currently vacant positions cannot be filled because of the school counselor shortage and budgetary concerns of MoNE. In the latest report of the Education Reform Initiative, it is stated that “MoNE is aware of the shortage of school counselors; a significant portion of teacher appointments in 2014 were carried out in the counseling field. However, the school counselor shortage continues, and it is essential that MoNE continues to address this issue” (Education Reform Initiative, 2015, p. 13). In spite of this awareness, however, this problem continues.

Since there has been a school counselor shortage for years, MoNE has recruited nonschool counseling degree graduates with insufficient training in order to avert this shortage. However, with the rapid increase in the number of counselor training programs countrywide in recent years, it is estimated that in the near future the supply of school counselors will soon exceed the recruitment capacity of MoNE. At the latest yearly regular department chairs’ meeting, it was decided to initiate lobbying efforts in an effort to decrease the quota of school counseling training programs.

Despite all of these facts, MoNE still continues to recruit nonschool counseling degree graduates and is strongly criticized by the Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association, since this disadvantages new school counseling graduates and also negatively impacts the profession’s reputation. According to 2011 statistics, out of 18,828 school counselors who work in public schools, only 13,419 of them hold a degree in school counseling, and the rest of them were recruited from other majors such as philosophy, sociology, and psychology (TPCGA, 2011). The lack of MoNE’s national plan in terms of workforce planning of school counselors is a significant problem (Yeşilyaprak, 2012). There should be a nationwide needs assessment in order to develop sound strategic planning. If this issue is not controlled in a strategic manner, there is the risk of continuing uncoordinated policy responses to school counselor workforce challenges.

## The Role and Functions of School Counselors in Turkey

MoNE (2001) defined the functions of school counselors through a document entitled “The MoNE Guidance and Psychological Counseling Services Regulation.” In this document the functions of school counselors were defined in 19 items (Article 50). The following activities were deemed appropriate for school counselors: collaborating with teachers to present guidance lessons, ensuring student records are maintained as related to guidance service; designing guidance and counseling programs based on schools’ needs; providing individual counseling services to students; planning educational and career guidance activities, implementing them or guiding other teachers in implementation; guiding students with special needs and their families within the collaboration of Provincial Guidance and Research Centers (GRCs); organizing meetings, conferences, or panels for parents, students, and teachers; evaluating guidance and counseling activities at the end of the school year; and preparing an evaluation report.

In the same regulation, inappropriate activities for school counselors to partake in were also delineated (Article 55). Included in the list of inappropriate activities were the following: substituting for absent teachers, performing clerical and administrative duties, hall monitoring, and acting as an invigilator. Although addressing school counselors’ appropriate and inappropriate job functions in a formal government regulation might give power to practitioners in performing their job, these guidelines have been found to be vague by many academicians (Korkut, 2007; Korkut-Owen & Owen, 2008) since these tasks and major functions were not dependent on clearly defined role descriptions. Besides that, since this regulation was put into practice in 2001 before the infusion of a comprehensive approach to school counseling, it is thus questionable whether defined functions of school counselors in this regulation meet the functions of school counselors with respect to preventative and comprehensive developmental perspectives.

In Turkey, all undergraduate students who study for any degree in an education faculty have to take a course focusing on the practice of guidance counseling before graduation (HEC, 1997). This requirement may help to educate future teachers and principals in developing a greater appreciation for the roles and responsibilities of school counselors. However, there is no research on how this course shapes future educators' understanding of school counselors' role and functions nor overall school counseling services. Due to this fact, this mandatory course can be interpreted as an indicator of the essential value of school counseling services (Korkut-Owen et al., 2009).

Along these lines, several recent studies were conducted to determine principals' and teachers' perceptions of the responsibilities of school counselors. For example, Korkut-Owen and Owen (2008) found similar patterns of role expectations and valued counselor activities between school counselors and school principals, both of which placed less emphasis on administrative duties as school counselor functions. In contrast, some other studies revealed that school principals do not have sufficient knowledge of the scope and the purpose of counseling services (Nazlı, 2007) and they continue to perceive administrative and clerical tasks, and substitute teaching, as functions of the school counselor (Aydın, Arastaman, & Akar, 2011).

In recent years, the leadership (Köse, 2015) and advocacy role of school counselors has also opened up for discussion in school counseling literature (Gültekin, 2004; Keklik, 2010). The debate about the role and main functions of school counselors is likely to continue in the future.

Lastly, the Provincial Guidance and Research Centers (GRCs) plays an important role in providing school counseling services in Turkey. GRCs are governmental units tied to MoNE and available in each province. Their main function is to carry out special education services, deliver some counseling services to schools that lacked school counselors, and provide extra support to counseling services to schools in the region (Korkut-Owen & Güneri, 2013).

## A National School Guidance Program in Turkey

One major recent development in school counseling in Turkey was the adoption of a comprehensive developmental school guidance program in 2006. This program aims to position school counseling services as an integral part of the school mission and place school counselors in proactive role to serve all students, not just those with mental health needs. With the adaptation of a national scheme for school counseling services, school counselors are required to meet the needs of students in educational, career, and personal/social domains, and a focus on preventive and developmental counseling in schools has gained importance (Ergüner-Tekinalp, Leuwerke & Terzi, 2009; Korkut-Owen et al., 2009).

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model was taken as a template in the preparation of this comprehensive developmental school guidance program for Turkish schools (Nazlı, 2006). Prior to its current model, this program was piloted in some curriculum laboratory schools between 2000 and 2003 (Nazlı, 2006). Since the pilot study produced positive outcomes, such as increased study skills, adaptation skills, decision-making and problem-solving skills of students, and positively affected students' acceptance of self and career development (Nazlı, 2006), the comprehensive developmental guidance concept was consequently extended to all elementary and secondary schools countrywide in 2006 (Ergüner-Tekinalp et al., 2009; Korkut-Owen et al., 2009). Part of this effort, a framework program called "Elementary and Secondary Class Guidance Curriculum" was developed by MoNE and was implemented in 2006.

Starting from 2006, the MoNE Board of Education gradually added one mandatory "guidance hour" to the overall curriculum at all education levels, and classroom teachers were made responsible for delivering classroom guidance lessons with the collaboration of school counselors, in line with the "Elementary and Secondary Class Guidance Curriculum" of MoNE (the term "guidance hour" instead of "guidance class" was chosen so that it would not

be perceived as a regular lesson) (MoNE, 2006). This implementation was widely considered a positive gain for the profession and forms the backbone of the comprehensive developmental guidance program (Şensoy-Briddick & Briddick, 2015). However, Turkey had a major policy reform in the education system during the 2012–2013 academic years. Compulsory education was extended from 8 years to 12 years and divided into 4 years elementary, 4 years middle, and 4 years high school education (publically called as 4 + 4 + 4 system). In this way, religious schools have become optional for the middle school stage of education. As part of this policy reform, a number of elective courses (religious elective courses added) were also increased in the national public school curricula. To be able to open up a place to newly added elective courses, mandatory guidance hours were eventually abandoned by 2015 in elementary and middle schools (MoNE, 2014). The removal of guidance hours that were previously part of the general school curriculum jeopardized the implementation of a comprehensive developmental approach. Instead, the 1-h mandatory “Guidance and Career Planning Lesson” was added to the overall curriculum only for students in grade eight, and classroom guidance teachers were tasked to teach this lesson in line with the framework program provided by MoNE (MoNE, 2014). Classroom guidance activities still continue at high school level as part of “Secondary Schools Guidance and Orientation Lesson” (MoNE, 2011).

A recent study revealed that this shift in the Turkish education system from a traditional guidance model to a comprehensive developmental school guidance model has been embraced by school counseling practitioners, since it provided explicit goals for the school counseling program, made school counselors’ role definition more clear, and opened up a method of collaboration with teachers (Terzi, Ergüner-Tekinalp, & Leuwerke, 2011). On the other hand, there have been some challenges to successful implementation. Some of these challenges include a high student-counselor ratio (Nazlı, 2006; Ergüner-

Tekinalp et al., 2009; Demirel, 2010); some deficiencies in counselor education programs, such as graduates who are not trained to implement a preventive, developmental counseling program (Ergüner-Tekinalp et al., 2009); availability of evidence-based preventive curriculums or group interventions for use by counselors (Köse Şirin & Diker Coşkun, 2015); and classroom teachers with insufficient training in delivering guidance lessons (Demirel, 2010; Siyez, Kaya, & Uz Bas, 2012; Terzi et al., 2011). All of these have been highlighted as some of the significant difficulties faced in trying to implement a comprehensive developmental guidance program in Turkey.

Although a comprehensive developmental approach to school counseling has been implemented in Turkey since 2006, there is no clearly defined national model in which the mission, role, and functions of school counselors or service delivery components are thoroughly considered. The existing model is more like a framework curriculum that gives structure for school-based counseling services.

Research that evaluates the impact of a comprehensive developmental school guidance program is very limited, although empirical evidence showing the benefits of this program is needed (Ergüner-Tekinalp et al., 2009; Stockton & Güneri, 2011). In addition to this, the model has been criticized, since the program has not been revised nor improved since 2006. Also, as stated earlier, recent removal of classroom guidance lessons from the overall national public schools’ curricula is thought provoking in terms of future of comprehensive school counseling programs in Turkey. Education policy in Turkey is highly controversial, incredibly polarized, and a debated issue in society that lasts a couple years. It is argued that current government, as part of their political agenda, implicitly implements policies to shape both the content and structure of education system more religious at the expense of secular academic schooling. In such current sociopolitical environment, it is getting challenging to agree to a common vision about what school counseling programing should address at the national level.



## Refugees and School Counseling in Turkey

Currently, the Syrian refugee issue is one of the most debated topics in Turkey. More than 4 million refugees from the Syrian Civil War have left their home country since the start of the war, and Turkey has taken in the largest number of Syrian refugees of any country in the world. Nearly 2.5 million Syrians have taken refuge in Turkey since 2011 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHRC], 2016), and of those, more than 1.7 million live in refugee camps (Darcy et al. (2015) Close to half of these are children under the age of 17 (UNHRC, 2016). As of the 2014–2015 academic year, 150,000 Syrian students have been integrated into the Turkish education system (Istanbul Bilgi University Children Study Unit [ÇOÇA], 2015). Many of these students have experienced psychological difficulties, such as symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), since they were exposed to violence in Syria, and further stressors, such as poverty after immigration and difficulties integrating into a new culture, all of which make their situation worse (ÇOÇA, 2015).

A recent study noted that these students underutilize school counseling services, and school counselors do not offer any interventions for them, since they feel either inadequately resourced or skilled to serve this population. High counselor-student ratios and language barriers are also highlighted as factors that negatively impact the school counselor's ability to help this population of students (ÇOÇA, 2015).

Considering that there are also other refugee populations, totaling approximately 36,000 individuals, from countries such as Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Somalia, the education and mental health needs of refugee students should be taken seriously (Şeker & Aslan, 2015). The MoNE should provide support for school counselors (e.g., handbooks, in-service training) to equip them with the knowledge and skills to help these students in a school setting, and more school counselors should be appointed to those schools where there is a high occurrence of refugee students.

## Egypt

School counseling services in Egypt are delivered by “psychological professionals,” and their utilization is mandatory in schools (Mikhemar, 2013). The term “psychological professionals” has been found to be problematic since it does not reflect the professional identity of school counselors. Although mandatory, many public schools lack counseling services due to a shortage of qualified professionals and budgetary concerns of the Ministry of Education. Based on Ministry of Education data from 2011, the total number of “psychological professionals” in middle and high schools was 9,082 and the demand for school counselors in that same year was 31,736 (Mikhemar, 2013). Results from a study found an overall statewide student-to-counselor ratio of 3080:1, and in the same study, it was estimated that the population of Egypt would surpass 83 million and rise to 100 million by the year 2025 (Jimerson, Alghorani, Darweish, & Abdelaziz, 2010). All this data reveals that insufficient numbers of school counselors will become an important issue that negatively impacts the quality of school counseling services in Egypt, unless the Ministry of Education takes action to eliminate the shortage.

School counselors in Egypt generally graduate from Psychology Departments that are housed in Colleges of Arts (Amer, 2013). There is no higher education institution that offers specialization in school counseling (Amer, 2013; Mikhemar, 2013). Therefore, a mental health model of counseling is the primary focus of counseling services in schools, and counseling, consultation, direct interventions, primary prevention, and psychometric assessments (e.g., intelligence tests) are reported to be the main work activities of school counselors (Jimerson et al., 2010).

It is pointed out in the literature that non-counseling tasks, such as clerical and administrative duties, take up much of a counselor's time and the profession faces role disparity and unclear responsibilities, which lead to the underestimation of counselors' functions in the schools (Jimerson et al., 2010; Mikhemar, 2013). In addition, insufficient



resources (Jimerson et al., 2010) and the government's unfair payment policies for school counselors (Mikhemar, 2013) are also highlighted as significant problems that negatively impact the profession.

There are two psychological associations in Egypt, namely, the Egyptian Association for Psychological Studies and the Egyptian Psychologist Association (Jimerson et al., 2010); however, there is no professional association for counseling nor school counseling (Mikhemar, 2013). The counseling profession in Egypt is not considered a unique and distinct discipline from psychology (Amer, 2013; Mikhemar, 2013); therefore, the profession faces an identity crisis. Amer (2013) asserts that "the roles of school versus clinical psychologist are sometimes contested and psychological practice is often conflated with social work or psychiatry" (p. 26). As it is not seen as an independent profession, there is no national system of certifying school counselors (Amer, 2013).

Research on school counseling in Egyptian literature is limited. The lack of funding resources for scholars and language barriers impede the advancement of research. It is pointed out that even if there is some valuable published research on counseling, it is not widely read internationally due to the limited language ability of the Egyptian researchers and therefore their inability to publish in Western journals (Amer, 2013; Mikhemar, 2013).

Political instability, overpopulation, within-country immigration, and poverty are the main social problems in Egypt. These socioeconomic hardships have had many consequences for school-aged children (Amer, 2013). For example, one recent research report shows that during the Egyptian political conflict (the so-called Arab Spring) children whose schools were located close to the main conflict areas (Tahrir Square) suffered from depression, PTSD, and anxiety symptoms, since they witnessed considerable violence (Moussa et al., 2015). Nevertheless, resources to support these students are limited. It can be concluded that these issues should be addressed in school counseling policies in Egypt. Lastly, the need for culturally

appropriate approaches in counseling is also highlighted as an issue that should be shown attention in the future, since Western Models do not always fit the religio-cultural context of Egypt (Amer, 2013).

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## Iran

The history of school counseling in Iran started in the 1960s when the Iranian Ministry of Education sent a group of local experts to Western countries such as the United States, Canada, and England to study counseling and related fields. These experts established and developed the counseling profession when they returned from abroad (Fatemi, Khodayari, & Stewart, 2015).

Following their inception, in 1967, the first counselor education programs were opened at both the undergraduate and master's levels in Departments of Education and Psychology at Tehran's Tarbiat Moallem University. Starting in 1986, a number of counselor education programs were developed in Tehran and also doctoral level studies became available (Korkut-Owen, Damirchi, & Molaei, 2013). A notable event occurred in 1971 when school counseling first started to be implemented at middle school level. Efforts to increase school counseling services in the education system were accelerated, mostly in middle schools, starting from 1985 (Korkut-Owen et al., 2013). Currently, school counseling is mandated for secondary schools in Iran (Harris, 2013), and there has been no updated information collected about the school-counselor-to-student ratio. However, Harris (2013) states that there are not enough trained counselors for every school in Iran, especially in rural areas.

A School Counseling degree is offered at undergraduate, master's, and doctorate levels in Iran in the Departments of Psychology and Education. There are 18 undergraduate, 15 master's, and 5 doctoral level programs currently available in the country. While most universities offer a generic psychological counseling degree, in some of them, school counseling is offered as a distinct specialization (Korkut-Owen et al., 2013). As the Iranian

education system is centralized, the Ministry of Science and Technology has begun to regulate the curriculum of counseling programs at all levels (Korkut-Owen et al., 2013). Counselor training programs are criticized, since many of the concepts and theories taught in these programs have been adopted from Western countries without critically evaluating whether they are culturally relevant to Iranian society (Birashk, 2013; Fatemi et al., 2015).

Iranian school counselors (officially termed “consultants”) are expected to provide educational counseling, preventive counseling, career planning, and individual/group counseling for students who need special attention (Fatemi et al., 2015). They encounter some problems, which impede their effectiveness. First, other school employees are not fully aware of the professional roles of counselors (Fatemi et al., 2015). Second, they lack necessary valid measures when working with students, such as interest inventories, among others (Alavi, Boujarian, & Ninggal, 2012; Fatemi et al., 2015). Third, they don’t have enough in-service training opportunities to improve their counseling knowledge and skills (Alavi et al., 2012). Lastly, nonschool counseling graduates are appointed to school counselor positions due to scarce numbers of counselors, and this is considered one of the biggest challenges for the profession (Korkut-Owen et al., 2013). Further studies are needed to identify the barriers and problems of school counseling in Iran (Alavi et al., 2012).

In 1988, the Iranian Psychological Counseling Association (IPCA) was chartered. This association serves to advocate for the counseling profession, creating international connections and promoting research in the field. Also, the IPCA monitors and gives work licenses to psychological counseling clinics (Korkut-Owen et al., 2013). Although private practitioners in counseling are required to obtain licensure, there is no such regulation for school counselors (Fatemi et al., 2015).

Fatemi et al. (2015) state that larger societal events such as the Iran-Iraq war, which continued for 8 years, and large-scale natural disasters such as the Tehran earthquake of 1990 increased the

demand for counseling services in Iran. Currently, a prevalence of substance abuse among adolescents, high youth unemployment rates, and Iranian youths’ struggles in seeking a balance between Western and traditional values (Fatemi et al., 2015) are cited as common societal concerns. How national school counseling policy guidelines aim to address these large-scale social issues was beyond the scope of this work.

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## Israel

The school counseling profession was actively integrated into the Israeli education system during the early 1960s when 34 school counselors (officially termed “teacher counselors”) were appointed to different public schools (Karayanni, 1996). Since then the number of school counselors has increased rapidly, and currently there are about 4300 school counselors working in Israeli schools (Israelashvili, 2013) and the student-counselor ratio is approximately 1:570 (Erhard & Erhard-Weiss, 2007; Harris, 2013). School counselors are required in all educational settings in Israeli schools (Israelashvili, 2013).

School counseling in Israel has been influenced by the American counseling tradition. In the formative years of school counseling, the American School Counseling Association’s (ASCA) approach was taken as a guide while establishing the school counselor’s role and the main functions of school counseling services in Israel (Rantissi, 2002). When school counseling first entered into the education system in the 1960s, it was perceived as a means of addressing the vocational needs of students, assisting disadvantaged pupils to improve their learning (Karayanni, 1996) and responding to the mental health needs of high-risk students (Erhard & Harel, 2005). During the 1980s, a need for redefinition of the function of school counseling services arose, since the remedial focus of counselors was considered ineffective, as they spent the majority of their time working with limited numbers of students rather than devoting their efforts to improving the whole school system (Rantissi, 2002). Therefore, in the 1980s, the focus of

school counseling shifted from individual guidance and counseling to primary prevention (Erhard & Harel, 2005). From that time to the current day, the role of the school counselor in Israel has transformed to address the developmental needs of all students (Erhard & Harel, 2005), and currently, the ideal approach to school counseling is considered developmental, preventive, and systems-oriented (Klingman, 2002). Erhard and Harel (2005) state that “[t]he profession in Israel as in many other countries is being transformed from various marginal, ancillary and supplemental services to comprehensive counseling that is integral to the total school education program” (p. 87).

Recent research conducted with 681 school counselors in Israel revealed that 40% of the counselors in the sample allocated a greater amount of their time to direct individual counseling to students and focused on crisis and remedial counseling, whereas 20% of the counselors mainly focused on preventive activities through classroom guidance or small group counseling, and finally 40% of them equally divided their time between remedial and preventive counseling (Erhard & Harel, 2005). Frequent paradigm shifts (individual intervention versus systemic orientation and prevention versus remediation) in the understanding of the school counseling profession are considered one of the causes of role confusion concerning school counselors in Israel (Shimoni & Greenberger, 2014). It is also stated in the Israeli literature that the use of counselors for non-counseling tasks is prevalent and this has also exacerbated the difficulty in clarifying the professional roles (Shimoni & Greenberger, 2014). Standards for the Professional Practice of School Counseling, which were prepared based on ASCA National Standards for School Counseling, were published in Israel in 2009 (Shimoni & Greenberger, 2014). This development is promising in terms of resolving the tension over ideal professional roles (Shimoni & Greenberger, 2014).

Besides their myriad and disparate responsibilities, the unique needs of Israeli society have also impacted the roles of Israeli school counselors. For example, responding to war-related

trauma of students is considered one of the main responsibilities of Israeli school counselors (Israelashvili, 2013), as Israel has been involved in several major armed conflicts since it was established in 1948. As schools are considered the major source of social support and a facilitator of recovery (Abel & Friedman, 2009), school counselors are expected to debrief the children when cities are under attack and enable them to interact with one another in order to seek social support and help conflict-affected pupils (Israelashvili, 2013). In addition, when violent political conflict occurs, they are considered the main actor in the schools in taking a leading role in “consultation [with] school administrators and educators with regard to their difficulties in conducting situation-relevant classroom discussions and handling pupils’ stress reactions” (Klingman, 2002, p. 248). They are also “encouraged to educate students and advocate their participation in the ongoing peace process” (Abel & Friedman, 2009, p. 267). Due to these realities of the profession, it is not surprising that war-related literature and research in school counseling in Israel is prevalent and crisis intervention is emphasized in almost all school counseling preparation programs (Karayanni, 1996).

Another unique aspect of Israeli society, which also affects the roles of school counselors, is its identity as a multiethnic, multiracial, and multi-religious society. Israel is considered the homeland of Jews the world over and therefore accepts many immigrants who have connections to Judaism (Israelashvili, 2013). Also, about 20% of Israel’s population is composed of Palestinian Arabs. School counselors are expected to deal with the specific needs of immigrant children who come from different racial and ethnic identities (Karayanni, 1996). Even in the 1990s, when nearly a million immigrants from the former Soviet Union arrived in Israel, schools provided extra counseling hours for this purpose (Karayanni, 1996). Related to this issue of diversity in Israeli society, Tatar and Horenczyk (2003) argue that “[t]hree main areas seem to become pivotal in the professional agenda of Israeli school counselors in the 21st century: working with multicultural populations; implementing

conflict resolution strategies, especially for dealing with violence and antisocial behavior; and developing a systemic self-awareness as agents for social action and change” (p. 378). It is also noted in the literature that building multicultural competencies in school counselor trainees is essential in Israel, since schools are culturally heterogeneous institutions (Erhard & Sinai, 2012; Horenczyk & Tatar, 2004; Tatar, 2012; Tatar & Horenczyk, 2003) and counseling of immigrants and students from minority groups should receive more attention (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2004).

School counseling training is generally offered at graduate level within schools of education (Israelashvili, 2013; Lazovsky & Shimoni, 2007). As of 2012, six universities offer graduate degrees (master’s and doctoral) in school counseling (Israelashvili & Wegman-Rozi, 2012). After graduation, school counselor’s in-service training continues under the supervision of their municipal counseling inspector (Israelashvili, 2013). Currently, in Israel, there are no state laws and regulations for licensure on professional school counseling. Despite a great deal of effort having been put in by the Israeli Association of School Counselors, these efforts have failed (Israelashvili & Wegman-Rozi, 2012).

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## **Integrative Summary and Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, an overview of school counseling in Middle Eastern countries, namely, in Egypt, Iran, Israel, and Turkey, is given. This literature review revealed that the profession of school counseling in these countries is promising and rapidly evolving. In addition, they have some commonalities with regard to challenges that the school counseling profession as a whole faces. Table 25.1 summarizes some aspects of school counseling in these four countries.

First of all, the school counseling profession in these countries struggles to establish a clear professional identity. With the exception of Egypt, comprehensive developmental counseling models are considered the best approach to

school counseling, although there are no written national models that reflect the unique cultural and organizational needs of these societies. Developing national school counseling program models would shape the professional identity of school counselors, so that they might have a clearer professional vision and ground their identity based on these national models. Related to this identity issue, the variety of titles that has been used for school counselors in Middle Eastern countries is noteworthy. Considering that professional titles frame implicit and explicit assumptions about the scope of professional practice and professional identity, disparate and often confusing titles should be universally replaced by the title “school counselor.”

Secondly, there are no accreditation standards or counselor certification requirements in these countries. A strong initiative is needed to create a legislative process for the accreditation of school counselor training programs and school counselor licensure.

Thirdly, in Middle Eastern countries, there is a clear need to develop culturally relevant theories. Equally, measurement instruments and techniques used in school counseling have been cited as especially important areas for researchers to focus on and develop. Since the emergence of school counseling started with the significant impact of the Western model in Middle Eastern countries, many theoretical approaches and models in counseling were imported from the west without any consideration of cultural adaptation. There is a strong need to assess their cultural validity and limitations.

Fourthly, high school-counselor-to-student ratios and nationwide school counselor shortages are another significant problem in all these countries. Policy solutions used to alleviate this problem in Turkey and Iran bear some resemblance. In both countries, nonschool counseling graduates have been endorsed as school counselors to eliminate shortages and have created undergraduate programs to fill the gap in a shorter time period. It appears that a discrepancy between the recommended student-to-school-counselor ratio and the current ratio in Egypt will worsen due to a rapid increase in the population. Further

**Table 25.1** School counseling in Egypt, Iran, Israel, and Turkey

	Beginning of the school counseling profession	Title used for school counselors	Professional association	Situation of counseling services in schools	School-counselor-to-student ratio	School counseling program approaches	School counselor training	Program accreditation and school counselor licensure
Egypt	The counseling profession is not considered a unique and distinct discipline from psychology	Psychological professional	None	Mandatory	3080	Mental health model of counseling approach	Psychology graduates are employed as school counselors. No distinct program for counselor training	Not exist
Iran	1960s	Consultant	Iranian Psychological Counseling Association	Mandated only for secondary schools	No available information	Comprehensive developmental approach	Offered at undergraduate, master's, and doctorate levels	Not exist
Israel	1960s	Teacher counselor	Israeli Association of School Counselors	Mandatory	570	Comprehensive developmental approach	Offered at graduate level	Not exist
Turkey	1950s	Guidance teacher	The Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association	Mandatory	650	Comprehensive developmental approach	Offered at undergraduate, master's, and doctorate levels	Not exist



research is needed regarding possible reasons for the shortage, and a nationally representative needs assessment is required to make future projections. Based on the evidence of current research, both policy-level decision-makers and counselor education institutions should commit to create a unified solution to the shortage.

Unfortunately, the Middle East is a conflict-prone region. Often, school-aged children are affected by war, internal violence, terrorist attacks, and political instability. Due to this fact, Middle Eastern school counselors should be trained to respond to trauma, because school counseling cannot be considered in isolation from larger societal events. Therefore, they have to be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for school-based emergency crisis interventions in the event of mass tragedies, psychological first aid, and the necessary skills to aid in the grieving/healing process. It appears that the Israeli school counseling literature is relatively more well developed in terms of this need and might prove useful for other Middle Eastern school counseling professionals. In addition, school counselors can also play a “change agent” role with regard to social conflict. For example, peace education and multicultural education can be easily integrated into school counseling activities. However, in order to translate such ideas into practice, policy-level regulations are needed.

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# Policy Research on School-Based Counseling in the United States: Establishing a Policy Research Agenda

# 26

John C. Carey and Ian Martin

This chapter is a review of the major policy studies concerning school-based counseling in the USA that were disseminated between 2000 and 2015. This review was conducted to examine the relationships between public education policy and school counseling practice in the USA, to determine what is known and not known, and to identify policy studies that need to be conducted to investigate unresolved policy-related questions.

Educational research is conducted and disseminated with three possible audiences in mind: practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers. Educational research seeks to generate knowledge that leads to improved practice and to investigate which variables are associated with effective practice. Educational research is also conducted to educate and inform policy-makers charged with making decisions about whether or not to promote and support various educational approaches, programs, and activities through policy and law. Furthermore, educational research that was originally intended to inform practitioners and researchers can be

“repurposed” if it is intentionally reexamined from the policy perspective. For example, a body of practitioner-focused research can be critically reviewed to identify its implications for educational policy (e.g., Borders & Drury, 1992). Policy studies included in the present article therefore include research originally intended to support policy-making and reviews of research that have policy implications.

Herr (2000, 2002) and Gysbers (2001) noted that throughout its history, the practice of school counseling has been dramatically shaped by public policy that was directly intended to influence school counseling practice (e.g., the National Defense Education Act) or by policy that had an indirect influence on school counseling practice through changes instituted in public education structures (e.g., federal laws like No Child Left Behind that govern the reform of public schools) within which school-based counseling is situated. Federal legislation that directly influenced the practice of school counseling includes: the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984, and the School to Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (Gysbers, 2001; Herr, 2000, 2002). Collectively, these acts were intended to encourage more students to pursue higher education and advanced careers in science and technology, to enable noncollege-bound students to receive appropriate vocational guidance in schools, and to facilitate transitions between K-12 schooling

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and work or a career. Judging only from these major federal acts, it could be concluded that federal policy goals related to school-based counseling are primarily focused on the promotion of students' vocational or career development and college placement (with a special focus on science and technology careers) to promote the economic development and security of the nation.

The most significant recent indirect public policy effect on the practice of school-based counseling in the USA is the No Child Let Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007). This act attempted to create dramatic reform in US public education through the encouragement of the adoption of a standards-based model for schooling. To qualify for federal block grants, states were required to reform their public education systems by incorporating critical features of standards-based education such as comprehensive state curriculum frameworks, frequent standardized testing of students based on these frameworks, high-stakes testing based on these frameworks, identification of underperforming schools based on their capacity to promote increased achievement in all student groups, and explicit sanctions for underperforming schools, educators, and students. NCLB did not attempt to explicitly reform school counseling practice but, in fact, resulted in dramatic changes in school counseling that were seen as necessary to adapt the profession to a standards-based educational environment. Manifestation of these changes included the American School Counselors Association's (ASCA) creation of a set of national student learning standards for school counseling (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) and a national model for school counseling programs (ASCA, 2003). A school counseling model and set of learning standards were intentional initiatives of the national professional association to adjust school counseling practice to fit standards-based education. The ASCA National Model (2003) placed much more of a focus on students' academic achievement than on their successful transition to college, mental health, or psychosocial development, under the assumption that this focus was necessary for the

successful incorporation of school counseling into a standards-based public education environment. It should be noted that the changes advocated by ASCA to help the profession prosper in standards-based educational environments (i.e., increased focus on academic achievement) are not perfectly aligned with the long-standing federal policy focus on postsecondary placement.

In 2009, the Obama administration created the Race to the Top (RTTT) competition. RTTT awards large education grants to states that implement education reforms targeted at using standards and assessment to prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace, using educational data more effectively, enhancing the effectiveness of teachers and principals, and turning around low-achieving schools. Despite RTTT's focus on college and workplace transitions, only one state (Massachusetts) thus far has included school counseling reform as a RTTT strategy.

In 2014, Michelle Obama initiated the Reach Higher initiative. It is difficult at this early stage to evaluate its approaches or to speculate about its impact (especially in the context of a change in administrations after the 2016 presidential elections). It is interesting to note that this initiative is consistent with past federal policy initiatives (e.g., the National Defense Education Act) that saw improving school-based counseling as a way to promote students' access to and transition to postsecondary education.

The present review reflects an analysis of policy studies during a critically important period of change for the school counseling profession in the USA. In the decade after 2000, standards-based education emerged as the dominant model for public education. The school counseling profession in the USA underwent dramatic changes as it adapted to this new model. These adaptations reflected a reconceptualization of the goals of school-based counseling, the activities of school counselors, and how school counseling activities are organized and managed within public schools. Focusing the review on this time period should make evident the types of policy-related changes that have occurred as the

influence of standards-based education has grown in the USA.

To identify articles for inclusion, we reviewed the peer-reviewed *Professional School Counseling* journal to identify research and research reviews that were explicitly directed in whole or in part to policy-makers. In addition, we consulted the websites of various organizations (e.g., the College Board's National Office for School Counselor Advocacy) and national and state professional associations concerned with school counselor advocacy (e.g., ASCA, National Association for College Admission Counseling, state school counseling associations) to locate studies that were either conducted to influence public policy or that were being used by the organizations in policy advocacy contexts. We also consulted the reference sections of each of these documents to identify additional articles. In all, we located 37 documents disseminated between 2000 and 2015 that were either intentionally written with a focus on policy implications or frequently used to attempt to influence policy decision-making. In a previous monograph (Carey & Martin, 2015), we have presented a critical methodological review of these studies. The present chapter is organized according to the major policy issues that are addressed by these studies in order to highlight the critical questions that have been addressed and identify the extent to which they have been answered. These recent policy studies in the USA have addressed seven basic issues related to the practice of school-based counseling:

1. The work of school-based counselors
2. The benefits of counseling services
3. The breadth of the role of school-based counselors
4. The benefits associated with implementing the comprehensive developmental model and the ASCA National Model
5. Student-to-counselor ratios and student outcomes
6. Effective school-based counseling activities and practices
7. State educational policy and effective school-based counseling practices

## The Work of School-Based Counselors

Between 2000 and 2015 the results of two major national surveys related to public policy concerning school counselor activities. In addition, the National Association for College Admission Counseling published the results of its yearly *Counseling Trends Survey* (see NACAC, 2011) each year from 2004 through 2014.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2003) of the US Department of Education conducted a national survey of public high schools in 2002 that included information on school counseling programs, activities, and staffing in order to provide basic descriptive information on school counseling in US public high schools.

In 2002, about 49,500 guidance staff members (counselors and paraprofessionals) were employed in public high schools in the USA. Overall, a ratio of 315 students for every full-time school counselor was noted (which reflected 284 students for every school counselor including full- and part-time counselors). Most emphasis was placed on activities related to scheduling of high school courses, postsecondary admission and selection, and student attendance, discipline, and personal problems. Relatively little emphasis was reported on student's job placement and immediate employability. Non-guidance activities (e.g., hall/lunch duty, bus duty) were reported to occupy relatively little time. Helping students with their academic achievement was the most emphasized goal of high school guidance programs (48%). The guidance program activity in which students participated most often was individual counseling sessions (as was also the case in the 1984 survey).

In 2011, the College Board's National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (2011) published a national survey of school counselors that was conducted to understand how counselors viewed their roles, how they spent their time, and how they viewed measures of accountability and education policies and practices related to their roles within the educational system.

Very large differences were discovered between school counselors' views of ideal and



actual goals of public education. Significant differences were also noted between participants' views of the ideal and actual mission of school counselors, and the majority of counselors indicated a desire to spend more time on activities related to improving student achievement and school success. Although the vast majority of respondents reported having a Master's degree, only a small minority indicated that they felt very well trained for their jobs, and over a quarter of the group indicated that their training did not prepare them well for their job.

Based on the survey results, NOSCA (2011) suggested the following state policy recommendations: align university-based counselor education with the actual knowledge and skills needed to perform well as a school counselor, redefine state school counselor certification and licensing requirements to include competency in college and career readiness counseling, and mandate and enforce maximum school counselor caseloads. In addition, a number of national educational policy recommendations were forwarded: involve school counselors when formulating national education reform agendas; create and implement school counselors accountability measures to assess their contributions to student success; continue strategic philanthropic investments in the school counseling profession; connect federal legislation, especially the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, with school counseling reform initiatives to ensure that students are college and career ready; and expand research initiatives focused on determining the efficacy of different school counseling practices.

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) surveyed high school counseling programs regarding staffing and practices and also about college counseling activities each year between 2003 and 2012. Results indicated that the average student-to-counselor ratio in responding public schools was 285:1. Counselors in public high school schools indicated that "helping students with their academic achievement" was their school counseling department's top priority goal, while counselors in private schools indicated that "helping students plan and prepare for postsecondary educa-

tion" was the department's most important goal. Relatedly, counselors in public schools reported spending 23% of their time on college counseling, while their counterparts in private high schools reported spending 55% of their time on college counseling. Finally, the most frequent activities related to counseling were reported to be individual meetings with students to discuss postsecondary admission options and hosting college representatives at the high school. Even with relatively favorable caseloads, school counselors in public high schools spend relatively little time on college counseling and tend to use individual interviews as the major mode of practice.

*These studies suggest that public high school counselors in the USA in general experience favorable working conditions in terms of caseloads and freedom from having to focus on inappropriate tasks; deliver a wide range of different types of services to students; spend relatively little time on college counseling (or in fact any one type of service); focus more on course choice, college placement, and student behavioral issues than on post high school employment; rely heavily on individual interviews to accomplish their work; and feel that their graduate training did not adequately prepare them for the actual work of a school counselors. A number of public policy recommendations have been forwarded by NOSCA and NACAC to address issues and problems.*

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## The Benefits of Counseling Services

Since 2000, three studies have investigated the effectiveness of school counseling using existing databases. Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, and Holcomb-McCoy (2011) used data from the Education Longitudinal Study (ELS) of 2002 to investigate how students' contact with high school guidance counselors is related to college application rates. Student-counselor contact was significantly associated with application to college. Students who saw their counselor by 10th grade were twice as likely to apply to one college and 3.5 times as likely to apply to two or more



colleges as students who had not had contact. Students who reported having contact with their counselor in 12th grade (but not in 10th grade) also showed higher odds of applying to college but not as high as when contact was initiated in 10th grade.

Belasco (2013) also used data from the ELS of 2002 to study the relationships between high school students' contact with their school counselor and application to college and the extent to which these contacts with the counselor are more or less beneficial depending on students' socioeconomic level. Belasco (2013) found that (after controlling for other variables related college enrollment) counselor contacts were positively associated with students' college enrollment. This effect was particularly strong for enrollment at 4-year institutions. Results also demonstrated that the influence of school counselor contacts on college enrollment was most beneficial for low socioeconomic status.

Engberg and Gilbert (2014) examined the relationships between high school counseling practices and resources and students' college-going rates using data from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009. After controlling for demographic variables, Engberg and Gilbert (2014) found that the college-going rate was positively associated with the amount of time counselors spent on college counseling. Three school counseling program practices were found to be positively associated with college-going rates: offering financial aid information and assistance, participating in college fairs, and facilitating college connections by offering courses at 4-year colleges or organizing visits to colleges.

Using telephone survey methods, Public Agenda (2010) reported the results of a survey of a national sample of 614 adults in the USA who were 22–30 years old and who had completed at least some postsecondary education. Survey items measured participants' experiences with high school guidance counselors and satisfaction with services related to college readiness counseling. Most participants give their high school guidance counselors "fair" or "poor" ratings regarding their helpfulness with choosing and applying to a college. Participants

identifying delaying going to college and making poor choices about higher education as consequences of not receiving adequate counseling and practical advice in high school. Teachers were viewed as more helpful than high school counselors in terms of supporting students' college aspirations.

