2023

School Counselor Leadership: Illuminating the Lived Experiences of Principals who Utilize Counselors in Leadership

Amanda Schwyn
Walden University

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Health

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Amanda Schwyn

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Katarzyna Peoples, Committee Chairperson, Counselor Education and Supervision Faculty
Dr. Kelly Dardis, Committee Member, Counselor Education and Supervision Faculty
Dr. Marilyn Haight, University Reviewer, Counselor Education and Supervision Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2023

Abstract

School Counselor Leadership: Illuminating the Lived Experiences of Principals

Who Utilize Counselors in Leadership

by

Amanda Schwyn

MA, Indiana Wesleyan University, 2017

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Counselor Education & Supervision

Walden University

February 2023

Abstract

The topic of principal–school counselor partnerships has been emerging over the last several decades. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) helped introduce and streamline counselor roles and responsibilities in 1952 and has been advocating for schools to have comprehensive school counseling programs since. Despite articles, research, and ASCA's work to promote school counselors as leaders in the school and the importance of a comprehensive school counseling program, a gap remains with respect to counselors working with principals to establish comprehensive school counseling programs from the principal's perspective. To understand the principal's experience, the study was conducted using eight principals at Recognized ASCA Model Program schools. Using semistructured interviews and thematic analysis coding, the purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to answer the following overarching question about the lived experiences of principals who utilize counselors in school leadership by helping to remove barriers for a more effective principal/counselor partnership. Findings suggest that when principals and counselors have better relationships, they experience an increase in understanding of each other's roles, achieve a higher level of mutual respect, better communication which helps with better flow of day-to-day operations, and experience an increase in the potential to have a higher job satisfaction rate. This in turn has enormous social change implications, as better principal-counselor relationships improve opportunities for student success.

School Counselor Leadership: Illuminating the Lived Experiences of Principals

Who Utilize Counselors in Leadership

by

Amanda Schwyn

MA, Indiana Wesleyan University, 2017

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Counselor Education & Supervision

Walden University

February 2023

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family who believed in me and supported me throughout the process. To my Mom and Dad, thank you for always believing I can do anything I seek to accomplish. I would not have accomplished what I have without your guidance and modeling throughout my life. To my daughter, Hannah, who allowed me to continue with my schooling as she was growing up. I hope she learns she can do anything she sets her mind to. To my husband, John, who has given me encouragement and many pep talks along the way. Thank you for motivating and inspiring me to maximize my time and abilities and pushing me beyond what I thought I could do. To my sister, who is successful in her own right. Thank you for being an inspiration and a shoulder to cry on. You have been there through all of life's important moments, and I don't know what I would do without you. To my friends, for being there for me and "forcing" me to take a break now and again. Finally, to Dr. Judith Justice. You were the inspiration behind getting my doctoral degree! You have been my professor, my mentor, my co-worker, and my friend. Thank you for your endless support. I love you all!

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Peoples for her guidance, support, and openness to my many questions I have had along the way. You played a valuable and significant role in my work. I would like to thank Dr. Dardis for her quick responses, enthusiasm, and insights into the content of my dissertation as it related to school counseling. To Dr. Haight, for her valuable input as I navigated the dissertation process.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

School counselors are essential stakeholders in a school, collaboratively working to ensure positive educational experiences for students. Uniquely positioned within the leadership team, they can assist with academic, social, emotional, and college and career services for all students and advocate for students through purposeful partnerships with principals. Practices such as articulating a solid vision that aligns with the school's mission, demonstrating knowledge about instructional practices and curriculum, and promoting a positive school climate to develop student strengths are often considered core competencies for any school leader (Hanson et al., n.d.). Partnering with principals can assist school counselors in displaying these competencies through a comprehensive school counseling program (CSCP), as it aligns with the mission, vision, and goals of a school and is guided by process, perception, and outcome data and based on the National Model of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2019a; Hatch, 2014; Young et al., 2015).

