THE EXPANDING ROLES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL

STUDY ON THE NONCOUNSELING RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS

WITHIN TITLE 1 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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by

Kaythi C. Nyan

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my aunt, Dr. Moe Moe Myint who passed away before the completion of this dissertation. I will always remember her love, encouragement, and support throughout my life, especially in the years that I was in the doctoral program. Her memory continues to inspire me to grow intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally through her love for knowledge, travel, and helping others. This is also dedicated to my mom, who emigrated from Myanmar and worked multiple minimum-wage jobs, as a single mom with two children, to help support her younger sister through medical school and her daughter through graduate school. So I dedicate not only this dissertation, but my doctoral degree to my mom because she should be the one getting hooded, accepting the diploma, and receiving the applause at my graduation. This dissertation is also for all of my aunts who have been nothing less than second-mothers to me and have supported me, cared for me, and loved me unconditionally throughout my life. I want to also dedicate this dissertation to my brother, my uncles, and my favorite cousin who have encouraged me and given me the support that I needed to complete this endeavor after the loss of my aunt. I feel truly blessed to be a part of such a close family that is united in our faith, integrity, generosity, perseverance, and love.

ABSTRACT

Nyan, Kaythi C., *The expanding roles of school counselors: A phenomenological study on the noncounseling responsibilities of school counselors within Title 1 elementary schools*. Doctor of Philosophy (Counselor Education), December, 2017, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Due to increased accountability and budget shortages, school districts and administrators are utilizing school counselors to perform noncounseling duties at their Title 1 elementary schools. School counselors juggle multiple roles, heavy caseloads, and a myriad of duties while addressing students' academic, social, emotional, and career development needs. The counselors at Title 1 elementary schools are expected to meet the extensive behavioral, academic, and emotional needs of their students, which would cause these counselors to experience their roles very differently than counselors at non-Title 1 elementary schools. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the experiences and perceptions of professional school counselors regarding their noncounseling responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools.

The ten-question interview protocol was developed based on review of the literature pertaining to the school counselor's roles and responsibilities. The qualitative phenomenological analysis yielded six themes, four of which included subthemes. The themes included: (a) too much to handle: resent meaningless noncounseling duties, (b) enjoy working with kids and making a difference, (c) utilize me effectively: just let me counsel – no extras, (d) STAAR testing prevents me from seeing students, (e) dealing with duties: stress out, set boundaries, and take it in stride, and (f) juggling time and triaging: hard to carve out time to see students. Implications of this study include increased collaboration between policymakers, stakeholders, administrators, and

counselors with a knowledge base for reevaluating the duties assigned to counselors at

Title 1 schools.

KEY WORDS: Elementary school counselors, Title 1, Noncounseling duties, and Phenomenological

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In an era of increased accountability and budget shortages, school districts and administrators are requiring school counselors to perform noncounseling duties in public schools (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Coll & Freeman, 1997; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Lieberman, 2004; Nelson, Robles-Pina, & Nichter, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). At the majority of public schools, the principals determine the role of the school counselor, thus the responsibilities of the school counselor often do not match the national or state role standards (ASCA, 2012; Borders, 2002; Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Fitch, Newby, Ballestero, & Marshall, 2001; Nelson, Robles-Pina, & Nichter, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Wines, Nelson, & Eckstein, 2007; Young & Lambie, 2007). School counselors often act as disciplinarian, master scheduler, transcript evaluator, detention room monitor, duty supervisor, substitute teacher, testing coordinator, yet none of these roles are viewed as part of the professional identity of a school counselor (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Niebuhr, Niebuhr, & Cleveland, 1999; Scarborough, 2005).

School counselors experience high levels of stress due to increased workloads and demands (Bardwell, 2010; Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Kolodinsky, Draves, Schroder, Lindsey, & Zlatev, 2009). Professional school counselors typically juggle a multitude of roles simultaneously ranging from providing counseling services, presenting guidance lessons, leading groups, to scheduling classes and coordinating standardized tests (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Oloumi-Johnson, 2016). Title 1 schools have high percentages of students from low income families (United States Department of

Education, 2015). It is presumed that working in Title 1 schools adds an extra layer of responsibilities, demands, and accountability to the role of the school counselor (Malburg, 2012); however, no research was found that examines the experiences and perceptions of school counselors who work specifically in Title 1 elementary schools.

Founded in 1997, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) is an organization that focuses on promoting professionalism and ethical practices in the school counseling profession. ASCA provides professional development, publications, resources, research, and advocacy for professional school counselors around the world (ASCA, 2009). The ASCA Role Statement (2009) provides the standards of practice for professional school counselors and indicates which services are appropriate for the role. The ASCA National Model, which was first published in 2003, was designed to clarify the role of the professional school counselor and to support the efforts of school counselors in helping students focus on academic, personal, social, and career development so they achieve success in school and become contributing members of society (ASCA, 2012). ASCA developed the National Model to ensure more uniformity and understanding in the school counseling profession about the counselor's role and function (ASCA, 2012) and to find a solution for the role confusion and ambiguity that has plagued the school counseling profession for decades (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013). The ASCA National Model (2012) recommended that 80% of a school counselor's time be spent in direct service with students, with program planning and student support activities taking 20% of the counselor's time.

In actuality, many school counselors perform noncounseling related functions that compromise their ability to engage in significant daily activities at the school that are

associated with the national and state role standards (Fitch et al., 2001). Noncounseling

duties are generally defined as monitoring activities, disciplinary functions, and testing

duties not typically related to the roles and responsibilities of school counselors (ASCA,

2012). The ASCA National Model (2012) gives examples of other noncounseling

activities such as master schedule duties, detention room coverage, classroom coverage,

and clerical responsibilities that take a school counselor's time away from essential

counseling tasks.

School counselors are typically team players, and they understand the equitable

division of responsibilities within a school system, but they cannot be entirely effective

for students on a campus if they are performing noncounseling duties rather than essential

counseling tasks (Fitch et al., 2001). Research is needed to probe the perceptions and

expectations of school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools to determine how they

experience their noncounseling responsibilities. The results will help to discern if these

responsibilities support the effectiveness of the direct services provided to students and,

thereby, promote possible changes to better serve the needs of students in Title 1

elementary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Although ASCA (2012), the Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2004), and the

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

(2012) have defined best practices for the school counseling profession, school

counselors are usually employed in educational systems where there is an absence of a

distinct role or the role is incompatible with the school counselor's professional training

and standards (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Fitch et al., 2001; Paolini & Topdemir,

2013; Ross & Herrington, 2006). School counselors face increased demands in addressing the social/emotional, and academic needs of all students (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013) especially in Title 1 schools where there is an increase in need for student services due to poverty, familial strife, school violence, absenteeism, high dropout rates, parental conflict, and a multitude of environmental struggles (Bavin, 2002; Malburg, 2012).

The school counselor's roles and responsibilities in the public school system are ever changing and the roles of school counselors are often misunderstood (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Niebuhr, Niebuhr, & Cleveland, 1999; Scarborough, 2005). School counselors are frequently given duties outside of their professional identity such as administrative duties, testing, and scheduling (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Bailey, 2012; Niebuhr, Niebuhr, & Cleveland, 1999; Scarborough, 2005; Zalaquett, 2005; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012). Principals frequently relegate school counselors to duties that are outside their training and function (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Bailey, 2012; Brinson, 2004; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; White, 2007). Often, principals' expectations of the role of the school counselor are conflicting and inconsistent with ASCA role standards (Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Nelson, Robles-Pina, & Nichter, 2008; Zalaquett, 2005; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012). School counselors are frequently assigned noncounseling related tasks despite the clear role statements developed by ASCA (Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, & Solomon, 2005). Therefore, they experience role stress and confusion due to numerous work requirements, role ambiguity, full caseloads, and inadequate clinical supervision (Lambie, 2007).

As noted, national and state standards (ASCA, 2012; CACREP, 2012; TEA, 2004) have been outlined for the professional practice and role of school counselors but

despite this, counselors are still expected to perform duties that are outside of their professional identity (Falls & Nichter, 2007; Lambie, 2007; Nelson, Robles-Pina, Nichter, 2008; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). In spite of the clear role statements by ASCA and a distinct preference by counselors towards engaging in activities outlined in the ASCA National Model (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008), counselors still find themselves in organizational systems where their roles are ill defined and they are asked to perform duties outside of their professional standards (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Fitch et al., 2001; Ross & Herrington, 2006). Conducting noncounseling duties prevent counselors from fulfilling their counseling roles (Gybers & Henderson, 2001). Even with the ASCA National Model and the state standards for school counselors, confusion exists regarding the appropriate duties of a school counselor (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Falls, 2009; Falls & Nichter, 2007; Fitch et al., 2001; Zalaquett, 2005; Zalaquett & Chatters 2012).

In my review of the literature, I noted a lack of research pertaining to elementary school counselors' perceptions of being assigned administrative and noncounseling duties as part of their roles in the public education system. No research was found regarding how elementary school counselors experienced their roles in the public school setting and no qualitative research was found on how school counselors experienced their roles in Title 1 schools. The literature addressing counselor burnout suggests that school counselors experience job stress and burnout due to inconsistent demands placed on them, especially those that pertain to the assignment of noncounseling duties (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Culbreth et al., 2005; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Falls, 2009; Falls & Nichter, 2007; Lambie, 2007; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006).

My study will establish how school counselors experience their noncounseling responsibilities within Title 1 elementary schools. Such information would provide policymakers, stakeholders, administrators, and counselors with a knowledge base for reevaluating the duties assigned to counselors and for determining if these responsibilities assist in increasing the effectiveness of the direct services provided to students in Title 1 schools. Results could also enable principals at Title 1 schools to better understand the experiences of school counselors and their perceptions about performing noncounseling related duties as part of their roles.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the experiences and perceptions of professional school counselors regarding their noncounseling responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools. Based on an extensive review of the literature, school counselors are expected to perform duties which may fall outside the scope of their professional identity (Culbreth et al., 2005; Paolini & Topdemir, 2013; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008) indicating a discrepancy between what key stakeholders in education deem appropriate and what the national and state standards delineate as appropriate practice for the school counseling profession (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Baker, 2001; Natividad, 2010; Paolini & Topdemir, 2013; Ross & Herrington, 2006). In spite of ASCA (2012) delineating appropriate counseling responsibilities and inappropriate noncounseling activities for school counselors, there is a clear need for research to determine the perceptions and expectations of school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools in an effort to determine how these counselors regard their noncounseling responsibilities that may be incongruent with their training and values and to discern if

these responsibilities support the effectiveness of counselors to meet the needs of students, thereby, increasing the efficacy of counseling services at Title1 schools. In addition to school counselors, individuals who benefit from the findings of my study include students in Title 1 schools, parents, teachers, counselor educators, counselor supervisors, guidance directors, school administrators, district board of trustees, area superintendents, superintendents, and other key stakeholders in education.

Significance of the Study

No literature exists regarding the experiences and perceptions of professional school counselors pertaining to their noncounseling responsibilities in the public school setting, particularly in Title 1 elementary schools. Only a few research studies have been conducted on the experiences of elementary school counselors from a phenomenological stance and those studies were not conducted in Title 1 schools (Moran & Bodenhorn, 2015; Omizo & Omizo, 1990) and they did not pertain to the noncounseling duties of school counselors. I hope to add to the literature with my examination of a specific aspect of the school counselor experience in the public school system: how school counselors perceive taking on noncounseling responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools.

The findings of this study may be beneficial to policymakers, stakeholders, administrators, and counselors. Counselors may include research findings in their discussions with their principals about the comprehensive guidance curriculum. Guidance directors or district counseling coordinators can use the findings to initiate discussions with district board of trustees, area superintendents, and superintendents about the perceptions of school counselors regarding their roles. My findings will also

help these guidance directors train new counselors and principals on what precisely the role of the school counselor entails. The findings will also assist counselor supervisors who provide supervision for new school counselors, and experienced counselors who are confused about their roles, to clarify role expectations and duties that address the pressing needs of students and to develop effective comprehensive counseling programs at their schools to meet these needs. Finally, new counseling graduates from counselor preparation programs may consider my research findings as they seek employment to have a better understanding of their professional role in a Title 1 public school setting. This information may assist future counselors in effectively advocating for professional roles that are more consistent with the national model and state standards.

Theoretical Framework

The role of the school counselor has historically been shrouded in ambiguity (Lieberman, 2004; Trolley, 2011; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). Schmidt (1993) stressed the need for counselors to effectively define their roles at their campuses. Role theory originated from other theories, literature, and ways of thinking that focused on the interaction between individuals, role perceptions, and social behaviors in a work related context (Natividad, 2010).

Role Theory. Role theory views individual behavior in a social context as an integral component of social exchange in relationships (Natividad, 2010). This theory examines the behavior of an individual as a minute component of the overall interactions of roles within a system (Ivey & Robin, 1966; Natividad, 2010). For the purposes of this study, role theory serves as a model to assist counselors in understanding the school system. This theory illuminates the importance of interpersonal and interprofessional

relationships in determining the efficacy of a counselor within the school system in which he or she works (Ivey & Robin, 1966). The role of the school counselor and the interactions the counselor has with administrators, teachers, parents, and school stakeholders can be defined using this theory.

Using role theory, the adoption of roles by counselors can be seen as a continuous process towards role fulfillment in which counselors act as catalysts to further interact with stakeholders (Burns, 1992; Natividad, 2010). Role conflict can occur, for example, when the principal expects the school counselor to administer discipline to a student for excessive tardiness when the counselor works with the student concurrently in a grief support group due to the loss of his mother. Role conflict on the part of the school counselor can lead to tension, job stress, job dissatisfaction, and a lack of commitment to the mission and vision of the school (Bedeign & Armenakis, 1981; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Snoek, 1964; Natividad, 2010). Khan et al. (1964) stated that role conflict was the occurrence of two or more pressures such that the compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult. This definition of role conflict can be used to conceptualize the precarious position in which school counselors find themselves when asked by administrators to perform noncounseling duties that do not align with their training or their professional role standards. Based on role theory, my expectation is that school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools will report greater job satisfaction and a sense of being valued if their work responsibilities are aligned with their professional role.

Role Conflict. Role conflict occurs when stakeholders' expectations of the school counselor's responsibilities differ from the counselor's perceived professional role

(Amatea & Clark, 2005). Role conflict transpires when stakeholders of an organization perceive the individual to perform different roles than what he or she actually fulfills or is asked to undertake (Natividad, 2010). School counselors experience cognitive dissonance in regards to the noncounseling duties that they view as inconsistent with their training or inappropriate with their role (Culbreth et al., 2005; Falls, 2009; Falls & Nichter, 2007). Cognitive dissonance refers to the feeling of discomfort experienced by professional school counselors when a discrepancy exists between their training and their actual day-to-day job realities, resulting in job stress (Falls & Nichter, 2007).

  Role ambiguity. School counselors experience role ambiguity when there is doubt about the job description and uncertainty about what is involved in the role as a professional school counselor (Falls, 2009). A major factor of role ambiguity is the difference in perception of the school counselor role by the counselor and the principal (the counselor's supervisor), in the public school setting (Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008). Role ambiguity typically decreases the effectiveness of services that school counselors provide to all stakeholders in education (Geigel, 2013).

  Role confusion. Role confusion is the basic dilemma among professional school counselors and the stakeholders they serve regarding the school counselor role. Role confusion arises partly because the roles and functions of the school counselor do not align with the training the counselors received in graduate school or with the national and state role standards for the school counseling profession (Falls & Nichter, 2007). Ross and Herrington (2006) found that role confusion was destructive to the school counseling profession and detrimental for students because ill-defined guidance programs negatively impact the students.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to assist in the reader's understanding of the terms and their usage in the current study.

Guidance curriculum. Guidance curriculum consists of classroom instruction, interdisciplinary curriculum development, group activities, and parent instruction and workshops (ASCA, 2009).

Individual student planning. Individual student planning includes individual and group appraisal and advisement services (ASCA, 2009).

Responsive services. Responsive services include consultation, individual counseling, small group counseling, crisis counseling and response, referrals, and peer facilitation (ASCA, 2009).

System support. System support refers to support services such as professional development activities, consultation, collaboration and teaming, and program management and operation (ASCA, 2009).

Research Question

By allowing school counselors the opportunity to share their experiences and expectations about their roles and responsibilities, I sought to answer the following research question: What are the perceptions of professional school counselors regarding their noncounseling responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools? I developed an interview protocol designed to allow school counselors the opportunity to freely share their experiences (Appendix C).

Limitations

The research was limited to elementary school counselors in Title I campuses who met the selection criteria and consented to participate in the study. This study was based on self-report, and hence, participants' willingness to share information affected the results. The study took place in one geographical location and it may not be transferable to other geographic locations. School counseling is not a traditional career choice for males (Dodson & Borders, 2006); and as manifested in this study, more females, rather than males, participated in this study making the results less transferrable to male school counselors. Furthermore, the findings of this study were limited by the interview questions used to ask professional school counselors about their experiences and perceptions. Although the pilot study served to test the interview questions, it was possible that the questions may not have accounted for all the details of the experiences as perceived by the participants.

Certain methodologies and designs, such as phenomenology, come with limitations over which the researcher has little control. In phenomenology, the researcher acts as the instrument for the study, and hence, the researcher provides the purpose of the study to the participants, communicates with the respondents, offers opportunities for the respondents to give relevant information, controls the flow of the conversations, filters the data that is gathered, and interprets the data (Husserl, 1973). The researcher reduces data gathered as lengthy interviews describing the shared experiences of several participants to a central meaning, or "essence" of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, the researcher's expertise can be a limitation of phenomenological research.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to school counselors from moderately-sized, ethnically diverse, public, Title 1 elementary schools in Texas. The participant selection criteria were delimited to study participants who: (a) worked as an elementary school counselor in a Title 1 public school setting for at least one year, (b) willingly participated in an individual interview that was 45 minutes to an hour in length, and (c) fit the characteristic criteria as determined through my professional judgment and the objective opinions of my colleagues. My goal in sample selection was to include school counselors from a variety of ethnicities, levels of experience, and elementary school counseling positions (i.e., pre-kindergarten through fourth grade counselor, pre-kindergarten through fifth grade counselor, kindergarten through fourth grade counselor, kindergarten through fifth grade counselor, sole counselor at an elementary school, and a counselor at an elementary school that employs two or more counselors) in order to obtain a broader perspective of the role of the school counselor in various Title 1 elementary schools in Texas.

Assumptions

It was assumed that participants would understand the interview questions and would be honest and truthful in answering, and not succumb to societal pressures to provide the "right" answer to the questions. I assumed that the interview questions would allow school counselors to adequately discuss their perceptions and experiences. It was also assumed that participants would be forthcoming about their experiences and opinions concerning their roles and responsibilities as counselors in their schools.

Organization of the Study

My dissertation is divided into five chapters that are organized as follows. This chapter, Chapter I, includes the introduction to my research which consists of the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, definition of terms, research question, limitations, delimitations, and the assumptions inherent in the study. Chapter II consists of a review of the relevant literature pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of school counselors. The literature review includes a discussion of the ASCA National Model which consists of the school counselor's professional identity and responsibility to the profession. Next, literature on the current role of the school counselor was discussed which reviewed multiple factors that influenced a counselor's role at a given campus. Chapter II concludes with the reality versus perception of school counselors' roles and time allocations, as well as principals' expectations for that role. Chapter III includes the methodology of my study and begins with the procedure for the selection of participants and a discussion of phenomenology and how it was utilized for the purposes of this study, including the research design. Next, bracketing of experience, researcher bias, instrumentation, the pilot study, data collection, and data analysis were discussed. Finally, procedures for establishing credibility and trustworthiness were explained to conclude Chapter III. In Chapter IV, I presented the results of my phenomenological analysis, including the themes and subthemes that emerged from participant interviews. To conclude my dissertation, Chapter V contains a summary of my study, discussion of the research findings, and implications and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Principals, teachers, parents, and students have varied and inconsistent assumptions of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008). Principals, in particular, do not have an accurate sense of the school counselor's function at the school (Brown, Dahlbeck, & Sparkman-Barnes, 2006; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005) and may assign school counselors to administrative and managerial duties (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Brinson, 2004; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Zalaquett, 2005). The ASCA Role Statement (2009) provides the standards of practice for professional school counselors. Despite ASCA's recommendations, school counselors still engage in work activities that absorb much of their time but are only remotely linked to their professionally determined roles (Baker 1996; Baker & Gerler, 2004).

The clerical, administrative, and nonguidance duties often take up half of a school counselor's time and cause them to feel overwhelmed (Myrick, 1993). Burnham and Jackson's (2000) study suggested that some school counselors are spending numerous hours on nonguidance duties that distract them from more appropriate counseling and guidance responsibilities. Perera-Diltz and Mason (2008) identified the clear discrepancy between the recommended time suggested by ASCA for direct services versus the actual time school counselors spent engaged in counseling students. Kareck (1998) expressed that as a school counselor, he spent less time with students and more time completing paperwork, such as organizing and distributing standardized tests,

building schedules, doing registration, attending meetings, and organizing cumulative folders.

Kolodinsky et al. (2009) conducted a study on levels of satisfaction and frustration felt by Arizona school counselors, and reported that the most common frustration expressed by the counselors in the study was a feeling of being overwhelmed by noncounseling duties. Kolodinsky et al. (2009) noted that "although many [school counselors] are satisfied with their work, the frustrations they feel often come from feeling off task; that is, an excessive amount of their daily duties (documentation, noncounseling activities, etc.) takes them away from reaching children in significant ways" (p. 197). ASCA's expansive definition of the school counselor's role leaves room for interpretation as to the actual responsibilities of the counselor because counselors are responsible for a myriad of duties in the school system, many of which do not fall under the conventional scope of school counseling services (ASCA, 2012; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Hann-Morrison, 2011; Oloumi-Johnson, 2016, Young & Lambie, 2007).

This chapter builds the foundation for understanding the school counselor's roles and responsibilities in the educational system. I begin the literature review by explaining the ASCA National Model (2012) and its recommendations for school counselors. I present examples of noncounseling duties as defined by ASCA, and I examine the responsibility of school counselors to the profession using the ASCA National Model (2012) as a guide. I also discuss CACREP standards and recommendations proposed by TEA. Second, I explore the current role of school counselors and how the role is unclear and ambiguous in public schools across the nation. The role ambiguity leads to increased demands on the school counselor's job function in terms of them being assigned

noncounseling duties (Culbreth et al., 2005; Lambie, 2002, 2007; Lieberman, 2004).

Third, I examine the perception of school counselors concerning their actual duties and

roles in the public school setting. Finally, I examine principals' expectations of the role

of school counselors and how their expectations impact school counselors' experiences of

their roles. In summary, the following areas of literature will be discussed: (a) the ASCA

National Model's role standards (b) current role of school counselors: increased demands,

(c) reality versus perception, and (d) principals' expectations.

The ASCA National Model

ASCA is the school counseling subset of the American Counseling Association

(ACA) and is the professional organization that provides the standards of practice and

role definitions for school counselors (ASCA, 2012). ASCA is the national professional

group that represents the field and outlines the scope and practice for the school

counselor. ASCA (2009) provides a clear role statement for professional school

counselors that most state educational agencies have used as a foundation for their role

statements (Fitch et al., 2001).

The ASCA National Model (2012) outlines the school counselor's role as serving

the academic, career, and social/emotional needs of all students. The development of the

National Model (ASCA, 2012) was significant in helping to clarify the school

counselor's primary role. The ASCA National Model was developed to provide

consistency, awareness, organization, and structure among school counseling curriculums

across the nation (ASCA, 2012). The National Model (ASCA, 2012) was updated twice,

once in 2005 and again in 2012, from its original 2003 version to incorporate resources to

support each component of the school counseling program including the foundation, delivery, management, and accountability system.

The ASCA National Model is composed of four quadrants: (a) Foundations System (quadrant 1), (b) Delivery System (quadrant 2), (c) Management System (quadrant 3), and (d) Accountability System (quadrant 4). The Foundations System focuses on the framework for a strong school counseling program that ensures that every student receives maximum benefits. The Delivery System discusses the services that school counselors perform in order to meet the needs of students. The Management System is the organizational piece that highlights the importance of utilizing data, planning, and calendars to track the time school counselors spent engaged in counseling related functions. The Accountability System addresses data analysis to show how the counseling program enhances student success (ASCA, 2013).

The ASCA National Model (2012) delineates the linkage between the functions of school counselors and student success. The National Model serves as a guide for counselors to adhere to in order to comply with the standards set by their profession and to fulfill the expectations of all school stakeholders (ASCA, 2012). Four themes are interwoven throughout the ASCA National Model (2012) that address school counselors' contribution to student achievement: (a) advocacy, (b) leadership, (c) collaboration, and (d) systemic change. Each theme outlines the role that school counselors play in promoting equality and enhancing students' social, emotional, academic, and career outcomes (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013). School counselors implement the comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling programs (CDGCP) that aim to promote student success and coordinate the delivery of the programs through the guidance curriculum,

individual student planning, responsive services, and system support (Serres & Nelson, 2011).

ASCA Recommendations. According to ASCA (2012), school counselors are expected to spend the majority of their time providing direct services to students, making necessary referrals, and consulting and collaborating with school stakeholders to ensure equity and achievement of all students. The ASCA National Model (2012) identifies that appropriate school counselor duties include the activities of counseling students, presenting guidance lessons, consulting with teachers and principals, and creating individual academic programs for students. Inappropriate counseling duties include such activities as administering achievement assessments, registering students, performing clerical record keeping, and disciplining students (ASCA, 2012). ASCA (2012) recommends that the school counselor appropriates 80% of his or her time to direct and indirect services, with the remaining 20% of time allotted to program planning and student support activities. In actuality, Paolini (2012) found that the noncounseling tasks interfered with the school counselor's ability to engage in direct and indirect student services and hindered the counselor from using a more data driven accountability system to document the effectiveness of the CDGCP. Research suggests that many school counselors do not spend the recommended amount of time engaged in endorsed duties (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Fitch et al., 2001).

ASCA Professional Standards. According to ASCA (2012), the role of the school counselor includes developing a school-wide counseling curriculum (presenting group and classroom lessons to aid students in achieving their academic, personal/social, and career objectives), coordinating student planning (engaging in activities designed to

assist students with accomplishing their goals such as appraisal and advisement), and implementing responsive services (addressing students' immediate concerns and responding to crises). Appropriate school counseling duties are defined as those that are focused on the delivery of the school counseling program through the guidance curriculum, individual student planning, and responsive services (ASCA, 2012). According to ASCA (2012), these counseling duties include providing counseling, coordination, collaboration, and consultation services. ASCA (2012) recommends that school counselors spend most of their time in direct service to students and suggests that only a small amount of the school counselor's time be devoted to system support, which consists of indirect services.

CACREP Standards

CACREP, an independent agency recognized by the Council of Higher Education Accreditation to accredit counselor graduate programs, delineated the 2016 CACREP Standards (2015) "written with the intent to promote a unified counseling profession" aimed to "ensure that students graduate with a strong professional counselor identity" (p. 2). The 2016 CACREP Standards (2015) includes the following sections: (a) Section 1, The Learning Environment, (b) Section 2, Professional Counseling Identity, (c) Section 3, Professional Practice, (d) Section 4, Evaluation in the Program, (e) Section 5-A, Entry Level Specialty Areas, Addiction Counseling, (f) Section 5-B, Entry Level Specialty Areas, Career Counseling, (g) Section 5-C, Entry Level Specialty Areas, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, (h) Section 5-D, Entry Level Specialty Areas, Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling, (i) Section 5-E, Entry Level Specialty Areas, College Counseling and Student Affairs, (j) Section 5-F, Entry Level Specialty Areas, Marriage, Couple, and

Family Counseling, (k) Section 5-G, Entry Level Specialty Areas, School Counseling and (l) Doctoral Standards for Counselor Education and Supervision. According to CACREP (2015) all entry-level counseling graduates in accredited counseling programs, regardless of the area of specialization, must acquire knowledge and gain instruction in eight common-core areas that represent the basic proficiencies necessary for these graduates. These eight core areas include the following: (a) professional counseling orientation and practice, (b) social and cultural diversity, (c) human growth and development, (d) career development, (e) counseling and helping relationships, (f) group counseling and group work, (g) assessment and testing, and (h) research and program evaluation (CACREP, 2015). CACREP (2015) recognizes the importance of a counselor's professional identity and addresses it in Section 2, which covers the foundational principles and the related common-core areas. Students that graduate from CACREP-accredited programs are prepared for jobs in the fields of education, private practice, human services, mental health, business, government, military, and industry (CACREP, 2015).

TEA Recommendations

TEA's A Model Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools, A Guide for Program Development Pre-K-12th Grade was developed to help ensure that all students benefit from high quality counseling programs that meet the differing needs of students in Texas public schools (TEA, 2004). This model is TEA's version of the ASCA National Model and is designed to help educators "develop, validate, or improve their school district's guidance program" (TEA, 2004, p. v). The Texas model includes the following five sections: (a) Section 1: The Basis for the Texas Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program,

(b) Section 2: The Texas Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program Model, (c) Section 3: Responsibilities of School Counselors and Other Staff Members, (d) Section 4: The Scope and Sequence of a Guidance Curriculum, and (e) Section 5: A Process for Implementing a Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program.

In Section 3 of A Model Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools, a school counselor's job description and responsibilities are addressed in conjunction with the eight responsibility domains that comprise the responsibilities of the professional school counselor: (a) Program Management Domain, (b) Guidance Domain, (c) Counseling Domain, (d) Consultation Domain, (e) Coordination Domain, (f) Student Assessment Domain, (g) Professional Behavior Domain, and (h) Professional Standards Domain. The guidance curriculum assists students to cultivate essential life skills and is used as the basis of a guidance program. In the state of Texas, the following seven areas have been selected for the guidance curriculum (TEA, 2004):

1) Self-confidence Development

2) Motivation to Achieve

3) Decision-making, Goal-setting, Planning, and Problem-solving Skills

4) Interpersonal Effectiveness

5) Communication Skills

6) Cross-cultural Effectiveness

7) Responsible Behavior

Figure 2 depicts TEA's recommendation for counselors in elementary schools to appropriate their time in the following manner: 35%-45% on guidance curriculum, 30%-40% on responsive services, 10%-15% on system support, 5%-10% on individual student planning, and 0% on nonguidance (TEA, 2004).
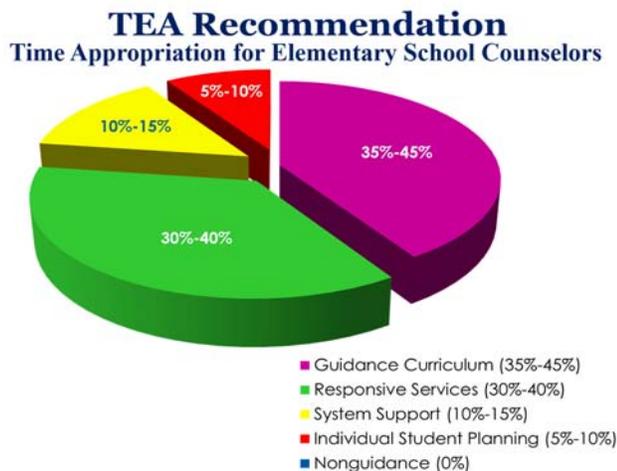
Figure 1. TEA's (2004) recommendation for elementary counselors' time appropriation.

The Role of the School Counselor

The history of the school counseling profession indicates the expanding role of the school counselor since the evolution of the profession in the early 1900's (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). During the early 1900's, school counseling centered around vocational guidance and evolved in the mid 1950's to include the social and personal needs of students, before transforming again at the end of the 20th century with the arrival of the standards based movement in education (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013). Thus, the role of the school counselor has been continually evolving since the inception of the profession.

ASCA (2010, 2012) describes school counselors as leaders, collaborators, change agents, and advocates and defines their roles as addressing students' needs through planning, executing, analyzing, and improving a comprehensive school counseling program aimed at maximizing student success. School counselors are uniquely qualified for their roles in the public education arena, and may be the only certified professionals in the areas of education and mental health on school campuses (ASCA, 2012). Paisley and Hayes (2003) expressed that a school counselor is frequently the most qualified stakeholder in the school to gauge systemic barriers that prevent achievement in all areas of student development. Counselors are expected to fulfill many significant tasks in schools, such as demonstrating program alignment with education reform standards and utilizing accountability practices to promote effectiveness of their services (Ritter & Serres, 2006). Milsom (2006) envisioned the school counselor's role in servicing students with disabilities as implementing interventions to better meet the unique and diverse needs of these students. Paolini and Topdemir (2013) asserted that today's counselors use "evidenced-based practices in order to serve as advocates, to remove barriers, to design programs, to overcome role confusion, and to help all students in their academic, career, and personal/social development" (p. 11-12).

The ASCA National Model suggests that school counselors allocate most of their time in direct service to all students so that each student can reap the greatest gain (Serres & Nelson, 2011). School counselors play a crucial role in promoting the social, emotional, and academic acquisition of all students (Eakin, 2013). School counselors are in a distinct position to give support to diverse populations and to promote unity and cooperation among stakeholders; they embody the skills to "empower, guide, and mentor

youth from different backgrounds, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, and sexual orientations" (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013, p. 14). The school counselor is an advocate to students and their parents, especially ones who voices have been diminished or marginalized by the educational system (Serres & Nelson, 2011).

Influential Factors that Affect the Role of the School Counselor

Although the ASCA model recommends a 250 to one student-counselor ratio, the national average for the 2013-2014 school year was 491 students to one counselor, with Texas schools fairing a bit lower than the national average at 465 students to one counselor (ASCA, 2009; United States Department of Education, 2014). Cervoni and DeLucia-Waack (2011) found a multitude of factors that influence a school counselor's role, including campus funding, building resources, and the school principal. Counselors in public schools are expected to perform a myriad of duties and effectively address the needs and concerns of hundreds of students (Bardwell, 2010; Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Johnson, Rochkind, & Ott, 2010; Kolodinsky et al., 2009). DiDomenico-Sorrento (2013) found that principals' perceptions of the school counselor's role were incongruent with the national standards for the profession set by ASCA.