The report concluded that:

...Based on the responses here, the high school guidance system is another factor that educators and policymakers need to look at. When it comes to facilitating students' transition from high school to college or work, the current system is seriously under-serving those it is intended to help. (Public Agenda 2010; p. 14)

*Taken together, the results of these four studies suggest that while contact with a school counselor can be a very beneficial in promoting successful college transitions (especially for low socioeconomic status students), widespread dissatisfaction exists among college-going adults regarding the amount and type of help they received from their school counselors regarding college transitions.*

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## The Breadth of Role of School-Based Counselors

Civic Enterprises (2011), with the sponsorship and support of the College Board, published a landscape review of the school counseling literature to develop a general understanding of the roles of school counselors in middle and high schools, and "to determine where and how counselors can be better leveraged in education reform" (p. 6). The review references over 300 articles from diverse sources including conceptual articles, research articles, reports, and position papers. Civic Enterprises (2011) concluded that school-based counselors in the USA fail to make substantive contributions to students' academic achievement because their roles are too broadly defined which allows for the inclusion of many activities unrelated to students' academic achievement and college readiness. The report suggests the overly broad role of school-based counselors is related to a basic misalignment of

counselor preparation and counseling practice. Civic Enterprises noted that most university-based school counselor preparation programs focus on mental health counseling to the exclusion of foci (e.g., college readiness counseling, data use, or accountability) that would prepare counselors to make more effective contributions to improving students' achievement. The report recommends redefinition of the role of school-based counselors in the USA and a realignment of university-based counselor preparation programs with this narrower role.

*This study suggests that the range of activities that currently comprise the role of school counseling in US schools may be so broad that it is difficult for counselors to make a strong impact on any one area of practice. Narrowing the scope of activities and aligning university preparation with this narrowed role may be warranted.*

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### **The Benefits Associated with Implementing the Comprehensive Developmental Model and the ASCA National Model**

Several studies have examined the relationships between the organization of the counseling program and student outcomes and benefits. Lapan, Gysbers, and Petroski (2001) examined the relationships between the level of implementation of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs and outcomes related to school safety and success as reported by a statewide sample of 7th grade students and 7th grade teachers in Missouri. After controlling statistically for differences in socioeconomic status and enrollment among schools, the researchers found that in middle schools with more fully implemented comprehensive guidance programs, students reported feeling safer, having better relationships with their teachers, being more satisfied with the education they were receiving in their school, having greater awareness of the relevance and importance of education for their future, and earning higher grades.

Sink and Stroh (2003) collected data from 150 randomly selected public elementary schools in Washington state to determine whether comprehensive school counseling programs (CSCP) in elementary schools were related to higher academic achievement test scores. Sink and Stroh (2003) found that while the overall difference between implementing and non-implementing schools was small, the longer students were enrolled in high implementation CSCP schools, the more likely they were to have significantly higher achievement test scores than students in the non-implementing schools.

Sink, Akos, Turnbull, and Mvududu (2008) used a similar approach to examine the relationships between comprehensive school counseling program implementation and student academic achievement in middle schools in Washington state. Sink et al. (2008) found that while only minimal differences in student achievement were noted between implementing and non-implementing schools, the high implementation schools did outperform non-implementing schools on some important academic achievement measures.

Carey, Harrington, Martin, and Stevenson (2012) studied the associations between a wide range of student outcomes and the level of implementation of the ASCA National Model for program organization in Utah high schools. They found that the level of implementation of the ASCA National Model was associated with increased reading proficiency and math proficiency (measured by the state achievement test), increased college admission test scores, and increased percentage of students who chose to take the college admission test.

Carey, Harrington, Martin, and Hoffman (2012) used the same methods to study the relationships between student outcomes and ASCA National Model implementation in rural high schools in Nebraska. They found that, after statistically controlling for differences among schools, the level of implementation of an ASCA National Model delivery system was associated with increases in attendance rates, decreases in discipline rates, and decreases in suspension rates.

Lapan, Whitman, and Aleman (2012) used regression and multiple regression procedures to examine the relationships between academic achievement-related variables (e.g., graduation rates, attendance rates, suspension rates, and discipline incidents) and a comprehensive developmental program focus on college and career readiness in Connecticut high schools. Controlling statistically for differences among schools, they found that a higher level of counselor-reported focus on college and career readiness was associated with fewer student discipline incidents and decreased rates of suspension.

Dimmit and Wilkerson (2012) used data from a Rhode Island state database to identify the impact of implementing a comprehensive developmental school counseling program. The level of implementation of the comprehensive program as reported by counselors was found to correlate significantly with benefits for students (increased sense of belonging, decreased reports of conflicts with other students, decreased reports of conflicts with teachers, decreased reports of being teased/bullied, increased attendance, decreased suspensions) and parents (perceptions of the level of school's responsiveness to their concerns).

Burkhard, Gillen, Martinez, and Skytte (2012) used school counselor surveys combined with state school performance data to study the level of implementation of different components of comprehensive developmental guidance and the relationship between the implementation of these different components on student academic outcomes in Wisconsin high schools. They found that comprehensive developmental guidance (CDG) was implemented both poorly and unevenly across the state. However, correlations between these program components and student outcomes indicated that more complete implementation of most components was associated with increased attendance rates, higher graduation rates, decreased grade retention rates, and decreased truancy and suspension rates.

Finally, Wilkerson, PÉrusse, and Hughes (2013) reported the results of a quasi-experimental study,

which compared characteristic of 75 schools in Indiana that qualified for a "RAMP" award (based on their high level of implementation of the ACCA National Model) with a matched group of schools from the same state. RAMP and non-RAMP schools were compared on passing rates on standardized state academic achievement tests. Comparisons across groups indicated that RAMP elementary schools had significantly higher English proficiency rates than their non-RAMP counterparts. However, no differences between RAMP and non-RAMP schools at the middle school or high school were observed.

*Taken together, these studies indicate that organizing school counseling services according to a comprehensive developmental model (including the ASCA National Model) results in benefits to students including: enhanced engagement in school, increased attendance, increased graduation rates, reduced disciplinary problems, and reduced suspensions from school. Significant relationships between CDM organization and academic achievement were much less robust.*

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## Student-to-Counselor Ratios and Student Outcomes

Researchers at the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center (Hurwitz & Howell, 2013) used archival data from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) *Schools and Staffing Survey* (SASS) to estimate the effect of adding an additional high school counselor on students' 4-year college-going rates in 12 states that had state education policies specifying a maximum student-to-counselor ratio. Hurwitz and Howell (2013) estimated that adding an additional counselor would produce a 10% increase in students' 4-year college-going rates.

Carrell and Carrell (2006) examined the relationship between student-to-counselor ratios and discipline incidents over a 4-year period in 23 elementary schools in a large school district in Florida. They estimated that reducing the counselor staffing ratio from the current value of 544 students per counselor to the ASCA-recommended

250 students per counselor would result in very sizable decreases in the occurrence of student disciplinary problems.

Carrell and Hoekstra (2014) used the same data set and method as above to estimate the impact of adding an additional counselor to each elementary school on academic achievement as measured by state test scores. The researchers concluded that the addition of a counselor would significantly increase students' achievement. Based on comparisons to other studies, they noted that the impact of hiring one additional counselor would be more cost effective than either implementing a professional development program to increase the effectiveness of the teachers or hiring additional teachers to reduce class size.

Carey, Harrington, Martin, and Stevenson (2012) used state data to study the associations between a wide range of student outcomes and student-to-counselor staffing ratios in Utah high schools and found that after controlling statistically for school differences, more favorable student-to-counselor ratios were associated with higher attendance rates and lower discipline rates. Employing a similar methodology, Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley, and Pierce (2012) studied the relationships between student-to-counselor ratios and graduation rates, discipline incidents, attendance, and college admission test scores in Missouri high schools. After statistically controlling for differences among schools, more favorable student-to-counselor ratios were associated with increases in the graduation rate and decreases in the number of disciplinary incidents. In a related study of Connecticut high schools, Lapan, Whitcomb, and Aleman (2012) found that more favorable student-to-counselor ratios were associated with reduced student suspension rates.

*Both archival data set modeling studies and empirical investigations indicate that more favorable student-to-counselor ratios are associated with enhanced benefits to students especially in terms of improvements in attendance, improvements in graduation rates, and reductions in disciplinary problems.*

## **Effective School-Based Counseling Activities and Practices**

Hughes and Karp (2004) reviewed existing research related to career guidance interventions typically implemented by school counselors to establish the efficacy of these interventions and identified the most methodologically rigorous studies from the mid-1980s through 2004 that yielded evidence on whether career guidance programs influenced students' academic and vocational achievement. Hughes and Karp (2004) concluded that while many studies established a link between a range of career development interventions and vocational and academic outcomes, more research was needed before any definitive conclusions about effectiveness could be drawn.

McGannon, Carey, and Dimmitt (2005) completed a comprehensive review of 20 years of school counseling outcome research to determine the extent to which school counseling practice met NCLB Act (2001) requirements for the use of scientific research-based practices in schools. The authors determined that while research existed which demonstrated that each component of school counseling practice (e.g., individual counseling, group counseling, preventive/developmental curriculum, consultation) could achieve positive student outcomes, there was insufficient research information to draw inferences about the most effective modes of practice related to any component of practice. They indicated that this situation resulted from the fact that the field of school counseling has produced few research studies and a dearth of studies with strong research designs.

Whiston, Tai, Rahardja, and Eder (2011) conducted a meta-analytic review of school counseling outcome research studies conducted between 1980 and 2004. Studies were located through well-documented extensive search procedures to ensure that all relevant studies were identified. Overall, school counseling activities produced an average effect size of .30. In general, activities related to guidance curriculum and responsive services produced the highest effect sizes (.35) while activities associated with individual plan-

ning (.26) and program evaluation (.19) produced somewhat lower effect sizes. School counseling interventions proved to have the greatest impact on behavioral outcomes (.41) with lesser effects on affective (.23) and cognitive outcomes (.19). School counseling interventions were found to be especially effective in increasing students' problem-solving abilities (.91) and decreasing discipline problems (.86). Finally, school counseling interventions proved to have small but statistically significant average effect size related to student's GPA (.15) and standardized achievement test scores (.16). Whiston et al. (2011) concluded that while school counseling interventions in general produce their expected benefits for students, additional outcome research on school counseling activities is needed. The authors suggest further research on standardized interventions employing more rigorous designs was needed.

In addition, three US research efforts between 2000 and 2015 studied positive exemplars in districts or schools to identify effective school counseling practice. Fitch and Marshall (2004) examined the importance accorded to different facets of the school counselor role and function by a group of diverse counselors working in Kentucky schools that showed high achievement versus low achievement on the reading and math sections of a standardized academic achievement test. The authors found that counselors in high-achieving schools reported spending more time on: (1) program management, evaluation, and research; (2) coordination or "influencing systems more than individuals"; and (3) tasks related to adhering to professional standards (e.g., aligning programs to state and national standards).

Lapan and Harrington (2008) studied the 12 Touch Program implemented in Chicago public schools. This program was designed to promote a college-going climate by ensuring that middle school students experienced 12 key experiences related to college planning and successful transition to high school. Lapan and Harrington (2008) found that high school seniors are much more likely to apply to multiple colleges if they had attended schools in which the 12 Touch Program was more fully implemented. For every three

additional counselor "touches" (e.g., program components) that students experienced, the authors found a 6% increase in the rates that they applied to three or more colleges in their senior year. Interaction with an organized school counseling transition program focused on college attendance can positively influence college application rates.

Militello, Carey, Dimmitt, Lee, and Schweid (2009) and Millitello, Schweid, and Carey (2011) identified the exemplary practices of 18 high schools that received recognition for college preparation and placement in 2004 and 2005. These schools had received an "Inspiration Award" from the College Board in recognition of their ability to achieve high rates of students attending college despite the fact that the demographic characteristics of the student populations would predict otherwise. Through in-depth interviews with key personnel at each of the high schools, the researchers generated a set of ten domains that characterize the work of the school counselor that seem to be related to improved student enrollment in postsecondary institutions. Militello et al. (2009) indicated that in these Inspiration schools:

1. School counselors showed effective program management practices.
2. School counselors maintained external partnerships that add resources and social capital.
3. School counselors were leaders in the school.
4. School counselors showed effective college-focused interventions with low-income students.
5. School counselors helped establish an achievement-oriented school climate.
6. School counselors implemented effective parent academic and financial outreach programs.
7. School counselors thought systemically and used multilevel interventions.
8. School counselors used school data effectively.
9. School counselors facilitated the development and implementation of inclusive school policies.



10. School counselors routinized mundane aspects of the job or offload nonessential activities to free up time for innovative practice.

In addition, Millitello et al. (2011) indicated that educators in the Inspiration schools used a “collaboration-based” rather than a “role-based” approach to handling problems and issues related to students’ college transitions. They indicated that in traditional schools each participant (i.e., counselors, teachers, students, parents, and administrators) was viewed as being responsible for some aspect of the college transition process. If any participant failed to perform their role-related tasks, the transition process was compromised. In contrast, the authors suggested that the Inspiration schools operated in a collaborative mode. The necessary tasks related to students’ transitions were handled in creative ways based upon which participant was best positioned to address them. The authors suggested that “collaboration-based” work resulted in creative ways to compensate for the challenges presented to the college transition process by family poverty.

*These studies suggest that school counseling activities in general have a positive impact on students; the impact of school counseling activities is much more evident in terms of behavioral outcomes than in terms of achievement; well-designed school counseling initiatives focusing on promoting college going can have a strong impact on college transitions for traditionally underserved students. The studies also point out the desperate need for rigorous studies to identify effective school counseling practices.*

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### **State Educational Policy and Effective School-Based Counseling Practice**

The development of a state model for counseling in public schools by a state government agency (typically a state department of education) is a popular strategy to improve the practice of school counseling. Millitello et al. (2009) reported the

results of a national study of the implementation of state school counseling models. Martin, Carey, and DeCoster (2009) conducted telephone interviews with government personnel and professional association leaders, supplemented by the analyses of official documents and websites to determine the status of state-level school counseling models in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The authors gathered data on nine features (e.g., the existence of a written model, legislation associated with the model, professional development supporting implementation, an evaluation system to monitor model implementation) associated with model implementation to determine the extent to which states were actually committed to and involved in model implementation.

While the majority of US states (44) had developed written models, a great deal of variation existed concerning levels of implementation. Findings indicated that only 17 states had well-implemented models of school counseling. It was fairly common for states’ written models to incorporate features of the ASCA National Model (2005) and to offer professional development to support model implementation. It was fairly uncommon for states to align school counselor licensure requirements with the knowledge and skills needed for model implementation or to establish an evaluation system to monitor model implementation. While there was widespread interest across state government agencies in developing a state model aligned with the ASCA National Model (2005), many states lacked the implementation features needed to ensure that the official state model positively influenced school practices.

Skill in program evaluation is essential for the implementation of an ASCA National Model (2005) or an CDM program. Three studies investigated the extent to which states supported school counselors’ acquisition of program evaluation skills. Trevisan (2000) examined the program evaluation expectations within state school counselor licensing requirements in all 50 states of the USA. The study found that only 19 states actually required some proficiency in evaluation as part of school counseling licensure requirements.



Ultimately, Trevisan concluded that the evaluation requirements of the majority of states were not “sufficiently defined within the certification documentation to assure students receive proper training to develop and evaluate Comprehensive Developmental Counseling and Guidance programs” (p. 86).

Subsequently, Trevisan (2002) investigated evaluation within the school counseling profession through an analysis of the school counseling evaluation literature from 1972 to 2001, using Milstein and Cotton’s (2000) evaluation capacity framework as a conceptual framework. Trevisan found that the school counseling profession was underdeveloped across all aspects of the framework and warned that this lack of a professional evaluation infrastructure could greatly undermine the widespread adoption of CDG programs in schools since CDG programs assume that school counselors have a relatively high level of sophistication in evaluation practices.

Given this conclusion, Martin and Carey (2012) explored how state departments of education in two exemplary states (as identified by Martin et al., 2009) promoted school counselors’ capacity to engage in evaluation. An in-depth, qualitative, cross case analysis methodology showed that the Utah and Missouri departments of education developed very different yet effective approaches to building evaluation capacity of school counselors. These approaches were related to how the states differed in terms of local control versus the centralized control of educational policy and decision-making. For example, they found that the Utah Department of Education clearly defined its role as an authority, while the Missouri Department of Education defined its role as a support for practitioners. These findings reinforced the conclusion that effective policy and practices to promote evaluation are dependent on the policy context of the state. The observation that both approaches were successful in promoting school counselors’ acquisition of relatively high levels of evaluation competence calls into question the appropriateness of “one-size-fits-all” policy approaches.

Between 2000 and 2015, three states education departments conducted formal reviews of

school counseling in order to identify ways to improve practice. In 2001, the California Assembly passed a bill (AB 722) that required the California Department of Education (CDE) to conduct a study of pupil support services and programs (including school counseling programs) in California’s public schools. This study was completed in the summer of 2003. The CDE developed Survey of Pupil Support Services that was distributed to a stratified sample of 255 school districts. Supplemental data were also collected from online versions of the survey adapted for parents, teachers, and school board members. In addition, 12 focus groups were held throughout the state.

The study found that 84% of the districts indicated that they “needed more” of the 22 support services listed in the survey. The most commonly cited needed services were “providing school-wide prevention and intervention strategies and counseling services; providing psychological counseling for individuals, groups and families; and identifying and providing intervention strategies for children and their families, including counseling, case management, and crisis intervention” (California Counseling and Student Support Office, 2003; p. 18). This comprehensive examination of student support services in California was important because it highlighted the serious deficiencies in student support services including: inordinately large student-to-counselor ratios (871:1) and the hiring of non-credentialed counselors due to a lack of district funding (California Counseling and Student Support Office, 2003). Based on these findings, the California Legislature passed the Middle and High School Supplemental Counseling Program bill that provided funding of 200 million dollars for an additional 2500 school counselors.

The State of Texas has also conducted statewide policy studies related to school-based counseling. The Texas comptroller was tasked with investigating concerns raised by the state’s legislature regarding how school counselors use their time and issues related to counselor-to-student ratios to ensure that all students had access to quality school counseling services (Rylander, 2002). A task analysis survey was sent to 9940

school counselors across the state. The findings indicated that, on average, school counselors in Texas spent nearly 40% of their time to duties that were unrelated to their role and that did not directly benefit students (e.g., lunch duty, test coordinating). Texas study resulted in a state requirement that each school district adopt a policy regarding the proper use of counselor time – the implementation of which would be regularly monitored during state compliance visits.

The state of Utah represents the most robust and sustained example of state policy evaluation to support decision-making. Since the 1990s, the Utah State Legislature has commissioned independent evaluations of school counseling pilot programs and state-authorized school counseling programs.

In the late 1980s, the Utah State Office of Education initiated a pilot Comprehensive Developmental Model (CDM) School Counseling program with 11 volunteer schools. Based on the results of a formal evaluation of this pilot program, Utah Legislature decided to implement CDM programs statewide in 1993 (Utah State Office of Education, 2000). Subsequently, the Utah Legislature commissioned several studies to evaluate the implementation and quality of the school counseling programming. These evaluations (Gardner, Nelson, & Fox, 1999; Kimball & Gardner, 1995; Nelson & Gardner, 1998), conducted by the Institute of Behavioral Research in Creativity (IBRC), were used to identify both successful implementations and problems with implementation and influenced the legislature's decisions about funding and mandating lower student-to-counselor ratios.

The most recent and ambitious statewide evaluation in Utah (Nelson, Fox, Haslam, & Gardner, 2007) was built upon the previous evaluation work and used stakeholder group surveys and available student outcome data. Participants were sampled from 175 schools and consisted of 436 counselors, 384 administrators, 5061 teachers, 14,265 students, and 7806 parents and represented a total survey response rate of 84%. Given the large numbers of participants, it is significant that all of the interest groups surveyed reported very high levels of satisfaction with (80–90%)

most aspects of Utah Comprehensive Developmental Guidance and Counseling (UCDGC) program. For example, 74% of 8th grade students and 83% of 11th grade students felt comfortable going to the counseling center; and 96% of 8th grade principals and 96% of 11th grade principals indicated that staff members understood and supported the comprehensive guidance program. The evaluation also indicates significant positive differences between high and low CDG-implementing schools with respect to several important student outcomes including achievement test scores.

*These studies shed light on how state educational policy can influence effective school counseling practice. First, while it is helpful for a state to have a written state school counseling model to serve as a standard for practice, implementation of the model at the grassroots level is unlikely unless the state also provides the supports that are necessary for model implementation. While the exact nature of the support strategy will differ according to the state policy context (e.g., local control vs. central control of decision-making), helpful supports include: charging a leader at the state department of education with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the model, the identification of explicit linkages between model implementation and the achievement of important state educational policy objectives, legislation mandating important factors required for implementation (e.g., school counselor activities and/or ratios) and/or essential services that need to be delivered (e.g., 5-year educational and career plans for all students), the inclusion of the skills needed for model implementation in state licensing requirements for school counselors and/or in state accreditation requirements for the curricula of school counselor education programs, professional development for school counselors focused on the acquisition of essential skills needed for model implantation, and a statewide system for monitoring model implementation and evaluation model outcomes. School counselors' skill in school-level program evaluation is an especially important factor in CDM implementation that needs added attention.*

*Furthermore, these studies suggest that state education agencies can use statewide program evaluations to improve practice and build support among policy-makers for investing in building school counseling programs. Periodic statewide evaluations where each new evaluation builds upon the knowledge generated by previous evaluations seem to be a particularly effective approach.*

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## **Recommendations for a US Policy Research Agenda**

The seven issues presented above and the associated research reflect the transitions that have occurred and are occurring in US public education policy and how school counseling is situated within this changing landscape. Given the questions surfaced by these studies and the associated magnitude of change that has occurred in US public education, we believe that a fundamental revisioning of school counseling in the USA is necessary in order to establish an approach to practice that fits with current education policy objectives, fits with current models of schooling, and frees practice from the historical constraints that limit possibilities for development and change. Policy research is needed to guide and support this revisioning. We suggested that, in this changed and changing landscape, research is needed to address the following eight fundamental policy questions.

1. What are the major policy objectives for school counseling at the national, state and local levels in the US?

We believe that it is essential to determine what policy-makers at the national, state, and local levels believe that school counseling should be contributing to public education. It is highly likely that expectation for what school counseling should achieve differs and conflicts across levels. It is also likely that differences and conflicts will exist between policy-makers and the school counseling professional community. It is important to

have an accurate and complete map of the points of convergence and divergence rather than continuing to operate as if this information was actually known. Conflicts can be resolved by a number of means (ranging between persuasion and capitulation) but must be based on actual information.

2. What should be the goals towards which school counseling activities and programs in the US are directed?

We believe that there is a need to identify the actual goals for school counseling practice in the USA. These goals will need to come out of an understanding of the (conflicting) policy objectives for school counseling, an understanding of the goals as defined by the school counseling profession, and an understanding of the actual outcomes of school counseling interventions. Continuing the status quo is not acceptable. At present, for example, most states are implementing state models based on the ASCA National Model which maintain that the primary goal of school counseling is producing gains in academic achievement. Federal initiatives are being implemented to encourage school counselors to focus on students' college and career readiness. Empirical research suggests that school counseling interventions have only a weak effect on academic achievement (but a strong effect on student engagement and persistence).

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of different organizational models for school counseling?

At present, we know that organizing school counseling activities according to a comprehensive developmental model results in greater benefits to students than an unorganized approach to delivering services. We do not know whether organizing services according to other models (e.g., Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Kutash, Duchnowski, & Lynn, 2006) would produce even greater benefits. Comparative studies of the costs and benefits of CDM in comparison to other models should be undertaken.

4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of different staffing patterns for school counseling programs in the US?

Within every possible model, different staffing patterns are possible. The ASCA National Model (2005) is based on a staffing pattern in which all student services are to be delivered by Masters-level counselors who receive clerical and secretarial support. Lower student-to-counselor ratios were consistently found to be associated with higher attendance rates, higher college application rates, and lower discipline rates. Government policies reducing these ratios (especially in states with particularly high ratios) would be expected to result in enhanced benefits to students.

It is still unclear however, whether focusing on reducing student-to-counselor ratios is the most cost-effective way to achieve these important objectives. The school counseling profession in the USA seems fixated on relying on full-time Masters-level counselors to staff the program rather than considering how a combination of professional and paraprofessional staff might more efficiently deliver effective services to students and parents.

Future policy research should use a cost-benefit approach to identify the most effective staffing patterns needed to achieve critical policy objectives in school counseling. Recently, Astramovich, Hoskins, and Bartlett (2010) proposed an organizational model for comprehensive school counseling that relies on a combination of professional and paraprofessional staff. An evaluation of student benefits achieved under this model (in comparison to traditional staffing patterns) would be very important. In addition, many school counseling programs actually rely on a combination of professional-paraprofessional staffing of the school counseling programs. The examination of effective ways that job responsibilities are delineated in such programs and an analysis of the potential efficiency of such program in producing student benefits are clearly warranted.

5. How are policy objectives, goals, organizational models and staffing patterns the same

and different for different school contexts in the US?

The ASCA National Model (2005) is based on the premise that one model will be sufficient for all school districts in the USA. It is quite possible that differences between schools in inner cities, affluent suburbs, and rural settings, for example, differ in the problems and issues that then need school counseling to address, possible staffing patterns, and optimal organizational models. The notion that a unitary focus for the entire profession is possible or desirable is highly questionable. It seems more likely that the importance of different foci will vary depending on the context of the school. Students in large, diverse, inner city high schools; small, affluent, suburban high schools; and remote rural high schools are likely to need a different “cocktail” of services. This fact argues against the appropriateness of policy solutions focusing on a wholesale redesign of the job of school counseling and argues for solutions that help schools hire and/or develop school counselors who have the right mix of skills for the needs of their particular students. We propose that future policy research examine how school counseling can be best attuned to different contexts to achieve maximal results.

6. How are policy objectives, goals, organizational models and staffing patterns the same and different at the elementary, middle and high school levels in the US?

Similarly, the bulk of the research we review concerned high school counseling. Very little policy research exists to guide practice in elementary or middle schools. Future policy research should address similarities and differences in objectives, goals, organizational models, and staffing patterns across these levels.

7. Which School Counseling activities and interventions are most effective?

The ASCA National Model (2012) and CDG are “frameworks” that allow school counselors to choose the specific practices, interventions, and curricula that they see as most appropriate for their given context. It is

not uncommon to see schools within the same district selecting very different practices to meet similar goals. School counseling research to date has paid little attention to the effectiveness of the actual practices that school counselors employ. Rigorous research is needed to identify the interventions, curricula, and practices that result in the best student outcomes. Federal policy and supports are needed to promote this rigorous research on effective school counseling practices.

8. How can state departments of education best promote effective school counseling practice?

Even though the primary responsibility for facilitation and oversight of school counseling is at the state level in the USA, very little information is available of effective ways that states can promote effective practice. The findings of Martin et al. (2009) suggest that most state departments of education do not have adequate mechanisms in place to support the widespread implementation of the endorsed state models. Very few states have engaged in comprehensive evaluations of school counseling practice. Trevisan (2000) indicated that in general state departments of education licensure requirements for school counselors in the area of evaluation do not require sufficient levels of competence to support the implementation of effective comprehensive developmental programs. Policy research should identify effective ways that state government agencies support improvement in practice are needed.

## Summary

School counseling has great potential to contribute to the public good by improving the educational outcomes for students in the USA. At present, the range of foci for school counseling practice in high schools is broad and includes academic achievement, postsecondary educational transitions, work transitions, social skills development, and mental health promotion. Even with favorable student-to-counselor ratios, counselors are spread thinly across this wide range of

foci. At present, it is unclear how school-based counseling practice aligns with national, state, or local educational policy agendas and priorities. Different constituencies within the profession are advocating for the primacy of different foci for practice based partly on assumptions about alignment with policy objectives. It is unclear which educational policy objectives are within the “wheelhouse” of school counseling practice and which specific practices are effective in achieving desired student outcomes. Effective state policies regarding school-based counseling need, likewise, to be identified. A revisioning of counseling in US school is needed. Policy research is necessary to guide and support this revisioning.

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## History and Context of Education in Canada

Prior to analyzing the current landscape of school counseling practice in Canada, consider that the country of Canada covers a landscape of 3.8 million square miles with a population of 34 million, the second largest country on Earth in area, just behind Russia, the largest land area, and the United States, the third largest country by area. In addition, because so much of the country covers vast distances from place to place, consideration of the delivery of school counseling services and public education generally necessitates investigation from the context of the distinction of service delivery that includes rural areas and Canada's cities.

While some formal religious and basic education existed as early as the seventeenth century in New France, as Canada was then known, and later during the British conquest in the eighteenth century, the education was largely a function of the family, not the state, was religious in its focus, and was not delivered with any curricular or state-sanctioned uniformity. Divisions between British colonists and French Catholics continued

during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century, with growing immigration and industrialization, that Canada, like the United States during the same period, began to develop more formal mechanisms to deliver public education.

Canada's heterogeneous population includes the original inhabitants of the area, First Nations, Aboriginal and Inuit peoples of the islands and northern parts of the country, Asian immigrants on Canada's West Coast, French settlers, and British colonists, along with immigrants from many other European countries, Africa, the Middle East, and the United States. Today, some 70% of Canada's population have a heritage of British, French, or other European origin (The Canadian Encyclopedia n.d.). Today, Canada's educational system is governed by the ten provinces and three territories. Canada has no formal federal department or ministry of education, and because of the cultural and geographical distinctions among the provinces, educational service delivery varies according to the population and place. Despite that variation, however, as a nation, Canada values education and on worldwide measures of educational achievement and attainment does quite well. For example, on the PISA score, Canada ranked number ten in the world (OECD, 2014).

Because Canada's population is so widely spread across the landscape, there are distinctions in the educational system depending upon meeting

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the needs of the people based upon their region and provincial structure. For example, in Quebec and New Brunswick, French is an official language, and in the other eight provinces, English is the official language while native tongues are spoken in some areas of the territories. Canada's rich historical foundation informs educational policy and practices in the present era (The Canadian Encyclopedia n.d.).

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## School Counseling Services in Canada

Because there is no federal governance over education in Canada, practices related to school counseling vary from province to province depending upon the educational culture, provincial need, history, practicality, and training systems related to the education of teachers and school counselors. In the present day, only three of Canada's provinces regulate the delivery of counseling services (Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec), and those provinces provide for the regulation of mental health counseling service providers, not school counselors as a distinct profession (school counselors are certified/licensed by provincial education authorities). Moreover, the regulated provinces use different terms such as counseling psychologist, counseling psychotherapist, clinical counselor, career counselor, guidance counselor, and vocational guidance counselor, among others. The trend toward professional standardization and regulation of professional counseling was borne out of the need for parity of services across Canada's vast landscape, and the regulation that exists developed out of Canada's urban centers in the most populated provinces.

The regulation of services provided by school counselors is even less developed than that of mental health practitioners. By comparison to the United States, Canada's development of school-based counseling regulation is somewhat of a reverse trend where regulation of school counseling services followed that of mental health services. Like in other countries where teacher certification is granted by states or provinces, so too is the

regulation in Canada, but the provinces do not differentiate certification of school counselors from that of teachers, and each province follows different regulations or guidelines about the practices of school counseling. Despite the variation across the country, there are models developed for the delivery of comprehensive counseling programs, most notably the Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program of the Nova Scotia Department of Education published in 2007. In a way similar to the American School Counselor Association model being shaped by the state of Missouri (USA) model, so too is there a movement in Canada to nationalize comprehensive school counseling program delivery following the Nova Scotia Model as a framework. As of this writing, there is no national model in Canada.

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## Existing Context and Policies

While delivery of school counseling services is not new to the Canadian provinces, formal models of delivery and uniformity of duties and responsibilities are. Only recently through the advocacy of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association has there been some movement toward a more nationalized counseling professional identity and parameters of practice. Currently, professional identity is in a developmental stage because of the variance of responsibilities and training. Counselors need a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a service area of vocational counseling, social sciences, or education with a master's degree customary in more developed areas (Keats & Laitsch, 2010). In the province of Quebec, for example, the term counseling does not apply to a unique profession but rather a collection of professions united around the activity of counseling. This distinction is different from the rest of Canada and from the United States and, from a global perspective, provides some insight into where the country of Canada is relative to other places in the world. A logical national comparison might be made to Canada's neighbor to the south, the United States, which, by contrast, has a developed professional identity of school counseling, is regulated, and

follows a specific curricular design for training, largely through the US-based accrediting body, the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs or CACREP. While Canada does have its own accrediting council operated through the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association which is affiliated with the International Registry of Counsellor Education Programs or IRCEP that accredits a program in British Columbia, counseling program specific accreditation, as elsewhere in the world, is a voluntary process.

As long ago as 1944, the province of Quebec had an association of career/guidance counselors, which became a regulatory body in 1963 (Martin, 2013). Other provinces have developed regulatory bodies more recently: Quebec, 2012; Nova Scotia, 2015; Ontario, 2015, but those bodies' primary function is to regulate the provision of mental health-related counseling services, while school counseling, also regulated by provinces, has an amorphous professional identity and regulatory environment. The primary advocacy group for school counseling concerns is the school counseling chapter of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA), whose chief goal is to provide some unity to the profession and advocate for the presence of school counseling across the nation. Some of their goals include professional development, lobbying, support, collaboration, research, and connecting the needs of school counselors to the broader counseling and psychotherapy profession in Canada.

While there is curricular variability in the preparation of counselors performing the duties of personal/social, career, and academic counseling in the schools, the requirements include at a minimum coursework in counseling theories, a supervised counseling practicum, communication skills, and ethics, along with a minimum of four elective courses to include assessment, couple and family counseling, consultation methods, diversity issues, group counseling, human development, career development, and research and evaluation. Those standards follow similar background and training required by the departments of education of most developed nations, and the

eight required courses for counselor certification in Canada follow a similar path as CACREP in the USA. Certification by the CCPA is not mandatory, however, and in most of the Canadian provinces, school counseling services are delivered by teachers with an appropriate teaching certificate (in an academic teaching field) from the provincial education regulation authority (Harris, 2013).

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## Research Review

### Professional Identity

In a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of counseling in Canada, Young and Nicol (2007) noted professional identity tension within counseling psychology because of the nature of the services provided and the training, which has been historically housed in education areas of universities. Young and Nicol note, however, counseling psychology services are something distinct from school counseling, which, as in other parts of the world, has a lengthier history from a counseling perspective because of its educational nature and service delivery in a school context. Other researchers corroborated the Young and Nicol study where in 2011 a qualitative study of counseling psychology students in Canada found role confusion related to their professional identity because of distinctions about the work relative to the context in which it is practiced, the narrow focus of the training, and perceptions about the value of the work. A noted issue, however, is that this qualitative study only addressed the viewpoints of the ten subjects who participated (Gazzola, De Stefano, Thériault, & Audet, 2014). Canada's training programs are often taught by faculties of psychology and/or counseling in education departments or colleges, and because of this, the lines between psychology, counseling, education, and related helping professions are more blurred than it is in other places where the distinctions are more clear, most notably in the United States. Another issue not unique to Canada but certainly important is the practicality

of service delivery. Morrissette (1997) observed particular challenges in the Canadian counseling landscape related to service delivery in rural areas where counselors are called upon to wear many different professional hats because they likely also are performing other duties in addition to counseling. Some of the salient issues addressed are the sense of isolation, adjustment to community mores, the lack of professional supervision available, potential role conflicts, lack of resources, issues of privacy and anonymity, and the need for trust among students, parents, and teachers. In spite of those challenges, a positive feature of the rural environment is counselors' freedom to design a counseling program that meets the needs of a particular school, less restrained by provincial or national standards.

## Psychosocial Issues

In a study regarding thematic responses to youth suicide, Christianson and Everall (2009) wrote that it was not until the late 1980s that school counselors in Canada were required to have any training beyond that of a teaching credential. By 2016, school counselors in Canada were required to have the four specialized courses and four electives for certification by CCPA. Given student need and the high stress associated with student or client suicide, the authors called for consultation and specialized training. Chachamovich et al. (2015) suggested that given the high suicide rate among Inuit in the territory of Nunavut, school programs and teaching of coping skills along with parental training have the potential to reduce suicide rates in that community. Suicide prevention, though, is only one of many psychosocial interventions that school counselors provide.

Bullying prevention and intervention is also a responsibility of school counselors in Canada. Power-Elliott and Harris (2012) found that school counselors are in a unique position to provide services for victims and perpetrators of bullying due to their training in empathic intervention. In a study of school counselors in the rural areas of Newfoundland and Labrador, the authors discov-

ered that school counselors are likely to engage in preventing bullying behaviors whether or not there was a specific bullying prevention program. Most school counselors viewed bullying as a problem and would enlist other adults and discipline the bully. In a Canadian sample of adolescents, Dittrick, Beran, Mishna, Hetherington, and Shariff (2013) found that a preference for violent video games and cyberbullying were correlated but that the reasons were complex. Promoting healthy relationships between parents and children was an important variable and can moderate the bullying that may result as a consequence of playing violent video games. In another study by Beran, Mishna, McInroy, and Shariff (2015), 14% of Canadian children had been cyberbullied during the last month, and that of those who were cyberbullied, 94% were also bullied in some other fashion; with a nationally stratified sample in the study, the authors found cyberbullying and bullying generally to be a problem in Canada.

Other findings in a sample of elementary students were revealed by Rose, Miller, and Martinez (2009) who investigated the effects of an anxiety prevention program in a Canadian elementary school. The FRIENDS for Life study did not find statistically significant reductions in anxiety, but for all students who participated in the program, all showed reductions in anxiety after the curriculum. The authors noted that the challenge in the study was the small sample size even though the findings indicated that the program was functionally useful. Similar findings from other small-sample studies included counseling interventions for recent immigrants to the country as Canada is a safe haven for refugees from around the world, most recently from Syria, illustrating that a number of programs have been developed to address the needs of Canada's growing multicultural/multiethnic population. Of the many programs that serve Canada's immigrant population, programs related to learning English, understanding Canadian culture, and psychoeducational groups for teenagers have been made available through schools and community centers (Ruiz-Casares, Kolyn, Sullivan, & Rousseau 2015). Important areas of intervention for school counselors, suicide prevention, bullying prevention, and

education remain important for policy research and outcome data related to the intervention provided by school counselors.

