

THE IMPACT OF HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES  
ON THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF COUNSELOR ROLES AND PERCEPTION OF  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MICHIGAN COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE AND  
COUNSELING PROGRAM

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I would like to dedicate this work to the memory of Robert Charles Cole. Bob accepted his friends and students unconditionally and inspired me and everyone around him to reach to the next level. He was loved as he loved others and is missed by his family, friends, colleagues and students.

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## ABSTRACT

### THE IMPACT OF HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES ON THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF COUNSELOR ROLES AND PERCEPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MICHIGAN COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

by Duane C. Tigner

Principals typically determine the duties of the counselors under their supervision. However, graduate programs in educational leadership rarely require coursework in school counseling, counselor evaluation, or program implementation. Consequently, school counselors often feel they are assigned duties incongruent with what they were trained to do in their graduate programs and are instead commonly assigned clerical and quasi-administrative duties.

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which differences in the educational backgrounds of high school principals impact principals' knowledge of counselor roles. This study also sought to identify which types of educational experiences are most impactful on principal knowledge of counselor roles and program components. Additionally, this study examined the extent to which school characteristics, the educational experiences of principals, and the knowledge of principals impacts the implementation of the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP).

Data was collected via an anonymous electronic survey of 421 grade 9-12 high school principals in Michigan. The survey collection period consisted of a four-week timeframe that began in December 2011 and concluded in January 2012 with a response rate of 40.6%. Findings revealed that principals generally agree that roles designated by

the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) to be appropriate duties for counselors are in fact appropriate. However, principals also classified as appropriate some duties designated by the ASCA as inappropriate.

While the impact of various principal educational experiences on principal knowledge was examined, it was found that the time that principals spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff was highly significant. The results of the first research question imply that experiences in the field may be more impactful than formal educational experiences in influencing principals' views of the role of the counselor. While principal graduate school training related to counselor roles and programs could prove beneficial, this study implies that placing an emphasis on training in collaboration and communication in the field could prove to be especially beneficial.

Results of regression models related to the second research question were insignificant but nonetheless implied a relationship between implementation of the MCGCP and student-to-counselor ratios. The findings related to the second research question suggests further research is warranted.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Since the passage of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) there has been a heightened emphasis on academic achievement and accountability. In addition to concerns regarding the requirements of NCLB, the current setting in K-12 schools is one where budgets and resources are often strained. Proper resource allocation is a priority in the decision-making process of school boards, superintendents, and principals.

School counselors are trained to contribute to the overall mission of the school and work within programs designed to hold them accountable and to be supportive of student success (Dahir & Stone, 2003). The purpose of this study was to examine the principal's impact on the role of the counselor in schools. Relevant literature illustrates that there are differences between the views of counselors and principals on some aspects of the role of the counselor (Rambo-Igney & Grimes Smith, 2005-2006). What is lacking in the literature is in-depth discussion related to why there are differences among principals in regard to the appropriateness of counselor duties as well as differences between principals and counselors in regards to such differing views. This study was conducted in an attempt to identify what accounts for those differences and how differing experiences impact the principals' perception of the role of the counselor and implementation of counseling programs.

The following are presented and discussed in this chapter: (a) problem statement, (b) purpose of the study, (c) research questions, (d) definition of terms, (e) limitations and delimitations, (f) significance of the study, and (g) overview of chapters II, III, IV, and V.

## Problem Statement

School administrators make decisions regarding the hiring of counselors, the elimination of counseling positions, and the assignment of duties to counselors. Nonetheless, according to Beale and McCay (2001), school administrators are typically ill-prepared to make such decisions as graduate programs in school administration rarely require coursework in school counseling, counselor evaluation, or guidance program implementation and evaluation. School counselors often feel they are assigned duties incongruent with what they were trained to do in their graduate programs, and have instead inappropriately been assigned clerical and quasi-administrative duties over the years (Sears & Coy, 1991).

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) endorses the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP), which is adapted from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model (2005). In order to adequately carry out the components of the MCGCP, the MDE, the Michigan School Counselor Association (MSCA), and the ASCA recommend a student-to-counselor ratio of no more than 250 to 1. Since principals often lack a basic understanding of counselor roles and guidance program components, student-to-counselor ratios vary from district to district but are often much higher than recommended, and consequently, guidance and counseling programs frequently remain unimplemented.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental, explanatory study was to determine the extent to which differences in the educational backgrounds of high school principals impact principals' knowledge of counselor roles and implementation of

MCGCP. Principals are often the primary figures in the school setting that determine the actual job assignments and duties of the counselors under their supervision. Principals typically lack knowledge in the area of counselor roles and guidance programs, and counselors often find themselves assigned duties unrelated to their graduate school training. In this study, the researcher sought findings as to what accounts for differences in principals' knowledge in the area of counselor roles and guidance programs. Additionally, any variations in the educational experiences of principals that result in different perceptions and outcomes regarding counselor assignments and program implementation lead to implications regarding the graduate training of principals and the future of the role of the school counselors and guidance programs in public schools.

### Research Questions

The following two research questions guided this study:

1. To what extent do the educational experiences of principals impact principals' knowledge of the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP)?
2. To what extent do school characteristics, the educational experiences of principals, and principals' knowledge impact principals' perception of school's implementation of the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP)?

A survey of grade 9-12 high school principals was conducted in the State of Michigan to answer these research questions.

## Definitions of Terms

School characteristics as stated in the second research question consist of two factors of measurement in this study: (a) Student participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) which is commonly referred to as the free and reduced lunch program. (USDA, 2011). The NSLP is a federally funded program administered at the state level to provide free or reduced cost school-provided meals to children of low-income families. Student participation in NSLP will be a measure of socioeconomic status. (b) The student-to-counselor ratio which refers to the caseload of students assigned to a counselor.

Educational experiences of principals includes graduate school coursework and professional development hours taken that consisted of counseling-related topics, the estimated number of hours spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff, and any knowledge gained by other sources such as reading articles or doing research on the Internet.

Principals' knowledge, in this study, refers to the actual knowledge that principals have of the role of the counselor and the MCGCP.

Student success may also be referred to in the literature as academic success, student achievement, or academic achievement. The literature lacks a single definition but the term usually relates to a family of desirable academic outcomes in the areas of standardized testing, successful course completion and grades, student retention, and graduation rates.

Comprehensive guidance programs are sometimes referred to as comprehensive guidance and counseling programs or comprehensive school counseling programs. A

comprehensive guidance program is a K-12 model with standards and benchmarks used as the basic foundation of a school's counseling program.

#### Assumptions

An assumption underlying this study was that counseling programs are beneficial to students and that schools should implement them. If all principals received adequate training in counselor roles, supervision, and program implementation as a standard component of their graduate school training, then all students would benefit.

#### Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited to grade 9-12 public high school principals in the State of Michigan, and as such, the results may not be fully applicable to other states. Since the survey was voluntary, the results are limited to only those principals that chose to respond to the survey. Principals' perception of implementation may or may not indicate actual implementation.

#### Significance of the Study

School principals are typically responsible for the hiring of counselors, the elimination of counseling positions, and for assigning duties to the counselors employed in their schools. Unfortunately, principals typically do not receive training in their graduate programs in school administration in the areas of school counseling, counselor evaluation, or guidance program implementation and evaluation. School counselors often feel they are assigned duties unrelated to their graduate school training and find themselves primarily doing administrative and clerical duties. As a result, counselors

become less effective in exercising skills they acquired in their graduate school training to support student success as the objective.

The aim of this study was to identify differences in the knowledge of principals as they relate to counselor roles and program implementation. The implications of this study point to the significance of such knowledge as to how it impacts the duties that counselors are assigned and ultimately what role counselors and guidance programs play in support of student success. An additional factor of primary significance is the implication for the future of principal graduate school training programs.

### Organization of the Study

Chapter II includes a review of the literature beginning with an introduction and a brief history of school counseling and the evolution of counseling program development. This is followed by an examination of the literature discussing the role of the counselor and student achievement, principals' knowledge of the role of the counselor, and the history of counselors being assigned duties unrelated to their skills. Also included in chapter II is a brief discussion of Bolman and Deal's four frames and a conceptual model of the decision-making process related to counselor role assignment.

Chapter III includes a discussion of the methodology used for this study. Topics included in chapter III are research design, population and sampling, data collection, and further discussion of the variables. Chapter IV is a presentation of the results of the survey, and Chapter V provides a discussion of the results and the implications for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This chapter is a review of the literature and focuses on three primary themes that assist in providing a context to frame this study. First, a historical overview of school counseling outlines its founding with key government initiatives assisting in the promotion and evolution of guidance programs. Second, the historical trend of principals lacking training in the area of guidance programs and counselor roles and consequently assigning duties to counselors that are unrelated to the role of the counselor is examined. The problem of principals assigning counselors clerical or quasi-administrative duties unrelated to the role of the counselor and guidance programs and the resulting frustration of counselors is a problem that has existed for decades and continues to the present (Leuwerke, 2009). Third, despite assertions in the past and present that counseling programs are important to student success and the empirical evidence to support such claims, counseling positions and programs often receive little priority when government or school officials are faced with budget constraints and subsequently reduce or cut counseling positions or programs (ACA, 2011; Dahir & Stone, 2003). While the first and third themes provide a context for the research topic, the second theme is of primary importance.

The literature demonstrates the existence of differences among principals regarding the appropriateness of various counselor roles. Principals tend to agree with counselors that roles deemed appropriate by professional organizations and the literature are important tasks for counselors to perform. Where there is disagreement is mainly in

the area of counselor roles that are deemed inappropriate (Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005). What is generally absent in the literature is an examination of what accounts for the differences that exist among principals regarding some aspects of the role of the counselor which is the basis for this study. In addition to an examination of the foregoing topics, a conceptual framework based on Bolman and Deal's four frames is presented followed by a conceptual model of the decision making process of the high school principal in regard to the role of the counselor.

## History of School Counseling

### Early History

The first school counselor in the United States was Jesse B. Davis who served as history teacher and 11th grade principal at Central High School in Detroit, Michigan in 1898 (Davis, 1956; Pope, 2000, 2009). In his memoir, Davis (1956) stated that he met individually with his students to "help each one to select some tentative occupational field as an educational objective and then to select his studies so far as possible to prepare him for that goal" (pp. 175-176). In 1907, Davis obtained the position of principal at Central High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan (Davis, 1956). Soon after beginning his tenure in Grand Rapids, Davis set out to create a guidance program that would serve every student and eventually organized guidance curriculum to be included as part of the English classes at his school (Davis, 1956). Each Friday, teachers of English were to experiment with guidance topics with such themes as ambition, successful men and women, the right habits of work and living, and the world's work (Davis, 1956). Davis also discarded the curriculum that was in place at his school that consisted of a variety of courses that were required for graduation (Davis, 1956). The new curriculum put in place

was made up of 16 units of which eight were prescribed in the areas of English, math, science and history. “The remaining units were to be selected under guidance, planned individually for each pupil, and aimed to meet his particular educational and vocational needs” (Davis, 1956).

During the Progressive Era of the early 1900s, there was a movement of popular interest that sought relief from the harsh effects and living conditions that accompanied the Industrial Revolution (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). The term commonly used to refer to school guidance programs throughout this time period was “vocational guidance” (Gysbers, 2001; Gysbers & Henderson, 2006; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). The purpose of vocational guidance was to address “the economic, educational, and social problems of those times and concerned the entrance of young people into the world of work and the conditions they might find there” (Gysbers, 2001, p. 97).

In addition to the vocational model, the mental health movement of the 1930s gave rise to a clinical model. During this time, school counseling programs were influenced by “measurement movements, developmental studies of children, the introduction of cumulative records and progressive education” (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006, p. 8). As the clinical model and the practice of personal counseling began to gain popularity, vocational guidance also remained but was more specifically identified as having to do with “occupational choice, preparing for it, entering into it, and progressing in it” (Gysbers, 2001).

In the first half of the twentieth century, there were several pieces of legislation that gave strength to the vocational model (Gysbers, 2001; Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 provided funds to the Federal Board for Vocational

Education to conduct investigations to aid in the organization and conduct of vocational education programs. Under the Smith-Hughes Act (1917), funds were dispersed to states to be used in preparation of and to pay the salaries of teachers of trade, home economics, industrial, and agricultural subjects. In 1936, An Act to Provide for the Further Development of Vocational Education was passed and was followed a decade later by the Vocational Education Act of 1946. The Vocational Education Act of 1946, also known as the George Barden Act, was especially significant and was based in part on the provisions of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 and likewise provided funds to support state vocational training programs. Under provisions of The Vocational Education Act (1946) funds were appropriated to pay for teacher training and the salaries of teachers in vocational education as well as vocational guidance counselors. As a result, school guidance programs grew rapidly at the state and local levels throughout much of the United States (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006).

Despite the expansion of guidance programs in the 1940s, by the early 1950s there were still relatively limited numbers of school counselors in the United States, and there remained few options for professional preparation (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). The profession of school counseling reached an important milestone in 1952 with the formation of the American School Counselor Association followed by the establishment of its professional journal *School Counselor* in 1953 (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). These events were significant in fostering a national identity for the school counseling profession.

## Sputnik and National Defense Education Act (NDEA)

In reaction to the Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957, the United States passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958 which made federal funds available for school counseling programs. The NDEA (1958) provided funds to states to support testing programs in secondary schools to identify students with outstanding aptitudes. The NDEA (1958) also allocated funds to states to support secondary school guidance programs to advise students so that their coursework suited their abilities and to encourage outstanding students to pursue further education in institutions of higher education. Under provisions of the NDEA (1958), funds were also directed to institutions of higher education to advance counselor training programs and stipends were provided to individuals in attendance of such programs.

The passage of the NDEA of 1958 greatly impacted the future of guidance and counseling in schools (Baker, 2001; Bauman et al., 2003; Coy, 1999; Gysbers, 2001; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001, 2006; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Stiller, 1961). Following the passage of the NDEA of 1958, there was a boom in recognition of the value of guidance programs and the training of guidance counselors became a priority (Baker, 2001; Bauman et al., 2003; Coy, 1999).

Throughout the 1950s, states began developing and implementing certification standards for school counselors (Coy, 1999). In the 1960s, the need emerged to evaluate the quality of and establish standards for training programs. During the 1970s, the Association of College Educators and Supervisors Committee on Accreditation was established to serve as an accrediting body of school counselor training programs (Coy, 1999). In 1981, the Council of Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational

Programs was established, and is currently the national accrediting body of graduate school training programs in school counseling.

#### Increased Emphasis on Achievement and Accountability

*A Nation at Risk* was published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983. The report's overall message was summarized by Harris and Miller (2005) stating that, "if student achievement continued to decline as the United States moved from the industrial age into the information age, and *if* other nations produced better educated students, then the American economy would suffer" (p. 158). *A Nation at Risk* greatly influenced education reform in the decades that followed (Harris & Miller, 2005).

In addition to the ongoing effects of *A Nation at Risk*, education reform in the 1990s was driven by the educational objectives embodied in the National Goals of Education (NGE) which was adopted in 1990 by President George H.W. Bush and the governors of all 50 states (Gronlund, 1993). Gronlund, in his article, "Understanding the National Goals" stated the two primary purposes of the NGE: "First, to increase the achievement level of all students and second, to provide equal opportunity education for all students ("Why Education Goals?" ¶ 1). The NGE continued the trend started under the NDEA (1958) and echoed by *A Nation at Risk* that placed heightened emphasis on the academic achievement of students and with an ever-increasing movement towards greater accountability within schools.

The emphasis on academic achievement continued with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. While accountability had been a goal of past reforms, it has been at the center of the NCLB initiative. Since the passage of NCLB (2001), there

has been an increased emphasis on using testing and data to measure school effectiveness and for accountability purposes. Under provisions of NCLB (2001) student success on academic tests became a condition of the receipt of federal funds and mandated penalties for schools that failed to make adequate yearly progress toward state proficiency goals.

Title V of NCLB (2001) authorized discretionary grants to help schools establish or expand counseling programs. In order to qualify for the Title V grants originally created under NCLB (2001), guidance programs were required to be innovative and comprehensive and work toward a goal of one counselor to every 250 students and one social worker for every 800 students. In February of 2011, in the wake of concern about government deficit spending and campaign promises to reduce it, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to eliminate discretionary grant funding for elementary and secondary school counseling programs (Title V) when it passed H.R.1, the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act of 2011. Moreover, the American Counselor Association (ACA) contends that, despite their lobbying efforts, the Obama administration's budget proposal for fiscal year 2011 lacked support for counseling programs and "relies almost solely on teachers and principals to achieve education reforms without also ensuring the necessary supports, such as credentialed school counselors" (2011, p. 3).

### Counselor Role Confusion and Counselor Frustration

School counselors in the United States have struggled for decades to be recognized as integral to the educational mission of schools (Hatch, 2002). Over many decades, school counselors have had to deviate from doing the work they were trained to do and perform various duties assigned to them that are unrelated to the guidance

programs and goals which they deem important and impactful to student success (Dahir, Burnham, Stone, & Cobb, 2010).