According to ASCA, a CSCP is provided by a state-credentialed or licensed school counselor and delivered to all students. The developmentally appropriate curriculum directly complements academic state standards while focusing on mindsets and behaviors that all students need (Indiana Department of Education [IDOE], 2020). This results in improved student achievement, attendance, and discipline (ASCA, 2019b; IDOE, 2020).

This qualitative research provides school counselors and academic administrators with an expanded understanding of how principals are able to assist in removing common barriers such as role confusion, counselor time use, communication, counselor-to-student ratios, funding, and lack of resources in order to have a collaborative relationship with school counselors and a CSCP. The social change implications from this study are far-reaching, as principals and counselors may examine their own principal–counselor relationship to discover how to remove barriers in order to improve their working relationship. Improving their relationship will improve the flow of daily operations of the school, which in turn, improves the opportunity for staff and student success.

This chapter states the hermeneutic phenomenological study's problem and purpose. The research question, overviews of theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and the nature of the study are provided. Furthermore, assumptions, scope, and delimitations are addressed.

Background

There is a vast amount of literature that articulates the benefits of having a CSCP, as well as literature supporting the collaboration between principals and school counselors (Young & Dollarhide, 2017; Zalaquett, 2005). Principals and school counselors are both instrumental leaders in schools, and they are most effective when they can work collaboratively.

Principals are the educational decision-makers at a school and can facilitate removing barriers that may exist in utilizing counselors effectively. Understanding of counselor roles, time use, communication, counselor-to-student ratios, funding, and lack

of resources are common barriers to collaborative efforts (Havlik et al., 2019; Wilkerson, 2010; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). The lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities prevents principals from including counselors as school leaders. Counselors are left out of communication loops and shared decision-making, which creates a gap in practice (Finkelstein, 2009). Furthermore, if school counselors work in a building where roles are misunderstood and/or undervalued, they are at greater risk of being assigned noncounseling duties (Pyne, 2011).

While studies support the benefits of collaborative relationships and having a comprehensive counseling program through ASCA, there is a gap in the literature in understanding how principals assist in removing barriers to utilize principal–counselor partnerships effectively. This study is needed, as effective principal–counselor partnerships can increase relationships, allow school counselors to be more effective in their role, and better assist schools in understanding how principals are able to remove barriers. Better relationships may lead to the implementation of a Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) that, in turn, focuses on the success of all students.

Problem Statement

The specific problem that this research addressed was the underutilization of principal–school counselor partnerships due to common barriers such as understanding of counselor roles, counselor time use, communication, counselor-to-student ratios, funding, and lack of resources.

Principals are leaders in schools. Principals have an enormous influence on all aspects of school operations as they craft a school's vision of success, create a positive

climate and culture, engage others in the pursuit of goals, maintain a high-quality staff, focus attention on student achievement, and build capacity for improvement, making them a major factor that determines whether principal–school counselor partnerships are successful (Dahir et al., 2019; Janson et al., 2008; Kaplan & Owings, 2015). However, most of the literature regarding principal–counseling partnerships does not include the lived experience of principals (Dollarhide et al., 2007; Gyspers & Henderson, 2012; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hines & Lemons, 2011). More specifically, what are principals' perspectives on working collaboratively with school counselors, and how do they help remove barriers that may exist to have a more effective principal–counselor partnership that is more likely to implement a CSCP?

Collaborative partnerships foster the ability to have a CSCP and ensure that principal–school counselor partnerships are utilized for full effectiveness in the building. Principals are the stakeholders with the power to enact and maintain these partnerships. Therefore, it is crucial to understand principals' experiences and how they can assist in removing barriers to have collaborative relationships with school counselors. The specific problem that this research addressed was exploring the underutilization of principal–school counselor partnerships due to common barriers such as understanding of counselor roles, counselor time use, communication, counselor-to-student ratios, funding, and lack of resources.