## Career Counseling

A significant but perhaps underemphasized area of the triumvirate school counseling model proposed by the American School Counseling Association is career counseling. Career counseling in Canada is a well-developed emphasis area of the broader counseling profession, and it includes programs that support career counseling in secondary schools, colleges/universities, and vocational rehabilitation settings. Canada does have a lengthy history in the field of career counseling as Robertson and Paterson observed (Robertson & Paterson, 1983); the Career Exploration System (CHOICES), widely used in the United States and elsewhere around the world, was developed in concert with the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission, but then, as is still the case, because of the provincially governed system by which counseling services in schools are disseminated, there is great variance across the nation. Ten years later, in 1993, Levi and Ziegler in a study commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Education noted that an effective guidance program has to be central to the school mission and that career education needs to be an integral part of the guidance system. Specifically, the characteristics of an effective program were that it contained the following structure: “(1) It is total school guidance, (2) it is a collaborative venture, and (3) it has a strong mandate.” The authors stated “Guidance counselors have been criticized for being insufficiently responsive to the need for more emphasis on career education.” To address this need, Levi and Ziegler argued that the transition years between middle and high school are a crucial period for the development of career exploration as a key component of the school counseling program. That career counseling is an important component of school counseling in Canada was supported by findings of another national study in the 1990s. The primary issues impeding the full

development of a career counseling program for the schools were lack of support, training, and funding. Secondary school counselors did, however, note that career counseling was a significant and important characteristic of the work that they do (Conger & Hiebert, 1995) and that career counseling in the schools is a vital component for career counseling of girls in particular to encourage broad application of their skill set into the world of work and postsecondary education (Guttman, 1991). Newer research into career counseling in Canada focused on connecting theory to practice from a multicultural perspective. The career cycles program, while not limited to a school population, uses a positive psychology approach to help students identify their career desires, preferences, strengths, assets, and possibilities (Zikic & Franklin, 2010). Continuing on this line of emphasis, Marshall et al. (2011) suggested that in working with Aboriginal families in Canada, adolescent career development needs to include the family and a broader context beyond thinking of career as something limited to the goals of an individual client (a common Western approach) and that career counseling “Point to the importance of taking into account the ways in which stressors on the family may shift focus away from concerns about adolescents’ future to more immediate survival.” Important for adolescent development and concerns around the globe, career counseling remains a significant contribution to the role that school-based counselors play across Canada for its diverse population.

## Academic Counseling

A variety of academic counseling approaches have been developed across the provinces in Canada during the past 20 years and before. A 1998 article by Millar argued for the need of the province of Alberta to adopt the then Missouri model and to center the province’s guidance program around a comprehensive delivery model that was intentional, proactive, and planned instead of the reactive, ad hoc, and as-needed approach common to school counseling services



in Alberta and elsewhere. Lehr and Sumarah (2002) in a study describing the implementation of the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program, GCP, in Nova Scotia suggested that in addition to having a comprehensive program that addresses the appropriate activities for social, educational, and career domains, it is equally crucial to have support not just at the provincial level but that the local level school boards, principals, teachers, and those responsible for implementing the CGP have a vested interest at the building level because that is where the services are delivered to the students directly benefiting from it.

Other provinces in Canada have contributed to research based on the specific needs of their student populace. Morrissette and Gadbois (2006) found that the First Nations and Aboriginal students of Canada have graduation rates substantially lower than the national average, and for those who do persist, there are some adjustment issues when seeking postsecondary education. In a 2004 study of high school students in Saskatchewan, Alexitch et al. discovered that while 45% of high school students spoke with their guidance counselors about postsecondary education, most of them recalled that what they provided was information about colleges and that it was parents and friends, not teachers or counselors, who were most influential in their decisions to attend college or engage in some other postsecondary educational or employment endeavor. The authors also reported a disconnect between students' desire to see their guidance counselor(s) and actually seeing them. For this reason, guidance counselors need to be actively engaged in the entire school population, indicating the need for a comprehensive counseling program that seeks to educate all students in a school instead of only those who seek the school counselor; i.e., what proponents of comprehensive school counseling programs advocate for is addressing the needs of the participants described in the study.

School counselor intervention has long been advocated for increasing the upward mobility of a nation's population. Mediating deficits for students at the low end of the economic strata finds

similarities in large-scale data from the province of Manitoba in a study by Roos et al. (2013) where socioeconomic status indices statistically and significantly predicted the educational achievement of adolescents, a finding common to educational achievement data in other countries, suggesting that family economic status, not health indices, predict greater educational achievement. The finding is noteworthy because in Canada basic medical care is provided to all citizens, in contrast to the United States; however, similar to the USA, higher ADHD and conduct disorder diagnoses were associated with lower SES. As is true in other parts of the world, a primary function and focus of school counselors across the Canadian provinces is the provision for academic counseling to ensure the proper assessment, placement, and encouragement for success by providing individual and group counseling, along with classroom lessons to support students, schools, and the broader communities they serve.

### **School Counseling Policy Research**

What countries do for their educational practices, policies, and delivery depends in large measure on geography, politics, history, tradition, economics, the will of the people, and various other forces. In Canada, because its 34 million inhabitants are spread among the third-largest land area for a country in the world, education is delivered most practically at the provincial level, following provincial policy, with no federal government oversight. School counseling services, in addition to providing proactive engagement in the form of comprehensive developmental guidance programs following the American School Counseling Association model (or a model similar to it), address needs as a reaction to what is most critical for a particular place and moment. While the ASCA model and other governmental policies make sense for their service delivery populations, Canada's school counselors find different roles and responsibilities depending on whether they work in an urban or rural setting, on the province in which they counsel, on the unique

needs of their populations, and on the focus and needs of their particular school. The needs at the local and provincial level are illustrated partly by the literature reviewed earlier in this chapter. A number of initiatives have been proposed and described about the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs, most notably in Nova Scotia (2002) and Ontario (2006) and in a renewed call for implementation of a comprehensive school counseling model (Robinson, 2015).

### **Who Is Crafting School Counseling Policy in Canada?**

Because of province-based variations in the needs of school counseling programs in Canada, research, policy, and practice is designed by a combination of university faculty, provincial educational departments, individual school districts, school counselors themselves, and the school counseling chapter of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA). According to Domene and Bedi (2013), because of the blurred lines between counselors, psychotherapists, psychologists, and allied helping professionals, there is a hierarchical structure to the prestige of counseling-related occupations. In addition, unlike in the UK and the USA, counseling in Canada is not a protected term with a unique professional identity and skill set although that is currently changing. At present, school counseling policy is managed by the provinces, individual schools, and individual counselors depending on the particular needs of the schools, students, and training of the person doing school-based counseling. In spite of the varied regulatory environment and loose job descriptions of school-based counselors in Canada broadly (some provinces more tightly regulate school-based counseling services), there is consensus on minimal qualifications for school-based counselors illustrated by certification by the CCPA. Regulation of school services is a dynamic process changing at the present time and varies according to provincial educational regulatory authority. In conclusion, school counselors have

quite a bit of flexibility in the way that services are delivered; however, a potential drawback to such a localized system of school-based counseling policy is great variation across the country. The local and provincial governance of school-based counseling is metaphorically and culturally illustrated by the loose association Canada has with Great Britain and a loose association of the provinces with the federal government of Canada (which does not regulate education) with respect to educational policy. As noted earlier in this chapter, Canada has no federal educational regulatory authority, so a natural consequence for school-based counseling is that it is delivered differently according to the provinces, and a non-governmental entity such as the CCPA would be the logical unifying force if there were going to be any national policy for school-based counseling in Canada. At the present time, the provincial and local authority for regulation and delivery of school-based counseling, the services counselors provide, the outcomes counselors measure, and the promotion of the field of school-based counseling appears to work well enough that advocacy for changes is happening within the school counseling community but not by provincial, federal, or political entities.

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### **Conclusion**

Because Canada does not have any national educational governance, advocacy for and promotion of comprehensive school counseling models and the services provided within them fall largely to provincial advocacy groups for education-related topics related to their needs, e.g., special education topics such as ADHD or autism, crisis counseling, and to the school counseling chapter of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA). Notwithstanding efforts that are already continuing to be made by CCPA, it is through this advocacy body that counselors find a place for the development of a unified counseling identity for what school counselors provide. One of the reasons that unified counselor identity is more difficult in Canada than in other countries is because of the decentralized

nature and certification requirements for the people who perform the duties of school counselors, coupled with the geographical expanse. Canada does not have a type of parallel structure of licensing/certification for school counselors (as it does for teachers) that is common to the United States, and because of this, the roles, functions, and duties of school counselors find quite a bit of variation from province to province and school to school despite research illustrating the need for services (Keats & Laitsch, 2010). As in other places, the future of school counseling in Canada and emphasis on its importance lie largely in developing research strategies to measure outcomes related to the value of the services that school counselors provide. Because Canada relative to the world performs well in education, measured by the PISA tests, the relative urgency for change to current practice as a federal matter may be less emphasized than it is in other Western developed nations.

The most useful models for future research in Canada will be outcome research as needed with respect to the particular topic of evaluation such as academic or career counseling. In a study of six states in the United States, for example, Carey and Dimmitt (2012) summarized research outcomes related to those at the level of the school counselor, the program/school, the district, the state, the school counselor education program, and the national policy level. Future research in Canada may focus on analyzing many studies, outcome and otherwise, that incorporate a synthesis of the already published research in the ten provinces and three territories.

Because of Canada's provincial and territorial diversity, culturally considerate interventions for school-based counseling have to be developed in French and English and include considerations relative to the history, culture, mores, and needs of the unique populations in those areas. The well-developed network across provinces and territories of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is the best available conduit for linking school-based counseling services. As is the case in other countries, the CCPA, like the ACA in the USA, represents a diverse cross section of the counseling profession

that includes not just school-based counseling but the profession broadly. Canada's professional identity for counselors is less distinct in its training and service delivery than common in the USA under the American Counseling Association's definition of professional counseling or the American School Counselor Association's definition of school (based) counseling. In this way, Canada's delivery of school-based counseling is more similar to other countries addressed in this volume. A non-exhaustive list of policy foci for school-based counseling in Canada includes:

- What professional identity should school-based counseling seek to attain in pluralistic country like Canada?
- What competencies must school counselors possess in Canada?
- Role and function of school-based counselors.
- School-based counselors' role in student outcomes in Canada.
- School-based counselors' role in addressing academic/personal/career needs of Canadian students.
- Staffing levels of school-based counselors for the population and needs of the country.
- Whether provinces/territories need to have a specific training and certification for school-based counseling.
- Curriculum for the training of school-based counselors.
- A national model for school-based counseling (some provinces have models).
- Certification standards for school-based counselors.
- Whether the relationship between CCPA and provincial licensing authorities be strengthened.
- Technology utilization for the benefit of school-based counseling in Canada and in the provinces.

Finally, the CCPA school counseling chapter provides a national platform for all school counselors in Canada and that organization can use its nationwide influence to continue to serve as a gathering place for school counseling issues related to policy and research. In all parts of the world, the services provided from school coun-

seling are anecdotally widely known to positively influence the personal/social, career, and academic achievement of students in those respective nations. A continual challenge for professional school counseling globally is the inconsistent outcome data related to the services. The reasons are complex, but in many parts of the world, as in Canada, the problem remains that the roles, duties, and training of school counselors varies greatly compared to other professions, even its close professional cousin, teaching. The value in what school counselors provide is always bolstered by empirical data to support it, and for these reasons, increased focus on accountability, outcome research, and the need for comprehensive school counseling programs will unify the research, practice, and need for school counselors in Canada.

### Useful Websites Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association

<https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/>

School Counselling Chapter of the CCPA

<https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/chapters/school-counsellors/#id11>

CCPA Certification Guide [https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/CertificationGuide\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/CertificationGuide_EN.pdf)

Nova Scotia Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program

<https://studentservices.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/Comp%20Guidance%20and%20Couns%20Prog.pdf>

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## History of Education in Australia

Before examining policy and research on school-based counseling in Australia, it is important to place it within the context of the structure and history of education in this country. Geographically Australia is a vast continent, the planet's sixth largest country with 7692 24 square kilometers, almost the size of the USA or Europe. More than 85% of the population of 23 and half million live within 50 kilometers of the coastline. Politically, the country is divided into six states (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, and Tasmania) and two territories (the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory). As compulsory schooling began when the states were separate colonies, education is a state and territory government responsibility. Thus, there has been, and remains, diversity between state systems with respect to schooling and, consequently, in school-based counseling. The history of how each of the Australian states and territories have responded to the need for school-based counseling is idiosyncratic and reflects the specific issues, government policy, and events in that

state. Additionally, the diversity and distances reflect the geographical realities of the nation.

The age of compulsory schooling is similar across states with most students attending pre-school or kindergarten for a year prior to starting school. Six years of primary schooling is followed by 6 years of secondary schooling. Students with disabilities are mostly catered for in segregated special schools and special classes, although there is some integration into mainstream classes (Ashman & Elkins, 2005). In every state, there are three different schooling systems: schools that are provided free by the state government (servicing 63% of students), schools that are provided by a Catholic archdiocese (22% of students), and other independent, usually religious affiliated schools (15% of students). Since Federation in 1901, the Commonwealth or Federal government has been increasingly involved in education and now has considerable influence, both economically and educationally and in enacting policy. Economically, the Federal government provides funding for government-controlled schools and is also the major provider of public funds for non-government schools. This enables the Federal government to specify certain conditions that schools are required to meet as well as state or territory policy. However, as education is still a state responsibility, there are many differences between the states, one of which is the titles by which school-based counselors are known. Three

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main titles are used, school counselor, school psychologist, or guidance officer (Australian Psychologists and Counselors in Schools, [APACS], 2013). Policy research in school-based counseling therefore needs to be undertaken in each state separately as well as in each state's schooling system. This requires many levels of ethical approval to conduct this research as well as the complexities of the broad and ill-defined roles of school counselors involved in such diverse settings.

## History of School-Based Counseling in Australia

School-based counseling's origins and developments are closely related to the changing educational philosophy and psychology in Australia (Oakland, Faulkner, & Annan, 2005). The emergence of the discipline of psychology coincided with the provision of universal mass primary education which was achieved in Australia by 1910. This first public education policy that every child was to attend school brought about the introduction of school-based counseling as some students were found not to cope with school, and so segregated special schools and special classes in regular schools were established (Ashman & Elkins, 2005).

During the 1920s there was considerable excitement about the contribution that psychology and counseling could make to improving social, economic, and educational problems (Wright, 2012). Intelligence tests were used not only to segregate children with mental retardation to special schools but also for teachers to divide large classes into ability groups based on IQ scores (McCallum, 1990). Additionally, psychological testing was thought to be able to individualize educational provision and to solve social problems such as unemployed youths. The prevailing philosophy expressed by K.S. Cunningham in 1925 was to "make educational facilities fit the ability of all children" (Argus, 1925, p. 8) so that there would be no "misfits" as every child would be educated for the work he was best fitted. This notion of assisting

children to "fit" into the right job led in this period to the promotion of vocational or career guidance to assist students.

Linked to school vocational guidance for advising students on jobs and careers post-school was the provision of educational advice for boys on selecting suitable courses of study for professional, commercial, industrial, and rural occupations or for girls, home management (Giles, 1932). To enable educational guidance in schools in NSW in 1935, school counselors were introduced (Hughes, 2002). In the 1930s with the increased concern about children's welfare and the view that society was changing rapidly, many were also worried about juvenile delinquency and maladjustment and mental disease in youth which the provision of school counselors was thought to alleviate. The next educational policy shift which impacted on school-based counseling was an expanded secondary education for all, which was achieved in the 1950s and which increased the demand for more practitioners who could administer cognitive assessments for the purposes of optimizing students' educational success in secondary school (Hughes, 2002).

The role of school-based counselors was expanded again in the 1970s to accommodate some of the welfare functions, previously undertaken by the family or church. This more pastoral focus included providing individual and group counseling of students with social-emotional difficulties as well as in service to teachers and assistance to parents (Jacobs, 1986). Also during the 1970s, there was a perceived increase in student violence and aggression and calls for more school-based counselors (Department of Education Victoria, 1973). Yet there was a decrease in actual numbers of school-based counselors employed in Victoria due to public policy education changes concerning integration in the 1990s, with many students with disabilities attending mainstream schools and the assessment of children for special education services contracted out to private psychology organizations (Faulkner, 2006).

Career development in Australian schools has continued to evolve from its vocational guidance beginnings in the interwar years. The role of

assisting students to apply for courses at tertiary institutions has been successfully met by school counselors (Pascoe, 1999). For most of the 1990s and continuing to this day, assisting students with the tertiary entrance process was an accepted responsibility of the secondary school's guidance counselor and was regarded as a priority from a principal's perspective (Dickinson, 1995).

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## Roles and Responsibilities Currently

The role of the school-based counselor today is to assist students, teachers, parents, and school communities to enable students to reach both educational and social-emotional outcomes through proactive and reactive strategies. It is an ever-expanding role, which means that school-based counselors not only assist students with mental health concerns but also provide psychological assessment, career and personal counseling, behavior management interventions, consultation, and professional development for teachers and parents (Thiekling, 2006). Given this variety of professional duties it seems, as Bardon (1983) stated, that instead of developing as a profession, school-based counseling in Australia has, along with schools generally, accumulated tasks. Thus over time the educational and social policy objectives for school-based counselors have shifted from assessing students for segregation to assessment for integration. The emphasis of career policy has shifted from fitting the child into the correct job to exploring career possibility pathways to higher education, while guidance for delinquents has changed to proactive strategies for all students' mental health and wellbeing.

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## Public Education Policy Landscape in Australia

### Policy of National Conformity

It is interesting to note that there are two seemingly opposing pushes in educational policy at the moment in Australia: one of national

conformity and the other of individualization of schools. The national Australian curriculum, introduced in 2010, is one of the policy initiatives to achieve more conformity throughout Australia ([www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au)). In addition, the starting age for schooling and the transition to high school are now standardized in all states and territories from 2015. Allied to this is the advent of national educational assessment models such as NAPLAN (National Assessment Program- Literacy and Numeracy, [www.nap.edu.au](http://www.nap.edu.au)).

National conformity could also affect school-based counselors by way of the newly introduced national accreditation for school psychologists: legislation about psychological services in Medicare and national initiatives to target student mental health (Department of Health and Ageing, 2010). National accreditation of psychologists could have an impact on those states in Australia which employ school-based counselors with psychological qualifications, as the education standards and length of training have increased from 4 to 6 years. The Federal governments' health system of Medicare providing six free psychological consultations if referred by a general medical practitioner could also have an impact on school-based counseling by providing more referral pathways to community care. The national initiatives of MindMatters and KidsMatter, which are frameworks for promoting mental health and well-being in secondary and primary schools, also could have an impact on the work of school-based counselors.

The educational policy landscape in Australia at present is about the drive toward standards of students' academic achievement. This is couched in terms of accountability and is measured through narrow metrics, such as high-stakes testing of students. Surprisingly this policy which has been implemented for 7 years has not as yet affected the role of school-based counselors, unlike the situation in the UK and USA where the standards-based educational environment has impacted greatly on the work of school-based counselors (Martin & Carey, 2012).

However, these movements, which focus more on the effectiveness of the pedagogy to raise students' academic achievements, could require

school-based counselors in the future to work in an educational leadership and collaborative role with teachers rather than identifying the limitations of students (Hempenstall, 2012). This may challenge the school-based counselor to be more closely associated with the teaching process rather than the learning response. That is, instead of time devoted to the assessment and remediation of individual students, school-based counselors would work with teachers on strategies to ensure all students were catered for. Given this potential change for the future development of the profession, Farrell (2010) suggests that there is a need to invest in research that explores and evaluates other approaches to the psychological assessment of students with learning difficulties.

### Policy of Deregulation

In seemingly direct contrast to the nationalization of education to make it more uniform, there is a push for individual public government schools to be “self-managing.” There is a general belief emanating from the USA and from the UK and now taken up in Australia that publicly funded government schools are in crisis and that reform by means of deregulation and self-management by schools will improve students’ academic results (Dinham, 2015). It is believed that greater school autonomy leads to more innovation and flexibility and therefore improved student attainment. The Australian Federal Minister for Education announced in 2014 an *Independent Public Schools Initiative* to see more government-funded public schools become autonomous. One state, Western Australia (WA), began this process in 2010, and in 2015 around one third of public schools are now independent. Although the Federal Minister claimed this had lifted student achievement (Department of Education Australian Government website, 2014), this was not shown to be the case by an evaluation of the scheme by the WA Department of Education (Centre for Program Evaluation, 2013). Hopkins (2013) in reviewing the evidence for school autonomy found “no correlation between decentralization and achievement” (p. 29). The notion

that public education needs to be deregulated in order to improve student performance is also linked to privatization and market forces. This is notwithstanding that Australia already has a large “privatized” educational sector with at least 37% of all schools being private, and this percentage is growing (Dinham, 2015). However, it is difficult for public schools to operate as a business, given that they must accept every student, those with disabilities and behavioral problems and those who are culturally and linguistically diverse or homeless. As Ravitch (2014) says, “It is easy to get high test scores when students are ready, willing, and able to learn” (p. 301). In this sense school-based counseling, if allocated on a needs basis and not on an enrolment basis, could benefit students. However, the deregulation has meant that staffing for school-based counseling is entirely a matter for the principal with no mandate or policy that students have access to school-based counseling as in New Zealand, where in Section 77 of their Education Act 1989 requires that the principal ensures students “good guidance and counseling services” (Education Review Office, 2013).

Therefore, it is imperative that policy makers consider that for many students and their families, particularly those from lower socioeconomic areas, the school-based counseling service may be the only psychological service or professional mental health service which is accessible to them. We know that “poverty matters” and that countries with good academic outcomes have not only policy commitments to public education but also have social welfare, health care, and aged care (Luke, 2011). In contrast to the standardized, deregulated model, Finland and Ontario (successful in achieving high student attainment) have policy suites of highly qualified teacher education graduates, highly developed in-service teacher education, a less prescriptive curriculum, and a low to moderate reliance on standardized testing. Additionally they have a deep commitment to public education, access to childcare, health care, aged care, and social welfare (Luke, 2011).

Unfortunately, there is no research on the impact of deregulation on counseling in

Australian schools. Employing authorities seem unconcerned about this and seem to believe that all principals who manage schools have the well-being of students as a priority.

### **Policy of Integration**

A third educational policy which directly impacts on school-based counselors' work is the issue of special needs students separated into schools or classes or included in the mainstream. Inclusivity is central to public education policy today in Australia, coming full circle from 100 years ago where psychological testing was conducted to separate students with disabilities from typically developing students as mentioned previously. The policy for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) therefore dictates that all students "including those with high complex needs, challenging behaviours, mental ill health, or social and emotional problems" (p. 3) need to be catered for. However, a large part of school-based counseling work is still assessment for identifying students with intellectual disability and learning difficulties, either for segregation to special schools or to cater for their needs in integrated settings.

### **Staffing Policies**

There has been a slight increase in the last 20 years in the number of school-based counselors with 1400 in government schools across Australia in 1992 to over 2000 in 2013. There has therefore been a consequent slight reduction in counselor-to-student ratios in this period with 1:1544 in NSW and 1:4200 in South Australia in 1992 and 1:1050 in NSW and 1:3500 in South Australia in 2013. It is interesting to note the ratios in NSW and South Australia remained the lowest and highest, respectively. However, there is a need for more school-based counselors to deal with issues such as anger management, bullying, self-harm, and suicide which has been acknowledged in the popular media (RTTNews, 2013, Mar 27; Gold Coast Bulletin, 2009, Oct 08; Stirling Times, 2012, Jul 03). While school-based

counselors provide preventative and early intervention programs, if they do not have sufficient time, these are likely to be dropped to cater for the most at risk students and thus they are forced to work reactively. The Australian Psychological Association recommends a ratio of 1:500, while the American School Counselor Association (2011) recommends a ratio of 1:250 students.

Although these are the main policy thrusts in education in the last few years, there are many more policies that have been introduced. In Tasmania, for example, it has been calculated that 80 major policies were announced in a 5-year period from 1995–2000 which schools were expected to implement (Williamson & Myhill, 2008). This constant change adds to school-based counselors' workloads with distressed teachers needing assistance for stress-related conditions.

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### **Reviews of School-Based Counseling by Organizations**

As mentioned previously, research on the effectiveness of the position of school-based counselor is difficult in Australia, as unlike in the USA, there are no comprehensive guidance programs which can be evaluated such as the comprehensive developmental school counseling program. This program has an evaluation system linked to school counseling outcomes in at least ten states (Martin, Carey, & DeCoster, 2009). Almost all schools in Australia have access to a school-based counselor so it is not possible to compare schools with and without such a service. In addition, individual counselors are often moved to different schools every few years in the public and the Catholic systems. There is no clear national policy about the expected outcomes of students interacting with school-based counseling. There is also no policy research on the effectiveness of school-based counseling in Australia, but there has been a review or audit in one territory (ACT) and in one state (New South Wales).

A performance audit report into student support services for government secondary schools was conducted by Pham from the auditor-

general's office in 2010 and presented to the ACT parliament. There were 45 full-time school-based counselors. While acknowledging that support staff conduct themselves "in a professional and dedicated manner..in a dynamic and complex environment" (p. 4), it was found that "the Department did not have sound procedures and systems to collect and analyze relevant information on the audited services...As a result it did not have sufficient and reliable information..to ensure the quality as well as to fully evaluate the effectiveness of these services" (p. 5). The audit found a lack of updated documents on guidance as to prioritize activities and outcomes in addition to a lack of adequate professional supervision for school-based counselors. The report concluded that there was no information available to ascertain if a student's needs were met as the department did not "systematically analyse the information obtained from counselors' annual reports for service improvements" (p.7). The first recommendation that the report made was that the department should "develop and implement a set of performance indicators...which are measurable and useful for performance management and service improvements" (p. 8). Clinical supervision was the main quality assurance mechanism to ensure high-quality counseling (p. 32).

A review of school counselors by the NSW Department of Education and Training was to be undertaken in 2011 after the Coroner found, when investigating the suicide of a student, that there were not sufficient school counselors. In 2011 a paper was published describing the service, and a second paper was delivered in 2012 which was a commissioned review of evidenced-based programs for student's well-being in schools. There have been no other papers released to date. Both these reviews conducted by the employing authority have not provided good policy research to inform decision-makers about school-based counselors so they can take effective action.

### **Small-Scale Research on School-Based Counseling by Practitioners**

The fact as mentioned earlier that Australia does not have a mandated school-wide guidance or counseling program or policy, but is rather a staffing position in a school with certain duties, makes evaluation of the service difficult. While a few studies have delineated the activities school-based counselors engage in (e.g., Bramston & Rice, 2000; Rice & Bramston, 1999), there was no evaluation of the role. There are only a few studies that have evaluated the school-based counseling service, by way of surveys of satisfaction or expectations of principals, school-based counselors, and teachers. However, as Reger (1964) maintains, teachers' and principals' perceptions and attitudes toward school-based counselors can be a significant factor influencing the effectiveness of their work. Evaluations of most school-based counselors' work are based on these ratings of satisfaction.

Brittain (1988) examined 429 Queensland secondary school students' satisfaction with school-based counseling. The students completed the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire and rated their school counselors with a mean of 28.4 out of a possible 32. Dickinson in 1995, again in Queensland, administered a questionnaire to 12 secondary senior school-based counselors and 8 secondary principals. The participants were asked to rate both their satisfaction and preferred level of operation of 22 areas of activity such as personal counseling, career counseling, behavior management, and psychoeducational assessment. It was found that both principals and senior school-based counselor's perceptions about the activities were similar and that principals were mainly satisfied with the time allocation for these duties. In WA Leach (1989) surveyed 289 teachers and principals and found that teachers perceived that school-based counselors counseled students and assessed them rather than engaging in consultation and school-wide assessment. However, both groups wanted more of all the counselors' activities.



In Victoria Thiekling and Jimerson (2006) conducted a survey asking 21 principals, 86 teachers, and 81 school-based counselors what the role of the school counselor should be. All three groups agreed on some core activities such as counseling students, conducting psychometric testing, and implementing mental health group programs. However, teachers and principals wanted less confidentiality for students and compulsory counseling for discipline infractions.

In taking another approach to research on the effectiveness of school-based counseling, there are many universal prevention and intervention programs that are Australian based. One of the most evidenced based is the FRIENDS program. This is a universal school-based program to prevent childhood anxiety and depression through the application of cognitive-behavioral principles and the building of emotional resilience. The Resourceful Adolescent Program (RAP) is a universal depression program. In a meta-analysis by Neil and Christensen (2007), both FRIENDS and RAP were found to be moderately effective. Other programs such as Aussie Optimism, a mental health promotion strategy targeted to prevent internalizing problems in students transitioning to high school, and You Can Do It, a program for primary students on resilience, confidence, persistence, organization, and getting along, have also found to be somewhat successful (Bernard & Walton, 2011; Roberts et al., 2010). However, while these programs are often conducted by school-based counselors, they are also run by classroom teachers, so these are not actually providing evidence of the effectiveness of school-based counseling.

Additionally, in Australia there are three influential frameworks for promoting mental health in schools. KidsMatter Primary is a national primary school mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention framework, which began in 2006. Slee et al. (2009) found an improvement in student well-being and a decrease in mental health difficulties with schools who implemented the program compared to schools which did not. MindMatters is the framework for secondary schools developed in 1998. Ainley et al. (2006) found over 95% of secondary

schools were aware of MindMatters and reported it influenced the development of policies and programs in schools. The National Safe Schools Framework provides a vision and a set of guiding principles for safe and supportive school communities that also promote student well-being and develop respectful relationships. It was evaluated by Cross et al. (2011) 4 years after its implementation. While a small decline in self-reported bullying rates was observed from 1999 to 2007, it was concluded that the NSSF required greater implementation support and Australian teachers required further training in order to be able to implement it effectively.

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### Policy Questions That Need to Be Investigated

There is a surprising lack of attention to evaluation of school-based counseling in Australia, although evaluation leads to improvement and increased legitimacy in the eyes of educational decision-makers (Greene, 1988). However, the rhetoric in education is one of evidenced-based practice and accountability. We need evaluation and research in many areas such as Are the present policies fit for purpose? What are the most effective organizational and staffing models for school-based counselors in Australia? Counselors are expensive and therefore a scarce resource. As a profession we are not demonstrating our cost-effectiveness. We all believe the work we do is effective based on our own observations, but this does not provide evidence. We do not evaluate our services enough. Calls for the accountability of the profession are numerous. It is not just the cost but the value of school-based counselors; therefore cost-benefit analysis should be conducted. We need to know what is the most efficient and effective models of training for school-based counselors. What qualifications should the profession insist on? What are the most evidence-based practices for school-based counselors to deliver the most efficient and effective services? And most importantly how do school-based counselors impact on a variety of student outcomes – both academic outcomes and well-being?



We need however to be careful. While it is advisable to advocate for evidenced-based practice, using the metrics of objective science to inform evidence-based policies, we must not fall into the trap of advocating for policy-based evidence, that is, “to reconstruct after the fact, scientific rationale and data for overtly political and ideological decisions” (Luke, 2011, p. 18). As Shonkoff (2000) says, policymakers are “driven by political, economic, and social forces that reflect the society in which they live” (p. 181). They are not influenced as much by empirical data but rather by “compelling stories and the selective use of evidence” (p. 18), especially looking for “evidence” to support already entrenched policies which have been politically and economically influenced, that is, policy-based evidence, not evidence-based policies.

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### Who Should Investigate?

Who are the best people and/or organizations to research policy on school-based counselors? Employing authorities should be able to evaluate their service. However, in the ACT’s audit report, one recommendation was that the department collects and analyzes data on performance measurements of school-based counseling services and “obtain feedback from students in determining whether the counseling service was useful or effective in addressing their concerns” (p. 11). However, the Department, while agreeing feedback from school staff on the effectiveness of the school counselors’ role was useful, did not believe that direct feedback from students was warranted as if the students were engaged in their education this was proof that the counseling was effective. This illustrates a lack of understanding about school-based counseling by the employing authority. However, this does not seem to be the case in some states in the USA such as Missouri and Utah where the state education department has been shown to build capacity for school counseling evaluation (Martin & Carey, 2012).

Perhaps professional associations are the organizations to evaluate their members? There are two major professional associations catering

for school-based counselors in Australia. One is the Australian Psychologists and Counselors in Schools (APACS), which is a national body. It was an amalgamation of state-based organizations which still retain their own independence (Prescott, 1995). The other association is the Australian Psychological Society. It has nine colleges, one of which is the College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists, which requires psychologists to have specified qualifications and experience in this area. There is also an interest group of school psychologists, only recently formed in 2012 by Thielking, which any member of the APS can join, and a School Psychology Reference group, established since 2005, for which membership is invited (APS, 2014). However, neither has conducted any research or evaluation into school-based counseling.

University or independent centers for research on policy are used in the USA, such as the Center for School Counseling Outcomes Research and Evaluation (CSCORE) at the University of Massachusetts or the Assessment and Evaluation Center (AEC) at Washington State Institute for Public Policy. In Australia while there are no universities which have centers for evaluation of school-based counselors, there is the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) which is an independent, nonprofit organization carrying out research into education. However, they have not been commissioned to research school-based counselors to date.

Perhaps one of the reasons why no policy research on school-based counseling has been conducted in Australia is the cost. While employing authorities, professional associations, or universities could evaluate policies effecting school-based counselors, there is the question of who pays for this research. As has been shown, the employing authorities have to date conducted a review only when circumstances dictated (e.g., the NSW Coroner). The professional associations are funded only by members’ contributions, with the administrative positions voluntary carried out by employed school counselors themselves. Universities can apply for competitive national research funding but this is very limited.

## Conclusion

As a minority profession in a large educational bureaucracy, school counseling has been subject to and influenced by the many changes in organizational restructuring and policy initiatives (Faulkner, 1993; McKie & Colmar, 2013). There is a tension between a one-size-fits-all educational policy of national conformity, comparison of school academic results, and performance pay for teachers all regardless of background and context, with the individualized management of schools to achieve these aims. Evaluation of school-based counseling can lead not only to improvement in the service but also has the benefit of convincing employing authorities to advocate for the position with government for funding. As in many other countries, the role of school-based counselors is tenuous as seen by the previous section on how educational policy increases or decreases staffing numbers.

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## Introduction and Background

Aotearoa New Zealand is a small country in the South Pacific with an estimated population of 4,578,900 (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). The data gained from the 2013 census showed the population mix as 74% European, 15% Maori, 12% Asian, 7% Pacific People and 1% Middle Eastern/Latin American/African. The future projection is for a decrease in Europeans with an increase in Maori, Pacific and Asian peoples. Aotearoa New Zealand is becoming more multicultural.

Before the 1980s, education, compulsory and free between the ages of 6 and 16, was based on the traditional democratic educational values of social inclusiveness, democratic citizenship and moral responsibility (Codd, 2005). In the 1980s the New Zealand government embraced neo-liberalism as the solution to the worsening economic situation. Public sector reforms based on effectiveness, efficiency and outputs started in 1984 with education—the key to economic growth—being the focus from 1987–1990, the aim to prepare people for the job market.

In 1988, a government-produced education policy document entitled *Tomorrow's Schools* emphasised devolution, efficiency and choice (Codd, 2005). There was a move to more managerial autonomy, within tighter accountability frameworks. Schools became self-managing units with parents elected to boards of trustees to take responsibility for the governance and management of schools and the school principal being the chief executive. Schools wrote their own charters, strategic plans and policies including in them equity objectives. The Department of Education became a much smaller Ministry of Education whilst the regional education boards were abolished. The Education Review Office (ERO) was established to monitor schools, and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority was set up to ensure that New Zealand qualifications were regarded as credible and robust nationally and internationally.

In 1993 the Ministry of Education issued National Education Guidelines (outlined in the Education Act 1989 Part 7, Section 60A) consisting of national educational goals, national curriculum statements and national administration guidelines. Each school is required to enact the guidelines taking into account the educational needs of their students and local community. A school's charter document embodies all aspects required to be met by the school with each school reporting annually on their performance. The seven essential subject areas of the national curriculum had specific achievement objectives, at

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eight levels, with assessment directly related to learning outcomes, focusing on product rather than process, setting out what students ought to know and be able to do. By undertaking self-reviews—using ongoing processes of evaluation and inquiry—each school is expected to improve the learning and outcomes for all students. Using outcome-based evaluation indicators, the ERO visits and reviews each school every 3–5 years, carrying out an external evaluation, integrating with it the school’s internal evaluations. A school’s ERO report is available to the public on the ERO website.

In the 1990s, as enrolment zones were abolished, competition between schools increased. Schools were competing for resources and marketing for students both locally and internationally. In 2012 there were 9460 fee-paying international students enrolled in Aotearoa New Zealand schools (ERO, 2013a). By the end of the 1990s, the focus of education policy was on the national economy, creating enterprise cultures in schools, where students would acquire the skills and attitudes Aotearoa New Zealand needed to compete in an increasingly competitive international economy (Codd, 2005). Ten years after the reforms, the majority of principals (87%) and board of trustees (65%) found funding from the government to be inadequate, and school fundraising had increased markedly (Wylie, 1999). Competition between schools had increased. Principals and teachers’ workloads and paper work had increased. Schools with high Maori enrolment or in low socio-economic areas had not benefitted from the reforms and were struggling with falling rolls, staffing and a lack of local resources.

Following the 1990s there was a move back to social democratic ideals of inclusiveness, cooperation, equity and social responsibility whilst retaining an enterprise culture embracing globalisation. A revised curriculum was implemented in 2010 with languages—considered important for students to participate in a more multicultural Aotearoa New Zealand as well as the global community—added as the eighth essential learning area. The vision “young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong

learners” with the curriculum framework “designed to ensure that all young New Zealanders are equipped with the knowledge, competencies and values they will need to be successful citizens in the twenty first century”(Ministry of Education, 2007).

Government funding was a key issue in the 2012 national survey—carried out every 3 years—of secondary schools, with two-thirds of principals reporting a worse financial year than in 2011 and a quarter of principals having deficits in the past 3 years (Wylie, 2013). Moreover, some schools were spending more money than they would like on marketing and property. Whilst parents were slightly more positive than in 2009 about their child’s secondary school experience, principals’ and teaching staff morale had slipped. Schools with enrolments from low socio-economic areas were still facing issues related to funding, staffing, student achievement, behaviour and motivation. In many secondary schools, funding from international fee-paying students help ameliorate school budget/funding shortfalls.

In 2014, the government announced a new initiative, Investing in Educational Success (IES), to help raise student achievement. Costing \$359 million over the first 4 years, then \$155 million per year, the initiative involves collaboration between schools with around ten schools from primary to secondary forming a community of schools. Within the Communities of Schools the sharing of expertise in teaching and learning occurs through the most skilled—expert—principals and teachers providing leadership, support and mentoring to their colleagues. Through the setting of goals—achievement challenges—based on identified student learning needs, the aim is to increase the achievement of all students.

The 2015 national survey of secondary schools found principals’ stress levels and work hours remained high with their morale and optimism having slipped since 2012. Teachers were slightly more positive about their work, though concerned about the weight of assessment and motivating students, whilst parents were mostly happy with their child’s secondary schooling. Schools with



enrolments from the lowest socio-economic areas were still facing the most challenges in meeting the needs of their students. Resources for funding and property remained an issue with only 14% of secondary principals reporting their school's government funding as sufficient to meet their schools' needs (Wylie and Bonne, 2015). As well, the money allocated for education in the 2016 government budget had no increase in schools' operating grants.

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## History of Guidance and Counselling in Aotearoa New Zealand

In the 1940s guidance services in Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools consisted of career advisers, visiting teachers and a community-based educational psychological service. Although guidance was not officially recognized as an integral aspect of schooling before the 1960s, schools through their organisational practices and teaching staff—as role models—were seen to play an important socialising role. In response to emerging social problems and an upsurge in juvenile delinquency, the first guidance counsellors—experienced teachers—were appointed to selected schools in 1959 (Webster and Hermansson, 1983). The guidance counsellors had a remedial-adjustive function providing guidance and help for at risk students.