In 1953, Hitchcock observed that there was disagreement between principal and counselor trainers regarding what duties counselors should perform. Counselors believed that they should not be devoting their time to administrative or clerical duties, such as scoring tests, checking absences, monitoring the halls and bathrooms, or filling in for absent teachers.

Tennyson (1958) found that counselors believed that their effectiveness with students was inhibited by administrative assignments and that more time was needed to be allocated to follow-up activities with students. Tennyson stated that the appropriate use of the counselors' time should include the following:

Assisting students in their understanding of self, consulting with teachers and coordinating their efforts to help students receive optimum benefits from learning, providing leadership in the organization and administration of guidance services, and acting as liaison between the school and community in the use of resources for guidance. (p. 135)

In 1959, Stewart published *A Bill of Rights for School Counselors*. Stewart held a discussion session with a group of school counselors and recalled some of the remarks made by counselors:

- “I never had such a frustrating job in my life. I have no time to do real counseling.”
- “I am primarily a clerical worker.”
- “My principal seems to feel that it is more important to discipline a student than to counsel him.”

- “I left full-time teaching because I felt I could then be able to help students with emotional problems, but I was mistaken.”
- “At times, I feel I am wasting the taxpayer’s money. I am paid for counseling but I do very little of it” (p. 500).

Some of the rights of school counselors that Stewart (1959) proposed included the following:

- “The right to a reasonable counseling load.”
- “The right to enough time to do his real job... to engage in counseling per se.”
- “The right to a real opportunity to establish effective contact with parents, referral agencies, and other organizations in the community.”
- “The right to sufficient time and privilege of serving on curriculum and other critical committees.”
- “The right to have an effective voice in determining guidance and counseling policy and practice.”
- “The right to a recognized professional status.”
- “The right to have the full trust and support of the administrators to make the above rights effective” (p. 505).

Stewart (1959) asserted that, if his proposed rights for counselors were adopted, it would allow counselors to exercise skills commensurate with the credential requirements that were in force in 36 U.S. states. While some counselors expressed frustration with assigned duties in the 1950s, disagreement between counselors and principals regarding the proper use of the counselor’s time may actually go as far back as the turn of the 20th century and continues to be a problem in present times (Rambo-Igney & Grimes Smith, 2005-2006).

Beale (1995) asserted that, “the principal is the single most influential person when it comes to selecting school counselors” (p. 211). In addition to being influential in

the selection process, the principal is the key person in determining the duties that will be assigned to the counselor (Sears & Coy, 1991). The duties that are assigned to counselors are often unrelated to counselor training or counseling program components and are typically administrative or quasi-administrative in nature (Sears & Coy, 1991). Coy (1999) asserted that assigning counselors to work in areas outside of their scope of expertise is a misuse of their time. Insufficient access to counselors and guidance programs is “often the result of counselors being assigned administrative and noncounseling tasks” (Rambo-Igney & Grimes Smith, 2005-2006, p. 28).

In the present day, principals continue to request that counselors perform responsibilities not aligned with the standards developed by the ASCA, and which counselors have not been trained to perform. “Some of these tasks are clerical or administrative in nature such as developing master schedules, keeping student records, disseminating tests, coordinating special services, administering student discipline, or supervising the lunchroom and playground” (Leuwerke et al., 2009, p. 263).

According to Myrick (2003), a key to counselor and counseling program accountability is whether or not there is a written program in place. All too often, schools do not have a written guidance program in place, or, if so, counselors are nonetheless assigned roles unrelated to the written program.

Hatch (2002) stated that,

If a school counselor is fortunate enough to have an administrator who understands comprehensive programs, and supports school counselors in staying focused on their established priorities for students, then the program moves

forward. If not, then school counselors are without the leadership they need and often look to professional organizations for leadership (p. 40).

### Principal Knowledge of the Role of the Counselor

For many years, school counselors have been frustrated by the manner in which their abilities have been utilized by principals (Chata & Loesch, 2007). In 1953, Hitchcock asserted that there was a need for principals to receive training in guidance programs and counselor roles in school administrator preparation programs. Fitch, Newby, Ballestero, and Marshall (2001) stated that the absence of school counseling as part of the school principal's training suggests to school counselors that "their supervisors might lack knowledge of appropriate counselor roles" (p. 90). Most principals have never served as counselors and commonly lack graduate school coursework in school counseling (Beale, 2001). Coy (1999) contended that, in recent years, some principals have enhanced their knowledge of the role of the school through training and research. While Coy asserted that there are some instances of graduate school requirements that at least one course in school counseling is required for a degree in school administration: "Many principals continue to view the role of all school counselors from their experience with the counselor at their own school" (p. 2).

In a study by Dietz (1972), questionnaires were sent to principals asking them to rank possible counselor activities in terms of degree of positive attitude. Dietz concluded that his findings indicated "some ambivalence on the part of principals in perception of counselor roles and function" (p. 75). While it was found that principals viewed some ASCA recommended counselor activities positively, they also viewed some

recommended activities less positively and viewed some nonrecommended activities positively.

Fitch et al. (2001) conducted a survey of graduate school students in educational administration who had goals of working in K-12 leadership capacities. The respondents were asked to rate appropriate and inappropriate counselor activities in relation to level of significance on a 5-point Likert scale. Fitch et al. found that while respondents rated appropriate counselor activities at a high degree of significance, nearly 30% of respondents rated some inappropriate counselor activities as significant. Duties unrelated to guidance programming that were often rated by respondents as being either significant or highly significant included “discipline, record keeping, registration, special education assistance, and administering tests” (Fitch et al., 2001, p.96).

Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) conducted a study which found that principals and counselors were often in agreement with regard to activities congruent to the counselor role. However, when it came to activities that are deemed incongruent to the counselor role, they were often in disagreement. Kirchner and Setchfield compared the results of their study of practicing principals to those of Fitch et al. (2001) which examined the attitudes of graduate school students. To the extent that there were differences between the two groups, Kirchner and Setchfield stated that, “we should not be too optimistic about our ability to change perceptions in the absence of corresponding experiences in the field” (p. 13).

In a study by Bardoshi and Duncan (2009), rural school principals’ perception of the role of the school counselor was examined. A survey was conducted that asked rural principals to respond to a five-part level of importance scale that consisted of various

counselor tasks that have been determined to be either appropriate or inappropriate by the ASCA and as discussed in the literature. The results support the findings of Fitch et al. (2001) and Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) in that a majority of principals responded that many counselor congruent roles were either important or very important while a significant percentage of principals indicated that counselor incongruent roles were also important or very important. For example, while the interpretation of achievement test results is considered to be an appropriate task, 68.1 % of principals responded that the counselor inappropriate task of the administering of achievement tests was either an important or very important role for the counselor. For the inappropriate task of maintaining student records, 48.1% of principals responded important or very important. It was also found that 50.7% of principals rated the counselor inappropriate task of assisting with special education services as being either important or very important. (Bardoshi & Duncan, 2009).

In a 2009 survey conducted by Finkelstein for the College Board, it was found that counselors rated ASCA-designated inappropriate administrative tasks took up more of their time while principals rated the same tasks as taking up less of counselors' time. Such tasks were described as clerical and record keeping, coordinating or facilitating standardized tests, doing scheduling and schedule changes, and maintaining student transcript information.

In a study by Leuwerke, Walker & Shi (2009), principals were exposed to one of four school counseling related information sessions with one of the four consisting of a no information control group. It was found that principal exposure to that ASCA National Model had the most impact on principal recommendations for counselor time

allocation and it was concluded that principals are not otherwise “systematically exposed to information about roles, responsibilities or missions of school counseling programs, either in or after graduate school” (p. 268).

The impact of the lack of knowledge that principals have regarding the role of counselors and the effective use of counselors and counseling programs has often left school counselors feeling frustrated. The lack of knowledge of principals in regard to the role of counselors often leads to poor communication and working relationships, as discussed by Ward, Evans, and Coutts (2010):

The quality of communication and the working relationships between pre-K-12 public school counselors and school principals has been ignored yet questioned for years. Some graduates from school counseling and educational leadership preparation programs have voiced concerns that the communications between these two extremely important school positions have been ineffective in the past. The concern was that the skills taught in these programs did not provide the knowledge necessary to work as a collaborative team to solve school-related issues (p. 151).

Ineffective communication can result in conflict and ineffectiveness for both counselors and principals (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). Dahir et al. (2010) stated that, collaboration between the principal and the counselor is not an option but a necessity and “ensures that there is alignment between the stated desires for student academic success and actual practice” (p. 300). Conflict between counselors and principals is far too often the result when there is a lack of agreement and understanding regarding the appropriate roles and responsibilities of counselors (Rambo-Igney & Grimes Smith, 2005-2006). A

summary of ASCA designated appropriate and inappropriate counselor activities were outlined in the executive summary of the ASCA National Model (2005) (Table 1).

Table 1. Counselor Roles as Defined by ASCA

Inappropriate (noncounseling) activities	Appropriate counseling responsibilities
Registering and scheduling all new students	Designing individual student academic programs
Administering cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests	Interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests
Signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent	Counseling students with excessive tardiness or absenteeism
Performing disciplinary actions	Counseling students with disciplinary problems
Sending home students who are not appropriately dressed	Counseling students about appropriate school dress
Teaching classes when teachers are absent	Collaborating with teachers to present guidance curriculum lessons
Computing grade-point averages	Analyzing grade-point averages in relationship
Maintaining student records	Interpreting student records
Supervising study halls	Providing teachers with suggestions for better study hall management
Clerical record keeping	Ensuring student records are maintained in accordance with state/federal regulations
Assisting with duties in the principal's office	Assisting the school principal with identifying and resolving student issues, needs and problems
Working with one student at a time in a therapeutic, clinical mode	Collaborating with teachers to present proactive, prevention-based guidance lessons

## Comprehensive Guidance Programs

Throughout the early decades of the 20th century, school counseling was typically considered to be an ancillary element of the educational system (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). However, as cited in Gysbers and Henderson (2006), in 1923 Myers made the contention that guidance programs should be considered integral to school programs and that counselors should have special training and should work within the context of a defined, integrated program. During those early years, programs were often ad hoc and were carried out by teachers without the benefit of any type of formal training in vocational guidance (Gysbers, 2001). As early as the 1920s and 1930s, a concern emerged regarding the lack of an “agreed-upon centralized structure to organize and direct the work of vocational counselors” and that “other duties as assigned could become a problem” (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001, p. 247).

Concurrent with the impact following the passage of NDEA in 1958 was the rise to prominence of the pupil personnel services movement in the 1960s (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). The pupil personnel services model emphasized support for the overall well-being of every student and guidance program textbooks written in the 1960s adopted this approach (Gysbers & Henderson). By the 1970s, much of the terminology and constructs for comprehensive guidance programs had been developed (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). In 1971, the U.S. Office of Education awarded the University of Missouri-Columbia a grant to help each state develop and implement state models for “career guidance, counseling, and placement” (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006, p. 22). Gysbers oversaw the project and staff, and developed a manual to be used by states to develop their own programs (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). Gysbers and Henderson

(1988) stated that, by the late 1980s states had developed and patterned comprehensive guidance programs on the framework they had described. Throughout the 1990s, states continued to develop and refine guidance models and put them into practice (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006).

#### American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model

In 2001, the ASCA drafted a national model for school counseling, and after having made refinements, released the ASCA National Model in 2003 (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). The ASCA National Model was revised in 2005 and is a comprehensive guidance and counseling program that has an accountability component that requires that program data be collected and analyzed, that counselors are evaluated, and programs audited. The program aims to facilitate counselors answering the question, “How are students different because of what school counselors do?” (ASCA, 2003, p. 165).

The intent of the model was to allow schools to do the following:

1. Establish the school counseling program as an integral component of the academic mission of the school.
2. Ensure every student has equitable access to the school counseling program.
3. Identify and deliver the knowledge and skills all students should acquire.
4. Ensure that the school counseling program is comprehensive in design and is delivered systematically to all students (ASCA, 2003, p. 165)

#### Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP)

In May of 1987, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) released a policy position document on guidance programs in Michigan. Interim Superintendent of Public

Instruction, Gary D. Hawks stated that the purpose of the position paper was to “affirm the State Board of Education’s commitment to . . . quality, comprehensive guidance, and counseling programs in the schools throughout the State” and that “schools cannot deal with improved academic achievement without consideration for the students’ self-concepts, personal goals and values” (Bonaparte et al., 1987, p. 4). It was further stated that the position paper was developed to “reinforce a common core of expectations . . . related to guidance programs” (Bonaparte et al., 1987, p. 5). In 1987, Superintendent Phillip Runkel ordered staff of the MDE to work with local education agencies to “strengthen guidance and counseling programs and practices in order to enhance learning” (Bonaparte et al., 1987, p. 5). The State Board of Education declared that comprehensive guidance and counseling is “an integral part of the total education program” (Bonaparte et al., 1987, p. 8).

The MCGCP was developed by the Michigan School Counselor Association (MSCA) in association with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Office of Career and Technical Preparation. The MCGCP was first introduced in 1991 and revised in 1997. In 2005, it was revised once again to align with the ASCA National Model (MSCA, 2005). The MCGCP is intended to be an integral component to the mission of schools “similar to language arts, math and other curricular areas” (MSCA, 2005, p. 4). Aligned with the ASCA National Model, it is a data-driven program which has “a three prong accountability system involving the collection of data to measure program results, effectiveness of guidance and counseling personnel, and program impact on student learning” (MSCA, 2005, p. 4). The intent of the MCGCP is to assure that all students have access to counseling, and that all students will “acquire and demonstrate

competencies in the areas of academic, career, and personal/social development”  
(MSCA, 2005, p. 8).

An overview of the four primary sections of the MCGCP are presented in Tables 2 and 3 as follows:

Table 2. Overview of the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program: Sections I and II.

Section I—Foundation: Contains standards and benchmarks in three academic domains.	
1. Academic Development (Domain)	Each of the three academic domains have corresponding standards with benchmarks and benchmark indicators. The standards and benchmarks have been adopted from the ASCA National Model (2005) and can be found on pp. 18-22 in the MCGCP (2005) program guide.
2. Career Development	
3. Personal/Social Development	
Section II—Delivery System: Consists of four components by which the MCGCP is to be delivered.	
1. Guidance Curriculum	Described as a way to systematically provide guidance content (knowledge and skills) to every student.
2. Individual Student Planning	Methods by which counselors work closely with students and parents to plan, monitor, and manage the personal, academic, and career development of the student.
3. Responsive Services	Addresses immediate needs of the student. Examples include individual, group or crisis counseling, referrals, consultation with parents, teachers, or other professionals.
4. The Systems Support	Activities intended to ensure and maintain program effectiveness. Examples include professional development, consultation, collaboration and teaming, and program management.

Table 3. Overview of the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program: Sections III and IV.

Section III—Management System. Describes the process for implementing and maintaining a comprehensive guidance system which consists of four phases.	
Phase I: Organization	Requires vision, administrative support, acceptance of change, review of pre-conditions (i.e., budget, staff, materials, etc.), mission statement, and action plan.
Phase II: Current Program Assessment	Program audit is used to assess the current system in relation to the MCGCP.
Phase III: Program Design	Conduct needs analysis to determine program priorities and plan development.
Phase IV: Implementation and Managing the Program	School Board adoption of program, manage and promote, and utilize data.
Section IV—Accountability System	
Part I - School Guidance and Counseling Program Audit	Designed to be used with implementing the program and should also be conducted on an annual basis.
Part II - School Counselor Performance Standards	Outlines the basic standards of practice expected of school counselors.
Part III - Results Reports	Intended to find out how students are different as a result of the program. Data that was gathered from activities outlined in action plans are assessed.

The first of four sections of the MCGCP is the *foundation* (MSCA, 2005). The *foundation* provides an overview of the program and its benefits as well as a detailed outline of academic domains with corresponding standards, benchmarks and benchmark indicators. Some of the benefits are indicated to be enhanced student academic performance, improved decision-making skills, student strategies for coping with a changing world, and promotion of a positive climate within the school.

The standards and benchmarks are outlined in detail and fall within the three academic domains of *academic development, career development, and personal/social development*. The following is an example of the first benchmark under the academic domain: “Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span” (MSCA, 2005, p. 18). There are three benchmarks that fall under Standard A which are: improve academic self-concept, acquire skills for improving learning, and achieve school success. Under the benchmark “improve academic self-concept,” there are five benchmark indicators which are as follows: articulate feelings of competence and confidence as learners, display a positive interest in learning, take pride in work and achievement, accept mistakes as essential to the learning process, and identify attitudes and behaviors which lead to successful learning. The full list of standards, benchmarks and benchmark indicators are found a pp. 18-22 of the MCGCP program guide.

The second section of the MCGCP is the *delivery system* (MSCA, 2005). All of the program activities fit within one of four main components of the *delivery system*. The four components are *guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services* and *systems support*. The *guidance curriculum* component provides a way to deliver knowledge and skills to every student. Curriculum topics are tied to selected benchmark goals and may be delivered in the classroom setting or other group setting by counselors or through team teaching. Benchmarks are assessed via pre-post tests or activity completion. Some examples of possible curriculum topics include conflict resolution, decision making and goal planning, study skills, appreciating diversity, peer

resistance skills, knowledge of career opportunities, bullying, substance abuse and job preparation.