Astramovich, Hoskins, Gutierrez, and Bartlett (2013) suggested that research on the role of school counselors has attempted to define and prioritize their duties as well as factor in the views of school administrators on the appropriate duties of school counselors. Some researchers indicated that administrators in elementary, middle, and high schools want school counselors to focus on providing direct counseling services, such as giving individual and small group counseling, consultation, coordination, and crisis intervention (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Zalaquett, 2005; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012).

Previous research has been conducted on the views of school counselors pertaining to their roles and duties. Coll and Freeman (1997) suggested that even though all counselors experienced a sense of being overburdened with duties and conflicted by their roles in the school system, elementary school counselors felt significantly more overwhelmed by their responsibilities and perceived more role conflict than middle and high school counselors. DeMato and Curcio (2004) attributed a decline in job satisfaction among elementary school counselors to the myriad of duties they performed such as high stakes testing and servicing the needs of school districts due to staff shortages, school violence, and societal adjustments.

Walsh, Barrett, and DePaul (2007) found that elementary school counselors spent only one-third of their time performing direct counseling services, with the majority of their time spent on guidance, individual planning, and systems support services. According to Nelson, Robles-Pina, and Nichter (2008) high school counselors reported that much of their time was spent performing noncounseling duties, such as creating class schedules, and thus, they did not have as much time to provide direct counseling, coordination, and consultation services. Similarly, counselors in Paolini's (2012) study responded that administrative tasks not only interfered with their ability to offer direct and indirect services to their students but also hindered them from being more data driven in regards to student accountability.

Title 1 Schools

Title 1 schools receive financial funds through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for the high numbers of students they have enrolled from low-income families; the funds assist to enable all students to meet the rigorous academic

standards set by the state (United States Department of Education, 2015). Title 1 schools

have students facing many challenges including poverty, inadequate nutrition, restricted

access to health care, and lack of sleep (Bavin, 2002). The basic principles of Title 1

state that schools with large populations of low-income students will receive

supplemental funds to help in attaining students' educational objectives (Malburg, 2015).

Schools in which students from low-income families make up at least 40% of enrollment,

may use Title 1 funds for schoolwide programs that serve all students in the school

(United States Department of Education, 2004). This means that for a school to qualify

for Title 1 status and thus receive Title 1 funds, at least 40% of the students in the school

must be enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program (Malburg, 2015). Bavin (2002)

stated that the students from Title 1 schools are predominately from homes with

inconsistent parenting skills, violence, and substance abuse making those students more

in need of health care services than students in non-Title 1 schools. The lack of parenting

skills leads educators in Title 1 schools to more readily identify their students as having

behavior problems (Bavin, 2002).

Erford (2011) purported that school counselors adjust their counseling programs

to meet the specific needs of the students at their schools. The needs of the students and

the school, therefore, determine the amount of time that counselors spend on direct and

indirect services, advocating for issues, consulting, and coordinating (Erford, 2011).

Borders (2002) further asserted that school counselors must amass adaptability skills and

learn to be flexible to handle students' needs in a particular school setting.

Pierce and Molloy (1990) indicated that educators in low socioeconomic schools

perceived higher levels of stress attributed to factors such as behavior problems, truancy,

and insufficient resources. Malburg (2012) stated that educators in Title 1 schools encounter students with multiple distractions associated with helping their families put food on the table or acting as a parental figure for younger siblings. According to Malburg (2012), these students deal with real life dilemmas that other students in non-Title 1 schools may take for granted. "School takes a backseat to surviving for some Title 1 students" (Malburg, 2012, para. 3). The counselors at Title 1 elementary schools are expected to meet the extensive behavioral, academic, and emotional needs of their students, which would cause these counselors to experience their roles very differently than counselors at non-Title 1 elementary schools.

Discrepancies in Role Expectations

Natividad (2010) pointed out the stark discrepancy between the role expectations of school counselors as delineated by ASCA verses the role expectations of school counselors as perceived by key stakeholders in the educational system (such as students, parents, teachers, and principals). Helms and Ibrahim (1983) established the need to clarify parental perceptions about the school counselor's role in order to help elucidate the counselor's professional identity. Schmidt (2003) administered an external study on the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents and found that parents of elementary and middle school students perceived counselor helpfulness to be higher than parents of high school students. These parents also perceived clerical tasks, paperwork, and test administration as the least essential functions for school counselors (Schmidt, 2003). School counselors often engage in duties that are unrelated to their role (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; DiDomenico-Sorrento, 2013; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Pèrusse, Goodnaugh, Donegan, & Jones, 2004) and as a consequence,

many students miss out on the direct services that they need to remove obstacles to learning (Fitch et al., 2001). Perera-Diltz and Mason (2008) conducted a nationwide survey and found that school counselors engaged in duties that were not endorsed by the professional standards set forth by ASCA, with high school counselors performing more non-endorsed duties than middle or elementary school counselors.

The role of the school counselor has typically gone beyond the scope of professional practice defined by ASCA to incorporate "other duties as assigned", including clerical duties, administrative duties, curriculum development, testing, record-keeping, and disciplinary functions (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Wines et al., 2007; Young & Lambie, 2007). Cervoni and DeLucia-Waack (2011) posited that many school districts did not adhere to the role standards for school counselors promoted by ASCA. Fitch et al. (2001) concluded that there was a clear need for principals to understand the professional role of counselors so that these school administrators, who supervise school counseling programs at their campuses, could align their expectations of the school counselor role to the standards of the profession.

Leuwerke, Walker, and Shi (2009) noted, "in delegating administrative tasks to school counselors, building principals frequently request that counselors perform responsibilities not aligned to the standards developed by ASCA and for which counselors have not been trained to perform" (p. 263). Recent research has emphasized how the roles of school counselors have been misunderstood by school stakeholders (Carnes-Holt, Range, & Cisler, 2012). Ross and Herrington (2006) found that school counselors are deprived of their autonomy when they perform duties that are unrelated to their essential counseling functions. Moreover, Paolini and Topdemir (2013) asserted

that school counselors may feel disenfranchised and ineffective due to their noncounseling related duties, which negatively impacts student outcomes.

In a phenomenological study conducted by Falls and Nichter (2007) about job stress experienced by school counselors, the researchers expressed that administrators often place noncounseling related duties on counselors without giving them proper support. For example, a respondent in the study discussed her belief that administrators pull counselors from their counseling responsibilities to perform administrative duties that the administrators do not want to necessarily do themselves. The interviewee expressed, "so truly they're [administrators] looking at they need help, and we're the ones to back them up . . . you can take this off my workload . . . not realizing that our workload is increasing…" (Falls & Nichter, 2007, p. 12). Professional school counselors engage in work activities that absorb much of their time but are only remotely linked to their professionally determined standards (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Baker, 1996; Bringman, Mueller, & Lee, 2010; Brinson, 2004; Partin, 1993; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006).

Counselors in public schools today are accustomed to juggling multiple roles, ranging from providing counseling, interventions, and guidance lessons to conducting clerical duties and lunch detentions (Baker, 1996; Oloumi-Johnson, 2016) all the while effectively servicing the myriad of needs for hundreds of students (Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Johnson et al., 2010; Kolodinsky et al., 2009). School counselors are uniquely qualified professionals, with a minimum of a master's degree, and they may be the only person on a school campus who is formally trained to promote the well-being of students while supporting them to attain their academic, personal, social, and career goals (ASCA,

2005; Brown et al., 2006; Paolini & Topdemir, 2013). Therefore, counselors are well situated to remove barriers to learning for all students in order for them to achieve and attain future success. Thus, school counselors are in key positions to affect educational reform (Adelman & Taylor, 2002; Davis & Garrett, 1998; House & Martin, 1999).

It can be concluded that the ASCA National Model (2012) sets roles and standards for the school counseling profession. Also, the ASCA National Model (2012) specifies what constitutes noncounseling duties as well as recommendations for the amount of time school counselors should be in direct service with students. The ASCA Role Statement (2009) presents the standards of practice for professional school counselors, but counselors continue to be assigned duties by principals who have little or no knowledge of the ASCA Role Statement (2009) or the ASCA National Model (2012). Because administrators determine the role of the school counselor in most public schools, the responsibilities of the school counselor do not match the national or state role standards of the profession. Therefore, the realities experienced by most school counselors are not congruent with the ASCA National Model (2012).

Responsibility to the Profession

Although the ASCA Role Statement (2009) provides the standards of practice for professional school counselors and indicates which services are appropriate for the role, school counselors are often requested to perform duties that are outside of the national or state role standards (Dahir, 2001; Baker, 1996; Fitch et al., 2001, Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Partin, 1993; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). The ASCA National Model, which was first published in 2003, was specifically designed to clarify the confusion "surrounding the counselor's seemingly amorphous role" (Vail, 2005, p. 26). Hann-Morrison (2011)

reported that the adaptable nature of the school counselor role contributes to the problem of defining the duties of the school counselor, because of the flexibility in the counselor's daily functioning that is inherent in the role based on campus resources and students' needs, which influence these daily variations in duties. Mitchell and Bryan (2007) purported that due to the broad range of the school counselor's responsibilities, the person delegated in this role must not only be a visionary, but also be adept at handling resources, multi-tasking, and community mobilization.

There is a perception that the role statements for school counselors are not often followed by principals who determine what tasks are given priority by counselors in their individual schools (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Leuwerke et al., 2009, Pèrusse et al., 2004). Even with the national and state standards for school counselors, confusion still exists regarding the appropriate duties of a school counselor (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Fitch et al., 2001; Falls, 2009; Falls & Nichter, 2007). Pierson-Hubeny and Archambault (1987) established that school counselors reported the highest level of role ambiguity and role conflict in comparison to other school personnel such as teachers, school social workers, and school psychologists. Tennyson, Miller, Skovholt, and Williams (1989) surveyed high school counselors and found that the counselors spent more time performing scheduling tasks than any other function. In an article by Vail (2005), an interviewee summarized his experience,

> School counselors are nice people and we are cooperative people. That can come at the expense of direct student contact. If I'm out cleaning tables in the cafeteria after the kids leave, I can't be in the office helping them. (p. 27)

More recent studies indicate that school counselors' perceptions of noncounseling duties have not changed much since Tennyson et al. (1989) conducted their study. Wilkerson and Bellini (2006) found that school counselors experienced job overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity, which are related to burnout. "Role conflict and role ambiguity are the two specific occupational stressors that school counselors experience with regard to the multiple roles they assume within schools" (Bryant & Constantine, 2006, p. 265). Perera-Diltz and Mason (2008) surveyed 1,704 school counselors across the nation to discern if the duties that they performed aligned with the duties endorsed by ASCA as best practices. The researchers found that only five out of 21 endorsed duties were recognized as present duties by over 75% of the respondents; these duties included the following: (a) consultation, (b) individual and group counseling, (c) referrals, (d) peer facilitation, and (e) collaboration and teaming (Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008). Furthermore, one of their significant findings is that elementary school counselors, who have worked previously as teachers, endorsed more duties that were not aligned with the ASCA standards. One explanation that these researchers gave for the results is that elementary school counselors that hold teaching credentials are more cognizant of and are more inclined to partake in duties outside of their work roles that are necessary for the operation of the school because of the collaborative nature of elementary schools (Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008).

Variation of Duties across Building Levels

Lieberman (2004) noted incongruences in the practice of the school counseling profession and the lack of a well-defined school counselor role across different campuses and different grade levels nationwide. Researchers have looked into the duties performed

by school counselors across building levels. Carroll (1993) reported that elementary

school counselors willingly performed duties as a counselor, coordinator, and consultant

but were hesitant to perform duties as a manager of a counseling program and a teacher

of guidance lessons. Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) researched how school

counselor's actual roles aligned with those set by ASCA across building levels, and found

that role discrepancy exists for counselors across grade levels. These researchers

reported that although high school counselors wanted to allocate the majority of their

time performing duties recommended in the comprehensive, developmental school

counseling program, elementary level counselors were more likely to follow these

recommendations set by ASCA (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Furthermore, Hardesty

and Dillard (1994) analyzed the delivery of services used by elementary school

counselors and found that they were prone to operate from a systems perspective

participating in collaborative and consultative services, in comparison to middle school

and secondary school counselors who were prone to participate in individual services,

performing counseling, advising, and administrative duties. Burnham and Jackson

(2000) advanced the analysis of the delivery of services by counselors even further by

concluding that school counselors performed a broad scope of duties, including duties

endorsed by the profession (such as counseling, coordination of classroom guidance,

consultation, and assessment) and duties that were not endorsed by the profession (such

as record keeping, filing paperwork, and scheduling). It may be concluded that the above

researchers established that there is controversy over the role of the school counselor and

the duties that they engage in across building levels.

Current Role of School Counselors: Increased Demands

Counselors today face increased demands to demonstrate the effectiveness of their school counseling programs (Adelman & Taylor, 2002). In addition to adhering to the ASCA National Model's guidelines for the profession, school counselors can also utilize accountability practices to decrease role ambiguity and role confusion (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013). Dahir and Stone (2003) purported that it has become the standard practice among school counselors to make evident accountability measures. Erford (2011) discussed that the push for demonstrating accountability practices in education is due to the following mandates: (a) No Child Left Behind (NCLB), (b) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, (c) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, (d) and Title 1, among many others. Paolini and Topdemir (2013) addressed the need for school counselors to stress college and career readiness with the inception of the Common Core Standards, and the focus on being more data-driven and accountable in schools. The Common Core Standards were developed to safeguard that all students had the knowledge and skills to be successful in the 21st century workforce (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013). Paolini and Topdemir (2013) stated that recent studies show that although counselors knew the importance of utilizing data driven practices to demonstrate accountability, school counselors think that these measures take up too much of their time. These researchers also stressed the need for school counselors to demonstrate accountability for their services and their time stating "it is imperative for counselors to be data-driven in order to be seen as critical stakeholders" (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013). Paolini and Topdemir (2013) further asserted that through using accountability practices,

counselors will move away from their role as "ancillary service providers" (p. 8) to elucidate their professional role and significance to school stakeholders.

Researchers have revealed that school counselors do not necessarily spend time counseling or advising students (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Baker, 1996; Bringman et al., 2010; Brinson, 2004; Partin, 1993; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). Much of their day is often devoted to administrative tasks, discipline matters, and managing scheduling issues. Many school counselors are involved in coordinating testing programs, overseeing lunch duty, monitoring hallways, supervising in-school suspensions, managing detentions, and even substitute teaching (Johnson, Rochind, & Ott, 2010). Researchers revealed a discouraging trend that indicates more and more school counselors are experiencing increased demands on their roles, perceiving their jobs as being increasingly stressful, and feeling overwhelmed (Baggerly & Osborn, 2002; Bardhoshi, 2012; Bardwell, 2010; Bryant & Constantine, 2006; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Kolodinsky et al., 2009). School counselors are struggling to juggle a list of duties in the public school system and still striving to effectively assist and provide services for hundreds of students (Johnson et al., 2010).

Role ambiguity. Because the duties of school counselors vary depending on the state and the school district in which they work, the role of school counselors is unclear in many school districts nationwide (Erford, 2007; House & Martin, 1999). School administrators' expectations for the counselor's role is partly responsible for role ambiguity (Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008) in that school counselors are typically told what to do by principals who are often more concerned with the overall functioning of the school rather than the professional roles for school counselors (Amatea & Clark, 2005;

Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; House & Martin, 1999; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Leuwerke et al., 2009, Pèrusse et al., 2004; Waltz, 1997). Thus, school counselors are often responding to administrative requests rather than their professional priorities when it comes to shaping practice at their respective campuses (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; House & Martin, 1999; Leuwerke et al., 2009). Lambie (2002) explained that role ambiguity exists when (a) a person does not have information about his or her work role, (b) responsibilities associated with the role are unclear, or (c) peer perceptions related to the scope and practice of the job are incongruent. Lieberman (2004) noted significant role ambiguity and confusion for school counselors and the inefficient use of counselor's time and energy that results from not having a clearly specified role for counselors at the school campus. Culbreth et al. (2005) conducted a study on role conflict and ambiguity in high school counselors and reported that issues about role conflict, incongruence, and ambiguity still exist among practicing school counselors. Lambie and Williamson (2004) noted that role ambiguity is present in the school counseling profession due to the fact that professional school counselors have conflicting perceptions of their roles in the school setting. Furthermore, the College Board (2011) stated that daily functions of school counselors include the following duties: (a) admissions counseling for post-secondary schools, (b) testing, (c) personal needs counseling, (d) scheduling courses, (e) career counseling, and (f) job placement as well as other non-counseling duties. It can be inferred from this widely-used publication that school counselors are possibly assigned to engage in non-counseling duties and hence, role confusion exists among the school counseling profession.

Natividad (2010) conducted a study on the conflicting perceptions of the role of high school counselors and discovered that students, teachers, and parents gave the highest importance rating to the school counselors' responsibility of college, career, and class planning, whereas, the counselors gave the highest importance rating to the school counselors' responsibilities of assisting students with personal issues and helping students learn. There is a clear discrepancy between counselors' perceptions of their role and that of other stakeholders in schools. School counselors experience cognitive dissonance in regards to the noncounseling duties that they view to be inconsistent with their training or inappropriate with their role (Culbreth et al., 2005; Falls, 2009; Falls & Nichter, 2007). There is still confusion concerning the role of the school counselor even after professional organizations have developed role standards and have emphasized the importance of a clear professional identity (Schmidt, 2003).

Borders (2002) suggested that counselors show how their school counseling programs support students' academic and behavioral success. Topdemir (2010) proposed that school counselors need to repeatedly advocate for their professional role in addition to advocating for the students at their campus. Paolini and Topdemir (2013) established the need for school counselors to advocate for their professional roles to alleviate role confusion. "Through advocacy, counselors will be able to collaborate with other key stakeholders and demonstrate that their services do in fact make a significant difference in the lives of students" (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013, p. 5). Paolini and Topdemir (2013) further stated that through data-driven practices, school counselors can "differentiate themselves from other key stakeholders and… validate themselves as necessary stakeholders rather than expendable" (p. 9).

Increased workload. The review of the literature supports the existence of increasing job demands placed on school counselors (Cunningham & Sandhu, 2000; Herr, 2001). School counselors feel overwhelmed with the increased workload (Lambie & Williamson, 2004) and experience stress in finding time for direct counseling and guidance services for students (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). The increased workload is exacerbated by large student caseloads and high student-counselor ratios (Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Sears & Navin, 2001). In a study with Arizona school counselors, Kolodinsky et al. (2009) noted that counselors felt overwhelmed by duties, and they often felt off-task due to an excessive amount of daily noncounseling duties that pull them away from their meaningful work with students.

School counselors struggle to balance numerous job demands (Bryant & Constantine, 2006) with conflicting job responsibilities (Coll & Freeman, 1994; Culbreth et al., 2005) given the existing time restraints placed on them (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). Noncounseling duties assigned by administrators to school counselors not only increases their workload (Kendrick, Chandler, & Hatcher, 1994), but also increases higher levels of job-related stress (McDaniel Cail, 1994; Falls, 2009; Falls & Nichter, 2007).

In conclusion, school counselors spend an extraordinarily large amount of time performing noncounseling duties that take them away from direct counseling services with students (Johnson et al., 2010; Kendrick et al., 1994). School counselors experience increased demands on their roles, perceive their jobs as being more stressful, and feel overwhelmed (Bardhoshi, 2012; Bardwell, 2010; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; McDaniel Cail, 1994). Role ambiguity stems from the fact that school

counselors' roles are typically determined by administrators (Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005; Leuwerke et al., 2009, Waltz, 1997) while counselors have conflicting perceptions of their professional roles (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; House & Martin, 1999). School counselors feel stressed and overwhelmed due to increased workloads and increased demands placed on them (Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Herr, 2001). School counselors struggle to balance increasing duties with conflicting job responsibilities given existing time and resource restraints (Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Coll & Freeman, 1994; Culbreth et al., 2005).

Reality versus Perception

Many school counselors perceive that they are spending too much time engaged in noncounseling responsibilities and are unable to provide adequate services to students (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Baker, 1996; Bringman, 2010; Brinson, 2004; Clemens, Milsom, & Cashwell, 2009; TEA, 2004; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). The national and state standards do not regard administrative and clerical duties as core elements of the professional school counselor's role (ASCA, 2005; TEA, 2004). Researchers have suggested that while performing noncounseling activities might be temporarily beneficial for the school, they tend to weaken the counseling program overall (House & Martin, 1998; Johnson et al., 2010; Sutton & Fall, 1995).

School counselors experience role conflict when they are required to perform duties that are in direct conflict with one another, or in direct conflict with the counselor's beliefs and values (Culbreth et al., 2005). Professional school counselors perform duties that are only remotely related to their professional role standards (Zalaquett, 2005), and they are spending too much time in administrative roles (Baker & Gerler, 2004), which

are not conducive to helping meet the personal and social, academic, or career development needs of students (Falls, 2009; Scarborough, 2005). In 2002, high school counselors spent the most time selecting and scheduling courses (Parsad, Alexander, Farris, Hudson, & Greene, 2003). House and Martin (1998) referred to school counselors who function without an identified role and those who allow their roles to be defined by others in the school system as "gatekeepers of the status quo" (p. 286).

Fitch et al. (2001) identified three counselor roles from their review of the literature: (a) counseling, (b) consulting, and (c) coordination. In addition to these three roles, counselors should embrace new roles and a wider skill set in an ever evolving public school system. House and Martin (1998) encapsulated the school counselor role,

> We propose a model of activism where counselors function as leaders, change agents, and as people willing to take risks. We believe that if counselors adopt an advocacy role they help students become prepared to work in today's world and move toward becoming active, involved citizens. (p. 285)

More recent research has been conducted by Bailey (2012) on counselors' and principals' perceptions regarding the role of the school counselor. These findings indicate that there are statistically significant differences between the roles of school counselors as defined by the ASCA role standards and the roles that school counselors actually perform in schools.

Niebuhr, Niebuhr, and Cleveland (1999) reported that principals may expect school counselors to take on noncounseling duties as part of their roles in public school systems. Principals have the most influence in determining the role of school counselors at the campus level (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007;

Ponec & Brock, 2000). Principals regard the role of a school counselor as being focused on the academic needs of students whereas counselors regard their roles as fulfilling the social and emotional needs of students, in conjunction to addressing academics (Oloumi-Johnson, 2016). Much debate persists around the influence that a principal or supervisor has over the school counselor's daily job duties (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012).

Pérusse et al. (2004) stated that over 80% of secondary school principals were unable to properly identify appropriate counseling tasks. Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) reported significant differences between actual and preferred activities for all four ASCA domains as well as significant differences between preferred and actual time for performing noncounseling duties. Furthermore, Bardhoshi and Duncan (2009) concluded that school counselors and principals have similar intentions regarding the day-to-day duties for counselors, but their opinions vastly differed on the time appropriated for counseling duties. These researchers noted that principals expected 20% of school counselors' time be allocated to responsive services, which is only one-fourth of the time recommended by ASCA (2012) standards (Bardhoshi & Duncan, 2009). ASCA endorsed that 80% of a school counselor's time be devoted to direct student services. Zalaquett and Chatters (2012) concluded that although principals' perceptions of school counselor duties shifted to include fewer scheduling and disciplinary-related functions, principals continued to perceive clerical tasks, test coordination, and substitute teaching as the school counselor's predominant duties.

School counselors play a crucial role in ensuring the success of students as they have a school wide perspective on servicing the needs of all students. (ASCA, 2005; Clemens, Milsom, & Cashwell, 2009). According to the ASCA Role Statement,

professional school counselors provide services to promote the overall development of students, families, and their communities (ASCA, 2009). School counselors viewed themselves playing a variety of roles in the public school setting; they perceive themselves as being campus leaders, consultants, and change agents (Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994). Paolini (2012) further supported the notion of school counselors' perceptions of their time allocations differing from their realities by reporting that the school counselors in her study spent the majority of their time counseling (individual, peer, crisis, or group), student advising and individual planning, and presenting (classrooms and workshops); 21% of the school counselors' time was spent in counseling sessions, 15% of time was spent on individual planning, advisement, and appraisal, and 14% of time was spent presenting. The school counselors in Paolini's (2012) study spent only 3% of their time on other duties such as test administration, disciplinary functions, or lunch duties, but the respondents reported to the researcher that these administrative duties interfered with their ability to provide responsive services and impeded their efforts towards using data for campus accountability. There is a discrepancy between what school counselors actually do and what they perceive as their ideal role at their campus.

Principals' Expectations

School counselors often feel overwhelmed by the multitude of duties that they undertake along with the growing expectations about student outcomes as a result of their work (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013). Culbreth et al. (2005) reported that many school counselors experienced role stress and confusion because of the inconsistent messages that they receive from principals and other stakeholders who fail to understand their professional roles in the education system. Lambie (2007) further noted "professional

school counselors experience high levels of stress because of multiple job demands, role ambiguity, large caseloads, and lack of clinical supervision" (p. 82).

Leuwerke et al. (2009) traced role confusion between school counselors and principals to the inception of the school counseling profession. The ASCA National Model (2012) provides the roles and responsibilities of the school counselor and has led to a clearer role definition of the profession. The ASCA National Model (2012) provides a consistent vision for the appropriate role of school counselors. An emphasis on the accountability of school counselors is another contributing factor that helped clarify the confusion surrounding the role of the school counselor (Studer, Oberman, & Womack, 2006) and a push for data-driven results to demonstrate the effectiveness of counselors' interventions (Paisley & McMahon, 2001, Paolini & Topdemir, 2013). Lambie (2007) suggested that the level of support that school counselors received at work may be the most effective form of prevention against occupational burnout, implying that the principal-counselor relationship is crucial to burnout prevention.

Differences in perceptions. Principals frequently request that school counselors perform duties that are not aligned to the standards provided by ASCA and for which counselors have not been trained (Leuwerke et al., 2009). Differences in perceptions between school counselors and principals regarding the appropriate roles and duties of school counselors contribute to role ambiguity (Pèusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004). Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) compared principals' and school counselors' perceptions and discovered that principals typically identified registration, testing, discipline, record keeping, and working with the special education program as important functions for school counselors. Fitch et al. (2001) revealed that over half of pre-

professional principals rated registration, testing, record keeping, and assisting with special education as a significant or highly significant function of school counselors; over a quarter of the respondents also rated discipline as a significant function of school counselors. In a study conducted by Monteiro-Leitner, Asner-Self, Milde, Leitner, and Skelton (2006) of school counselors' use of time, principals preferred counselors to spend less time providing individual counseling to students and less time attending training to enhance their own professional role. Baker (2001) stated that principals' lack of knowledge about the duties of the counselor leads them to assign non-counseling related duties to professional school counselors such as discipline, test administration, and lunch duty.

Principals' perceptions of counselor roles and duties. Armstrong, MacDonald, and Stillo (2010) noted that high school principals' views pertaining to the roles of school counselors were not congruent with the counselors' self-reported roles. Furthermore, Dodson (2009) reported that high school principals were confused about the roles of high school counselors, particularly on campuses where the ASCA model was not communicated or utilized. In a qualitative study of 26 principals, most principals viewed the school counselor's role as either a consultant or direct service provider while a quarter of the respondents viewed the school counselor as part of the administrative team (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Brinson, 2004). Mason and Perera-Diltz (2010) conducted a study that revealed the importance of teaching principals about the appropriate duties of school counselors that align with the role standards outlined by the American School Counselor Association. The effectiveness of a school counseling program is based on the support of principals and the explicit communication by school counselors to principals

concerning their roles (Chata & Loesch, 2007). Bryant and Constantine (2006) reported that higher job satisfaction was predictive of greater overall life satisfaction among women school counselors. Job satisfaction and turnover rates for school counselors are related to the relationship between the principal and the school counselor and how the counselor's professional role is perceived (Clemens, Milsom, & Cashwell, 2009). Duncan and Miller (2008) addressed the need for school counselors to obtain feedback from stakeholders to measure the effect of their services in promoting student and stakeholder outcomes.

Paolini and Topdemir (2013) recommend that school counselors be more proactive in educating principals about their roles as leaders, advocates, and "systemic change agents" (p. 3). These researchers also proposed that school counselors delineate clear boundaries with principals so that the counselors can focus their efforts on direct services that support the academic, social, emotional, and occupational success of all students (Paolini, Topdemir, 2013). Paolini and Topdemir (2013) further asserted that school counselors have a gratifying role in that they are in a distinct position to reach out to the diverse student body and school stakeholders to make a lasting impact on the climate and culture of the school, making school counselors extremely important people in the educational environment.

Summary

In my extensive review of the literature, I found that there was a paucity in literature on the perceptions of elementary school counselors concerning their noncounseling duties at Title 1 campuses. I deduced that the ASCA National Model (2012) set the roles and standards for the school counseling profession and also specified

what constituted noncounseling duties. Even after the publication of the ASCA National Model (2012), role confusion was still a problem for school counselors. The ASCA National Model (2012) was not congruent with the realities experienced by most school counselors because counselors were typically assigned to perform duties that were outside of the national role standards by their school principals who had little or no knowledge of the ASCA National Model. My review of the literature revealed that school counselors experienced increased demands on their roles, perceived their jobs as being more stressful, and felt overwhelmed. Counselors also experienced role conflict when they are required to perform duties that are only remotely related to their professional role standards.

There are thousands of publications about the role of professional school counselors, but I did not find a single phenomenological study on elementary school counselors' perceptions of taking on noncounseling responsibilities as part of their roles at Title 1 campuses. This study will add to the school counseling literature by providing useful insight into the experiences of elementary school counselors at Title 1 schools and by producing rich descriptions of how school counselors experience taking on noncounseling related responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools. My findings may provide direction for school counselors in their discussions with policymakers, stakeholders, and principals about the comprehensive guidance curriculum. Additionally, these findings may support district counseling coordinators to start conversations with district board of trustees, area superintendents, and superintendents about the perceptions of school counselors regarding their roles and responsibilities in Title 1 schools. The findings will also assist counselor supervisors, who work with new and experienced

school counselors, in helping to define their supervisee's professional role and delineate duties that are endorsed by the profession. My findings will help future counselors in actively promoting professional roles that are more consistent with the national model and state standards. Lastly, new counseling graduates may reflect on my findings as they seek employment to have more awareness of their professional role in a Title 1 public school setting.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this research is to explore the perceptions of professional school

counselors regarding their roles and responsibilities in the public school system. Through

an examination of elementary school counselors' perceptions in Title 1 schools, I seek to

understand the ways in which a select group of school counselors experience their

noncounseling responsibilities. I hope to produce useful descriptions of the

administrative aspects of the school counselor experience within Title 1 schools as well

as describe other noncounseling aspects of the elementary school counselor's role. I

chose phenomenology as the method of research for my study because I wanted to

capture the subjective experiences of elementary school counselors through their

perspectives. In this chapter, I outline the research methodology of this proposed

phenomenological study of school counselor experiences. The components of this

chapter are: (a) participants, (b) research design, (c) bracketing of experience, (d)

researcher bias, (e) instrumentation, (f) pilot study, (g) data collection, (h) data analysis,

(i) credibility and reliability, and (j) summary.

Participants

The participants include elementary school counselors who are drawn from

moderately sized, ethnically diverse, Title 1 public school districts in a southern state.

Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling

is used in qualitative research to get a better understanding of the participants'

experiences with the phenomenon. In order to accomplish this goal, I selected

"information rich" samples or participants that provided the most insight into the

phenomenon under study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Creswell (2013) states that a purposive sample is one in which the participants and the sites are selected intentionally to understand the central phenomenon under study as it is experienced by those specific participants at those research sites.

Maxwell (2005) implied that the technique of purposive sampling involves deliberately choosing participants from the population that can provide the researcher with the most useful information. Welman and Kruger (1999) considered purposive sampling to be the most important of the non-probability sampling techniques to select primary participants. Participants are essentially chosen because they have experience with the researched phenomenon (Kruger, 1988). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that purposive sampling is most appropriate for the following three cases: (1) typical cases that represent the average experience of the phenomenon, (2) extreme cases in which the participant has an unusual experience of the phenomenon, and (3) negative cases that are dissimilar from the majority of the experiences found in the study.

I also utilized snowball sampling to gain additional participants for this research study. Snowballing expands the sample by relying on participants to recommend other candidates who are qualified for the study (Babbie, 1995; Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Snowball sampling is a type of purposive sampling that proceeds by identifying an individual perceived to be an appropriate participant (Babbie, 1995; Creswell, 2013). This participant is then asked to recommend another potential participant, and the process continues until the researcher has gathered sufficient data (Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell (2013), the advantage of snowball sampling is that it will help the researcher identify participants who may be reluctant to talk about

their experience of the phenomenon under study. Another advantage of snowball sampling is that it increases the credibility of the study, as the participants are involved in the research process (Creswell, 2013; Laerd, 2012). Snowball sampling builds on the resources of existing networks and determines stakeholders with the specific range of skills that has been selected to be useful in the study that are initially unknown to the researcher (Patton, 2014; Laerd, 2012).

My goal in sample selection was to include participants in the sample from a variety of ethnicities, levels of experience, and elementary school counseling positions (i.e., pre-kindergarten through fourth grade counselor, pre-kindergarten through fifth grade counselor, kindergarten through fourth grade counselor, kindergarten through fifth grade counselor, sole counselor at an elementary school, and a counselor at an elementary school that employs two or more counselors) from moderately sized, ethnically diverse Title 1 school districts in a southern state. I initially planned to include between 6-10 participants in this qualitative research study, and ended up with 9 participants. Patton (2014) regarded that "there no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry." Mouton & Marais (1992) suggested a small sample size when exploring large amounts of qualitative data in depth. Creswell (2013) recommended that qualitative research requires only a small number of participants. The general rule for sample size in a phenomenological study is typically limited to ten participants (Creswell, 2013; Hays & Singh, 2012).