The ASCA Model calls for principal–counselor partnerships. Collaborative partnerships foster the ability to have a CSCP and ensure that principal–school counselor partnerships are utilized for full effectiveness in the building. Principals are the

stakeholders with the power to enact and maintain these partnerships. Therefore, it is crucial to understand principals' experiences and how they can assist in removing barriers to have collaborative relationships with school counselors.

A CSCP aligns with the vision and mission of the staff, serves students more effectively, and allows counselors to perform research and evidence-based work (Dollarhide et al., 2007). This research illuminated the lived experiences of principals who used counselors as leaders and aids in understanding how principals assist in removing barriers to have a collaborative relationship with the school counselor. This understanding may aid counselors in better fulfilling their roles as counselors and leaders in their building by sparking critical conversations with their principals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to illuminate the lived experiences of principals who assist in removing barriers in order to utilize counselors as school leaders, thus creating a collaborative partnership between principals and counselors. The benefits of intentional and visible school counselor leadership are well documented (Chen-Hayes et al., 2014; Hanson & Stone, 2002; Hines & Lemons, 2011; National Office for School Counselor Advocacy [NOSCA], 2011; Sink, 2009). However, there is a gap in the literature related to understanding how school counselors can be effectively utilized and how those barriers are removed, specifically with a principal's assistance (Young & Dollarhide, 2017). Exploring this gap may provide counselors with information that will assist in navigating critical conversations with their

principal. These critical conversations may allow counselors to perform their duties and roles in more effective ways and may create a movement towards a recognized CSCP.

Research Question

This study answered the following overarching question: What are the lived experiences of principals who utilize counselors in school leadership by helping to remove barriers for a more effective principal/counselor partnership? The research question was explored using a hermeneutic phenomenological design, described in this chapter, and expanded in Chapter 3.

Framework

The research question was addressed through a qualitative study. The specific research design was hermeneutic phenomenology, which can be identified as a philosophical ideal and as a research methodology. As a philosophical ideal, phenomenology focuses on the conscious awareness of human beings (Kafle, 2013; Manen, 2017). As a research methodology, phenomenology has been used qualitatively for understanding the experiences of individuals living through a specific phenomenon (Eberle, 2015; Finlay, 2009; Manen, 2017).

The methodological framework of phenomenology is closely related to the work of Edward Husserl. Phenomenology allows researchers to understand individuals' everyday experiences, as it highlights the world and phenomena in question as individuals experience them (Laverty, 2003; Maruna & Butler, 2005). Transcendental, existential, and hermeneutic are types of phenomenological inquiry (Cilesiz, 2010). Hermeneutic phenomenology, developed by Martin Heidegger, was used in this study.

Chapter 3 includes additional details on how this theoretical framework furthers understanding of the lived experiences of principals.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is a research approach that focuses on interpreting individuals' lived experiences (Heidegger, 2010; Kafle, 2013). Heidegger, a student of Edward Husserl, coined the term *Dasein*, meaning "being there" or "to exist" (Kafle, 2013). Being human means making sense of one's existence. Interpreting thoughts and activities and understanding how they relate to an understanding of the world is part of *Dasein*. *Dasein* and *Mitsein* are interconnected. *Mitsein* means "being within." In German, it means "togetherness" or "companionship" (Wrathall, 2005, p. 52). Heidegger argued that the social world is always a *Mitsein,* a being-in-the-world, because individuals encounter others who are also acting and interpreting in the world (Kafle, 2013). One cannot "exist" without being-in-the-world. A true understanding of the world does not happen with only knowing facts about it. The understanding comes from knowing how to live in it.

According to Heidegger, people's experience of the world is filled by an understanding of what things are, or how they are used. Even when people encounter something new or unfamiliar, they interpret the encounter against the background of their basic understanding of the world (Wrathall, 2005). For this reason, people can never be entirely free from their background experiences. As Husserl proposed, individuals cannot "bracket" their experiences. In fact, they can only know the world because of and through their experiences (Wrathall, 2005).