A second of the four MCGCP *delivery system* components is *individual student planning* (MSCA, 2005). *Individual student planning* is described as assisting students “in planning, monitoring and managing their personal and career development” (p. 24). Some of the areas addressed via *individual student planning* may include educational opportunity awareness, appropriate course selection and career awareness and exploration.

*Responsive services* is a third component of the *delivery system* and is intended to address “the immediate concerns and needs of students on a referral or self-initiated basis” (MSCA, 2005, p. 24). *Responsive services* may include academic or school-related concerns such as tardiness, truancy and drop-out prevention. Other issues could include divorce, physical/sexual/emotional abuse, grief/loss, sexuality and coping with stress.

The fourth delivery system component is *systems support* (MSCA, 2005). *Systems support* includes “program, staff and school support activities and services” (MSCA, 2005, p. 24). Examples of possible areas addressed include guidance program development, parent education, teacher and administrator consultation, school improvement planning and goals, community outreach and public relations.

In order to operationalize the *delivery system* components of the MCGCP, schools should follow the recommendation of a student-to-counselor ratio of no more than 250:1 (MSCA, 2005). Additionally, counselors should distribute their time working in delivery system component areas as shown in Table 4 (MSCA, 2005):

Table 4. Recommended Distribution of Total Counselor Time

Delivery System Component	Elementary	Middle/Junior High School	High School
Guidance Curriculum	30-40%	20-30%	15-25%
Individual Student Planning	5-10%	15-25%	25-35%
Responsive Services	30-40%	30-40%	30-40%
System Support	15-20%	15-20%	15-20%

The third section of the MCGCP (2005) is the *management system*. The *management system* outlines the procedures for implementing and maintaining the MCGCP. The process is conducted in phases the first of which involves articulation of a vision and obtaining administrative support, acceptance of change, review of pre-conditions (i.e., budget, staff, materials, etc.), establishment of a mission statement, and development of an action plan. This is followed by a program audit used to assess the current system in relation to the MCGCP and a needs analysis to determine program priorities and plan development. The final phase involves school board adoption, management and promotion of the program.

The fourth section of the MCGCP (2005) is the *accountability system*. The *accountability system* involves the use of a program audit which is designed to be used with implementing the program and should also be conducted on an annual basis. School counselor performance standards are included in the MCGCP users guide in the *accountability system* section and outlines the basic standards of practice expected of school counselors. The use of results reports are used to assess data gathered from activities outlined in action plans and is intended to demonstrate how students are different as a result of the program.

In a study conducted by Studer, Dimbra, Breckner and Heidel (2011), researchers surveyed graduates of a school counseling program that graduated from a university in the southeastern United States in the years 2003-2009. The graduates had been highly trained in implementation of the ASCA National Model. Respondents were asked to indicate how well they perceived their school met the standards outlined in the ASCA national model when they first arrived at their school as well as how well the standards were met at the time of the survey. The researchers found significant differences across school levels in regard to the amount of guidance program change and also the responsive services delivered. Findings also revealed significant differences between secondary school counselors and elementary school counselors in regard to the amount of guidance lessons that were conducted. It was concluded that the additional time spent on guidance curriculum at the elementary level compared to the secondary level corresponded to differences in the amount of time counselors are recommended to spend in this area (Table 4). It was noted that more research was required to better understand differences and the specific types of responsive services being provided at each level. The area found to be the least implemented at all school levels was the management component (Studer et al., 2001).

In a memorandum to the MSBE, dated May 24, 2010, Michael P. Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction, discussed proposed revised standards for preparation of the school counselors in Michigan and stated that, “the proposed standards are developed to reflect and support the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program model (and) to require higher education universities to be accountable for how they prepare candidates to serve in the role of counselors.”

Flanagan further stated, in the same memorandum, “To offer K-12 students the best counselors, institutions need to align their school counselor programs with state curriculum and standards.” On June 15, 2010, the proposed standards for preparation of school counselors were adopted by the MSBE. One of the stated standards is to “articulate knowledge of the school setting and Michigan comprehensive guidance and counseling program” (MSBE, 2010, p. 6).

#### Comprehensive Guidance Programs and Academic Achievement

In the aftermath of the passage of the NDEA in 1958 and the increased emphasis on academic achievement, Shertzer and Stone (1963) asserted that, “guidance services and personnel are not ancillary, expendable parts of a luxurious educational program, but rather, that they make necessary contributions to student learning and development” (p. 24). However, despite various efforts by government and professional organizations to promote the use of counselors in schools, principals and teachers have traditionally viewed counselors and counseling programs as a luxury and not a necessity in regard to such things as student retention and student achievement (Myrick, 2003).

Assigning counselors duties that allow them to work in appropriate roles and guidance programs can have a positive impact on student success. According to the American Psychological Association (2010), “over twenty years of research demonstrates that school counseling . . . can significantly improve student achievement and school attendance and reduce disruptive behavior” (§ 3). Additionally, The Education Trust (2009) stated that “School counselors have an enormous impact on student achievement” (§ 1).

Faced with having to make decisions regarding the allocation of resources, “school boards, administrators, and faculty who are enveloped in accountability issues may not see the work of counselors as an effective utilization of financial resources to improve student achievement” (Dahir & Stone, 2003, p. 215). Confronted with declining budgets, reform mandates, and a lack of adequate administrative support, the overwhelmed principal often assigns administrative duties to counselors (Leuwerke, Walker, & Shi, 2009). In the face of austere economic conditions and scarcity of resources while in the context of the accountability requirements associated with NCLB, school counselors must show that they can contribute to the mission of schools. In order to justify their existence, school counselors are increasingly being called upon to show that they can produce programs and results that can be shown to have a positive impact on student success (Astramovich, Coker, & Hoskins, 2005; McGannon, Carey, & Dimmitt, 2005).

In the era of NCLB, with its increased emphasis on academic achievement and accountability, Rambo-Igney and Grimes Smith (2005-2006) stated that, “counselors can play a vital role in raising academic standards (and) reducing the dropout rate” (p. 32). If principals involve school counselors in “all aspects of the national academic mandate” and encourage the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs, then “students will be the ultimate winners” (Rambo-Igney & Grimes Smith, 2005-2006, pp. 32-33). The emphasis on academic achievement and accountability associated with NCLB has placed added pressure on schools to demonstrate positive student outcomes. “As a result, school counselors are increasingly being called upon to take the lead in

implementing results-based programs with an emphasis on systematically evaluating their outcomes and impact on student success” (Astramovich et al., 2005, p. 49).

Sink (2005) discussed research methodology in relation to examining the impact of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs, referred to by Sink as “comprehensive school counseling programs or CSCPs” (p. 9). Sink asserted that because of the difficulty in showing direct causal links between various education innovations and student outcomes, “a variety of salient research methods should enhance CSCP’s ability to document . . . positive academic development” (p. 11). While considering the caveats, limitations, and confounding factors associated with such investigations, researchers can nonetheless make “causal inferences” (Sink, 2005, p. 11) regarding the impact of educational interventions and programs.

Sink and Stroh (2003) conducted a causal-comparative study examining various measures of academic outcomes of third and fourth-grade elementary school students enrolled at schools with well-established CSCPs versus students at schools with no programs. While accounting for socioeconomic status differences, Sink and Stroh concluded that students that were continuously enrolled at schools with CSCPs in place produced “higher achievement test scores over and above those continuously enrolled” (p. 362) in schools without programs in place.

In a study by Lapan, Gysbers, and Petroski (2003), the impact of comprehensive guidance programs in regards to indicators of quality of life (QOL) was examined. Lapan et al. found that more fully implemented counseling programs where counselors were engaged in program supportive roles significantly predicted “(a) student perceptions of being safer in their schools, (b) better relationships between students and teachers, (c)

greater satisfaction of students with the education they were receiving in their schools, (d) perceptions that one's education was more relevant and important to one's future and (e) earning higher grades" (p. 192-193). As a result of their investigation, Lapan et al. concluded that "implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs was consistently associated with important indicators of student safety and success" (p. 193).

Webb, Brigman, and Campbell (2005) examined the impact of a counselor-led student success skills intervention on the academic success of elementary and middle school students. Student scores from the March 2002 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) were used as a pretest and FCAT scores from March of 2003 were used as a posttest. The intervention was provided by 25 school counselors that met with students in groups once a week for 45 minutes for 8 weeks beginning in October. The initial phase was followed by four 45 minute reinforcement sessions that met once a month beginning in January. A student success skills manual was developed that provided detailed plans for sessions that focused on strategies to help students develop academic, social and self-management skills. Students in the treatment group improved their FCAT math scores by a significant margin over the nontreatment group. Eighty-five percent of students in the treatment group improved math scores by 27 scale points whereas 73% of students in the nontreatment group showed an 11 point gain. While the statistical difference in regard to FCAT reading scores were not deemed significant, the treatment group improved by an average of 16.2 percentage points while the nontreatment group improved reading scores by an average of 12.9 percentage points. Upon examining trends in reading scores, 75% of students in the treatment group improved by an average of 26 scale points while 73% of nontreatment group students improved by an average of 13

points. In addition to FCAT scores, Webb et al. examined teacher ratings of student behavior in areas of academic, social and self-management. Ratings were conducted in September and again in April. Ratings indicated that 72% of treatment group students improved by an average of 19 percentile points. Teachers reported they were very positive about the behavior changes observed in their classrooms. Webb et al. concluded that, “interventions targeting specific skills associated with school success . . . can improve academic achievement and social performance of students” (p. 410).

In a study of the impact of CSCPs in middle schools in the State of Washington, Sink, Akos, Turnbull, and Mvududu (2008) found positive “provisional evidence for the linkage between CSCPs and the educational development of schools” (p. 51). In looking at scores of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in high implementation CSCP schools versus non-CSCP schools, there were non-significant mean differences between research groups on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). However, upon further investigation it was found that when CSCP implementation occurred for five consecutive years or more grade 6 and 7 students significantly outperformed their non-CSCP peers. Sink et al. (2008) concluded that the results of the study suggest that “CSCP’s need to be implemented over many years before their results are readily quantifiable” (p. 51).

#### Student-to-counselor Ratios

In order for counselors to be effective, the ASCA and MSCA recommend a student-to-counselor ratio of no more than 250:1. The MSCA (2007) expressed concerns that recent economic conditions have resulted in the elimination of counseling positions from schools in the State of Michigan. In a testimony presented to the Michigan House

Education Committee in 2009, the MSCA indicated that Michigan high schools have an average student-to-counselor ratio of 354:1, approximately 100 students higher than the recommended caseload level. When looking at the overall (K-12) ratio, Michigan was said to have the fourth highest student-to-counselor ratio in the United States at 648:1 (MSCA, 2007). Studies in Michigan and across the country indicate that lower student-to-counselor ratios are associated with such desirable outcomes as higher academic achievement, higher graduation rates, safer schools, a more positive school climate, and better student-teacher relationships (MSCA, 2007).

High student-to-counselor ratios greatly limit student access to counseling services. Students with access to counseling services are more likely to enroll in more rigorous academic track coursework and make plans to attend 4-year colleges (Lee & Ekstrom, 1987). Additionally, students from families of lower socioeconomic status (SES) are less likely to have access to counselors and counseling services (Lee & Ekstrom, 1987). As a result, lower SES students are more likely to follow a limited education and career plan rather than a college-preparatory plan in high school, and because they are less likely to get assistance from their parents with limited knowledge and skills; hence, lower SES students would be “those who might need more, rather than less, assistance in forming their future plans than other students” (Lee & Ekstrom, 1987, p. 307). Students of lower SES report less contact with counselors but are more likely to need assistance in making decisions about employment or continuation of education (Lee & Ekstrom, 1987).

## Public Agenda Study

In 2010, Public Agenda conducted a study for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that examined the school guidance in the United States. In a national survey of adults aged 22 to 30, Public Agenda (2010) reported that a strong majority of respondents indicated that teachers and coaches were more instrumental in influencing their post-high school education goals than school counselors. Some respondents indicated that they did not believe their counselor cared about them and a majority of those that went on to college indicated that the advice of their high school guidance counselors was inadequate, impersonal and perfunctory. When asked about their experiences with their high school counselors, about half said they felt like “just another face in the crowd” (Public Agenda, 2010, p. 3). The 2010 study attributed its findings in part to high student-to-counselor ratios and counselors being overburdened with noncounseling duties (Public Agenda, 2010). Researchers contended that the guidance system in the United States is under considerable stress and proposed that the number of counselors be dramatically increased to reduce ratios and that counselors should be assigned appropriate duties to allow them more time to work directly in support of students (Public Agenda, 2010).

## Conceptual Framework

For the purpose of this study, Bolman and Deal’s (2008) reframing approach was used to consider the principal’s view of the role of the counselor via the four-frame model. The use of the four frames is intended to allow leaders to look at situations from differing viewpoints in order to discover alternative possible actions and outcomes. The four frames are *political*, *human resources*, *structural*, and *symbolic* (Bolman and Deal, 2008).

The *political frame* is based on the premise that goals are met through attainment of power. Members of an organization compete to influence policy and decision making and for allocation of scarce resources. Temporary coalitions may form and conflict may seem unavoidable. Decisions are often the result of negotiation, compromise, or coercion rather than rational inquiry. A metaphor for the *political frame* is “jungle” (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

Within the context of the political frame, principals have power over resource allocation and policy decisions. When confronted with decision making about the allocation of limited resources while faced with concerns about accountability and student achievement, principals are often more influenced by less abstract concepts such as class size and the importance of classroom materials (e.g., paper, textbooks, and technology) and assign counselors clerical and administrative duties (Dahir & Stone, 2003; Leuwerke, Walker & Shi, 2009). Principal perception of the MCGCP and principal knowledge of appropriate student-to-counselor ratios and the role of the counselor are significant factors in the decision making process. Traditionally, the role of the counselor and counseling programs are more ambiguous to the principal who often views the counselor as a means of accomplishing necessary administrative tasks in support of the daily functions of the school. Feeling powerless and misused, counselors are often left feeling frustrated and resentful (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The *human resources frame* emphasizes concern for others and that the needs of the individual are best met in an atmosphere of caring and trust. Attainment of group members’ commitment is best accomplished through a shared decision-making process. A metaphor for the human resources frame is “family.” Viewing the role of the

counselor through the *human resources* lens, the principal listens to the concerns of the counselor and attempts to build a sense of trust and commitment through collaboration and through counselor involvement in policy formation. Through collaborative experiences with the counselor, the principal's knowledge of the counselor's role and potential contribution to the mission of the school can be impacted. Through the *human resources* frame, the principal learns about the counselor's need to feel empowered through guidance program implementation and utilized in ways that are in direct service to students (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The *structural frame* underscores standards of practice, division of labor, efficiency and accountability. According to Bolman and Deal, the organization is most efficient when roles are well defined and understood. Metaphors for the *structural frame* are "factory" and "machine" (Bolman and Deal, 2008). Within the context of the structural frame, a comprehensive guidance program provides the structural component for counselors to exercise their skills and to implement effective program components (Dollarhide, 2003). Seeing the role of the counselor from the perspective of the *structural frame*, a principal knowledgeable about appropriate student-to-counselor ratios and the role of the counselor may see the MCGCP as the structural component that clearly defines the role of the counselor and specifies how the counselor can most efficiently be utilized within the context of an implemented comprehensive guidance program. When principals lack knowledge in the area of comprehensive guidance, principals may instead view the role of the counselor as a means of assisting with efficient management of the daily operations of the school (Leuwerke, Walker & Shi, 2009).

The *symbolic frame* stresses the cultural aspects of an organization. According to Bolman and Deal, the symbolic frame assumes that motivation and commitment are fostered through imagery, faith, rituals, metaphors, and ceremonies rather than via rules and administrative authority. Metaphors for the symbolic frame are “carnival,” “temple,” and “theater”. In organizations where resources are scarce, individuals may compete for power to influence resource allocation, policy formation, and role definition. The principal that is knowledgeable about the role of the counselor, via the *symbolic frame*, may look for overarching, unifying, and inspirational symbols or themes linked to the functions that counselors value in order to overcome differences and enlist counselors to work in partnership (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

### Conceptual Model

The following Figure 1 represents a visual perspective of the role and function of the counselor and the thought process of the principal through the lens of Bolman and Deal’s (2008) four-frame model. In addition to the four frames and the possible consequences of each approach, other factors that impact counselors and students are represented. Variables related to the research questions include socio-economic status, principal educational experiences and principal knowledge. Implementation of school counseling programs is represented by the MCGCP, the effective counselor and student access to counseling.