Phenomenological studies usually utilize a small sample such as six to ten participants (Morse, 2000) because they involve exhaustive treatment of data. Hutt, Scott, and King (1983) suggested that because phenomenological research required a detailed and exhaustive analysis of large quantities of data, sample sizes are usually kept

small. Boyd (2001) noted that two to ten participants were sufficient to enable saturation

to be reached. Saturation is achieved in qualitative research when the researcher decides

that additional data will not bring added insights for the emerging themes (Creswell,

2011). Researchers have successfully used the phenomenological approach with a

sample size range of three to ten participants (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Hays &

Singh, 2102; Oloumi-Johnson, 2016). Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) suggested that

a sample size of six is sufficient to identify overarching themes that describe the shared

perceptions, beliefs, and experiences among a comparatively homogenous group. Morse

(2000) recommended at least six participants and Creswell (2017) endorsed "long

interviews with up to 10 people" for a phenomenological study (p. 65). Thus, I initially

attempted to recruit a minimum of 6 elementary school counselors from Title 1 school

districts and a maximum of 10 in order to guard against premature closure of narrative

analysis (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1990).

Elementary school counselors in selected Title 1 school districts were recruited

through personal contact. An email was sent to elementary school counselors in selected

moderately sized, ethnically diverse Title 1 school districts in a southern state. Colaizzi

(1978) established that in phenomenological research, the primary criteria for participant

selection is oratory expressiveness and their personal knowledge of and familiarity with

the research phenomenon. I was influenced by Colaizzi's (1978) assurance that,

"experiences with the investigated topic and articulateness suffice" (p. 58) as

prerequisites for participant selection in a phenomenological study.

The respondents were then invited to participate in the interview but were under

no pressure to accept. I included the purpose of the study, sample questions, and an

informed consent form in the initial email so that the potential participants could make an informed decision about their participation in the research study. The initial email was followed up with a phone call to further explain the study, answer any questions that they might had, and to set a date and time for the initial interview. If a potential respondent chose to participate, the individual was informed that he or she could withdraw from the study at any time. Recommendations from selected participants and professional colleagues supplemented my professional judgment in selecting participants that would best meet the research criteria.

The selected participants desirably represented a demographically diverse range of education and work experiences, ethnicities, current school counseling positions, as well as male and female perspectives. Eligibility criteria were as follows: the participant (a) has worked as an elementary school counselor in a Title 1 public school setting for at least one year, (b) was willing to participate in an individual interview that is 45 minutes to an hour in length, and (c) fit the characteristic criteria as determined through my professional judgment and the objective opinions of my colleagues. I gathered the participants' demographic information prior to their individual interview sessions and then used open-ended questions to guide the semi-structured interviews.

Research Design

Phenomenology is a philosophical perspective as well as a qualitative approach to research that describes the essence of the experience of several individuals concerning a phenomenon and offers a comprehensive understanding of their reality through immersion in the details of their unique perspectives (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Omizo et al., 2006). In phenomenology, the researcher strives to understand the

participants' subjective experiences of the phenomenon from the authentic lens and interpretations of the participants (Moustakas, 1994; Wertz, 2005).   Phenomenology is rooted in the seminal works of the existential philosopher Edmund Husseral (1973) who stated that the meaning of a phenomenon lies in the experience and not in the object. Moustakas (1994) referred to phenomenology as a rigorous and thorough qualitative research method that attempts to elucidate the essence or the meaning of the participants' experiences. The goal of phenomenology is to find the "central underlying meaning of the experiences that contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on the memories, images, and meaning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 52). Husseral (1962) stated that the personal experience of each participant in relation to the phenomenon is the crucial component of a phenomenological study. Merriam (2002) noted that phenomenology is "an attempt to deal with inner experiences unrobed in everyday life" (p. 7). This type of research method is suitable for a study on how elementary school counselors experience and perceive their diverse roles in the Title 1 public school setting.

I chose to do a phenomenological study to obtain the core meaning of the "lived experiences" (Creswell, 2013, p. 76) of elementary school counselors and their noncounseling responsibilities in Title 1 public schools. A phenomenological approach was deemed appropriate to use in this study because it affords insights into understanding the lived experiences of the participants and produces authentic descriptions of these experiences as it is happening to the participants in the immediate environment (Ganeson & Ehrich, 2009; Omizo et al., 2006). My goal for the research is to collect descriptions from these individuals in order to deduce the perspectives of the phenomenon (Omizo et

al., 2006) into a "composite description" (Creswell, 2013, p. 76) that has a solid "grasp of the very nature of the thing" (Creswell, 2013, p. 76; van Manen, 1990, p. 163). My interview protocol was "directed to the participant's experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions" about the phenomenon under investigation (Welman & Kruger, 1999, p. 196). The objective of the phenomenological research model is to ultimately understand what is said, what is felt, and what has happened in the context of the participants' actual surroundings (Omizo et al., 2006).

My intended use of the phenomenological research approach is to elucidate the participants' experiences by combining their textural and structural descriptions into an integrated essence (Omizo et al., 2006) of the school counselor's experience in Title 1 elementary schools. The phenomenological approach is centered around the participants' lived experience with the phenomenon under study and seeks to examine the complicated, underlying aspects of the participants' shared perceptions of the phenomenon (Iwamoto et al., 2006).

Creswell (2013) describes the features of phenomenology that make it the most appropriate approach for this research study: (a) focusing on an idea or phenomenon to be examined, (b) examining the phenomenon done by a group of people who have all experienced the phenomenon, (c) bracketing of the researcher's experience with the phenomenon out of the study to set aside any biases that she may have in order to focus on participants' experiences, (d) utilizing interviews from participants with experience of the phenomenon as a form of data collection, (e) analyzing the data to render the microcosm of an individual participant's statements about the phenomenon into the macrocosm of the collective experiences of all of the participants in the study, and (f)

identifying resulting essence that sums up that the participants' common experience of the phenomenon. Moreover, this type of research is recognized as a rigorous and exhaustive approach to qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2013; Iwamoto et al., 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

Overview of phenomenological research. Conducting phenomenological research consists of two phases (Kornfeld, 1988). The first phase is the epoche, in which the researcher records her biases, assumptions, and stereotypes and brackets them, which allows openness to examine the phenomenon (Husserl, 1970). Moustakas (1994) defines epoche as "the elimination of suppositions and raising of knowledge above every possible doubt" (p. 26). The researcher sets aside her prejudgments and starts the inquiry process with a purely "unbiased, receptive presence" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 180) to promote openness to the phenomenon under study (Omizo et al., 2006). This process basically allows the researcher to approach the phenomenon without predetermined hypotheses so that she can fully comprehend the participants' experiences with the phenomenon (Boon & Alderson, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). The interviews are semi-structured so as not to lead the participants, digitally recorded to be transcribed verbatim to ensure that the data is "rich", and examined thoroughly according to phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994).

The next step involves recording, clustering, and synthesizing the categories to examine emerging themes in the data (Kornfeld, 1988; Moustakas, 1994). Initially, the researcher analyzes the data to find and record significant statements and to delete duplicate statements in the process of horizonalization (Iwamoto et al., 2007). During this process, the researcher reviews the transcriptions multiple times to locate statements

that significantly describe the experience and meaning of elementary school counselors'

roles and responsibilities (Boon & Alderson, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Wertz, 2005). In

addition, the researcher takes precautions to ensure that the statements contain integral

details of the experience that are significant to understanding the phenomenon under

study (Iwamoto et al., 2007). For this study, statements containing elements that are

crucial to the experience of elementary school counselors' responsibilities are to be

extracted, then grouped into related clusters of themes or "meaning units" (Iwamoto et

al., 2007, p. 342) to create a description of the textures and structures of the experience

for each participant (Boon & Alderson, 2009; Omizo et al., 2006).

The second phase of phenomenological research comes after clustering the

emergent themes. Then participants' experiences are identified by combining the textural

and structural descriptions for each participant (Iwamoto et al., 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

The textural description portrays how the participant experiences the phenomenon and

the significance that the participant characterizes with the experience (Iwamoto et al.,

2007; Moustakas, 1994). The structural description emphasizes the context and the

environment of the phenomenon (Iwamoto et al., 2007**;** Moustakas, 1994). Utilizing the

descriptions from the individual participants, an integrated textural-structural description

of the experience is generated that captures the true essence of the phenomenon of

elementary school counselors' responsibilities in Title 1 schools that represents all of the

participants in the study (Moustakas, 1994; Omizo et al., 2006). The goal of this study is

to evaluate the participants' experiences using textual and structural descriptions of the

phenomenon (Omizo et al., 2006) until saturation is reached.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested that saturation occurs when "no new or relevant data seem to emerge regarding a category, the category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions, and the relationships among categories are well established and validated" (p. 212). In other words, theoretical saturation is the point in which there is no new understanding gained, no new theme derived, and no new concern appeared from the data category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Bowen (2008) stated that data saturation involves continually gathering new participants until the data set is exhaustive, demonstrated by data redundancy or data replication. Charmaz (2000) pointed out that saturation is reached by arranging new data into previously established categories that account for all aspects of the phenomenon under study. Morse (1995) emphasized that saturation of all categories is evidenced when the data categories are confirmed and firmly established, which suggests the juncture to stop analysis. That is to say that saturation is attained when the researcher "gathers data to the point of diminishing returns, when nothing new is being added." (Bowen, 2008, p. 140).

Bracketing of Experience

Bracketing or epoche is a key component of phenomenological research (Moustakas, 1994). Epoche is a Greek term that signifies "to refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things." (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). Moustakas (1994) stated, "in the Epoche, we set aside our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things" (p. 85). The researcher attempts to set aside (bracket out) his or her assumptions and knowledge of the experience under consideration to obtain a fresh comprehension of the participants' experiences with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Bracketing allows the researcher to

suspend preconceived notions to discover the true essence of the experience through the consciousness of the participants (Kafle, 2011). Utilizing bracketing or epoche, I sought to suspend all judgments and focused on how the participants experience and perceive the phenomenon under study.

The researcher uses bracketing to minimize the influence of her preconceptions and biases in order to maintain an openness to unpredictable results (Moustakas, 1994; Wertz, 2005). This process involves pinpointing and deliberately setting aside any presupposition and previous experience that the researcher has pertaining to the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Chan, Fung, and Chien (2013) suggested the following four strategies, illustrated in Figure 2, for achieving bracketing throughout the phenomenological research process that I followed when planning this study: (a) strategy for mental preparation, (b) strategy for deciding the scope of the literature review, (c) strategy for planning data collection, and (d) strategy for planning data analysis.
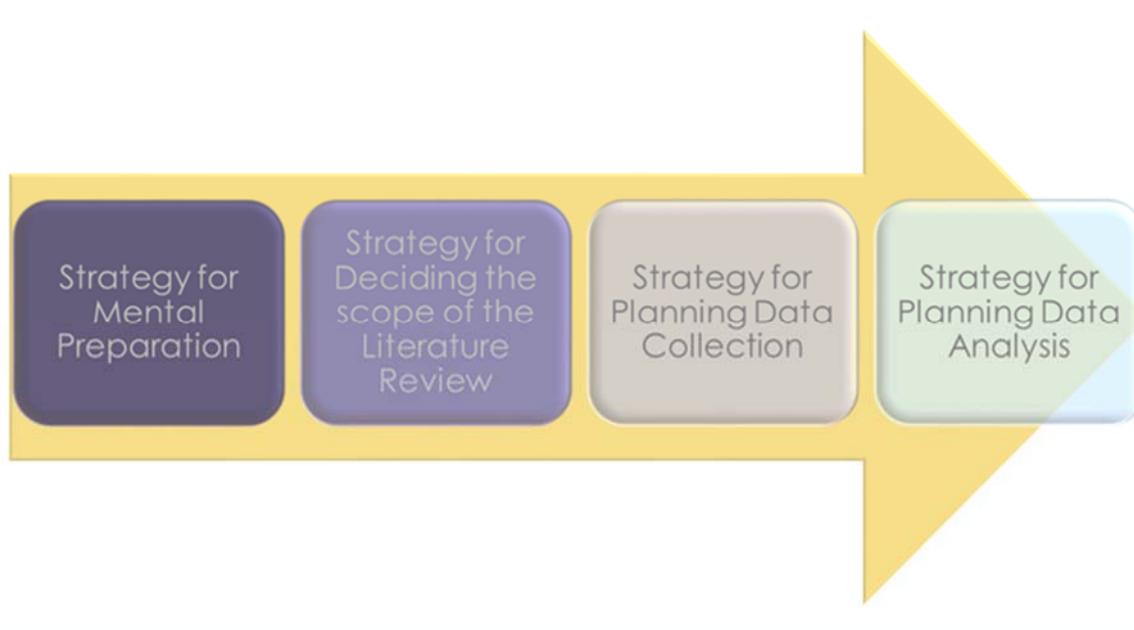
Figure 2. Strategies for achieving bracketing throughout the phenomenological research process as suggested by Chan, Fung, and Chien (2013).

Strategy for mental preparation. Prior to deciding on a research method, I asked myself some questions, similar to the ones proposed by Chan et al. (2013), to decide whether a phenomenological study was a good fit for me and whether I have the capacity to suspend previous knowledge and to adopt an attitude of openness. I explored my own perceptions and awareness by asking myself the following questions adapted from Chan et al. (2013): "[Am I] humble enough to [gain insight into] the experiences of other [school counselors], including [the ones who have less experience than me]?" (p. 4). Will I be able to maintain an open, objective attitude--- one of conscious naiveté--- about the subject matter? Can I be as open as possible to the notion that individuals possess their own realities? I decided on phenomenology as the research method after assenting to the above questions and after thorough self-examination and self-reflection of my ability to set aside foreknowledge and presumptions and remain inquisitive (Chan et al., 2013) about the research questions under investigation.

Strategy for deciding the scope of the literature review. Writing a review of the literature on the topic of study is a prerequisite for conducting research. The purpose of a thorough literature review is to tie previous research and background information of the topic under investigation to the current research study, thereby revealing gaps in the literature that is filled by the current research. Chan et al. (2013) posit that a thorough review of the literature prior to conducting the study may influence the phenomenological researcher's data collection and analysis process. So for this current study, I researched and wrote just enough of the literature review in my research proposal to fulfill the requirements of the "university committee or the gatekeeper" (Chan et al., 2013, p. 2) in

order to be cleared to commence the research. When deciding on the scope of my literature review, I asked myself this question, adapted from Chan et al. (2013): "Do [I] understand the topic enough that [I] can justify the research proposal while maintaining [my] curiosity in this area?" (p. 4). After assenting to the above question, I deferred some parts of my review of the literature until the data analysis process is complete. Delaying the literature review safeguards against using the same (or similar) wording for interview questions and analyzing data into themes as present in the literature (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010).

Strategy for planning data collection. Data collection was planned according to the suggestions proposed by Chan et al. (2013) of conducting a semi-structured interview and allowing the participants to guide the interview process with their concerns, rather than the interview questions. I also planned to ask participants "focusing but not leading questions" (p. 5) pertaining to their experiences and to listen intently, keeping in mind that the way I ask the questions affect the quality of the information collected (Chan et al., 2013). I maintained an open stance and started the interview with grand tour questions that gave a general view of the participant's experience (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995) such as the following questions adapted from Chan et al. (2013): "[…] Describe your experiences in working out your roles [as a school counselor]?" "[Portray] the challenges in working out your [current] duties?" (p. 5). Grand tour questions are usually descriptive, open-ended questions that the researcher asks in order to gain a general perspective of the participant's experience (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995). I made an effort to only ask questions for clarification and elaboration purposes (Chan et al., 2013) and

used an interview protocol with open-ended prompts so that the participants, and not the questions, lead the interview process.

Strategy for planning data analysis. I attempted to use a version of Colaizzi's method for the analysis of data as suggested by Chan et al. (2013). Colaizzi's method relies on the participants to validate the data to ensure that the researcher has properly interpreted the description and meaning of their experiences (Chan et al., 2013). Participant feedback would be utilized to confirm interpretations and to clarify misunderstandings, which serves to bolster trustworthiness of the data (Chan et al., 2013; Hamill & Sinclair, 2010).

I notated the bracketed information in my field notes for reference during the data analysis process (Macdonald, Sauer, Howie, & Albiston, 2005). In addition, I utilized a self-reflective journal to record my thoughts, feelings, and perceptions during the study. A reflective journal, or reflexive diary, was used by the researcher to document foreknowledge, ideas, observations, and stereotypes. It allowed the researcher to reexamine her stance on arising issues and emerging themes throughout the research process (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010). Using a reflective journal permitted me to review my position when concerns arose during the research process that could have potentially influenced the study (Chan et al., 2013; Hamill & Sinclair, 2010). After each interview, I wrote in the field notes and in the self-reflective journal, to help in self-reflection and in the bracketing process, any assumptions and judgments (Macdonald et al., 2005) about elementary school counselors' responsibilities so that I experienced the phenomenon "from the vantage point of an open self" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34).

Bracketing serves to suspend the researcher's personal beliefs and biases, so that she can perceive the participants' reality through a fresh lens (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010; Iwamoto et al., 2007). Schmitt (1967) presents an idea on the openness of the researcher to new findings, "the content of experience is dependent on myself as subject; experience presents to me its claim to validity: I must certify this claim…" (p. 67). I sought to obtain a fresh understanding of the participants' experiences with the phenomenon, uncluttered by previous knowledge, biases, stereotypes, and assumptions (Iwamoto et al., 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Consequently, my predispositions were held in abeyance during the process of data analysis (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010).

Researcher Bias

It is conventional in phenomenological research to bracket out the researcher's personal experience with the phenomenon under study (Boon & Alderson, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Osborne, 1990). The premise for epoche or bracketing is that the researcher's bias, preconceptions, and previous experiences with the phenomenon will skew the interpretation of the data and will impact the subsequent results of the study (Moustakas, 1994; Osborne, 1990). The researcher recognizes conscious bias through bracketing of experiences (Moustakas, 1994; Omizo et al., 2006). Although I planned to use bracketing to temporarily suspend my prior knowledge, presumptions, and biases throughout the study, I acknowledged that my expectations can unconsciously shape my comprehension and interpretation during the data collection and analysis process (Chang & Berk, 2009; Hamill & Sinclair, 2010).

My experience of the phenomenon stems from my decade long work history in education. I previously worked as a teacher at the elementary, middle, and high school

settings in Title 1 campuses in the public school system, before I became a school counselor. I worked as a counselor-intern at a middle school campus when I was employed there officially as a teacher and I was simultaneously enrolled in courses to get my masters degree in Counseling. I then worked as a counselor in both the elementary and the high school settings at Title I campuses. I also hold a school administrator certification and I have worked as an administrative intern in the elementary and in the high school settings. My interest in the administrative and noncounseling duties of school counselors in Title 1 schools derive from this experience.

As a counselor who has worked in Title 1 public schools for over a decade, I have first-hand experience of what happens at campuses when the school counselor is busy with other responsibilities at the expense of direct student services. I have knowledge of the multiple roles that school counselors juggle on a daily basis and the stress that they endure as a result of handling several different tasks at the same time. I have experienced attrition of my coworkers at Title 1 campuses due to the inability to keep up with the pace and the rigor of daily campus demands.

I have learned that at most campuses, the school administrators viewed the counselors as free agents, who could cover assignments that other campus professionals were unwilling or unable to take on. At those campuses, the administrators' agendas became the priority of the school counselors. I also understand that at some campuses the counselors take on more responsibilities in order to secure their jobs. With budget cutbacks and increased caseloads combined with the rising need for student services at Title 1 campuses, I often worried about my students. I expect counselors at Title 1 elementary schools to feel stressed about the multiple roles that they take on at their

campuses, whether those roles are delegated to them or self-imposed. I also expect that the school counselors would prefer to spend more of their time counseling students rather than performing administrative or noncounseling duties. I have known school administrators that have asked counselors to take on the disciplinarian role to either administer consequences to students or to restrain students who were acting out. I believe that taking on the role of disciplinarian impairs the foundation of trust that is essential in the relationship that school counselors have with our students. Recognizing my predispositions going into the research held my biases in abeyance as I analyzed the data. I participated in bracketing throughout the entirety of the research process by writing my observations, stereotypes, ideas, and feelings in my reflective journal after each interview in the data collection process, as issues, themes, and meanings emerged during the data analysis process, and to record descriptions, interpretations, and findings during the process of establishing credibility and trustworthiness.

When conducting my literature review, I noticed gaps in the literature pertaining to the roles of elementary school counselors, especially counselors that worked in Title 1 campuses where students and their families are in most need of services. Moreover, I noted a dearth of literature about the perceptions of Title 1 school employees in general, that used phenomenology as the method of research to illuminate their lived experiences. Given this lack of research, I wanted to add to the literature on the roles of elementary school counselors and gain an authentic awareness of how they experienced their roles in Title 1 schools. I also hoped that indirectly, the research would elevate the quality of counseling services that students receive at Title 1 schools.

Instrumentation

A semi-structured, face-to-face interview process using non-leading questions was adopted in which I, acting as the instrument in the study: (a) provided the purpose of the study to the participants, (b) communicated with the respondents, (c) offered opportunities for the respondents to give relevant information, (d) controlled the flow of the conversations, (e) filtered the data that was gathered, and (f) interpreted the data. I gave the demographic questionnaire to each participant prior to conducting the interview. Information requested on the questionnaire included age, gender, race or ethnicity, experience, and other descriptive information (see Appendix B). Also four open ended questions were included for participants to answer on the demographic questionnaire:

1. List the tasks and services involved in your role as a counselor at your Title 1 school.

2. Out of the above services that you perform at your campus, which of them would you define as being administrative (noncounseling) duties?

3. How many hours a day do you think that you spend performing administrative duties outside of your counselor role?

4. Who determines your responsibilities at your campus?

I developed a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix C) based on the review of the literature that will allow the participants to address the research question. The following interview structure will be presented:

1. What does being a school counselor mean to you on a personal level?

2. Detail the services you perform in your Title 1 school (e.g., for students, teachers, administrators, or parents).

3. Depict the gaps in the counseling program that are specific to the needs of your current Title 1 campus.

4. Tell me about your personal reactions, thoughts and feelings, associated with performing noncounseling duties at your school.

5. Describe your experiences in working out your roles as a school counselor at a Title 1 school.

6. Portray the challenges in working out your current duties?

7. What expectations do you have for your role as a school counselor at a Title 1 school?

8. Characterize your ideal role at your campus.

9. Express how your job as a school counselor influences your sense of professional competency.

10. What aspects of your job do you find fulfilling and what aspects do you think need to change?

This study is based on self-report and hence participants' willingness to share information will affect the results. I observed and noted participants' facial expressions and emotional reactions during the interview in my journal.

Role theory guides my methodology in this study and thus it influenced the relationship that I fostered with the participants. Using role theory, I viewed the behavior of a person as a minute component of the overall interactions of roles within a system or organization (Ivey & Robin, 1966; Natividad, 2010). For the purposes of this study, role theory served as a model to assist counselors in understanding the school system and elucidates the significance of interpersonal and interprofessional relationships in

determining the effectiveness of a counselor within the school system in which he or she works (Ivey & Robin, 1966). I observed role conflict as occurring when stakeholders of an organization (for example: students, parents, teachers, and administrators in a school system) perceived the individual to perform different roles than what he or she actually fulfills or is asked to undertake (Natividad, 2010).

Prior to starting the interview, I reviewed the purpose of the study and the definition of role theory to the participants to clarify discourse. Because I was conducting a phenomenological qualitative interview, I determined that it was beneficial to give respondents preliminary information before the interview so that they would be prepared to share relevant stories of their experiences with the phenomenon (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995). The interview initiated with this grand tour question to obtain the respondent's meaningful interpretation of the role: *What does being a school counselor mean to you on a personal level?*

Pilot study. I conducted a pilot study, which served to pre-test the demographic questionnaire and the interview protocol, with seven school counselors from urban and suburban school districts in Texas. In following with Creswell's (2005) recommendation for conducting pilot studies, the participants in the pilot test provided feedback directly on the demographic questionnaire and the interview questions. I asked the participants to mark any problems on the demographic questionnaire and the interview protocol, such as: (a) the order of the questions, (b) the range of answers provided in the multiple choice question on the demographic questionnaire, (c) wording of the questions, (d) the length of time needed to complete each item on the questionnaire, and (e) questions that needed to

be broken into separate parts for clarification. I revised the instruments used, based on the comments from the participants in the pilot test (Creswell, 2005).

Based on the feedback of the participants in the pilot study, I changed the order of the questions on the demographic questionnaire to improve the flow and readability of the survey. In the latest iteration of the demographic questionnaire, the question that asks for the name of the participant's school district follows the question that asks how long the participant has held employment at the current district. Likewise, the question that asks for the name of the participant's campus follows the question that asks how long the participant has held employment at the current campus (see Appendix B). In the prior iteration of the demographics questionnaire, the participants were asked for their current school district's name, their current campus name, then for the years that they have held employment at each respectively. I also moved Question 19 (see Appendix B) to follow the question that asks which tasks and services the participant performed that he or she would define as administrative duties.

I removed an item on the demographic questionnaire that asked for the geographic representation of the participant's current campus in the school district because most of the responses to that item did not make sense and it took the participants an excessive amount of time to complete the question. I also changed the range of answers on Question 14 (see Appendix B) of the demographic questionnaire to reflect the various elementary school settings. The previous iteration of the survey had all levels of education represented in the range of answers (elementary through high school settings). I separated a previous question on the demographic questionnaire into two components for clarity. The prior iteration of the survey asked the participants to list their licensure,

certifications, and professional memberships as one item on the questionnaire. The item

has been broken apart to allow the participants to list their professional memberships

separate from their credentials.

I also modified the interview protocol from the previous iteration used in the pilot

study. Based on participant feedback, I added three questions to the initial interview

protocol. I added a grand tour question at the beginning of the interview (see Appendix

C) so that I could gain an understanding of what being a school counselor means to the

participant on a personal level. I also changed the wording of the questions for

clarification purposes. I added Question 5 and Question 6 (see Appendix C) to the

interview protocol so that the participants could fully describe their experiences in

working out their different roles as a school counselor and elaborate on the challenges of

juggling their various roles. In the previous version of the interview protocol, Questions

5 and 6 (see Appendix C) were implied. I added these questions to guide the participants

through a more specific description of their roles. The participants' responses in the pilot

study along with their feedback indicated a need to ask specific questions that would

allow the participants to convey their various roles and to elaborate on the challenges that

they face working out those roles. The pilot study served to test the demographic

questionnaire and the interview questions in addition to obtaining preliminary data on the

topic.

Based on the pilot study, I noted a lack of data from school counselors across

different levels of education pertaining to noncounseling responsibilities in elementary

schools, which prompted me to solicit participants in the current study exclusively from

elementary schools. I also noted differences in the pilot study pertaining to roles and the

amount of duties performed by school counselors in Title 1 schools versus non-Title 1 schools, which prompted me to narrow the focus of the current study particularly to Title 1 schools where there is a greater need for student services. Data collected from the pilot study resulted in modification of the demographic questionnaire and the interview protocol to its current version.

Data Collection

Before participant recruitment initiated for the study, I submitted the research protocol to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at a state-funded university in the southern region of the United States for approval. After IRB approval was acquired, individual elementary school counselors that met the eligibility criteria as determined by my professional judgment were contacted via email and invited to participate in the study. In the initial email to prospective participants, I included a letter of introduction outlining the purpose of the study and the time requirements, sample questions, a letter of informed consent, and my contact information.

The recipients were encouraged to forward the email widely to other elementary school counselors currently employed in Title 1 school districts. I then followed up with the respondents of the initial email via phone contact to further explain the study and answer any questions that they might have had. The respondents that agreed to participate signed the consent form, returned the signed copy to me, and scheduled a face-to-face interview with me.

Various methods of data collection that were used in this study included audiotaped interviews, written responses to the demographics questionnaires, the self-reflective journal, and participant observation categorized in my field notes. The variety

of techniques used in data-collection increased the trustworthiness of the study by providing multiple frames of references and multiple sources from which the data was obtained (Denzin, 1978).

I utilized field notes as an essential source of data in this qualitative study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I wrote down what was seen, heard, thought, and experienced during the data collection process, making my field notes important in not only collecting data but reflecting on the data collected (Groenewald, 2004). I also dated my field notes in order to assist in linking the notes with the collected data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I used field notes as a crucial tool to jog my memory in order to preserve the data in its truest state (Loftland & Loftland, 1999). Data was gathered in individual audiotaped interviews conducted by me. The semi-structured face-to-face interviews were 45-minutes to 1-hour in length and were conducted in a private setting so that confidentiality was assured.

The interview protocol included open-ended prompts and questions in order to encourage participants to describe what was meaningful and salient in their roles as school counselors. If the participants indicated that they wanted to spend more time on the interview, the interview was extended. The interviews were terminated when the participants indicated that they had no more to contribute or the prearranged length of time had transpired.

Before each interview began, I reviewed the purpose of the study and obtained informed consent. Then, I reviewed the definition of role theory to clarify discussion and I asked the participants to complete the demographic questionnaire. For confidentiality

purposes, all participants were asked to use a pseudonym for reference and identification. I wrote in my field notes during each interview in order to obtain a rich data set.

Following each interview, I completed field notes, which included behavioral observations, process notes, and salient themes in order to provide a source for triangulation of results. I documented all extraneous reactions by participants in my field notes such as their voice tones, facial expressions, body language, and noteworthy mannerisms. All identifiable data regarding a respondent was removed from the interview report and pseudonyms were substituted for participant names to protect the person's identity.

I listened to each digitally recorded interview as soon as I possibly could after the actual participant interview ended. I listened repeatedly to the taped interview to gain a much fuller perspective of each participant's experience through the participant's own words (Holloway, 1997). I transcribed each audiotaped interview. At the end of the transcription process, participants were asked to review transcripts of their interviews and to provide feedback or additional comments related to the initial discussion in order to address credibility of results through the use of member checking. I conducted member checks with research participants by giving each participant his or her transcribed interview and the research abstract for review and feedback. This member checking process ensured that the participant's experiences were accurately reflected. Participants wrote their comments on the actual transcript, which was incorporated into the final report. Any changes that were recommended by the participants were made in the interview report prior to solidification of data analysis.

Data Analysis

The Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of data analysis, as described by Moustakas (1994), was utilized in this study. Groenewald (2004) described the data analysis process in phenomenological studies as reconstructing the data through the researcher's interpretation. I utilized the following procedure in my data analysis process, which is replicated from Zeeck's (2012) phenomenological study, and I explain the steps in the paragraphs that follow:

1. I transcribed the interviews verbatim and read the transcripts repeatedly.

2. I identified and listed significant statements from each transcript that shed light on the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013), in a process known as horizonalization, and eliminated the repetitive, irrelevant statements (Moustakas, 1994).

3. I clustered the nonrecurrent, nonoverlapping statements, known as the invariant horizons, into themes.

4. I constructed a textural description of each participant's experience using the themes.

5. I produced a structural description of each participant's experience from the textural description.

6. I generated a textural-structural description of the meanings of each participant's experience.

7. I synthesized an overall compound description that captured the essence and meaning of the experience for all of the participants (Ganeson & Ehrich, 2009; Iwamoto et al., 2007).

Step 1. I listened to each digitally recorded audio interview repetitiously to familiarize myself with the dialogue (Holloway, 1997) and to get a holistic view of the participant (Shuemann, 2014). Then the interviews were transcribed verbatim from start to finish. I thoroughly read and reread the interview transcript while I simultaneously listened to the audio-recorded interview. I repeatedly reviewed each transcript to "identify with the data and to acquire a sense of each individual and his or her background and experiences" (Schuemann, 2014, p. 88). I meticulously read and reread the transcripts as a way to prepare for the analysis process through complete immersion in the data (Marshall & Rosman, 2006).

Step 2. Horizonalization consists of finding and recording significant statements and deleting duplicate statements (Iwamoto, Creswell, Caldwell, 2007). Each statement that illuminates the experience of school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools were extracted or isolated (Holloway, 1997; Moustakas, 1994) with each statement holding equal weight (Zeeck, 2012) in order to give a holistic representation of the participant's experience (Duley, 2012). A list of significant statements were formulated and their meanings scrutinized (Moustakas, 1994). Overlapping and redundant statements were eliminated (Moustakas, 1994) from the list resulting in the invariant meaning units of the participant's experience, known as invariant horizons (Duley, 2012; Moustakas, 1994, Zeeck. 2012).

Step 3. The invariant horizons were clustered and classified into core themes (Moustakas, 1994). I checked the invariant horizons and the themes against each participant's interview transcript to confirm that they were explicitly stated by the participants (Holloway, 1997). If the invariant horizons and the themes were not

explicitly stated by the participant, then I verified that they were accurately inferred and congruent with the interview transcripts (Schulz, 2006). I verified the invariant horizons with the interview data in order to accurately extract the appropriate themes (Holloway, 1997).

Step 4. The themes were synthesized into a textural description for each participant (Moustakas, 1994). A textural description is how the participant experiences the phenomenon and the significance that the participant characterizes with the experience (Iwamoto et al., 2007). Texture is the attribute of a phenomenon as it occurs in daily life. Examples of texture are events, images, thoughts, and feelings. Often the texture of a phenomenon conceals the structure (Omizo et al., 2006). Textural descriptions use the participant's words to fully describe his or her knowledge, awareness, and reflection of the phenomenon (Polkinghorne, 1989, Schulz, 2006).

Step 5. A structural description was constructed for each participant through my application of imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994) using the textural description as a foundation (Schulz, 2006).   Moustakas (1994) explained imaginative variation as "seek[ing] possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions" (p. 97). The process entails the researcher to step back "from fact, logic, and reasonableness" (Schulz, 2006, p. 84) and assume a reflective position where the possibilities are endless. The textural description was scrutinized from different perspectives to derive the description of the structure or the "how" of the participant's experience (Schulz, 2006). The structural description emphasizes the context and the environment of the phenomenon (Iwamoto et

al., 2007). Structure is the facet of the phenomenon that stays constant and is a precursor to texture; usually texture will need to be filtered out in order to revel structure (Omizo, Omizo, Baxa, & Miyose, 2006).

 Step 6. I formulated a "composite textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122) for each participant. This step combines my conscious experiences and my structural interpretations (Schulz, 2006) to depict the essence of the phenomenon that emerged for each participant. The resulting textural-structural description will be shared with each participant for member checking (Duley, 2012).