The Renwick Working Party Report of 1971 recommended all secondary schools establish comprehensive guidance programmes involving all teachers and available to all students. Schools needed to be concerned with the personal development as well as the educational and vocational development of students (Department of Education, 1971). With more guidance counsellors appointed in the 1970s, universities—through their education departments—started to offer training programmes. Each year the Department of Education provided a number of study awards for teachers appointed to guidance counsellor positions. Guidance counsellors as qualified and experienced teachers, trained in guidance and counselling processes and skills,

were specialist teachers and became the focal point of a school's guidance and counselling programme. Schools established guidance networks consisting of the principal, deputy principal, senior mistress, deans/tutors and form teachers with both administrative- and guidance-related roles, whilst the guidance counsellor—a middle manager—had leadership responsibilities. Alongside their management and leadership roles, guidance counsellors were available for consultation and provided counselling to students, their families and staff. They also networked with and made referrals to outside agencies. Guidance was a shared responsibility carried out by the guidance network personnel, and schools developed guidance programmes to meet the specific needs of their students.

By the early 1980s, guidance and counselling had become one of the functions of a school, and although separate from, it integrated and overlapped with the teaching and administrative functions (Hermansson, 1981). Guidance had changed from its initial remedial, social control function to include the concept of developmental guidance. Eligible secondary schools—depending on enrolment numbers—were allocated time allowances for guidance duties. Guidance counsellor positions were tagged and government funded (Besley, 2001). Advisors from the Department of Education provided support for school's guidance and counselling function.

With the changes in education policies in the 1980s and 1990s and schools becoming self-managing, there was no longer external support, advice or guidance, and no official national policy/guidelines were available to support a school's guidance and counselling function. Moreover, schools focussed more on the curriculum, student achievement and administration, with less emphasis on developmental guidance. Other specialist functions came under the guidance umbrella including the management of mainstream special needs students and transition/career education for all students, as students were staying longer in schools due to the lack of employment opportunities. English as a second language was also included for fee-paying international students and immigrants. Often an assis-



tant principal rather than the guidance counsellor held the responsibility for this enlarged guidance network. In many schools, responsibility for vocational guidance was separate from the guidance counsellor's role, with teachers acting as career advisors. This was in response to workload issues for the guidance counsellors, who were frequently the only guidance counsellor in the school, and an increasing demand for counselling from students presenting with emotional, social and developmental issues. As well, there was a growing emphasis on career education and guidance in secondary schools.

School staffing formula changes in 1996 saw the removal of tagged funding for guidance counsellor positions (Besley, 2001). At the same time, the requirement that eligible secondary schools have guidance counsellors was removed, with guidance counsellor appointees no longer needing to be teacher-qualified with at least 5 years of teaching experience.

Although schools were left to make their own decisions on their guidance and counselling provision, most secondary schools continued to have guidance/pastoral networks—also useful for administrative purposes—and employ guidance counsellors. In some schools, the emphasis on guidance and counselling lessened, resulting in a loss of guidance counsellor positions, whilst in others the position became school counsellor or counsellor. During and after the 1990s a number of people without teacher qualifications or experience were appointed to guidance counsellor positions, whilst some appointees had little or no counsellor training. Also, a number of non-teacher-qualified guidance counsellors were appointed when teacher registration was optional between 1991 and 1996 (Alison, 2007). When a school appoints a non-teacher-qualified counsellor, they can apply to the teacher's registration body for a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT). LAT is granted for 3 years and enables the guidance counsellor to be part of the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement (STCA) and paid from the schools' staffing entitlement. Alternatively, the school may employ the counsellor on an individual contract and pay them from other school funding.

A review of staffing in 2001 resulted in schools receiving an additional guidance-staffing component when they met certain criteria and reached a minimum enrolment. There was no stipulation on how this staffing was to be utilised, with the maximum allocation being equivalent to two-and-a-third (2.3) full-time teaching positions (ERO, 2013b). Schools could use this allocation to employ guidance counsellors and/or provide deans/tutors/head of pastoral care with allocated time to carry out their administrative, discipline and guidance responsibilities, or schools could use this allocation in other ways.

At the end of 2006, the teacher registration body decided that they would no longer accept and grant reapplications for LATs. They informed all guidance counsellors holding LATs that they needed to become trained teachers if they were to maintain their current position and paid from the schools' staffing entitlement. This resulted in a number of affected guidance counsellors undertaking specially designed teacher-training courses. At this time, the teachers' registration body was also redefining the criteria for registration as a teacher. They questioned the right of guidance counsellors to be teachers especially if they had no allocated teaching hours.

In 2009, the Minister of Education when looking at potential areas of savings questioned the need for guidance counsellors to be teachers. Responses to the Minister from individual guidance counsellors and from the teachers' union outlined the important contribution that guidance counsellors make to students' learning and achievement (Gainsford, 2009). The Minister's questioning of the need for guidance counsellors to be teachers, along with the teacher registration and employment issues, led to much debate and dividedness amongst school guidance counsellors during the late 2000s (Crowe, 2014). After several drafts and consultations, the teacher registration body redefined what it is to be a teacher. Teacher-qualified guidance counsellors are teachers with a specialist role. With schools being self-managing and no national guidelines or policies, they maintain the flexibility to appoint teacher-qualified or non-teacher-qualified guidance counsellors.

## Policies and Guidelines Relating to Guidance and Counselling

The Ministry of Education has provided guidelines for schools in a number of areas involving guidance. For career advisors, including those guidance counsellors still responsible for career education and guidance, the Ministry (2009) provided an updated version of “Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools” which “offers advice and support to schools on providing effective career education and guidance in years 7–13” (Ministry of Education, 2009). The Career Services worked with the Ministry of Education on this document, having undertaken a number of initiatives in schools in 2005/2006 and 2007/2008, including professional development programmes and resources to improve career education and guidance. Careers New Zealand Services (formerly Career Services) in 2011 published a set of Career Education Benchmarks intended as a self-review resource for secondary schools. (Careers New Zealand, 2011).

In May 2015 the ERO released *Careers education and guidance: good practice* having collected information from ten schools previously identified as demonstrating good practice in career education and guidance during a 2012 review. Information gained from other ERO reviews related to student success and achievement, preparation for future education, training and employment also informed this report (ERO, 2015). The career education and guidance indicators used by ERO in their evaluation are included and will be useful for a school’s self-review. These encourage a school-wide approach to develop student career-management competencies, linking with the curriculum and pastoral and guidance systems resulting in each student with an active career plan, developed and monitored through academic mentoring and counselling.

In 2010 the Ministry of Education Special Education sent schools two documents—a guide and resources—to manage emergencies and traumatic incidents. These provide detailed guidance on the effective management of emergencies and traumatic incidents (Ministry of Education, Special Education, 2010). Guidance counsellors

play a key role managing students and their families affected by traumatic incidences. In 2013, the Ministry of Education released an updated version of a 1998 resource kit for schools for their role in suicide prevention and responding to suicidal behaviour. The kit provides practical guidance for school staff and anticipates that school counsellors will play a major role in the assessment and management of young people at risk of suicide (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Bullying is a concern for all schools. In 2013 Patrick Walsh, then president of the Secondary Principals’ Association, called upon the government to urgently provide a clear, comprehensive bullying policy for schools (Jones, 2013). He maintained that it was inefficient for each school to create their own policy and that the Ministry of Education needed to provide leadership in this important area of student safety. The outcome was the release in 2014 of *Bullying prevention and response: A guide for schools*, updated in 2015. The Secretary for Education along with an advisory team consisting of representatives from relevant government sectors and other agencies developed the guide (Education, 2015).

All schools are required to fulfil certain legal requirements, including:

- Section 77 of the Education Act 1989 which requires that the principal ensures students get good guidance and counselling
- Section 17A of the Education Act 1989 that requires the principal to take reasonable steps to ensure that a student who is stood down or suspended has guidance and counselling
- National Education Goal 2 that requires boards to remove barriers to achievement
- National Administration Guideline 5 that requires boards to provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students. (ERO, 2013b)

A secondary school’s guidance and counselling provision helps to meet these legal requirements. It also contributes to the values and key competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum in particular relating to others, participating and contributing, and managing self (ERO, 2013b;

Hughes, 2009). Therefore, although self-managing, most secondary schools have continued to provide guidance and counselling services and to employ guidance counsellors. They have developed their own policies and guidelines. Such policies may include job descriptions for people in various guidance roles, such as the guidance counsellor, deans and career teacher. Further, policies cover professional and ethical issues, such as confidentiality, bullying and abuse. A school's understanding of the nature of guidance and counselling and its value in assisting student wellbeing, learning and achievement may influence their policy development and implementation (ERO, 2013b).

### **Support and Advocacy for Support and Policies/Guidelines for School Guidance Counsellors**

The lack of support for guidance counsellor positions resulted in guidance counsellors becoming increasingly concerned about their status in schools and their ability to address the counselling needs of their students (Crowe, 2006). Since the move to self-managing schools, these concerns were brought to the attention of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) and the Post-Primary Teachers Association (PPTA).

NZAC is the professional association for counsellors. Members of NZAC are accountable to NZAC. To maintain their membership they are required to practice under the NZAC Code of Ethics, have regular supervision and participate in ongoing professional learning and development. In assenting to the NZAC Code of Ethics counsellors who belong to NZAC, accept their responsibilities to clients, colleagues, the Association, agencies and the wider community (NZAC, 2002). NZAC has branches throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, which hold monthly meetings and organise professional development events. Conferences for school guidance counsellors are held biannually and open to both NZAC members and non-members. When a guidance counsellor is a member of NZAC, they work under an appropriate code of ethics, have regular

supervision, participate in ongoing professional development and are subject to a complaints process.

PPTA, the secondary teachers' union, negotiates with the government the pay and conditions of teachers, including teacher-qualified guidance counsellors, employed in secondary schools. Both NZAC and PPTA advocate for and support guidance counsellors.

Concerns expressed by guidance counsellors to NZAC and PPTA included the removal of the tagged positions for guidance counsellors which meant schools no longer were required to have guidance counsellors resulting in the loss of some positions. The appointment of non-teacher-qualified guidance counsellors and the questioning of whether guidance counsellors needed to be teachers were a major concern. Traditionally guidance counsellors are trained and experienced teachers who undertook guidance counselling training, frequently funded through the Ministry of Education study awards with a number of awards available each year. Guidance counsellors remained part of the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement (STCA) and were paid from a school's staffing budget. Appointing experienced teachers and training them as guidance counsellors had value, in that teachers knew and understood school systems, had experience of working with adolescents and were more able to gain the trust of students, teachers and principals. These qualities were important for acceptance and credibility when leading school guidance networks and carrying out other related education activities (Besley, 2001). The importance of school guidance counsellors being embedded alongside teachers in schools is also emphasised by Webb (2008). The possible removal of guidance counsellors from the teaching profession would devalue their role and impact on their effectiveness in schools. Also if they were no longer teachers, they would be removed from the STCA and no longer paid from the school's staffing entitlement.

When schools appoint a non-teacher-qualified counsellor, they apply to the teacher's registration body for a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT), which is valid for 3 years. This means it is

possible to pay their salary from the school's staffing budget, or they can pay the counsellor on an individual contract basis, with payment coming from other school funding. The pay rates for those on individual contracts are variable and frequently on lower pay scales than their teacher-qualified colleagues. Not all schools would have sufficient other funding to meet this cost. The fact that some schools are appointing non-teacher-qualified guidance counsellors indicates that the traditional route to a guidance counsellor position may not be meeting the needs of schools. Schools are looking for trained counsellors who can work effectively and safely as soon as they are appointed. This suggests that a change in policy might be required in the allocation of the Ministry of Education's study awards for guidance counsellor training.

Other concerns were the appointment of people with no counselling qualifications and not belonging to any appropriate professional association and others not having any supervision or professional development. The concerns were in relation to the safety of the guidance counsellors' practice and their effectiveness, the devaluing of the role and the overall impression conveyed from them of the guidance counsellor role. A number of guidance counsellors on individual contracts were expressing concerns about their pay and conditions, lack of funding for supervision and ongoing professional development. All of the concerns have arisen out of the move to self-managing schools with each school making their own decisions, guidelines and policies around their guidance and counselling provision.

Representatives from NZAC and PPTA have met regularly with government agencies to inform, discuss and work to find solutions for the concerns expressed by guidance counsellors. Together NZAC and PPTA also updated the School Guidance Counsellor Appointment Kit. The Guidance Advisory Service of the Auckland Department of Education had produced the first kit in the 1980s (Barclay, Crocket, Kotze, & Mira, 2013). The current document outlines the role of the guidance counsellor and provides guidelines for principals, boards of trustees, teachers and guidance counsellors when a school

is looking to appoint a guidance counsellor and is available on the NZAC and PPTA websites.

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### **Research Used for the Support and Advocacy of Guidance Counsellors**

The need to advocate for school guidance counsellors resulted in NZAC supporting Manthei's 1997 research (not published until 1999) on school guidance counsellors. The results of the research were "to be used to make more accurate and detailed submissions to the Ministry of Education regarding the training, supervision and continuing employment of counsellors in schools" (Manthei, 1999). A small number of previous studies in the 1980s and early 1990s had provided information on guidance counsellors and the work they did in schools. From these studies changes and trends were identified both in demographic information on the guidance counsellors and on their work in schools. Manthei's 1997 study, which involved questionnaires being sent out to 389 schools, gained 212 responses from guidance counsellors. This study found more females than males being appointed to guidance counsellor positions, resulting in an equal number of male and female guidance counsellors (50/50) when in the past there had been more male than female guidance counsellors; 63% were over the age of 45, with an imbalance of Pakeha/New Zealand European guidance counsellors, 92% to other ethnic counsellors and only 3.8% Maori; 60% had 6+ years of experience as a guidance counsellor with 26% having 10+ years and 16% over 15 years; 95.6% were teacher qualified; 70% were NZAC members; 11% (24) had inadequate counselling training even though they had been working as guidance counsellors in schools for 6+ years; and 92% were receiving supervision.

When the guidance counsellors' workload in Manthei's 1999 study was compared to earlier studies, it was noted that although the time spent on counselling had remained much the same, there had been an increase in time spent on non-guidance administration and crisis work with

teaching responsibilities taking up 11.4% of their time. Guidance counsellors reported working longer hours had increased workloads and 85% found the job more difficult. The problems most frequently dealt with by the guidance counsellors were career decisions, family problems, educational problems, peer conflict and disruptive behaviour. The most difficult or serious problems were depression, family problems, suicide attempts, sexual abuse and drug abuse with an increase in the complexity of counselling cases. Poverty, more disturbed young people, lack of jobs and an increasingly violent community where the social and economic factors identified by guidance counsellors as contributing to their caseloads.

The guidance counsellors accessed support from a variety of outside support services, including statutory agencies to help deal with the more difficult and serious problems. They reported mixed usefulness saying some services lacked resources and expertise and were slow to respond, in particular the statutory agencies. Overall, the support and expertise they could call on had deteriorated. Despite the difficulty of the job, for a substantial number of counsellors, their job satisfaction had increased. It was suggested that the increased confidence and experience of these guidance counsellors was due to the opportunity for basic and ongoing training along with clinical supervision (Manthei, 1999).

In 2004, the PPTA surveyed guidance counsellors to gather information that would assist PPTA in its support and advocacy of guidance counsellors (PPTA, 2004). Of the 256 guidance counsellors that responded, PPTA found 66% were NZAC members; 83% were fully registered (77%) or provisionally registered teachers(6%); 11% (28) were on a Limited Authority to Teach(LAT), 6% (14) not registered/not answered; 41% (104) had teaching responsibilities; 81% had counselling qualifications; 82% were employed as teachers on the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement or Area School Teachers' Collective Agreement, with 25 respondents being on a variety of individual contracts and payments, one being paid as little as \$15 per hour. A concern was expressed that in the schools

with the majority of students from lower socio-economic families and hence the likelihood of more complex and demanding issues, there were fewer counsellors. Comments from respondents also conveyed some guidance counsellors being under huge pressure. Half (50%) of the respondents identified advocacy to the board of trustees, principals, teachers and government about the need for counsellors in schools as one of the main things PPTA could do for them.

The absence of any official government information and database on school counsellors was highlighted by Payne and Lang (2009) when they reported on their national survey of school guidance counsellors and their supervision. They outlined their difficulty in carrying out a survey when they had no way to access school guidance counsellors directly or know how many school guidance counsellors exist. From the 213 respondents to their online survey, they found that 66% were women, 90% were over 40 years of age and 11% had been a guidance counsellor for over 20 years. Most (94%) were accessing professional supervision, 94% were counselling qualified or working towards a counselling qualification, 80% were also registered as teachers and most belonged to a professional body or association NZAC, 69%, and/or PPTA, 62% (Payne and Lange, 2009). All teachers are required to practice under the PPTA code of ethics, but this code does not cover the professional codes and guidelines for counsellors. Some guidance counsellors who are not NZAC members may use the NZAC code of ethics as a guideline to their practice, but they are not accountable to NZAC.

When comparing the findings of the 1997, 2004 and 2009 survey data, there is a decrease in the numbers of teacher-registered guidance counsellors from 95.6% to 83% to 80% which relates to the loss in 1996 of the tagging of school guidance counsellor positions and the removal of the requirement that guidance counsellor had to be teachers (Besley, 2001). A comparison of the 1997 survey data with the 2009 data reveals that the trend identified in 1997 of more females being appointed to guidance counsellor positions continued with 66% being female in 2009 which may relate to the loss of status of the position in



schools and therefore less males interested in becoming guidance counsellors. Data from the three studies show an increase in the number of guidance counsellors with counselling qualifications, an increasingly aged and experienced workforce with over 66% belonging to NZAC and most of the guidance counsellors receiving supervision.

At a school counsellor conference in 2008, a number of guidance counsellors, both NZAC and non-NZAC members, expressed their concern that NZAC was no longer able to effectively represent them (Hooker, 2011). NZAC—originated from school guidance counsellors in 1974—has a membership of over 2000. In 2014, 285(14%) members of NZAC were school guidance counsellors (Antony McFelin, Executive Officer NZAC, personal communication February 18, 2014). Following a consultation and survey process undertaken through local regional school guidance counsellor groups, the decision was made to remain within NZAC and to establish an advisory group to NZAC through their school counsellor portfolio holder. The advisory group was made up of both teacher-qualified and non-teacher-qualified guidance counsellors from throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

The School Counsellors' Advisory Group, which meets annually and focuses on relevant professional and employment issues, wanted information to use in any advocacy initiatives as well as help provide direction for future activities. They also wanted clarification on the advisory groups' representation and appointment processes (Barclay et al., 2013). A survey was constructed using SurveyMonkey, an online survey platform (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>). In November and December 2011 the survey was sent out to all school guidance counsellors who were NZAC members with a known e-mail contact. These members were invited to pass the survey onto other guidance counsellors who were not members of NZAC. The respondent number of 138 was low. This may have been because not all school guidance counsellors received the survey, the time of the year the survey was undertaken and the advisory groups' lack of resources to follow up.

The Advisory Group's survey (published by Barclay et al., 2013) found that the respondents of their survey were well qualified with most having postgraduate qualifications in counselling; most were Pakeha/New Zealand European with 8% Maori. All were having supervision, most (77%) were teacher qualified with 70% having management units, 84% were members of NZAC and 73% were PPTA members with 70% of the group having more than 6 years of experience, 46% having 10+ years and 31% having 15+ years as school guidance counsellors (Barclay et al., 2013). These last figures of years of service show a more experienced and longer serving group than in the Manthei 1997 survey, and although the 2011 surveyed group was small, it is pleasing to note that a higher proportion, 8% of respondents, were Maori. The fact that 84% of respondents were members of NZAC compares well to other survey completion rates of 66%, 69% and 70%. This may be the result of the survey being sent out to all NZAC guidance counsellors and reflect their awareness of the issues being faced and how the information gained was to be used (Table 29.1).

Findings from the surveys showed most guidance counsellors to be highly qualified and experienced. Nearly all were receiving supervision and many belonged to NZAC. There were increasingly more female than male guidance counsellors with most having Pakeha (European) ethnicity. The number of teacher-qualified/registered guidance counsellors had declined. Also evident is an ageing workforce.

With all the survey statistics it is important to take into account that not all school guidance counsellors responded. In fact, it is hard to gauge the percentage response when the number of schools which employ guidance counsellors and the number of counsellors in each school were unknown. Also, the respondents may have been more confident to respond to the questions in the questionnaires. However the results of these surveys did give both NZAC and PPTA some information on the position of guidance counsellors in New Zealand secondary schools, information they used at meetings with government agencies in the hope that they could affect some changes.



**Table 29.1** Comparison of findings from the four surveys (dates in Table 29.1 below represent the year of the surveys rather than publication year).

Survey	Manthei (1999)	PPTA (2004)	Payne and Lang (2009)	Barclay et al., (2013)
Respondent number	212	256	213	138
Male/female %	50/50		66% female	
Age	63% >45 years		90% >40 years	
% European counsellors	92%			95%
% Maori counsellors	3.8%			8%
% >15 years service	16%			31%
Teacher registration/qualified	96%	83%	80%	77%
Counselling qualifications	89%	81%	94%	
Receiving supervision	92%		94%	100%
NZAC membership	70%	66%	69%	84%

NZAC and PPTA communicated guidance counsellors' concerns to government agencies and drew attention to the lack of a database for communicating with guidance counsellors, the absence of data on the number of school guidance counsellors across the nation, their demographic composition and their roles in schools. Further, the loss of status and inconsistent numbers of guidance counsellors employed were highlighted, particularly since the removal of tagged positions in 1996, and the appointment in some schools of non-teacher-qualified counsellors on individual contracts. This new situation, whereby untrained and trained counsellors are practising without supervision, raised concerns about student safety in schools. Concerns were also expressed about guidance counsellors' workloads and expectations that they teach time-tabled classes and carry out other non-guidance and counselling roles, resulting in less time available for guidance and counselling, especially given increasing numbers of students accessing counselling and the complexity of issues students are presenting with.

Hughes (2009) defends and supports the role of guidance counsellors in schools by outlining how school guidance counselling contributes to the values and key competencies of the revised New Zealand curriculum. From research and exploration of guidance counsellor sessions with students, Hughes et al. (2013) demonstrate how the student learning from counselling sessions contributes to and complements classroom learning.

### Research Undertaken Intentionally to Impact Upon the Role of the School Guidance Counsellor

Only one evaluation of guidance and counselling has taken place with the intention of having an impact on this provision, including the role of the guidance counsellor. A concern—highlighted by a number of national and international reports—for the mental health and wellbeing of young people from ages 12 to 19 in Aotearoa New Zealand prompted this evaluation (Crowe, 2014). This age group has relatively high morbidity rates relative to other developed countries (OECD, 2009). The government had responded to this concern by announcing in 2012 the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project. The Prime Minister stated that "One in five of our young people will experience some form of mental health problem during the crucial time they are transitioning to become an adult" (Key, 2013). The aim of the project initiatives was to improve the mental health of young people with, or at risk of, mild to moderate mental health problems with one initiative, being the evaluation of the guidance and counselling provision in secondary schools. The government was not only concerned for the mental health and wellbeing of young people from ages 12 to 19 years, they were also concerned that the money schools were receiving for their guidance and counselling provision was being used appropriately and achieving the right outcomes. In 2012 the Ministry of Education had paid out 57 million across 438

schools to fund 853.6 full-time teaching equivalents (FTTEs) for guidance and counselling (ERO, 2013b).

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## The ERO Evaluation

The ERO, which was tasked with the evaluation—guidance and counselling provisions had not been specifically reviewed before—developed an evaluation framework and indicators of good practice. The aims of the evaluation undertaken in two phases in 2013 were to provide evidence for the Ministry of Education’s policy and programme development and to improve the quality of guidance and counselling for young people in schools, in particular looking at:

- How the current school guidance system is operating, such as schools’ perception of pastoral care, the role of the guidance counsellor and the quality, coverage and management of guidance and counselling in secondary schools
- Which practices best support youth wellbeing
- Better equipping schools to identify and deal with mental health issues
- Enhancing the quality, coverage and management of this resource in secondary schools. (ERO, 2013b)

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## Phase One of the ERO Evaluation

The first phase of the evaluation involved online surveys. Questions covering all aspects of guidance and counselling were asked of school leaders, guidance counsellors and students to find out “what makes guidance and counselling in schools work well” (ERO, 2013c). Schools receiving the guidance staffing entitlement were e-mailed surveys inviting school leaders and guidance counsellors to respond. The ERO received responses from 105 school leaders and 180 guidance counsellors. A student survey set up through the database of the Ministry of Youth Development received 91 responses. All the respondents—the school leaders, guidance counsellors and students—agreed “that having the right people is

what makes guidance and counselling in schools effective. For school leaders and guidance counsellors this meant staff having appropriate professional knowledge. For students this meant the people responsible for guidance and counselling should be supportive and understanding, ensure confidentiality, be a good listener and be non-judgemental” (ERO, 2013c).

For effective guidance and counselling, school leaders considered a collegial approach and a shared understanding about guidance and counselling as important, as was resourcing of time, people and space along with accessibility. Guidance counsellors identified supportive relationships with school staff—school leaders and teachers—whilst for students, finding a solution and taking action were important when they accessed support from guidance and counselling staff. Guidance counsellors also expressed the need for the whole school to convey the message that it was important and normal to access guidance and counselling.

The survey findings identified a number of challenges to effective guidance and counselling including:

- The increasing and diverse workload in guidance and counselling
- Particularly in low income communities
- Not being able to be proactive as school leaders and guidance counsellors would like due to increased reactive counselling and crisis management
- Poor and limited access to, and response from, external agencies and support services
- The stigma attached to mental health that inhibited young people from seeking appropriate help. (ERO, 2013c)

Other findings included nearly two-thirds of the students saying it was socially acceptable to see someone in their school for guidance and counselling. Students identified parents/caregivers as the first people they would seek help from, followed by friends or other students, then guidance counsellors, deans or form teachers. Whom students sought out also depended on the issue they needed help with. Seeking help was easier

when there was easy access along with an assurance of privacy and confidentiality. A negative aspect identified by the students was that some people in guidance and counselling positions lacked time to see them. One suggested change from the students was “employing a diversity of counsellors, for example, younger, male, different ethnicities” (ERO, 2013c).

The school leaders’ survey showed the guidance staffing entitlement being used in varying ways. Rather than employ a guidance counsellor, the schools with smaller rolls (101–400) often used their entitlement to supplement non-classroom contact time for other staff such as senior leadership team, deans, form teachers, and the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) or to provide some social work support or external counselling. If guidance counsellors were employed in these schools, they frequently also had teaching responsibilities. The number of guidance counsellors in schools tended to increase with increasing roll size. Some schools were adding to their guidance staffing entitlement to provide more service provision from guidance counsellors or deans or other guidance personnel. A small number of school leaders were unaware they received the guidance staffing entitlement, and in one large school that did not employ a guidance counsellor, the entitlement was used for career guidance and career programmes. Most schools had other staff besides a guidance counsellor(s) with responsibilities for guidance and counselling, the most common being deans.

In those schools that had guidance counsellors, the school leaders mostly reported that the school provided paid supervision for their guidance counsellor on either a fortnightly or monthly basis. A number of schools also provided some supervision for other staff involved in providing guidance and counselling sometimes on an as-needed basis. The requirement that their guidance counsellor belongs to an appropriate professional association such as NZAC was stated by 65 school leaders, with three school leaders being unsure and seven stating not required.

The ERO had identified four policies/procedures they considered important in guiding guid-

ance counsellors’ work in schools. These were employment decisions, complaints, ethical practices and conflicts of interest. No school leader reported having all of these policies. However most of the schools had at least one of these policies/procedures for guidance counsellors with the most common one being complaints. Yet for other staff involved with guidance and counselling, a greater number of school leaders reported having four of these policies/procedures to guide their work. The ERO expressed their concern over the lack of a comprehensive set of policies and procedures for guidance counsellors (ERO, 2013c).

Only half of the school leaders reported that their school undertook self-reviews of students’ access to good guidance and counselling. Evidence was mostly gathered through student surveys with a number of schools also using staff and parent surveys. Some schools used anecdotal feedback. Two-thirds of the school leaders said their school reported to their board of trustees about their guidance and counselling provision, usually done annually by the guidance counsellor.

Of the 180 guidance counsellors who completed the ERO survey, 65% were female and 94% were over the age of 40 years with 66% older than 50 years. 89% were Pakeha/European with 8% Maori or part Maori, and 95% had counselling qualifications with over half holding a Masters in Counselling. Almost all 97% were receiving supervision and 81% belonged to NZAC. These findings, when compared to the findings of the surveys undertaken by Manthei (1999), PPTA (2004), Payne and Lange (2009) and the advisory group survey in 2011 published by Barclay et al., (2013), show the same trend of an ageing workforce, with an increasing number of guidance counsellors over 40 years of age and two-thirds over 50 years, the majority being European.

Over two-thirds of the guidance counsellors reported that the nature of their position had changed with more than half of the guidance counsellors working more than their allocated hours. These changes were due to the increased frequency and complexity over the past 5 years of young people’s mental health needs—suicidal thoughts, depression, anxiety, self-harming and

family violence—which required more individual counselling. Two-thirds of the guidance counsellors expressed their concern that due to the insufficient hours allocated to carry out their role, the quality of their service was lower and student safety compromised.

Management and appraisal of guidance counsellor positions were variable. Those guidance counsellors, who considered their position very well managed and appraised, “had regular and ongoing management by a supportive principal or senior leadership team that had good insight into the complexities and demands of the role” (ERO, 2013c). These schools had school-wide policies and procedures, some with guidance manuals that were clear and regularly reviewed. The lack of appraisal as guidance counsellors was a concern. Guidance counsellors in some schools had adapted and incorporated into their school appraisal system the guidance counsellor role. Many guidance counsellors were strongly guided in their work by the NZAC Code of Ethics.

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## Phase Two of the ERO Evaluation

Following the first phase of the evaluation which relied upon surveys and self-reporting, the second phase involved the ERO visiting 49 schools, including five wharekura—Maori immersion schools—with 671 students from 18 of these schools undertaking the same student survey as used in phase one. All the schools/wharekura visited by the ERO were receiving the guidance staffing entitlement. The ERO review officers talked with school leaders, board chairpersons, guidance counsellors and other school-based guidance personnel. Workers from outside agencies, such as health nurses, youth workers, social workers and doctors, who were providing services in the school were also included. The findings from the second phase of the evaluation support the findings from the first phase and provide a more detailed account of what makes guidance and counselling in schools work well.

The ERO found that all schools regardless of school type, location or decile—based on socio-

economic level of enrolled students—had students with many different problems presenting for guidance and counselling. “The major problems facing schools in terms of student wellbeing arose from household poverty, poor mental health, family dysfunction, bullying, relationships, and drugs and alcohol” (ERO, 2013b). Over all the ERO was concerned about the capacity of the guidance personnel in all schools to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students seeking guidance and counselling help, many with complex issues. To help address the guidance and counselling needs of their students, schools accessed support from a variety of external agencies. Almost all schools identified challenges with complex referral pathways and the stigma felt by some students and families associated with accessing support when working with external agencies. Of the 49 schools/wharekura visited, the ERO found 30(61%) of these schools serving students well with their guidance and counselling provision, while 14 of these 30 schools were doing so very well. The remaining 19(39%) of schools needed to make considerable improvements.

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## The Very Effective Schools/ Wharekura

In the 14 very effective schools/wharekura, the guidance and counselling provision was underpinned by a strong ethos of care and shared understanding about the school’s approach, with student wellbeing considered critical for learning and achievement. The schools/wharekura had strong leadership, strategic resourcing of people, time and space and clear expectations around practice with some schools additionally resourcing their guidance and counselling provision. Guidance personnel had the professional capacity to help students manage their problems or refer them to expert help, and there were good relationships and communication both internal and external to the school (ERO, 2013b).

In these 14 very effective schools, their strategic vision, goals and values were well articulated, made clear and visible, and guided practice. In

most schools, a member of the senior leadership team had oversight of the guidance and counselling provision. Staff involved in guidance and counselling included guidance counsellors, deans with responsibility for the pastoral care of a large group of students such as a year level, and form/tutor/whanau teachers responsible for the day-to-day care of students, as well as career counsellors, SENCOs, resource teachers' learning and behaviour, health nurses, attendance officers, youth workers and social workers. Deans had allocated noncontact time to carry out their role and received one or two management units. Good communication and positive and trusting relationships existed between guidance and counselling staff. In the two wharekura—due to enrolment size, received less than the full guidance staffing entitlement—that did not have guidance counsellors, all the staff were responsible for guidance and counselling.

A variety of preventative programmes were being run in these 14 schools based on the needs of the students and included academic and peer tutoring, transitions and life skills programmes as well as programmes to address social issues such as bullying and drugs and alcohol. School-wide programmes such as restorative practices involving staff and students were being run. All 14 schools had good procedures to respond to critical incidents and for seeking out external help when needed. They had well-developed relationships with some external providers.

Most of these 14 schools carried out self-reviews of the effectiveness of their guidance and counselling provision. The reviews included feedback from students who had accessed guidance and counselling, school-wide surveys of students, staff and parents and the reviewing of pastoral care goals. Other statistical information on stand-downs and suspensions, student engagement, achievement and progress, attendance and retention and self- and peer referrals were taken into account. Information gained from self-reviews was used by the schools to make decisions about their guidance and counselling provision and shared with the board of trustees.

Self-referral rates by students were high. The guidance counsellors in these schools were com-

petent, confidential and welcoming. Almost all of the guidance counsellors had both counselling and teaching qualifications—most had no teaching responsibilities—and received one management unit. They accessed regular school-funded supervision and professional learning and development, had job descriptions, were appraised for their role as guidance counsellors and were guided in their work by an appropriate code of ethics, usually the NZAC Code of Ethics.

The challenges faced by the guidance counsellors in these very effective schools were as follows: increasing demands from students for counselling, the complex nature of the problems some students were presenting with, the increased time spent on reacting to critical incidents at the expense of students already engaged in counselling and the development of proactive and preventative programmes. Some guidance counsellors used interns to help with their caseloads and to provide counsellors with different ethnicity and/or gender. Workload and time constraints limited the guidance counsellor's involvement in extracurricular activities. This affected their ability to develop their profile in the school and build relationships with students. Yet overall, these 14 schools were providing guidance and counselling very well.

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### The Less Effective Schools

All the other 35(71%) schools the ERO visited needed to make some improvements to their guidance and counselling provision. Nineteen(39%) schools, including two wharekura, needed considerable improvement with 15 of these schools judged by the ERO as doing “somewhat well” and the other four “not at all well” in their guidance and counselling provision (ERO, 2013b). All 19 schools lacked many of the features found in the 14 effective schools. These included: the absence of an integrated approach or shared understanding of guidance and counselling, with poor resourcing, despite 16 schools receiving the full guidance staffing entitlement; out of date policies and job descriptions; no protocols to guide practice; little



opportunities for PLD for guidance and counselling staff; lack of supervision and appropriate appraisal; screening by staff of students who access counselling; poor promotion of the counselling service and stigma attached to accessing guidance and counselling; poor communication within and outside the school; few or no self-reviews; and limited preventative programmes. Often the guidance counsellors had classroom teaching roles, or other responsibilities, which the ERO considered impacted on their effectiveness as guidance counsellors. The ERO was concerned about the workloads of the guidance and counselling staff, their capacity to meet the needs of their students, the lack of resources and lack of support from external agencies.

The remaining 16 schools described by the ERO as doing “well”, also needed to improve in a number of ways. These included: strategic planning and resourcing of guidance and counselling; reviewing and updating policies, procedures and preventative programmes; ensuring guidance counsellors were trained; clarifying job descriptions of guidance personnel and providing PLD opportunities for all guidance staff; appraising guidance counsellors for their role; strengthening communication with parents and undertaking comprehensive self-reviews of their guidance and counselling provision. Six of the schools in this group did not conduct self-reviews. The ERO was concerned about the capacity of the guidance and counselling staff to meet the guidance and counselling needs of students. There was also a need to be more culturally responsive to their Maori and/or Pacific students, as most of these schools had high Maori and/or Pacific enrolments.

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## Responses from the Students

The 671 students surveyed in phase two of the evaluation gave similar responses to those in phase one. A student’s issue/concern tended to determine whom they sought out for support. They mostly accessed guidance counsellors for help and support with mental health issues, sexuality or gender identity, family issues, drug and

alcohol issues, racism, sexual harassment, grief, family violence, self-harming, body image, issues with friends, issues with boyfriend/girlfriend and financial issues. For bullying, they equally sought out the dean or guidance counsellor. Deans were mainly sought out for study and learning issues, and issues with teachers, with form teachers approached for goal setting and learning at school. Career advisors were accessed for careers, further education and training.

Students emphasised the need for confidentiality when accessing guidance counsellors, as well as availability, ease of access, flexibility around appointment times and the opportunity to bring a trusted friend for support. The students identified being supportive, comforting, understanding, approachable, accepting, easy to talk to, good at listening, trustworthy, empathetic, friendly and nonjudgemental as key competences needed by guidance counsellors. Being able to receive practical and useful advice and guidance was the most commonly cited positive aspect of seeing the guidance counsellor (ERO, 2013b). As in phase one, over two-thirds of the students indicated it was acceptable to seek out support from guidance and counselling staff in their school. However, for a number of students, the social stigma and fear of being judged by their peers were a concern.

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## The ERO Recommendations, Next Steps and Impetus for Policy Development

The ERO report listed recommendations as to the next steps needed to improve guidance and counselling for students in secondary schools. For all schools/wharekura, the recommendation was to review their use of their guidance staffing entitlement, taking into account their students and school context to ensure that it was being used appropriately and meeting the identified needs of their students. The ERO also listed a number of questions to help schools review the effectiveness of their provision. The ERO was concerned about the lack of school self-reviews of their guidance and counselling provision as only half of the



school leaders who responded to the survey in phase one of the ERO evaluation reported doing self-reviews. As well, the ERO found a large number of the 49 schools/wharekura they visited needing to do self-reviews or improve on their self-review process. All schools would benefit from incorporating into their school policies a requirement to review on a regular basis, their use of their guidance staffing entitlement and the effectiveness of their guidance and counselling provision to ensure students' needs are met.

The six recommendations made by ERO to the Ministry of Education could also form the basis for policy change or development. The first of six recommendations made by ERO to the Ministry of Education was for the ministry to review the formula used to calculate the guidance staffing entitlement. Currently, eligible schools, with a school roll of over 1000 students, receive the same level of entitlement, 2.3 FTTE, as a school with just over 200 students. This is clearly inequitable with the recommendation made “to ensure the funding better aligns with roll size” (ERO, 2013b). Also a number of the more effective schools in the ERO evaluation had used other school funding additional to their guidance staffing entitlement to resource their guidance and counselling provision indicating that the funding provided by the ministry was not adequate to meet the guidance and counselling needs of their students.