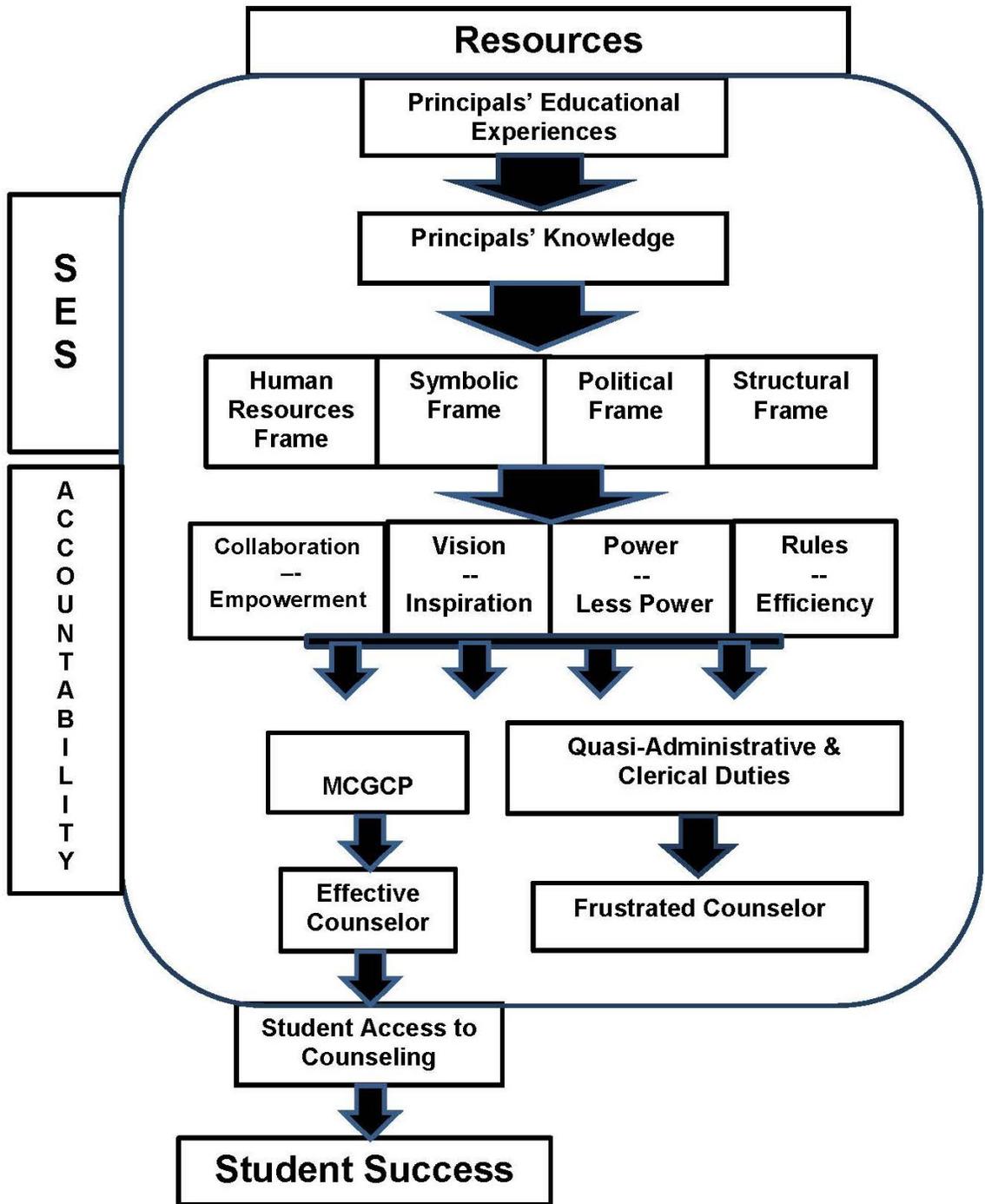


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the principal decision-making process using Bolman and Deal's (2008) four-frames and the role of the counselor.

Encompassing the overall process and its outcomes are the factors of socioeconomic status, accountability and (scarcity of) resources. Principals' educational experiences impact principals' knowledge of counselor roles. Depending on how the principal views the role of the counselor and which frame the principal uses to approach the process can influence the outcome.

The counselor may be assigned a number of quasi-administrative and clerical tasks unrelated to the role of the counselor in which case the counselor feels frustration. If the outcome is implementation of the MCGCP, then this leads to greater access to counseling which supports student success.

### Summary and Conclusion

School guidance has been a part of the educational landscape for over a century. For many years, counselors have complained that they have been assigned duties unrelated to their training (Chata & Loesch, 2007; Dahir, et. al., 2010; Dietz, 1972; Hitchcock, 1953; Hatch, 2002; Leuwerke et. al., 2009; Sears & Coy, 1991; Tennyson, 1958). School counselors assigned duties deemed inappropriate and incongruent with the role of counselor results in insufficient student access to counselors and guidance programs (Public Agenda, 2010; Rambo-Igney & Grimes Smith, 2005-2006). In addition to being assigned inappropriate duties, school counselors often find themselves with large caseloads (MSCA, 2007) with high student-to-counselor ratios that greatly limit student access to counselors and guidance program support (Lee & Ekstrom, 2007; Public Agenda, 2010).

The school principal is the key person in the selection and hiring of school counselors (Beale, 1995) and in determining the duties assigned to counselors (Sears &

Coy, 1991). Despite the significant role that principals play in the area of counselor hiring and duty assignment they nonetheless typically lack training in counselor roles, guidance programs, program implementation, or program or counselor evaluation (Beale & McCay, 2001; Fitch et al, 2001; Hitchcock, 1953).

Studies have shown that principals often agree with counselors in regard to tasks deemed appropriate by counselors and the ASCA. However, the literature also illustrates that many principals often view inappropriate counselor roles positively or as being significant or important (Bardoshi & Duncan, 2009; Dietz, 1972; Fitch et al., 2001; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005). Inappropriate roles are duties that have been designated as incongruent to the role of the counselor by professional organizations and counselors (ASCA, 2003). Some of the duties considered inappropriate by the ASCA include registering and scheduling all new students, administering aptitude and achievement tests, performing disciplinary actions, teaching classes when teachers are absent, computing grade-point averages, maintaining student records and supervising study halls (ASCA, 2005). Examples of duties considered appropriate by the ASCA include designing individual student academic programs, interpreting aptitude and achievement tests, counseling students with disciplinary problems, collaborating with teachers to present guidance and proactive prevention based curriculum lessons, analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement, interpreting student records and providing teachers with suggestions for better study hall management. Assigning counselors appropriate duties and implementing guidance programs can support student success and academic achievement (APA, 2010, Lapan et al., 2003, MSCA, 2007; Sink & Stroh, 2003; Sink et. al, 2008).

While there has been relative consistency in various studies regarding the trend that school principals and counselors tend to be in agreement regarding counselor appropriate duties and tend to be in disagreement in regard to counselor inappropriate duties, definitive explanations are lacking as to why these differences exist or why a significant number of principals indicate that the counselor inappropriate roles of administering aptitude tests and maintaining student records is significant or important while a significant number of principals do not (Bardoshi & Duncan, 2009; Kirchner and Setchfield, 2005). In their study of graduate school students, Fitch et al. (2001) found that 57% of future principals rated significant or highly significant the counselor inappropriate tasks of keeping records and registering students while 54.7% also rated significant or highly significant the inappropriate task of administering tests. While over half of participants responded that the counselor inappropriate roles are significant or highly significant, slightly less than half in the preceding example did not.

In discussing the results of their study, Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) offered a possible explanation for their findings regarding differing principal perceptions of counselor roles. Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) indicated that different principal perceptions of inappropriate counselor roles might be related to experiences in the field and that ““real life” experiences trump any concepts that are present in their training” (p. 13). Although Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) did not examine specific experiences in the field, it was noted that a “positive, although not statistically significant, correlation between years of experience and the tendency to endorse role-incongruent statements is consistent with this explanation” (p.13).

Aside from lacking formal graduate school training in counseling, there is no clear explanation in the literature that accounts for the tendency of principal agreement with counselors regarding appropriate counselor duties while tending to be in disagreement with counselors and the ASCA regarding some inappropriate duties. Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) noted a positive but not statistically significant correlation between years of experience and perceptions regarding counselor inappropriate duties and suggested experiential differences in the field may impact principal perception of the role of the counselor. It is clear that some principals differ from the overall trend in their view of counselor roles and yet questions remain in regard to what experiential differences exist that may account for different perceptions among some principals regarding the role of the counselor. Further study is needed to understand what accounts for differences in principal perceptions of the role of the school counselor and how differing experiences impact the principals' perception of the role of the counselor and implementation of counseling programs.

In an era where academic achievement and accountability are at the forefront, the effective use of resources is imperative. In order to address what has been seen as an omnipresent problem for decades, some educators have asserted that principals need training in guidance program and counselor evaluation as a standard component of their graduate school training.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes a description of the methods used to investigate the research questions. The chapter has the following sections: research design, population, sample, data collection, variables, analytical method, methodology limitations and delimitations, and summary.

#### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental, explanatory study was to determine the extent to which differences in the educational background of high school principals impact their knowledge of counselor roles and implementation of MCGCP. Principals are often the primary figures in the school setting that determine the actual job assignments and duties of the counselors under their supervision. Principals typically lack knowledge in the area of counselor roles and guidance programs and counselors often find themselves with duties unrelated to their graduate school training. In this study, the researcher sought findings as to what accounted for differences in principals' knowledge in the area of counselor roles and guidance programs. Additionally, any variations in the educational experiences of principals that result in their differing perceptions and outcomes regarding counselor assignments and program implementation lead to implications regarding the graduate school training of principals and the future of the role of the school counselor and guidance programs in public schools.

## Research Questions

1. To what extent do the educational experiences of principals impact principals' knowledge of the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP)?
2. To what extent do school characteristics, the educational experiences of principals, and principals' knowledge impact principals' perception of school's implementation of the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP)?

A survey of 421 grade 9-12 high school principals was conducted in the State of Michigan to answer these research questions.

## Research Design

A quantitative, non-experimental, explanatory research design was used for this study. Quantitative methodology is used to investigate relationships between two or more variables (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2008). The explanatory research design is appropriate when attempting to develop causal explanations between variables (de Vaus, 2001). To examine the variables related to the research questions, an electronic survey was conducted and standard multiple regressions were performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 19™ (SPSS 19).

## Population

The population of this study included high school principals in the United States employed by traditional public schools rather than charter, private, or parochial schools. Studies have shown principals to be the most influential persons associated with the

hiring of school counselors (Beale 1995; Beale & McCay, 2001). Principals are charged with assigning duties to and supervising counseling staff (Leuwerke et al., 2009; Rambo-Igney & Grimes, 2005-2006).

### Sample

For the purpose of this study, a convenience sample consisting of all principals of grade 9-12 public high schools in the State of Michigan was utilized. A convenience sample is a non-probability sampling technique used to capture data from a portion of the larger population. The subjects included in a convenience sample are those that are reasonably accessible to the researcher. The convenience sample is useful when examining or identifying the existence of relationships between variables and is more cost effective than using a randomized technique (Castillo, 2009). The electronic survey was sent out to 421 high school principals in Michigan. Since the survey is anonymous, randomness of the sample is unknown.

### Data Collection

Data was collected via an anonymous electronic survey of grade 9-12 public high school principals in Michigan using Survey Monkey™. Subject contact information was obtained from the *Michigan Education Directory* (2011) and via school websites listed within. Email addresses of the principals were inputted into Survey Monkey™. The survey was conducted over a period of 4 weeks. An introductory correspondence via email identified the researcher, explained the nature of the survey and informed potential participants that responses will be kept confidential. The email correspondence contained a link to the survey as well as a link to opt-out. The survey was restricted to allow only

one response per email address. A tracking option was used to send custom messages and reminders to those that did not respond as well as a thank you message to those that did. Three reminders were sent, one at the beginning of each week. Respondent IP address and personal identification information was not collected in the interest of maintaining respondent confidentiality.

The survey consisted mainly of objective response questions and contained four primary sections: Principal and school characteristics, level of appropriateness of counselor task scale, counselor time spent on tasks scale, principal counseling-related educational experiences (see Appendix). The level of appropriateness of counselor task scale section was adapted from a survey conducted by Bardoshi and Duncan (2009). The Bardoshi and Duncan scale was used as a template for this survey because it consisted of tasks that were deemed appropriate or not appropriate according the ASCA and the literature. While the scale was changed from level of importance to level of appropriateness for this survey, the commonality between the tasks of the surveys allows for some consistency for comparison between the studies and the literature in general. Additionally, Bardoshi and Duncan (2009) contended that their survey had face validity because it was based on ASCA standards and guidelines on counseling roles and program components. Because of the descriptive nature of their study, little reliability information was available (Bardoshi & Duncan, 2009).

The Bardoshi and Duncan (2009) survey used a level of importance scale. For the purposes of this research, the rating scale section was used as a template for survey scale development and the rating scale was changed from a five-part level of importance scale to a five-part level of appropriateness scale. Two additional inappropriate counselor task

items were added to the survey. The counselor task items have been determined to be either appropriate or inappropriate activities by the ASCA and as discussed in the literature. There were a total of 16 appropriate task items and six inappropriate task items in the level of appropriateness scale section. The scale was of Likert format and consisted of five parts: *not at all appropriate, marginally appropriate, moderately appropriate, appropriate, and highly appropriate.*

Thirteen items from the appropriate scale section were MCGCP *delivery system* related tasks and were grouped by type for use in the counselor time spent section. For the counselor time spent section, respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of time that counselors spent per week working in areas grouped by *delivery system* type. There were also three task groups that consisted of inappropriate, non-delivery system tasks. For each of the task groupings, participants were asked to choose from a drop down box that ranged from 1 to 21+.

The survey was developed in consultation with a university methodologist and counselor educator. The pilot included one recently retired high school principal and one former principal currently serving as a graduate school professor and principal educator. Both respondents reported no problems with access to the survey or comprehension of survey items and recommended no changes.

### Response Rate

The survey collection period consisted of a four-week timeframe that began in December 2011 and concluded in January 2012. A link to the survey, which was hosted and administered via the Survey Monkey™ website, was sent to the electronic email address of 428 principals of grade 9-12 Michigan public high schools. Seven out of the

428 addresses were undeliverable reducing the potential number of respondents to 421. Of the total population of 421, 171 responded for a response rate of 40.6%. The response rate for each survey item varied as some respondents chose to skip some survey items or stopped taking the survey and did not return to complete it. As a result, survey item count reports vary and reported percentage totals do not always add up to 100.

## Variables

### Dependent Variables

1. Principals' knowledge. This was a continuous variable and was used as a measure of the actual knowledge that principals have of MCGCP. The knowledge or lack thereof that principals have of counselor roles and MCGCP components and benchmarks impact the duties that counselors are ultimately assigned to perform. When principals lack knowledge of MCGCP, they often assign duties to counselors that have little or nothing to do with their graduate school training. This was also an independent variable for the second research question. Data related to principal knowledge was obtained via question 12. Question 12 was made up of 22 items defined by the ASCA and the literature as either being appropriate or inappropriate counselor duties. Respondents were asked to rate counselor task items on a five part level of appropriateness scale with 1 being not at all appropriate and 5 being highly appropriate. (See Appendix)

For analysis purposes, principal knowledge was calculated by creating a single variable which consisted of the sum total of the items from question 12. Prior to calculating the sum score, inappropriate task item scales were inverted. The

inappropriate scale inversion and the sum score calculation were conducted using SPSS. Question 12 was divided into 22 tasks, 16 of which are considered appropriate counselor tasks and six that are considered inappropriate tasks in accordance the ASCA and MCGCP guidelines and the literature. The results for 16 rated tasks that are considered appropriate are shown in Table 5. For each of the 16 appropriate tasks, a majority of respondents chose either 4 or 5, indicating that the task is either appropriate or highly appropriate. This is consistent with the literature indicating that principals generally agree with the ASCA regarding appropriate counselor tasks.

Table 5. Question 12: Principal Level of Appropriateness Ratings for ASCA Appropriate Tasks

Appropriate Tasks	N	Level of Appropriateness				
		1	2	3	4	5
Respondent Ratings in Percent						
1. Academic support to students, including organizational study and test taking skills	161	.6	4.9	21.0	32.7	40.1
2. Crisis intervention	161	.0	1.2	3.1	19.8	75.3
3. Consultation, collaboration and teaming	160	1.9	1.9	17.3	38.9	38.9
4. Education on understanding self	161	.0	3.7	19.1	43.2	33.3
5. Peer relationships, coping strategies, social skills	161	.0	1.9	9.9	39.3	50.0
6. Assisting the school principal with identifying and resolving student issues, needs and problems	161	.6	1.2	8.6	38.9	50.0
7. Small group counseling	162	1.2	4.3	19.1	45.1	30.2
8. Academic planning	161	.0	.0	4.3	27.2	67.9
9. Multicultural/diversity awareness	161	1.2	11.5	27.8	34.0	25.3
10. Interpretation of cognitive, aptitude, achievement tests.	162	2.5	5.5	25.9	38.9	27.2
11. School counseling program management/operation	161	.0	2.5	9.3	46.9	40.7
12. Individual counseling	162	.6	3.1	5.6	41.4	49.4
13. Career awareness, exploration and planning	162	.0	.6	4.3	37.7	57.4
14. Analyzing grade point averages in relation to achievement	160	2.5	8.6	24.7	38.3	24.7
15. School counselor professional development	162	.0	4.3	9.9	46.9	38.9
16. Referrals to school and community resources	161	.0	1.9	6.2	38.9	52.5

While the literature supports the notion that principals and counselors are in agreement regarding ASCA appropriate duties, where there has been disagreement is in the area of roles considered to be inappropriate. The results of the remaining six tasks that are considered inappropriate illustrate that some principals consider some inappropriate tasks to be appropriate which is generally consistent with the literature. A majority of respondents rated the tasks of maintaining student records, administering cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests, and assisting with special education services either appropriate or highly appropriate (Table 6).