 Step 7. I generated a composite description of the group's experience as a whole (Duley, 2012). This description captured the essence and fundamental meaning of the phenomenon for all of the participants in the study (Moustakas, 1994). The formulated descriptions from all participants were referred back to the original interviews for validation (Colaizzi, 1978; Herrick Hutt, Scott, & King, 1983). The verification of the fundamental meaning was accomplished by returning to the participants for confirmation of the analysis results (Colaizzi, 1978).

Credibility and Trustworthiness

 Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that establishing credibility is an essential component in ensuring trustworthiness. Credibility of a study is authenticating that the research results are believable and that "the data speak to the findings" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). I used a range of methods to ensure accuracy of the results and I utilized multiple strategies in order to establish credibility and trustworthiness in this study: (a) auditing system, (b) clarifying researcher bias, (c) triangulation, (d) member checking, (e)

rich, thick descriptions, (f) frequent peer debriefing sessions, and (g) outside observer (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004, Siefert, 2011).

Auditing system. I used an auditing system to verify the results of the study (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). I maintained an audit trail that consists of the transcripts, memos, field notes, and my reflective journal entries to validate the rigor of my study and to certify data collection (Patton, 2014). I also included an explanation of how the themes emerged from the data (Merriam, 1988) as well as any drawings and diagrams that I made during the data analysis process. An external auditor (outside observer) was also consulted to review the data and the themes.

Clarifying researcher bias. Clarification of my biases about the phenomenon began from the onset of the study so that anyone reading this would comprehend my stance and my assumptions that potentially influenced this research (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1988). Credibility of the data was also assured by using bracketing to set aside personal assumptions and judgments (Creswell, 2013). Bracketing ensured trustworthiness and rigor of the research as well as the data collection and analysis processes (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010). I utilized my reflective journal and field notes to engage in self-reflection and to set aside my judgments, prejudices, and assumptions pertaining to the phenomenon (Ponterotto & Grieger, 2007). I used an auditing system, peer debriefing sessions, and an outside observer to hold me accountable for bracketing researcher bias throughout my study.

Triangulation. Denzin (1978) described triangulation as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (p. 291). Triangulation provided corroborating evidence by utilizing multiple and different investigators, methods, and

data sources (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2014). By integrating investigator triangulation (utilizing different investigators and having participants review the research findings), methods triangulation (using participant observation and interviews), and triangulation of multiple data sources (allowing participants to review interview data in a private setting after the data collection process and then presenting the resulting themes in a group forum during the data analysis process), I attempted to compensate for the shortcomings that accompany studies using singular investigators, individual methods, and sole data sources (Patton, 2014).

Triangulation of investigators. Patton (2014) defined investigator triangulation as using multiple analysts to review and corroborate findings. Investigator triangulation establishes validity by having different investigators use the same method of data analysis to arrive at a consistent conclusion (Guion, 2002). Investigator triangulation was used to double check the themes based on interview data. For the purposes of this study, the main researcher, is identified as investigator number one. Investigator number two is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) who has 4 years of experience in a school-based therapy setting where she works in tandem with the school counselor to provide behavioral health services to students at Title 1 schools. She received her Doctorate of Philosophy in Counselor Education from Sam Houston State University. Investigator number three is a LPC who has over twelve years of experience as a school counselor in Title 1 public schools. She currently works as a lead counselor of her counseling team for grades 9-12 in the public school system. The investigators worked independently to extract the themes from each transcript using the first six steps of the data analysis

process. The investigators met a minimum of 2:1 agreement on the themes for the themes to be included in the final report. The overall findings from each investigator was then be compared to develop a rich, overall understanding of the essence of the phenomenon.

   Triangulation of methods. Patton (2014) referenced triangulation of methods as verifying the consistency of results produced by combining multiple methods of data collection, such as documents, interviews, observations, questionnaires, or surveys, when conducting research. Triangulation of different data collection methods would bolster the trustworthiness of a qualitative study by giving numerous frames of references and multiple sources from which the data was obtained (Denzin, 1978) such as individual interviews, demographic surveys, observations made in the field notes, and the reflective journal (Shenton, 2004). This process required confirming evidence from different sources to illuminate a theme or viewpoint (Creswell, 2013). Denzin (1978) called this cross validation process "between (or across) methods" (p. 302) in which two or more distinct methods were found to be consistent and yielded similar results. I paired a demographic questionnaire using closed-ended questions with a semi-structured interview utilizing open-ended questions in my data collection process to obtain different information that provided data sets that complemented one another. I used evidence to document a code or a theme in the interviews, demographic questionnaires, observations written in field notes, and reflective journal to triangulate information and provide validity of the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2014). Lincoln & Guba (1985) asserted that utilizing different methods of data collection together would take advantage of their respective strengths and counterbalance their corresponding singular weaknesses.

Triangulation of multiple data sources. Triangulation of sources involved examining the consistency of different data sources within the same method at various points in time and in disparate settings (Patton, 2014). Participant feedback was gathered in a private setting after the initial review of the interview data upon the completion of the data collection process. Participant feedback was also gathered after the data analysis process and the completion of the public presentation of the resulting themes to the group of participants.

Member checking. Member checking was the most crucial credibility technique (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Zeeck, 2012) in which the participants were solicited to verify the accuracy and credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2013). After the interviews were transcribed, the participants were contacted again via phone to meet with the principal investigator to engage in member checking to verify the accuracy of their statements. Member checking was utilized as an integral technique to ensure the study's credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999) and to enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the results (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Loh, 2013). Each participant was asked to review his or her interview transcript for accuracy, clarification, and additional insight. In this study, participants were asked to authenticate the preciseness of their statements through member checking interview transcripts as well as member checking to corroborate themes in the data.

Member checks of interview transcripts. Member checks granted participants the opportunity to repeatedly read the interview transcripts to check the data (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999) and give feedback on the accuracy (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Member checking the transcripts allowed the participants to confirm whether or not their

dialogue matched what they intended to say (Shenton, 2004). If the participants

acknowledged their actual words, then the data has captured the essence of their

experience and representativeness is established (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999). The

participants were informed that if they wanted to make any changes to the transcript or

add more information to it, then they could do so on the interview transcript itself using

an ink pen. Participants wrote their comments on the actual interview transcripts, which

were then added to the study. Partcipants were also informed that if the transcript was

accurate and if they did not want to change anything on it or add additional information

to it, then they would communicate this to the principal investigator. All nine out of the

nine participants member checked their interview transcripts and confirmed that the

transcripts were accurate. Only one out of the nine participants wrote additional

information on the transcripts; the additional information was included in the final report.

Member checking assessed the credibility and trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln &

Guba, 1985) culminating in a more robust comprehension of the phenomenon (Loh,

2013).

Member checks of themes. Member checking was also utilized after themes were

discovered to confirm the data analysis with participants. Participants were invited to a

presentation and discussion about the research findings in which they provided feedback

of the emerging data. Preliminary findings were clarified and validated by the research

participants to ensure that the data adequately represented the themes that were revealed.

Four out of the nine participants member checked the themes. At this point, the

participants were asked to give an explanation for certain patterns that the researcher has

noticed (Shenton, 2004). Their responses were used to refine the interpretations (Loh,

2013) and any new data collected from this member checking process was incorporated into the discussion of the results (Moustakas, 1994). Member checking also served to refine the themes that emerged in the data analysis process and aids in verifying the accuracy of the results (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The reanalysis of the data by the participants confirmed the pattern of the research findings and proved the redundancy of the results, which signified that saturation has been achieved and that the findings were unlikely to change even with the addition of extra participants (Creswell, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Rich, thick descriptions. I gathered rich, thick descriptions, which were intricately detailed descriptions, through the process of data collection; they reveal the shared experiences of the participants in the study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). I provided rich, thick, detailed descriptions of the participants in the study for readers to make decisions concerning transferability and applicability (Creswell, 2013; Gordon, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988). I utilized thick descriptions to provide copious, interwoven details when describing a theme using action verbs and quotes (Creswell, 2013). I used verbatim interview transcriptions and my field notes, which contained behavioral observations and process notes, to ensure rich, thick descriptions of participants and their experiences (Gordon, 2014).

Peer debriefing sessions. Peer debriefing or peer review allowed for an external check of the study (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988). Frequent peer debriefings were utilized after each participant interview session between me and my colleague to widen my perception of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Both my colleague and I kept written documentation of each peer debriefing session (Lincoln &

Guba, 1985). Creswell (2013) stated that the role of the peer is to play devil's advocate

and to keep the researcher "honest" (p. 251) by inquiring about the meanings,

interpretations, and procedure and to actively listen to the researcher, thereby allowing

her an opportunity for catharsis. The collaborative sessions were used to discuss

alternative approaches, plan action steps, develop ideas, and verify interpretations

(Shenton, 2004).

I debriefed before, during, and after the data collection process with an alumnus

of my university. She holds a doctorate in Developmental Education Administration from

Sam Houston State University and has worked for seven years in a Title 1 public school

setting. Peers in the same field would be familiar with the research literature, techniques,

and analysis process, and thus would be able to authenticate the findings (Loh, 2013).

Frequent debriefs helped me to recognize my assumptions and biases as well as flaws in

the preliminary plan of action for the study. Peer debriefing sessions also helped to

ensure that my study is solidly "grounded in good research practices" (Siefert, 2011). I

utilized the sessions as a sounding board to test my hypotheses and to plan my next steps

(Shenton, 2004).

Outside observer. I utilized an alumnus of the doctoral program and a professor

at my university who was familiar with the topic of the study to be an outside observer.

She received her Doctorate of Philosophy in Counselor Education from Sam Houston

State University and she is a National Certified Counselor. In addition to being

a Coordinator of Graduate Studies at Sam Houston State University for over 6 years, she

is also Clinical Faculty at the university. She was the external auditor for my research

study and verified the interpretation and the recurrence of the themes that were revealed

in the data analysis process (Creswell, 2013). She also cross-checked my analysis of the data to verify that the structural and textural descriptions accurately reflected the meaning of the participants' perceptions about the phenomenon. The fresh, unique perspective that this academic brought to my study allowed her to question my presumptions from an unbiased stance and granted me an interdisciplinary view of the research study.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the methodology and design of the study. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of professional school counselors regarding their roles and responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools. The participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling. I designed the demographic questionnaire and the semi-structured interview protocol for the study based on participant responses from my pilot study. The interview protocol featured open-ended questions in order to encourage participants to describe what is meaningful and salient in their roles as school counselors. Member checks were conducted with research participants and the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of data analysis was utilized in which clusters of themes were drawn from the participants' statements to capture the essence of their experiences. To ensure credibility and trustworthiness of my study, I utilized an auditing system, clarifying researcher bias, triangulation, member checking, providing rich, thick descriptions, peer debriefing sessions, and an outside observer.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of professional school counselors regarding their roles and responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools. A demographic questionnaire and a face-to-face interview was used to collect qualitative data about the ways in which school counselors experienced their noncounseling responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools. I, along with two fellow researchers, thoroughly analyzed the data in a multi-step process to gain insight of each participant's experiences and bridge portions of those experiences together. This chapter presents the key findings obtained from nine in-depth interviews beginning with the demographic information and a brief description of each participant. This chapter elucidates the results to the following research question: What are the perceptions of professional school counselors regarding their noncounseling responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools?

Demographic Information

Nine elementary school counselors from multiple Title 1 school districts across Texas participated in this study. Each participant filled out a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) prior to the interview that included the following information about each participant and his or her campus: (a) age, (b) race, (c) gender, (d) overall years in public education, (e) overall years as a school counselor, (f) approximate number of students at current school, (g) approximate number of staff at current school, (h) approximate percentage of students with special needs at current school, (i) years working at current Title 1 school district, (j) years as a school counselor at current Title 1 elementary school,

and (k) estimated hours spent per day performing noncounseling duties. The demographics questionnaire also included four open-ended questions about the counseling and noncounseling services that they performed at their respective schools as well as who determines their responsibilities at their campuses (see Table 1). In order to maintain confidentiality, each participant was given a pseudonym.

Participant Descriptions

      Participant #1 – Sunny. Sunny is a 66-year-old Caucasian female. She has worked in public education for 36 years and out of those years, she has been a school counselor for 29 years at her current school. Sunny is employed at a school that has approximately 900 students and 75 staff members. She estimated the ethnic composition of her school as 85% Hispanic and 15% African American. Sunny also approximated that 5% of the student population at her campus has special needs. She reported that she does the following services at her Title 1 elementary school: individual counseling, small group counseling, classroom guidance, parent conferences, and college and career awareness. In addition to those services, Sunny listed that she has the following roles: chairperson of ABC (Above and Beyond Committee), in charge of student council, member of the FAME (Families Actively and Meaningfully Engaged) committee, and member of the attendance committee. She also listed Section 504 Program chairperson, TAIS (Texas Accountability Intervention System) walkthroughs, and CTC (Campus Testing Coordinator) among that noncounseling services that she performs at her Title 1 elementary school. Sunny estimates that she spends 3 hours of each day performing noncounseling duties outside of her counselor role. She reported that her principal determines her responsibilities at her current campus.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Gender	Overall Years in Public Education	Overall Years as a School Counselor	Approximate Number of Students at Current School	Approximate Number of Staff at Current School	Approximate Percentage of Students with Special Needs at Current School	Years Working at Current Title 1 School District	Years as a School Counselor at Current Title 1 Elementary School	Estimated Hours Spent Per Day Performing Noncounseling Duties
Sunny	66	Caucasian	F	36	29	900	75	5%	29	29	3
John	61	Caucasian	M	22	20	1025	110	9%	22	2	"During STAAR time- all day for 2 weeks"
Katherine	35	Hispanic	F	12	1	950	80	16%	10	1	2
Marcy	48	Hispanic	F	15	2	1200	125	10%	10	2	1-3
Alexandra	43	Caucasian	F	18	7	350	70	13%	4	4	3-4
Ginger	47	Hispanic	F	25	22	625	75	5%	17	17	"not certain"
Stacy	59	Caucasian	F	34	6	1136	90	5%	5	5	"3/4 of my day"

(continued)

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Gender	Overall Years in Public Education	Overall Years as a School Counselor	Approximate Number of Students at Current School	Approximate Number of Staff at Current School	Approximate Percentage of Students with Special Needs at Current School	Years Working at Current Title 1 School District	Years as a School Counselor at Current Title 1 Elementary School	Estimated Hours Spent Per Day Performing Noncounseling Duties
Tasha	42	African American	F	19	16	1170	110	6%	13	4	1
Jane	52	African American	F	15	6	886	88	3%	6	6	"Depends on the day, dynamics on campus, and schedules of administrators"

Note. Last column includes direct quotes from participants' responses on the demographic questionnaire.

Participant #2 – John. John is a 61-year-old Caucasian male with 22 years of experience in public education. He has been working in the same school district for all 22 years and he has been a school counselor for 20 years. He has been at his current Title 1 elementary school for 2 years. John represents the only participant in this study that works at a Pre-K through 5th grade elementary campus, because the other participants are at Pre-K through 4th grade campuses. He also represents the only male in this study. John is currently employed at a school with approximately 1,025 students and 110 staff members. He estimated that over 86% of the student population at his campus identified as economically disadvantaged. He also estimated that his campus has a 17% mobility rate and that 9% of the student population has special needs. John approximated the ethnic composition of his Title 1 campus as 45% Hispanic, 30% African American, and 25% Asian.

John listed that he performs the following services at his Title 1 elementary school: individual counseling, small group counseling (academic motivation), classroom guidance, anti-bullying program, character education program, conflict resolution, personal safety program, college and career awareness, responsive intervention, cultural awareness, friendship class, Red Ribbon Week (anti-drug awareness program), Backpack Buddies Program, giving out school supplies, and greeting students on morning duty. He detailed that he is on the following committees at his school: ABC, LPAC (Language Proficiency Assessment Committee), and STAT (Student Teacher Assistance Team). John noted his role as a CTC as the only noncounseling duty that he performs at his campus. He recounted that during STAAR testing (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) time, he spent all day performing noncounseling duties for a period

of 2 weeks. John reported that he and his principal determines his responsibilities at the school. John represents the only elementary school counselor in this study that cited himself as one of the people determining his responsibilities at the school.

Participant # 3 – Katherine. Katherine is a 35-year-old Hispanic female that has 12 years of experience working in public education. She has been employed at her current Title 1 school district for 10 years and she has just completed her first year as a school counselor. As a brand new counselor, she has worked at her current campus for one year. She approximated that there are 950 students in her Title 1 elementary school and 80 staff members. She is a counselor in a high needs urban area school with a high rate of mobility and low SES (socioeconomic status). Katherine's elementary campus is one in which the majority of students were identified as "at-risk." Katherine reported that Hispanic students make up over 80% of the ethnic composition of her school. She listed the following services that she performs at her campus: individual counseling, small group counseling, classroom presentations, translator, RTI (Response to Intervention), parent center liaison, and crisis team. She noted her roles as Section 504 coordinator and STAAR CTC as her noncounseling responsibilities at her school. She estimated that she spends 2 hours of each day performing noncounseling duties outside of her counselor role. She indicated that the administrators at her school determine her responsibilities.

Participant #4 – Marcy. Marcy is a 48-year-old Hispanic female who has just completed her second year as a school counselor at a Title 1 elementary school. She has worked in public education for 15 years and has been employed at her current school district for 10 of those years. She has been a school counselor at her current Title 1 campus for 2 years. She described that her school has 1, 200 students and 125 faculty

members. Marcy estimated that her Title 1 school has approximately 92% economically disadvantaged students from low SES families with a mobility rate of 19%. She approximated that nearly 10% of the student population at her urban school has special needs. Marcy estimated the demographic population of her campus as 65% African American, 32% Hispanic, 2% Caucasian, and 1% Other.

Marcy listed the services involved in her role as a school counselor at her Title 1 school as: guidance curriculum, responsive services, systems support, family and teacher support, providing resources, individual planning, consultation, coordination, assessment, program management, professional standards, referrals, program implementation and facilitation, prevention, and intervention. Marcy also detailed the following noncounseling services that she performs at her campus: Fall Festival Committee, ABC secretary, Multicultural Market and Committee, behavior push-in, behavior intervention, tardy duty, bus duty, and Section 504 Program coordinator. She approximated that she spends 1-3 hours of each day performing noncounseling duties outside of her counselor role. She noted that her school principal determines her responsibilities.

Participant # 5 – Alexandra. Alexandra is a 43-year-old Caucasian female with 18 years of experience working in the public school system. She has been a school counselor for 7 years and she has worked in her current school district for 4 years. Alexandra is currently employed as an elementary school counselor in a rural Title 1 school with many students and families with low SES. She also has experience as an elementary school counselor in a high needs inner-city school in which the majority of the students were identified as "at-risk." Her current Title 1 rural campus has approximately 350 students and 70 staff members. She estimated that 70% of the student

population at her school is economically disadvantaged with a high rate of mobility.

Alexandra approximated that the ethnic composition of her school as 84% Hispanic, 14%

Caucasian, 1% African American, and 1% Other. She noted that nearly 13% of the

student population at her school has special needs.

Alexandra listed the following tasks and services involved in her role as a

counselor at her Title 1 elementary school: individual counseling, small group

counseling, classroom guidance, working alongside the administrative team and the

teachers to help build a positive climate, and working with parents as needed. Alexandra

also detailed her noncounseling roles at her Title 1 school as: RTI specialist, Section 504

Program coordinator, GT (Gifted and Talented) coordinator, LPAC coordinator, migrant

and immigrant coordinator, state assessment coordinator, At-risk Program coordinator,

and dyslexia specialist. Alexandra reported that depending on the time of year, she

spends 3 to 4 hours per day performing noncounseling duties at her Title 1 elementary

school. She also noted that her principal determines her responsibilities at her campus.

Participant #6 – Ginger. Ginger is a 47-year-old Hispanic female with 25 years

of experience working in public education. Ginger has been a counselor for 22 years and

she has been at her current Title 1 school for 17 of those years. She works at an urban

Pre-K through 4th grade elementary school that has approximately 625 students and 75

faculty members. She described her school as a campus with predominately low SES

students in which the ethnic composition is mostly Hispanic, African-American, and

Asian. Her campus has TLC (Therapeutic Learning Center) and PPCD (Preschool

Program for Children with Disabilities) units for students with special needs.

Ginger lists the following services that she performs as part of her counseling role at her Title 1 school: individual counseling, classroom guidance, grade-level guidance, assisting with GT students, and assisting with DCAs (District Common Assessments). She performs the following roles at her campus: member of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), member of ABC, Pennies for Patients campus coordinator, and Section 504 Program coordinator. She detailed the following noncounseling responsibilities that she performs at her campus: STAAR testing coordinator, Naglieri testing coordinator, cochairman of the fall festival, fundraising coordinator, sponsor for the boys' and girls' clubs, and morning, mid-day, and afternoon duties. She noted that she is not certain about the number of hours that she spends each day performing noncounseling tasks. Ginger indicated that the administrators at her school determine her responsibilities.

Participant #7 - Stacy. Stacy is a 59-year-old Caucasian female that is fluent in Spanish. She works at a predominately bilingual campus with the following ethnic composition: 81% Hispanic, 15% African American, and 2% Caucasian. Stacy has worked in public education for 34 years and she has been a school counselor for 6 years. She has been employed at her current school district for 5 years and she has been at her current Title 1 elementary school for all those 5 years. Stacy's campus has approximately 1,135 students and 90 faculty members. She estimated that 90% of the student population at her school is economically disadvantaged. Her campus has a 21% mobility rate and approximately 5% of the student population at her school has special needs.

Stacy listed the following counseling services that she performs at her campus: individual counseling, small group counseling, guidance lessons, and college and career

readiness. She also detailed the following noncounseling responsibilities that she

performs at her school: Section 504 Program coordinator, FAME committee chairperson

(in charge of coordinating 5 events each year), CTC, transition 4th grade to 5th grade,

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society fundraiser, student council sponsor (in charge of

elections, food drive, carnation sales, recycling, leadership skills), angel tree coordinator,

morning and afternoon duties, and assist principals with misbehaving students. Stacy

noted that she spent three-fourths of each day performing noncounseling duties at her

Title 1 elementary school. She stated that her principal determines her responsibilities at

the school.

   Participant #8 – Tasha. Tasha is a 42-year-old African American female with 19

years of experience working in the public education system. She has been a school

counselor for 16 years and she has been employed at her current school district for 13

years. She has been at her current Title 1 elementary school for 4 years. Tasha's school

has approximately 1,170 students and 110 staff members. Tasha is employed in a high

needs urban school in which more than 90% of the population are from families of low

SES. She described the ethnic composition of her school as 66% Hispanic, 17% African

American, 16% Native American, and 2% Asian with an extremely high mobility rate,

she estimated as high as 3% monthly per month. Tasha approximated that over 5% of the

students at her school have special needs.

   Tasha listed the following counseling services that she performs at her Title 1

elementary school: provide counseling and guidance lessons for students, morning and

afternoon duties, morning announcements, LPAC committee member, collaborate with

teachers, parents, staff, and CIS (Communities in Schools), professional development,

and mentor program coordinator. She cited her role as testing coordinator of her campus as a noncounseling responsibility that she performs at her school. Tasha noted that she spends one hour of each day performing noncounseling duties outside of her counselor role at her school. She reported that her principal determines her responsibilities at her campus.

Participant # 9 – Jane. Jane is a 52-year-old African American female who has worked in the public education system for 15 years. She has been a school counselor for 6 years. Jane started her career as a school counselor at her current school district and at her current Title 1 elementary school. She is currently employed at an elementary school in the inner city that has approximately 886 students and 88 faculty members. Jane estimated that over 70% of her students are identified as economically disadvantaged and that her campus has a very high mobility rate. Jane noted that 3% of the student population at her school has special needs. She detailed the following counseling services that she performs at her Title 1 elementary school: individual and small group counseling, organizing programs for students (girls club, grandparents' day, muffins for mom, donuts for dad, girls' overnight stay at the museum, boys' campout), and Red Ribbon Week. Jane also detailed the following noncounseling tasks that she performs at her campus: removal of students from class, discipline issues, cafeteria issues with student lunch accounts, cumulative folders, and member of the FAME committee. She reported that the hours per day that she spends performing noncounseling duties "depends on the day, [the] dynamics on campus, and [the] schedules of administrators". Jane noted that her principal determines her duties her campus.

Themes

The phenomenological data gathered from the participants in this study yielded six major themes. Four out of the six themes have subthemes. Each theme and subtheme is described and supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews are presented in the paragraphs that follow. Table 2 summarizes the theme, subtheme, number of participants in which the theme was present in their interviews, and the definition of each theme.

1. Too Much to Handle

    a. Resent Meaningless Noncounseling Duties

2. Enjoy Working with Kids and Making a Difference

3. Utilize Me Effectively

    a. Just Let Me Counsel – No Extras

4. STAAR Testing Prevents me from Seeing Students

5. Dealing with Duties

    a. Stress Out

    b. Set Boundaries

    c. Take it in Stride

6. Juggling Time and Triaging

    a. Hard to Carve out Time to See Students

Table 2

Themes

Theme	Subtheme (s)	Number of Participants in which Theme was Present in their Interviews	Definition of Theme
Too Much to Handle	Resent Meaningless Noncounseling Duties	9 out of 9	The feeling that school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools have too many duties, roles, meetings, bosses, or students to manage effectively and that they are stretched too thin.
Enjoy Working with Kids and Making a Difference		9 out of 9	The belief that school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools like spending time with students and are focused on having an impact in the lives of their students.
Utilize Me Effectively	Just Let Me Counsel- No Extras	9 out of 9	The perception that school counselors are to be more effectively and appropriately utilized at their Title 1 schools according to their training and expertise.
STAAR Testing Prevents me from Seeing Students		9 out of 9	The idea that coordinating STAAR assessments impedes school counselors from direct contact with students.
Dealing with Duties	Stress out Set Boundaries Take it in Stride	9 out of 9	School counselors' reactions to dealing with the abundance of noncounseling duties at their Title 1 elementary schools by stressing out, setting boundaries and advocating for their roles, or by taking their duties in stride.
Juggling Time and Triaging	Hard to Carve out Time to See Students	9 out of 9	The elementary school counselors' experiences with time management and prioritization in order to accomplish all of their responsibilities at their Title 1 schools.

Note. Some themes do not have a subtheme.

Table 3

Subthemes

Subtheme (s)	Theme from which Subtheme Originated	Number of Participants in Which Subtheme was Present in their Interviews	Definition of Subtheme
Resent Meaningless Noncounseling Duties	Too Much to Handle	7 out of 9	The indignation that some school counselors voiced in regards to assuming duties that were unrelated to their mandatory counseling responsibilities.
Just Let Me Counsel- No Extras	Utilize Me Effectively	8 out of 9	The desire that some school counselors conveyed to just counsel students, which was their mandatory responsibility, and to not be burdened down with other extraneous noncounseling duties, meetings, committees, administrative tasks, and ancillary services.
Stress out	Dealing with Duties	4 out of 9	The feelings of anxiety that some school counselors had to dealing with the abundance of noncounseling duties at their Title 1 elementary schools.
Set Boundaries	Dealing with Duties	3 out of 9	The reaction that some school counselors disclosed of delineating the perimeters of their role or defining their role when they were assigned noncounseling duties.
Take it in Stride	Dealing with Duties	2 out of 9	The attitude that some school counselors expressed about making the best of their noncounseling duties by building relationships and checking in with their students while they performed these duties.
Hard to Carve out Time to See Students	Juggling Time and Triaging	7 out of 9	The difficulties experienced by some school counselors in regards to meeting with students during instructional time.

Note. Themes that did not have a subtheme were excluded from this table.

Too much to handle. The theme of having too much to handle was present throughout all of the participants' interviews. More specifically, all nine of the participants made comments that supported the idea that school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools have too many duties, roles, meetings, bosses, or students to handle effectively and they are stretched too thin. These school counselors were scarcely able to keep up with the expectations and demands placed on them. Alexandra recognized that the abundance of noncounseling duties was keeping her from accomplishing her most important tasks and she admitted:

> I'm pulled to do so many other things that it takes away from my ability to be a
> full-time counselor. I mean, I spend a lot of my time doing the other
> noncounseling responsibilities and it pulls away from, ideally what I'd like to do
> as a school counselor, which is what I thought I was hired to do.

Alexandra further explained:

> I have various roles at my campus; not just counseling. I am the GT coordinator,
> I am the [Section] 504 coordinator, I am the LPAC coordinator, I am the migrant
> and immigrant coordinator, and I'm the RTI coordinator. I am on the Hospitality
> Committee. That's the nature of working at a Title 1 school, you're doing your
> job plus 7 others' [jobs] because there is a shortage of staff members, but there are
> so many students, and so many things that need to be done in a certain, usually
> short, time frame--- the nature of the beast.

Sunny expressed how multitasking her many responsibilities dilutes her attention and prevents her from being more effective in her role. She shared, "Well, it's just

getting them [current duties] all done. I don't feel like I do them all as well as I could do if I didn't have quite as many as I do." Sunny was also concerned that her large caseload impeded her from seeing all of the students. Sunny stated:

> I get around to the classroom lessons but I do all the grade levels so I only do 3, sometimes 4 classroom lessons a year… I can see an individual, if you've got a problem. But unless you're--- if you're holding it together pretty well I don't always see you, and you could have problems that I'm not aware of, so.

Marcy also carried a heavy caseload at her Title 1 campus and she described how she has adapted her techniques to accommodate all of the needs at her school. Marcy expressed:

> So in this campus, the amount of students is in ratio to the need of the kids, like in each classroom there's so much need with psychosocial assistance. And because there's such great need, you could easily have a counseling group--- you could have thirty counseling groups per one grade level---and with that being that it's just impossible to reach them all, so to do [small group counseling] it the normal way, 'I'm going to see a bunch of groups', doesn't see all the kids and meet all their needs, so it's like I'm having to adjust that. So that's a big gap--- trying to get to all of them [the students] so then I have to adjust how I see them. I can't see them in a normal counseling 'I'm going to pull a little group' setting. I got to either see them massly [sic] or go into the classrooms and do more guidance, do more small groups within the classrooms, so then I'm hitting it more globally and not always [doing] that one-on-one individual [counseling]…

Even though Marcy has adapted her skills to the needs of the campus, she was struggling

to handle the workload that had become too much. Marcy described handling one task

effectively only to be given another task by her administrator in a never ending cycle of

need fulfillment at her Title 1 school. Marcy shared:

> It is hard to--- it was harder last year---to accept that I didn't get everything done.
>
> This year, it's easier to accept; [it] still stresses me out when I can't stay until 9
>
> o'clock at night to finish all of my work, when there's paperwork and other things
>
> that need to be done. I think it's just that, I don't know if there's a balance yet,
>
> 'cause I'm still trying to juggle it all, and then it seems like the more I do, then the
>
> more little 'other duties as assigned' come to me--- or because I'm doing this
>
> [task] so well, 'hey can you also handle this [other task]?'… I think also, the more
>
> you can multitask, the more tasks that they [administrators] give you to multi-
>
> manage.

Stacy expressed that her optimism fades early every year when the reality of her

role and the heavy workload sinks in. Stacy said:

> So at the beginning of each year, I'm always so optimistic and I have these great
>
> plans for groups that I want to hold that year. Because I know the kids now---I've
>
> been here five years--- so I know a lot of the kids that I want to pull for groups,
>
> things that I want to do. September comes; I'm all gung-ho when I get started.
>
> Then it's like, 'Oh yeah, this event is happening or I have to do this', but as the
>
> year goes on, it becomes very difficult to follow through [with the plans]. Then
>
> like we do have so many kids with so many problems and we can't get to all of

them--- so that's frustrating. I start out in September with great ideas, great plans, great lessons I've thought of--- great groups I want to hold--- and then come October, maybe November, things are just falling apart because there's just chaos everywhere.

John had multiple and varied roles at his Title 1 campus. He recounted them all.

I'm on the LPAC Committee; I go to STAT and talk about behavior… I have Red Ribbon Week. I'm on the Above and Beyond Committee. I do Backpack Buddies… as far as keeping the numbers that we have and sending information back and forth with the Houston Food Bank. I take care of that… I do school supplies and everything… [I] do give them away, backpacks, coats, shoes. I go over to the apartments probably once every couple [of] weeks--- obviously helping the teachers; we do parent meetings and home visits. It's interesting to do that. Oh, I'm also in charge of the crisis team--- I write our plans.

Although he is receptive to his numerous and varied responsibilities, John had an aversion for ARD (Admission Review Dismissal) meetings and he recalled why. John stated:

I only go [to ARDs] as an LPAC rep if there's nobody else that can go. That's the only time I do ARDs. When I first was a counselor, we did all the ARDs and we did spring ARDs and so, between testing and ARDs, there was no counseling. Once we hit January, counseling was over. I used to tell people, 'I'm an 'ARD-vark'; if you want to find me, I'll be in the conference room.' I would be there from eight in the morning 'til four in the afternoon.

The ARD meetings used to keep John away from seeing the students. Jane also feels

overwhelmed at the number of meetings that she has to attend. Jane discussed:

> To tell you the truth, in everything, I hate the meetings. Meeting, meeting,
>
> meeting, meeting. Look at how many meetings we have to go through during a
>
> year… We'll go to PLC [Professional Learning Community] meetings, and I
>
> guess it's important for us to be in the loop. Then we have to do SAP [Student
>
> Assistance Program], PPC [Prevention Program Coordinator], FAME, and STAT
>
> meetings.

> Ginger communicated a similar sentiment of having too much to handle. She not

only had multiple roles and multiple duties that she must handle, but also multiple people

to answer to, which was an additional serving on an already full plate. Ginger said:

> I mean there's things to work around and do, and then everything that's asked
>
> from admin, or for ILT or in preparation, along with your counseling duties, along
>
> with what is asked from assessment or from your counselor coordinator, etc. So
>
> you're not answering to one person, you're answering to at least three different
>
> ones during the year, as your boss.