The interrelation between the researcher, context of the phenomenon, and interpretation of being is ongoing and connected throughout the research process and is used in the hermeneutic circle, which is part of the hermeneutic phenomenology process. In the hermeneutic circle, there is a revision of preunderstanding, which includes experiences, and a new understanding of the phenomenon occurs. The understanding of the parts that have changed informs the whole (Wrathall, 2005).

Nature of Study

This qualitative study involved a hermeneutic phenomenological research design. Using descriptive phenomenology, I was able to gather rich and in-depth perspectives of the lived experiences of principals while interpretation allowed for the identification, description, and interpretation of the collaborative leadership phenomenon (Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015).

My goal in using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach was to discover meaning and a sense of understanding of principals who used school counselors as leaders and understand how principals assisted in removing barriers to using counselors effectively in their schools. Using Heidegger's principle of *Dasein,* counselors and principals share the same world, even though they possess different roles. The actions and experiences intertwine and support each other in many ways.

This study included interviewing select principals working in an Indiana *Recognized American School Counselor Association Model Program (RAMP)*. Indiana leads the way in RAMP schools, so it was valuable to get perspectives of principals

throughout the state. Principals are key players in a RAMP school, and schools cannot receive RAMP status without their principals' support.

Definitions

American School Counselor Association (ASCA): Assists school counselors with efforts relating to academic, career, and social/emotional development of students through providing professional development, publications, and other resources for school counselors (ASCA, 2019a). ASCA developed a rigorous CSCP that allows schools to understand how to better utilize school counselors and establish an effective principal–school counselor partnership.

Dasein: Created by Heidegger and means "being there." Humans are in the world, so to Heidegger, they are *Dasein* because of the way they exist within the world (Wrathall, 2005).

Effective: An effective school counseling program is research based and follows the ASCA National Model. An effective program uses school counselors in a way that positively impacts the school (ASCA, 2021).

Effective principal–counselor partnership: An effective principal–counselor partnership is a partnership that has components outlined by ASCA and documented through the RAMP process (ASCA, 2021).

Hermeneutic circle: All understanding moves in a circle. Understanding of the whole is established by reference to the individual parts and one's understanding of each part by reference to the whole (Wrathall, 2005).

Professional school counselors (PSCs): Licensed educators with a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling (ASCA, 2021).

Recognized American School Counselor Association Model Program (RAMP): RAMP schools are recognized as delivering comprehensive, data-informed school counseling programs. These programs align with the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2021). RAMP schools have gone through the rigorous process to show that "all hands are on deck" and counselors are specifically being utilized effectively.

Assumptions

I assumed that both principals knew what a CSCP is and understood the importance of having counselors as part of the leadership team. I assumed that principals and counselors had encountered challenges and barriers and had worked through at least some of them to become a successful team. To receive RAMP status, counselors and principals are required to show how they are working collaboratively. This includes documentation of at least a yearly agreement meeting, outlining roles and responsibilities of the counselor, and documentation of monthly meetings with a team of stakeholders, including the counselor and principal, in which the CSCP is developed and aligned to the school's mission and goals. I assumed that all selected participants met eligibility criteria before engaging in the interview process within this study. Lastly, I assumed that I had certain understandings about principal–counselor partnerships from my own experience as a school counselor, specifically about barriers and what it is like to work collaboratively, that might change as I received new information and that my understanding would be revised.

Scope and Delimitations

I recruited participants who were licensed school principals in the state of Indiana. Indiana has the highest percentage of RAMP schools, so I drew from the experiences of the principals meeting RAMP requirements or working towards RAMP certification in the state. RAMP certified schools go through a rigorous process to show that they have met criteria for a CSCP. RAMP certification mandates documenting principal and school counselor partnerships and agreements, so for this reason, it was essential to choose RAMP schools. Principals who did not have RAMP schools and principals who were not at the chosen location during the RAMP certification or renewal process were excluded from participating in this study. Transferability was established by providing readers with evidence that the research study findings could be applicable to other contexts, situations, times, and populations.