Table 6. Question 12: Principal Level of Appropriateness Ratings for Inappropriate Tasks

Inappropriate Tasks	N	Level of Appropriateness				
		1	2	3	4	5
		Respondent Ratings in Percent				
1. Maintaining student records	160	.6	7.4	23.5	32.1	35.2
2. Administration of cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests	162	3.7	11.1	17.9	40.7	26.5
3. Performing disciplinary actions	161	66.6	18.5	9.3	3.1	2.5
4. Assisting with special education services	162	3.7	8.0	32.7	38.9	16.7
5. Monitoring students in the cafeteria (“lunch duty”)	162	63.6	20.4	10.5	2.5	3.1
6. Monitoring the parking lot before, during, or after school	162	77.8	13.6	5.6	1.2	1.9

2. Principals’ perception of implementation of MCGCP (counselor time spent on task). This was a continuous variable that is a measure of how principals view the extent to which MCGCP is actually implemented at their respective schools. Data related to this variable was obtained via question 13 of the survey. Question 13 asked respondents to estimate the percentage of time per

week counselors spend working in specific tasks areas and was made up of eight items, four of which were comprehensive guidance delivery system components. Two items were made up of specific non-guidance activities and one item was “other activities.” (See Appendix)

The dependent variable, implementation of the MCGCP, is represented in the analysis by data associated with question 13. This survey item was comprised of groupings of tasks that were either organized by MCGCP component delivery category or were otherwise inappropriate, non-program duties. Respondents were asked to choose from a dropdown box that had a range of 1-21+. Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of time counselors spent at their school working in various task areas. A sum score of the data from the items contained within question 13 were used to create the variable of implementation for analysis purposes. The calculation was done using SPSS.

Question 13 represents what principals believe in regard to how counselors spend their time performing various tasks (implementation). The results indicated that principals believe counselors spent a similar amount of time performing the inappropriate tasks of maintaining student records, administering tests and assisting with special education services as they do performing appropriate tasks. However, a majority of principals indicated that counselors spend 0% of the time working in the two inappropriate categories related to discipline and monitoring the parking lot and cafeteria. For the same two survey items, the second largest group of respondents chose the next lowest response range indicating counselors spend only 1-5% of their time working in the aforementioned categories (Table 7).

Table 7. Questions 13: Principal Estimate of Counselor Time Spent by Program Category

	Percentage of Time Spent					
	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+
<b>Guidance Program Task Group</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>					
Academic support to students (organizational, study, test-taking skills); Peer relationships, coping and social skills strategies; Multi-cultural diversity awareness, Career exploration and planning	0	12.8	14.1	11.5	10.3	50.6
<b>Responsive Services</b>						
Crisis intervention; Small group or individual counseling; Referrals to school support and community resources	0	23	28.9	14.1	11.5	21.8
<b>Individual Student Planning</b>						
Education on understanding self, including strengths and weaknesses, Academic planning	0	32	24.4	15.9	10.9	14.7
<b>System Support</b>						
Consultation, collaboration and learning; School counseling program management and operation; school counselor professional development	0	40.4	24.3	14	9	6.4
<b>Non-Program/Inappropriate Tasks</b>						
Maintaining student records; Administration of cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests; Assisting with special education services	0	33.4	32.7	8.3	19.9	13.5
Administering student disciplinary actions (reprimands, suspensions, detentions, etc.)	60.3	35.9	1.2	1.9	0	.6
Monitoring the cafeteria (“lunch duty”); Monitoring the parking lot before, during, or after school	53.2	41.7	1.2	1.9	1.2	.6

## Independent Variables

1. Principals' educational experiences. This was a categorical variable.

Principal educational experiences are actually a set of related independent variables and data for this variable was derived from survey items 14-18. This variable set involved classifications or types of experiences that a principal may have had that were related to counseling roles and comprehensive guidance components. The variable included graduate school coursework and professional development hours taken that consisted of counseling-related topics. It also included the estimated number of hours spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff and any knowledge gained by other sources such as reading articles or doing research on the Internet. For analysis purposes, each of the survey items related to educational experiences was added to the regression process as separate but related independent variables using SPSS.

2. Free and reduced lunch program participation. This was a categorical variable that was a measure of the percentage of the student population that was eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. The variable was a control for socioeconomic status of a district as it reflects the relative affluence of the corresponding population. The measure was intended to account for differences in the wealth of a district and its impact on the availability of resources and the likelihood that counseling positions are reduced or that programs such as MCGCP remain unimplemented. Free and reduced lunch program participation data was obtained via item number 6 of the survey

which asked respondents to estimate student participation in the free and reduced lunch program. (See Appendix)

3. Student-to-counselor ratio at respondent's school. This was a continuous variable that was related to implementation. It was assumed that adequate counseling staff is required to effectively carry out the duties of the counselor as defined by the MCGCP. The ASCA/MCGCP recommended caseload ratio is no more than 250 students per counselor. A student-to-counselor ratio was calculated using data collected via items 4 (number of counselors) and 5 (enrollment) of the survey. (See Appendix A)

#### Analytical Method

There were two scales related to each of the two research questions. A standard multiple regression was conducted for each of the research questions. Multiple regression is a procedure used to identify predictable relationships between variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). This procedure is then useful in attempting to predict outcomes related to the variables in the research questions: the impact of principals' educational experiences on principals' knowledge of counselor roles; the impact of school characteristics, and principals' knowledge of implementation of counseling programs. A p-value of  $\leq .05$  was used for this study.

#### Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited to public high school principals in the State Michigan and as such, the results may not be fully applicable to other U.S. states. Since the survey was voluntary, the results are limited to only those principals that chose to respond.

Survey questions 12 and 13 included the ASCA designated counselor inappropriate task of *assisting with special education services*. It is possible that “assisting” with special education services could be interpreted to mean different things to different respondents. While it is considered inappropriate for counselors to be in charge of or assist with the administration of special education programs, it is otherwise appropriate for counselors to provide support for all students to include those in special education programs.

Since it seems possible that respondents may have wanted to choose 0% for an inappropriate task and could not, the two survey items with the high missing values had those missing values converted to 0 for reporting and analysis purposes. Survey item 13, parts 6-7; and survey item 15 had an abnormally high number of missing values. For item 13, the two inappropriate task groupings, *disciplinary actions* and *monitoring the parking lot or cafeteria* had a disproportionately high rate of missing values (over 50%). It was assumed that because an option of 0 was unavailable to respondents that wanted to choose 0, some respondents skipped these items. For the purposes of reporting and analyzing the data, these items had all missing values changed to zero. While it seems logical that a high number of respondents skipped these survey items because they wanted to choose 0 and could not, it is not possible to know will all certainly the number of respondents that skipped these survey items for this reason. However, one respondent emailed the researcher and indicated a preference of 0 for some categories where a choice 0 was not available.

For survey question 17, respondents could choose from five different categories of ranges that represented the number of hours spent discussing the role of the counselor

with guidance staff. A sixth category was mistakenly missing in the electronic survey, however, there was a low number of missing values indicating that only 1.3% of respondents skipped the question. This implies that respondents were comfortable with the remaining choices, although this missing category is clearly a limitation.

For the second research question, the dependent variable of principal perception of implementation of counseling programs was based on the principals' beliefs regarding the amount of time counselors spent working in various task categories. Principal perception of the amount of time counselors spend working in various task categories may not match the actual time counselors spend working in these roles. Therefore, principals' perception of implementation may or may not indicate actual implementation or the actual time spent by counselors in task areas.

There are other limitations inherent to the study's reliance on respondent self-reported data which cannot realistically be verified as truthful or accurate. For example, principals were asked to recall the number of hours of counseling related instruction they had received in graduate school, as part of their professional development and from self-directed research. Principals were also asked to recall the number of hours, over five years, they had spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff. These questions rely on the accuracy of respondent memories. For these categories, respondents may not have an accurate recollection of the exact hours and thus provided what was only an estimate to some survey response items. Although the survey was anonymous, an additional limitation could be that respondents could have exaggerated the amount of hours or over-estimated the amount of knowledge they had regarding the

MCGCP (question 19) because they felt they were “supposed” to know things that they did not know or felt they should have more training than they actually had.

### Summary

This was a quantitative, explanatory study which examined the extent to which principals’ educational experiences impact principals’ knowledge of counselor roles. A secondary purpose of this study was to examine the impact of school characteristics and principals’ knowledge on the implementation of MCGCP. Data was collected via electronic survey and was limited to principals of grade 9-12 public high schools in the State of Michigan. A standard multiple regression for both scales was conducted.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data collected for this study. An online survey was administered via Survey Monkey™ to 421 principals of grade 9-12 Michigan public high schools. This chapter reports the demographic data followed by the results for each of 20 survey questions. Finally, the results of a standard multiple regression analysis is presented for each of the two research questions. A third multiple regression analysis was performed using variables associated with the second research question since the initial analysis model was found to be insignificant.

#### Demographics

##### Gender

A total of 125 males (73.1%) and 43 (25.1%) females answered the first survey item which asked respondents to indicate their gender (Table 8). The results are consistent with a study conducted by Thoenes (2009) in which an electronic survey of 1084 secondary school principals in Michigan resulted in responses from 177 (72.2%) male and 68 (27.8%) female respondents.

##### Years of Experiences as a Principal or Assistant Principal

The second survey item asked respondents to choose 1 of 5 categories in order to indicate the number of years they have served as a school principal or assistant principal. The categories were 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20 and Over 20. The largest category consisted of 56 (32.7%) respondents that had served in their role for 6-10 years. The data indicated

that slightly more than half (54.3%) of respondents have served as a principal for 10 years or less (Table 8).

#### Highest Degree Held

Responding to the third survey question, the smallest group (1.2%) of respondents indicated their highest degree held was a baccalaureate while the next smallest group (7%) held a doctorate. A substantial majority, consisting of 120 (70.2%) respondents, indicated their highest degree held was a master's (Table 8). The results show consistency with Thoenes 2009 survey of Michigan secondary principals. Thoenes also found that the majority of respondents reported having a master's degree (66.5%) and that only a small percentage had earned a doctorate (6.3%). Thoenes also found that the smallest number of respondents had earned only a baccalaureate degree (0.8%).

Table 8. Survey Questions 1-3: Demographics

Demographic	Count	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	125	73.1
Female	43	25.1
<b>Years of Experience</b>		
0-5	37	21.6
6-10	56	32.7
11-15	46	26.9
16-20	17	9.9
Over 20	15	8.8
<b>Highest Degree Held</b>		
Baccalaureate	2	1.2
Master	120	70.2
Specialist	37	21.6
Doctorate	12	7.0

### School Characteristics

#### Student-to-Counselor Ratio

The student-to-counselor ratio was created using data gathered from survey questions 4 and 5 which represented the number of counselors and student enrollment respectively. The student-to-counselor ratio is an independent variable for the second research question. The results revealed a mean ratio of 382.66 (Table 9) which is 53% higher than the ASCA recommended maximum ratio or 250 students per counselor and is slightly higher than the average Michigan high school student-to-counselor ratio of 354 reported by the MSCA in 2009.

The results imply that principals believe that a student-to-counselor ratio that is higher than the recommended ratio is acceptable. In addition to principal perceptions, other factors can impact the student-to-counselor ratio. In regard to the higher mean score in comparison to the 2009 reported average, this could be related to economic factors associated with the national recession and cuts in state funding and subsequent cuts in programs and staff. Since the survey was anonymous, there was no way to know if the sample and results are proportionally representative of the population. For example, if there was a higher rate of responses from inner city districts, this could not be accounted for since respondent identity and location was not tracked.

Table 9. Questions 4 & 5 with Student-to-Counselor Ratio Calculation

Variable	N	Min/Max.	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Number of Counselors	157	1/15	2.64	1.83	2.41	12.35
Enrollment	161	130/2600	916.70	560.82	.838	-.200
Student-to-Counselor Ratio	156	130/988.00	382.66	127.45	2.02	6.85

Table 9 displays a maximum student-to-counselor value of 988 indicating that there was at least one principal that reported an enrollment of 988 students while also reporting only one counselor. This high student-to-counselor ratio (988:1) suggests a possible outlier that skewed the mean result (382.66). However, upon further examination of the data, several moderately high ratios were noted with one counselor reported from schools with enrollments in the 500s and 600s. A handful of very high ratios were discovered as well. In addition to the high ratio of 988:1, other schools with only one counselor had enrollments of 865, 900, and 940. Taken together, the results suggest that the mean value is likely not misleading because of a single outlier (988) but

that there were several moderately high ratios and a handful of very high ratio schools that contributed to the mean result of 382.66.

#### Free and Reduced Lunch

Respondents were asked to choose from six categories to indicate the percentage of students that were in attendance during school year 2010-2011 that qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch, also known as the National School Lunch Program. Data was gathered via question 6 of the survey and represented an independent variable for the second research question. Each of the first five categories represented a 10 percentage point range with the sixth category representing 51% or more of student participation. A plurality of respondents (24.4%) chose the category of 51% or more (Table 6). When combining the two highest categories of 51% or more with the next highest category of 41-50% of student participation, this results in a combined total of 38.4% of respondent reported student participation in free and reduced lunch. Since the percentage (38.4%) represents number of respondents and since respondent schools range in size from 130 to 2600 students (Table 10), the percentage cannot be assumed to also represent overall student participation in free and reduced lunch. Additionally, since the population was limited to principals of grade 9-12 schools, high schools with differing groupings of high school grades were not included in the survey sample. For example, seven 9-10 grade Detroit high schools and two grade 7-12 Flint schools were not included in the sample.

According to the Kids Count in Michigan Data Book for 2011, 6% of students qualified for reduced lunch and 41% of students qualified for free lunch for a total of 47% of students qualifying for school lunch assistance. However, the Kids Count data was based on the qualifying criteria for the free and reduced lunch program according to

the financial status of K-12 student families rather than solely on 9-12 students that had actually applied for assistance. Regardless of what the actual overall percentage of respondent student participation in free and reduced lunch was, the fact that 38.4% of respondents indicated 41% or more illustrates that a significant number of students at respondent schools participate in the free and reduced lunch program.

Table 10. Question 6: Free and Reduced Lunch

Range as Percentage of Students	Count	Percent
0-10	15	8.7
11-20	26	15.1
21-30	32	18.6
31-40	29	16.9
41-50	24	14.0
51+	42	24.4

#### Professional Staff Reductions

Survey questions 7-11 asked respondents to answer questions pertaining to professional staffing and reductions to staff in their building. These variables were not included in the research questions or analysis but because of the economic conditions of recent years, staff reductions can impact the ability of schools to retain staff and to maintain programs to include counseling staff and programs.

#### Total Professional Staff

Principals were asked to specify the total number of professional staff (teachers, counselors, psychologists, social workers, media specialist etc.) in their building.

Additionally, principals were asked to indicate if there had been any cuts in professional

staff. For the total staff survey question (question 7), respondents were provided a textbox to enter the total number of professional staff in their buildings. For the question regarding cuts, (question 8) a drop down box was provided with a range of 0-15+. In addition to the numerical range, there was also a choice of “uncertain” which was chosen by 6 respondents. The results revealed a range of professional staff from 12 to 125 with a mean of 54.17. The mean for cuts was 4.31 (Table 11). The mean result should be considered in the context of a wide range of staff sizes included in the survey sample. Respondent building professional staff sizes ranged from 12 to as large as 125 with a mean of 54.17.

Table 11. Questions 7 & 8: Total Staff and Staff Cuts

Variable	N	Min/Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Total Professional Staff	157	12/125	54.17	29.69	.70	-.72
Total Staff Cuts Past 3 Years	155	0/15+	4.31	3.59	1.20	1.13

*Note. N = number of respondents; SD = standard deviation; Min. = minimum; Max. = maximum*

Principals were also asked if cuts were anticipated next year (question 9). Nearly half of respondents indicated “yes” (Table 12).

Table 12. Question 9: Staff Cuts Next Year

Response Option	Count	Percent
Yes	82	47.7
No	37	21.5
Uncertain	51	29.7

## Counseling Staff

In addition to questions about professional staff in general, principals were asked specifically about cuts in counseling positions. Question 10 asked principals if any of the cuts last year or if any of the cuts next year might be counseling positions. A significant number (21.5%) indicated yes while 12.2% were uncertain (Table 13).