Ginger answered to at least three different bosses while handling the multiple roles and

responsibilities that are required of her as a school counselor at her Title 1 elementary

school. She continued to express her disdain at having to turn students away due to what

she perceived as an overwhelming amount of duties, paperwork, and deadlines. Ginger

shared:

At the current time I just co-facilitate but in the past for many, many years I was facilitator of SDC (Shared Decision-Making Committee), Above and Beyond, those were my two [committees] that I did for 14 to 15 years. Now I just co-facilitate the Above and Beyond committee, I am a member on SDC and I help with the Social Committee... I have also been the co-chair for our Fall Festival, which is one of our biggest events... I am the [Section] 504 coordinator, mostly for the medical side of 504, the OHIs (other health impairments), but the REID person and I work together with the 504-dyslexics and the 504-medicals, and this is the first year that we have ever worked together because otherwise I was the person that was the solo 504 coordinator... I feel that there's a lot of gaps because there's a lot of paperwork and a lot of planning behind all of these events, or all of these committees that are facilitated... planning, meetings, trainings, etc. I feel that it does take away from my students when I have to say, "I'm sorry, I can't see you right now" because this is due and I have all these deadlines that are paperwork and computer-related or email-related. I feel that I'm turning away students sometimes and I don't like that.

Katherine was pulled in many different directions by her diverse roles and duties that she performed at her campus. She explained:

For teachers I do a lot of responsive services. Meaning in the mornings, I will walk around and just intervene with any issues or concerns the teachers may have about their students which changes from day to day. With the staff, I often do the same thing. I make my rounds, check in with my office, my administrators, and just intervene with any need that the campus might have for

that day. For parents as well, one of my roles is to be at the front door in the morning. So usually if parents have any requests for parent conferences with the counselors or with teachers they know that I'm there as a bilingual translator--- as well as for English speaking parents and just a voice for any need that they might have regarding their child when it comes to school.

In discussing how she handled all of her responsibilities, Katherine said, "I try not to schedule things, you know meeting wise, [Section] 504 [Program] wise, parent conferences, school meetings, on Friday morning, Friday afternoons, as well as Monday mornings, Monday afternoons just because that's when things happen." Katherine tried to leave her schedule as open as possible so that she could handle the needs of her campus on the days when she was accustomed to handling crises. Katherine further explained:

> Fridays are when kids are just finished with the week. That's when teachers are stressed. Children are ready for the weekend. So to leave my schedule open as much as possible on Fridays really helps, so when I do receive a phone call or a CPS issue--- I've noticed a lot of things happen on Fridays before children go off to the weekend---handling, you know CPS concerns, parents are sometimes off on Fridays, they tend to come in wanting to meet with you right away on a Friday. So just scheduling time, not putting so many things on my schedule, that I would be stressed if something popped up. So I only put things that are actual meetings and then I leave a lot of open space for just meeting the demand of the needs that come up daily.

In addition to the multitude of roles and various noncounseling duties that take up a large portion of time, school counselors in the state of Texas also have to deliver a comprehensive guidance curriculum that covers the seven areas identified to help students develop basic life skills, as revealed in the literature review. Covering all seven areas is a daunting task to handle in and of itself without the extraneous duties. Tasha expressed her concerns about wanting to cover all the areas in the comprehensive guidance curriculum, and also include crucial topics that her students would need such as "Stranger Danger", but inevitably falling short due to restrictions set on her time because of the myriad of responsibilities that she is required to complete at her Title 1 elementary school. Tasha admitted:

> You want to protect them from predators, you want to protect their private parts, how to do stranger danger, you know, it's just so much that you're wanting to incorporate and teach them. And so, you want to make your guidance lessons meaningful, you want to make your group lessons meaningful, you want to make your one-on-one lessons meaningful, so you're really trying to cover all areas. Sometimes you may not get to everything. Sometimes you may feel like, 'oh my gosh, if I had just taught him this.' And you just hope that the next campus, or the next grade level, or somewhere along the way, if there's something that you missed, that they'll get it.

Resent meaningless noncounseling duties. Despite the fact that school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools had too much to handle already with the multitude of roles, multiple bosses, heavy caseloads, and countless meetings, many counselors were executing duties unrelated to their mandatory counseling responsibilities

at the request of administrators. With all the needs for counseling services at Title 1

elementary schools, counselors ought to spend the majority of their time engaged in

direct and indirect student services. Seven participants in the present study indicated

feeling resentful of meaningless noncounseling duties that take time away from seeing

students. These participants were already stretched thin due to heavy workloads, so the

addition of meaningless noncounseling duties to their roles caused their responsibilities to

increase substantially, so much so that it became almost too much for these participants

to handle and they developed feelings of resentment. Therefore, this subtheme of *resent*

meaningless noncounseling duties was added under the theme of *too much to handle* to

accurately depict experiences as told by the participants. Ross and Herrington (2006)

suggested that having a diminished sense of autonomy, due to assuming duties unrelated

to their roles, led counselors to develop feelings of resentment. Alexandra expressed how

her noncounseling duties prohibited her from seeing her students in a meaningful way:

> If I didn't have the noncounseling duties, I would be able to see the kids on a
>
> more regular basis. I would be able to meet the needs of the students in a better
>
> way because I would be able to devote the time to meet the counseling needs of
>
> the students at my campus.

Alexandra discussed having a fading vision of her ideal role after performing

meaningless noncounseling duties for a period of years. She felt disempowered due to a

decreased sense of autonomy and began to deeply resent the duties. Alexandra shared:

> When I was first hired, I had a lot of vision for what I wanted my role to look like
>
> or be. Because on a Title I campus, you tend to have more needs in your families

and in your students. So you want to focus on that and be a difference in your

community and in your school, and help those families meet those needs. So that

was what my focus was when I first started but then I had so many other duties

added on top of that, that vision quickly slipped away. It wasn't able to be so

much on the forefront as I had hoped.

Ginger noticed that her noncounseling duties prevented her from seeing her

students for counseling. Her noncounseling duties consumed so much of her time that it

impeded her ability to work effectively on counseling-related responsibilities. Ginger

expressed:

> I'm always willing to help, but to be the main facilitator or main coordinator for
>
> many things takes a lot of time. I'm a person who likes to help, but helping is
>
> very different from coordinating, because coordinating takes so much more time.
>
> So when I'm over Boys Club and Girls Club, and I'm planning and meeting with
>
> those students, and going on field trips with them---and I do enjoy that. But does
>
> it take time out from my other students? It does, because I do meet with them so
>
> often. The coordination though, really does take a lot of time, and I'm really
>
> noticing it this year. I mean I have noticed it all along, but it is just finally coming
>
> to fruition how much time is taken with noncounseling duties because I also do
>
> three duties a day: a morning, a midday, and an afternoon--- and um--- it's a lot of
>
> time.

Furthermore, Ginger noticed that she could not perform any of her responsibilities at

100% anymore because she just had too many of them. She came to a realization that if

she had less extraneous noncounseling duties, then she could strive to be at 100%. Ginger explained:

> It is challenging because it seems like when you have it all worked out, then more duties come up and are added to your plate. You would assume my plate is full but I'm a "yes" person, so I would accept more and more. So do I feel strained in certain areas because of that… because I can't tell people no? I do. Do I do everything at 100% or as well as I can? No, because my hands are in a lot of things, with helping, and I think that if I had less I would have more of a focus at 100%.

Katherine described dealing with a noncounseling duty at her school and how it was a hindrance on her time and her ability to work with students. Katherine stated:

> [Section] 504 [paperwork] is one of the big non-counseling duties that I have this year. When it comes to a parent submitting a request for 504 services, I understand the counselor playing a role in that part because we take the information. Like let's say a letter for ADHD and the child needs help so, we're the ones on campus who understand that the most, however spending the hours, and hours, and hours, and hours of entering the forms into the Success Ed Program. For one student the other day that came from another campus with missing forms, I probably spent the entire day investigating where her old forms were, and where signatures were, emailing, calling district people, calling the last counselor, teachers and yeah. For a day like that day, I didn't get to see my students, or my teachers, or my parents because I had to get that done especially

because this child specifically was having major behavior issues. It was something that had to happen right away. So 504 takes a lot of investigating, that would just be really great if another position was made for that so that the counselor can be on standby for phone calls, and conferences, and just all kinds of things that come up day to day at such a needy campus.

Furthermore, Katherine shared that school counselors were not necessarily trained to handle all the details that came with some of these noncounseling duties because it was not a part of their role. She believed that these noncounseling duties would be better suited for someone else trained as an ancillary service provider at the school and not the duty of a school counselor. Katherine continued:

Here mostly it's [Section] 504 [paperwork] that I had no background knowledge really for. I mean I know what it is. I know what it was as a teacher. But to be messing with the Success Ed [computer] program and printing 504 forms and some of those things are not really what I would like to see. I think that's a position that anybody can be trained to do and not really a school counselor's job.

Sunny outright resented her noncounseling duties but she reported doing the duties anyway because she is just grateful to have her job. Sunny shared:

I resent them [noncounseling duties] a certain amount, part of me is happy and most of the time I'm happy enough with the fact that I am a counselor... that some of the other duties go by the wayside and [I] just do them because I feel lucky to have the position I have most of the time. Sometimes I resent them a lot, the other duties.

Tasha disclosed that she does not know why she has noncounseling duties, she just knew

that every member of ILT has a duty that they must do. Tasha just happened to have

three of these duties each day: two in the morning and one in the afternoon. She stated:

> I have cafeteria duty in the morning. But the way that they do it here is they
>
> rotate the ILT every nine weeks. So for the first nine weeks I was in the fourth
>
> grade hallway, second nine weeks I was somewhere else, third nine weeks… so
>
> they rotate the ILT team for the different morning duties. That's 7:15 AM until
>
> 7:45 AM because I also do morning announcements with the tech person. So we
>
> have a morning crew that comes with kids that we work with every day and then
>
> we do the announcements. In the afternoon, our duties start at 2:55 PM and
>
> because we come in at 7:15 AM, we get off at 3:15 PM, and so then that also
>
> rotates. The first semester I was outside, and then I was in the gym, and now I'm
>
> in the cafeteria, and so it's just like a rotating thing.

Jane reported having cumulative folder duty each year, so she was in charge of

keeping the records for her entire school. This was a clerical task that could have been

given to an ancillary service provider, but it was a duty that was specifically delegated to

Jane by her administrator. Jane explained her duty.

> Cume (cumulative) folders, I have to pick up, distribute to the teachers at the
>
> beginning of the year, keep up with it in terms of, if the teachers need to get the
>
> folder, they have to fill up the form and then I pull the folder and give it to
>
> them… Most of them [teachers] don't have those folders. So it's centrally located
>
> and to help the registrar, that was one of the duties assigned to me. So I have to

pick them up. I have to give it to the teachers at the beginning of the year. Pick

them up after a certain time. I make the schedule, come up with it, pick it up, and

put it back in the cabinets.

Jane made it a point to prioritize her more pressing counseling duties over the

noncounseling ones. Jane stated:

The noncounseling duties, if it has a deadline, I procrastinate and do other things--

- what I'm trained to do. I try to do that [counseling] first. And then I can do the

other [noncounseling] duties later. And I guess most times that's what I stay to do

when I'm here late because there's a lot of other stuff that has got to be done,

especially programs I want to do for the kids.

Stacy was very vocal about resenting meaningless noncounseling duties that take

her time away from performing essential counseling tasks at her Title 1 elementary

campus. Stacy believed that her noncounseling duties were not dependent on the needs

of students, but rather determined by administrators who saw her as an extra pair of

hands. She regraded her assigned noncounseling duties as busy work that served no

actual purpose. Stacy expressed:

The one thing that I'm most unhappy with is duty because we have duty in the

morning, which takes up an hour of my day, and duty in the afternoon, which

takes up like 30 minutes of my day. When I first came here, we had a different

principal. I did have duty in the morning, but my duty was to be in the cafeteria

looking out for problems--- like kids that needed something; that was what I was

told that my purpose was. Now my duty is that I can be just like an aide and go

watch the kids and make sure they're walking in a straight line. I have no purpose. Right now, I have car rider duty, so I'm opening car doors. I say to myself that I've got this Master's Degree to open car doors… in the rain. The other day I was soaked… So, yes, the counselor is outside in the rain opening car doors for like an hour. So that's a big portion of my day. Duties like that.

Stacy shared that her role was very different when she was first employed at the school years ago. Then the administration changed, and Stacy's role evolved into something entirely different. Stacy explained:

When I got the job here, they wanted a counselor because this is such a highly at-risk school with a lot of problems. That's what they were looking for. They wanted someone to counsel these high needs kids. I was not the 504 Coordinator. I was not the FAME Committee. I was not in charge of any of that. When I came, my first year here, the focus was on counseling and working with kids. So that first year I was able to do that. It was the following years when I got the new duties--- FAME, Student Council, then the [Section] 504 Coordinator. So that changed things--- changed the dynamics… But my role evolved into something else.

Stacy continued to explain that with the change in administration, not only was she assigned meaningless noncounseling duties but she was no longer a part of the leadership team at her school, which added to her resentment. Stacy explained:

Things that I never thought would happen, happens. Then, we're supposed to be part of the ILT (Instructional Leadership Team), but we're not really. We're there

in name only. Decisions that are made--- we're not consulted about anything---

nor are we told of decisions that have been made. So frequently we're in the dark

about what's actually going on around here. They'll [administrators] come to us

with something and we're like, 'Nobody told us--- we don't know what you know-

-- nobody said anything to us.

Stacy further shared that her biggest challenge is her feelings of resentment. She stated:

The challenge is just kind of resentment sometimes. That's my biggest challenge.

Some things I resent having to do. I resent duty. I really do. I just feel that

opening a car door is not what I was hired for--- I do, I really resent it [morning

car duty]. It's kind of crazy, or telling a kid to walk in a straight line every day---

that's not a counselor's role.

Along with being assigned meaningless noncounseling duties that are unconnected to

their training and purpose, school counselors may develop a sense of decreased autonomy

over their roles (Ross & Herrington, 2006), which can bring on feelings of resentment

toward administrators, thereby adversely influencing their role performance (Paolini &

Topdemir, 2013), and interfering with their personal wellness and contributing to work-

related stress and impairment (Young & Lambie, 2007).

Brief summary. This section focused on the many roles, responsibilities,

meetings, committees, and caseloads that school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools

must handle. Opinions in regard to the sheer number of responsibilities, tasks, and

services that are required to meet the needs of the students in their Title 1 elementary

schools were expressed. Participants' stories and case examples were broken into one

subtheme: *resent meaningless noncounseling duties*. Disclosure of participants' feelings in regards to assuming meaningless duties that are unrelated to their mandatory counseling responsibilities were expressed. Seven out of nine participants described resentment in regard to how these noncounseling duties keep them away from performing direct and indirect counseling services.

Enjoy working with kids and making a difference. The theme of enjoying their work with students and making a difference in the lives of students and their families was present throughout all of the participants' interviews. School counselors enjoying the time that they spend with kids is nothing new, but with the extraneous duties, heavy caseloads, multiple job demands, role ambiguity, short staffings, and budget cutbacks that is the reality of many Title 1 schools, it is refreshing to ascertain that all nine out of the nine participants made comments that supported the idea that school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools were focused on positively interacting with students, directly promoting student success, and making a difference in the lives of their students.

School counselors play an instrumental role in Title 1 schools by providing students with an array of expert services aimed at helping all students succeed. All participants disclosed that they enjoyed their work with kids and making a difference in the lives of students. John does whatever is needed for his students, no matter how complicated or how simple. John shared:

> [My expectation is] to be there for the kids, the best I can. The expectation is that I'm going to do things to help them be successful, academically and socially. I will do things to make sure that they grow up to be safe... Again, just to support the mission of the school, which is we want the kids to be academically

successful--- which means they have to have what they need. I work hard on

having school supplies for them, getting them uniforms. If they don't have shoes,

we draw a picture around theirs and I go down and get them a pair of $7 shoes at

the Family Dollar Store, whatever. You take that off in your taxes later on

anyways. Talk to them about test anxiety, test taking techniques.

John further expressed that counseling and helping kids gave his life meaning.

It gives me meaning in life because I'm helping keep kids safe. I'm helping kids

hopefully grow up to be strong. I love the quote it basically says, it's easier to

raise a healthy child than to fix a broken man. I kind of believe in that… this is

where I can mold and help kids.

John found it fulfilling when students come back and they remember what he has done

for them. John stated:

The most fulfilling is when a kid comes back, either a graduate or as a high school

student and says, "Hey, I remember when you did this. Or you did that."

Substitute teacher will come in and say, "Oh, I remember when you did McGruff

for us." Or teachers that work here will say, "I remember when you talked to us

about this in second grade and I use this." Or a parent will say, "Hey, you're the

guy that my son points out when I smoke a cigarette." That's cool. Or even when

they come back in uniform, I've had quite a few go into the marines. I was a jar

head. They'll come back and talk--- and their moms will bring them back in here.

Or you go to a place--- we'll go to the tailor--- and do something and kids are

coming up to you. They know who I am, I make sure of that. I'd say that's the most fulfilling.

Sunny talked about how she enjoys direct contact with the students, especially in the classroom setting. She stated, "I like the classroom guidance a lot. I find that part very fulfilling because you get to see children you would not see otherwise in the smaller groups or individual students---- and I like that part."

Similarly, Katherine finds it fulfilling to help families, students, and staff. Katherine said:

> Being a school counselor means that I come to work every day ready to help families, students, and also being there for staff when it comes to their personal, academic, and social needs. It's truly something I look forward to doing every morning when I come to work. It's a very fulfilling job.

Katherine further expressed that she not only enjoys working with the students at her Title 1 elementary school, but she also enjoys working with their families.

> I like working with the families a lot. I like families knowing that there's someone here that is like them. That comes from growing up in like the same community, the same family background culturally as well. We know that from graduate school that some cultures will shut down and not want to speak to a counselor, but here you know last year they had a non-bilingual counselor and there's a lot of positive feedback that has been very fulfilling this year from the staff, from the office, from parents, of just being grateful to have someone that is here for them. And if I don't know the answer they know that they can get outside

support, so that's very fulfilling. That makes me want to come back more and more and more next year, and years after hopefully, and just being here as the liaison for this specific community.

Katherine continued to express how she felt needed and valued by the students at her Title 1 elementary school. Katherine stated:

Because my passion has always been working with at-risk children as a teacher so that was easy to transition. Actually I transitioned to the two years at the upscale community and then came back last year, back to an at-risk Title 1 school. There's just something more fulfilling working with children that really need you. The other children, they needed me too at the upscale school. But they also get a lot of that at home so they'll be okay if you weren't there. These kids, a lot of them, like for example, last week I was out sick and the next day the assistant principal said, "There were three or four girls looking for you the minute they walked through the door and very disappointed that you weren't here because you were sick." So they know you might be that one person that they need. At the other [non-Title 1] school they had mom and dad and they have lots of friends and they have sports and so they need you in a different way--- as a role model--- but not in the sense of how these children here need you.

Marcy viewed school counseling as a way to help kids and their families, which is her mission in life. Marcy stated:

For me, school counseling is an opportunity to be able to really help families and children on a much bigger level than I did as a teacher, because I get to see much

more grade levels, and then to be able to not only be able to help the kids, but their families and the community. So to me, it's really being able to help and that's something that's near and dear to my heart. That's something I want to do in my life all the time.

Furthermore, Marcy expressed that she finds fulfillment in making a difference in the lives of her students. Marcy shared:

It's almost every moment that I see a child just be happy, that I've changed them. To have that little child that comes in and says, 'I need my stamp,' and then they feel better. 'I need my mommy kisses,' and that's just something silly that I created on the spur. But to make that child feel that, 'Okay, I'm okay to come to school today.'… That moment I fix something and I really, truly change that little child or that human being or that mom and send her on her way, that's the fulfilling moment.

Alexandra took the holistic approach in her work with students. Alexandra expressed, "Being a school counselor to me, means being able to help students be successful and a better, well rounded student--- and taking care of them socially, emotionally, and not just academically." Alexandra further stated:

The most fulfilling part of being a counselor is when I get to spend the time with the kids. Whether it's one on one, or in small groups specific for a need, or even doing classes with a whole class group, that's by far the most fulfilling. Then what I like least is the paper pushing.

Ginger expressed that she is always willing to help students, parents, and teachers in her role as a school counselor. Ginger said:

As a school counselor, I feel that I am a child's advocate and teacher advocate. Here in my building, I want to help every child that I can, in any way that I can, as well as the teachers. I'm also here for teachers so I feel that it's very important that everybody has their needs taken care of… I'm here for parents when they have problems or issues with teachers or administration, or maybe something happening in the community. I'm here for parent conferences with teachers and parents as well, to help our students. I am here to counsel our students and help them in any way I can, whether it's in individual counseling, small group counseling or counseling with character education at each grade level. Also, finding other services, as needed, for outside counseling, outside therapy. Maybe somebody is having a hard time at home, or is separated or divorced and finding more social work services for them as well.

Jane expressed similar sentiments about wanting to help people as the primary purpose of her role.

On a personal level, being a school counselor means I have to come in here and work with kids to the best of my ability. That's what it means to me… But I know I want to help people. My whole goal was to learn it and go back home and apply, but I'm still here.

Furthermore, Jane enjoyed working with parents of the kids at her Title 1 campus and giving them parenting tips. Jane expressed:

I'm a firm believer in learning from other people's mistakes. It doesn't necessarily have to happen to me, but I know people it happens to. I've seen what has gone on, what has happened and what they did to fix it. I try to give parents tips like that, and I love doing that.

Tasha wanted to meet with kids and make a lasting impact on them. She stated, "My expectation is that I would be able to meet with the students and just make an impact as far as on their morals and ethics, and just being a well-rounded person…" Tasha also enjoys working with kids in the classroom setting and giving them valuable yet fun lessons. Tasha stated:

> And then we have our groups, we have our guidance lessons, those are fun and interesting. We try to make them more engaging because we just don't want the kids sitting and listening, so we try to have them up and moving, and do some computer things. We do career things with the kids, we have our career fair like in the spring time. So we try to incorporate a lot of fun things as well as informational things for the staff and for the parents.

Tasha explained further about the most fulfilling aspect of her role as a school counselor. Tasha said:

> It's fulfilling--- first of all, that the child knows my name, because that means that I have been to them, they have listened to me, we've built some type of rapport, and that when they come up to me and hug me, "When are you going to pull me out? I want to do this. When can I come back to your office to do this?" I just think that, I hope that I've made an impact--- that they want to come back and do

an activity. I like it when a child says, "You've helped me with this" or they're excited to tell me how things are going with them at home, or in class, when I see them on my duty, they'll run up to me and hug me. That's the best feeling, boys and girls want to hug you and tell you that, "My mom is still there" or "Thank you for talking to me about that". I think those are the most fulfilling because you really want to feel like you've done something to just help that child or that family.

Stacy shared her story about why she became a school counselor.

I went into counseling because I was a teacher for 28 years and I used to have kids come talk to me about their problems. I liked talking to them and trying to guide them so I went into school counseling in order to help kids and help them solve their problems. That's why I went into school counseling.

Stacy further expressed how she enjoys working with her students first and foremost, despite the other noncounseling duties at her school. Stacy stated:

I wear many hats. So my primary purpose is to work with the kids. So I do individual counseling as needed and I try to have groups, but a lot of times they get interrupted by other things--- scheduling changes, people don't want the kids out of the class; [I] try to get everybody to work and sometimes getting the groups together is very difficult. So I do have the groups that I work with. We do have the opportunity here to go do classroom lessons… there's a bullying lesson we do and a career lesson that we do. I always do this kindness lesson--- then the introduction to counseling [lesson] and after you get through the whole school---

so we do get to do those kind of lessons with a group and being a teacher for 28

years that I have fun with and I enjoy that. And okay so beyond that are more

noncounseling duties.

Stacey continued to explain what she finds the most fulfilling about her work with

students at her Title 1 elementary school. Stacy expressed:

The fulfilling thing is when I get to know the kids and I meet the kids--- and they

know me. I feel like I'm doing something for them. Sometimes I can see that I've

done something for them--- sometimes--- but sometimes I can't reach these kids---

there's just some that no matter what I do, I'm not getting to them. I wish I had a

magic wand that I could use in that case.

Brief summary. This section explored how school counselors felt about their

roles in Title 1 elementary schools and their desire to work with kids and to leave a

lasting impression on them. All participants expressed the importance of helping

students succeed as the motivation in their daily work with students. The participants

disclosed stories and scenarios about what is salient and meaningful in their role as

school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools.

Utilize me effectively. According to ASCA (2012), school counselors are

supposed to devote 80% of their time to direct and indirect student services, with the

other 20% of time appropriated to program planning and school support. In Title 1

elementary schools, a large portion of the school counselor's time is spent on other duties

as assigned by administrators. These other duties may include disciplinary functions,

morning or afternoon or lunch duty, test administration, fundraising, sponsoring clubs,

chairing committees, and coordinating events or festivals or parades at the school. These

noncounseling duties relegated to school counselors impede upon their ability to engage

in direct and indirect services with students. Administrators determine the role of the

school counselor (Amatea & Clark, 2005) and they may put counselors in the role of

disciplinarian, behavior interventionist, or in-school suspension monitor at the school,

which is in direct conflict with the counselor's training and standards. During this

phenomenological study, nine out of the nine elementary school counselors passionately

expressed a strong desire to be more effectively and appropriately utilized at their Title 1

schools according to their training and expertise. Eight out of the nine participants also

voiced their inclination to just counsel students without having to perform other

extraneous noncounseling duties and ancillary services that usually come with the school

counselor's role. Therefore, this theme was divided to include a subtheme in order to

accurately portray the participants' experiences.

Sunny explained that keeping records takes a lot of her time, that time could be

spent seeing students. Sunny said:

> I have to record all the data, all the students I see, and all the small groups I serve.
>
> And that recording takes a lot of time, and I think I could be seeing children if I
>
> wasn't recording all this.

Sunny further expressed, "I feel like I know that the [counseling] program could

be different if all these other extraneous things were not attached to my job…" John

shared that sometimes he is put in the disciplinarian role by his administrators and he

does everything possible to not be in that position. John declared:

If you want me to be the counselor, I'll be the counselor. If you want me to be

another admin person... if I see a kid that needs to be disciplined, I'll look at them

[administrators] and say, "I'm not going to discipline that kid. That's you guys.

I'll talk to him after you discipline him. Don't expect me to put that kid in SAC

(Student Activities Center)." I stay away from that part of it.

Similarly, Marcy talked very passionately about administrators assigning her

various roles that are in direct conflict with her main role as the school counselor at her

Title 1 school. Marcy shared:

Tardy duty is something that I don't think I could be doing at that very moment,

that I would benefit more from being in the cafeteria with those kids coming in

that were late, to get them to class. Because you know what, if they're late,

they're probably stressed out, and I would be able to help with that so I can make

those meaningful connections…. And then when it comes to PLC (Professional

Learning Communities) meetings, as much as I believe in being part of the groups

that I serve, at the same time, it brings me into the academic world, where that

PLC time--- that's a crucial 45 minutes--- that I could be pulling [counseling]

groups. So I feel like that is something that I see [as] a benefit, but I see a bigger

benefit supporting the kids during PLC time.

Marcy continued to talk about her other roles that were assigned to her by the

administrators of her Title 1 elementary school that are disconnected from her counselor

role. Marcy stated:

For my campus I mean at the beginning of the year when the leadership team spent the whole semester--- pretty much, nine weeks--- doing walk-throughs of classrooms. Yeah, we got in the classrooms, but you know what? I'm in the classroom judging--- and that tinged on the wrong role.... I didn't feel that was the correct role for me, to be in there doing those types of classroom walk-throughs… when it comes to academic RTIing, academic support in the classroom. I don't like that line being blurred because it isn't what I'm supposed to be in there [the classroom] for. I'm supposed to be in there to help this child psychosocially not, "Oh, let me help you with your math or small group lesson." So that's blurring the lines a little bit and I wouldn't want it to be the case… not that I'm not willing to help, but I should be used--- utilized in a different manner, if they [the administrators] need me to help.

Furthermore, Marcy did not want the teachers at her school to view her as an administrator because of roles that were delegated to her by the administrators. Marcy expressed:

I want to be able to, for not only with the students--- having them be open with me--- I also never want teachers to see me as, "Oh, you're a part of administration," because I'm not. "I'm in there to support you [the teacher], and this child, and what I say helps you" that's not, you know, like an administrator. So every so often you get that tinge of someone might be holding back because they think that you're there to judge them in a way that's going to hurt them. When, no, no, no. "What you [the teacher] say to me [the counselor], it's about you and me. How I'm going to help you. How the team is going to help you or

whatever it is", and then not that, "Oh well, this is going to hurt your T-test [teacher evaluation]," you know?

Similarly, Stacy was intensely vocal when she shared her experiences of being assigned roles that were inconsistent with her training and values. Stacy stated:

I've heard the assistant principal say before, "Oh well, let's just let the counselors take on some of those duties that we have. Give it to the counselors." I've fought it. This one day she [the assistant principal] was in the hall and I was busy doing something counseling wise. She saw me in the hall and she goes, "Well, you want to take her [a student] to here or do you want to do this?" I said, "I'm in the middle of something right now. I'm not doing anything but continuing with the job that I was hired for." And I walked away. She never said another word. But that kind of frustration I feel--- that they think we're just sitting here twiddling our thumbs--- frustration, that's my feeling, and lack of respect. I just feel that.

Stacy continued to share about how she was asked to deal with behavior problems at her Title 1 school and how that experience put her in a disciplinarian role that conflicted with her values as a counselor. Stacy expressed:

Our administration team basically leaves us alone except for like if one of them is going to be out, then they ask us to go deal with behavior. At this campus, we have a lot of behavior issues. Frequently, we're called to go help with behavior. Just controlling behavior--- like an administrator would--- not necessarily counseling behavior. See, we're [counselors] not supposed to do anything with behavior because we're the safe people. We're the ones that the kids can feel

comfortable coming to talk to. When we're seen as disciplinarians they're not going to open up to us.

Furthermore, Stacy felt as if she received no respect from the administrative team at her campus. Stacy admitted:

Well, the morning duties and those noncounseling duties, the administration assigns them. I don't understand why I'm opening car doors. I'm frustrated and I'm angry because like on the list of people at the school: there's principal and then if the principal is not here, who's in charge? Counselors. But we're not treated with any of that kind of respect. The thing I like the least about being here is: I got this Master's Degree and I don't feel like I'm treated like I got a Master's Degree. Frequently, I feel like I'm on the level of the---not the custodian---but close.

Stacy expressed that she and her counseling partner are delegated "awful duties", such as the role of campus testing coordinator, that they must share. Stacy said:

We share all the stuff with the testing. She [other counselor] does all the mentoring stuff. She's got stuff that she does and then I have stuff that I do. But some of the stuff we share--- awful stuff---like testing. STAAR testing and Naglieri testing, we share.

In addition to feeling as if she was not treated with respect, Stacy also felt that she was just a "worker bee" at her campus. Stacy expressed:

There's a great lack of communication. A lot of times things will come up that I should've known something and I wasn't told. Well, even now, like we have the awards ceremony and well, I'm in charge of Student Council. That's another one. I'm in charge of Student Council, but the assistant principal is supposedly the head of it--- so she controls it--- but I'm the worker bee. So I've done Student Council, all the activities all year long but I'm not in charge necessarily. Today when we had our awards ceremony, they hadn't ordered the medals yet. So I felt, I don't know, like I didn't do my job because I wasn't there with the medals to give to the kids--- but it wasn't really my job.

In relation to Stacy's story, Alexandra also believed that administrators do not respect the school counselor's role. She expressed frustration that counselors basically get to do what administrators do not want to do. Alexandra stated:

I think that a lot of times what other administrators don't want to do, gets thrown on the counselor. So, I feel sometimes that the importance of the [counselor] position is not very honored by administration because we're pulled from our counseling duties on the regular and for seemingly, lots of different reasons. So, I think that our [counselor] position is not respected… My principal determines my role… I mean, earlier on in my career, I was able to focus more on counseling and less on other duties. But, now I have all these other responsibilities.

Alexandra further stated that she would have gone back to school to be an administrator if she wanted to perform administrative tasks at her campus. That was not her choice;

Alexandra reported that she went to school to be a school counselor, but expressed that she does little counseling at her school. Alexandra shared:

> I mean I do feel like I'm a professional person, but as far as being hired to be a professional school counselor, I feel like I get to do very little of that and a whole lot of administrative tasks, like an administrator would… I think that if I wanted to do administrative work, I would go back to school and become that--- become an administrator and not a school counselor. But as a counselor, I wish that I could focus more on the counseling duties.

Tasha felt as if her counseling responsibilities were not always respected and that her administrators utilized her to get students and to deal with problematic behaviors. Tasha explained:

> On a personal level, I feel like I should be able to make a difference to my students and even to my staff and parents. Sometimes though, I feel like my talents are not used for that reason. I'm used for behavior, specifically, to go get kids. Unless I am specifically in a classroom at the time, they [administrators] feel like I'm doing nothing, and so, they feel like they're able to just use me to do just whatever is needed to be done. And I get that, but I think a school counselor is supposed to have specific goals and specific things, like an outline--- our curriculum--- to follow. I don't feel like that's always respected.

Tasha further disclosed that it was difficult to be put in the disciplinarian role by administrators because it impaired the trusting relationship that she shared with her students. Tasha stated:

The thing where I seem to have a conflict though is when I'm more in a disciplinary role and that crosses the line of my counseling role. It's kind of hard to go back and forth because I have this counseling relationship with this child and now I have to be the disciplinarian and they may not trust me as much, or they look at me a little differently, or they're not as open to talk to me because I had to call their parents about a discipline [issue], you know, so that is difficult sometimes. It's not easy. It's not easy to do both.

Furthermore, Tasha shared that she was required to carry a walkie-talkie, just as the administrators did on her campus, so that administration could get in touch with her if they needed assistance. Tasha said:

We do carry--- we're supposed to carry it [walkie-talkie], I don't always have it with me…. If the admin is out and he's the only one here, or if they're all in meetings and they need assistance, but usually, this year though, it's been less frequent that we've been called [on the walkie-talkie]. But we will. They [administrators] still call us. Like I said, if they're in meetings or they're off campus, or if they're just tied up with other kids, other situations and there's things happening all over the building. But yes, we are required to carry it.