The second recommendation concerned each school's use of the guidance staffing entitlement. The ERO asked the ministry to help schools work out how to use the entitlement appropriately, taking into account their school's context and approach to guidance and counselling, as some schools in the ERO evaluation were unaware they received the guidance staffing entitlement whilst others were unable to account for its use. In the 14 very effective schools that the ERO visited, the guidance staffing entitlement was well allocated, as there was a clear understanding and valuing of the role that guidance and counselling provision plays in the wellbeing and achievement of their students. A policy on the appropriate use of the guidance staffing entitlement, which may include the required appointment of guidance

counsellors, would help all schools work towards meeting the guidance and counselling needs of their students.

The third ERO recommendation for the Ministry of Education to “provide guidelines/expectations for schools and wharekura about the provision of guidance and counselling” (ERO, 2013b) may also form the basis for school policies. Such policies may cover the schools' use of the guidance staffing entitlement, the appointment of staff to guidance and counselling roles including the required qualifications and experience of guidance staff, job descriptions, role expectations, the provision of support for supervision and professional development, as well as policies for appraisal, complaints, confidentiality, ethical practice and conflicts of interest. In phase one of their evaluation, the ERO found a number of schools lacking in policies for school guidance counsellors and their work. Those schools whose guidance counsellors are members of and accountable to NZAC are covered by the NZAC Code of Ethics and complaints process. As well, these guidance counsellors have the appropriate counselling qualifications. A school policy may require guidance counsellors to belong to NZAC.

The fourth ERO recommendation to the Ministry of Education was to provide “targeted professional learning and development (PLD) for school leaders and people working in guidance and counselling roles” (ERO, 2013b). This would help to educate the school leaders—frequently changing—about the nature and value of guidance and counselling to student wellbeing and achievement, as well as provide PLD for guidance personnel. All guidance personnel require ongoing and appropriate PLD so they can carry out their role safely and effectively. This is crucial for staff new to guidance and counselling roles. For guidance counsellors who are members of NZAC, ongoing PLD is a requirement of membership.

Recommendation number five asks the Ministry of Education to encourage schools/wharekura “to include goals and approaches related to student wellbeing and/or guidance and counselling in charters, and annual and strategic planning, and to report on these” (ERO, 2013b). A

school policy to cover this recommendation would make visible, acknowledge, strengthen and show the value of the guidance and counselling provision and provide the structure for self-reviews.

The sixth recommendation involves the Ministry of Education working with other government departments and social service agencies to ensure that schools have appropriate and sufficient access to external agencies and support services to refer students to when needed. One of the issues identified by ERO was the variable support to schools from external agencies.

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## Discussion and Conclusion

The move to self-managing schools in the 1980s, and the increased focus of education on outputs—student achievement—rather than processes, with each school responsible for their operational management, including school policies, has resulted in disparity between schools in their the guidance and counselling provision. The findings from the ERO (2013b) and ERO (2013c) evaluation of guidance and counselling in secondary schools highlight similar issues as identified by Manthei (1999) and PPTA (2004) and voiced as concerns by Crowe (2006). All schools were experiencing a growing number of students with a range of problems—some very complex—seeking out guidance and counselling support. Many of the problems were resulting from social and economic factors of “household poverty, poor mental health, family dysfunction, bullying, relationships, and drugs and alcohol” (ERO, 2013b). In their evaluation of the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling provision in 49 schools/wharekura that ERO visited, they found 61% (30) are doing very well, (14) doing well and (16) needing to make some improvements, with over a third 39% (19) needing to make considerable improvements. Because of the increasing demand, the ERO was concerned about the capacity of the guidance personnel in all the 49 schools/wharekura to meet the guidance and counselling needs of their students, especially in those schools that were less effective, whilst

some schools/wharekura lacked accountability for their use of the guidance staffing entitlement.

The ERO evaluation report outlines very clearly the features common to those 14 schools/wharekura that provide guidance and counselling very well which alongside the ERO recommendations provide the opportunity for the development of national guidelines and policies for the provision of guidance and counselling in all schools.

There is also an urgent need for research on the professional practices involved in guidance and counselling and the affect these services have on the mental health and wellbeing and learning and achievement of youth in Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools. Research on the benefits or not of having teacher-qualified guidance counsellors compared to non-teacher-qualified counsellors would be useful. In the most effective schools in the ERO evaluation, most of the guidance counsellors had both teaching and counselling qualifications. It would also be interesting to know how well the students achieved in the 14 most effective schools to know if being effective in the provision of a school’s guidance and counselling provision does impact positively upon students’ learning and achievement.

The findings of the surveys of guidance counsellors by Manthei (1999), PPTA (2004), Payne and Lange (2009), the advisory group survey 2011 published by Barclay et al., (2013) and ERO (2013b) also show trends that need addressing. The majority of guidance counsellors are European yet the Aotearoa New Zealand population is 74% European with the future prediction that this percentage will decrease whilst the Maori, Pacific and Asian population will increase. Also two-thirds of the guidance counsellors are female which may be the result of the loss of status of the role and less males interested. There needs to be a more equitable balance in ethnicity and gender of guidance counsellors. In the ERO survey of guidance counsellors, 94% were over 40 years of age with 66% over 50 years of age. There needs to be some consideration as to recruitment of younger guidance counsellors in the near future.

Since the ERO reports released in December 2013, a number of meetings located within the Ministry of Education included representatives from the ERO, NZAC and PPTA. Initially no action was taken by the Ministry of Education on the recommendations made in the report, the main reason given being lack of further resourcing available for education. Then in 2015 the Ministry of Education made a small amount of money available to NZAC to produce an information flyer on school guidance counsellors for distribution to principals and boards of trustees. In 2016 specialist staff from the Ministry of Education and experts from key stakeholder organisations including NZAC and PPTA began work on guidelines to assist secondary schools on their guidance and counselling provision. These are yet to be published.

Government concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of the Aotearoa New Zealand youth initiated the ERO evaluation. The aim was to provide evidence for the Ministry of Education's policy and programme development and to improve the quality of guidance and counselling for youth in secondary schools. The recommendations from the ERO evaluation would help to make a difference to the guidance and counselling provision for youth in all secondary schools and especially in the 39% (19) of the 49 school/wharekura that, according to the ERO, needed to make considerable improvements to their guidance and counselling provision to meet the needs of their students. Ministry of Education guidelines/expectations for schools/wharekura about the provision of guidance and counselling, as recommended by the ERO, would help all schools to develop and implement their own policies and guidelines. This would ensure they are using their guidance provision appropriately and meeting the guidance and counselling needs of their students.

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# Historical Influences on the Development of Policy Affecting School-Based Guidance and Counseling in Latin America

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George Davy Vera and Alfonso Barreto

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## Introduction

Several Latin American (LA) authors have called for a rethinking of the guidance and counseling field. They argue that its philosophical, conceptual, procedural, and methodological body of knowledge has been heavily influenced by theories and practices produced in contexts that are historically, culturally, politically, and economically dissimilar from Latin American countries (Calonge, 2004; González, 2008; Olivera, 2004; Rascovan, 2004; Vera, 2013). LA scholars are also critically searching for new ways to conceptualize the field of guidance and counseling and the work of the practitioner based upon contemporary perspectives that are locally rooted (Gavilán, Quiles, & Chá, 2005; González & Ledezma, 2009; Graham, 2001; Vera, 2013). In order to understand trends in policy and policy research in LA today, it is necessary to understand sociocultural, historical forces and factors that have shaped LA school counseling. This

chapter therefore addresses historical, social, cultural, and contextual factors that have influenced policy developments in school-based guidance and counseling.

## Guidance and Counseling in Latin America: Cultural and Racial Historical Contexts

### Cultural Contexts

Latin America (LA) is a complex region full of contrasts. Most LA countries share common cultural roots and political origins, but also have distinct and sometimes clashing histories. Culturally speaking, LA populations are a mixture of races, ethnicities, and diverse aboriginal groups, including mixed configurations (Hernández, 2012).

Although some aboriginal groups are now extinct, aboriginal culture-based guidance and counseling practices are identifiable today. For example, some aboriginal guidance and counseling practices are linked to parenting activities, whereby the group's world view, collectivist values, and social expectations are taught to younger generations. An individual's responsibilities to the collective well-being of the group are taught from childhood by parents, shamans, and the elderly. In most Central and South American aboriginal cultures, it is not possible to conceive of an individual's being as separate from her/his group (Wade, 1997). For example, the Pemonas,

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an ethnic group from Venezuela's southern region, could not conceive of a group member being killed by someone of the same ethnicity. This would be perceived as unnatural and akin to killing the entire group. It would not make sense to them (Gillin, 1948; Thomas, 1982).

Even in urban societies, some aboriginally informed guidance and counseling practices can be found. For example, respect and caring for the elderly and how to behave when talking to adults and strangers are taught within the family system. In LA Andes countries, especially in Venezuela, it is possible to find guidance practices based on a blend of aboriginal traditions and Spanish Catholic rituals. This practice is related to religious beliefs and social behaviors associated with intergeneration-transmitted cultural practices in families and how to behave in a large social group (Levine, 1981). For example, one ritual called "the child Jesus visits" is practiced in small-town festivals and teaches table manners.

In LA, learning an occupation from the head of the family or from relatives was commonly practiced in the past and is still in evidence in some families today. Trades such as carpentry, plumbing, gardening, farming, electrical, house building, and craftworks are commonly passed from one generation to the next. Parents guide their children into the family business early in life. This practice also happens in professions that require a college degree, such as teaching, medicine, law, and preaching, and goes back several generations (Mathias, Marzano, Esteban, Jiménez, and Fonseca-Paredes, 2001; Fernandez & Lluch, 2016; Vera, 2013).

Although the influence of aboriginal cultures is present in LA guidance and counseling, their practices remain largely undocumented in academic circles. An additional complex array of factors operated to shape the current practices and policy landscape of present-day LA guidance and counseling.

### **Origins of Racism and Discrimination in LA**

The colonial conquistadores imposed their world view and social values through their religion, military, customs, and government. They also

created institutions to exercise their dominion over people, lands, and goods. The caste system was a source of perpetual slavery, elite social class domination, exclusion, inequality, discrimination, persecution, and economic and political privileges. Systematic oppression based on the caste system was used to create a system of law and legal procedures that perpetuated black and aboriginal exploitation while keeping power and privileges in the hands of the white "Iberian Peninsula" population. Many vestiges from the caste system persist today. In many LA countries, some policies, laws, and processes are infused with prejudices and biases based on race or social status (Hernández, 2012). Very few statistics are available on racial hatred and discriminatory behavior. The small amount of data available shows how racial discrimination saturates life in LA countries today, from the social-cultural to the political, in education, employment and public health. In countries, such as Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, and Uruguay, the black population is much more likely to be a victim of political violence than white people. Equal access to land ownership, better jobs, and educational opportunities has evaded descendants of Africans and aboriginals. The judicial and police systems provide less protection for blacks and aboriginals and their court sentences are more severe. In addition, the killing of aboriginal people over land right disputes by landlords, the paramilitary, and governmental forces is also common practice in LA (Bello & Rangel, 2000; Rodríguez, 2000; Telles, 2007; Telles & Steele, 2012).

Discrimination and biases are also identifiable in historical documents and are ingrained in many peoples' attitudes, ways of thinking, feelings, and behavior toward a particular individual or group of individuals. Common sayings and beliefs in LA countries illustrate this discriminatory ideology:

- If a white individual is dressed in white, they must be a physician, but if an aborigine is dressed in white, then they must be an ice-cream vendor.
- You are as smart as an aborigine (meaning intended: you are ignorant).



- You must be the son of a black because you do not know how to read or write.
- Aborigines are lazy and undependable.
- You walk pompously like a black.

This bigoted mentality is not only reflected in sayings but also in institutional practices. For example, it is more likely that a white male will earn higher wages or be promoted in the workplace than a black or aboriginal individual. Black and aboriginal females earn even less than their male counterparts. White males or females also have access to better schools. Investments in urban development projects and public services favor places where wealthy people live (Chong & Ñopo, 2007; Graham, 2006; Hernández, 2012; Wade, 1997). Biases, discrimination, and class prejudice are deeply embedded in the cultural mentality, political landscape, and social systems in LA countries.

Three distinct groups, aboriginal, black, and white, have been producing mixed-race groups since colonial times. Terms have been created to describe these mixed-race groups: mulatto (white and black), zambo or cafuzo (black and aborigine), and mestizo (white and aborigine). However, within this blended society, discrimination and class-based inequality persist today (Wade, 1997). Guidance and counseling professionals must be aware of these historical facts and understand how they contribute to challenging the nature of guidance and counseling practitioners' work for helping individuals and society to reach a better stage of personal and collective development.

### **History of the Development of Education and Guidance and Counseling**

In addition to the ideological influence of the caste system, it is also important to consider how education has been conceived and implemented in LA since colonial times. It is also important to examine how early models of education are linked to the world of guidance and counseling and its social functions today. Guidance and counseling evolved as a professional activity within education. Over time, it was formally rec-

ognized as a part of the services that public education institutions should provide to all students in LA. To understand educational policy affecting guidance and counseling, it is necessary to first understand the role that colonial perspectives had in shaping education. Vestiges of these perspectives are still found in policies that are affecting guidance and counseling.

From the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, the concept of "nationhood" emerged as a driving force in education in LA. Schools embraced heroes, hymns, and flags at the same time as education expanded and national education systems were formed (Donoso, 2009). Education became widely recognized as a way to support the development of the nation. The rise of industrialization and urbanization contributed to the recognition that making education broadly available was necessary for the nations' productivity and development (Gellner, 1991).

In pre-Columbian times, schools existed in LA, most notably in the Inca and Aztec empires. However, these schools were created exclusively for the elite. During the colonial period, missionary schools for indigenous and underprivileged populations were introduced. Although the value of "education for all" had been advocated in earlier times, it was not until the beginning of industrialization and LA urbanization, in the last third of the nineteenth century, that universal education became a major concern in LA societies. Between 1920 and 1950, both elite and popular leaders agreed that education was a matter of importance. However, these leaders held different points of view about what was meant by "education for all."

Before the LA independence wars, public education was supported by leaders who thought education should enlighten the populace, civilize the "barbarism" of indigenous peoples, and improve people, so they could properly exercise sovereignty. These ideas guided the development of some specific projects and initiatives, but they were not incorporated into national educational policies and hence did not transform educational systems in LA. The ideal of "education for all" did not prosper, despite its proponents' efforts,

because the political realities and social and economic conditions of the time were not consistent with that view of education.

In the debate on educational policy regarding universal education, the arguments of the elite prevailed and emerged as the drivers of educational policy. As a consequence, national resources were directed toward the education of the elite. Education for the rest of the population was deferred. Some elites argued that universal education was important, but that it was not the first priority. Venezuelan Andrés Bello, an early teacher of Simon Bolivar, proposed that to educate the masses, it was important to begin with educating the elites. Furthermore, the elites should receive the best education and major access to resources. He argued that only then would it be possible to educate the general population. Because the newly educated elite would be responsible for educating the general population, the quality of the eventual education of the general population would be dependent on the quality of the present education of the elite (Bello, 1970).

The Argentinian Juan Bautista Alberdi (Halperin, 1980) and the Brazilian Manoel de Oliveira Lima (Gerab, 1998) argued that universal education was unnecessary because the non-elite population did not require schooling to successfully carry out their relatively simple roles in society. Furthermore, they argued that “education for all” was undesirable because it would create aspirations for equality and justice that society would not be able to meet. The resulting discontent might create disagreements that could potentially fuel acts of violence (Newland, 1991), jeopardizing order, stability, and national security. Class divisions remain today and privileges for the elite are still embedded in policies and legislation.

This situation was made more complex by the fact that many members of the nonelite were uninterested in universal education. Parents preferred their children to work in order to sustain the family’s economic existence. They were not convinced that schooling would lead to social mobility. Schools were perceived to be irrelevant to daily survival in a context where harsh, rural

conditions were the immediate reality. The lack of confidence in schools for the nonelite was further reinforced by the fact that the schools had poor infrastructure and were run by teachers whose social status was low (Azevedo, 1976; Newland, 1991; Torres, 2009).

However, at the end of the nineteenth century and during the first half of the twentieth century, social and economic conditions in the region changed rapidly. Perceptions of universal education also began to change. Industrialization and urbanization demanded that people acquire new knowledge, skills, and tools to survive in the rapidly growing capitalist job market (Newland, 1991). Therefore, the general population and the elite came to understand that “education for all” was essential to satisfy the new economic and social realities (Fajardo, 2003). Nevertheless, expectations of a highly educated general population were not met because industrialization and urbanization led to serious cultural, familial, and economic circumstances that constrained well-being and life expectations for the nonelite class. Poverty, exclusion, violence, political persecution, dictatorship, and injustice increased exponentially everywhere throughout LA.

The pressure from large-scale commercial agriculture and the changing social landscape forced the rural population to abandon their way of living and to search for better life opportunities in cities. This emigration from the countryside to the largest cities, mainly the capitals, resulted from harsh living conditions, and for many there simply was no choice as they had to either leave the countryside or perish. Farmers became the new urban workforce. As a result of this migration, a belt of poverty grew around many cities. These belts of poverty continue to grow today. The population in cities increased faster than ever before, and public services, education, job opportunities, and quality of life became severely limited (Alvarez, 1995; Martínez, 2004; Newland, 1991).

National policies related to economic and social progress designed according to international and hemispheric organizations under the leadership of the Alliance for Progress did not yield the expected results. The oligarchies in

place in most LA countries were focused on preserving the status quo. They were not inclined to lead the economic and transformation process prescribed in the Alliance for Progress. Policies related to agrarian reforms and social inclusion ran counter to the interests of transnational corporations. The oligarchy transferred their money out of LA. Much of this money originated from investments made through the Alliance for Progress (Agudelo, 1966; Fajardo, 2003; May, 1968; Scheman, 1989; Tanck, 1963).

Across LA countries the implementation of “education for all” was driven by economic, industrialization, and urbanization development plans. New constitutions and legislation were developed to support those plans. However, poverty, violence, exclusion, injustice, inequality, discrimination, and other constraining factors were not addressed nor overcome. On the contrary, these issues expanded as the population increased and better living conditions were much less attainable. Within this social context and economic situation, guidance and counseling started as an organized professional activity. The guidance and counseling profession was heavily influenced by issues related to students’ adjustment to school and their living conditions, individuals’ vocational choices, and their possible placement in the job market. Therefore, guidance and counseling’s major contribution to society was seen as helping people make occupation and vocational choices in order to contribute to their country’s economic development plans. This vocational focus is still very strong in LA.

### **Early Core Ideas Paving the Way for Guidance and Counseling**

Several core ideas related to guidance and counseling can be traced to Spain and were transferred to LA during and after colonial times, mainly by religious institutions. In Spain, the most significant early form of educational guidance can be found in the *Regulae de Scholis Collegurom* (Rules for Studies in Schools), drafted in 1553 by the Jesuit father Jerónimo Nadal. These practices also took effect in New Spain and other places in LA. “Guidance” focused on helping students maintain proper school discipline and was delivered in the

form of conferences or classes. “Guidance” classes consisted of lessons in moral theology applied to everyday practice and were delivered by the priests of the diocese rather than by classroom teachers. School children’s compliance with proper discipline was the responsibility of the staff in charge of correcting misdemeanors. From these practices a form of guidance emerged separated from classroom teaching in the schools run by the Company of Jesus (Gonzalbo, 1985).

The earliest evidence for understanding the need for a separate profession of guidance and counseling is found in the proceedings from the general meeting in Spain of the Royal Basque Society of the Friends of the Country in 1783 (Tanck, 1963). These proceedings were widely published throughout LA. The document proposed the establishment of a new profession, youth instructor, a school-based professional designated to work to promote young people’s “moral development.”

The first part of the proposal was a criticism about the ineffectiveness of the current educational system regarding the training of scientists, physicians, politicians, and historians which was perceived as providing insufficient guidance to ensure future professionals would behave with a sense of social solidarity, humane virtues, and moral principles for the good of society. The same document later maintained that there was a need for a profession focused on rectifying the ideas of the young, inculcating in them the desire to do good, fostering the development of virtue, and imprinting their understandings of fairness, justice, humanity, and patriotic love. Schools and educators were expected to guide students to become righteous, virtuous citizens and patriots (Tanck, 1963). This reconceptualization of education led to the understanding that a new profession was needed to promote the virtues and moral development of students in the new world and served as an identification of needs for what evolved to become the guidance and counseling profession in LA countries.

In addition to the above ideas adopted from Europe during the LA emancipation process, concepts related to the development of guidance and counseling were also elaborated in the new

world. For example, Simon Rodriguez (1771–1854) developed a new vision of education. His theoretical basis and practices of popular (public) education as a form of guidance and counseling for the new citizen were focused on developing the virtues of the human spirit. Rodriguez believed that enlightenment and social virtues were at the heart of education and in fact the aim of education. Therefore, personality and character development were of primary importance in the transformation of society. Knowledge acquisition clearly played a secondary role. Rodriguez's commitment was to raise students' awareness of their social responsibility. Rodriguez considered education as the means to make the common good a reality for all people. Therefore, national educational policy should promote the common good, justice, inclusion, and social responsibility. For Rodriguez, education should be based on the study of reality linked to individuals' characters and industrial talents in the context of society's needs. As a thinker during the LA independence wars, Rodriguez maintained that to have a republic, it was necessary to cultivate republicans and to educate all people on republican principles. Consequently, Rodriguez believed that the development of a republican emancipatory mind-set could be achieved through schooling (Rodriguez, 1838; Rodriguez, 1840).

Subsequently, Simon Bolivar delivered his famed Angostura Speech to the Second Constitutional Congress of Venezuela (1819). This speech impacted the whole of LA. Bolivar identified several important principles relating to a philosophical vision of policy based on the common good:

... The citizens of Venezuela enjoy everything through the Constitution, interpreter of nature, a perfect political equality... should we consecrate it to correct the difference that apparently exists? My opinion is, legislators, that the fundamental principle of our system depends immediately and exclusively on the equality established and practiced in Venezuela. That men are born with rights equal to the assets of society, is sanctioned by the plurality of the wiser; that not all men are born equally suitable for earning all ranks; Maybe everyone should practice virtue, and not all practice it; all must be courageous, and all are not; all must possess talents, and all do not possess those.

Here comes the effective distinction observed between individuals in the most liberally established society. If the principle of political equality is widely recognized, less is not what physical and moral inequality. Nature makes men unequal in temper, temperament, strengths, and character. Laws designed to correct this difference, place the individual in society so that education, industry, the arts, services, virtues, offer a fictitious reality, properly called political and social equality.... (Acosta, 1981, p. 473)

The LA independence wars and the creation of LA republics resulted in the development of a politically emancipatory mind-set that guided the development of constitutions, laws, and policies based upon the common good. The institutions of the new republics were redesigned to reflect a new relationship between the government and the people. A new philosophy of education emerged that provided a rationale for the foundation of school-based guidance and counseling. The conceptualization of education as guiding youth toward greatness through teaching virtues and moral principles and linking an individual's character and personality to a sense of social responsibility paved the way for the development of the guidance and counseling profession in LA.

### **Guidance and Counseling as a Profession in LA**

In several LA countries, professional guidance and counseling activities were in existence before the 1920s. In South America, these practices were chiefly conducted by European educators, philosophers, and pedagogues who immigrated to LA countries during the aftermath of World War I (Acquaviva, 1972; Casado, 1987; Vera, 2013). Likewise, between 1920 and 1950, guidance and counseling services emerged in more organized, systematic ways. Some of these developments were heavily influenced by Spanish professionals who immigrated to LA (Boronat & Molina, 2005; Vera, 2011a). In Argentina, for example, psychometric labs existed in 1923; the "psychotechnical guidance and counseling professional" was introduced in 1925; inclusion of access to guidance and counseling was enshrined in the Constitution of 1949. The inclusion of guidance and counseling as a constitutional right

clearly indicated that (1) all young people in Argentina should have access to guidance and counseling services to help them channel their natural skills into a proper vocation and/or career and (2) the state was responsible for ensuring access to these services (Di Doménico & Vilanova, 2000).

Other LA countries also included guidance and counseling in their constitutions, and this receptive environment encouraged the establishment of service delivery organizations. In Brazil between 1930 and 1950, for example, Menge developed the first organized system for guidance and counseling services promoting career decision-making (Bisquerra, 1996); Laurence Filho created the first publicly funded career guidance service (Carvalho, 1995); and Emilio Mira y Lopez established the Institute for Recruitment, Selection, and Professional Guidance (Gavilán, 2007). In 1934, Pablo Aguirre published a preliminary evaluation of the academic and vocational application of mental tests in Venezuela, and, in 1936, the Institute of Caracas was funded by governmental decree to scientifically investigate public education and the delivery of guidance and vocational counseling services (Del Olmo, 1953). The initiation of widespread public funding of Venezuelan guidance and counseling services occurred during the 1940s and 1950s. Examples of the services include the psycho-pedagogical labs and guidance and counseling cabinets in high schools in Venezuela (Acquaviva, 1972; Boronat & Molina, 2005; Calonge, 2004; Vera, 2013) and the Psychological, Guidance, and Counseling Professional Institute in Colombia (Mosquera, 2002).

Organized approaches to formal training in guidance and counseling can also be identified in several Central American countries during this same time period. For example, in 1935, a Chilean pedagogical mission assessed the Costa Rican educational system and made several recommendations related to training in guidance and counseling. In 1949, the Costa Rican Ministry of Education established a Department for Guidance and Counseling that organized training for a group of school teachers in assessment techniques and professional practice skills in guidance and counseling (Baldares, 2014).

In Guatemala in 1956, Governmental Decree No. 558 created the Department of Guidance and Vocational Counseling within the Ministry of Education. The Department's educational rules were clearly defined and stated that guidance and counseling services were to be aimed at assisting students in the resolution of educational, emotional, and vocational problems. In 1955, The National Council of Education of the Dominican Republic passed a bill (Ordenanza 930) that created the first publically funded positions for vocational counselors (Rodríguez, 1966). The establishment of publically funded school-based guidance and counseling in the 1950s and 1960s was made possible through the General Plan for Educating the Guidance and Counseling Professional created and supported by the UNESCO technical assistance mission (Zaragoza, 1962).

In 1912–1914, the Verified Education Congress in Mexico made several decisions that transformed Mexican schooling and incorporated guidance and counseling into schools. In 1923, the Pedagogy National Institute was created which included the Vocational Guidance Service Division. In 1925, the Department of Educational Psychology, Mental Hygiene, and Physical Development was created. Later, in 1933, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) organized its first cycle of conferences to promote the development of vocational guidance. The Medical Pedagogical Institute was founded in 1935 to help children deemed to be mentally abnormal. By 1944, the Normal School was created in Mexico to formally train educators for public school levels. The Normal School offered a specialization in vocational guidance and counseling. Around this same time, the University National Autonoma of Mexico founded the Institute of Professional Guidance and Counseling. Between 1949 and 1952, guidance and counseling services were established by the government in state-run middle and secondary schools. Services were focused on attending to four functions: providing vocational information, conducting psychometric tests, engaging in counseling interviews, and giving advice. In 1954, a proposal to establish a vocational guidance information center was established at the Ibero-American University. In subsequent years, similar centers were founded at a



number of universities including the Americas, the Salle and Women of Mexico, the Military Medical School, and the Tepeyac School Pan-American Modern. In 1957, the Department of Vocational Orientation of the UNAM was created (Aceves & Simental, 2013).

In Panama, the Ministry of Education was created in 1959 by Governmental Decree 3 (January 14, 1959). Educational and vocational guidance was administered under the Vocational and Industrial section of the MOE and was charged with the responsibility of organizing services in some secondary schools. Subsequently, in 1961, publically funded pilot guidance services were formally introduced in four secondary schools. Over subsequent years, services were gradually extended to other secondary schools across the country (Olmos, 2011).

In the first half of the twentieth century, public policies promoting guidance and counseling were established throughout LA with an intent that these activities were essential for both the welfare of the individual and the good of the country. Governments established agencies and policies to support the development of guidance and counseling services for students. Guidance and counseling became widespread in school settings. Universities developed educational programs to prepare educators for guidance and counseling work and careers. Public funding was provided for the preparation and employment of counselors in schools. Laws, governmental regulations, and governmental programs were created to regulate the provision of guidance and counseling services and to ensure that these services were broadly available to students.

### **International Contributions to the Development of Guidance and Counseling in LA**

The agendas of several US-based institutions such as USAID, and international organizations such as the Pan-American Union, contributed to the development of guidance and counseling as a discipline and as a profession in several ways in LA countries. This influence began as early as the 1930s and is still evident in the governmental structures and policies regarding guidance and

counseling (Boronat & Molina, 2005; Dintrans, Lemus, Reyes, & Naranjo, 1967; Velázquez, 1959; Vera, 2002).

UNESCO's General Plan for Developing Professional Guidance and Counseling Services was a historically important influence on the development of guidance and counseling (Zaragozá, 1962). Improving school-based guidance and counseling services became an important element of the UNESCO Educational Plan for LA.

In the 1930s, several education meetings took place between top LA educational policy-makers under the influence of the Pan-American Organization. These pivotal meetings led to the creation of LA policies on guidance and counseling and contributed to the formal establishment of vocational guidance and counseling services in schools. In Chile in 1934, the Third Inter-American Conference on Education recommend the creation of consultation commissions in the normal schools and Institutes of Pedagogy with the mission of providing teachers with pedagogical information related to guidance and counseling matters. It was recommended that those working with students on these matters receive sufficient preparation in scientific psychological assessment methods, pedagogical procedures, and the philosophical and sociological principles necessary for effective counseling practice. In 1946, during the Third American Countries Conference in Mexico, members of the International Labour Organization endorsed the idea that LA countries should take actions to prepare qualified personnel in vocational guidance and counseling. In 1955, the Middle Education Inter-American Seminar in Chile stated it was important to the individual and for society that all students receive support to identify their aptitudes and interests and explore vocational and professional paths. During the First Centro-American Seminar on Educational-Vocational Guidance and Counseling & Technical Education in Guatemala City in 1957, it was proposed that Central American countries should create vocational schools within which students would receive support to discover their aptitudes and



identify appropriate vocations for their own benefit and for the good of society. The Inter-American Seminar on Educational Planning, held in Washington, D.C., in 1958, was organized by the OEA and UNESCO and unanimously recommended the creation of school-based professional guidance and counseling services in every country in LA. Likewise, the Pan-American Congress on School and Professional Guidance and Counseling Congress, held in Bogota in 1959, adopted a recommendation that all countries attending the congress develop school-based guidance and counseling services (Dintrans et al., 1967). These meetings drew attention to the importance of school-based guidance and counseling in helping all students with vocational and career choice. The meetings also set the stage for the design of their education policies and the development of educational systems in LA countries.

During the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, meetings of Ministries of Education of LA countries were organized with support from UNESCO. The main intended outcome of these meetings was the creation of action plans and related procedural protocols for transforming national educational systems as an approach to alleviating poverty and addressing the “underdevelopment” of LA countries. Through this ambitious initiative, the modernization of LA education policies occurred with the stated purpose of increasing individual worker productivity and thereby the wealth of nations. National public education systems were organized according to theories of human capital within the context of an international geopolitical agenda where workers’ productivity had more salience than their well-being. The notion of LA countries being “underdeveloped” and in need of being better prepared to participate in international capitalism was at the core of this new notion of education (Martínez, 2004).

Within this new framework for education, school-based guidance and counseling was designed to promote the development of a “modern” society based upon productivity and market requirements in order to help LA countries achieve the status of “developed” nations.

Therefore, guidance and counseling services were focused on vocational and occupational selection, rather than on issues like the development of life satisfaction and social responsibility, in order to satisfy the industry and market needs for technically qualified labor forces. In this new role, guidance and counseling professionals were supposed to contribute to overcoming underdeveloped social and economic conditions in their country. In LA countries, UNESCO’s main recommendations were to create national guidance and counseling systems that would be administered by the Ministries of Education in each country. This recommendation was adopted in many LA countries. For example, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Venezuela created Guidance and Counseling Systems (CGS) as part of their national education systems. These CGS were responsible for organizing and providing guidance and counseling programs and services within public education (Dintrans et al., 1967; Watts & Fretwell, 2004; Zaragoza, 1962).

According to Escobar (1996), the modernization of society was based on the concept of “underdeveloped” countries that was used in the official discourse of international organizations and their technical assistance commissioners. Understanding the origin of “development” as a core concept is key to understanding how education in LA evolved and how policies came to be designed to serve foreign agendas. Since the creation of the United Nations in 1945, the destiny of the nonindustrialized world has been intensively discussed (Martínez, 2004). After World War II, the discourse of “three worlds” evolved to describe explicitly the economic differences between countries and to guide implicitly the actions that poorer countries should be helped to take in order to become richer. The extensive use of this discourse ensured that the concept of “underdevelopment” was adopted by individuals, communities, and governments as their own representation of reality. On the development spectrum, the First World consisted of free industrialized countries; the Second World consisted of communist industrialized countries; and the Third World consisting of poor, unindustrialized countries. Third World countries could

develop through the implementation of structural and societal changes that would render them more industrial and more capitalistic (like First World nations). First World countries could promote the development of Third World countries by providing guidance, aid, and technical systems designed to help them make these necessary structural and societal changes.

Within this international political context, guidance and counseling services were conceived, organized, and expanded as education systems in LA were recreated, and the expansion of “education for all” became official policy in LA countries. Several technical assistance commissions were organized and sent to LA countries by UNESCO. These commissions were attached to national Ministries of Education (Dintrans et al., 1967; Martínez, 2004; Seguin, 1968). By providing technical assistance to LA governments, international organizations were able to implement their own agendas for progressive education without regard for whether or not the agendas were consistent with national culture or the will of the people (Martínez, 2004). This new vision of education represented a shift from virtues and moral principles to an economic and capitalist view of human beings and society. Hence, technical and specialized occupations began driving the countries’ educational plans, and humanistic disciplines were not favored. Support for students’ social and moral development was severely constricted. In LA guidance and counseling was focused on promoting vocational decision-making to increase productivity in the context of rapid industrialization and national “development.” Nations invested in school-based guidance and counseling as part of their development agendas. Guidance and counseling was not designed to be consistent with promoting virtues and values characteristic of LA aboriginal cultures or revolutionary republics.

From the perspective of educational policy, LA countries’ implementation of school-based guidance and counseling through widespread government investment in this era was driven by the belief that doing so would significantly contribute to improving the earning power of individuals and be reflected in the economic development of the nation. The policy objectives

were largely economic. Guidance and counseling’s potential role in improving social policy objectives like improving society by improving students’ mental health, social interest, social responsibility, and quality of life was not deemed important.

### **Constitutional Articles and Fundamental Educational Laws Related to Guidance and Counseling**

As described previously, in most LA countries, educators who received additional training in guidance and counseling were the first practitioners. These counselors worked primarily in the school systems. Later, university programs in guidance and counseling were developed (Vera, 2011b) to prepare practitioners. Before the creation of government-regulated guidance and counseling positions, recognition of the importance of the acts of guidance and counseling for individual people and society at large existed. This public recognition was reflected in many countries’ political constitutions and early educational legislation. Today, the impact of the ideas from many of those early documents can still be identified in the current constitutions and legislation which drive present-day public policies. In most LA countries, guidance and counseling is understood as having the potential to contribute significantly to the public good. Therefore, public funds are made available to educate guidance and counseling professionals and to employ them in publically funded schools and community agencies. The trend of incorporating varied visions of guidance and counseling into a country’s constitution and to further develop those visions in a country’s laws of education is common in LA. Table 30.1 contains examples of contemporary policy foundations from the constitutions and laws of seven exemplar LA nations that are related to guidance and counseling practice.

### **Current Developments in LA Guidance and Counseling**

Today in LA countries, guidance and counseling is practiced outside as well as inside schools. Within the profession itself, guidance and counseling has been reconceptualized as a lifelong,

**Table 30.1** Provides several examples of Guidance and Counseling conceived as social and human rights for the population according to diverse LA Countries' National Political Constitutions. By law, governments should grant counseling and guidance services to the population

Country	Constitutional foundations		Law and regulations	Year
	Vision of humans and society	Guidance and counseling perspective		
Bolivia	(Art. 78/IV) The State guarantees vocational education and humanistic technical education for men and women, related to life, work, and productive development	Vocational and academic	Educational law recognized professionals in educational science and pedagogy, "whose functions are to develop methodologies and techniques of school guidance"	2007
Brazil	It is not clearly included	Vocational guidance and career counseling	Educational law requires all schools to provide "professional guidance or career and vocational guidance counseling"	1942
Costa Rica	(Art. 50) The State will procure the greatest well-being to all inhabitants of the country, organizing and stimulating production and the most adequate distribution of the wealth...	Educational, occupational guidance and counseling based on principles	The Fundamental Law of Education required that "the educational system will ensure the learner a service of educational and vocational guidance provided to the learner exploring their skills and interests, helping them to the choice of study plans, and allowing a good emotional and social development"	1957
Guatemala	(Art. 72) Aims of education. Education is paramount to the integral development of the human person, the knowledge of reality and national and universal culture. Declared of national interest the education, instruction, social formation and the systematic teaching of the Constitution and human rights	School and vocational perspective	Educational law established special training and occupational guidance and counseling: "The Ministry of Education promotes and supports guidance and counseling programs and center creation and occupational training aimed at personal independence and individual integration in the workplace"	1991
Panama	(Art. 96) The law shall determine the State agency which shall draw up and approve plans of studies, educational programs and the educational levels, as well as the organization of a national system of educational guidance, all in accordance with national needs	Educational guidance	Educational law ensures the formation of the Panamanian student according to their interests and capacities "through the implementation of programs in the area of educational and vocational guidance that takes into account the elements of the curriculum, in order to ensure its success in the different stages of the process of teaching and learning"	1972

(continued)

**Table 30.1** (continued)

Country	Constitutional foundations		Law and regulations	Year
	Vision of humans and society	Guidance and counseling perspective		
Venezuela	(Art. 103) Every person has the right to a full, high-quality, ongoing education under conditions and circumstances of equality, subject only to such limitations as derive from such person’s own aptitudes, vocation and aspirations...	Vocational guidance and school counseling	Educational law requires “guidance and counseling services, health, sport, recreation, culture, and wellness services to students involved in the educational process in co-responsibility with the relevant bodies”	1999
Honduras	(Art. 51) The national education will be secular and shall be based on the principles of democracy, instill and promote in the learners’ deep feelings hondureñistas and should be linked directly with the process of economic and social development of the country	Career and vocational guidance and counseling	Educational law indicates that “The educational guidance will be staffed at all levels of the school system by psycho-pedagogical treatment that stimulates and leads the development of the learner in order to assist in your school, moral, civic, and social formation.” “Vocational guidance will be developed in the upper grades of primary education and in the two cycles of the Middle education” “Vocational guidance shall help students discover their own skills so they can decide the type of studies that will lead them to a career or a satisfactory occupation (Art. 48)”	1966

social, and critical practice that should be available to support everyone’s growth as an individual and as a socially interdependent being (Gavilán, 2007; González, 2008; Rascovan, 2004; Vera, 2002; Vera, 2013). Practitioners have expanded their scope and are employed in community social service agencies, industries and commercial companies, NGOs, and the military sector (Vera, 2013, Vera & Jiménez, 2005, Jiménez & Jiménez, 2009; Lessire & González, 2008). In some countries, private practice is also legally acceptable. Laws and regulations have been developed in most LA countries to legally regulate guidance and counseling practice and training.