Limitations

This study provided valuable in-depth data describing the lived experiences of principals working with counselors in leadership; however, this study had a few limitations. Given the focus of the phenomenon of the study and the criteria outlined, there were some challenges with participant recruitment. There are 92 RAMP schools in the state of Indiana and only 10 principals volunteered, and eight principals' interviews were used. Some of the principals were contacted more than once to reach saturation in the study.

The generalizability of the findings is limited to principals who are leading RAMP schools in the state of Indiana. The study did not focus on assistant principals,

who often work closely with the school counselor as well. The study also did not include experienced and successful principals or assistant principals who were not part of RAMP schools for one reason or another.

Significance

This study adds to the existing body of literature in the field of school counseling, specifically as it relates to collaborative leadership and removing barriers that are commonly experienced with a school counselor and principal as they implement a CSCP. It uniquely fills the gap of understanding counselor leadership from the principal's perspective, as many studies on principal–counselor partnerships have been from the perspective of the counselor. Although the studies are insightful and help counselors to know how to communicate and advocate for their position (House & Hayes, 2002; Jansen et al., 2008; Robinson et al. 2019), outline what a counselor should be doing (Gyspers & Henderson, 2012; Hines & Lemons, 2011; Kalkan et al., 2020), and highlight the importance of leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Kneal & Dollarhide, 2017), the studies do not talk about how principals influence and shape the overall success of a comprehensive program.

The results of this study benefit counselors in two key ways. First, the results allow counselors to understand the experiences of the person in power. The principal is the gatekeeper of a collaborative partnership. Understanding experiences and perspectives of the principal allows the counselor to lobby for collaborative partnerships in a more effective manner. Secondly, if an implementation barrier arises that is named in this study, counselors will be able to have critical conversations with their principal about

how to navigate through that specific barrier. The downstream effect of these conversations will allow counselors to be more effective in their role.

Summary

Principal–school counselor partnerships are critical to meet the needs of students fully. This chapter introduced the background and significance of the principal–counselor collaborative partnership phenomenon. It also explored the research problem of the underutilization of counselors as school leaders, and the common barriers that make it difficult for principal–counselor partnerships to lead to a CSCP. Definitions were discussed to aid in understanding the research, and assumptions that were critical to the meaningfulness of the study were discussed. The scope and delimitations included researching certified CSCPs in Indiana, as Indiana has the highest percentage of RAMP schools in the country.

Chapter 2 will address the theoretical foundation of the study, the conceptual framework, and an exhaustive review of current literature related to key variables and concepts of the research to pull major themes in the literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Effective principal–counselor partnerships have been shown to increase the probability that a school will meet its goals and vision (ASCA, 2019b; Hallinger & Heck, 2010). There are a variety of barriers that prevent a successful partnership from occurring, which will be discussed in this chapter. Principals, as leaders in the school, are in the position to assist with removing these barriers. A number of articles and research studies have been written to show the value of comprehensive school programs and the value of school counselor leaders (ASCA, 2019b; Curry & Bickmore, 2012). There is also literature that assists counselors in working with their administrator (Cisler & Bruce, 2013; Edwards et al., 2014). However, much of the literature addresses perspectives and experiences from counselors only (ASCA, 2019b; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; McConnel et al., 2020; Meany-Walen et al., 2016; Oehrtman & Dollarhide, 2021; Robinson et al., 2019). Principals' experiences and perceptions as they relate to counselors have not been examined thoroughly, even though principals are the lead decision makers of school buildings. This is why it is crucial to gain understanding from the principal's perspective and experiences. A principal's perspective can help a school counselor gain insight into how a principal perceives leadership and how they navigate the principal/counselor partnership (Lewis et al., 2020).

This literature review outlines the theoretical foundation of my research, including a discussion on phenomenology and hermeneutics. In discussing the literature in this chapter, I also aim to review what is known about principal–counselor

partnerships, including common barriers that occur that frequently prevent an effective partnership. In order to do this, it is necessary to revisit historical roles of school counselors to assist in providing insight and understanding into these current and common barriers. Finally, this review highlights relevant literature regarding CSCPs, counselor leadership, and known characteristics of principal–counselor partnerships.