Ginger would prefer to not have the role of the campus trainer in addition to her counselor role. She was the designated representative from her school that attended district-level trainings. She was then required to train the staff of her school on the newly acquired material. Ginger shared:

Not having to sit in so many meetings [is what I would change] because that really takes hours, and days out per month. I think everybody would probably feel that way, all kinds of trainings that you constantly need to do, and then once you go through it, then you have to come back and train everyone and anybody who was absent and then in smaller groups sometimes just so they understand and can ask questions, it takes time.

Ginger also shared that she has learned to hide her talents from her administrators for fear that she would be assigned yet another role at her school based on her exhibited talents. Ginger expressed:

When they [administrators] know that you can handle a given task and you can do it, then you become the person. I've learned to just not speak up anymore and [to not] say "oh, okay I can do that", because when you do make those suggestions then it [the task] becomes yours. Lesson learned.

Jane felt as if she was utilized as a social service provider at her school. She believed that most of her time was spent giving out resources to students and families in need. Jane explained:

I feel more like I'm into social services, here as the school counselor because calling parents and telling them, "Why the kid didn't take a shower? Why the kid smell so bad? Why they didn't bring them to school on time? And then they didn't get to eat breakfast at home. The cafeteria is closed for breakfast." And that's just a little bit, but I feel sometimes like parents, what they have us do is social services. Pure and simple.

Jane further explained that she made numerous phone calls for the cafeteria manager at her school because parents did not refill lunch money on the students' lunch accounts, so those students could only get a peanut butter and jelly sandwich from the cafeteria each day until their parents brought money to refill their lunch accounts. Jane expressed:

> And sometimes I'll call [the parents], most times, the number don't work. And sometimes when she [the cafeteria manager] calls, the number doesn't work, but I know to go to the nurse, get the number from the nurse, or call the child and tell the child depending on the grade, "Sweetie, you know you have no money on your account, right?" "Yes." I say, "You know you're supposed to take that paper home to your mom and if you leave it in the cafeteria, you will eat a peanut butter sandwich tomorrow. Okay?" He'll [student] say, "Yes." I say, "If you don't tell your mom, you're old enough to let your mom know. You can go home and tell her everything else, true and untrue. You're supposed to be telling her you need money on your account. Do not be afraid of her. She's not going to eat you. Tell her.

Furthermore, Jane stated that she was utilized as the disciplinarian at her campus, which she very much disliked. Jane shared:

> Oh, let me tell you one other thing, I hate being the one to have to take the kids when they misbehave out of the room. Because then I have to go--- and I want to talk to those same kids and they would be like, "okay, she put me in SAC the other day, so why should I go with her?" If you really need me to talk to a kid, but if the teachers have no way, or when administrators are in meetings,

somebody has got to do it. I prefer doing that and having the other 20 kids learn [in the classroom] than to have that one kid disturb the entire class. I dislike doing it, but I have to do it.

Jane further explained:

Yes, sometimes it does interfere with my counselor role because if I pull that kid and took that kid to SAC, then I'm telling that kid something else next time or I come to the class to do anything, they probably will not listen to me. They probably will be the one making a noise and being rude and disrespectful. I try not to do that as much as possible.

Jane continued to explain that although she was happy to help, she did not want anything to interfere with her primary role as the school counselor of a Title 1 elementary school. Jane stated:

I'm happy to help a lot of the times, but there are times when I have to do something important, maybe see a child, but then I have to go pull another kid because that kid from a class is disrupting, stuff like that. Then I have to make my students wait if I have to go and do group.

Just let me counsel - no extras. Along with the theme of being effectively utilized at their campuses as counselors, eight out of the nine participants conveyed their desire to just counsel students, which was their mandatory responsibility, and to not be burdened down with other extraneous noncounseling duties, meetings, committees, administrative tasks, and ancillary services. Sunny expressed:

My ideal role would be all the extraneous things would be taken away and I could

strictly counsel; that would be ideal. I wouldn't have the duties, and all the other

committees and all the other before and after school things, and the working on

the Red Ribbon Week and the Kindness Week and all. You know, if all those

would disappear.

Similarly, John had the role of testing coordinator in addition to his school

counselor role at his Title 1 elementary school. John stated:

Just it would be great if there was a test coordinator and they took us out of that

[testing role] completely so that we can do our job: counsel students. That's the

only thing I wish; take it away. Get that STAAR out of here! It's not two hours.

Katherine shared her sentiment of just wanting more time to counsel. Katherine

said, "Just having more time to counsel--- not going to so many meetings so that I could

visit each classroom more during the week." Marcy also just wanted to be able to

counsel and to work with kids. Marcy expressed:

I could ideally just to really just work with kids. Not doing [Section] 504

[paperwork], not worrying about what's going on in STAT, or "who's the Special

Ed kid", or "why haven't we RTIed (Response to Intervention) them", even

though that's not my role, but still playing that role you know. "Why didn't you

get this medical release so this kid can be 504? Oh wait, he needs to be Special

Ed." There's a lot of that happening. I wish that wasn't part of my role.

Marcy further added that she would like the ability to make her own schedule to counsel students. She stated:

> Ideally, my role would be that I can see children. I can make a master schedule for my day, and I can literally see the individuals that I needed to see but then also see multiple groups of children per grade level. And that ideally, it didn't affect their academic schedule. That I could just create this master schedule that just fit me. Then I got to see everybody and I got to make those connections. And that everyone scheduled a meeting with me, versus, "Can someone just see you right now?" That would be ideal. Of course, I know it's not [going to happen], but that would be the magic wand like, "Here's my schedule, I will pencil you in at whatever time because that's when I have an available slot." That would be amazing.

Ginger revealed that her ideal role at her Title 1 elementary school would be student-centered so that her focus would solely be on assisting students and that her other noncounseling roles would be taken away.

> Yes, [my ideal role] would be very different… I would just do strict counseling, these kids need me every day and so do the parents and so do the teachers, and I feel like I cannot fulfill it [my counseling role] daily for as much as they need it, with everything else that I'm the coordinator over, and the expectations of other things other than counseling. So I think that it should be strictly counseling but helping with a duty, at least one duty, and having my GT [groups] because I still think that's assisting students. Having my clubs, that's assisting students and

helping them--- student centered. Would I want the paperwork and the [Section] 504 [coordinator role] and all of that taken away? Absolutely.

Similarly, Tasha said that her focus should be on the student, and not on her role as testing coordinator that was assigned to her at the school. Tasha did mention the reality of working at a Title 1 school district means accepting all of the roles and making it work.

> I think my ideal role would be to not have to do testing. But just focus on just the kid. Just the child and the needs of the staff and how to provide adequate resources. But I know that in this district, it is what it is. It's just what we have to do. We just make it work. I do know that self-care is very important and I have been just reminded of that. Like you have to take care of yourself to be able to take care of people and things on your job… and so, we just make it work, make it happen.

Stacey admitted that there are too many noncounseling duties at her school that prevents her from doing the things that she wants to do with her students. Stacy explained:

> My ideal role is what I plan in September or August--- or whenever it is before the school year starts--- to do with my groups. Because truly I have like--- look at these books with ideas, and lessons--- I mean, I've got a million things that I want to do with the kids. I look through the books for career things. I have so many big plans for career things because I love doing career stuff with the kids and I have all the stuff I want to do, but then it just never leads to fruition. It just

doesn't happen because of all the other things--- noncounseling duties--- that we have to do… No, we were not hitting all the counseling domains by any means--- there just isn't time--- because there's so much other stuff going on.

Similarly, Alexandra just wanted to be a counselor at her school and to not be burdened down with the other roles that were assigned to her.

My ideal role would be to solely be just a counselor and be able to meet with kids and classes, and groups, and parents. You know, [to] have even courses, or classes, or meetings for parents to try to help them with parenting and answer their questions and help them be better parents to their kids who are in school. Then to meet with these kids on a regular basis and meet their needs in a better way if they're not being met at home--- so to try to get those needs met here at school.

Brief summary. This section focused on the participants' sentiments to be utilized effectively as counselors and not used in other roles that were unrelated to their training and values. All nine of the participants felt that they should be utilized effectively as counselors. Stories in which the participants were not utilized according to their training were shared and broken down into a subtheme: *just let me counsel - no extras*. Eight of the nine participants expressed a shared desire to just counsel at their Title 1 elementary schools, instead of being appointed extraneous roles, functions, and duties.

STAAR testing prevents me from seeing students. The theme of STAAR testing preventing school counselors from seeing students was prevalent throughout all

nine participant interviews. More specifically, nine out of the nine participants stated that

coordinating STAAR assessments impeded their ability to see students. Testing

coordinator is the role for many counselors (Baker, 2001). In elementary schools,

STAAR testing affects grades 3, 4, and 5 (for elementary campuses with 5th grade) in the

spring time. Students in those grade levels take at least 2 STAAR assessments and their

scores affect the accountability and the rating for the entire school. So it is not unusual

for principals to put a lot of pressure on school counselors to flawlessly coordinate and

execute STAAR testing. The emphasis on STAAR scores as determinants for a school's

accountability rating puts a heavy burden on school counselors to get everything

STAAR-related correct. The school counselor's time spent coordinating STAAR testing,

leads to counselors not being able to be see students around the time of state assessments.

Katherine stated how STAAR testing affects her students. She believed that

students' needs were being put on the back burner to coordinate STAAR testing. She

expressed:

> Even for students that are [STAAR] testing, the ones who we are actually doing
>
> the testing for, those kids have needs that come up during those [STAAR testing]
>
> times as well and we kind of stop everything to get their [STAAR test booklets
>
> and answer documents] documents ready and that's an issue. Because even
>
> though we're responsible for testing, come testing day that child hasn't had his or
>
> her needs met which therefore results in low testing scores--- and at this campus
>
> there's two counselors--- I work with the younger ones: pre-K, kinder, and first
>
> grade. The other counselor works with second, third, and fourth [grades]. So I
>
> help a lot with [STAAR] testing which takes me away from the needs of the lower

[grade] children who aren't even at a [STAAR] testing level. So then those children are asking for me, why I haven't seen them, why we haven't pulled groups, why I haven't visited their classroom, when is the next time I'll come do a guidance lesson. So they realize it's been over a month [since I've seen them] because it takes a very long time to get all the [STAAR] testing documents ready and then not to mention the week pretty much that you dedicate to [STAAR] testing. Preparing, dispersing everything, and then collecting everything. So it [STAAR testing] does take a lot of time.

Katherine further stated that school counselors should not have to handle the role of STAAR testing coordinators. She shared:

I would like to see as far as [STAAR] testing not be a part of the [school counselor] role because of how much time it takes during the year. The meetings that we've had for STAAR this year, any day that we were gone for STAAR [training] that messed up the whole week because you had to shuffle all your counseling needs to be able to make it off campus [for] a half-day or a day [of STAAR training].

Katherine felt that it was unfair to students when the counselors could not see them because they were obligated to coordinate STAAR testing at the school. Katherine continued:

You have to tell the students in PK through 2nd grades it's [STAAR] testing time, "Oh when the big [3rd and 4th grade] kids are done STAAR testing then you'll come see us." They say, "It's been a long time." I'm like, "I know." My [PK

through 2nd grade] students say, "Can you come now?''… And I think some campuses are different where that's okay. They'll be okay without the counselor, but here at this school, you know every single child is coming in with very low SES. You know, just issues--- violence at home, family issues--- and those things can't be overlooked, especially when they don't seek outside help. We are the only help they have in the community so that's very stressful to a younger child. To explain that to them--- that you can't see them because of [STAAR] testing--- they don't understand that.

Sunny stated, "Testing is a really big rock and to do [STAAR] schedules, it's a lot." John reported that STAAR testing takes up every hour of the work day for two weeks straight. John said, "The other thing is testing, which takes how many hours a day for that two weeks, every hour and then some. I've got a good team here which I've never had before; they could do it without me". Marcy conveyed that she was hired to be the counselor, not the STAAR testing coordinator. Marcy shared:

When it comes to STAAR, it's a big role. At the same time, it shouldn't be a big role of the counselor because of the fact that it doesn't have to be. There are schools where it's the AP. I mean, there's other elementary school districts where it's not the counselor. So that, is something that I feel my role doesn't need to be.

Jane expressed that it was difficult for her to see students for group counseling during the weeks leading up to the STAAR tests. She shared:

Well, I probably could be doing more lessons with the kids in classes, but as you know, we spend a lot of time doing prep for STAAR… But if I got my [STAAR]

tote trays already set up on my sofa, I'm not going to let the kids come in here cause' you don't know what they're going to touch. Sometimes I don't feel comfortable talking to the kids about certain things in the library, and other people use the offices… So it's difficult to find a place where you would have that kid focused and you will talk to the kids… Yes, during [STAAR] testing time, it is difficult to meet with my group. If I meet with them, it's not anything substantial. I probably will just pick them up [and say], "Hey, how are you doing? How was… good news? Bad news? I saw you in SAC the other day--- what's going on?" [Checking in] and stuff like that.

Tasha was very vocal regarding how she felt about STAAR testing. She believed that coordinating STAAR assessments shuts down counseling. She expressed:

Unfortunately, when testing time comes, we do the [STAAR] Writing [test], and that's when we start kind of--- not turning kids away--- but it's like, "if it's an emergency, send them down, if it's an emergency other than that, we really have to get this STAAR stuff ready" because that's what basically determines the scores. If it's not done correctly--- we don't want to miss anything. When big STAAR [math and reading STAAR tests] comes around, I mean, it's so many details involved in that.

Furthermore, Tasha explained the pressure that came with being required to coordinate STAAR assessments and being obligated to collaborate with multiple departments within the school. Tasha conveyed:

It [STAAR] encompasses other departments, so it's not just you working on it, you're working with ESL, you're working with Special Education and you're hoping that they've done their part because it's a trickle effect. If they haven't done their part, you can't effectively do your part. Then on the day of the test, it's like you better have it right.

Tasha recalled the added pressure of having a crisis situation and being in charge of the school at the time that she was preparing for STAAR testing. Tasha stated:

It's not like you have a trial run, where they do the practice test. It's not an all campus thing but on the day of the test, it's pretty much like we have to have it right. We don't have that much time to prepare from when the booklets get here until the test, and if you're pulled away--- if there's a CPS issue or if someone's grandfather died or just things come up that you wouldn't believe--- the administrators are out of the building and you're in charge of the building and when anything happens. Really? Like how do I work on a testing deadline basically and I'm in charge of the building?

Tasha concluded that she would want to get rid of testing responsibilities from her role as the school counselor. She stated:

That's testing--- I wish that was something that could change. But unfortunately, I don't think that's ever going to happen in this district. If I go to somewhere else, there's other issues that you deal with. They may not have STAAR [testing] but they may have GT [testing]…

Similarly, Ginger finds it hard to see students when she is preparing for the STAAR assessments.

> I am the only counselor at this campus; we've only always had one. Therefore, yes, I am the testing coordinator. It takes a lot of time; I don't get to see students because my office is a locked area at that time and I do have the only key. It's a lot of prep, it's a lot of training, it's a lot of checking, it's boxing, it's scanning… and I don't have the time for the students. They say, "are you seeing me today, can we see you today, am I seeing you today?" Begging to be seen basically [between] two administrations of the STAAR test, most likely more than three weeks for sure [of preparing] and between the two administrations of that test, and at least a week [to prepare] for the Naglieri [testing].

Alexandra shared the same sentiments that coordinating STAAR testing took a lot of her time. She stated, "A big noncounseling duty is assessment. Being a testing coordinator takes a lot of time in the spring semester."

Stacy passionately conveyed that a huge amount of work went into STAAR testing. She expressed:

> Oh, and I forgot! Testing! I'm telling you, for two months I would say I was here [as the Testing Coordinator] until 7 PM every day. So just getting ready for testing. Especially, this year with the "Oh, this one could be small group! This one could be over here!" … We also had, "This one needs to be request [accommodations]. This one needs to be read-all [accommodations]." So we had to put them [the students] in small groups [for STAAR]. So we had like a million

small groups; [teachers said] "This one [student] doesn't need it [accommodations] for math. This one needs it for reading. This one needs it for this." Oh my god!

Stacy continued to express the extreme pressure that she was under to get everything correct and ready for STAAR testing. She stated:

So this year testing, I'm telling you, two months... I had that [testing] sign on my door [for two months] and the kids were like, "Are you going to see me? Are you going to see me now? When are you going to see me?" I had to tell them, "I can't. I'm sorry." I was literally running around here like a crazy woman and the staff just thinks, "Oh it's a test. Just pass them out." Nobody realizes how much work goes into coordinating the STAAR tests.

In addition to the pressure that she was under to prepare and coordinate STAAR testing, Stacy also believed that STAAR testing hampered her ability to counsel students at her Title 1 elementary school. Stacy continued:

This was the hardest year of STAAR. So that was two months of my year as a counselor. Two months at least. That I couldn't see kids. It was like [I could only see] kids with emergencies only.

Furthermore, Stacy felt that her school counselor role stopped during the spring of each year, when she was obligated to prepare for STAAR testing. Stacy shared:

Well, in the spring, I feel like I stop being a counselor. In the fall, we hit a lot of the stuff that we're supposed to do as counselors. But for Naglieri [testing] in the

fall, we're both still doing the testing but we're also fighting for computer time….

But just trying to schedule to get every third grader in the computer lab to test is a

problem.

Stacy was designated as the testing coordinator of her campus, and that role could, at

times, supersede her role as the school counselor at her Title 1 elementary school.

Brief summary. This section explored how elementary school counselors

experienced STAAR testing at their Title 1 elementary schools. All nine of the

participants shared their stories about how STAAR testing affected their work with

students. Multiple participants expressed how STAAR testing restricted their ability to

see and to counsel students effectively at their schools. All participants disclosed that

STAAR testing took up an enormous portion of their time and that they had to stop what

they were doing in order to coordinate STAAR testing.

Dealing with duties. School counselor's reactions to dealing with duties has been

addressed in the review of literature as job stress. Job stress is experienced by school

counselors when administrators assign noncounseling duties to counselors without giving

them appropriate support (Falls & Nichter, 2007). School counselors lose their sense of

autonomy when they perform duties that are remotely related to their mandatory

counseling role (Ross & Herrington, 2006). However, a theme that has not been

addressed in literature is the various ways that school counselors in Title 1 elementary

schools deal with the abundance of duties. This specific theme bridges the gap in

counseling literature between counselors' responsibilities and role stress. During the

present phenomenological study, elementary school counselors expressed a variety of

ways in which they handle their duties. The participants' responses were crucial in

acquiring a profound understanding of school counselors' experiences in Title 1 elementary schools.

All of the nine participants expressed dealing with the abundance of duties at their schools in a variety of ways. Four out of the nine participants expressed being stressed out by their duties. Three out of the nine participants expressed that they set boundaries and advocated for their roles when they were given multiple noncounseling duties in addition to their primary role as the school counselor. Two out of the nine participants took their noncounseling duties in stride by building relationships with school stakeholders while they performed the noncounseling duties, thereby making the best out of their circumstances. Therefore, this theme has been divided into three subthemes in order to accurately depict the experiences as told by the participants.

Stress out. As revealed in the literature, school counselors experienced job stress when they are relegated to performing noncounseling duties that are unrelated to their essential counseling tasks, without being given adequate assistance (Falls & Nichter, 2007). Similarly, the literature addressing counselor burnout implied that school counselors experience job stress and burnout due to contradictory requests made on them, especially those that deal with noncounseling duties (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Falls, 2009; Lambie, 2007). Four out of the nine school counselors interviewed, expressed that they were stressed out, so much so that the stress was affecting their home lives. Marcy expressed:

> In one aspect, it makes you feel good when you're asked to do something [by the administrators] that has to do with the leadership role. You know like, "Oh, they value my opinion. Oh, they value my leadership." So it's "Oh, that feels good."

But then, when it keeps taking away from what you're really here for, then it's stressful, because I know that my main goal is to help the students, to help the school, to help that climate change, that culture of the school. So when it's something that someone else can do, and not because I'm better than them, but just like, there's these five other people that might be able to take that role. It stresses me on the inside. Of course I know that everyone's stretched thin because of the size of the school, but it does stress me, because I want to be the best that I can for the students and for the teachers. At the same time, I know that whatever the administrators ask me to do is needed at that moment.

Marcy continued to talk about the stress of dealing with all the paperwork as a school counselor and how she stayed after work on most days to complete it. Marcy shared:

Then the paperwork part, which it has to be done, gets pushed to after work, after hours, so people are like, "Oh, you're still here." [I say], "Yes, because I still have to do this this this and this, and this report, or I need to look at this spreadsheet, or I need to fix this" because to me, and then I like it better, the paperwork part, when it's quiet [after school]. I need to figure out how to maybe shut the phone off and close the door [and say], "I'm in STAAR mode", so that I can get certain paperwork done during the day. I just don't know if that would be the best thing for my students, because they need--- because the need of the students--- I need to be there. So I guess that's still a challenge, and I'm okay with doing it [paperwork] after hours.

Furthermore, Marcy expressed that the abundance of duties at work is affecting her home life. Marcy shared:

> What's happening, and because I do have children--- I have little children--- and I do have other things that I do after school for my kids and for other things, the workload does affect my quality of life. I get overwhelmed, or I have a panic attack, because now it's midnight and I'm still trying to do something, because I need to get it done… It's just that it [the workload] does stress me out, because I like to be--- I like to have things done. So I think that when it comes to my personal life, work--- during the school year--- is my priority, and it does take away from the quality of my personal family life. There should be a balance, and I don't have a balance. Also, I don't have a balance for when it comes to working out or eating well; that's the last thing on the bottom of my list of priorities. Because it [list of priorities] goes work, then unfortunately, then my family--- unless it's an emergency--- and then, maybe I'm going to get my nails done, or get my hair done, or go for a walk and do something for myself. So I'm all the way on the bottom [of my list of priorities], and that's really sad (voice cracks).

Marcy continued to explain that stress affected her quality of life. Marcy believed that her family receives only a small portion of her.

> In reality, when it comes down to it, my family's on the bottom [of my list of priorities] and then, under that is my health. It's like, without my health, I can't take care of my family and why do I work? I work so that I can give my family a

better life, but I'm not even giving them a better life, since they get a little bit of me.

Furthermore, Marcy admitted that she was emotionally drained from the stress of her job as a school counselor at a Title 1 school. Marcy shared:

I'm emotionally and physically drained when I have to hear the stories these children tell me, or the parents tell me, or CPS tells me. And then I have to put a smile on, for the next child or that parent or the teacher but inside, I'm like, "I know what will happen to little Johnny" or "I know what's going on in this family" and it really takes so much to be able to hide it. I want to give them all my love, and then I get home, and then I'm emotionally drained. And my children don't get that happy mommy half the time because I'm emotionally drained. I'm just so, "Why are you crying" and "No, I can't" [at home to my kids]. It's like my tolerance is low because I've given it [everything] to these children [at work] because I feel like I need to save them all. And then I go home, and I'm saving these children [at work], but who's saving my children? Who's giving them that happy mommy, that love--- unconditional love--- and support, that I give the children I work with every single day (tears up)?

Marcy continued to talk about how she needed to save a portion of herself for her family. Marcy stated:

So that's been a very, very big burden for me and something that affects everything. I want to save all these children, but I also have to look at, as the role of counselor, I need to make a difference and I have to be okay with the

differences I'm making. But I also have to realize that I'm a human being, and I have to give something back to myself. And to be able to save just a little so, I can give it to my children and my mom.

Similarly, Ginger also felt stressed out when she moved to her current school because of the new duties that came with the school counselor role at her new campus. She was no longer spending the majority of her time with students as she did at her last school, so adjusting to the new duties caused her stress. Ginger expressed:

> It was very different when I came in because I came from [another district] where I was counselor there for five years, and we were not the testing coordinators and we were not Special Ed coordinators doing ARDs or responsible for ARDs. We did do counseling and we did do parent classes, so my role over there was very different. I assisted with testing and I was responsible for speech ARDs. When I came to [this current district], the parenting classes were not asked, but instead were replaced with being the ARD administrator for every ARD… It was so very different coming here to [this current district] from where I came from, with the counselor experience and different expectations of what the counselor did. I counseled a lot over there, and I was in classrooms all the time, and when I came here it was the opposite.

Sunny also had to get used to an adjustment period at her job as well as the duties that were assigned to her. She admitted that recording the data for her counseling sessions took an excessive amount of time, that time could have been better utilized counseling students. Sunny shared:

Just last year we had to [record all the data], and then I looked at my list just last week and there's 102 students that I see in small groups... And just updating my sheet with my attendance roster took two hours. Two hours that I could have spent in small groups, or with children. Or, doing classroom presentations.... That's been an interesting component. And then the last two years I had a counseling partner and then I'm back to not having one again. So that's been a transition.

Stacy was stressed due to a change in administration at her school. Along with the new principal, came new duties that she had to perform in addition to her school counselor role. Stacy recalled:

So my first year here, I had a different principal. While she was here, the campus--- it was a different atmosphere. I was encouraged to counsel. Then the new principal has been here for four years and things are different. Before, my duty in the morning was to look out for kids and their needs. Now my duty is to open car doors. So just things like that have changed.

Furthermore, Stacy believed that she was not respected by her administrative team. Stacy stated:

So I don't feel respect. I don't feel like I'm valued… I don't. The other counselor and I would talk about it. When she was at her other school, she was respected and had these responsibilities that were useful. Here, we just feel like--- we're the stepchildren.

Stacy continued to state that she felt as if she was regarded as a "stepchild" at her school because her opinion was nether solicited nor valued. Stacy expressed:

> I don't feel fulfilled at just how I'm regarded here… just as a stepchild. I mean that's basically how I feel. I feel like I would like to have more say-so in the running of what happens--- because I've been around a long time and I've seen things that are wrong, but my opinion isn't valued.

Stacey shared a scenario about how she and her counseling partner were disregarded by the administrative team at her school. This was in stark contrast to how the former principal treated her and made her feel valued at the same Title 1 elementary school years earlier. Stacy shared:

> My [counseling partner] does the mentoring. She had a whole program out there. Then the assistant principal like changed things and didn't consult her. Just changed things--- without even consulting her. I was mad… But, I went to the assistant principal, but nothing came of my requests. I don't know if it was my partner or me, or just the whole fact… It was just the case of everything--- where we're just kind of disregarded. This is so sad. My first year here, I had a master key. If I needed things, I could just get them. I was trusted… The year after that, they took my key away with no explanation--- ever. They just took it away. I felt like they took away… I felt like they took away my part at the school--- I don't know--- (voice cracks) like symbolically.

Set boundaries. Three out of nine participants expressed that they dealt with noncounseling duties by setting boundaries and either advocating for their role or

defining their role. John expressed his thoughts about his ideal role at the school. John stated:

> What I'm doing right now [is my ideal role]. [My administrator] lets me define my role. Since I keep coming to her saying, "I want to do this next year, I want to do that." The first year, we did this big thing--- it looked like it was all brand new but it was stuff I'd been doing at other schools--- about bullying and parents signing contracts about I'm going to do this and kid will do that.

Furthermore, John stated, "You have to have your boundaries and you have to set them. With kids… at the beginning of the year they're [administrators] just looking for a babysitter, I'm not willing to do that for them [administrators] either."

Similarly, Katherine talked about how she advocated for her role. Katherine expressed:

> I advocate a lot for how my administration keeps me out of things that aren't related to my role and I'm very thankful for that. And also I've learned not to nominate myself for things that are not part of the guidance curriculum for Texas counselors. So learning just to do what is specific to my role at this campus and not comparing it to other campuses and doing what's best for my school, and my administrators, as well as my students.

Katherine further stated that she was in her ideal role at her Title 1 elementary school because the administrative team at her school knew the role of a school counselor, so rarely did she get assigned duties outside of her role. Katherine expressed:

I know some principals are told what counselors--- you know--- what their role should be like. But at the end of the day, it's their home and they kind of run things how they want. I know that I work for a very good leader--- very good leaders--- many of them are just, they're all amazing leaders and they understand what the counseling role is and very rarely am I asked to do something that's not counseling related.

Unlike John and Katherine, Alexandra was not in her ideal role. However, Alexandra expressed her wish for school districts to explicitly define the school counselor's role, so that the counselors were not burdened with noncounseling duties that were unrelated to their mandatory function. Alexandra stated:

I just wish that school districts would respect the--- school districts as a whole--- would respect the position of a counselor and not let it be a catch-all position, but let it be focused on meeting the needs of students and their families.

Take it in stride. Two out of the nine participants expressed that they dealt with noncounseling duties by taking it in stride and thereby making the best of these duties. The two participants expressed that they utilized their counselor role as they performed noncounseling duties, by building relationships and checking in with their students while they performed noncounseling tasks. Jane shared that her noncounseling duties kept her in the know so that she could find out more things about her students, to better help them. Jane shared:

I wouldn't want to take away some of my noncounseling duties because some of those things help me to get to know the kids on another level. Because just sitting

in this chair and them coming here, sometimes the kids are smart in terms of, they will tell you what they think you want to hear. I find doing other stuff helps me to get to know the students and know them on a different level than if I was just pulling them from the class or just going in a class where they know there's a guest in the room. Because you know, when you go to a class and you're not the teacher of that class, no matter what you think, you are a guest in that class... You are a guest in that class, so I find I do enjoy some of this stuff, but it's just that sometimes it's overwhelming, and I can't do anything about it.

Jane further explained that her noncounseling duties helped to keep her informed and alert about problems that she could help her students with. Jane expressed:

I don't mind doing other stuff because I know I hear about the kids. Without asking a lot of questions, I hear about their home life and what other things are going on, so if there's a problem, I can think about it…. Sometimes, I know it's [a] noncounseling duty for certain things, but I don't mind…. It keeps me active. It keeps me in the loop with a lot of things, although, I still miss a lot of things.

Jane continued that she voluntarily attended meetings just so that she could share what she knew about students with members of her leadership team, and vice versa with the intent of getting the students what they needed to succeed. Jane said:

I attend STAT meetings, and I like to attend STAT meetings because I think it's important if there's a kid struggling with something…. And some of the times, I give the information like, "That family is struggling. That family needs XYZ." I said, "Let me talk to mom. I'm talking to her on the phone and let's see how she

can help us" …. And if there's an action for me she'll [the STAT person] say, "Okay, do you think you can put this child in a group, in a SAP group or maybe with a PAL (student mentor), PALS from the high school, or can you help put this student in your little anger group or your little first grade group or something?"

Similarly, Tasha took her duties in stride and executed her counselor role while she performed her noncounseling duties. Tasha explained:

Now what I have learned to do during my morning duty, is kind of interact with the kids during that time. I just kind of make the best of my duty. So, in the cafeteria, I'm talking with the kids, building those relationships, asking them, "Did you have breakfast" --- how their evening was, things like that…. During dismissal [I ask], "How was your day? Oh, let me see your conduct? What can we do better?" So, I kind of make the best of it… I just kind of incorporate those counseling goals into my duties.

Furthermore, Tasha expressed that she would implement her counselor role no matter where her administrators put her for noncounseling duties. She made the best of her situation. Tasha conveyed:

I guess just trying to convey that we are needed in the counseling role as opposed to some of the other things that they [administrators] want us to do. It works out. I feel like wherever they have us, we're going to be counselors there. So if you want me at cafeteria [duty], or if you want me in the gym [for duty], I'll still do my role there.

By making the best of her circumstance, Tasha believed that there was not much at her Title 1 elementary school that pulled her away from her counselor role. Tasha stated:

> The only thing that I think really pulls me away [from counseling] is the LPAC meetings, but those normally aren't that long. They're so well done that we're just basically in there finding out information that only happens maybe once a month. Other than that, I don't really have anything else that I feel like pulls me away other than the random radio calls for me. You know [administrators say], "We need you to go with so and so, or we need you here."

Brief summary. This section focused on the participants' ways of dealing with the abundance of duties at their Title 1 elementary schools. Scenarios were broken down into 3 subthemes including: (a) *stress out*, (b) *set boundaries*, and (c) *take it in stride*. Four out of the nine participants expressed the experience of stressing out when handling duties. Three out of the nine participants conveyed the experience of setting boundaries and advocating for their roles when presented with duties. Two out of the nine participants shared the experience of taking noncounseling duties in stride and making the best of them.

Juggling time and triaging. As revealed in the literature, counselors in public schools juggle multiple roles (Baker, 1996; Oloumi-Johnson, 2016) while servicing the varied needs of hundreds of students (Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Johnson et al., 2010; Kolodinsky et al., 2009). This section focused on the theme of elementary school counselors juggling time and triaging tasks that needed to be done at Title 1 schools. Nine out of the nine participants indicated ways in which they focused their time and their attention on specific priorities to meet all of the demands at their Title 1 school.

Seven out of the nine participants expressed how hard it was for them to create time in their busy schedules for their counseling responsibilities.

John writes his plans on a calendar and does his best to manage his time appropriately so that he does not have to take his work home with him. John expressed:

> I like to do my work from 7:30 [AM] to 4:30 [PM]--- even earlier--- 3:30 [PM] basically. I'm very organized; I'm a pencil scratcher. I do it all on a calendar and just write in there in pencil and erase and put new things in there as things happen. I make sure I'm where I need to be at the right times. I try not to take it home with me. I do the best I can during the day and I've learned to let it go. I used to not be able to do that.

Similarly, Stacy conveyed that if something was not on her calendar, then it was not going to happen because she was pulled in many different directions at her school. Stacy said:

> If I don't have it on the calendar, it's not happening. I learned that at the other district because they're huge on calendars. Anything that's going on, anything that I have to do, I make lists. I make a list every morning. If I have to get this done, I have to get this done, I have to get this done. Then I check off my list. I have to have it on the calendar because I look at my calendar every day. That's how I keep myself knowing what we're doing. But our job is not necessarily a calendar thing because then crazy things just pop up and as the counselor, you're expected to deal with it…

Furthermore, Stacy expressed how much of a challenge it is to schedule groups at her Title 1 elementary school. Stacy stated:

> A challenge is getting to see my groups. That's one that I can bring up because I plan all these wonderful groups. I plan all these activities with my groups. Then it's like, "no, you can't take them during PE. No, you can't take them during this. No, the interventionist has them here." Just the challenges to just meet with my groups. Just having the time to see them. I'm told, "They cannot be gone during math, they can't be gone for this, or for that." That's a challenge... Like I said, just finding the time to pull the kids without them missing something important is like pulling teeth.