Table 13. Question 10: Cuts in Counseling Staff

Response Option	Count	Percent
Yes	37	21.5
No	112	65.1
Uncertain	21	12.2

Principals were asked to specify the total number of counseling positions that were cut last year or that might be cut in the coming year. A significant number (22.7%) indicated 1 counseling position and a total of 25.1% of respondents specified in the range of 1-3 positions while 7% remained uncertain. One-third of principals indicated that there were cuts last year or that there might be cuts next year or were uncertain (Table 14).

Table 14. Question 11: Cuts in Counseling Staff

Response Option	Count	Percent
0	114	66.3
1	39	22.7
2	2	1.2
3	2	1.2
4	0	0
5 or more	0	0
Uncertain	12	7.0

As previously discussed, the MSCA reported average student-to-counselor ratio in 2009 in Michigan was 354 students to 1 counselor. This number is 42% higher than the ASCA recommend ratio of 250 to 1. However, the survey, which was conducted in December 2011 to January or 2012, revealed a mean ratio of 382.66 which is 53% higher than the ASCA recommended maximum ratio or 250 students per counselor. When considering the reported student-to-counselor ratio (Table 9) and the number of respondents that reported cuts (25.1%) or were uncertain (7%), it supports the previous contention that recent economic factors as well as principal knowledge likely have an impact on student-to-counselor ratios.

#### Educational Experiences of Principals

Questions 14-18 were intended to identify the degree of exposure principals have had to counseling and guidance related topics via coursework, professional development, self- directed research and via discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff. In combination, questions 14-18 constitute the educational experiences of principals and are independent variables for both research questions. For the first research question, educational experiences are the independent variables and principal knowledge (question 12) is the dependent variable. For the second research question, educational experiences remain independent variables and principal perception of counselor time spent (implementation of MCGCP) is the dependent variable.

Counselor Education Graduate School Courses

Principals were asked to estimate the total number of counselor education graduate courses that they had taken. Slightly more than two-thirds (69.9%) of respondents indicated that they have taken no counselor education courses while 10.3% have taken at least one course (Table 15). It is not surprising that nearly 70% of respondents had taken no counselor education courses. The likelihood that a graduate school student in educational leadership would take a course in counselor education apart from the educational leadership curriculum is small. Additionally, only a small number of principals are likely to have more than one master’s degree. The survey for this study did not ask respondents to disclose if they had more than one master’s degree. However, according Thoenes 2009 study, only 10.7% of Michigan secondary principals held multiple master’s degrees. It is not surprising then that the survey for this study indicated that only seven (4.5%) of principals held a degree in counseling. When considering the time and expense associated with obtaining multiple graduate degrees, it is reasonable to assume that principal knowledge about counselors and counseling programs is not likely to be the result of significant numbers of principals having formal graduate school training in the form of counselor education coursework or that they would hold counseling degrees in addition to degrees in educational leadership.

Table 15. Counselor Education Courses

Response Option	Count	Percent
0	109	69.9
1	16	10.3
2	14	9.0
3	2	1.3
4 or more	6	3.8
Have Counseling Degree	7	4.5

## Other Graduate School Courses

Survey question 15 asked principals to specify the number of clock hours of instruction that were part of graduate coursework taken that were not part of counselor education courses but consisted of counseling related topics. For example, a supervision or personnel administration course in educational leadership could potentially have as part of the curriculum a component related to counselor supervision, programs and evaluation. Respondents chose from a dropdown box with a range of 1-15+. For most of the educational experience survey items (questions 14-18), missing values were typically below 4% meaning less than 4% of respondents skipped the questions. However, Question 15 had a high number of missing values (28%). A possible explanation for the high number of missing values compared to the other experience type questions is that question 15 should have had 0 as an option. Instead, respondents that wanted to choose 0 in order to indicate they had no hours of instruction to report skipped the question because it was not possible from the available options to indicate a correct response. Additionally, one respondent contacted the researcher to indicate a preference for 0 that was not available. For this reason, all missing values for question 15 were converted to 0 for reporting and analysis purposes.

The results disclosed a mean of 5.19 hours (Table 16). On the surface, this could imply that the typical principal has had approximately 5 hours of graduate school instruction in the area of counseling in non-counselor education courses. However, when examining the frequency distribution, this does not appear to be apparent (Table 17). Over 40% of respondents specified that they had 0 to 2 hours of instruction related to

counseling. This indicates that a highly significant number of principals have received very little or no instruction at all in the area of counseling in graduate school.

Table 16. Distribution for Question 15: Hours of Counseling Topics in other Courses

Variable	N	Min/Max.	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Clock Hours of Counseling Topics	156	0/15	5.19	5.44	.73	-.96

*Note. Min. = minimum; Max. = maximum*

Table 17. Frequencies for Question 15: Hours of Counseling Topics in other Courses

Response Option in Hours	Count	Percent
0	43	28
1-2	24	15.4
3-4	22	14.1
5-6	18	11.6
7-8	1	.6
9-10	18	11.5
11-12	7	4.5
13-14	0	0
15+	23	14.7

#### Professional Development of Counseling Related Topics

For question 16, principals were asked to choose from a range of 0-20+ to indicate the number clock hours of professional development that they have had that was related to counseling or counseling programs. As indicated on Table 18, mean clock hours = 7.99. In regard to frequency, 30 respondents (21%) indicated that they had

received 0 hours of professional development in counseling and nearly half (46%) indicated they had received 5 or less hours.

Table 18. Distribution for Question 16: Counseling Related Professional Development

Variable	N	Min/Max.	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Clock Hours of Professional Development	148	0/20	7.99	6.88	.53	-.93

*Note. Min. = minimum; Max. = maximum*

#### Discussing the Role of the Counselor with Guidance Staff

Principals were asked to indicate the number hours they have spent, over the last five years, discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff. Respondents could choose from five different categories of ranges that represented number of hours spent. A sixth category (21-30) was mistakenly missing in the electronic survey, however, there was a low number of missing values indicating that only 1.3% of respondents skipped the question. This implies that respondents were comfortable with the remaining choices, although this missing category is clearly a limitation. Nonetheless, the plurality of respondents (30.8%) chose the highest category (41+ hours) and nearly half (44.3%) of principals indicated they had spent 31 or more hours of time discussing the role of the counselor (Table 19).

Table 19. Question 17: Hours Discussing the Role of the Counselor with Guidance Staff

Response Option/Number of Hours	Count	Percent
0	1	.6
1-10	43	27.6
11-20	41	26.3
21-30	0	0
31-40	21	13.5
41+	48	30.8

#### Self-Directed Study of Counseling Related Topics

Question 18 asked respondents to indicate the number of hours they have spent, over the last five years, doing self-initiated research on counseling related topics.

Principals could choose from six categories that ranged from 0-41+. A small but somewhat significant number of respondents (14.1%) indicated they had engaged in 0 hours of self-directed study of counseling topics. However, a significant number (65.4%) chose the range 0-10 hours indicating that nearly two-thirds of principals have done little self-directed research on the topic of school counseling (Table 20). It appears from the survey results that self-directed study of counseling topics is not likely impacting a highly significant number of principals in regard to their knowledge of counseling.

Table 20. Question 18: Hours Spent in Self-Directed Study of Counseling Topics.

Response Option	Count	Percent
0	22	14.1
1-10	80	51.3
11-20	23	14.7
21-30	14	9.0
31-40	2	1.3
41+	13	8.3

As noted during the discussion of the results for question 17, nearly half of principals had indicated they had spent 31 or more hours discussing the role of the counselor with counseling staff (Table 19). Of the various types of educational experiences considered in this study, it appears that the hours that principals spend discussing the role of the counselor with counseling staff has the most potential to impact a large number of principals in regard to what they know about the role of the counselor.

#### Principal Self-Assessment of Knowledge

The final two survey questions asked principals to estimate their knowledge of the MCGCP (question 19) and to give an estimate of an appropriate student-to-counselor ratio (question 20).

#### Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program

Over half of respondents indicated that they were not at all knowledgeable or were only somewhat knowledgeable of the MDE's recommendations regarding school counseling (The MDE endorses and recommends the MCGCP). Only 5 (3.2%) of respondents indicated they were highly knowledgeable (Table 21). While a significant

number of principals indicated that they are either not at all knowledgeable or only somewhat knowable, nearly a one-third indicated that they are either knowledgeable, quite knowledgeable or highly knowledgeable. The numbers show that there exists some disparities among principals in regard their knowledge of the role of the counselor but it remains significant that more than half are not knowledgeable or are only somewhat knowledgeable of the MCGCP.

Table 21. Question 19: Principal Self-Assessment of Knowledge - MCGCP

Response Option	Count	Percent
Not at all Knowledgeable	26	16.7
Somewhat Knowledgeable	71	45.5
Knowledgeable	34	21.8
Quite Knowledgeable	17	10.9
Highly Knowledgeable	5	3.2

#### Appropriate Student-to-Counselor Ratio

The final survey question asked principals to indicate what they think a fair or adequate student-to-counselor ratio would be for the MCGCP to be implemented. The recommended maximum student-to-counselor ratio is 250 students to one counselor. A clear majority (58.3%) of principals surveyed chose the response range 1-299 which most closely correlates to the ASCA recommended ratio (Table 22). The second highest number of principals chose the 300-399 range which is consistent with the mean results previously reported for questions 4 and 5 (Table 5). The results indicate actual student-to-counselor ratios tend to not match what most principals indicated they believe to be an appropriate ratio. While principal beliefs likely influence student-to-counselor ratios

(34% chose the 300-399 range and the actual mean ratio was 382.66), other factors, such as economic and budgeting issues also likely influence the ratios.

Table 22. Question 20: Principal Estimate of Appropriate Student-to-Counselor Ratio

Response Option	Count	Percent
1-299 Students	91	58.3
300-399 Students	53	34.0
400-499 Students	9	5.8
500-599 Students	1	.6
600 or More Students	0	0

## Data Analyses

### Research Question One

The intent of the first research question was to determine the extent to which the educational experiences of principals had an impact upon principals' knowledge of the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP). There are six survey questions (12, 14-18) that pertained to the first research question. Questions 14-18 collectively constitute the independent variables (principal educational experiences), while question 12, the dependent variable, represented a measure of principal knowledge of appropriate counselor roles.

### Multiple Regression for the Research Question One

A standard multiple regression analysis was performed between the dependent variable (principal knowledge) and the independent variables (principal educational experiences). Multiple regression is a procedure used to identify predictable relationships

between variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). This procedure is then useful in attempting to predict outcomes related to the variables in the research questions.

The dependent variable was based on a sum score of responses from question 12 which consisted of a five-part scale of appropriateness rating for counselor tasks. There were five independent variables which corresponded to questions 14-18 of the survey. The independent variables consisted of various types of principal educational experiences: counselor education courses; hours of instruction in other graduate courses that consisted of counseling related topics; hours of professional development that consisted of counseling related topics; hours spent discussing role of the counselor with guidance staff; and hours spent in self-directed study of counseling related topics.

Regression analysis revealed that the model significantly predicted principal knowledge as the results produced ANOVA  $F = 3.289, p = .008$ . A  $p$  value of  $\leq .05$  is being used to establish significance for this study, therefore, a  $p$  value of .008 is considered highly significant. The model summary resulted in adjusted  $R^2 = .078$ . The adjusted  $R^2$  of .078 indicates that the model can explain approximately 7.8% of the variations in principals' knowledge.

Table 23. Regression for Research Question One

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		<i>p</i>
	B	Std Error	
(Constant)	80.606	1.906	.000
Counselor Education Courses Taken	.070	.561	.901
Clock Hours of Counseling Related Coursework in other Graduate School Classes	.001	.137	.993
Professional Development – Counseling Topics	.034	.110	.759
Hours Spent Discussing Role of Counselor with Guidance Staff	2.107	.602	.001
Hours Spent in Self-directed Study – Counseling Topics	-.237	.568	.678

*Note.*  $p \leq .05$

Table 23 displays the unstandardized regression coefficients and the *p* level for each variable. The B value indicates the amount the dependent variable (principal knowledge) is expected to go up when the independent variable goes up by one unit provided that all of the other independent variables are unchanged. The standard error is a measure of standard deviation or a prediction of how the results could vary if multiple samples were taken from the same population or estimates how likely the sample data is representative of the population. A smaller standard error increases the likelihood that the sample is representative of the population.

The *p* value is a measure of significance in regard to the predictive nature of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Since a *p* value of  $\leq .05$  is being used for this study, the results reveal that out of the five types of

educational experiences, the hours that principals spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff is highly significant,  $p = .001$ . The results for the other independent variables which consisted mainly of types of formal education did not yield a  $p$  value that indicated significance. It was found that the model can only explain 7.8% (adjusted  $R^2 = .078$ ) of the variations in principals' knowledge while also finding that the time that principals spent discussing the role of the counselor was highly significant ( $p = .001$ ). The finding of the overall significance of the model as well as the finding of significance of the single independent variable and the lack of significance of the other independent variables suggests that other factors related to experiences in the field may be responsible for principal knowledge more so than factors related to formal education.

#### Research Question Two

The intent of the second research question was to determine the extent to which school characteristics, the educational experiences principals, and knowledge of principals impact implementation of the MCGCP. Principal knowledge of appropriate counselor duties (question 12) and the educational experiences that principals have had that pertained to counseling related topics (questions 14-18) are independent variables that represent the overall knowledge that principals have of counseling programs and counselor roles. Two other independent variables pertaining to school characteristics were the number of students that participated in the free and reduced lunch program (question 6) and the student-to-counselor ratio (questions 4-5).

#### Multiple Regression for Research Question Two

A standard multiple regression analysis was performed between the dependent variable (principals' perception of implementation) and the independent variables

(principal knowledge, principal educational experiences, free and reduced lunch, student-to-counselor ratio). The independent variables pertained to survey questions 12, 14-18, 6, and 4-5 respectively. The dependent variable was based on a sum score of responses from question 13 which consisted of principal estimates of the percentage of time counselors spent performing duties that were organized by MCGCP delivery systems category.

Regression analysis revealed that the whole model did not significantly predict principals' perception of implementation of MCGCP, ANOVA  $F = 1.000$ ,  $p = .440$ . The model summary resulted in adjusted  $R^2 = .000$ , indicating that the model can explain 0% of the variations in implementation. However, one of the independent variables, student-to-counselor ratio, is significant,  $p = .018$ . Since the results of the ANOVA was  $p = .440$  and therefore not significant, the student-to-counselor ratio result of  $p = .018$  nonetheless suggests a relationship between student-to-counselor ratio and the dependent variable of implementation. Table 22 displays the unstandardized regression coefficients and the  $p$  level for each variable.

Table 24. Regression for Research Question Two

6	Unstandardized Coefficients		<i>p</i>
	B	Std Error	
(Constant)	113.366	31.924	.001
Knowledge	-.233	.338	.492
Counselor Education Courses Taken	1.562	2.061	.450
Clock Hours of Counseling Related Coursework in other Graduate School Classes	-.356	.531	.504
Professional Development – Counseling Topics	.103	.449	.820
Hours Spent Discussing Role of Counselor with Guidance Staff	-.835	2.421	.731
Hours Spent in Self-directed Study – Counseling Topics	1.457	2.263	.521
Free and Reduced Lunch	-.172	1.513	.910
Student-to-Counselor Ratio	-.046	.019	.018

*Note.*  $p \leq .05$

The student-to-counselor ratio of  $p = .018$  suggests a relationship between the variables but there is clearly a problem with the model since it resulted in ANOVA  $p = .440$ . A second standard multiple regression analysis was performed with implementation as the dependent variable but with all of the other independent variables removed except for student-to-counselor ratio. Despite an insignificant model result (ANOVA  $F = 2.967$ ,  $p = .087$ ), an adjusted  $R^2$  of .14 suggests that the student-to-counselor ratio explains 14% of the variation in the implementation of the MCGCP. The

regression results imply that there is a relationship between implementation and the student-to-counselor ratio and that further research is warranted.

### Summary

This chapter presented the data summaries for all of the survey questions and the results of the multiple regression analyses that were performed for this study. It is not clear from the results of this study what impact free and reduced lunch or some educational experiences of principals have on counseling program implementation. However, the results did reveal a positive relationship between principal knowledge of counselor roles and the amount of time principals spend discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff. Regression results also suggested that there is a relationship between student-to-counselor ratios and implementation of counseling program components.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which differences in the educational experiences of high school principals impact their knowledge of counselor roles and implementation of MCGCP. A secondary purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which school characteristics, the educational experiences of principals, and the knowledge of principals impacts the implementation of MCGCP. Additionally, in relation to the first research goal, this study also sought to identify what accounts for differences in principal knowledge and to identify which types of educational experiences are most impactful on principal knowledge. Principals typically determine the actual duties of the counselors under their supervision. The literature indicates that principals typically lack knowledge in the area of counselor roles and guidance programs and counselors often find themselves performing tasks unrelated to their graduate school training (Beale & McCay, 2001; Fitch et al., 2001). An electronic survey of grade 9-12 high school principals in Michigan was conducted and standard multiple regressions were performed. This chapter will provide a summary and discussion of the findings of this study.