Literature and Search Strategies

The keywords searched included *school counseling*, *school counselor*, *leadership*, *school leadership*, *principal leadership*, and *principal/school counselor collaboration*. Databases searched included APA PsycArticles, PsycInfo, Education Source, ERIC, SocINDEX, and Sage. Search parameters included peer-reviewed articles that were published between 2016 and 2021.

PsycInfo returned 188 peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Twenty-six articles were not specifically relevant to the topic of research. In SAGE, there were 7,834 articles available for the initial search. A selection of subject *education* further narrowed the article database to 892. Upon review of titles and abstracts, a further reduction occurred based on the article contents of school nursing, administrators not identified as principals, and studies outside of the United States. Fifteen articles were saved from the SAGE database to review. The number of SocINDEX initial results was 258. Applying "peer-reviewed scholarly journals" and date-range limitations reduced the articles to 78. Of the 78, 15 articles were considered because they specifically applied to the research topic. Several additional articles were chosen that were not from searches but from resources cited in another research study. Some of the previous research was completed before

2016 but was relevant to my study, as it addressed the common themes of leadership and school counseling and also showed the lack of research that had been done on this topic.

A second search was completed using the Psychology Databases Combined Search, which includes PsycArticles, PsycBooks, PsycEXTRA, and PsycINFO. Keywords included *phenomenology*, *hermeneutics*, and *interpretive phenomenology*. The initial search with limiters of 2016–2021 and peer-reviewed articles produced 6,530 results. Further limiting the subject to phenomenology, hermeneutics, philosophies, theories, and qualitative methods reduced the number to 1,595 results. Of those, 24 articles were chosen based on describing and understanding phenomenology, hermeneutics, and interpretive phenomenology.

Theoretical Foundation

Principals have a distinct role in utilizing counselors as leaders and assist in removing barriers to form an effective and collaborative partnership. Understanding this vital role and the experiences of principals will help counselors engage in critical conversations with their principals. Further, this will allow counselors to lobby for changes effectively, which will result in the ability to perform in a way that aligns with a CSCP (ASCA, 2021).

While quantitative and mixed methods research has provided information on roles of principals, school counselors, and school factors relating to burnout of principals and school counselors (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Curry & Bickmore, 2012), quantitative research does not fully capture the depth and complexity of the experiences of the principal, specifically as it relates to the principal–school counselor partnership. There is

limited literature from the perspective and experience of the principal, as will be discussed further in this chapter (Zalaquette, 2005). Qualitative research allowed for meaning making as I sought to discover and describe real life experiences of principals as they navigated through barriers. Counselors will benefit from understanding collaborative partnerships through the administrative lens, as this will help them to engage their principal more effectively, increasing the potential for their school to become a RAMP-recognized school.

In addition to using qualitative research, I used hermeneutic phenomenology as a theoretical framework to gather the breadth of meaning and dynamics of this phenomenon.

Phenomenology offers an opportunity to gather an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon being studied and has the potential to "penetrate deep into the human experience" (Kafle, 2013, p. 189). Phenomenology evolved out of the philosophical works of Edmond Husserl (1859–1938), who was considered the father of phenomenology (Spear, n.d.). Within phenomenology, there are two differing perspectives: descriptive and interpretive. Husserl believed that phenomenology should be descriptive. Descriptive phenomenology allows for exploring, describing, and analyzing a phenomenon while maintaining its richness, breadth, and depth, so as to gain a near real picture of it (Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015; McConnell-Henry et al., 2009; Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). Husserl and his viewpoint of intentionality suggest that meaning is derived from the subject's intention, or what the subject is intentionally focusing on (Dowling & Cooney, 2012). Husserl wanted to get a pure essence of a

phenomenon and believed that nothing should be assumed or taken for granted when trying to understand a phenomenon. Husserl was particularly interested in finding a means by which someone might come to accurately know their own experience of a given phenomenon through bracketing. Bracketing in research involves refraining from adding judgement and removing the researcher's experiences from the research process (Smith et al., 2012).