Similarly, Sunny shared her challenge of scheduling her counseling groups when there were many activities going on at the school and she was unable to pull students during their academic time. Sunny expressed:

> So, gaps in my counseling program? I think the more social skills type lessons they're [students are] not having, because we don't have that other component for the small groups... they [the groups] are constantly being interrupted by activities, events, interventions, anything and everything that goes on at this school... but, I would like to be able to see the children more during the day. And like I say with the curriculum expectations or limitations, I don't think I see them as much as I can.

Tasha reflected back to an instance when she was asked to put classroom routines and procedures in place for one of the teachers at her school. Tasha prioritized her time

and her skill set by pulling in other members of her ILT to help her accomplish the task, with all the members collaborating yet functioning at their own capacities so that Tasha would not have to bear the brunt of the work. Tasha explained:

> I've also been asked for the classes that are having some difficulty, to do extra lessons with those students. I had also been asked to work with the teacher on how to implement effective disciplinary techniques or to put systems in place. Well, when it came to that, at this campus we have a triage of people, it's called a coaching team. So the coaching team, there's an ILT person, there may be another classroom teacher, maybe like a master teacher, and then there may be a counselor on that particular coaching team. And so when I was asked to go and do this extra thing with the kids and the teacher, and put the systems in place, so I suggested that I would do the lessons with the kids. I would go in, whether it'd be twice a week, additionally to my other guidance lessons, and do whatever the focus is, but the content person, the ILT person, could work with the teacher on maybe systems in place and things of that nature. And then our REID person, the person that does the behavior plans and things of that nature, she could go in and work with the teacher on the BIP, or the behavior plans, or the paperwork part of it… And that has seemed to work a little better for everybody, because we all feel like it's like a network… And so, I kind of work with the children and someone else is working with the adult, and someone else is working with the systems and trying to see the big picture.

Katherine juggled her time wisely and prioritized effectively so that she could meet the demands of her Title 1 school and to meet her own needs for self-care, because

it was important to her to prioritize her self-care routine so that she could function effectively as a school counselor at a high needs campus. Katherine shared:

> There's some days that are rough and on those days I just--- [do] a lot of self-care. I make sure I go home right away; I don't schedule things for my evening, take a hot shower, and you know just wind down. I have to detox from people and children. If I have a lot of events scheduled in the evenings or on the weekends, that could easily stress me out. So just taking the time to relax, exercising, reading, and just really taking it one day at a time--- which I think really helped me [when I worked] as a teacher as well.

Similarly, Ginger had a hectic work schedule that posed a challenge for her to see her students, but Ginger had 20 years of experience juggling and prioritizing her schedule to make it work for her busy lifestyle so that she could accomplish her goals. Ginger explained:

> Sometimes there is not enough time in a day… and I have really experienced that the last year or two with running out of time for certain things or just strapped for time because of meetings and trainings that we have to attend, and having to tell students, "I'm sorry, I've got to go to another meeting or a training" and they go, "Another one?" I think they don't believe half the time that there are that many meetings, and there are, you know, there truly are. It is hard to work out but I think as a counselor with over 20 years of experience, I have learned how to juggle school and work life and personal life, as well as trying to work through

lunches or just do things where I can get things done that I know have to be done by that week.

Furthermore, Ginger expressed how she has learned to prioritize the hard way by paying her dues earlier on in her career as a school counselor. Ginger explained:

I did pay my dues, those first ten years, I did. And I stayed--- ten years or more--- and stayed and sacrificed, but I am not at that point anymore. Testing still does take me staying here in the evenings and prepping beforehand and mostly the beforehand time. After all these years, testing still makes me so very nervous to be the person that is responsible for all of that. Other than that, other things I can take home or work on my computer from home, when I have to do career schedules you know, I could email that to my home email... and work on those things in the later evening. So it's not that I don't do it at home anymore, but I've learned to prioritize…

Likewise, Jane stayed late at her job to finish paperwork to compensate for the times when she got pulled into parent meetings with little or no prior notice. Jane shared:

It's difficult that sometimes I have to actually tell a parent, "Hey, I'm the only person and I have stuff to do." And some of them come [to the school]. The ones [parents] that come on campus and know, they see the stuff we do around here and they know somebody has to do it. So hey, sometimes it's difficult, but I find myself, I'm at school by 6:45 AM every morning and most days I leave at 6 o'clock [PM]. Most days I leave at 6 o'clock.

Jane conveyed that keeping up with all of the demands that were placed on her at the school kept her schedule busy. Other noncounseling tasks could fall by the wayside. Jane explained:

> I can tell you, since I came new from another school, I know I did not expect to be doing all of the other noncounseling stuff around here. That is what I know. So, I expected I would come in, and the teachers will let me know those kids that need help, and I'll sit in this room all day, and help them one at a time throughout the day and speak with them, and we'd do therapy. We'd talk about it, and I'd do documentations, but these days, I can't even document when I see kids--- I can't document, because I don't have the time. By the time when I come back [from being pulled] to my office, I'm mixing the kids' names up, I can't really remember who I saw.

Marcy conveyed that she responds to unexpected situations that arose at her school by triaging the incidents and prioritizing them by immediacy. Marcy explained:

> It is trying to juggle and trying to manage and trying to figure out what's the most important thing at this very moment. Because there are moments where, yes, I need to see this [counseling] group, but this parent is in front of me, and they're grieving. Or there's a situation where there's a CPS or a one-on-one situation with a child that's immediate right now, and I need to respond. So I think being okay with, "What's the priority?" Like [using] a tier system in a sense of a hospital and then if I look at it that way, then it makes me feel better, because I know in general, I'm still serving.

Alexandra expressed that time management was key to her role as the school counselor. She believed that the reality of her job at a Title 1 school was to balance her time between her mandatory role and her assigned ancillary duties. Alexandra stated:

> The challenging part is--- well, there's not enough hours in a day, number one, and number two, you're torn because what your heart wants to do is be the counselor and just focus on that, but what the reality of my job description is, is taking on those other responsibilities as assigned and just having the time management to try to focus on what I feel is important--- the counseling part--- versus doing what I have to do. It's the hardest part.

Hard to carve out time to see students. In addition to juggling multiple roles and responsibilities as well as triaging unplanned incidences and emergencies that could arise throughout the course of a school counselor's work day at a Title 1 school, counselors must create a time amidst the chaos to perform their mandatory responsibility of counseling the students. Seven out of the nine participants admitted that it was hard to carve out a time during the school day, when students are not in their academic subject areas, their state-mandated physical fitness classes, or their curriculum-related intervention sessions, to see their students. Sunny expressed that she would like to spend more time with her students but it was a struggle. Sunny stated, "I think there are gaps in the amount of time I can work with students… they [administrators] don't want them pulled other than lunch and possibly at social studies time." With restrictions placed by administrators on when students could be pulled out from their classes, Sunny found it hard to carve out time to see students for counseling. Sunny shared:

[I would like] the freedom to take students out of curriculum type classes if I need

to see them and not having to wait until the end of the day or their lunch time and

times when they might not want to see me as much.

Likewise, the administrators at her school informed Stacy that she could not pull

counseling groups during instructional time. Stacy recalled the hurried pace of her

groups as she tried to get her students in and out of group counseling in time for

instruction. Stacy explained:

It's like every morning I say, "Okay! Hurry up! We have this amount of time!"

That's when I do my character lessons: social studies or science [time], because

I'm not allowed to be anywhere near the kids during instructional time. But you

know what, I understand. As a teacher for 28 years, I get that. But most of the

teachers here are happy when we [counselors] come in.

Similarly, Ginger expressed what a challenge it was for her to carve out time around the

instructional schedule to see students. Grinder recalled:

It is challenging to work around my different roles. When I want to counsel,

making sure that students aren't missing educational time unless it's direly needed

and it's an emergency. So working around all those schedules to where they're not

going to miss academic time is challenging. So do I end up with a lot of lunch

bunches at recess? Yes, I do.

On the other end of the spectrum, mandatory meetings, trainings, and duties could

make scheduling time to see students complicated. Katherine expressed how hard it was

for her to see students when her schedule was already full with meetings. Katherine expressed:

> So on a week like this week, just taking the time that I have for groups, or making rounds with the teachers and just splitting up the time. I don't really stress about how much time I have--- just what I can get done in that week around meetings and things.

Jane believed that setting priorities was the key to successfully appropriating her time between many roles and responsibilities as the school counselor at her Title 1 school. Jane expressed:

> Sometimes it's a lot to balance the time, so I have to set priorities. Like if a kid says, "I'm going to kill myself, I'm going to kill somebody." I know I have to drop everything else and see that kid. And that's part of my duty as a counselor. But if there's something else going on, if a child's throwing a chair. So that one that says he's going to kill himself, guess what? He has to wait until I deal with the one that is throwing the chair.

Similarly, Tasha managed to carve time out of her hectic schedule to see students by planning ahead, adjusting, and taking work home to prioritize her groups. Tasha explained:

> Time management. It's just managing time. Sometimes you may not see your groups on a certain day. You just have to plan out your week or your month, and me and [the other counselor], we do that. We meet and we'll say, "Okay, this is

what we're working on." And so we may see our kids instead of over a period of two weeks, we may see them the first, second, and third day and then the rest of the week, work on whatever. Or half the day see kids, half the day work on something else. It's just time management. Sometimes you take stuff home. Unfortunately, sometimes we have to work on things from home and you know, pick up the next day. I've done that a lot. So that I would be ready.

Alexandra shared that she managed to get in as much counseling as possible at her Title 1 elementary school but her noncounseling duties came with specific deadlines that she must adhere to. Alexandra expressed:

I mean, the vast majority of my role is just trying to time manage. You know, you want to do as much as you can in the time that you have. So wearing so many different hats, I'm trying to get as much counseling in as I possibly can. But I also have to manage all those other noncounseling duties and responsibilities, which some of them come with specific timelines.

Brief summary. This section focused on participants' experiences with time management, particularly juggling time and triaging to accomplish all of their responsibilities. Nine out of the nine participants shared their experiences with scheduling and prioritization of tasks. The theme of juggling time and prioritizing responsibilities was explored within the context of how hard it was for elementary school counselors in Title 1 schools to carve out time to see students. Participants' attempts to explain factors that may attribute to the lack of time to see students were discussed.

Seven out of the nine participants shared experiences in which it was challenging to juggle their roles and responsibilities and still find time to see students.

Summary

Nine participants shared their experiences about their roles and responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools. Six major themes were disclosed, including: (a) *too much to handle*, (b) *enjoy working with kids and making a difference*, (c) *utilize me effectively*, (d) *STAAR testing prevents me from seeing students*, (e) *dealing with duties*, and (f) *juggling time and triaging*. Four out of the six themes were organized into subthemes. The theme of *Too Much to Handle* was divided into one subtheme: *resent meaningless noncounseling duties*. The theme of *Utilize Me Effectively* was also divided into one subtheme: *just let me counsel – no extras*. The theme of *Dealing with Duties* was divided into three subthemes: (a) *stress out*, (b) *set boundaries*, and (c) *take it in stride*. The theme of *Juggling Time and Triaging* was divided into one subtheme: *hard to carve out time to see students*. Meaningful themes and subthemes were extracted directly from the participants' statements to capture the reality of school counselors' experiences. Each theme and subtheme was discussed by arranging related topics collectively and entwining participants' stories together to yield a deeper understanding of the perceptions of school counselors regarding their noncounseling roles and responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

In this phenomenological study, I explored the experiences and perceptions of professional school counselors regarding their noncounseling responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools. Following is a summary of the study, discussion of the findings, implications for school counselors, limitations, recommendations for future research, and conclusions. A detailed discussion of the findings in regard to each theme that emerged as related to current literature is included in order to foster a deep understanding of the roles and responsibilities of elementary school counselors.

Summary of the Study

In the review of literature (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012), the perceptions of school counselors regarding their roles resonated strongly and seemed to indicate dissatisfaction with the number and nature of noncounseling duties they were required to do. My review of the literature revealed that school counselors were assigned duties that fell outside the scope of their professional identity (Culbreth et al., 2005; Paolini & Topdemir, 2013; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008) which signaled a discrepancy between what stakeholders in education regarded as appropriate and what the national and state standards outlined as appropriate practice for school counselors (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Baker, 2001; Natividad, 2010; Paolini & Topdemir, 2013; Ross & Herrington, 2006). Furthermore, the literature on counselor burnout suggested that school counselors experienced job stress and burnout as a result of contradictory demands placed on them, specifically administrators assigning noncounseling duties to counselors (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006;

Culbreth et al., 2005; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Falls, 2009; Falls & Nichter, 2007).

However, there was a lack of research regarding how elementary school counselors experienced their roles in the public school setting and no qualitative research, which would explore the phenomenological experience of elementary school counselors dealing with noncounseling duties, was found on how school counselors experienced their roles and responsibilities in Title 1 schools.

The purpose of my phenomenological study was to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of professional school counselors regarding their noncounseling duties in Title 1 elementary schools. Nine participants took part in this study and each of them responded to ten questions in the interview protocol (Appendix C) to give voice to the experiences of school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools. The face-to-face interviews conducted with the participants gave them the platform to express firsthand knowledge to better understand my overall research question: What are the perceptions of professional school counselors regarding their noncounseling responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools? A phenomenological research design was utilized to capture the essence of the participants' perspectives regarding their roles and responsibilities in Title 1 schools and to gain a comprehensive understanding of their reality through immersion in the details of their unique inner experiences (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Omizo et al., 2006). Data was obtained from participants' responses on the demographic questionnaires (Appendix B) and face-to-face interviews. Six primary themes emerged from the data analysis process and were discussed in detail. Each primary theme captured portions of the essence of nine out of the nine participants' interviews, therefore representing significant underlying meanings

of the participants' experiences and were presented to provide information and resources to individuals affiliated with public education, specifically school counselors, as well as students in Title 1 schools, parents, teachers, counselor educators, counselor supervisors, guidance directors, school administrators, district board of trustees, area superintendents, superintendents, and other key stakeholders in education.

My review of the literature served as the foundation of this phenomenological study and outlined critical concepts in the school counselors' experiences of their roles and responsibilities in the public education system. Specifically, the review of the relevant literature included the following factors: (a) ASCA national model, (b) CACREP standards, (c) TEA recommendations, (d) Title 1 schools, (e) discrepancies in role expectations, (f) responsibility to the profession, (g) variation of duties across building levels, (h) increased demands, (i) reality versus perception, and (j) principals' expectations. In addition, role theory was used as the theoretical framework for this study to illuminate the importance of interpersonal and interprofessional relationships in establishing the effectiveness of counselors within the school system in which they work (Ivey & Robin, 1966).

Six primary themes emerged from the current study, which included: (a) too much to handle, (b) enjoy working with kids and making a difference, (c) utilize me effectively, (d) STAAR testing prevents me from seeing students, (e) dealing with duties, and (f) juggling time and triaging. The themes depicted in the literature review and the themes that emerged from the present study bear some similarities as well as differences. In the following section, I present how each theme that materialized from this study is either connected or disconnected to the concepts covered in my review of the literature.

Discussion of the Findings

Six themes emerged that captured the essence of the nine participants'
experiences of their roles and responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools. Four out of
the six themes have subthemes. This section will include a discussion of each theme as
related to the current body of literature.

Too much to handle: resent meaningless noncounseling duties. Too much to
handle was a theme that permeated through all nine of the participants' interviews. The
theme is connected to the concept of increased demands that was discussed in my review
of the literature. Adelman and Taylor (2002) reported that counselors experienced
increased demands to determine the effectiveness of their school counseling programs.
Much of their day is often dedicated to administrative tasks, discipline matters, and
managing scheduling issues. Alexandra summarized all of her roles and duties.
Alexandra stated:

> "I have various roles at my campus; not just counseling. I am the GT coordinator,
> I am the [Section] 504 coordinator, I am the LPAC coordinator, I am the migrant
> and immigrant coordinator, and I'm the RTI coordinator. I am on the Hospitality
> Committee. That's the nature of working at a Title 1 school..."

School counselors participate in a myriad of noncounseling duties including coordinating
assessments, managing lunch duty, monitoring hallways, supervising in-school
suspensions, overseeing detentions, and even substitute teaching (Johnson, Rochind, &
Ott, 2010). As a result, school counselors are pulled in different directions, stretched too
thin, and are scarcely able to keep up with the expectations and demands placed on them.

My review of the literature suggested that a growing number of school counselors are experiencing multiple demands on their roles, recognizing their jobs as being increasingly stressful, and feeling overwhelmed (Baggerly & Osborn, 2002; Bardhoshi, 2012; Bardwell, 2010; Bryant & Constantine, 2006; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Kolodinsky et al., 2009). In addition, Lambie and Williamson (2004) suggested that the school counseling profession has evolved and changed since its inception and the school counselor's role has continued to broaden. Kolodinsky et al. (2009) reported that the greatest frustrations of school counselors were: being overwhelmed by duties, conflict with administration, and problems with parents and family members. Within this study, the participants' experiences correlated positively with current literature, and they expressed feeling overwhelmed by their diversified roles, abundant caseloads, and endless duties.

For example, Stacy shared that she starts each year with an optimistic view. She explained, "I start out in September with great ideas, great plans, great lessons I've thought of--- great groups I want to hold--- and then come October, maybe November, things are just falling apart because there's just chaos everywhere." Ginger expressed, "It is challenging because it seems like when you have it all worked out, then more duties come up and are added to your plate. You would assume my plate is full…" Alexandra expressed, "If I didn't have the noncounseling duties, I would be able to see the kids on a more regular basis. I would be able to meet the needs of the students…" All nine of the participants shared stories which echoed the theme of *having too much to handle*.

The theme of *having too much* to handle also has a subtheme of *resent meaningless noncounseling duties*. Seven out of the nine participants in the current study

expressed that they had resentment towards performing meaningless noncounseling

duties that took time and attention away from their essential counseling tasks. Paolini's

study (2012) found that although school counselors engaged in administrative tasks for

3.4% of their time, the counselors commented that these administrative duties not only

hindered them from performing direct and indirect student services but also impeded

them from utilizing data driven accountability measures. Paolini's (2012) study suggests

that even though the amount of time spent on noncounseling duties is relatively small,

counselors nonetheless had strong emotions about how these duties impeded their ability

to perform their essential functions as school counselors. Paolini's (2012) study therefore

bridges the gap in current literature to the present study's subtheme of *resent meaningless*

noncounseling duties.

Within this study, Alexandra expressed that the myriad of noncounseling duties

that were assigned to her kept her from completing her mandatory counseling

responsibilities. Alexandra admitted:

> I'm pulled to do so many other things that it takes away from my ability to be a
>
> full-time counselor. I mean, I spend a lot of my time doing the other
>
> noncounseling responsibilities and it pulls away from, ideally what I'd like to do
>
> as a school counselor, which is what I thought I was hired to do.

Alexandra attributed the abundance of noncounseling duties to working at a Title 1

school. The reality of what educators face in Title 1 schools was discussed in my review

of the literature. Research has been published on educators that encounter students in

Title 1 schools with multiple distractions (Malburg, 2012), these educators perceived

higher levels of stress due to factors such as behavior issues, tardiness, absences, and lack

of resources (Pierce & Molloy, 1990). It is helpful to note that although all of the

participants expressed that they had heavy workloads, Alexandra was the only participant

from the current study to express the connection between her workload and her job at a

Title 1 elementary school. Alexandra disclosed:

> That's the nature of working at a Title 1 school, you're doing your job plus 7
>
> others' [jobs] because there is a shortage of staff members, but there are so many
>
> students, and so many things that need to be done in a certain, usually short, time
>
> frame--- the nature of the beast.

Ginger communicated the same sentiments when she expressed that elementary school

counselors working in Title 1 schools not only had multiple roles and duties to perform,

but they also have multiple people to answer to, which adds another layer to the current

literature on job stress and burnout (Falls, 2009; Falls & Nichter, 2007). Additionally,

counselors receive pressure from administrators, teachers, students, and parents, who all

have conflicting expectations of the roles and responsibilities for school counselors

(Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008). Ginger expressed:

> I mean there's things to work around and do, and then everything that's asked
>
> from admin, or for ILT or in preparation, along with your counseling duties, along
>
> with what is asked from assessment or from your counselor coordinator, etc. So
>
> you're not answering to one person, you're answering to at least three different
>
> ones during the year, as your boss.

Ginger noticed that her noncounseling duties hindered her from effectively working with

her students. Ginger recalled:

The coordination though, really does take a lot of time, and I'm really noticing it this year. I mean I have noticed it all along, but it is just finally coming to fruition how much time is taken with noncounseling duties because I also do three duties a day: a morning, a midday, and an afternoon--- and um--- it's a lot of time.

Ginger continued, "But does it take time out from my other students? It does…" Sunny stated that multitasking all of her duties weakens her focus on her main counseling priorities, thereby making her less effective in her role as a school counselor. Borders (2002) expressed the need for school counselors to advocate for their students and for their professional roles in the public school system, but according to participants in this study, it is difficult to find time for advocacy amidst their noncounseling duties.

Sunny admitted, "Well, it's just getting them [current duties] all done. I don't feel like I do them all as well as I could do if I didn't have quite as many as I do." Sunny continued to share a story about how it was impossible to see all of the students in her caseload with the plethora of duties that she has at her school. She expressed, "But unless you're--- if you're holding it together pretty well I don't always see you, and you could have problems that I'm not aware of, so." Stacy was very vocal about her resentment of the meaningless noncounseling duties that were assigned to her. Stacy expressed:

The challenge is just kind of resentment sometimes…. Some things I resent having to do. I resent duty. I really do. I just feel that opening a car door is not what I was hired for--- I do, I really resent it [morning car duty]. It's kind of crazy, or telling a kid to walk in a straight line every day--- that's not a counselor's role.

Enjoy working with kids and making a difference. This theme was present in nine out of the nine participants' interviews. School counselors play a crucial role in promoting student success (Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2007). Agresta's (2006) research on school social workers established that job satisfaction was highest when the difference between ideal and actual professional roles was lowest. For example, school counselors collaborate in developing a safe school climate that protects, encourages, and assists all students (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013), and play an essential role in the social, emotional, and academic learning of all students within a school (Eakin, 2013), and some studies suggest that school counselors are moderately to highly satisfied with their jobs (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Schuttenberg, O'Dell, & Kaczala, 1990; Wilkerson, 2009), likely because they feel congruence between their actual jobs and their ideal vision of what school counselors should do, which supports Butler and Constantine (2005), who established that when school counselors feel that their work is highly valued by others, they feel less exhausted and gain a higher sense of personal accomplishment.

Although the school counselor's role is not ideal by most of the participants' standards, they are all well suited to work with students and they all enjoyed that aspect of their jobs, and all of the participants in the present study expressed that they enjoyed working with students. Katherine looked forward to working with her students, staff, and families each day. Katherine expressed:

> Being a school counselor means that I come to work every day ready to help
> families, students, and also being there for staff when it comes to their personal,

academic, and social needs. It's truly something I look forward to doing every morning when I come to work. It's a very fulfilling job.

Similarly, Marcy felt fulfilled when she helped students and their family members. Marcy stated, "That moment I fix something and I really, truly change that little child or that human being or that mom and send her on her way, that's the fulfilling moment." Stacy said, "The fulfilling thing is when I get to know the kids and I meet the kids--- and they know me. I feel like I'm doing something for them." School counselors care about students, whether it's their social/emotional needs, their academic progress, or their career awareness. Tasha expressed, "My expectation is that I would be able to meet with the students and just make an impact as far as on their morals and ethics, and just being a well-rounded person…" Tasha also enjoyed it when students recognized her in the hallways. She explained, "It's fulfilling--- first of all, that the child knows my name, because that means that I have been to them, they have listened to me, we've built some type of rapport…"

The school counselors in the current study also felt that their rewards are making a positive difference in the lives of students, whether helping them to overcome social issues, giving them resources, or teaching them basic life skills, and current literature indicated that parents regard the school counselor as the primary resource provider, possessing awareness and expertise in numerous domains (Herr, 2002). Jane expressed, "On a personal level, being a school counselor means I have to come in here and work with kids to the best of my ability." Likewise, Ginger expressed her willingness to help others in need. Ginger stated, "As a school counselor, I feel that I am a child's advocate

and teacher advocate. Here in my building I want to help every child that I can, in any way that I can, as well as the teachers."

School counselors collaborate in developing a safe school climate that protects, encourages, and assists all students (Paolini & Topdemir, 2013). They play a crucial role in promoting student success (Lapan, Gysbers, and Kayson, 2007) by being an integral component in the social, emotional, and academic learning of all students within a school (Eakin, 2013). Alexandra stated, "The most fulfilling part of being a counselor is when I get to spend the time with the kids. Whether it's one on one, or in small groups specific for a need… that's by far the most fulfilling." The elementary school counselors in this study felt as if they have made a positive impact on the lives of the students at their Title 1 schools. John stated, "The most fulfilling is when a kid comes back, either a graduate or as a high school student and says, 'Hey, I remember when you did this. Or you did that.'"

Utilize me effectively: just let me counsel – no extras. Although ASCA has distinctly defined role standards, and school counselors clearly preferred to perform the tasks specified in the ASCA National Model (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008), "professional school counselors experience high levels of stress because of multiple job demands, role ambiguity, large caseloads, and lack of clinical supervision" (Lambie, 2007, p. 82). Moreover, Amatea and Clark (2005) reported in their study that administrators determine the role of school counselors in the vast majority of schools. Although all of the school counselors in the present study stated that their principals determined their role at their schools, most of them would spend their time differently by performing more counseling-related tasks. All nine out of the nine elementary school

counselors resolutely expressed a desire to be effectively utilized at their Title 1 schools according to their training and expertise. Sunny believed that the ancillary services that she is told to provide takes a lot of her time and she would rather spend that time in direct contact with her students. Sunny expressed, "I feel like I know that the [counseling] program could be different if all these other extraneous things were not attached to my job…"

The theme of *utilize me effectively* and the subsequent subtheme, *just let me counsel – no extras*, connects with the relevant literature, which establishes that even after ASCA (2009, 2012) and CACREP (2015) have defined best practices for school counselors, counselors are often employed in schools where their roles are not defined, ill-defined, or in direct contrast with their training and values (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011). Kolodinsky et al. (2009) established that job satisfaction for school counselors was positively correlated with time spent counseling students and working alongside teachers and negatively correlated with time spent on noncounseling duties. Principals frequently assigned counselors duties that are not aligned to the ASCA standards and for which counselors have not been trained to do, such as creating master schedules, coordinating tests, or regulating discipline (Leuwerke et al., 2009). In this study, John refused to assume the disciplinarian role at his school because he believed that it conflicted with his training and values. John declared:

> If you want me to be the counselor, I'll be the counselor. If you want me to be another admin person... if I see a kid that needs to be disciplined, I'll look at them [administrators] and say, "I'm not going to discipline that kid…" I stay away from that part.

Principals, in particular, did not have an accurate sense of the school counselor's role (Brown et al., 2006; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005). School counselors handle numerous duties, most of which do not quality as school counseling services (ASCA, 2012; Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Wines et al., 2007; Young & Lambie, 2007). Marcy was assigned to do walk-throughs of classrooms to annotate her observations of instructional practices (or lack thereof) on a checklist developed by her administrators. Marcy recalled:

> I don't like that line being blurred because it isn't what I'm supposed to be in there [the classroom] for. I'm supposed to be in there to help this child psychosocially not, "Oh, let me help you with your math or small group lesson." So that's blurring the lines a little bit and I wouldn't want it to be the case… not that I'm not willing to help, but I should be used—utilized in a different manner, if they [the administrators] need me to help.

The school counselors in the present study felt that they need to take on more counseling responsibilities, which were being pushed aside due to the noncounseling tasks that they were assigned. Stacy shared her experience of how she felt when she was assigned a duty by an administrator that was in direct conflict with her role. Stacy discussed:

> I've heard the assistant principal say before, "Oh well, let's just let the counselors take on some of those duties that we have. Give it to the counselors." I've fought it…. But that kind of frustration I feel--- that they think we're just sitting here

twiddling our thumbs--- frustration, that's my feelings and lack of respect. I just feel that.

School counselors experience role stress due to the conflicting requests that they receive from administrators and they are overwhelmed with increasing demands placed on them (Culbreth et al., 2005). Eight out of the nine school counselors in the present study voiced their preference to just counsel students without having to perform other extraneous noncounseling duties that often come with the school counselor's role. Sunny expressed her preference to just counsel:

My ideal role would be all the extraneous things would be taken away and I could strictly counsel; that would be ideal. I wouldn't have the duties, and all the other committees and all the other before and after school things... You know, if all those would disappear.

Similarly, Katherine just wanted more time to counsel her students. Katherine expressed, "Just having more time to counsel--- not going to so many meetings so that I could visit each classroom more during the week." Administrators must specifically define the role of school counselors in order to avoid utilizing them incorrectly and ineffectively at their schools (Lieberman, 2004). The participants' ideal roles at their Title 1 schools would involve performing more counseling related duties such as more individual or group counseling, more time spent in classrooms doing presentations or activities, or more time to educate parents through parent workshops.

STAAR testing prevents me from seeing students. Participants shared common experiences of STAAR testing in regard to how it interfered with their ability to see

students. The theme, *STAAR testing prevents me from seeing students*, was prevalent

through nine out of the nine participants' interviews. In my review of the relevant

literature, little information was available on this theme in regard to state testing as a

hindrance to a school counselor's ability to effectively work with kids. I bridged this

theme with the relevant literature that was available on principals' perceptions and school

counselors' role definitions.

These elementary school counselors believed that coordinating state STAAR

testing impeded their ability to see students. This theme is connected with key concepts

in relevant literature that addresses the school counselor's role, broadening of those roles

as the profession evolves, role confusion, and role stress. Leuwerke et al. (2009) reported

that principals regularly assigned roles and responsibilities to counselors, such as

coordinating state (STAAR) testing, that fall outside the realm of counseling services and

tasks for which school counselors are not trained to do.

Marcy stated that she was hired to be the school counselor, not the STAAR

testing coordinator. Marcy expressed, "When it comes to STAAR … it shouldn't be a big

role of the counselor…. I mean, there's other elementary school districts where it's not

the counselor. So that, is something that I feel my role doesn't need to be." The school

counselor's role has gone beyond the scope of what ASCA has defined to include testing,

disciplinary functions, record-keeping, curriculum development, advising teachers,

providing health and wellness education, coordinating ESL services, and clerical and

administrative duties. Furthermore, school counselors may additionally serve as mental

health counselors to service the escalating needs of all students within the school

(Lockhart & Keys, 1998). All of the participants expressed to some degree that STAAR

testing halted their counseling programs by interfering with their ability to work with students in a meaningful way.

Pérusee et al. (2004) reported the differences in perceptions by principals pertaining to the role of the school counselor. Furthermore, Paolini and Topdemir (2013) suggested that due to counselors being assigned noncounseling related tasks by their supervisors (usually principals), role confusion not only exists but thrives in the school counseling profession. Alexandra admitted that coordinating STAAR testing consumes much of her time. Alexandra expressed, "A big noncounseling duty is assessment. Being a testing coordinator takes a lot of time in the spring semester." Stacy stated that she was unable to see students for two months as she prepared for STAAR state testing. Stacy recalled:

> So this year testing, I'm telling you, two months... I had that [testing] sign on my
> door and the kids were like, "Are you going to see me? Are you going to see me
> now? When are you going to see me?" I had to tell them, "I can't. I'm sorry."

Stacy continued, "[People assume] 'Oh it's a test. Just pass them out.' Nobody realizes how much work goes into coordinating the STAAR tests." Lack of a defined role or a role that is inconsistent with their training and values, causes school counselors occupational stress and impairment that hampers their overall wellness (Young & Lambie, 2007).

John, like all of the elementary school counselors in the current study, was not only the school counselor but he also functioned as STAAR testing coordinator at his school. John expressed:

Just it would be great if there was a test coordinator and they took us out of that

[testing role] completely so that we can do our job: counsel students. That's the

only thing I wish; take it away. Get that STAAR out of here!

Culbreth et al. (2005) investigated job satisfaction and established that organizational

support and supervision correlated with decreased role stress. Knowing that school

counselors preferred to perform essential counseling tasks (Scarborough & Culbreth,

2008) over noncounseling duties that conflict with their training and values (Leuwerke et

al., 2009), it would be advantageous for administrators to support and supervise school

counselors (Culbreth et al., 2008) when they are performing noncounseling duties that are

incongruent to ASCA standards, in order to decrease role stress.

Dealing with duties: stress out, set boundaries, and take it in stride.

Participants expressed the various ways that they dealt with the abundance of duties at

their Title 1 elementary schools. The three ways that were most prominent throughout

the interviews included: (a) stress out, (b) set boundaries, and (c) take it in stride.

Throughout my review of the literature, little information was available in regard to how

school counselors dealt with their duties. So I sought to bridge this theme with key

concepts about counselor's roles and burnout in the existing literature.

Four out of the nine participants expressed the experience of being stressed out

when handling duties. The subtheme of *stress out* is connected with the literature on role

conflict, role ambiguity, role stress, and burnout (Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Falls &

Nichter, 2007; Lambie ,2007; Wilkerson, 2009), and appeared in regard to the following:

(a) overwhelmed by workload and it affects quality of home life, (b) moved from another

school district and inherited duties that came with the counselor's role, (c) collecting and

recording data on students took a great deal of time, and (d) treated with no respect and no regard. School counselors experience job stress when administrators assign noncounseling duties to counselors without providing proper support (Falls & Nichter, 2007). School counselors are deprived of their sense of autonomy when they carry out duties that are remotely connected to their essential counseling role (Ross & Herrington, 2006).