The creation of the Latin American Network of Guidance and Counseling Professionals (Red

Latinoamericana de Profesionales de la Orientación, RELAPRO) in 2006 was a major step forward in the development of the guidance and counseling profession. Over 900 LA guidance and counseling practitioners are currently affiliated with this network (Lessire & Gonzalez, 2008; Vera, 2010). RELAPRO’s mission is to encourage the development of the guidance and counseling profession and its contributions in helping to promote the development of individuals and society. RELAPRO acts to make practitioners’ work visible by sharing publications, facilitating the creation of international projects, and advocating with policy-makers and government institutions that regulate guidance and counseling practice.

In addition to international associations, national counseling associations have been

founded in most LA countries. These associations have articulated comprehensive models of the scope of guidance and counseling that extend far beyond a focus on vocational and occupational counseling. These associations have acknowledged the profession's historical and cultural roots, preserved and cultivated the profession's body of knowledge, clearly articulated its social functions, developed a professional identity and efficiently communicated it to society, and established codes of professional ethics (Vera, 2013). In addition, they have advocated to national governments to recognize and support this evolving profession of guidance and counseling through law, policy, and regulations in the interests of the public good. These associations have enabled more communication with policy-makers to inform them about the profession's main social functions, its importance, and its contributions to a country's human and economic developments, thereby encouraging broadening of government policy objectives related to support for guidance and counseling.

Especially active associations are found in Argentina (Asociación de Profesionales de la Orientación de la República), Brazil (the Brazilian Association of Professional Guidance and Counseling), Costa Rica (Colegio de Profesionales en Orientación de Costa Rica), Mexico (Asociación Mexicana de Profesionales de la Orientación), and Venezuela (La Federación de Asociaciones de Orientadores de Venezuela) (Baldares, 2014; Melo, 2007; Villanueva & Chávez, 2013).

While efforts to influence public policy related to guidance and counseling by professional associations are laudable, this advocacy is currently being done without the benefit of a solid body of policy research on guidance and counseling. It is likely that advocacy would be more effective if it were based on solid research documenting, for example, the relative effectiveness of different types of guidance and counseling services, the impact these services have on individuals and society, and the effectiveness of government-sponsored initiatives on improving service provision and achieving desired outcomes.

## Summary

Foundational ideas and early models of school-based guidance and counseling in LA can be found in pre-Columbian cultures, colonial period educational models, and post-revolution societal and educational reforms. In the early twentieth century, both European immigrants and LA educators introduced vocationally focused models of guidance and counseling in LA schools. After the World War II, development initiatives led by international agencies (e.g., UNESCO and the Pan-American Union) led to widespread diffusion of a vocationally focused approach to school-based guidance and counseling across LA. This approach focused on preparing individuals for finding jobs to promote the development of industrialized, capitalist nations. It deemphasized a focus on promoting factors such as personal fulfillment, social responsibility, and moral development that were traditionally considered important in LA society and education. Today, the guidance and counseling profession has expanded beyond its school-based roots. LA professional associations have been successful in elaborating approaches to guidance and counseling that encompass a broad range of human behavior, not simply vocational behavior, and have, in some sense, reintroduced a focus on optimal human functioning consistent with aboriginal and revolutionary values. These associations are actively involved in initiatives to influence public policy related to guidance and counseling. These efforts, however, are hampered by a paucity of policy research.

Given the lack of policy research in LA, several foundational studies are necessary to help guide the development of guidance and counseling. Recommendations for addressing these concerns include:

1. A comprehensive study of current educational laws and policy in LA to determine what policy objectives are embedded within
2. Research on the knowledge, beliefs, and expectations of LA policy-makers regarding the contributions that guidance and counseling is currently making and can potentially make to the public good



3. Analyses of modern approaches to practice that have been elaborated by the guidance and counseling profession (e.g., international and national professional associations) to determine what specific contributions to the public good are identified or implied
4. The identification of best practices in LA school-based guidance and counseling and the identification of how these practices can potentially contribute to the public good
5. Research on the effectiveness of school-based guidance and counseling in producing outcomes related to important policy agendas.
6. The creation of an LA policy research center to conduct and coordinate research and its dissemination and to encourage young scholars to pursue policy research careers
7. Engagement by the guidance and counseling profession in the ongoing debate about the goals of education and the desired student outcomes for schooling

School-based guidance and counseling has the potential to make critically important contributions to the education productivity and well-being of the populace in LA. Public education and the profession itself are at an important stage of maturity. Recognition of the limitations inherent in the present model of education and interest in constructing new models that are more culturally appropriate, liberating, and transformative (including the reconnection of the guidance and counseling profession with its aboriginal and cultural roots) is evident. The profession is poised to influence public policy through its professional associations. However, advances in policy research are needed to guide the development and transformation of school-based guidance and counseling.

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## Contemporary Public Policy on School-Based Guidance and Counseling in Venezuela, Costa Rica, and Other Latin American Countries

George Davy Vera, Dorelys Jiménez,  
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This chapter discusses policy regarding school-based guidance and counseling in selected Central and South American countries where the guidance and counseling profession is particularly well organized. In these countries, there is evidence of clear policies supported by legislation, public funding for services, and employment, and the profession's historical roots are also well documented. The chapter examines the policy context and related professional issues in Costa Rica and Venezuela (including a history of guidance and counseling to illustrate current policy). Brief overviews of other Central American countries (i.e., Panama, Guatemala, and Honduras) and South American countries (i.e., Argentina, Brazil, and Chile) are also provided. Finally, the authors offer recommendations for policy and research in order to both strengthen

and support the development of guidance and counseling in Latin America in general.

Section “**Context**” of this chapter provides a general context for understanding school-based guidance and counseling in Latin American (LA) countries. Section “**Public Policy on Guidance and Counseling in LA Countries**” discusses public policy related to guidance and counseling in LA countries, based on contemporary definitions of policy and public policy in the LA literatures. Section “**Policy and School-Based Counseling and Guidance Services in Central America**” focuses on policy related to school-based counseling and guidance services in selected Central America countries. Section “**Policy and School-Based Counseling and Guidance Services in South America**” reviews the same content for selected countries in South America. Finally, section “**School-Based Counseling Policy Research**” provides an overview of policy research challenges across the region.

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### Context

The guidance and counseling field in Latin America is historically, culturally, and contextually diverse and delivered within a multidisciplinary framework. According to the specialized literature from LA, a key purpose is to help people over the lifespan to make personal, educational, and professional decisions and to manage their lives and careers.

Guidance and counseling services can help individuals to reflect on their own motivations, interests, talents, qualifications, and possibilities. They also assist people to better understand and navigate the complexities of life, families, jobs, and education systems and to link this knowledge to what they know about themselves and their society (González, 2008a; Rascovan, 2004; Vera, 2013; Vera & Jiménez, 2015). While guidance and counseling professionals help people to accomplish these life-long, individual, social, and educational goals, they face numerous challenges including funding constraints, limited employment opportunities, and official policies which contain political demands that they, as professionals, are ill equipped to tackle.

Literature on guidance and counseling throughout LA notes the necessity for practitioners to engage in policy-related debates and engage with associated political issues that influence the profession. Further, it is argued that efforts are needed to conceptualize and reinterpret the training and practice of guidance and counseling as a human field focused not only on individual students but also collective well-being and prosperity, with implications for Latin America's development as a whole (Vera & Jiménez, 2015).

At the same time, guidance and counseling scholars are inviting practitioners and their professional organizations to question policy and policy-related factors from a social justice standpoint (e.g., injustice, inequality, violence, drugs, human trafficking, corruption, unemployment, and homelessness). It is important to discuss how these issues are intertwined with the functions of guidance and counseling and to consider how the professional knowledge base has political implications for people's lives and national advancement. Consequently, policy and public policy research are growing in importance and deserve the attention of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers.

Guidance and counseling practitioners are involved in helping people lead healthier lives and, thereby, create stronger democratic societies. Both of these functions are heavily influenced by policy-related factors. It is timely to

incorporate policy and policy research matters into the guidance and counseling knowledge base; however, this is a very challenging undertaking (González, 2008b; Graham, 2001; Guichard, 2002; Hiebert, 2005; Melo, 2007; Vera & Jiménez, 2015). By examining how public policy and policy research relate to current debates and emerging perspectives within counseling and guidance, this chapter considers implications for the conceptualization, training, and practice of guidance and counseling on the one hand and for policies, legislation, institutions, and societies in Latin America on the other.

Although guidance and counseling<sup>1</sup> has a long history in Latin America (LA), and formal public policies and laws are historically identifiable in most LA countries, the issues those policies cover and how those policies have designed, implemented, and evaluated it are not widely understood. At a macro level, there is an equivalent lack of understanding of the social function of the guidance and counseling professional, as represented in current public policies and in the governance of public employment in the field across LA countries. At a micro level, there is a lack of attention to policy research issues in the professional literature. Recent publications (González, 2008b; Olivera, 2004; Vera & Jiménez, 2015) indicate a significant lack of awareness and understanding by all parties of the relationship between policy and policy research and how the work of practitioners can support the well-being of individual people and the nation state. This gap needs to be reduced through policy and policy research led by guidance and counseling professionals, their organizations, and their associated educational institutions.

<sup>1</sup>Guidance and counseling field is understood and practiced using diverse historical, theoretical, and methodological lenses; therefore, several traditions exist in LA, shaped by their cultural, social, economic context, historical evolution, and the work experience, education, and contributions of early pioneers, as well as countries' policies and regulatory institutions. The work could be known as educational guidance, vocational and professional guidance, school counseling, vocational guidance, career, and academic or vocational counseling. For practical reasons, we use guidance and counseling to describe the field in this chapter.

## Public Policy on Guidance and Counseling in LA Countries

There are two important aspects that pertain to LA's public policy on guidance and counseling. First, unlike its origins in many other areas of the world, guidance and counseling in LA did not derive from the mental health field. Throughout its history, most guidance and counseling training programs in LA have resided in university schools of education, rather than in schools of medicine or arts and sciences. The field has therefore primarily been conceptualized as an education profession. LA guidance and counseling does, however, draw on mental health, education, psychology, sociology, vocational-occupational, and political theories and models to help people reach a high level of consciousness of themselves as individuals and as responsible members of society (González, 2008b; Vera, 2011b; Vera, 2013). The second important aspect concerns the pivotal role LA counselors have played over past decades in shaping the practice of guidance and counseling internationally through global organizations, such as The World Health Organization (WHO), International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), and National Board for Certified Counselors International (NBCCI). Despite these significant contributions in those organizations outside of LA, it is evident that, within LA, there is a pervasive lack of understanding about what counselors do, how counselors relate to one another and to other professionals in LA countries, and how counselors contribute to LA development (González, 2008a; González & Ledezma, 2009).

In most LA countries, guidance and counseling services remain part of the official educational system. Constitutional and legislative mandates as well as particular policies influence school-based guidance and counseling in most LA countries today. However, according to several LA authors, one persistent weakness of the guidance and counseling profession is the lack of effective monitoring of public policies to ensure the implementation of effective guidance and counseling programs and services. Recently, this situation has begun to shift as professional organizations, training centers, and practitioners are becoming more involved

in guidance and counseling policy debates and policy development (González, 2008b; Melo, 2007; Vera, 2013). In some instances, knowledge of policy and policies on guidance and counseling has been incorporated into the training curriculum at universities. One such example is an undergraduate program at the University of Zulia, Venezuela. This program includes courses in policy and policymaking to expose students to the diverse realities of the Venezuelan political system and to legislation related to the guidance and counseling profession (Universidad del Zulia, 2005; Vera, 2011a; Vera & Jiménez, 2015).

Although school-based counseling and guidance (SBCG) services are an official and integral part of a school system—supported by constitutional and legal provisions—information about how these public services work is rarely reported in the professional literature. It is therefore an important task to increase knowledge and awareness about how a country's guidance and counseling policies are organized and how policy research is conceived. Likewise, in some LA countries public policy has not focused on guidance and counseling (González, 2008a; Vera, 2013). Politicians and policymakers have demonstrated limited interest in how the field serves individuals or contributes to society's economic and cultural well-being. These same policymakers define SBGC's operational framework and determine funding for essential resources. However, González (2008b) has noted that importance accorded SBGC by policymakers has been growing with the increased awareness that public education needs to be reformed in order to create systems that are responsive to diverse learner needs experienced over the lifespan.

Currently in LA countries, the support that guidance and counseling services receive from the public policy sector, in addition to legislation and other work-related regulations, has been based on the rationale that SBGC services can improve the effectiveness of educational systems by helping clients make better decisions about themselves and smart choices related to their future career or occupation. Therefore, jobs, families, and society at large are seen as benefitting from the services provided. In the current LA landscape, guidance and counseling professionals, their scientific bodies, their profes-



sional associations, and their training centers need to fully embrace the public policy field, advocate for good policies, and collaborate with policymakers (González, 2008a; Olivera, 2004; Rascovan, 2004; Vera, 2013).

To understand the characteristics of policy, public policy, and policy research related to the field of guidance and counseling in Latin America countries, it is necessary to: (a) understand the legal foundations underpinning counseling services in those public institutions and private organizations that provide public support for training and research activities in the field; (b) recognize the primary educational, occupational, and social factors influencing the formation of public policy in the field; and (c) specify the public purposes of guidance and counseling services. It is also essential to consider the specific objectives of such services for the population, which might include acquiring a greater understanding of self and individual potentiality, and learning to deal with the challenges associated with personal development. Public policies in the field of guidance and counseling have implications for the discipline and for the development of professionally relevant and contemporary training programs that equip practitioners to engage with the policy agenda and policy research. Therefore, the following discussion is organized into two parts, with a focus on examples from Central American countries first, followed by examples from South America. The descriptions contain key informational sources related to public policy on guidance and counseling as available. Original resources consulted included the country's constitution; relevant laws related to education, industry, and technology; and any existing rules governing professional practice or code of ethics. Where an official development plan exists, this document is also considered.

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## **Policy and School-Based Counseling and Guidance Services in Central America**

Counseling and guidance services in Central American countries can be traced back to the 1950s. At that time, the Technical Assistance Office of the United Nation for Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) led an educational co-joint project with the Departments of Education of several Central American countries. This project included the establishment of vocational and academic guidance and counseling services, including formal training of educators, psychologists, and social workers in relevant knowledge, methodology, and practices. Most of this information was unfamiliar to the Central American countries' ethnic and cultural configuration, within the remit of the school system. With the cooperation of UNESCO, the First Central American Seminar on Vocational and Career Guidance and Counseling was held in November 1962. This seminar was the first formal professional encounter between professionals and policymakers working in guidance and counseling matters in Central America (Nannanetti, 1960). Today, guidance and counseling services are practiced by psychologists and educators primarily within the school system.

## **Costa Rica**

SBCG in Costa Rica is a well-developed profession. University degrees in guidance and counseling are granted at the bachelor and master's levels. Organized bodies of practitioners, professional publications, legislation, public policies, and official development plans that influence the practice and improvement of the guidance and counseling profession are all in existence. Currently, Costa Rica is the only LA country that has passed a law regarding the professional practice of guidance and counseling as a distinguished and separate profession from other related human service fields.

## **Historical Overview**

The first guidance and counseling activities were evident in Costa Rica in 1950. These activities were strengthened in 1957 through the Fundamental Law of Education. Its Article 22 established that the Costa Rican education system guarantees learners access to educational guidance and counseling in order to facilitate the exploration of their skills and interests, help them make career plans, and support their emotional and social development.



Through this legislation, guidance and counseling is envisioned as a form of vocational service.

In 1964, a formal professional training program was established at the University of Costa Rica, in response to the needs of the Department of Education for professional trained counselors. In 1980, a program of professional guidance and counseling was established by the National University. Currently, guidance and counseling degrees are also provided by the Catholic University of Costa Rica and the Universidad Latina. These private colleges offer Associate and Bachelor's degree in Education with a major in Guidance and Counseling. In 2004, the University of Costa Rica began to offer a Master's in Guidance and Counseling specialties.

In 2010, the guidance and counseling field was further acknowledged as a public service through the enactment of the Law of the College of Professional Guidance and Counseling (Alvarez, 1995; Pereira, 1998). Costa Rica's counseling and guidance law aims to promote (a) the study and development of the guidance and counseling discipline, (b) the professional rights of guidance and counseling practitioners, and (c) continual professional updates and improvement in all areas; (d) to supervise the quality of guidance and counseling professional practice and its activities without prejudice to any civic or criminal liability that may occur; (e) to contribute to the progress of education and culture through professional activities in cooperation with universities, ministries, and public or related institutions; (f) to ensure the prestige of the profession and to strengthen the profession's identity; and (g) to contribute to professional training in a way that best advances the field and is responsive to social demands. The Law's principles were translated into best practice guidelines by the nation's professional guidance and counseling association, the Colegio. These guidelines reinforced the status of the profession and its importance for the well-being and development of individuals and society. Three key considerations are highlighted in the guidelines:

1. The discipline has evolved and expanded its theoretical, epistemological, and practice foundations in response to social contexts, and this

professional group works with diverse issues, in the educational, vocational-occupational, and personal-social domains. Likewise, practitioners are present in diverse workplaces, both in the private and public sectors.

2. The comprehensive development of people at different life stages through a professional helping relationship based on the client's needs in education, family, or work. This professional practice involves a direct relationship with children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly, according to the different roles that people play.
3. Guidance and counseling professionals require specialist training, to ensure a high level of responsibility and professional ethics. Such ethical behavior should be overseen by a regulatory body to protect clients and to support the establishment of ethically appropriate, effective interprofessional relationships and professional discipline.

### **Guidance and Counseling Policy Status in Costa Rica**

As in many other Latin American countries, research in the field of guidance and counseling is primarily conducted in colleges where guidance and counseling training programs exist. Much of the research is undertaken by students within their Master's degrees in Guidance and Counseling. Research is also conducted by guidance and counseling professionals in their workplace context. Legal provision, enshrined in the Costa Rican constitution (Costa Rica National Assembly, 1957, 2010), its educational law and in its educational developmental plan, refers to the guidance and counseling field and its social role. However, officially delineated policy research on guidance and counseling matters is not evident at this time. In the 2005–2015 Costa Rica Educational Plan, a guideline in its Education Management Strategy 1 indicated that research should be encouraged at regional level, with 20 specific foci identified for the period 2010–2015 (Costa Rican Educational Developmental Plan). The extent to which these guidelines have been used to promote best practice in school and community-based guidance and counseling has yet to be documented.

According to Baldares (2014), Costa Rican counselors are involved in guidance and counseling program evaluation through participation in discussions about innovative ways to make services more effective and by offering consultation to policymakers. However, the ways in which research is used to improve SBGC programs/services and to inform policymakers are unclear. In reality, Costa Rican practitioners are only rarely consulted and involved in decision-making about guidance and counseling policy. Changes in government policies and regulations often occur without practitioners' input or participation.

### **Guidance and Counseling Policy Status in Guatemala, Panamá, and Honduras**

In most LA countries, individuals can engage in professional practice as soon as they receive their undergraduate degrees. They are known as licenciados (licensees) and can practice in the context of their professions' regulations. Guatemala has a Professional Mandatory Affiliation Law (Congreso de la República de Guatemala, Decree number 72–2011) that mandates that all professionals must be affiliated with a professional body or association. Guidance and counseling practitioners are required to be registered with a professional body. Also, the affiliation law clearly establishes that every undergraduate-level professional needs to be involved in the country's development by contributing to projects in their field that contribute to the common good. Similar laws that clearly articulate the need for professions to have a prosocial function are not common in LA countries today.

In Panamá, policies related to guidance and counseling are based on the Panama Constitution and on the Panama Education Act. Due to Article 90 of the Political Constitution of 1972, a national guidance and counseling service has existed since December 1977, under the General Directorate of Educational and Vocational Guidance (Decree No. 438 of November 8, 1974) which provides technical administrative support to guide service delivery in 22 guidance counsel-

ing centers. In these centers, guidance and counseling activities are implemented in different schools throughout the country. Also, Article 92 states that education must serve the harmonious and holistic (physical, intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and civic) growth of learners within their social environment for their personal good and for the well-being of society at large. The performance of the education system and its diverse subsystems and units is systematically monitored; however, detailed information on how this assessment process operates and on the findings (outcomes) is not available at this time. It is also unclear how results are used to inform policymakers and guide policy that leads to access to effective SBGC services.

The Honduran Education Act created the legal foundation for policy on guidance and counseling. The Act ensured that educational guidance and counseling would be staffed at all levels of the school system and that psychoeducational support would be provided to promote students' educational, moral, civic, and social development (Art.46). Vocational guidance and counseling was identified as a necessary SBGC service I order to help students discover their own skills and help them choose an educational track that would lead to an appropriate occupation or career (Art. 47). Vocational guidance and counseling was mandated to be delivered in the later stages of primary education and in the two cycles of middle education. Unfortunately, evaluations of these policies or the programs resultant from this law have yet to be conducted. This research is clearly needed.

### **Policy and School-Based Counseling and Guidance Services in South America**

There is evidence of counseling and guidance services in South American countries as early as the 1930s. In the 1930s and 1940s, as part of the Pan-American Organization, officials from Ministries of Education met with specialists from South American countries; during the 1950s and 1960s, these meetings were hosted by UNESCO. Decisions

were made about the organization of educational systems and their services in different countries. This project included legitimizing national systems of vocational and guidance and counseling services for pupils and formal training to equip educators, psychologists, and social workers to work in the school system (Dintrans, Lemus, Reyes, & Naranjo, 1967; Nannanetti, 1960). Support from UNESCO in educational and guidance and counseling matters in LA countries remained strong throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Dyanko, 1996; UNESCO, 1982a). In South American countries today, guidance and counseling services are practiced by psychologists and educators, primarily within the school system (UNESCO, 1982b).

Venezuela is presented as the primary example of a well-developed SBGC profession with ample policy support. In Venezuela there exist college degrees in SBGC at the undergraduate and master's levels, professional organizations, professional publications, legislation, public policies, and government development plans that influence the practice and of professional practice of SBGC. These conditions are similarly true for Argentina, Brazil, and Chile.

## Venezuela

### Historical Overview

During the 1930s, guidance and counseling practices began as a form of educational counseling concerned with academic, vocational, and occupational issues. Between 1936 and 1956, services included mental hygiene and pupil hygiene that were delivered by personnel of the Ministry of Health placed in education centers. At the Ministry of Education, two departments (Psychoeducation and Guidance) provided student assistance programs. Some services were organized by European immigrants who became distinguished Venezuelan counseling pioneers.

By the 1940s, formal guidance and counseling services had been developed by Dr. Ortega Duran (educator), Professor Aguirre (counselor), Professor Constanzo (teacher and philosopher), and Professor Escalona (career counselor and academic; Benavent, 1996; Calogne, 1988; Vera, 2011b).

Under the influence of these early professionals, guidance and counseling services were conceived of as educational, vocational, and career oriented.

In the early 1960s, the government created the first counselor education training program (Calogne, 1988; Moreno, 2009). At this time, professors from the United States (US) who were specialists in aspects of guidance and counseling traveled to Venezuela to train the first counselors. This training program was made possible through a joint project between the Venezuelan government and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) (Vera, 2010). Scholarships were awarded for eight professionals to receive master's level guidance and counseling training in the USA (Sifuentes, 1980). In 1965, the Guidance Division of the Ministry of Education was created (EDUPLAN, 1964), and under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, school-based services have continued, albeit with some struggles, until today. The US-based training of guidance and counseling professionals at master's and doctoral levels has also continued, sponsored chiefly through public funding and private initiatives.

### Guidance and Counseling Policy Status

Historically, school-based guidance and counseling has been recognized as a profession of public interest and viewed as strategically important for individual development and national success (Ministry of the Popular Power of Higher Education, 2009; Vera, 2011b). In 1936, educational policymakers agreed on regulations establishing the first official counseling and guidance services within the Department of Education. Currently, the guidance and counseling profession is constitutionally supported through two articles of the constitution: Article 2 upholds democratic values and human rights, and Article 3 affirms the role of the state in protecting and developing the well-being of the population and society through the provision of education and employment, in accordance with the constitution (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, 1999; p. 13).

More recently, these intentions have been further developed in the Venezuelan Education Act, which affirms guidance and counseling as a politi-

cal and human right for every Venezuelan citizen. Article 6, F, of this Act “guarantees counseling, health, sport, recreation, culture, and wellness services to students involved in the educational process in co-responsibility with the relevant bodies” (Asamblea Nacional, 2009; p. 5). Effectively, this mandates for the provision of counseling services at all public and private schools and colleges. The Department of Education and union representatives from the Venezuela College of Education reached agreement about guidance and counseling services within the school system. This created a strong platform for developing guidance and counseling activities in the country, primarily by acknowledging the value of the profession. This agreement ensured a budget for hiring practitioners and public funding for guidance and counseling programs and services. Every school, from preschool to high school, should employ one practitioner to work in a guidance and counseling center on a staff pupil ratio of 1:10 classes. However, such aspirations have not been sustainable due to staff retiring, financial constraints, and a lack of local training (only two colleges in the country at present train SBGC professionals). The services available to students have declined dramatically as economic conditions have worsened. SBGC professional have attempted to promote public awareness of the importance of SBGC and advocate for the provision of the levels of student services promised by law. For example, at the University of Zulia, Venezuela, undergraduate students are engaged in debates about the practical implications of constitutional principles and other laws related to themselves as social beings and to the everyday work of guidance and counseling practitioners (Vera & Barreto, 2014).

### **Guidance and Counseling Policy Status in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile**

Guidance and counseling in Argentina has a long history. In 1925, the Psychoeducation and Professional Guidance and Counseling Institute was founded by presidential decree. Furthermore, the Argentinian Education Act 26–206 granted guidance and counseling as a right for all students.

Article 126 states that all students have the right to receive vocational, academic, and professional-occupational guidance and counseling to support their decisions about the world of work and further education. Article 94 requires the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology to oversee the development and implementation of an information policy with continuous and periodic evaluation of the education system to inform decision-making. The key purpose is to improve the quality of education and social participation and promote social justice in the allocation of resources. This law established official policy and service assessments, but it remains unclear how these legal foundations (a) inform practice in policy research to evaluate the quality of guidance and counseling services and (b) how assessment results might inform policymakers. As in other parts of LA, such research is typically conducted by guidance and counseling practitioners for academic or professional development reasons or on the initiative of their employers. Likewise, colleges and research centers produce research related to diverse matters within guidance and counseling, such as efficacy studies and impact on academic outcomes. That said, policy and policy research are not evident in scholarly literature.

In Brazil, counseling is not an independent field of study or practice but is instead a specialty within psychology (Hutz-Midgett & Hutz, 2012). Career and vocational forms of guidance and counseling are particularly emphasized. Moreover, since Brazil is a large, multicultural, and multilingual country, guidance and counseling practitioners are integrating multicultural approaches into their work (Hutz-Midgett & Hutz, 2012). For example, through the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Brazil, the state recognized and protected the ethnic and cultural plurality of the nation for the first time. A new model of society has emerged with education as central to this goal. Consequently, professional guidance and counseling activities may contribute to the development of a new mindset, needed by the country and society.

Legal foundations for guidance and counseling subsequently developed in Brazil during this time. The Brazilian Association of Vocational and

Career Guidance and Counseling has worked extensively in the school system and in other settings (Melo-Silva, Lassance, & Soares, 2004). The Association has also worked to increase social recognition of the profession. Their efforts have concentrated on conducting vocational and career-related research and organizing national and international professional meetings on diverse matters related to career and vocational guidance and counseling. Policy and policy research has been a concern of this organization and of Brazilian writers in the field (Melo, 2007; Melo-Silva et al., 2004). However, outcome studies that establish the expected benefits from services are largely absent from the professional literature.

Chile was one of the first LA countries to organize guidance and counseling as a legally based public service within the national educational system. The Chilean General Education Act, no. 20.370, stated that education is the continual process of learning during different phases of an individual's life. Furthermore, the Act indicates that education's main purpose is to help individuals achieve spiritual, ethical, moral, affective, intellectual, artistic, and physical development by transmitting and cultivating values, knowledge, and skills. The Act further states that education empowers people to lead full lives; to participate in the community in active, responsible, tolerant, fraternal, and democratic ways; and to work and contribute to the development of the country. The understanding of individuals as human resources is prevalent in contemporary Chilean policy on guidance and counseling services. Labor market forces are the basis for the conception and delivery of guidance and services. Today, Chilean guidance and counseling policymakers and service providers consider issues such as global market competition, lifelong career planning, adapting to a changing workforce, and the availability of career information as critical guidance and counseling issues. One example of this model of vocational and career development guidance and counseling is the Chile Califica program (Alexandrowicz, 2004; Watts & Fretwell, 2004) which is an initiative to strengthen pathways between postsecondary schools, vocational training, and the workforce.

## School-Based Counseling Policy Research

This final section highlights major common features of SBGC shared across LA countries and identifies pressing questions for the profession related to policy and policy research. From a policy standpoint, most regional constitutions share some common principles such as inclusion, social justice, equality, and peace. In addition, these countries link the social and economic development of people, families, and society to education and jobs. Some constitutions stated that guidance and counseling was a right to be granted by the state. To ensure this right for the population, countries have included guidance and counseling services in their National Education Acts and other laws and regulations. In so doing, counseling services were integrated into educational systems, which allocated funding for services and employment for professionals.

While strong constitutional principles and proper legislation on guidance and counseling exist in several LA countries, laws that regulate the free practice of the profession can only be found in Costa Rica and Puerto Rico. Without these legal instruments, the development of guidance and counseling practice will be curtailed and will be under the control of outside forces. Guidance and counseling professionals will be limited how much they can participate in the creation of public policy. Policymakers will not be properly informed by professionals in guidance and counseling.

Although the largest guidance and counseling associations in the region are well organized and are invested in high-quality research and in fostering professional encounters, critical discussions about political issues and rigorous research on policy matters are largely absent from the agendas of these associations. Unless this situation changes, it is likely the profession's influence will continue to be absent in debates about SBGC policy. The existing situation of favorable legislation could cease. Public funding for guidance and counseling activities could be eliminated or curtailed. These dire predictions are already coming true in Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil.



Guidance and counseling scholars have called for more active participation in policy formation and policy research initiatives (Calonge, 2004; Gavilán, Quiles, & Chá, 2005; González, 2008b; González & Ledezma, 2009; Graham, 2001; Olivera, 2004; Rascovan, 2004; Vera, 2014). However, these requests only appear in conference proceedings and journal articles and do not visibly influence guidance and counseling associations, training programs, practitioners, policymakers, and officials responsible for public services. We believe that an agenda to influence LA policy research in school-based counseling would involve addressing the following essential questions:

1. What are the social functions and policy objectives of SBCG as embedded in current public policies and as understood by policymakers in the various LA countries?
2. How are professional activities conceptualized in official documents and public employment rules related to SBGC programs and services in the various LA countries?
3. How might research on SBGC and public policy be coordinated at both national and international levels?
4. How are SBGC professionals trained in the conduct and use of policy research, and how could this training be most effective?
5. How does SBCG contribute to helping students achieve well-being and nations attain prosperity?
6. What are the benefits at the individual and national levels of government programs and initiatives involving SBGC and how can these benefits be enhanced?
7. What are the most effective ways to create/change public policy that will ensure that SBGC makes a maximal contribution to the public good?

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## Part IV

# Synthesis and Future Directions

Vivian V. Lee and Go Eun Na

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## Introduction

Advocacy as both an act and a process is central to promoting the well-being of children as global citizens in part by policy research and school-based counseling. This chapter will focus on the overall process of advocacy and the role of policy research and school-based counseling therein.

This chapter will put the focus on the well-being of children as the ultimate population served by advocacy efforts. While advocacy efforts may promote policy research and school-based counseling, they will be considered as tools, services, and/or products of the overall advocacy process. In keeping with the international focus of this text, a research-based *International Counseling Advocacy Model – School-Based Counseling and Related Policy Research (ICAM-SBC)* will be presented that incorporates an established international advocacy process applied to the specific topic at hand. The established framework is UNICEF's *The Advocacy Toolkit: A guide to influencing decision*

*that improve children's lives* (UNICEF, 2010a) and *Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: Companion to the Advocacy Toolkit* (UNICEF, 2010b).

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## Defining Advocacy

Throughout the literature advocacy is defined in a variety of ways. In keeping with our use of the UNICEF's Advocacy Toolkit, we decided to use the definition in that document. The definition is presented below in its entirety but is not intended to suggest that the groups mentioned are only the constituents' counselors serve or the only ones to which this definition could be applied.

UNICEF defines advocacy as a “deliberate process, based on demonstrated evidence, to directly and indirectly influence decision makers, stakeholders and relevant audiences to support and implement actions that contribute to the fulfillment of children's and women's rights (UNICEF, 2010a, 2010b).”

While similar, though not as comprehensive, the Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines advocacy as *the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal: the act or process of advocating for something*. Similarly, in the counseling profession, advocacy is often defined as taking up a cause or position for one's self, on behalf of others, and/or the counseling profession (Lewis, Ratts, Paladino, & Toporek, 2011). While all

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three definitions make clear the inherent intentionality in advocacy, only Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and UNICEF define advocacy as a process.

More specifically, unique to the UNICEF's definition is the inclusion of demonstrated evidence as part of advocacy that makes research and other data part of the foundation on which advocacy rests. This definition also suggests deliberate action directed at multiple audiences and through multiple means further defining advocacy as coordinated and collaborative process that is both interrelated and multidimensional. Importantly, UNICEF's definition positions advocacy as a process with a clearly desired outcome, in this case the fulfillment of children's and women's rights. Implicit within a definition that has outcome expectations is a dynamic and intentional process designed to influence, create, begin, discontinue, transform, or modify a condition or to change a situation for individuals and groups to reach a determined standard of living, fulfillment of one's rights. While this definition is focused on children and women, it is applicable to other groups or causes designed to improve lives of those marginalized or disenfranchised or to address larger issues.

### Goal of Advocacy

At the macro level, the fulfillment of one's rights as a goal of advocacy may functionally require "change in governance, attitude, power, social relations, and institutional functions" (UNICEF, 2010a, *The Advocacy Toolkit*, p3). To accomplish this goal requires the inclusion of those who hold the power to change policies, laws, and mandates that create, regulate, and/or administer those functions. Such changes inevitably alter the workings of the institutions where implementation of those functions happens.

At the micro level that may translate into changes in the day-to-day duties performed by workers. Thus advocacy can impact a system from the macro to micro levels. In this way, advocacy can act as a process to address inequities and disparities in society, especially for oppressed,

marginalized, or underserved populations. From UNICEF's perspective, in this way, advocacy promotes human rights, social justice, and opportunities for marginalized populations to actively participate in the processes that shape their lives which fosters the democratic process. Moreover, advocacy can address the larger societal, social, political, and economic arenas; areas counselors have not always seen as their role.

### Advocacy Models

In contrast to case advocacy, which is more individually focused, the advocacy described above is known as cause or systemic advocacy. The American Counseling Association (ACA) *Advocacy Competencies* (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2002) address both individual and systemic advocacy needs, while other more systemic advocacy models focus only on changing the systems, policies, legislation, or structures that impact individuals or groups (UNICEF, the *Advocacy Toolkit*, 2010a). Systemic advocacy is most often conducted by groups or organizations rather than individuals. This is of importance to our discussion first because policy research is designed to influence or create policy and second policy research can also be conducted to evaluate the implementation of policy. Research and advocacy at these levels will hopefully positively impact individuals, but the scale, perspective, and approach are much broader.

Due to the focus on improving the life circumstances of marginalized individuals and groups, some authors have termed this type of advocacy "social justice advocacy" which is often used in counseling literature (Lee, Smith, & Henry, 2013). Other descriptors such as legal advocacy, multicultural advocacy, and human rights advocacy are used in the literature to frame the area or intent of advocacy in which one is engaging. Some authors use the term social justice advocacy as the overarching term for other advocacy work with a more specific focus. For example, Lee et al. (2013) suggest that within the larger realm of social justice advocacy is policy/legislative advocacy. Within this subheading of policy/

legislative advocacy, these authors suggest three prominent areas in which counselors can engage: “expert testimony/policy research, policy formation and evaluation, and lobbying for policy change and support” (Lee et al., 2013 p.79). While this conceptualization does not seem to be widespread within the counseling field, it provides some direction for this discussion.

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## School-Based Counseling and Related Research

Significant literature exists on school-based counseling; however, two studies stand out (Harris, 2013; Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015) as together they provide the most comprehensive information to date on the scope and factors that promote the development of school-based counseling globally. Significantly, because these two studies are replete with salient points that can inform a contemporary advocacy agenda, we have chosen to highlight these two studies in this work and will feature them later in the chapter.

Harris (2013) examined the scope of school-based counseling in 82 countries, 62 of which reported well-established school-based counseling and with an additional 7 emerging. The areas surveyed included practice, training, who delivers services, theoretical approaches, whether or not school-based counseling was mandated by policy, and at which levels it is practiced, primary, secondary, or across the educational experience. More specifically, the study found that while school-based counseling is mandatory in some countries, it is often delivered by teachers, psychologists, and in some cases social workers rather than counselors. The work of school-based counseling is often focused on vocational guidance using a specific curriculum and occurs in classrooms, while one-to-one counseling is not seen as the primary task. The use of therapeutic approaches highlights relational, cognitive behavioral, and solution-focused approaches which are most often cited. Finally, recommendations related to issues of practice-based research skills along with monitoring and evaluating the work of school-based counselors and

greater attention to culturally sensitive practice, along with a focus on the counseling relationship, approaches, and creative pedagogies.

Martin et al. (2015) identified factors affecting the development and practice of school-based counseling in different national contexts around the world. Using a grounded theory methodology, this study presents an 11-factor analytic framework, each with multiple subcategories that provide depth and scope. These 11 factors include the counseling profession; laws and educational policy; characteristics of the public education system; national needs – which were the most influential; models of school counseling; community organizations or NGO coalitions; research and evaluation; and notably a tie scoring among cultural factors, larger social movements, related professions, and local stakeholder perceptions. Significantly, in post-study efforts, the authors noted that in countries where professional organizations (part of the counseling profession) and governments (part of Laws and Education Policy) were active in promoting school-based counseling, it was more developed. They further noted that in some countries professional organizations and governments filled in the gaps for the other if one was less active. Moreover, these authors expressed the hope that this work might be used to support advocacy efforts to promote school-based counseling and related policy research.