#### Formal Education of Principals

A total of 171 grade 9-12 high school principals responded to the survey of which a predominate majority (73.1%) were males. A plurality of respondents (32.7%) had between 6-10 years of experience as a principal. A majority of respondents (70.1%)

indicated their highest degree held was a master's. The finding that a majority of principals had a master's as their highest degree held was expected and consistent with Thoenes 2009 study of Michigan secondary principals. Thoenes (2009) found that a majority (66.5%) of secondary principals held a master's degree.

## Summary of the Findings

### Research Question One

The first research question examined the extent to which the educational experiences of principals had an impact upon principals' knowledge of the MCGCP. Six survey questions pertained to this question. The independent variables related to educational experiences were number of counselor education courses; clock hours of counseling related topics in non-counselor education graduate school courses; clock hours of professional development of counseling related topics; hours spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff; and self-directed study of counseling related topics.

The dependent variable, principal knowledge of counselor roles, was represented by a sum score of data obtained from survey question 12. Question 12 consisted of 16 appropriate task items and six inappropriate task items that were rated on a five part level of appropriateness scale. The results indicated that principals generally agree that appropriate counselor duties are in fact appropriate, but it was also found that many principals believe some inappropriate roles are appropriate. The findings were generally consistent with the existing literature. Bardoshi and Duncan (2009) conducted a study that examined principal perception of counselor duties. While this study used a five-part level of appropriateness scale, the aforementioned study used a five-part level of

importance scale. Bardoshi and Duncan found that principals generally rated appropriate counselor duties to be important but also rated some inappropriate tasks as such.

Fitch et al., (2001) and Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) conducted studies using the survey developed by Fitch et al. to examine principal perception of counselor roles. Both studies illustrated that principals and graduate school students in educational leadership courses tended to agree that appropriate counselor duties were significant but also indicated that some inappropriate roles were significant.

The educational experiences of principals were examined via survey questions 14-18. Question 14 revealed that approximately 70% of principals had not taken a counselor education course and that 4.5% of principals had a counseling degree. Question 15 asked principals to indicate the number of clock hours received that pertained to counseling related topics as part of non-counselor education graduate school courses. For this item, a high number of respondents skipped the item (28%). It was assumed that because the lowest number that principals could choose was 1, those that wanted to choose 0 could not do so because the choice was not available and therefore skipped the question. For this reason, it is estimated that approximately 28% of respondents would have otherwise reported that they had received no counseling related instruction in graduate courses in their principal preparation programs. This finding is consistent with the literature which generally indicates that there is a general lack of counselor role and counseling program supervision training in educational leadership programs (Beale & McCay, 2001; Fitch et al, 2001).

For question 16, principals were asked to indicate the number of hours of professional development that they received that pertained to counseling related topics.

The results revealed a mean of 7.99 hours reported. Question 17 asked principals to indicate the number of hours they have spent discussing the role of the counselor over the past five years. Only one principal indicated 0 hours spent, 27.6% of principals chose the 1-10 hour category, 26.3% chose the 11-20 hour category and the plurality (30.8%) of respondents chose the highest available option of 41+ hours. Principals were also asked how many hours they had spent engaged in self-directed study of counseling related topics. Slightly more than half (51.3%) selected the category of 1-10 hours and 14.1% indicated 0 hours.

To examine the relationship between the variables in the first research question, a multiple regression was performed using the data from question 12 of the survey (principal knowledge) and survey items 14-18 as independent variables (different types of educational experiences). The findings were unclear for four of the five independent variables and regarding the impact on principal knowledge. However, the multiple regression analysis revealed that the model significantly predicted principal knowledge, ANOVA  $F = 3.289$ ,  $p = .008$ . The model summary resulted in an adjusted  $R^2$  of .078 indicating that the model explained 7.8% the variations in knowledge. Out of the five types of educational experiences, the hours that principals had spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff was found to be clearly significant,  $p = .001$ .

While the model did not reveal a predictive relationship between all of the independent variables and the dependent variable, the number of hours principals spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff was found to be significant. A  $p$  value of  $\leq .05$  was used to establish the level of significance for this study. The regression results revealed that the independent variable of time spent by principals

discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff yielded  $p = .001$  which is highly significant. This suggests a positive relationship between communication and collaboration between principals and counselors and overall principal knowledge of the role of the counselor. In other words, as the amount of time that principals spend communicating with counselors increases, so does their knowledge of the role of the counselor. The results revealed in this study is not clear in regards to identifying a particular amount of time that needs to be spent, however, it does support the notion that there is a positive relationship between the variables of the time principals spent communicating with counselors and the knowledge that principals have of counseling roles. It is notable that the two highest survey categories combine to illustrate that nearly half (44.3%) of principals indicated that they had spent 31 or more hours discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff within the specified timeframe of five years.

The finding of a positive relationship between the time spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff and the overall knowledge that principals have of the role of the counselor supports the contentions and concerns of others as discussed in the literature. Ward, Evans, and Coutts (2010) stated that some educational leadership and counselor education students have expressed concerns that their graduate school preparation programs did not adequately provide the training needed for principals and counselors to work as effective, collaborate partners. Poor communication between principals and counselors often results in conflict and ineffectiveness (Rambo-Igney & Grimes Smith, 2005-2006; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). Dahir, Burnham, Stone, & Cobb (2010) stated that collaboration between the principal and the counselor can support the desired outcomes of academic success for students. Additionally, according to the

College Board (2011), effective communication and collaboration can enable principals and counselors to “solve many of the issues that matter most in their schools” (p 11).

While it seems logical that effective communication and collaboration between counselors would result in a better understanding and alignment of goals and roles for both counselors and principals, perhaps it is also logical to assume the relationship between the variables is reciprocal. That is, the better the communication between the principal and the counselor, the more knowledge the principal has of the appropriate roles and aspirations of the counselor. Conversely, the more knowledge the principal initially has of the role of the counselor, the more likely there will be a positive, collaborative relationship between the principal and the counselor. The findings of this study related to the first research question support and strengthen the concerns as expressed by Ward, Evans, and Coutts (2010) and bolsters the argument that training is needed in graduate school programs that enable principals and counselor to work effectively as collaborative partners.

#### Research Question Two

The intent of the second research question was to determine the extent to which school characteristics, the educational experiences of principals, and principals’ knowledge impact principals’ perception of implementation of the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP). For this research question, data gathered from survey item 13 was used as a measure of the dependent variable, principals’ perception of implementation of the MCGCP. The items consisted of tasks grouped by MCGCP delivery system component or were otherwise inappropriate tasks. Principals estimated the amount of time counselors spent working in task areas.

Additional survey items were used to determine student-to-counselor ratio (questions 4-5) and free and reduced lunch participation (question 6) which was intended to be a measure of socio-economic status (SES) of student population.

The dependent variable for this question was principal perception of implementation of the MCGCP, while the independent variables were the school characteristics of free and reduced lunch and student-to-counselor ratio. Variables from the first research question were also independent variables for the second question which were principal knowledge of counselor roles and principal educational experiences.

The results of the multiple regression for the second research question was ANOVA  $F = 1.000$ ,  $p = .440$ . The model summary resulted in an adjusted  $R^2 = .000$ . Since the ANOVA  $p$  value was .440, indicating insignificance, it is not possible to say there is a predictive relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables based on this model. However, one of the independent variables, student-to-counselor ratio, had a  $p$  value of .018. The student-to-counselor ratio  $p$  value of .018 implied that there is a relationship between the variables. A second standard multiple regression analysis was performed with implementation as the dependent variable but with all of the other independent variables removed except for student-to-counselor ratio. The results were insignificant (ANOVA  $F = 2.967$ ,  $p = .087$ ), however, an adjusted  $R^2$  of .14 suggests that the student-to-counselor ratio explains 14% of the variation in the implementation of the MCGCP. The regression results imply that the student-to-counselor ratio and implementation are related which suggests worthiness for further investigation.

The ASCA has contended that in order for counselors to be effective, the student-to-counselor ratio should be no more than 250:1. According to the MSCA (2007), studies in Michigan and across the country indicate that lower student-to-counselor ratios are associated with desirable student outcomes. Lower student-to-counselor ratios improve student access to counseling services and increases student enrollment in more rigorous academic track coursework (Lee & Ekstrom, 1987). Additionally, students from families of lower socioeconomic status (SES) are less likely to have access to counselors and counseling services (Lee & Ekstrom, 1987). As a result, lower SES students are more likely to follow a limited education and career plan rather than a college-preparatory plan in high school (Lee & Ekstrom, 1987).

### Critique of the Study

#### Survey Design

During and after the data collection timeframe, it was determined that three survey items should have had a choice of 0 as the lowest value option rather than 1. It was found that on these three survey items (question 13 parts 6 & 7; question 15), there was a high number of missing values, indicating a disproportionate number of respondents had skipped these items. One respondent emailed the researcher to indicate a preference for 0 that was not available for these items. Additionally, it was discovered that a survey category of 21-30 for question 17 was missing. Question 17 asked principals to indicate the number of hours they had spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff.

The survey was developed in consultation with dissertation committee members and was drafted and revised several times. The survey was piloted by sending an email

with link to the survey to a recently retired principal and a professor of educational leadership that had previous experience serving as a principal. Both pilot participants reported no problems with the survey. Piloting the study using more participants or by using a pilot participant interview process could have improved the reliability and validity of the survey. Additionally, there were minimal revisions to the survey after the initial pilot, however, the survey should have been re-piloted after the revision process. It is likely that the time constraints and deadlines associated with this researcher's particular dissertation process contributed to the errors. According to Rudestam and Newton, surveys that are not properly developed and adequately piloted may be of "little scientific value" (p. 84).

#### Number of Variables Relative to Population and Sample Size

Although the response rate of 40.6% was above average for an electronic survey, the population size of 421 implies that the total number of responses that can realistically be collected and analyzed is somewhat limited. The regression for the second research question involved one independent variable and seven dependent variables. The dependent variable was a sum of seven items pertaining to question 13 and one of the seven independent variables (knowledge) was comprised of 22 items associated with question 12. The ANOVA  $p = .440$  and the adjusted  $R^2 = 0$  indicated that the model was not useful in explaining collective relationships between the variables. A study with a larger population or that examines smaller sets of variables might be useful in determining if other types of common educational experiences have an impact on principal knowledge of counselor roles and counseling programs.

#### Principal Perception as a Measure of Implementation

For the purposes of this study, principal perception of implementation was used as a measure of actual implementation. Principals were asked to estimate the percentage of time counselors spent working in MCGCP delivery component tasks as well as non-program tasks. However, in 2009, Finkelstein conducted a survey for the College Board and found that counselors rated ASCA-designated inappropriate administrative tasks took up more of their time in comparison to principals having rated the same tasks as taking up less of counselors' time. The Finkelstein study suggests that principal perception of implementation in this study may not be an accurate measure of actual implementation.

The regression for the second research question used principal perception as the independent variable while using seven dependent variables in the model. The ANOVA resulted in a  $p$  value of .440 but the independent variable of student-to-counselor ratio had resulted in a  $p$  value of .018. This suggests that further investigation may be justified involving a different measure for implementation in conjunction with the other independent variables used in the model.

### Implications

As part of this study, principals were asked to estimate the amount time counselors had spent working in tasks areas grouped by MCGCP delivery component or were otherwise inappropriate (non-program) tasks. The intent of the question was to provide a measure of MCGCP implementation. The regression results were insignificant but nonetheless implied that there was a relationship between implementation and student-to-counselor ratios. While the finding of an implied relationship between implementation and student-to-counselor ratios seems to follow common sense, it should be noted that the measure of implementation for this study was based on principal

perception of the amount of time counselors spent working in various task areas. The caveat is that what principals believe regarding how counselors spent their time may not be equivalent to the actual time counselors spent doing various tasks. Some inconsistencies between principal and counselor perceptions regarding the amount of time counselor spend working in task areas were found by Finkelstein (2009). However, the finding of an implied relationship between implementation and student-to-counselor ratios suggests that further investigation is warranted.

The ASCA and the MSCA recommend a maximum student-to-counselor ratio of 250 students to one counselor. The MSCA has pointed to studies in Michigan and across the country that indicate that lower student-to-counselor ratios are associated with such desirable outcomes as higher academic achievement, higher graduation rates, safer schools, a more positive school climate, and better student-teacher relationships (2007). The American Psychological Association (2010), the Education Trust (2009) and various studies have supported the contention that counseling program implementation can support student achievement and success (Lapan et al. 2003; Sink et al., 2008; Sink & Stroh, 2003; Web et al., 2005).

An additional finding of this study was that while a majority of principals rated ASCA designated appropriate counselor roles as appropriate or highly appropriate, a majority of principals also rated some inappropriate counselor duties as appropriate. This was generally consistent with findings of previous studies as found in the literature (Bardoshi & Duncan, 2009; Dietz, 1972; Fitch et al., 2001; Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005). However, while previous studies that examined ASCA designated appropriate and inappropriate counselor roles used level of positive attitude or level of significance or

importance survey scales, this study used a level of appropriateness scale. The purpose of the change in language from level of positive attitude, significance, or importance to level of appropriateness was to clarify whether or not principals view ASCA designated appropriate and inappropriate tasks to be appropriate or inappropriate duties for counselors regardless of how positively or important the task is viewed by principals. For example, it may be reasonably considered important for someone to administer an achievement test to students, but the administration of such tests by counselors is deemed inappropriate by the ASCA.

It was found that the vast majority (70.2%) of respondents held a master's degree. This was expected since formal principal preparation programs typically begin at the master's level and the finding of 70.2% was consistent with Thoenes 2009 study. It was also not unusual or unexpected to find that 69.9% of principals indicated that they had never taken a course in counselor education and that only 4.5% held a counseling degree. However, 28% of respondents indicated that they had received no hours of instruction whatsoever in counseling related topics in any graduate school course and 15.4% indicated that they had received only 1-2 hours of instruction. Only 14.7% of principals indicated that they had received 15 or more hours of instruction related to counseling in graduate school. While the results show that a significant percentage of principals had received little or no training in counseling related topics in graduate school, it did show that some principals received varied amounts of training. This supports the notion discussed in the literature that counseling is not a staple topic in principal preparation programs. To the extent that some principals received graduate school training, the amount varied and a clear majority (57.5%) received 4 or less hours. Previous studies

have also pointed to a lack of counseling related training in educational leadership programs (Beale, 2001; Fitch et al., 2001).

Regarding professional development in counseling topics, the results yielded a mean of 7.99 hours. However, 20.5% of principals indicated they had received no hours of professional development and 50.7% indicated that they had received 6 or less hours. In the area of hours spent in self-directed research, 14.1% of principals indicated that had none while 65.4% had 10 or less hours over five years. This study also found that over half of principals indicated that they were not knowledgeable (question 19) about the MCGCP. The findings of this study suggest that a lack of knowledge of counselor roles persists and that principals and counselors, and ultimately students, could benefit by including as a standard component in educational leadership courses some degree of training in the areas of counselor roles and programs, counselor supervision and principal-counselor collaboration skills.

The focus of this study was primarily principal knowledge of counselor roles and the educational experiences that could potentially influence principal knowledge and implementation of counseling programs. This study sought findings that accounted for the differences that exist among principals regarding their knowledge of the role of the counselor. While the results failed to shed light on how a number of different types of experiences influence principal knowledge, one type of experience was found to be particularly influential in predicating principal knowledge. While a variety of educational experience categories were examined, the one type that was found to be significant in impacting principal knowledge was the amount of time principals spent communicating with guidance staff about the role of the counselor,  $p = .001$ . The results

for the other independent variables which consisted mainly of types of formal education did not yield a *p* value that indicated significance. The finding of the overall significance of the model as well as the finding of significance of the single independent variable (principal time spent in communications with counselors) and the lack of significance of the other independent variables suggests that other factors related to experiences in the field may be responsible for principal knowledge more so than factors related to formal education. This finding supports the assertion by Coy (1999) that “many principals continue to view the role of all school counselors from their experience with the counselor at their own school” (p. 2). The implications of this study are also congruent with the contention made by Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) that different principal perceptions of counselor roles might be related to experiences in the field and that “real life” experiences trump any concepts that are present in their training” (p. 13).

It has been discussed in the literature that communication and collaboration between counselors and principals can reduce conflict and counselor frustration and lead to desirable outcomes for counselor, principals and ultimately, students (Dahir, Burnham, Stone, & Cobb, 2010; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). Nonetheless, concerns persist that educational leadership programs do not provide the training necessary for principals to work collaboratively with counselors (Ward, Evans, & Coutts, 2010). Dahir et al. (2010) stated that, collaboration between the principal and the counselor is not an option but a necessity and “ensures that there is alignment between the stated desires for student academic success and actual practice” (p. 300). Additionally, according to the College Board (2011), effective communication and collaboration can enable principals and counselors to “solve many of the issues that matter most in their schools” (p 11).

In addition to pointing to a need for principal training in counselor roles, counselor evaluation and counseling programs, this study amplifies the importance of the need for training in the area of principal-counselor communication and collaboration. While the findings have implications for the graduate school training of principals, it is important to remember that the ultimate goal of educators is to facilitate student success. The implications of this study point to the significance of principal knowledge as to how it impacts the duties that counselors are assigned and ultimately what role counselors and guidance programs play in support of student success. The significance of the matter at hand is that the maximization of resources to support student success and the effective use of counselors is largely dependent on principal knowledge of the role of the counselor and counseling programs as well as principal-counselor collaboration.