Marcy shared that the multitude of duties that she performed at work was affecting her quality of life at home. Marcy expressed:

> What's happening, and because I do have children--- I have little children---and I do have other things that I do after school for my kids… the workload does affect my quality of life. I get overwhelmed, or I have a panic attack, because now it's midnight and I'm still trying to do something, because I need to get it done… It's just that it [the workload] does stress me out…. So I think that when it comes to my personal life, work---during the school year--- is my priority, and it does take away from the quality of my personal family life.

"Role conflict and role ambiguity are the two specific occupational stressors that school counselors experience with regard to the multiple roles they assume within schools" (Bryant & Constantine, 2006, p. 265). Bryant and Constantine (2006) also reported that being able to balance multiple roles and being satisfied with their jobs, significantly predicted life satisfaction for female school counselors. Years of experience, role conflict, role ambiguity, and an emotion-oriented coping style predicted burnout (Wilkerson, 2009).

Stacy believed that her administrative team did not respect her and felt that she was neither regarded nor valued. Stacy expressed:

> So I don't feel respect. I don't feel like I'm valued… I don't. The other counselor and I would talk about it. When she was at her other school she was respected and had these responsibilities that were useful. Here, we just feel like---we're the stepchildren.

Butler and Constantine's (2005) study, as well as Lambie's (2007) study, suggested excessive depersonalization and exhaustion in school counselors. Schools counselors reported the highest levels of role conflict and role ambiguity when compared with other school professionals, such as teachers, school psychologists, and school social workers (Pierson-Hubeny & Archambault, 1987). Because the broadening of school counselor's roles and responsibilities is a reality in this continually evolving profession (Lambie & Williamson, 2004) it would be advantageous for school counselors to reflect on the ways that they deal with the abundance of duties and adopt a coping style that will minimize burnout.

The subtheme of *set boundaries* was present in three out of the nine participants' interviews. These participants conveyed the experience of setting boundaries and advocating for their roles when presented with duties. This subtheme connects with the relevant literature on the school counselor's role as defined by ASCA (2010, 2012), TEA (2004), and CACREP (2015). ASCA (2010, 2012) defined the role of the school counselor as supporting the social, emotional, academic, and career needs of students through the development, utilization, evaluation, and improvement of the comprehensive school counseling program that enhances the success of all students. The conversation

surrounding setting boundaries focused on the school counselor's role and how each of the three participants actively advocated for their roles and set boundaries on the ancillary tasks and services that were assigned to them. Paolini and Topdemir (2013) recommended that school counselors assert themselves and set clear boundaries with administrators so that their roles and efforts can be focused on directly advancing the social, emotional, academic, and career success of all students.

Katherine expressed that she passionately advocated for her role. Katherine stated:

> I've learned not to nominate myself for things that are not part of the guidance curriculum for Texas counselors. So learning just to do what is specific to my role at this campus… and doing what's best for my school, and my administrators, as well as my students.

Young and Lambie (2007) suggested that counselors who worked in schools where there is a lack of a defined role may experience a decline in personal wellness which contributes to occupational stress and impairment. Lambie (2007) established that burnout in school counselors was negatively correlated with work support, indicating that the counselor's relationship with administrators was imperative.

The subtheme of *take it in stride* was present in two out of the nine participants' interviews. These two participants shared that they took their duties in stride by building relationships with school stakeholders while carrying out the noncounseling duties, thereby putting a positive spin on their circumstances. Wilkerson and Bellini (2006) found correlations between role conflict, role ambiguity, and job overload as factors that contribute to burnout in school counselors. The stories surrounding this subtheme

centered on how these participants made the best of their duties. Tasha explained how she integrated her counselor role as she performed her noncounseling duties. Tasha stated:

> Now what I have learned to do during my morning duty, is kind of interact with the kids during that time. I just kind of make the best of my duty. So, in the cafeteria, I'm talking with the kids, building those relationships, asking them, "Did you have breakfast" --- how their evening was, things like that…. During dismissal [I ask], "How was your day? Oh, let me see your conduct? What can we do better?" So, I kind of make the best of it… I just kind of incorporate those counseling goals into my duties.

These two school counselors took their noncounseling duties in stride, whether it was hallway duty, cafeteria duty, detention room monitor, disciplinarian, or classroom substitute, they found a way to incorporate their counseling skills on duty to show students that they care.

Juggling time and triaging: hard to carve out time to see students. As revealed in current literature, school counselors are struggling to juggle a list of duties in the public school system and still striving to effectively assist and provide services for hundreds of students (Baker, 1996; Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Johnson et al., 2010; Kolodinsky et al., 2009, Oloumi-Johnson, 2016). Kareck's (1998) study established that school counselor's time spent on schedules, registration, standardized tests, cumulative folders, and meetings have immensely increased even by the standards set during that time. In addition to juggling a multitude of roles, handling a myriad of responsibilities, triaging emergencies, and managing spontaneous incidents that happen during the course

of a school counselor's day at a Title 1 school, counselors must formulate a schedule to accomplish their primary responsibility of counseling students. All nine participants shared common experiences regarding juggling time and triaging tasks that needed to be completed at their Title 1 elementary schools. Seven out of the nine participants expressed that it was hard to carve out time during the instructional day to see their students.

The theme of *juggling time and triaging* and the subtheme of *hard to carve out time to see students* was uncommon in existing literature regarding the process of scheduling time to see students during the instructional day and negotiating the students' curriculum schedule, as well as managing the counselor's schedule between various roles and responsibilities. This theme and the subtheme connected to the relevant literature on school counselor's primary responsibilities and time allocations, as recommended by ASCA. According to ASCA (2012), the majority of a school counselor's time should be spent in contact with, and in direct service to, students. More specifically, ASCA (2012) recommended that 80% of a school counselors' time be spent on direct and indirect student services with 20% of a counselor's time allotted to program planning and support services. Alexandra stated that time management was crucial to her role as a school counselor. She had to negotiate her time between her primary function as a school counselor and her assigned ancillary services at her Title 1 elementary school. Alexandra expressed:

> The challenging part is--- well, there's not enough hours in a day, number one, and number two, you're torn because what your heart wants to do is be the counselor and just focus on that, but what the reality of my job description is, is

taking on those other responsibilities as assigned and just having the time

management to try to focus on what I feel is important--- the counseling part---

versus doing what I have to do. It's the hardest part.

Likewise, Marcy expressed that she responds to unplanned occurrences and

emergencies at her school by triaging the incidents and prioritizing them by urgency.

Marcy explained:

> It is trying to juggle and trying to manage and trying to figure out what's the most
>
> important thing at this very moment. Because there are moments where, yes, I
>
> need to see this [counseling] group, but this parent is in front of me, and they're
>
> grieving. Or there's a situation where there's a CPS or a one-on-one situation with
>
> a child that's immediate right now, and I need to respond.

School districts need to develop a district school counseling manual with the intent to

define and explain the school counselor's role at each level and how counselors support

the district's educational mission (Young & Lambie, 2007).

The subtheme of *hard to carve out time to see students* appeared frequently in the

participants' stories. Stacy shared her challenge of trying to schedule counseling groups

at her Title 1 elementary school. Stacy expressed:

> A challenge is getting to see my groups…. I plan all these activities with my
>
> groups. Then it's like, "no, you can't take them during PE. No, you can't take
>
> them during this. No, the interventionist has them here." Just the challenges to
>
> just meet with my groups…. I'm told, "They cannot be gone during math, they
>
> can't be gone for this, or for that." That's a challenge… Like I said, just finding

the time to pull the kids without them missing something important is like pulling teeth.

School counselors are skilled leaders, educators, and advocates that work intently to develop comprehensive counseling programs to support all students (Stone & Dahir, 2006). Therefore, the school counselors' primary agenda is to promote the comprehensive counseling programs. However, these programs are rendered ineffective if counselors are unable to schedule a time to implement them, cover guidance lessons, or hold individual or group counseling sessions due to academic time restrictions. Ginger recalled what a challenge it was for her to navigate around the instructional schedule to carve out time to be able to see students. Ginger expressed:

It is challenging to work around my different roles. When I want to counsel, making sure that students aren't missing educational time unless it's direly needed and it's an emergency. So working around all those schedules to where they're not going to miss academic time is challenging.

Administrators set stipulations on the times when school counselors can see students for counseling and guidance. In some elementary schools, students cannot be pulled out during instructional time in their core subjects: Math, Reading, Science, and Social Studies, which leaves counselors to pull students from elective classes (physical education, music, art, technology, etc.), recess time, or lunch time.

The problem with pulling students from elective classes is that students cannot miss physical education, which is mandatory in some states. Also, elective teachers, understandably, try to maximize on their time spent with students to expose them to

technology and the arts. Students do not like to miss recess or lunch because recess may

be the only time that they are for allowed for play, and lunch may be their only time to

socialize with other kids. Sunny stated that she would like to spend more time seeing

students but admitted that it was a challenge. Sunny expressed, "I think there are gaps in

the amount of time I can work with students… they [administrators] don't want them

pulled other than lunch and possibly at social studies time." Sunny continued:

> [I would like] the freedom to take students out of curriculum type classes if I need
>
> to see them and not having to wait until the end of the day or their lunch time and
>
> times when they might not want to see me as much.

Because it is so difficult for counselors to carve out time during the instructional day to

see their students, it is advantageous for both counselors and students to maximize on the

time that they do spend together.

Implications

Although there is a wide variation of roles and responsibilities among school

counselors across different Title 1 school districts, all nine of the elementary school

counselors that participated in this study performed various noncounseling duties. Data

elicited from the nine participants in my study can inform the school counseling

profession in a number of ways. First, the impact of noncounseling duties on students is

that the quality of counseling and programs are not as effective as it could be if school

counselors were engaged in their primary role and had adequate time for direct

counseling services. Participants in my study indicated that their students were asking

and begging to be seen by the school counselor, which shows that students need and

desire direct services and their needs go unmet when counselors are over-engaged in STAAR and other noncounseling duties. This has implications for students' emotional and social development and may cause counselors to be uninformed about issues that may require outside referrals or CPS intervention. Also, when school counselors are engaged in noncounseling duties and are only able to provide crisis and emergency counseling, they miss out opportunities to assist the larger student population with normal developmental tasks and challenges. Further, school counselors cannot give their best efforts to students when they are stressed and this may cause them to miss important details in student narratives when they are providing direct services, which could have detrimental consequences.

Second, districts can plan professional development opportunities with school counselors and administrators so that they can both understand and collaborate with each other in regard to the national, state, and training standards for school counselors. It would behoove school counselors to have conversations with administrators about their professional roles and standards as defined by the national, state, and training publications. These conversations will serve as reference points for when administrators dispense duty assignments.

Third, the findings and suggestions from the current study can be utilized to inform counselors, policymakers, administrators, and guidance directors (district counseling coordinators) to initiate discussions with other educational stakeholders such as district board of trustees, area superintendents, and superintendents about the roles and responsibilities of school counselors and how to effectively utilize their expertise to enhance student success. Fourth, it would be advantageous for every school district to

create a district school counseling manual (Young & Lambie, 2007) that clearly defines

the counselor's role, time appropriations, and duties endorsed by ASCA as well as a

section that incorporates this study's findings on school counselors' experiences of their

roles and responsibilities to normalize the experiences of school counselors and to inform

them on how to navigate their noncounseling duties while prioritizing their mandatory

roles.

The intent of the ASCA National Model was to assist counselors to be more

professionally prepared by providing a guideline and framework that includes their

responsibilities, thereby raising counselors' awareness in regard to the duties they are

mandated to perform (ASCA, 2012). Based on the current study's findings, stakeholders

in education can keep the following suggestions in mind:

1. Because school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools experienced too

many roles and responsibilities, and most of them resented the meaningless

noncounseling duties, it would be advantageous to do a weekly check-in with counselors

to gage their tasks for the week, and to discuss whether or not they felt that these tasks

contribute to the educational mission.

2. School counselors enjoyed working with students and making a difference, so

responsibilities and services that put them in direct contact with students would be

preferred.

3. Roles and responsibilities that are congruent with school counselors' training

and values will promote their sense of autonomy and minimize role stress. School

counselors in Title 1 elementary schools did not like being assigned the role of

disciplinarian, testing coordinator, or Section 504 coordinator; they prefer to be utilized in roles that are specific to their training and their expertise.

4. School counselors would benefit from district professional development workshops to help them effectively and efficiently manage their abundance of duties in an effort to teach them how to establish boundaries, control stress, and maintain a healthy balance. Counselors can discuss coping styles, self/peer validation, and reflection during these workshops.

5. School counselors' opinions need to factor into discussions about the school's instructional schedule so that time is allotted in the academic calendar and the master schedule for counselors to see students and to accomplish the goals in the comprehensive developmental guidance program which is designed to promote the success of all students.

Amatea and Clark (2005) established that it is advantageous for school administrators to have discussions regarding the role of the school counselor. Principals are encouraged to review the ASCA National Model, TEA recommendations, and the CACREP standards with school counselors at district professional development opportunities to understand the professional roles and responsibilities of school counselors and the noncounseling duties that are not endorsed by the profession. Principals scarcely receive training in regard to the appropriate role of the school counselor (Fitch et al., 2001). Lieberman (2004) established that administrators need to know the school counselor's role definition in order to avoid utilizing them incorrectly and ineffectively at their schools.

These research findings can be used as a basis for professional development opportunities for school counselors and their principals to collaborate on various things such as: evaluating the comprehensive developmental guidance program, developing a master schedule and academic calendar that allows for counselors to see students throughout the instructional day, and establishing a supervisory-support team (that consists of educational leaders at the school) to assist counselors when they have to handle noncounseling roles and duties. If performing noncounseling duties is unavoidable at Title 1 schools, it would behoove administrators to support and supervise school counselors (Culbreth et al., 2008) when they are performing duties that are incongruent to ASCA standards, in an effort to decrease counselors' role stress. Principals can engage school counselors in a collaboration towards attaining a shared educational mission (Prothero, 2010), while supporting school counselors through continual monitoring of the workloads (Falls, 2010). School counselors, as proponents of the profession, need to demonstrate as well as to educate others on the advantages of using the ASCA National Model. Lambie (2007) suggested that the school counselor's relationship with the principal is imperative to reducing burnout.

Stakeholders in education can use the findings about school counselors' perceptions regarding their noncounseling duties to make informed decisions on how to correctly and effectively utilize school counselors in accordance with their training, values, and expertise. The findings of the current study can also help district guidance directors train new counselors and new principals on the specific role of school counselors as determined by ASCA. The results of the study can also assist counselor supervisors to clarify role expectations and responsibilities that address the most pressing

needs of students in Title 1 schools, as well as to develop effective comprehensive developmental guidance programs at their schools to meet the needs of all students.

Finally, new counseling graduates from counselor preparation programs can consider the findings of the current study as they seek employment to have a better understanding of their professional roles in Title 1 schools. This information can assist future counselors to effectively advocate for professional roles that are more consistent with the national model and state standards. These findings can also help school counselors initiate frank discussions with educational stakeholders to set boundaries when assigned to perform noncounseling duties by their administrators. It is imperative that school counselor training programs educate future counselors on the ASCA National Model as well as the state standards so that these counselors can advocate for their counseling roles and perform their primary counseling responsibilities as recommended by their profession. Young and Lambie (2007) suggested that counselors have a district school counseling manual that clearly defines the counselor's role and responsibilities endorsed by ASCA, as well as a section on how school counselors benefit student success. The findings of the current study can be included in these manuals for new and experienced counselors to understand how other school counselors experience their roles, which is useful in normalizing school counselor's perceptions of their own workload, their own duties, and can help to validate their own experiences.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study contributes by bridging the gap in literature concerning school counselors' experiences of their roles and responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools and understanding school counselors' perceptions of performing noncounseling duties.

Understanding school counselors' perceptions of their noncounseling duties helps in the implementation of policies and procedures that specify the role of the school counselor, time allocations, duties endorsed by the profession, and ways that they contribute to student success. Qualitative research examining school counselors' experiences in Title 1 elementary schools is scarce. The following recommendations for future research can inform best practices concerning school counselors and noncounseling duties.

First, researchers can explore school counselors' experiences of their roles and responsibilities, particularly how they perceive noncounseling duties, by analyzing the difference across elementary, intermediate, middle, and high school. Giving voice to the experiences of school counselors who work with students from different developmental stages will give insight into the particular experiences of counselors at each of their student's developmental level and into the counseling goals that are specific for each level of education. Second, an examination of school counselors' roles and responsibilities in Title 1 schools versus non-Title 1 schools utilizing qualitative phenomenological methodology could provide information about the expectations, time allocations, and noncounseling duties that are specific to each school environment.

Third, research on the training curriculum of principals and superintendents will be beneficial to determining whether they have received instruction about the roles and responsibilities of school counselors according to the current ASCA National Model. Fourth, a study examining the relationship between professional development on the ASCA National Model for administrators, and school counselor's experiences of their roles and responsibilities will serve to explore and possibly substantiate the need for future training for administrators on the national role standards for school counselors.

Fifth, research should be conducted on whether professional development workshops for counselors to help them deal with their workload will actually aid in alleviating their stress and managing their workload. The goal of the workshops should be to utilize multiple coping styles, self/peer validation, and reflection to reduce work stress, to set boundaries, advocate for their role, and take things in stride to decrease role stress. Lastly, a study to determine whether regularly-scheduled, collaborative meetings between principals and counselors are conducive to student success is necessary to ascertain if collaboration is favorable to achieve student gains. Engaging both principals and counselors in education about school counseling might result in a deeper awareness and collaboration between these two professionals. The goals of the collaborative meetings between principals and counselors should focus on: evaluating the comprehensive developmental guidance program; developing the master schedule and academic calendar for counselors to be able to pull students throughout the instructional day; and establishing a supervisory-support team of ILT members to assist counselors when they have to take on a noncounseling roles and responsibilities.

In this study also addressed the need for school counselors to advocate for their roles through the use of the ASCA National Model, the state standards, and CACREP standards in order to fulfill their professional requirements as well as to meet the needs and expectations of students and other school stakeholders. The findings of the current study highlight the significance of school counselors and their contributions to promote equity and success for all students. Qualitative research in this area is scarce and given the budget shortages and increased demands on school counselors in Title 1 schools, the school counselor's role will continue to evolve. Research in this area might affect

counselor education programs, principal education programs, as well as school practitioners.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the results of the current study demonstrate that there is a need for school counselors to set boundaries and advocate for their roles using the ASCA National Model, state guidelines, and CACREP standards. Although all the participants in this study enjoyed working with students and making an impact in the lives of students, all of them performed noncounseling duties, and they had too many roles and responsibilities at their Title 1 schools, including being in the role of state testing coordinator. However, they all wished to be utilized effectively at their schools to fulfill their professional role as defined by ASCA (2012). They dealt with duties in one of three ways which included: (a) stressing out, (b) setting boundaries, or (c) taking it in stride. The school counselors had to juggle time and implement a triage system in order to accomplish all of their responsibilities and still make time to see students.

School counselors in Title 1 elementary schools experienced noncounseling duties as their reality in the cycle of need fulfillment at their schools. The ASCA National Model is one of the best tools for school counselors to use in order to clarify their professional role. The model enables counselors to be professionally prepared by providing the framework that outlines their responsibilities, thereby increasing school counselors' knowledge in regard to the tasks that they are mandated to perform. School principals are encouraged to engage school counselors in a collaboration towards attaining the shared school mission (Prothero, 2010), while supervising and supporting the school counselor by regularly overseeing their workloads (Falls, 2010).

School counselors play an integral role in the academic, social, emotional, and career success of all students. By giving school counselors the necessary supports and opportunities for professional growth, they can carry out their crucial role in maximizing student success (Lapan et al., 2007). School counselors are in a unique position within the school setting to reach out to diverse populations, create a positive school climate, foster collaboration among stakeholders, and encourage a culture of learning. School counselors who are engaged in their professional roles benefit their students, their schools, and ultimately their communities at large.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form

Sam Houston State University
Consent for Participation in Research

Expanding Roles of School Counselors within Title 1 Elementary Schools

Why am I being asked?
You are being asked to be a participant in a research study about the noncounseling
responsibilities of professional school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools by Kaythi Nyan;
Counselor Education Department at Sam Houston State University. I am conducting this research
under the direction of Dr. Jeffrey Sullivan. You have been asked to participate in the research
because you are a Professional School Counselor in Texas, employed in the elementary setting at
a Title 1 campus and may be eligible to participate. We ask that you read this form and ask any
questions you may have before agreeing to be in the research.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will
not affect your current or future relations with Sam Houston State University. If you decide to
participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.

Why is this research being done?
This research is being conducted to understand how school counselors experience their
noncounseling responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools. You will be asked to fill out a
demographic survey and to participate in a face-to-face interview which will take approximately
45 minutes. The interview will be about your experiences performing noncounseling duties at
your school. All of your personal information will remain confidential and you will not be
identified in the research. You will be given a pseudonym which will be your identification code
in all correspondence to protect your identity. All files will be saved on a password-protected
external hard drive to which only I will have access. Following the interview, I will hand deliver
a copy of the interview transcription to you, and you will have the opportunity to make
clarifications or changes on the transcription that you deem necessary. Transcription changes will
be incorporated into the analysis. You will also be asked to attend a presentation of the resulting
themes that emerged from the data and to provide feedback, which will be included in my final
report.

What is the purpose of this research?
The purpose of this research is to explore the perceptions of professional school counselors
regarding their noncounseling responsibilities in Title 1 elementary schools. Through an
examination of professional school counselors' perceptions, I seek to determine how school
counselors experienced their noncounseling responsibilities in order to discern if these
responsibilities support the effectiveness of direct services provided to students in Title 1
elementary schools.

What procedures are involved?
If you agree to be in this research, we would ask you to do the following things:
1) Complete demographic questionnaire.
2) Participate in an audio-recorded 45-minute interview with the principal investigator (PI).

3) Verify transcripts and give any corrections/clarification to PI.
4) Come to a presentation of resulting themes and give feedback.

Approximately __10__ participants may be involved in this research at Sam Houston State University.

What are the potential risks and discomforts?
Minimal risk or discomfort associated with this research study.

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?
There are no benefits for participating in the research. Your participation is your contribution.

What other options are there?
You may choose to not participate in the study.

Will I be told about new information that may affect my decision to participate?
During the course of the study, you will be informed of any significant, new findings (either good or bad), such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participation in the research or new alternatives to participation, that might cause you to change your mind about continuing in the study. If new information is provided to you, your consent to continue participating in this study will be re-obtained.

What about privacy and confidentiality?
The only people who will know that you are a research participant are members of the research team. No information about you, or provided by you, during the research will be disclosed to others without your written permission, except:
- If necessary to protect your rights or welfare (for example, if you are injured or need emergency care or when the SHSU Protection of Human Subjects monitors the research or consent process); or
- If required by law.

The audio recordings themselves will be de-identified when they are created, and I will use a number to identify each digital audio recording rather than the participants' names. The transcripts of the audio recordings will also be de-identified when they are created; the participant's name, campus, and school district will be de-identified by renaming each with a pseudonym. Two digital recorders will be used for audio-recordings, and the files will be transferred to a password protected external hard drive, and the files on both recording devices will be erased after they have been transferred. The audio recordings on the password protected external hard drive will be destroyed within 6 months of the collection date.

The digital audio-recordings will be uploaded to a password protected external hard drive that only the PI will have access to, which will then be placed in a locked cabinet inside the PI's office. The password on the external hard drive will be changed every 4 weeks for security purposes. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with the participant will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with the participant's permission or as required by law.

What if I am injured as a result of my participation?
In the event of injury related to this research study, you should contact your physician or the University Health Center. However, you or your third party payer, if any, will be responsible for payment of this treatment. There is no compensation and/or payment for medical treatment from

Sam Houston State University for any injury you have from participating in this research, except as may be required of the University by law. If you feel you have been injured, you may contact the researcher, Kaythi Nyan, at 832-768-0982.

What are the costs for participating in this research?
There is no cost to you for participating in the research. Your participation is your contribution.

Will I be reimbursed for any of my expenses or paid for my participation in this research?
You will not be reimbursed for any of your expenses during your participation in this research, nor will you be paid for participating in this research study.

Can I withdraw or be removed from the study?
You may choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

Who should I contact if I have questions?
The researcher conducting this study is Kaythi Nyan. She is working with Dr. Jeffrey Sullivan and Dr. Sheryl Serres, professors in the Counselor Education Department at Sam Houston State University. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researchers.

Kaythi Nyan's Contact information	Dr. Sullivan's Contact information	Dr. Serres's Contact Information
Phone: 832-768-0982	Phone: 936-294-4657	Phone: 936-294-4848
Email: KXN002@SHSU.edu	Email: JMS107@SHSU.edu	Email: SAS008@SHSU.edu

What are my rights as a research subject?
If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Office of Research and Special Programs- Sharla Miles at 936-294-4875 or email ORSP at sharla_miles@shsu.edu.

You may choose to not participate or to stop your participation in this research at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Sam Houston State University.

If you are a student, this will not affect your class standing or grades at SHSU. The investigator may also end your participation in the research. If this happens, your class standing or grades will not be affected.

If you are a staff person at SHSU, your participation in this research is in no way a part of your university duties, and your refusal to participate will not in any way affect your employment with the university, or the benefits, privileges, or opportunities associated with your employment at SHSU.

You will not be offered, nor will you receive, any special consideration if you participate in this research.

Agreement to Participate

I have read the above information. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research.

Consent: I have read and understand the above information, and I willingly consent to participate in this study. I understand that if I should have any questions about my rights as a research subject, I can contact Kaythi Nyan at 832-768-0982 or by email at KXN002@SHSU.edu. I have received a copy of this consent form.

_____   _____

Signature of participant   Date

_____

Printed name of participant

_____   _____

Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

_____

Printed name of person obtaining consent

APPENDIX B

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Name: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Gender: _____
4. Race: _____
5. List type of licensure or certification(s): _____

    _____
6. List all professional memberships: _____

    _____

    _____
7. How many years have you worked in public education? _____
8. What school district do you currently work for? _____
9. How long have you been employed by your current school district? _____
10. What is the name of your campus? _____
11. How long have you been a school counselor at your current campus? _____
12. How long have you been a school counselor (overall)? _____
13. Do you work at a Title 1 school?　　　□ Yes　　　　or　　　　□ No
14. What elementary school setting are you in?

    □ Pre-Kindergarten - 4th grade

    □ Pre-Kindergarten - 5th grade

    □ Kindergarten - 4th grade

    □ Kindergarten - 5th grade

15. What is the approximate size of the school in terms of faculty and student enrollment? _____
16. What is the approximate demographic composition of the students at your school in terms of the following properties?
    a) Socioeconomic status: _____
    b) Ethnic composition: _____
    c) Rate of mobility: _____
    d) Proportion of students with special needs: _____

17. List the tasks and services involved in your role as a counselor at a Title 1 school.

    _____

    _____

    _____

_____
_____

18. Out of the above services that you perform at your campus, which of them would
    you define as being administrative (noncounseling) duties? _____

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

19. How many hours a day do think that you spend performing administrative duties
    outside of your counselor role? _____
20. Who determines your responsibilities at your campus? _____

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol

1) What does being a school counselor mean to you on a personal level?

2) Detail the services you perform in your Title 1 school (e.g., for students, teachers, administrators, or parents).

3) Depict the gaps in the counseling program that are specific to the needs of your current Title 1 campus

4) Tell me about your personal reactions, thoughts and feelings, associated with performing noncounseling duties at your school.

5) Describe your experiences in working out your roles as a school counselor at a Title 1 school.

6) Portray the challenges in working out your current duties.

7) What expectations do you have for your role as a school counselor at a Title 1 school?

8) Characterize your ideal role at your Title 1 campus.

9) Express how your job as a school counselor influences your sense of professional competency.

10) What aspects of your job do you find fulfilling and what aspects do you think need to change?

APPENDIX D

Follow-Up Letter

Hi _____,

In an effort to increase the trustworthiness of the research, I am giving you a copy of our interview transcript. Please take a moment to review the interview transcript and let me know if you would like to add, correct or clarify anything. If you would like to make any changes to the transcript or add more information to it, please do so on the interview transcript itself using an ink pen. If there is nothing you would like to add, correct or clarify, please inform me to confirm that this is an accurate transcription of our interview. Thank you for your participation in my study.

APPENDIX E

Invitation to Participate

SHSU Counselor Education Program
Department of Counselor Education
Sam Houston State University

Good Morning,

My name is Kaythi Nyan and I am a doctoral candidate from the Counselor Education Department at Sam Houston State University. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study exploring the noncounseling responsibilities of school counselors in Title 1 elementary schools. You are eligible to be in this study because you are a Professional School Counselor in Texas who has been employed in an elementary Title 1 public school setting for at least a year.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire answering questions regarding, demographics, work experience, employment setting, and experience with administrative (noncounseling) responsibilities. You will then be given the opportunity to volunteer for participation in one face-to-face interview taking approximately 45 minutes and consisting of ten questions. The interview will focus in your experiences with performing noncounseling responsibilities. Approximately ten counselors may be involved in this research at Sam Houston State University.

If you decide to participate in this study, I will audio record and transcribe the interview. All of your personal information will remain confidential and you will not be identified in the research. All files will be saved on an external hard drive to which only I will have access. None of the data will ever be stored on my personal or business computer. All materials will remain confidential and will not be released to any other agency or person without your written consent. Please be aware that there are both risks and benefits involved with participation in this study. Risks may include reliving negative emotions, such as anxiety and discomfort, as they relate to your experiences performing noncounseling responsibilities. Benefits of participation may include an opportunity to clarify and process your past experiences. Additionally, your participation in this study will contribute to the professional literature concerning the school counseling profession.

Your participation in completely voluntary. You may choose whether or not to be in this study. If you would like to participate or have any questions about the study, please contact me. Please disseminate this letter to any elementary school counselor that is working at a Title 1 campus in Texas for at least a year that may be interested in being part of this research. Thank you in advance for your help in this research study.

Sincerely,

Kaythi Nyan

APPENDIX F

Interview Reminder Letter

Greetings _____,

I look forward to our upcoming interview regarding your experiences with noncounseling responsibilities at your Title 1 elementary campus. Our individual face to face interview (approximately 45-60 minutes) is scheduled for:

(_____day, date)

(_____time)

(_____room and building)

I appreciate your interest and effort in my research study. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Appreciatively,

Kaythi Nyan

VITA

Kaythi C. Nyan, LPC, RPT

EDUCATION

- ❖ Doctorate of Philosophy in Counselor Education
- ❖ Dissertation: The expanding roles of school counselors: A phenomenological study on the noncounseling responsibilities of school counselors within Title 1 elementary schools

Sam Houston State University, *Huntsville, TX* (December 2017)

- ❖ Registered Play Therapist Certification (#T2341)

University of North Texas, *Denton, TX* (August 2013)

- ❖ Master of Science in Counseling
- ❖ School Counselor Certification (EC-12)
- ❖ Licensed Professional Counselor (#66103)
- ❖ Principal Certification (EC-12)

University of Houston Clear Lake, *Clear Lake, TX* (May 2009)

- ❖ Texas Educator Certificates:
- ❖ Secondary Computer Information Systems (6-12)
- ❖ Technology Applications (EC-12)

University of Texas at Dallas, *Richardson, TX* (August 2004)

- ❖ Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Minor in Biology

University of Houston, *Houston, TX* (August 1997)

ACADEMIC AWARDS

- ❖ Chi Sigma Iota (Beta Kappa Tau Chapter)- International Counseling Academic & Professional Honor Society
- ❖ International Academic Scholarship Recipient
- ❖ Member of Kappa Delta Pi- The Education Honor Society
- ❖ Member of Psi Chi: The Psychology Honor Society
- ❖ Dean's List

PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING EXPERIENCE

July 2010- present   **Holmquist Elementary School, Alief ISD**

- ❖ Counselor (PK - 4th grade)
- ❖ Campus Testing Coordinator
- ❖ Section 504 Program Coordinator
- ❖ Student Assistance Program Coordinator
- ❖ Prevention Program Coordinator

July 2009 - June 2010 **Alief Taylor High School, Alief ISD**

- ❖ Counselor (10th grade - 12th grade)

August 2008 – June 2009 **Holmquist Elementary School & Alief Middle School, Alief ISD**

❖ Counselor Intern (PK - 8th grade)

PROFESSIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Summer 2012 - <u>College Teaching Internship</u> **Sam Houston State University**

❖ Led Classroom Instruction for COUN 6335- Leadership, Advocacy, & Accountability in School Counseling

◆ Lecturer: "Developmental Classroom Guidance- Counseling Small Groups in Schools"

◆ Lecturer: "Promoting Educational & Career Planning in Schools"

◆ Lecturer: "Counseling Students Experiencing Specialized Problems"

❖ Led Classroom Instruction for CNE 5333-School Counseling: Consultation, Coordination, Counseling

◆ Lecturer: "Counseling Lessons & Activities on Diversity- Diversity Matters"

◆ Modes of Teaching: Presentation, Pair Share, Group discussion and processing, Team time

◆ Experiential activities- Fun with Pipe Cleaners, Diversity Jeopardy, Creating Culture Chains

❖ Led Web-based Instruction

◆ Lecture Video & Threaded Discussion: "School Counseling Program Resource Guide"

◆ Lecture Video & Assignment: "Promoting Educational & Career Planning in Schools"

◆ Lecture Video & Threaded Discussion: "Systemic Approaches to Counseling Students Experiencing Complex & Specialized Problems"

❖ Facilitated Classroom Instruction

◆ Led Lecture: "Stress and Self Care Small Group"

◆ Facilitated 4 experiential activities using different modes of teaching

August 2004 – June 2009 **Alief Middle School, Alief ISD**

❖ Teacher (6th grade - 8th grade)

❖ Computer Keyboarding

❖ Video Technology I & II

August 2002 – May 2003 **Lakeview Centennial High School, Garland ISD**

❖ Teacher (9th grade - 12th grade)
❖ Computer Keyboarding
❖ Record Keeping

August 2000 – May 2002 **Sam Houston Middle School, Garland ISD**

❖ Teacher (7th grade - 8th grade)
❖ Computer Literacy
❖ Math Review

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

❖ American Counseling Association
❖ American School Counselor Association
❖ Texas Counseling Association
❖ Association for Play Therapy