Yet despite the growing trend toward incorporating advocacy into the counseling profession, we have found no overarching international advocacy agenda for school-based counseling and related policy research. Given that there can be a tension between advocacy targeted for the profession and advocacy targeted for the well-being of children, the purpose of advocacy needs to be clearly articulated. However, at this time, there is no overarching agreement on areas of primary importance regarding who, where, or for what ends advocacy may be collectively conducted emanating from the counseling profession or other promoters of school-based counseling around the world. One point of unity that is highly relevant for school-based counselors and offers a picture of desired education outcomes for children and adolescents is Education 2030



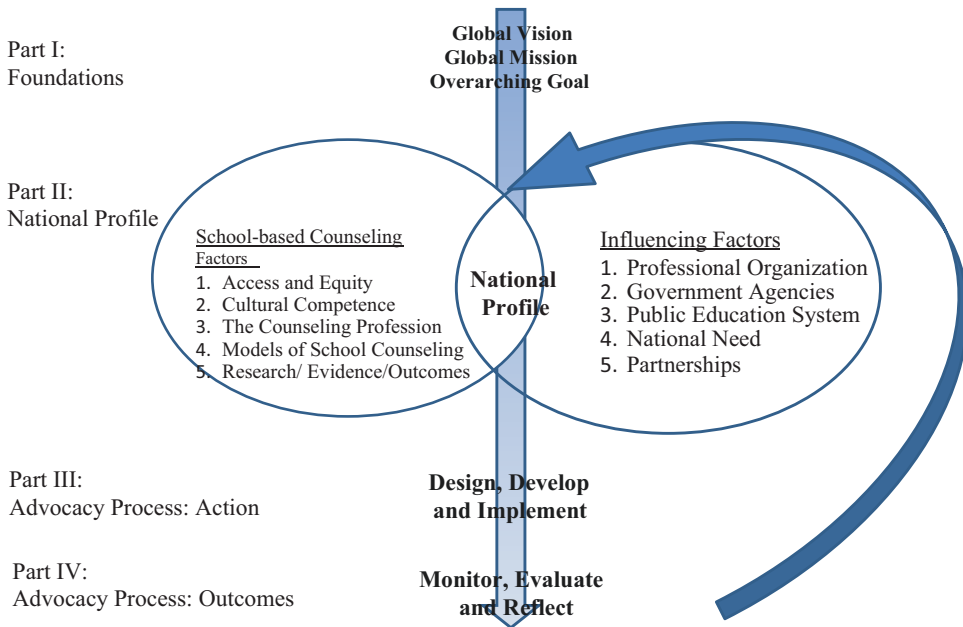
UNESCO (2015). The focus of Education 2030 which is another term for Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development goals, is inclusive equity-focused systemic education transformation consistent with counseling philosophies and beliefs. Crafting an advocacy agenda that supports the work of Education 2030 in the best interest of children may be a very promising avenue for school-based counselors to consider. Given the interconnected and interdependent global community in which we live filling in the gaps described here would represent movement forward. Those advocating for school-based counseling come from different parts of the world, with different cultures, governments, sociopolitical contexts, and cultural values. Thus, in order to facilitate and encourage both national and international dialogue focused on advocacy, a starting point that has the potential to reach across national contexts is needed.

To address this gap and in response to Education 2030, we developed the *International Counseling Advocacy Model – School-Based Counseling and Related Policy Research (ICAM-SBC)*. We offer the model as a work in progress. We will present

some initial content of the model recognizing that many perspectives, arguments, and depth of examination of each part of the model are beyond the scope of this present work. See Fig. 32.1.

### Overview

This four-part model is a synthesis of relevant research, established advocacy processes, and author-developed guiding foundations into an *International Counseling Advocacy Model – School-Based Counseling and Related Policy Research (ICAM-SBC)*. The purpose of this model is to offer a structure from which counseling organizations, practitioners, counselor educators, researchers, policy makers, funders, NGOs, and governments can begin to engage in dialogue to address the needs of children both nationally and globally. The goal of this four-part model is to encourage the development of a contextualized and dynamic advocacy agenda and processes responsive to identified needs and strengths with an eye on school-based counseling as one vehicle for addressing those needs and capitalizing on



**Fig. 32.1** International counseling advocacy model – School-Based Counseling and Related Policy Research

strengths. The remainder of the chapter will outline the four parts of the model followed by an examination of an internationally applicable advocacy process.

## Part I: Foundations

The “Foundations” section of the ICAM-SBC includes the vision, mission, and overarching goal. These three points provide language designed to frame the philosophy, values, and direction for advocacy dialogue and collaborative efforts.

### Global Vision

All children will live productive and peaceful lives as global citizens as put forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The first point in Part I, Global Vision, is designed to clearly and unequivocally position the work of school-based counseling and related policy research as work carried out in the service of children. One of the primary questions to be answered in advocacy work is who we are doing it for. In solidarity with UNICEF’s definition of advocacy, we believe an outward-looking stance is essential to ensure that the rationale and reasons for advocacy efforts always spring from a center grounded in serving others.

Moreover, the vision was designed to be aspirational and future oriented yet rooted in foundational international documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (the United Nations, 1948) and the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) (the United Nations, 1989). Given that many nation-states have ratified these documents, it is hoped that directly addressing these documents by name will increase familiarity with them and the actions of one’s nation in this arena. Finally, the vision is both a beginning and a place to return for perspective taking, reflection, and guidance throughout the advocacy process as the work of advocacy can be complicated and is certainly not linear.

### Global Mission

Promote the rights and well-being of all children through equitable school-based counseling services and related policy research.

Drawing on a vision grounded in the UDHR and the CRC, this mission positions school-based counseling and related policy research as a vehicle through which children’s rights and well-being can be promoted. This type of positioning inserts school-based counseling and related policy research into larger policy and governmental dialogues and negotiations that can connect to regional, national, or global goals, thereby highlighting potential contributions to audiences that may otherwise not be familiar with the work of this discipline.

The mission serves to frame and focus the scope of the work of school-based counseling and related policy research and offers the potential to align outcomes with those of the region or nation depending on goals, needs and strengths. It is important to remember that working for children’s rights and well-being may be in opposition to a given government/regime. Furthermore, the inclusion of the word equitable adds another essential layer in framing the scope of the work and has social and political implications as it can open up conversations otherwise not addressed about children’s rights and well-being that can impact the distribution of resources.

The inclusion of equity is also in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 which addresses Education Goal 4, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,” and is supported in the *Incheon Declaration Education 2030* (UNESCO, 2015). This goal and the ensuing agendas are inspired by a *humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity; social justice; inclusion; protection; cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity; and shared responsibility and accountability* (UNESCO, 2015, p.6). Further, it calls school-based counseling advocates to examine the access, quality, and availability of services to ensure children most in need of services are not shortchanged. If school-based counseling and related policy research is to truly enter the global

arena, understanding how it is linked, aligned, and supportive of these larger issues is essential.

### Overarching Goal

School-based counseling advocates develop and implement an advocacy agenda in response to a national profile and global trends to equitably promote the rights and well-being of children.

At the national level, the overarching goal directs the work of advocates and identifies advocacy as a means to respond to the needs of children through the development and implementation of an agenda reflective of a national profile and global trends. At the global level, this goal can serve to galvanize and mobilize advocacy efforts responsive to the dynamic and ever-changing global landscape with an eye to the uniqueness and contextual issues of nations and regions. Again, the inclusion of the word equity impacts the agenda in terms of the type and focuses of activities and can be used to identify more nation-specific challenges such as access, policy, participation, and desired outcomes.

### Conclusion

With a foundation in place that upholds the rights and dignity of children, we will now turn our attention to creating a national profile that is the second step in the international advocacy model.

## Part II: National Profile

In Part II we will explore how to create a unique national profile that describes the state of school-based counseling and the factors that influence its growth and development. The purpose of the National Profile is to create a picture of what exists. This context-specific depiction informs the primary goal of the National Profile which is to shape a national advocacy agenda that helps increase alignment with the vision, mission, and overarching goal of Part I. A secondary goal of the National Profile is to create a platform for cross-national dialogue and advocacy focused on the global needs of children and the ways in which school-based counseling can have a presence relative to the state of children.

To form the structure of the National Profile, we used the two studies (Harris, 2013; Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015) discussed earlier as they present wide-ranging analysis of school-based counseling globally. Within the structure of the National Profile, we repurposed and repositioned some of the items in each study to form two separate though not discrete parts, *School-Based Counseling Factors* and *Influencing Factors*. See Fig. 32.1.

The left portion of the National Profile, *School-Based Counseling Factors*, is designed to examine school-based counseling at a practice level that is more granular: a micro view. The right side of the National Profile, *Influencing Factors*, focuses on structures, institutions, and entities from a macro view. The left side of the National Profile is an integration of factors from both studies, while the right side is more reflective of the larger overarching items from Martin et al.'s study.

Furthermore, we added to the items and categories offered in both studies such as access and equity and expanded areas such as cultural competence. While the two sections of the National Profile are fluid and inform each other, we are presenting them separately for clarity. Following the explanation of each factor in both sides of the National Profile, critical questions are offered to frame and facilitate dialogue among those using this tool at a local, state, regional, national, or global level. The critical questions can also be viewed as policy research inquiry as many refer to need, strengths, status, implementation, and evaluation. We encourage advocates to create a document that outlines responses to the inquiry after each factor on both sides of the National Profile. Readers are encouraged to thoroughly review both studies used in developing this portion of the ICAM-SBC.

The *School-Based Counseling Factors* of the National Profile include:

1. Access and equity
2. Cultural competence
3. The counseling profession
4. Models of school-based counseling
5. Research/evidence and outcomes

The Influencing Factors of the National Profile include:

1. Professional organizations
2. Government agencies
3. Education policy and public schools
4. National need
5. Partnerships

### School-Based Counseling Factors

#### Access and Equity

To begin we expanded upon the two research studies and added access and equity, which can be applied to all other points in this section of the National Profile. According to Webster's Dictionary, access is defined as *permission or the right to enter, get near, or make use of something or to have contact with someone*. Applied to this topic, access would mean children having the right to receive and participate in school-based counseling services and to engage with a counselor, implying that a counselor is available and that services are offered. Equity is defined as *ensuring all are served with the potential of additional services provided to those most in need*.

Critical questions:

- How is access and equity understood and accepted or not accepted in the practice of school-based counseling? Are concepts of access and equity codified in policy?
- Do school-based counseling services exist and do all children have equitable access to those services? Who does and who does not?
- What efforts toward increasing access to and equity in delivery of in school-based counseling are currently underway?

#### Cultural Competence

Second, we support the recommendation in Harris' study to promote culturally sensitive practices with different populations but encourage dialogue to expand this recommendation to include training, practice, research, and policy grounded in cultural competence. We also suggest that items from Martin et al., under cultural

factors, be included here as it centers on issues such as worldview, values, religion, spirituality, traditional and western help-seeking practices, indigenous helpers, and the legitimacy of school counselors as helpers (Martin et al., 2015 p. 9).

Regardless of the theoretical approach of a practitioner, services conceptualized and delivered through a culturally competent lens are more likely to address the diverse needs of all children. Therefore, it is incumbent upon school-based counseling professionals to be grounded in the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to mobilize culturally relevant and responsive actions that uphold the rights and dignity of all children.

- What biases, prejudices, or oppression may exist toward a particular group of children in a country?
- How do those factors negatively impact children's rights and well-being in terms of their social, civic, and educational outcomes?
- How is cultural competence expressed in the training, practice, supervision, and research of school-based counseling? What is the accountability expectation for cultural competence?

#### The Counseling Profession

The counseling profession category within Martin et al.'s (2015) study holds many points that interface with Harris (2013). We matched items together to address issues surrounding practice and providers, training and supervision focused on the actual counseling work in the field.

##### Practice and Providers

In many countries school-based counseling is provided by teachers, not counselors. Moreover, social workers and psychologists provide school-based counseling services despite the fact that in a number of countries the qualifications to practice require graduate-level training in counseling. Regarding the content of services, in many countries, a curriculum focused on vocational guidance forms the basis of school-based counseling. However, Harris (2013) notes that in areas of violent conflict addressing issues of

trauma take precedent. In reflection on the expressed vision of this advocacy model, it may be asked:

- Are all children receiving services reflective of their immediate life circumstances and more aspirational needs to assist them in meeting the challenges of the present and future?
- Do practitioners possess the knowledge and skills to address the cultural, developmental, preventive, and remedial needs of children and build on their strengths?
- Are their standards of practice and ethical codes in place to guide culturally competent practice?

### Training and Supervision

The availability of university training sites, supervision, scope of curriculum, retraining, and professional competency as well as the interface between training and practice, and the role of professional associations in supporting these issues are all points noted in Martin et al. (2015). Access to quality training can directly impact the number of service providers in a nation as well as the potential equitable distribution of services.

- What is the relationship between the availability of quality training and supervision, the need for service providers, types of services actually needed and what exists?
- What is the curriculum and corresponding scope of training required to be recognized as a quality service provider? How is practice monitored and evaluated?
- What is the role of professional associations in supporting the above issues?

### Models of School-based Counseling

The category of models of school-based counseling ranked fifth among Martin et al.'s (2015) 11 categories. Given the identifiers of indigenous vs. imported models of practice, we placed it in this section of the National Profile. We believe models of school-based counseling that are contextualized to the unique issues of access and equity, educational systems, cultural norms and sociopolitical issues of a nation, as well as the dynamic

evolution of the counseling profession are important to effectively respond to the diverse issues of children both in a specific nation and globally.

- How are the models of school-based counseling integrated into the education system?
- How do models of school-based counseling promote access and equity, and cultural competence reflective of the diverse populations of children?
- How are models of school-based counseling developed and implemented keeping in mind the infrastructure needed to implement with equity, fidelity, and rigor and ensure integral sustainability?

### Research/Evidence/Outcomes

Importantly, recommendations for additional “practice-based research skills and strategies for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the work” were cited in Harris’ (2013) study. While we agree with these recommendations, we encourage a push toward policy research and research for evidence-based outcomes related to children’s success. Such efforts could be measured in educational, vocational/career, and social/civic attainment alongside measures of academic achievement and attainment. Importantly, success in measure for global citizenship outlined in the targets of Goal 4 are areas in need of research. Given that school-based counseling occurs in schools, attention to the ways in which counselors contribute to school-focused outcomes is appropriate. Martin et al. listed research and evaluation as one category in their 11; however, its low rating among the other factors suggested to us that it may receive greater focus on this side of the National Profile given the frequent disconnect between policy research and the actual policy-making process.

- What research exists that identifies the needs and strengths of children? How has existing research influenced policy?
- What are the desired outcomes for children based on identified research and how are research findings integrated into school-based



counseling practice to equitably meet children's needs and build up their strengths within a given context?

- What evidence exists that demonstrates the contribution of school-based counseling in meeting identified needs equitably?

## Influencing Factors

### Professional Organizations

As discussed above, we extracted professional organizations out of the counseling profession category. While the work of organizations is not a separation from other items in that category such as training, supervision, etc., the structure and capacity of an organization to effectively engage in advocacy efforts deserves special attention in developing a National Profile. More specifically, the UNICEF's Advocacy Toolkit provides an in-depth examination of eight specific areas to delineate the readiness of an organization to engage in advocacy. Organizational advocates are encouraged to thoroughly examine each area. They include credibility, skills, intra-office coordination and leadership, capacity to generate and communicate evidence, ability to assess risks, capacity to work with children and young people, long-term partnerships that can form a broad base for advocacy, and sufficient resources. What is the level of credibility the professional organizations or their advocacy leaders, researchers, and/or practitioners with policy and/or other decision-makers? Are they perceived as ethical?

To what degree do professional organizations or their advocacy leaders, researchers, and/or practitioners or others have the knowledge and skills to legitimately speak on behalf of those affected by presenting issues?

- To what degree do professional organizations or their advocacy leaders, researchers, and/or practitioners or others have the resources to initiate, communicate, and sustain advocacy efforts over time either alone or in partnership with others?

### Government Agencies

Government agencies are part of the factor of Laws and Education Policy which describes "the role of government within school-based counseling" (Martin, et al., 2015 p.12). Post-study research by the authors found this point to stand out in nations where school counseling is better developed; therefore, we have chosen it as an influencing factor in the National Profile. The larger category of Laws and Education Policy included items such as funding, resources, workloads, policies for credentialing, and government endorsements to name a few, all of which the government agencies can either create, control, regulate, or mandate. Furthermore, these larger structural, procedural, and policy points are also informed by and share a dynamic interplay with the School-Based Counseling Factor side of the National Profile especially where access and equity are concerned.

- How do the policies, practices, and procedures of government agencies address issues of access and equity related to the rights and well-being of children?
- How do government agencies and professional organizations work together to address the well-being and rights of children? If they do not, what hinders cooperation and collaboration?
- How do government agencies support school-based counseling through the allocation of funding and resources, supportive policies, and credentialing and related endorsements?

### Public Education Systems

Martin et al. (2015) originally titled this category characteristics of public education systems which includes a wide range of subcategories. Of particular interest for this section of the National Profile are points such as "the level of the education system's design to serve all or only some students, the level of material support, local vs. centralized control, resources available to public schools such as the availability of curricular choices and the degree of collaboration between school-based counseling and other educational

professional” (Martin et al., 2015 p.14). These points interface with perspectives on access and equity and thus are potential items for inclusion in an advocacy agenda.

- What is the impact of material, economic, and human resources on the ability of public school systems to equitably serve all children?
- What is the belief system about equitable access to educational opportunity for all children in the public school arena – how is it concretely demonstrated, or not?
- How do school-based counselors and educational personnel collaboratively promote the success and future aspirations of all children?

### National Need

This influencing factor comes directly from Martin et al. (2015) with a focus on large national needs linked to workforce development, social change, public health, poverty, mental health, violence, national career priorities, political instability, natural disaster and corruption, and the interface with and support of school-based counseling with government and the public related to these issues.

- Where and how does school-based counseling address national need and help promote strengths and resiliency?
- How are the outcomes of school-based counseling that address national need communicated?
- How can equitable school-based counseling address anticipated national need?

### Partnerships

This influencing factor represents a combination of two items from Martin et al. (2015): related professions and community organizations and NGO coalitions. These two areas focus on relationship and alliance building, networking, and the potential for collaborative and cooperative action. The purpose in combining these two items stems from the repeated mention throughout the advocacy literature that addressing large-scale issues such as the well-being and rights of

children requires multifaceted efforts by multiple stakeholders.

- How could school-based counseling and cross-sector stakeholders better collaborate to serve children both at the local, national, and global levels?
- What are areas that hinder cross-sector collaboration?
- What are the potential issues where cross-sector alliances and collaborations may be most effective?

### Conclusion

Once the National Profile is completed, it can be used to reflect on the differences and similarities between the vision, mission, and goal of Part I as the aspirational outcome and what actually exists. Second, the differences and similarities between the two can serve as a catalyst for developing an advocacy agenda and engaging in the advocacy process. The remainder of this chapter will now focus on *Part III and Part IV of the ICAM-SBC: The Advocacy Process Actions and Outcomes*.

## Part III. Advocacy Process: Action

### Introduction

UNICEF’s *Advocacy Toolkit: A guide to influencing decisions that improve the lives of children* forms the structure for this portion of our ICAM-SBC. This tool was chosen due to the international recognition of UNICEF as an organization dedicated to the rights of children and the proven success of this tool in multiple venues around the world (UNICEF, 2010a).

### Developing an Advocacy Strategy

The Advocacy Toolkit outlines the development of a strategic advocacy process using nine questions (see below). In the section below, we will apply this advocacy process to our discussion of school-based counseling. While the

toolkit provides an in-depth look at each of the nine questions, only a brief overview about each question will be provided. Similar to the National Profile, critical questions will be offered, some of which may be considered critical policy research inquiry, as we did in the National Profile above.

Advocacy Toolkit process questions:

1. What do we want?
2. Who can make it happen?
3. What do they need to hear?
4. Who do they need to hear it from?
5. How can we make sure they hear it?
6. What do we have?
7. What do we need?
8. How do we begin to take action?
9. How do we know it is working?

**Question 1:** What do we want?

This question is designed to delve deep into the causes, effects, and consequences of an issue and generate potential solutions that inform areas in which prioritized research is needed to build an evidence base focused on improving the rights and well-being of children.

The first two steps of the ICAM-SBC position advocates to begin the process of answering the question: What do we want? For example, Part I Foundations sets the overarching vision, mission, and goal, and the National Profile creates a picture of what exists, providing insight into the needs, strengths, gaps, disparities, and inequities between the two and stimulating dialogue around potential solutions. Building a base of evidence in response may be directly focused on school-based counseling or it may be focused on the larger needs of children in a community or in a nation at large.

- What are the consequences of and potential solution for what we want and do not have?
- What factors contribute to the needs, rights, and well-being of children that are not being met? Given the factors identified in the above question, what are the most immediate priorities?

- What relevant research/evidence exists and what research/evidence is needed?

**Question 2:** Who can make it happen?

This question focuses on identifying stakeholders, both allies and opponents, and assessing their interest, support, power, influence, and importance relative to advocacy priorities. Assessing the credibility of allies and including those who may lack power to make decisions but are central to the issue such as children and their families should be among the stakeholder group. Referencing the partners factor in the National Profile can be helpful starting point in this process. Conceptualizing who can make it happen from various theories of change and from the policy decision-making process within a nation or region allows advocates to locate their work within national agendas, narratives, time frames, and decision-making cycles.

- Who possess the interest, power, and influence to support the growth and development of children, school-based counseling, and policy mandates?
- How can the political, economic, cultural, and religious context of the country help identify critical allies and opponents?
- How are the desired priorities conceptualized within theories of change and the policy-making process?

**Question 3:** What do they need to hear?

Persuasive messaging that appeals to “what is right” and “audience self-interest” is a delicate balance (UNICEF, 2010a, Advocacy Toolkit, p.42). Using a primary message that includes “statement + evidence + example + goal + action desired” (UNICEF, 2010a, Advocacy Toolkit, p.42) and a secondary message that states how the goal will be accomplished targets self-interest and when linked to issues they already support can increase impact. Framing messages in simple and direct language allows a wider range of audience understanding and engagement.

Now let's apply this formula to children and school-based counseling in a developing country working toward educating more children as part of the sustainable development goals:

*Statement:* Children and young people who finish primary and secondary school are more likely to secure jobs and contribute to the life of the community in which they live.

*Evidence:* Research suggests that school-based counseling is an effective way to assist children with the skills necessary for success in school and helps prepare them for employment or further education.

*Example:* Since the introduction of school-based counseling services to Blank School, 50% more primary students went to secondary school. Upon completion of secondary school, 10% more entered university and 30% more were able to find full-time stable employment.

*Goal:* Ensure all children have equitable access to school-based counseling services in both primary and secondary school – especially those most in need.

*Action:* Enact policy legislation that mandates equitable access to school-based counseling services to those students most in need at both the primary and secondary level across the region and provide additional resources and funding for training and positions.

While the example is factious, it provides a guideline that may be used and adapted to a country, region, or nation-state's unique context.

**Question 4:** Who do they need to hear it from?

Now the messenger(s) must be strategically selected, and ideally they hold either power or influence over the decision-makers or target audience. It is here that the voices of children, families, employers, or community leaders who have a stake in this cause can be effective messengers. But the messenger and the voice must resonate with policy makers in ways that they can identify self and other interests and goals.

- Who possesses the power and influence to deliver the message?
- Through which mediums and venues will the message be delivered?
- How can advocates ensure the message is believable?

**Question 5:** How can we make sure they hear it?

Having identified government agencies and other policy-making entities in the National Profile, advocacy groups must strategically position themselves to leverage opportunities in the policy decision-making process. At the same time, advocacy groups must approach those opportunities with realistic expectations about what can be accomplished in that given period of time.

- What resources are needed to the best position the advocacy group?
- What strategies will be used (lobbying, negotiating, media, letter writing, phone calls, testifying at hearings, or briefings)?
- What is a realistic expectation for a given opportunity?

**Question 6:** What do we have?

**Question 7:** What do we need?

Both questions are considered together in the Advocacy Toolkit to assess the internal and external capabilities of an advocacy group to build on their previous efforts and to maximize current campaigns. They offer the ACT-ON model (see below) developed by the Advocacy Institute. As discussed in Martin et al., professional organizations and government agencies are most influential in developing school-based counseling. Each may want to consider the following in light of their position and the findings of the National Profile. Briefly, we have framed the points of the ACT-ON model as inquiry.

- *Advantages:* What are the advocacy group's strengths in terms of quality research, capacity, partnerships, reputation, and credibility with policy makers and in the public arena, clarity

and focus of voice and message, and the ability to ethically engage with children, families, and communities in advocacy efforts?

- *Challenges:* Where and how do any of the areas noted above need to be built up to more effectively engage in the advocacy process?
- *Threats:* How can potential threats from adversaries be transformed into opportunities by addressing internal capacity and finding ways to continue to move the agenda externally?
- *Opportunities:* How can the formal and informal social, political, and cultural structures in a society assist advocacy groups in continuing to move their agenda forward?
- *Next steps:* In light of the process thus far, what are the realistic next steps forward?

**Question 8:** How do we begin to take action?

This is the point where all the planning and strategizing turns into actual implementation through concrete action laid out in a prioritized timeline and within a prepared budget.

- What are the short-term goals or benchmarks that demonstrate results toward the advocacy goal?
- What specific activities will be used to attain short-term goals?
- Who is responsible for carrying out specific activities?

**Question 9:** How do we know it is working?

The last question of the advocacy process involves monitoring and evaluation. This essential step provides information about goal attainment and impact. This question will be addressed in the next section of the ICAM-SBC using UNICEF’s Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: Companion to the Advocacy Toolkit.

## Part IV. Advocacy Process: Outcomes

### Introduction

The last part of the ICAM-SBC is focused on monitoring, evaluation, and reflection on both the process and outcomes of advocacy efforts and

initiatives. Without effective monitoring, evaluation, and reflection on efforts and outcomes, it is difficult to assess the level of success and/or failure of advocacy efforts and initiatives. While the monitoring and evaluation toolkit notes that impact evaluation is less common, advocates are encouraged to examine outcomes and sustainability of initiatives and changes.

### Monitor and Evaluate Advocacy

In order to maximize the effectiveness of advocacy effort, it is very important to design monitoring and evaluation system at the start of an advocacy strategy. Having a clear vision, mission, and overarching goal (Part I) can provide guideline for how to examine each component of the National Profile and how to ensure quality advocacy strategies. For the following section, we will use the five questions from the UNICEF’s Advocacy Toolkit for planning advocacy monitoring and evaluation and apply our discussion of school-based counseling. The five questions are as follows:

1. Who are the monitoring and evaluation users?
2. How will monitoring and evaluation be used?
3. What evaluation design should be used?
4. What should be measured?
5. What data collection tools should be used?

**Question 1:** Who are the monitoring and evaluation users?

This question focuses on the intended user of information generated by advocacy efforts. Given that the National Profile focused on factors that range from micro to macro issues, identifying an intended audience for different factors allows advocates to strategically develop the purpose of monitoring and evaluation data and choose the most suitable data collection process and research methodology and to speak the “language” (Moodie, 2009) of targeted constituents when conveying the results of advocacy strategies.

- How will the advocates use the monitoring and evaluation process to advance and/or refine their efforts?

- Who are other stakeholders important in the monitoring and evaluation process?
- What is the role of other stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process?

**Question 2:** How will monitoring and evaluation be used?

Having identified uses, advocates must be fully aware of the purpose of monitoring and evaluating their work. The Advocacy Toolkit describes three uses for monitoring and evaluation: “accountability, inform[ed] decision-making, national and global learning” (UNICEF, 2010a, Advocacy Toolkit p.74).

- How will monitoring and evaluation help ensure that advocacy efforts stay on course and true to the established advocacy agenda based on identified gaps between Part I Foundations and the results of the National Profile?
- How will monitoring and evaluation be used to refine and revise efforts if they veer away from the established advocacy agenda?
- How will monitoring and evaluation be used to share experiences and generate dialogue among other advocates working to promote school-based counseling?

**Question 3:** What evaluation design should be used?

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation should drive overall methodological evaluation design. The Toolkit provides three categories of design: experimental design, quasi-experimental design, and non-experimental design. Since experimental and quasi-experimental designs are difficult to utilize in an advocacy context due to the characteristics of these designs (e.g., random assignment and counterfactuals that control subjects or conditions), non-experimental designs are the most common for monitoring and evaluating advocacy efforts (UNICEF, 2010b, Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy, p.6–13).

- What type of monitoring and evaluation design is most conducive to examining the process and results of advocacy efforts focused on school-based counseling for student success?
- What is the most important information to extract from the activities or initiatives to promote the advocacy agenda?
- What are the technical, financial, and human resources necessary to conduct quality monitoring and evaluation of school-based counseling?

**Question 4:** What should be measured?

This question is designed to determine what elements of the advocacy strategy should be measured, such as activities/tactics, interim outcomes, goals, and impacts. Advocates are advised to be realistic regarding timelines and prioritize essential elements of the advocacy strategy to be measured.

- What advocacy activities were accomplished to promote children’s rights and well-being?
- Which activities and outcomes will be measured?
- How has the quality of life been changed for children who receive effective school-based counseling?

**Question 5:** What data collection tools should be used?

The last question of the monitoring and evaluation process involves different methods of data collection. The Toolkit provides 17 tools to describe how data can be collected. Some examples are network mapping, media tracking, critical incident timelines, research panels, snapshot surveys, and system mapping before and after advocacy. We encourage review of the companion toolkit for further information.

- What methods of data collection are most appropriate to examine advocacy initiatives focused on access, quality, and availability of school-based counseling services?



- What are the conventional methods to gather data to address the importance of school-based counseling?
- What data already exists and what methods will be most effective to extract additional data to fill in gaps in knowledge and information necessary to advance the advocacy agenda for school-based counseling?

### Reflect

The last part of monitoring and evaluation process is reflection. While the Advocacy Toolkit does refer to the importance of reflection, we believed that it warranted a highlighted position. As indicated in Part I, the vision of the ICAM-SBC is aspirational followed by a National Profile that documents what is and provides critical information and data that informs and shapes an advocacy agenda. As advocacy efforts come to an end, dedicated time to reflect on what was or was not gained and the impact of that gain on all affected is time well spent. Did all the planning, efforts, and work move closer to the ultimate goal of better serving all children and enhance the quality of their life? Did advocacy efforts promote school-based counseling and related policy research? Did the advocacy efforts produce negative or unintended consequences for any groups? What blind spots or biases may advocates have that need to be revised to broaden perspectives and worldviews? For example, while advocacy efforts may result in many benefits to improve the life circumstances of marginalized individuals and groups and their rights, due to the complexity of relationships among stakeholders, we may experience unexpected results based on their interactions. In an interdependent world, we might notice that advocacy efforts for one group of people might cause an adverse effect on another group or population. In some cases, it can contribute even produce unintended inequality. In such cases it would have negated the overarching vision and compromised the outcomes of the advocacy efforts. Therefore, it is critical to reexamine advocacy strategy prior to, during, and after the advocacy process.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, advocacy is conceptualized as both an act and process to promote children's right and well-being, through school-based counseling and related policy research. Based on two studies (Harris, 2013; Martin et al., 2015), the *International Counseling Advocacy Model – School-Based Counseling and Related Policy Research* was created to provide a structural dialogue among stakeholders for identifying the development of advocacy, an advocacy agenda to promote children's rights and well-being of children locally, nationally, and globally. While it is recognized that unique circumstances in different countries may preclude school-based counseling and related policy research, the rights and well-being of children as global citizens are an essential overarching framework for advocacy efforts.

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# Present Status and Future Directions for Policy Research and Evaluation in School-Based Counseling

# 33

Oyaziwo Aluede, John C. Carey, Belinda Harris,  
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## Introduction

The development of this *International Handbook for Policy Research in School-Based Counseling* was undertaken to gain an understanding of the state of the art of policy research related to counseling in schools across the globe and to identify how access to rigorous policy research can be increased to ensure that students and their families have access to high-quality counseling services. Unlike other areas of public education (e.g., teaching, school finance, and school leadership), school-based counseling has been given only scant attention by the educational policy research community. There are several likely

reasons for this neglect. In many countries school-based counseling is a relatively new phenomenon. In other countries, like the USA, where school-based counseling has existed for over 100 years, school-based counseling expenses reflect a relatively minor component of education budgets, and the educational policy-related objectives of school-based counseling are less clear than for educational activities like teaching. Rather than teaching academic content, school-based counseling enables students to acquire and use their classroom learning. School-based counseling is much more concerned with the critically important mediational variables like motivation, engagement, participation, self-efficacy, confidence, grit, and determination than it is with the ultimate outcome variable of schooling—academic achievement. In many countries, the counseling profession's conception of school-based counseling focuses on the delivery of mental health-related services in schools and does not make explicit connections between school-based counseling and the achievement of desired policy objectives in the educational domain. Putting counselors in schools can be thought of as merely a matter of convenience. They are there to provide easy access for students who need them. Or, school-based counseling can be seen as an integral aspect of students' schooling and education programs.

Schools are a major tool to improve the well-being of individuals and promote the development

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of nations. All over the world, the purpose of the school is to afford students the opportunity for maximizing their potential to become very useful citizens in the future. In all regions of the world, students are faced with many challenges that impede the full realization of their desire for school attendance, participation, and learning. While these challenges ultimately result from “macro factors” such as poverty, oppression, discrimination, war, migration, and trauma, they are manifested in students’ mental health, motivation, tolerance for risk, trust, emotional self-regulation, prosocial skills, and belief in the future. Moreover, in rapidly developing countries, students are challenged to make extremely important educational and career decisions that their parents and extended families have never had to make.

School-based counseling can be seen as an enterprise that must be tightly linked with the goals of schooling. The underlying goal of school-based counseling is to help the student profit from schooling in order to learn all that is necessary to fulfill their potential and become useful in life. School-based counseling has great potential to contribute to the public good by improving the educational outcomes of students (Carey & Martin, 2015). School-based counseling should be an important focus of educational policy research that is intended ultimately to improve the outcomes of schooling in the interests of the public good.

School-based counseling is rapidly becoming a worldwide phenomenon (Harris, 2013). Governments across the globe are searching for innovative ways to improve the well-being and productivity of their citizenry and introducing counselors in school has become a popular tool. The need to continuously strengthen school counseling programs by means of the development of policies that significantly impact on the activities of school counselors cannot be over emphasized.

There exists a very complex relationship between policy and practice. The answers that policy researches generate can inform and improve both practice and future policy making. This explains why decision makers in government need accurate information to guide policy

objectives and to determine whether their actions in shaping school-based counseling are leading to the intended results. This is expected because throughout its history, the practice of school-based counseling has been dramatically shaped by public policy that was directly intended to influence school counseling practices. In the USA, for example, the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Carl D Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984, and the School to Work Opportunities Act of 1994 were directly intended to encourage more students to pursue higher education and advance career in science and technology (Carey & Martin, 2015). These acts actually led to the establishment of school-based counseling in US public schools.

Educational policy also affects school-based counseling by altering the school environment within which counseling occurs. Again in a US example, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (and related state school reform laws) resulted in US schools focusing almost exclusively on standardized achievement test scores as their desired outcome and de-emphasizing historically important student outcomes such as prosocial skill development, occupational attainment, emotional intelligence, and career development. The American School Counselors Association, in fact, developed a new model of counseling that was designed to create a place for school-based counselors within this new “standards-based” public school environment (Dimmitt, Carey & Hatch, 2007)

Policy research produces systematic and objective data that policy makers can use to make informed decisions related to the creation and implementation of programs intended to improve people’s lives and society as a whole. If policy makers are grounded in the findings of rigorous research, programs will be effectively designed and implemented; effective programs will be continued, and ineffective programs will be redesigned or discontinued—hereby improving the lives of the recipients of program services and benefits. Moreover, rigorous research will identify the unintended negative effects of policies and programs so that these problems can be remedied (Rallis & Carey, Chap. 1).

In similar vein, policy advocates (e.g., professional associations and NGOs) can use rigorous policy research to justify their lobbying for legislation and regulations that are in service of their interests. At present, professional counseling associations and nongovernmental organizations across the globe are advocating for policies that affect the practice of school counseling practices without the benefit of rigorous research that demonstrates that these practices will result in substantial benefits to students and the public good (Carey & Martin, 2015). Policy makers are unlikely to be swayed by advocacy that seems self-serving. Research that documents the actual benefits resultant from requested changes in policy will be more convincing.

School-based counseling is an important component of national educational systems and needs to be supported by solid public policy in order to realize its potential to contribute to the public good. Policy research in school-based counseling is currently a neglected and underdeveloped discipline. This international handbook has surveyed the state of the art of school-based counseling policy research leading to three summary questions: What do we know about policy research in the various regions and countries? What do we know about effective methodologies for school-based counseling policy research? What strategies and actions should be taken to generate more rigorous policy research and make it available to policy makers and advocates?

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### **What We Know About Policy Research and Evaluation Methodologies**

For policy studies in school-based counseling, there can be a huge variety of research and evaluation methodologies to choose from, and a researcher will have to justify their choice. The best way to look at the various research and evaluation methodologies is in terms of the initial research questions related to policy implications. Some of the research approaches in policy studies of school-based counseling, such as large-scale evaluation studies, are difficult, requiring

rigorous research design and a great deal of time and expense. On the other hand, some approaches such as research with secondary datasets require rigorous research design but are time and cost-effective. Considering time and budget, sometimes, the policy researchers need to make compromises. As long as a researcher recognizes and evaluates strengths and weaknesses in the research and evaluation methods when choosing from different research designs, however, any of the scientific research methods are valid contributors to scientific knowledge. This handbook reviews various research and evaluation methodologies that shed light on how policy studies of school-based counseling can be conducted using different approaches. Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 illustrate these various research and evaluation methodologies in detail and guide researchers to conduct systematic policy studies by helping to choose the proper and rigorous methodologies.

Lee (Chap. 3) discusses the importance of the ethical and social justice foundations of policy research in school-based counseling using an exploratory paradigm. Lee introduces the ethical and social justice paradigm for policy research in school-based counseling to link between transformational global agendas that impact the well-being of children as global citizens. Pivoting on the well-being of children as global citizens, the author emphasizes each part of the paradigm based on the ethical and social justice issues that shape and inform both the character and practices of school-based counseling researchers and evaluators, the need for cultural competence to engage effectively and ethically in a diverse global context, international perspectives on research that impacts children, ways in which researchers and evaluators can enter the policy process, and ends with an overview of how school-based counseling is an active contributor to sustainable development. In addition, the author selects the global agenda Education 2030 within the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, which impacts children on global, regional, national, and local levels. This influences them both directly and indirectly, whether they are in school or out of school, and is grounded in the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Furthermore, Lee utilizes the Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) to position the current discussion within the global context.

Harris (Chap. 4) describes the nature and purpose of a scoping review, how it differs from both a literature review and a systematic review, and how it can be used in policy advocacy and policy development. While a literature review and a systematic review tend to focus on a narrowly defined research question and assess relevant research studies within a quality framework, a scoping review leans more toward answering a broader, more exploratory research question, based on the best available evidence from a range of sources. For conducting a scoping review, Harris draws on Askey and O'Malley's six-stage process (i.e., identifying the research question, identifying relevant studies, study selection, charting the data, collating, summarizing, and reporting results). By conducting a scoping review with data from 82 countries, Harris found that school-based counseling is mandatory in 39 of the 82 countries, and she offers a narrative commentary to provide more context and clarity to the tabulated data.

Krezmien, Lauterbach, Harrington, and Yakut (Chap. 5) provide an overview of survey research and introduce practical steps for the development and implementation of cross-national school counseling surveys. The chapter reviews survey development, sample selection and survey administration, and data analysis and reporting. In the survey development section, the authors delve into possible types of surveys, issues associated with different types of surveys in international contexts, the survey development stages for concurrent international school counseling surveys, and methodological requirements of surveys in counseling research. Krezmien, Lauterbach, Harrington, and Yakut provide guidance on how to develop and implement school counseling surveys through international collaborations and illustrate the utility of survey research in guiding policy studies.