### Conceptual Framework

For this study, Bolman and Deal's (2008) framing approach was used to consider the principal's view of the counselor's role via the four-frame model. There are implications for all four frames when considering the results of this study. An assumption of the *political frame* is that goals are met through the attainment of power (Bolman & Deal, 2008). A metaphor of the *political frame* is the "jungle" as there is competition within the organization for the allocation of scarce resources. This competition at times results in conflict among members of the organization. When members of the organization feel powerless and misused, this often results in frustration and resentment (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The *structural frame* emphasizes standards of practice, division of labor, efficiency and accountability (Bolman & Deal, 2008). A metaphor for the *structural frame* is "factory" or "machine." One assumption of the

*structural frame* is that an organization is most efficient when roles are well defined and understood (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The *human resources frame* emphasizes concern for others and the needs of group members are best met through collaboration and communication. A metaphor for the human resources frame is “family” (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The *symbolic frame* stresses “how” things are done and the aspects of an organization that are embedded in the culture. A premise of the *symbolic frame* is that shared beliefs and vision foster internal cohesion and a sense of shared goals. Metaphors for the *symbolic frame* include “carnival,” “temple,” and “theatre” (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

When considering the various vantage points that each of the frames provides, it appears that there is an interconnectedness among the frames in regards to issues associated with effective counselors and program implementation. In regard to the *political frame*, resource allocation is of concern and competition among stakeholders can cause resentment and frustration. Poor principal-counselor communication and collaboration and the assigning of duties to counselors unrelated to counseling, often as a result of the principal’s effort to accomplish quasi-administrative goals, can leave counselors feeling frustrated and resentful. In this example, there is overlap but also incongruity with the *human resources frame*, which in contrast emphasizes concern for others and the importance of collaboration with members of the organization when considering resource allocation. Through the *human resources frame*, the frustration and resentment that can result via the *political frame* can be alleviated through collaboration and the effectiveness of the counselor can be maximized.

This study examined the extent to which five types of educational experiences impact principals' knowledge of the role of the counselor. It was found that out of the five types of educational experience, the one that was found to be significant with the time that principals spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff ( $p = .001$ ). The results support contentions that appear in the literature that place emphasis on the importance of communication and collaboration in reducing counselor frustration while supporting counselor effectiveness (Dahir et al., 2010; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). While keeping the collaboration emphasized by the *human resources frame* in mind, there is congruence with the *structural frame's* emphasis on clearly understood and defined roles. As previously noted, the results of this study revealed that principal knowledge of counselor roles was positively impacted by principals' communications with counselors which supports the *structural frame's* emphasis on clearly defined roles.

The *symbolic frame* shares the concern of having influence over resource allocation with the *political frame*, however, the principal that is knowledgeable about the role of each of the members of an organization, via the *symbolic frame*, looks for unifying, inspirational themes to inspire collaboration and communication (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The *symbolic frame's* emphasis on collaboration through inspirational themes ties in with the concern that the principal has via the *human resource frame* for the counselor and the high value that school counselors place on the work they are trained to do via comprehensive guidance programming (*structural frame*).

A review of the literature revealed that there is concern regarding a lack of principal training, not only in the areas of counselor roles, counseling programs and counselor evaluation, but also in the area of principal-counselor communication and

collaboration (Ward et al., 2010). The *structural frame* emphasis on clearly defined roles supports the notion that principals should be provided training in the area of counselor roles and programs as a standard component of their graduate school educational requirements. The results of this study revealed that 40% of principals had 0-2 hours of instruction on counseling related topics in graduate school and 62.2% of principals indicated that they were not at all knowledgeable or only somewhat knowledgeable of components of the MCGCP. In order of the MCGCP to be implemented, the ASCA recommends a student-to-counselor ratio of 250:1. However, this study found that the mean student-to-counselor ratio of Michigan grade 9-12 high schools was 383:1 which suggests that many schools have programs that are not implemented or are only partially implemented. From the perspective of the *structural frame*, counselors are assigned appropriate duties that support comprehensive guidance programming while also working in the context of appropriate ratios.

Principal-counselor collaboration and communication, as discussed in the literature and supported by the findings of this study, is congruent with the *human resources frame*'s emphasis on communication and concern for members of the organization. This is of particular concern because a lack of principal-counselor communication can result in principal and counselor frustration and ineffectiveness (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). This study found a positive relationship between principal knowledge of counselor roles (*structural frame*) and the amount of time principals spend discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff (*human resources frame*).

Related to principal knowledge of counselor roles and program components, is actual program implementation. In addition to the finding of a relationship between principal knowledge and the time principals spent communicating with counselors, this study also found a relationship between principal perception of implementation and student-to-counselor ratios. Counselor motivation and commitment (*symbolic frame*) can be facilitated via principal-counselor communication and collaboration (*human resources frame*) and can improve principal understanding of the role of the counselor (*structural frame*) while supporting the effective use of counselors (*political frame*). Through collaboration with counselors, principals can support counseling program implementation and ultimately yield the desired outcomes associated with student achievement (College Board, 2011; Dahir, et al., 2010).

#### Recommendations for Further Research

This study examined a relatively small population and a large number of variables. There was significance found between the dependent variable of principal knowledge and the independent variable of the time principals spent communicating with counselors about the role of the counselor. It is not clear from the findings what role some other types of experiences play in predicating principal knowledge. Future research might examine a larger size population and sample to study the same or a similar variety of common experience types. Another possibility would be to examine a variety of experience factors in a set of bivariate analyses to determine what experience types by themselves impact principal knowledge.

The second regression results were insignificant but the results suggested that the independent variable of the student-to-counselor ratio was nonetheless related to

dependent variable of implementation of the MCGCP. The other independent variables included in the model were principals' knowledge of the role of the counselor, various types of educational experiences of principals and the free and reduced lunch participation of students. One possible limitation particular to this model was that principal perception of implementation does not necessarily equal actual implementation or actual time spent by counselors performing various duties. A future study might involve a different measure of implementation. Such a study could involve a survey of high school principals that would focus specifically on the amount of time that they have spent discussing the role of the counselor with counseling staff while also looking at principal knowledge of the MCGCP. Principals would be asked to complete a five part scale rating the level of appropriateness of counselor roles. This would be an expanded version of the scale used for question 12 of this survey but would include all of the items that are both appropriate and inappropriate as described in the executive summary of the 2005 ASCA National Model. Additionally, student-to-counselor ratio data would be collected and program implementation would be examined. Rather than relying on principal perception as a measure of program implementation, counselors would be asked to complete a survey based on ASCA and MCGCP recommendations regarding the amount of time that counselors should spend by delivery system component. The survey would be based on ASCA (2005) National Model and MCGCP (2005) program and audit guidelines. Results of principal responses would be compared to corresponding counselor responses of counselors' perceptions of time spent working in program delivery system areas and counselor responses to questions based on MCGCP program audit guidelines.

The researcher would hope to discover a relationship between principal knowledge of counselor roles and the amount of time principals spent discussing roles with counselors which would support findings in this study. Additionally, the researcher would examine principal knowledge and time spent in relation to counselor responses related to program implementation and student-to-counselor ratio data. The study would assume that counselor reports of how they spend their time and their perceptions of program implementation would be a more accurate measure of actual implementation than the principal perceptions as used for this study. If the researcher found a positive relationships among the variables, this would strengthen the call for principals to receive as a standard competent of their graduate education, not only training in counselor roles, counseling programing and counselor evaluation, but training in principal-counselor collaboration. While providing principals training related to counselor programs and the roles of counselors could prove beneficial, placing an emphasis on training in collaboration and communication in the field could prove to be the most beneficial type of training of all. As stated by Kirchner and Setchfield (2005), “we should not be too optimistic about our ability to change perceptions in the absence of corresponding experiences in the field” (p. 13).

## APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

PRINCIPAL SURVEY

1. What is your gender?  
Male      Female
  
2. Please indicate the total number or years you have served as a principal or assistant principal.  
0-5 years      6-10 years      11-15 years  
16-20 years      More than 20 years
  
3. Please indicate the highest degree that you currently hold.  
Baccalaureate      Masters      Specialist      Doctorate
  
4. How many certified or licensed counselors were employed in your building during school year 2010-2011?
  
5. Please indicate the total student enrollment in your building during school year 2010-2011 by entering the number in the box below:
  
6. Approximately what percentage of students that attended your high school during school year 2010-2011 do you estimate participated in the free and reduced lunch program?  
1-10%      11-20%      21-30%      31-40%      41-50%      More than 51%
  
7. What is the total number of professional staff (teachers, counselors, psychologists, social workers, media specialists, etc.) assigned to your building? Please enter your numerical response in the textbox.
  
8. In that past three years, have there been cuts or reductions in professional staff positions your building?      Yes      No
  
9. Do you anticipate that there will be cuts in professional staff of in your building in the next school year?      Yes      No      Uncertain
  
10. Were any of the cuts you made last year or might any of the cuts you anticipate in the coming year be counseling positions?      Yes      No
  
11. How many total counseling positions were cut last year or might be cut in the coming year?      0      1      2      3      4      5 or more      Uncertain

12. Please rate the appropriateness of the following tasks as they pertain to the specific role of the school counselor by using the following scale:

1. Not at all appropriate 2. Marginally appropriate 3. Moderately appropriate 4. Appropriate 5. Highly appropriate

Academic support to students, including organizational, study and test-taking skills	1	2	3	4	5
Crisis intervention	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining student records	1	2	3	4	5
Consultation, collaboration and teaming	1	2	3	4	5
Education on understanding self, including strengths and weakness.	1	2	3	4	5
Peer relationships, coping strategies and effective social skills	1	2	3	4	5
Assisting the school principal with identifying and resolving student issues, needs, and problems	1	2	3	4	5
Administration of cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests	1	2	3	4	5
Small group counseling	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Planning	1	2	3	4	5
Multicultural/diversity awareness	1	2	3	4	5
Interpretation of cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests	1	2	3	4	5
Performing disciplinary actions	1	2	3	4	5
School counseling program management and operation	1	2	3	4	5
Individual counseling	1	2	3	4	5
Career awareness, exploration and planning	1	2	3	4	5
Analyzing grade point averages in relation to achievement	1	2	3	4	5
School counselor professional development	1	2	3	4	5
Referrals to school support and community resources	1	2	3	4	5
Assisting in special education services	1	2	3	4	5
Monitoring students in the cafeteria (“Lunch duty”)	1	2	3	4	5
Monitoring the parking lot before, during or after school.	1	2	3	4	5

13. Please estimate the total percentage of time per week, averaged over a school year, that counselors spend working in the following task groupings.

Percentage of time spent per week

Academic support to students (i.e., organizational, study & test-taking skills); Peer relationships, coping and social skill strategies; Multi-cultural diversity awareness; Career exploration and planning	
Maintaining student records, Administration of cognitive, attitude, and achievement tests, assisting with special education services	
Crisis intervention, Small group or individual counseling, referrals to school support and community resources	
Education on understanding self, including strengths and weakness; Academic planning	
Consultation, collaboration and teaming; school counseling program management and operation, school counselor professional development.	
Monitoring students in the cafeteria (“Lunch duty”), Monitoring the parking lot before, during or after school.	
Administering student disciplinary actions (reprimands, suspensions, detentions, etc.)	

14. Please estimate the total number of counselor education graduate courses that you have taken.

0      1      2      3      4 or more      Have counseling degree

15. Please estimate the number of clock hours of instruction taken that were part of graduate coursework taken that WERE NOT part of counselor education courses but consisted of counseling related topics. For example, if you have taken a course in educational leadership that had as a part of the curriculum counseling programs, counseling duties or supervision and evaluation of counselors, approximately how many total hours of the courses taken were devoted to those topics?

16. Please estimate approximately how many clock hours of other training you have had in the past five years that has consisted of counseling or counseling program related topics. Training may have consisted of various forms of professional development such

as locally sponsored workshops, seminars, or out of district conferences or workshops, etc.

17. In the past five years, please estimate the total number of hours you have spent discussing the role of the counselor with guidance staff at your school.

18. Please estimate the number of hours spent within the past five years engage in self-directed study of the topic of school counseling, or of the components of the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program. Sources of information many have been by reading articles or doing research on the internet or from other sources other than guidance staff, graduate school or other training (e.g., seminars, workshops).

19. In general, how knowledgeable do you feel you are about the Michigan Department of Education's recommendations regarding school counseling and guidance programs?

Not at all knowledgeable

Somewhat knowledgeable

Knowledgeable

Quite knowledgeable

Highly knowledgeable

20. The Michigan Department of Education endorses and recommends implementation of the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program. What do you estimate is a fair or adequate caseload for a counselor in order for full implementation of the MCGCP to occur?

1-299

300-399

400-499

500-599

600 or more students

## APPENDIX B

### SURVEY INTRODUCTORY EMAIL

Hello,

I am a doctoral candidate at Central Michigan University in the Educational Leadership program and a social studies teacher at Meridian High School, Sanford, Michigan. I am conducting a survey to examine the extent to which differences in the educational backgrounds of high school principals impact their knowledge of counselor roles and programs. The results of this study could possibly benefit principals, counselors, students and graduate schools that have programs in educational leadership. If you have any questions about my research project, please feel free to contact me at [duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us](mailto:duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us).

Participation in this survey is voluntary. I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate. The survey consists of 20 questions and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. It is of electronic format and is hosted by Survey Monkey. All responses will be kept confidential.

You have been identified as a potential participant because you are a principal at a public high school in Michigan. If you do not fit into that category, please click on the "OPTOUT" link below.

When you are ready to begin you can access the survey through the following link:

(Insert link)

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

You are free to refuse to participate in this research project or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in the project at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your participation will not affect your relationship with the institution(s) involved in this research project. If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, you may report (anonymously if you so choose) any complaints to the Institutional Review Board by calling 989-774-6777, or addressing a letter to the Institutional Review Board, 251 Foust Hall Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Duane Tigner  
Doctoral Candidate  
Educational Leadership  
Central Michigan University  
Email: duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails about this survey, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

## APPENDIX C

### FIRST REMINDER

This is the first reminder requesting your participation in my dissertation survey to examine the extent to which differences in the educational backgrounds of high school principals impact their knowledge of counselor roles and programs. The results of this study could possibly benefit principals, counselors, students and graduate schools that have programs in educational leadership.

The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential. When you are ready to begin you can access the survey through the following link:

(Insert link)

Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. I appreciate your willingness to participate.

If you have further questions or any difficulties in responding to this survey, please email me at [duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us](mailto:duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us)

If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, please feel free to contact (anonymously if you so choose) the Institutional Review Board at Central Michigan University at 989-774-6777 or my advisor, Dr. Gina Umpstead at 989-774-7325. You may also address a letter to the Institutional Review Board, 251 Foust Hall Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Duane Tigner  
Doctoral Candidate  
Educational Leadership  
Central Michigan University  
Email: [duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us](mailto:duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us)

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails about this survey, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

## APPENDIX D

### SECOND REMINDER

This is the second reminder requesting your participation in my dissertation survey to examine the extent to which differences in the educational backgrounds of high school principals impact their knowledge of counselor roles and programs. The results of this study could possibly benefit principals, counselors, students and graduate schools that have programs in educational leadership.

The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential. When you are ready to begin you can access the survey through the following link:

(Insert link)

Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. I appreciate your willingness to participate.

If you have further questions or any difficulties in responding to this survey, please email me at [duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us](mailto:duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us)

If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, please feel free to contact (anonymously if you so choose) the Institutional Review Board at Central Michigan University at 989-774-6777 or my advisor, Dr. Gina Umpstead at 989-774-7325. You may also address a letter to the Institutional Review Board, 251 Foust Hall Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Duane Tigner  
Doctoral Candidate  
Educational Leadership  
Central Michigan University  
Email: [duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us](mailto:duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us)

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails about this survey, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

## APPENDIX E

### FINAL REMINDER

This is the final reminder requesting your participation in my dissertation survey to examine the extent to which differences in the educational backgrounds of high school principals impact their knowledge of counselor roles and programs. I am nearing the end of the data collection phase of this study. I am currently X responses short of my goal. I would appreciate you taking time to complete the survey that can be accessed through the link below. The results of this study could possibly benefit principals, counselors, students and graduate schools that have programs in educational leadership. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential.

When you are ready to begin you can access the survey through the following link:

(Insert link)

Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. I appreciate your willingness to participate.

If you have further questions or any difficulties in responding to this survey, please email me at [duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us](mailto:duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us)

If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, please feel free to contact (anonymously if you so choose) the Institutional Review Board at Central Michigan University at 989-774-6777 or my advisor, Dr. Gina Umpstead at 989-774-7325. You may also address a letter to the Institutional Review Board, 251 Foust Hall Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Duane Tigner  
Doctoral Candidate  
Educational Leadership  
Central Michigan University  
Email: [duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us](mailto:duane.tigner@merps.k12.mi.us)

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails about this survey, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

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