Pattison and Robson (Chap. 6) discuss the use of collaborative and inclusive mixed methods to evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions in four primary schools in Wales. In addition, they introduce the readers to how research can be commissioned by governments to inform the development of a policy. Pattison and Robson describe the history of the development of counseling in primary schools in Wales, which is a separate country within the UK and has its own different policy on school-based counseling. The authors provide case studies as examples and examine whether various therapeutic interventions were effective in enhancing children's well-being. To this end they used collaborative, inclusive mixed methods, which were developed with school staff. They then evaluate the project and discuss the process and the limitations of research policy and practice in primary schools in Wales.

Köse (Chap. 7) elucidates the role of needs assessments to identify necessary school-based counseling services and better serve students within schools. Köse explains the term needs assessment in detail and the importance of needs assessment in school counseling. Köse asserts that needs assessment is considered one of the three legs of evidence-based school practice (EBP) in counseling practice and enables detecting the problems that cause discrepancies in expected performance. Specifically, the author emphasizes that needs assessments provide the foundation for an action plan to close the distance between the current situation and the ultimate objective, help to see common and critical needs of school-aged children, provide rationale to advocate for school counseling services, and help to effectively use available resources with a future action plan. Köse describes how such needs assessment provides valuable information for those working on school-based counseling services. In addition, he describes the associations between mega, macro, and micro needs assessments, the implications and challenges involved in conducting needs assessments, and the data collection tools required for this work.

Krezmien, Camacho, and Travers (Chap. 8) (a) describe the purpose of methodological



reviews, (b) provide a step-by-step guide for conducting methodological reviews in school-based counseling, and (c) give an example of a methodological review of three studies that school counseling researchers can use as a guideline for school counseling researchers. Methodological reviews and meta-analyses are two types of systematic reviews that enhance the quality of research in a particular discipline or field and provide high-quality evidence of what interventions and treatments can be supported. In order to improve the quality of research in school-based counseling, the authors provide detailed steps for conducting a methodological review in school-based counseling with seven quality indicators: (1) research basis, (2) sampling procedures, (3) participants and setting, (4) data collection procedures, (5) variables, (6) statistical analyses, and (7) implications and limitations. Krezmien, Camacho, and Travers provide the readers with a template and process to conduct methodological reviews and meta-analyses in a systematic manner, to understand the critical elements of quantitative research designs, and to promote advanced methodological reviews and meta-analyses in school-based counseling research.

Griffith and Greenspan (Chap. 9) discuss conducting outcome-based research to identify the impact of school-based counseling. They address the following issues: (a) the historical foundations of policy in school-based research in the USA, (b) the basic tenets and processes of widely used methodological approaches, (c) examples of international research representing each research design, (d) general considerations when conducting outcome-based research in school settings, and (e) concluding thoughts regarding the future relationship between school counseling research and public policy. Griffith and Greenspan describe various outcome-based research designs and demonstrate how each design is used in school-based counseling research. They specifically identify cluster randomized controlled trials (RCTs), quasi-experimental designs, nonequivalent group design, pretest-posttest design, single-case research design, ABAB designs, and multiple baseline design. Griffith and Greenspan describe how outcome-based research may be used to inform public policies of the future.

Sink, Cooney, and Adkins (Chap. 10) describe key methodological issues and considerations involved in large-scale evaluation studies. They argue that school counseling program policy and practice need to be informed by high-quality accountability research findings. Therefore, large-scale evaluation studies should be encouraged by national-level policy makers and administrators by providing schools with tangible inducements to offset their costs. The authors introduce three major survey designs for large-scale evaluation studies: descriptive, correlational, and causal-comparative. Next, they evaluate 11 large-scale evaluation studies of statewide comprehensive school counseling programs (CSCP) in the USA. Specifically, they elucidate primarily methodological quality, rigor, and reach of these 11 CSCPs. From 11 studies, the authors considered two Missouri (Lapan et al., 1997, 2003) and two Washington state studies (Sink & Stroh, 2003; Sink et al., 2008) as the most rigorously designed, generating fairly robust results. They illustrate how that large-scale evaluation research is a critical tool to guide policy making and implementation and provide several recommendations to improve school counseling program evaluation research.

Bryan, Kim, and Shi (Chap. 11) discuss research based on national and international secondary datasets to examine factors related to school-based counseling. The authors want to expand the knowledge and use of secondary datasets with the aim of increasing policy relevant research related to school-based counseling. They describe several benefits of secondary datasets including cost-effectiveness and generalizability. They also describe several challenges such as limited validity, reliability, and control over the secondary datasets. For conducting research with secondary datasets, the authors propose a six-step research process (i.e., gaining access to the data, getting to know and evaluating the data, preparing the data for analysis, conducting data analyses, interpreting results and examining policy implications, and describing the limitations of the study/data). Detailed step-by-step information is provided to orient future researchers embarking on policy research with secondary datasets. Finally, they suggest potential

secondary dataset research areas for school counseling that have direct policy implications for school-based counseling practice.

Trevisan (Chap. 12) discusses the essential role of statewide evaluation that promotes the development and implementation of effective school-based counseling programs. Trevisan elaborates about the trends of school counseling policy studies from 2000 to 2014. He further stresses how the use of scientifically based research sheds light on educational policy, but such research, including experimental designs, is limited due to the costs involved. Trevisan then discusses how school-based counseling has not been included in national educational policy, including research, and emphasizes the importance of the state's role in evaluation of school-based counseling programs and policies. The author discusses a content analysis of previous statewide evaluation studies and assesses the evaluations against the National Leadership Cadre (NLC) recommendations for statewide evaluations. Trevisan contends that the implementation and evaluation of the statewide policy will encourage school-based counselors to promote the need for education reform efforts throughout the USA.

Adegoke and Bolu-Steve (Chap. 13) discuss the use of qualitative methods to evaluate policy implementation and to elaborate methods for collecting qualitative data, which is a critical point in qualitative research. The authors assert that qualitative research methods provide in-depth information that quantitative research cannot provide with its focus on numerical data. Further, qualitative research can identify unintended outcomes and explore participants' responses. Moreover, they assert that qualitative research methods can be used to assess the effectiveness of a policy because policies affect peoples' lives. To promote the use of qualitative research methods in school-based counseling, Adegoke and Bolu-Steve demonstrate the following methods of collecting qualitative data and give detailed examples of each method: interviews, in-depth interviews, structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, focus group interviews, observations, and document studies/

secondary data. The authors emphasize that these various qualitative methods enable researchers to determine how well school-based counseling programs are implemented. Adegoke and Bolu-Steve believe that the different qualitative methods demonstrated in this chapter would be useful for the evaluation of policies related to human well-being.

Lee and Chung (Chap. 14) introduce readers to the use of basic concepts of cost-benefit analyses when conducting school counseling program evaluation. In order to determine if public social and economic resources are utilized effectively in implementing counseling in schools, it is necessary to estimate the real economic value of school counseling and its cost-effectiveness. In their chapter, Lee and Chung describe one of the major cost-benefit analyses, the willingness to pay approach (WTP) of contingent valuation method (CVM), which measures the direct economic value estimates of nonmarket goods. WTP is known as the only way to estimate the value of a non-commodity using the amount of money that respondents would be willing to pay, and this approach can be used regardless of the object to be measured, such as the impact of environmental change, the effects of systems and services, and the value of counseling services. CVM involves the use of sample surveys (questionnaires) to elicit the willingness of respondents to pay for (generally) hypothetical projects or programs. In the process, direct, indirect, and intangible treatment effects (i.e., economic values) can be evaluated. Lee and Chung demonstrate how to implement CVM using a dichotomous choice format to estimate the WTP for school counseling services as a research example. Their intention is to provide a step-by-step guide for applied researchers and those seeking initial exposure to the WTP and CVM methods.

Martin, Morshed, and Carey (Chap. 15) present a comparative analysis within international school-based counseling to highlight the importance of context in comparative international research. Although school-based counseling is practiced in many nations, there is a lack of comparative analysis within school-based counseling internationally. Martin, Morshed, and

Carey present several research practices and models from comparative education that can be used in school-based counseling policy research. Martin, Morshed, and Carey describe how a three-dimensional model of context is useful in designing and interpreting comparative policy research. The authors then describe how vertical case studies (VCS) enable rich contextualized comparisons among international school-based counseling policy and practice. Martin, Morshed, and Carey introduce these tools to enable researchers to conduct contextually sensitive comparative research and to motivate the development of cross-national collaborations.

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### **What We Know About Policy Research Findings and Needed Research and Evaluation**

Chapters 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31 of this handbook contain national and regional reviews that describe the policy landscape for school-based counseling, summarize existing policy research, and identify needed policy research based upon research gaps and national policy issues. Chapters address school-based counseling policy research in Nigeria and neighboring countries (Chap. 16); countries in Eastern and Southern Africa (Chap. 17); the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan (Chap. 18); South Korea (Chap. 19); India (Chap. 20); Bangladesh (Chap. 21); Malaysia (Chap. 22); the UK (Chap. 23); Malta (Chap. 24); Turkey and other Middle Eastern countries (Chap. 25); the USA (Chap. 26); Canada (Chap. 27); Australia (Chap. 28); New Zealand (Chap. 29); and Costa Rica, Venezuela, and other South American countries (Chaps. 30 and 31). A global summary of findings and conclusions from these chapters is presented below.

### **The Importance of Context**

As Martin, Morshed, and Carey (Chap. 15) have noted, understanding context is essential in understanding the relationships between policy

and practice and the status of policy research in school counseling in different countries and regions. For example, in postcolonial countries, such as those in Latin America, Africa, and the Indian subcontinent, the state's ambitions for its education system, and by extension for school-based counseling, tend to be aligned to social justice values, including equity of access and opportunity, so as to combat a legacy of poverty, oppression, socioeconomic disadvantage, and inadequate education. In these countries the primary goal of counseling is to support children and young people through their school years so that the vocation or career they work toward is suited not only to their abilities and aspirations but also to national priorities, needs, and the public good. To this end, many governments have been supported and influenced by the American tradition of guidance and counseling, and specific examples of this special relationship can be found in Venezuela, Turkey, Israel, Nigeria, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Korea.

While most countries include a focus on vocational and academic guidance, school counseling has needed to develop and diversify to respond to a range of issues affecting young people's engagement in schooling in different contexts. There is evidence, for example, of policy makers' concerns about the psychological stressors resulting from young people's direct and indirect contact with the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Eastern and Southern Africa, with war and conflict in the same region, as well as in the Middle East. Indeed, government recognition of posttraumatic stress in refugee children, young people, and their families is a feature of policy and practice in Canada, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Korea, Turkey, and the UK. Refugee children need particular support due to poverty, language barriers, cultural discombobulation, anxiety, and depression. The impact of colonization and migration on the composition of societies is a key concern in many countries and raises questions about the suitability of Western models of counseling for working with minority populations, and it is recognized that school counselors need to be open to working alongside traditional healers and healing systems, where appropriate.

While all governments recognize the alleviation of academic stressors as central to school counseling, concerns about the prevalence of mental health issues among children and young people have foregrounded the psychosocial effects of bullying and/or cyberbullying in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Malta, and Turkey. Further, an increasing number of countries (e.g., Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK) require school counselors to address psychological distress as it manifests through increases in self-harm, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation. Supporting children and young people in their relationships with others, especially through anger management and conflict resolution, is part of the counselor's role in Canada, Turkey, and New Zealand, while elsewhere the school counselor's role also covers responding to teenage pregnancy (East Africa), sexual harassment (Turkey), and family dysfunction and breakdown (Eastern Africa, Turkey). In India, Malta, and the UK, government policies position school counseling as central to the alleviation of psychosocial distress and the promotion of well-being, while academic support and vocational guidance is located with other helping professionals. School counseling is therefore a complex field, and the role, function, and status of school counselors is to a large extent determined by the policy context.

Policy research therefore needs to address a range of issues, processes, and outcomes, if it is to shed light on the ways in which school counseling adds value to schooling and to specific aspects of the public policy agenda. Policy research needs to be based on the recognition that different policy objectives for school counseling exist in different countries. We will now turn to the evidence available on optimal policy climates that underpin and support school-based counseling.

### **Policy Research: Optimal Policy Climates**

The policy climate in those countries and regional states with a sound record of high attainment on PISA scores, such as Finland and Canada, pro-

vides a clear indication of the conditions needed to maximize student engagement in learning. These educational climates are characterized by a deep commitment to public education, access to childcare, health care, aged care, and social welfare. Education is therefore focused on the provision of quality services as a way to facilitate academic outcomes. Highly qualified teacher education graduates are supported by highly developed in-service education, and they are not constrained by an overly prescriptive curriculum nor the regular standardized testing of their students. Such systems are underpinned by trust in well-qualified, trained, and supported professionals, and school-based counseling is an integral part of this system. The policy climate is therefore closely aligned with practice and has internal consistency.

The USA provides further examples of the support needed from state policy makers to safeguard the quality and effectiveness of counseling services. These include identifying a named person in the state department of education with responsibility for overseeing implementation; clarifying connections between key educational policy objectives and the implementation of a specific counseling model; clear legislation on key factors (e.g., legitimate counselor activities and low student counselor ratios) required for implementation and/or essential deliverables, such as educational and career plans for all students; state licensing requirements for school counselors; accreditation requirements for school counselor education programs; and a system for monitoring the implementation and evaluation of outcomes.

In recent decades even countries with a history of strong educational policies underpinned by professional trust, such as New Zealand and the UK, have changed course and embraced principles of performativity, decentralization, and self-management of schools, with adverse consequences for the role of school-based counseling and the status of school counselors. In other words they are moving in the opposite direction from an optimal policy climate, and this has had consequences for the status and conditions of service of school counselors in both countries.

In other more emergent policy climates, such as Nigeria, there is as yet little understanding of the potential value of school-based counseling and therefore little policy-level support for counselors to implement or monitor their work. Even in countries where school-based counseling is well established and valued, such as many in Latin America, there is some concern about potential threats to its status and future given economic constraints. Japan is an exception in that the Ministry of Science and Technology and a National Educational Research body have both contributed to the development of school counseling services.

Many governments have devolved responsibility to schools for educational outcomes, including those associated with school guidance and counseling. In New Zealand, a survey of school-based counseling provision undertaken by the Education Review Office (ERO, 2013) identified effective school counseling provision as having a strategic vision, with clearly articulated, visible goals and values guiding counseling practice (Crowe, Chap. 29). Further, school counselors are allocated noncontact time for the role, have their supervision paid, focus primarily on preventative programs, and have high-quality, trusting relationships with external service providers, with clear procedures for crisis intervention. Further, comprehensive data is kept, and self-reviews of effectiveness are standard practice. Therefore, support and accountability systems are well developed.

Unfortunately, the ERO expressed concerns about the absence of such support mechanisms in school policies or procedures to guide counseling practice in many schools. Such concerns reflect reality in the majority of countries included in this volume and highlight a significant mediating variable in school-based counseling, namely, the school principal and their vision for, understanding of, and attention to school-based counseling.

Given the financial investment in school counseling by governments around the globe, it is surprising to find only one cost-benefit analysis of school-based services. In Korea, the Ministry of

Education undertook a cost-benefit analysis to investigate the economic impact of employing one counselor per school. The results, based on data provided by parents, revealed a significant economic benefit to the country of between \$8,934,660,000 and \$21,766,533,600 (Lee & Yang, Chap. 19). Not surprisingly, the Ministry of Education encourages large-scale studies of school counseling programs and compensates those schools that comply by offsetting their costs. Such encouragement for and attention to detail by a Ministry of Education is rare, and accounts of school counseling in Australia, Canada, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East indicate that policy makers currently communicate little direct interest in the effectiveness or cost-effectiveness of school counseling services. Despite this situation, school-based policy research has been undertaken in schools in many parts of the world and the next section will identify key outcomes.

## **Policy Research: Outcomes**

### **Academic Outcomes**

In the Americas, Eastern and Southern Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Israel, and India, school counseling and guidance functions are integrated aspects of the school counselor's work. It follows, therefore, that a key indicator of effectiveness in these countries might be linked to academic attainment and success in relation to students' specific vocational or career goals.

In the USA the American School Counselor's Association National Model was found to have a positive impact on math and reading scores (Carey & Martin, Chap. 26). The paucity of research on academic outcomes reflects the complex array of factors involved in educational processes and outcomes and challenges involved in attributing successful outcomes to counseling alone. However, there is a growing body of evidence for school counseling in supporting the development of academic-related attitudes and competences.



### Learning-Related Outcomes

School-based counseling supports elementary school student's learning in multiple ways. In Korea, for example, a number of studies have demonstrated that a group counseling approach is effective in enhancing the academic motivation and academic skills of year 5 pupils (Lee & Yang, Chap. 19). In Hong Kong a life skills guidance curriculum demonstrated enhanced self-efficacy skills in relation to the academic development of year 5 pupils (Yuen et al., Chap. 18). In the UK individual counseling has been shown to have a positive impact on attitudes to school and children's ability to enjoy and engage in learning, while in Japan it has helped to reduce school absenteeism (Handley, Noble & Toor, Chap. 23). Further, research undertaken in Korea with multicultural pupils involved in group counseling sessions in elementary school demonstrated positive changes in self-esteem (self-understanding, self-acceptance, self-confidence, cultural identity), in interpersonal relationship skills (with parents, teachers, and friends), and, for lower achieving students, in school adjustment (Lee & Yang, Chap. 19).

A body of research undertaken in secondary education settings found individual counseling effective for enhancing problem-solving skills in Korean pupils (Lee & Yang, Chap. 19). In the USA, a number of studies indicate that organizing school counseling services according to a comprehensive developmental model (CDM) (including the *ASCA National Model*) results in benefits to students including enhanced engagement in school, increased attendance, increased graduation rates, reduced disciplinary problems, and reduced suspensions from school (Carey & Martin, Chap. 26).

### Vocational Outcomes

According to Yuen et al. (Chap. 18), a whole school approach to guidance and counseling in Hong Kong develops a sense of career consciousness, and a series of studies undertaken with students in years 8, 10, and 12 indicated that a comprehensive guidance program increased student's self-efficacy in the domains of academic, career, and talent development. Follow-up studies

conducted a year later, in years 9, 11, and 13, indicated that, apart from a slight drop in confidence in the career domain in year 13, self-efficacy scores increased over time.

Data from four studies in the USA suggest that while contact with a school counselor can be very beneficial in promoting successful college transitions (especially for low socioeconomic status students), widespread dissatisfaction exists among college going adults regarding the amount and type of help they received from their school counselors regarding college transitions. Further research is necessary to determine key factors contributing to this dissatisfaction (Carey and Martin, Chap. 26).

### Psychosocial Outcomes

In the UK, Hanley, Noble, and Toor (Chap. 23) provide evidence that individual school-based counseling in secondary schools results in a "significant reduction in psychological distress and helps children and young people move close to their goals" and further that these improvements have been maintained 3 months after counseling has ended. A large-scale pilot randomized controlled trial demonstrated an effect size of 1.14 following short-term counseling. Research in UK primary schools indicates positive impacts on children's health and well-being from a number of practice-based studies. Equally, Yuen et al. (Chap. 18) suggest a link between school counseling policies in Japan and the prevention of bullying, drug abuse, and suicide.

### Stakeholders' Perceptions and Satisfaction

Research involving school children tends to be small scale and studies have been undertaken primarily in the UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, and Hong Kong. In general, children and young people find school-based counseling helpful, and young people value the opportunity to speak to someone approachable, understanding, empathic, and helpful in a confidential setting. Parent satisfaction surveys in these countries also indicate high levels of satisfaction with counseling services. Teacher and school principal satisfaction survey research in a number of countries



suggests that school counselor's work with children and young people is perceived as making a positive contribution to student engagement in learning, attendance, and relationships.

## Policy-Level Mediating Factors

### Government Investment and Support

As already mentioned, a key mediating variable is the quality of support available from policy makers. In the USA, Korea, Japan, the UK, and New Zealand, governments have demonstrated their support for the implementation and evaluation of school counseling provision. In Korea, this has supported a climate of research capable of informing policy development (Lee & Yang, Chap. 19). However, in each of these countries, responsibility for counseling in individual schools rests with the school principal, whose influence on the status and practice of school counseling is significant.

In other countries, such as Venezuela (Vera, Jiménez & Barreto, Chap. 31), where government policies identify counseling as strategically important for the achievement of national goals, there is little interest on the part of governments in implementation and monitoring, so that practitioners and counseling training institutions have been slow to include policy and policy research on their agenda. By contrast, some states in the USA have an integrated approach to objectives, implementation, skills development, professional development, monitoring, and evaluation of outcomes, which encourages the development of research competences (Stevenson & Edvalson, Chap. 2).

### Policy and Policy Research Training

School counselor training is a key support for counseling practice. A lack of adequate or appropriate training leaves school counselors ill-equipped to achieve the implicit and explicit goals identified by policy makers, nor to evidence the effectiveness of their practice, nor to challenge inappropriate calls on their time by school principals and colleagues. Training programs do not always include or support engagement with

policy nor teach trainee counselors how to conduct policy research or how to engage in policy advocacy. Consequently, 24 of the 30 countries included in this volume have no or little (i.e., small-scale) policy research at this time.

### Conditions of Service

In many countries authors identify the absence of clearly defined roles for school-based counselors in policy documents as problematic, leaving the role open to interpretation by school principals, who, in the absence of specified job descriptions, divert counselors from core counseling-related activities and occupy them in administrative tasks. Even in countries such as Korea, where the Ministry of Education outlined the tasks of school counselors in detail, most schools did not adopt their recommendations, so that school counselors face ambiguities associated with diverse expectations and perspectives about their role (Lee & Yang, Chap. 19). Equally, too broad a role negatively affects the counselor's ability to make a strong impact on any one area of practice, as do heavy workloads, which affect the quality of service delivery and school counselors' perceptions of their effectiveness.

Where the role of the school counselor is distinct from that of guidance teachers, the latter enjoy better pay and conditions of service. In New Zealand, for example, schools are now employing school counselors without education qualifications and paying them lower salaries (Crowe, Chap. 29). This gradual erosion of school counselor's pay and conditions of service is perceived as undermining the status of the profession. By contrast, working conditions in the USA are perceived to be favorable at the present time (Carey & Martin, Chap. 26).

### Counselor-Student Contact Factors

A favorable student-to-counselor ratio leads to enhanced benefits from counseling practice, especially in terms of improvements in attendance, graduation rates, and reductions in disciplinary problems. The length of time in which young people are engaged in a comprehensive developmental guidance program enhances the benefits to students. Equally, attendance at counseling

sessions positively affects outcomes. Teacher care also has a significant impact on young people's social development and academic achievement.

### **School-Based Counseling Organizational Models**

Taken together a number of studies in the USA indicate that organizing school counseling services according to a comprehensive developmental model (in comparison to the absence of an organizational model) results in benefits to student's pro-education behaviors. Organizing services seems to produce more robust outcomes. However, it is not clear that the CDM is more effective than other possible ways of organizing service delivery (Carey & Martin, Chap. 26).

Counseling models designed from an individualist worldview, however, need to be adapted to suit diverse populations across the globe, including indigenous peoples, refugees, and immigrants. Practitioners need to demonstrate cultural awareness and sensitivity in their work if they are to develop a working alliance with a diverse range of children and young people.

### **The Work of Professional Associations**

A proactive stance on the part of national professional associations can support funding and training for policy research; facilitate robust dialogue between policy makers, practitioners, and counseling educators/trainers; and aid the status and development of the profession. In the USA, New Zealand, and the UK, professional associations have been proactive in responding to conditions in the field. In the USA, the ASCA developed strategies for meeting the national government's standardized testing approach, as outline in the No Child Left Behind policy. In the UK, the BACP has worked with practitioners and academics to develop national competences for school counseling and for school counselor education programs. Further, it has provided "seed corn" funding for a pilot RCT of humanistic counseling practice, which helped to secure national research council funding for a more extensive project. The BACP also led a Department of Health-funded project on children and young people's well-being that included a

school counseling dimension. Scoping reviews of school-based counseling were commissioned to inform the production of resources for parents and professionals. Such collaborations mobilize energy for research and development in the field and are to be welcomed.

These mediating factors and findings point to a number of challenges for policy, for policy research, and for practitioners, if school counseling is to flourish and to effectively support the personal, social, academic, and vocational needs of children and young people in schools. The findings reported above also indicate significant areas for future policy research. We will now stand back from this level of detail to identify areas for further research.

### **Needed Common Directions in Policy Research**

Given the importance of national contexts for influencing the policy research agenda in the field of school-based counseling, this section will briefly identify areas of commonality in the policy research agenda of most countries included in this volume. This analysis is offered as a stimulus for discussion within and across countries and begins by acknowledging the potential power of international research projects on school-based counseling to provide comparative data on policy contexts affecting school-based counseling and to map how policy implementation priorities affect the perceived status, role, goals, and delivery of school-based counseling services in public education. To this end national- or state-level evaluations may be particularly effective when they acknowledge and systematically build on the existing knowledge base acquired through previous evaluations to improve practice. Such work is well suited to research partnerships and collaborations that promote dialogue and reflection between practitioners and academics. This will enhance their appreciation and understanding of each other's expertise and the policy research-practice relationship. Such data-rich, policy-savvy research could also build support among policy makers for investment in school counseling services.

A characteristic of the school counseling profession internationally is the earnest commitment to make a difference to the educational experience and well-being of children and young people. However, in many parts of the world, there is some reluctance by practitioners to engage with research activities that could provide evidence of their value and effectiveness, particularly with reference to the policy research agenda. A key priority for the international school-based counseling community, therefore, is to mobilize energy and enthusiasm for research and to demystify the research process so that it is not perceived as an elite, scientific endeavor for which the practitioner needs to have or be working toward a doctorate. National associations and academic counseling educators have a significant role to play in changing this mindset by equipping and empowering school counselors with the competences and confidence to engage in research activities at the chalk face. Without evidence for its effectiveness and powerful stories of growth and change, school-based counseling is unlikely to receive the recognition, status, and resources needed to flourish in challenging political and economic times.

In reality, practitioners are engaged daily in research activity in their contact and dialogues with young people, teachers, and other professionals. With the right support, this curiosity and commitment can be harnessed in service of the field of policy research. Practice research networks are gaining ground in the UK and provide the infrastructure to enable discrete services within a geographical region to collaborate on audit and evaluation ventures. The provision of such an infrastructure yields potentially large databases that provide the foundation for delivering “practice-based evidence” as a natural complement to “evidence-based practice” (Audin et al., 2001:241). A practitioner research network could yield meaningful outcome data on school-based counseling in any country or state and potentially provide comparative data across countries and states, where significant aspects of the policy agenda are aligned and similar models of school-based counseling (e.g., *ASCA National Model*, or individual humanistic counseling) are prevalent.

## Toward an International Policy Research Agenda

In discussing school counseling policy research in the USA, Carey and Martin (Chap. 26) identified eight questions to guide new policy research. Although these questions were developed to guide new policy research in the USA, they are also pertinent for the policy research agenda in many countries, from Bangladesh, where school-based counseling is in its infancy, to Korea where it is relatively new and on an upward trajectory, to Venezuela, Australia, and New Zealand, where school counseling is well established but facing some significant challenges.

Carey and Martin (Chap. 26) suggest that a “fundamental re-visioning” of school counseling is needed in the USA to better align practice with educational policy objectives and with contemporary models of schooling. This is a rallying cry that is equally timely for school counseling in many parts of the world, where relentless change in educational policy climates poses challenges to long-cherished assumptions, norms, and ways of working. There is an urgent imperative to embrace new political, social, and economic realities and to proactively engage with policy research that holds children and young people’s mental health and well-being alongside their educational attainment.

A primary task is to ascertain policy makers’ intentions for school counseling within the educational policy framework. National, state, and local policy makers may not share the same agenda or aims for school-based counseling, and their conceptualization of what it is, and what contribution it can make, may not concur with the school counseling profession’s sense of its own professional and moral purpose. Therefore, policy research has to acknowledge multiple, potentially conflicting realities, and robust negotiations are integral to the policy formulation and implementation stages to enable national, regional, and local policy makers to identify sufficient common ground on which to fashion a workable and effective service. When policy makers can agree on an overarching goal for school counseling that aligns sufficiently with the values and expertise of school counselors, then appropriate services

can be developed and research methods devised to build an evidence base. Without this, school counseling is more likely to flounder and fail the very people it is meant to help.

Carey and Martin (Chap. 26) also highlight the importance of undertaking comparative research on different organizational models for school counseling and appreciating the advantages and disadvantages of these models in different contexts. Over time, models of school-based counseling can become fixed, rather than fluidly response-able to the particularities of a specific policy context or population. Regular reviews of the model being used need to be based on holistic research data (e.g., multiple perspectives, outcomes, cost-benefit). This would provide opportunities for practitioners, school principals, and other policy makers to codevelop creative solutions to emergent issues and problems and thereby to ensure that the service provided is valued and fit for purpose.

One of the key concerns affecting services in several countries is the pattern of staffing for the delivery of counseling services. The New Zealand Association of Counsellors, for example, has expressed concerns about the numbers of lower-paid non-teacher counselors employed in schools. Similarly, in Japan, Malta, and the UK, there is a hierarchy of school counselors, many of whom do not receive the same pay or conditions of service as their teacher counterparts.

Research indicates that lower counselor-to-student ratios lead to a wide range of better outcomes for children and young people. Therefore, it is important to investigate different staffing models to ascertain how best to deliver key services in specific school and community settings: “Future policy research should use a cost-benefits approach to identify the most effective staffing patterns needed to achieve critical policy objectives in school counseling” (Carey & Martin, Chap. 26). Equally, consideration needs to be given to different levels of expertise and how different job responsibilities might be delineated to ensure that counseling services are targeted at the point of need and delivered by individuals with the right level of expertise to make a difference and achieve benefits for the students.

The tendency in many countries and states is to follow a “one-size-fits-all” model of service delivery, such as the *ASCA National Model*. Research into inner city schools in challenging circumstances in the UK (Potter, Reynolds, & Chapman, 2002; Harris, 2007) indicates that significant differences exist in terms of the challenges facing students, teachers, and school principals, compared with schools located in more affluent suburbs or rural settings. For example, where schools have large numbers of students with type 1 or type 11 trauma, students need to be supported to self-regulate, communicate, and discharge their pent up rage in contained, safe spaces and to trust the school environment to keep them safe. It might be argued that this is best done within a whole school approach, including a combination of group-based psycho-education, individual counseling, and home visits to support the parents, therefore positioning the school counselor at the heart of the school community, supporting teachers and students to manage the emotional demands of the school climate. In another school students may need more individual support for transition to college or peer mediation for conflict resolution or bullying. Each context requires a different skill set or combination of skills, and the school counselor’s level of expertise and therapeutic training needs to match the situation. Policy research needs to examine how school counseling can be best suited and attuned to different contexts to achieve maximal results. This is equally true for different stages of education, and attention needs to be given to ensure that policy research covers all levels of schooling and is able to explain differences and similarities in service provision and staffing patterns between them.

A key concern identified in this handbook is the paucity of rigorous outcome research. In the UK a series of funded randomized controlled trials (RCTs) in high schools are developing a large database of outcomes related to humanistic-oriented relational counseling practice using standardized measures, including the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ Version 2) and the Person-Centered and Experiential

Psychotherapy Scale (PCEPS) adapted for Young People (PCEPS-YP). Such projects are labor intensive and require meticulous attention to project development and management, ethical issues, and risk management and require stakeholder involvement through a steering group. Such research is only possible because of large-scale funding from a national research council. The Korean government is keen to fund large-scale studies of school-based counseling, but this is the exception rather than the rule. This is where practice research networks and systematic practitioner inquiry become critical ways of developing and sustaining an evidence base capable of informing policy development and implementation.

The paucity of rigorous data is symptomatic of systemic failings within education departments to identify mechanisms for the effective promotion, development, and monitoring of counseling services in schools. The Education Review Office investigation into school counseling in New Zealand identified school-level factors contributing to the optimal implementation of school counseling, as well as issues that schools identified as inadequate that needed to be addressed (Crowe, Chap. 29). The resultant recommendations were experienced as supportive of the profession and developed benchmarks to guide the development of counseling for school principals to follow. This is one example of Carey and Martin's (Chap. 26) assertion in action, namely, that "policy research should identify effective ways that state government agencies support improvement in practice."

In many countries principles of equity, access, and inclusion are leitmotifs for the development of policies on school counseling. However, bridging the gap between espoused principles and practice at the chalk face serves to highlight policy research agendas in many countries, particularly related to the training and certification needs of school counselors, including training in policy matters and policy research competences. Research also needs to ascertain what competences are needed if counselors are to have the awareness, knowledge, and skills to work with a diverse client group, including students with

specific learning difficulties and students whose mother tongue and culture are different from the "host" culture. In other countries there is recognition that policies lead to tensions between secular counseling and religion-focused counseling that need to be resolved at the policy level. We will now turn to identify further the support mechanisms needed to engage with and communicate the findings of high-quality policy research.

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## **Supporting the Conduct and Dissemination of High-Quality Policy Research and Evaluation**

### **Acknowledging the Problems**

If the goal is to promote the conduct and dissemination of rigorous policy research to support school-based counseling, recognition of the current problems that must be embraced and solved is necessary. It is evident that there is currently limited research and evaluation in all the national contexts reflected in this handbook. Much of the available research and evaluation is not rigorous. Even in countries like the USA that have a long tradition of school-based counseling; a well-developed, university-based infrastructure to support research and evaluation; and a tradition of government funding to support research and evaluation, very few studies exist that were explicitly designed and conducted to explore policy issues related to school-based counseling.

Why is this? Unfortunately, it must be acknowledged that, in general, policy research and evaluation related to school-based counseling is not a priority for national or state governments. School-based counseling is a relatively small piece of a country's investments in public education. The actual contribution of counseling to schooling is not evident. Indeed it seems likely that in many countries school-based counseling is implemented without an explicit statement of the policy objectives that it is intended to accomplish. From the policy perspective, it is impossible to determine whether school-based counseling is worth public investment unless the expected benefits to the public good are specified. It is



important to note here that in the USA, the state of Utah stands as a counterexample. Through a series of planned statewide evaluations of school-based counseling, the Utah State Department of Education established an effective statewide model that had strong, ongoing support by the legislature (Stevenson, & Edvalson, Chap. 2). Legislative support was based on a clear understanding of the contributions of school-based counseling to the public good and confirmation of effectiveness based on government-supported statewide evaluations. Any plan to encourage the conduct and dissemination of high-quality policy research and evaluation in school-based counseling will need to sensitize policy makers regarding the important educational policy objectives that are related to school-based counseling and about the need to invest in policy research to maximize the return on investment.

Lee (Chap. 32) has developed an elegant model for the use of policy research in advocacy for effective school-based counseling. Rigorous and objective policy research is desperately needed and when available can be effectively used by advocacy organizations to influence policy formation. Unfortunately (as with government) professional associations and NGOs that engage in policy advocacy have made minimal investments so far in funding policy research and evaluation. Much of the current policy advocacy is based on logical persuasion or on the selective review of research conducted for non-policy audiences (e.g., for practitioners) that is repurposed to make a case to policy makers. To encourage the conduct and dissemination of high-quality policy research and evaluation, policy advocates will need to understand the necessity of funding rigorous and objective policy studies and of basing their advocacy on the results of these studies. At present, there are no international forums where school-based counseling policy makers and policy advocates can come together to dialogue about needed research and empirical support for programs and practices. Likewise very few examples of this type of dialogue exist with individual countries. At present, the policy making, policy advocacy, and policy research communities exist in isolation from one another. This

situation will need to be remedied in order to improve school-based counseling programs and practices.

In addition, it must be acknowledged that there are only a limited number of qualified scholars who are pursuing careers in policy research and evaluation. Around the globe, doctoral training in counseling does not typically prepare students to conduct policy research or evaluation. Doctoral programs rarely include coursework in policy or specialized training in policy research or evaluation. Given the paucity of established researchers actually engaged in this work, doctoral students have very limited opportunities to learn policy work “at the bench.” Encouraging established scholars to focus on policy work and enabling young scholars to establish academic careers focusing on policy research and evaluation are necessary components of the solution. Similarly, developing effective approaches for doctoral training in policy research and evaluation and materials to support training are necessary.

Finally, it should be noted that in developing this handbook, the editors found an almost complete absence of comparative policy research related to school-based counseling. Being able to study the relationships between policy and practice across different government contexts can generate very valuable insights and understandings. Martin, Morshed, and Carey (in press) described how such an analysis of state policy regarding school counselor competence in program evaluation across states in the USA, which differed in terms of central vs. local control of educational decisions, yielded useful information on how policy can improve practice. They furthermore presented a case study methodology that enables the study of policy within contexts and comparisons across contexts. Currently, however, little or no opportunity exists for developing cross-national policy research. Policy researchers in different countries function in isolation from each other and focus on school-based counseling within their own countries. The establishment of an international community of policy researchers will be necessary to support the comparative research that is needed to push the field ahead.



## Finding Solutions

In many ways this *International Handbook for Policy Research in School-Based Counseling* is a major step in advancing the practice of policy work. The handbook highlights the importance and power of policy research, identifies an ethical foundation for this research, describes the advantages and disadvantages of a wide range of policy research methodologies, identifies the characteristics of good research for each of these methodologies, describes the policy landscapes of major regions and countries, summarizes the existing policy research foundation in the regions and countries, identifies how policy research can be used in advocacy, and identifies needed research. Thus, this handbook summarizes where the field is and points to where it can be. In addition, this handbook has served an important organizational function—bringing together scholars from around the world with interests in policy research in school-based counseling. In addition to contributing to the handbook, chapter authors have thus far made panel presentations on policy research at two international counseling conferences (Carey et al., 2015; Trevisan et al., 2016) and have decided to form an International Society for Policy Research and Evaluation in School-Based Counseling (ISPRES).

ISPRES is anticipated to support capacity building for school-based counseling policy research by: (1) Building a community of policy makers, policy advocates, and policy researchers/evaluators where important conversations can take place; (2) Building awareness of the potential contributions of school-based counseling to the public good and support for rigorous policy research/evaluation to help achieve this potential; (3) Building capacity for high-quality policy research and evaluation through the development of rigorous standards for research methodologies; (4) Building the mechanisms to support the creation of international collegial relationships and the establishment of international research collaboration; (5) Creating ethical and professional standards for school-based counseling policy research; (6) Building the mechanisms to support information sharing and dissemination.

In concrete terms, ISPRES is developing an online directory of policy researchers/evaluators, an online clearing house of information on ongoing projects and developing projects, an *International Journal of Policy Research in School-Based Counseling*, and annual society meetings held in conjunction with the major international counseling associations. ISPRES is also offering membership to graduate students interested in establishing academic careers in policy research and mentorship and research collaboration opportunities for these students. ISPRES will continue the work begun by this international handbook in building a vital community of scholars dedicated to the improving students' access to of quality school-based counseling services through rigorous policy research and evaluation. If these conditions can be established, the future for policy research in school-based counseling will be bright.

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