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), a student of Husserl, did not believe that people can separate their personal experiences. Heidegger coined an essential term, *Dasein,* which means that individuals are existing and being in the world by exploring "average everydayness" (Heidegger, 1927/2010, p. 65; Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). In addition to *Dasein*, Heidegger believed that people should not only describe, but also interpret based on their own understanding and experiences (Dowling & Cooney, 2012; Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). To Heidegger, people are in the world. Everything they encounter and everything they do is influenced, at least in part, by the world that they share with others. Being-in-the-world means that people are not able to separate their thoughts or experiences because, according to Heidegger, they cannot feel, think, or have experiences unless they are actively engaged in the world (Wrathall, 2005).

Hermeneutics

Heidegger developed the notion of the hermeneutic circle as a result of his beliefs. Heidegger called preconceived knowledge *fore-sight*, which is previous experiences, understandings, or biases. As people begin to understand and interpret something, their fore-sight is revised. Heidegger believed that interpretation would lead to a deeper

understanding of a phenomenon (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009; Van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000). The hermeneutic circle allows for the counseling researcher to have a preunderstanding, to investigate the meaning of experiences related to issues that have implications for counseling research and practice, and to revise that understanding to see the phenomenon as a whole. Using the hermeneutic method allowed for an understanding of the deeper layers of the human experiences of a principal as they navigate common barriers that occur (Bynum & Varipo, 2017).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Evolution of the School Counseling Role

The evolution of the school counseling role should be considered, as counselor role confusion is still identified as a primary barrier in collaborative partnerships today (Finkelstein, 2009). Initially, the role of the school counselor was filled by principals and teachers (Gyspers, 2010; William & Mary Education, 2022) and began in response to the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution moved education to respond to economic, educational, and social concerns, such as better preparing children for the workforce, providing services and resources to those in need, and improving labor laws and conditions in industries that employed children (Gyspers, 2017). There was no specific organizational structure in the first 40 years of school counseling. The primary task of the "school counseling" role was to assist students in finding a career. During this time, assigned counselors would match personal characteristics of the student with an occupation (Gyspers, 2017).

Frank Parsons, the father of vocational guidance, advocated for trained professionals to perform vocational guidance in public schools (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). Principals and teachers were trained in assessing occupational selection and placement for high school students. Training also included assessments that benefited the military, especially in World War I and II. The need to determine the skills and competencies of soldiers and what roles millions of soldiers effectively and quickly would play was fulfilled through these assessments (Gyspers, 2017).

By the 1920s, the focus shifted. There was a more significant push for expanding the career guidance role. Principals, such as Jessie B. Davis, were developing curriculum for moral guidance and "mental hygiene" (Gyspers, 2017, p. 1). This resulted in a more clinically oriented approach. There was a shift away from economic issues to psychological issues, emphasizing counseling for personal adjustment (Gyspers, 2010; Gyspers & Henderson, 2001). This prompted a mental health movement. During the mental health movement, more structure was put in place, and "Pupil Personnel Services" were created (Gyspers, 2017, p. 1).

Mental Health Movement

Pupil Personnel Services were the beginning of comprehensive school programs, which went beyond isolated focus on either jobs or mental wellness as previously done (Gyspers, 2010). School leaders began looking at closing achievement gaps and providing remedial services to students. The mental health movement included an expansion from academic to social and emotional interventions to promote a more well-rounded student (ASCA, 2007; Cinotti, 2014; Gyspers, 2010).

Developmental Guidance

The developmental guidance movement was supported by the funding provided in the renewal of the National Defense Education Act (U.S. Congress, 1958). It allowed elementary and middle school counselors to be trained in academic and social/emotional supports (Gyspers, 2010; Myrick, 2003; William & Mary Education, 2021). Guidance counselors were trained to identify the developmental needs of students to reach more diverse populations. This helped to increase student achievement and have a larger impact on student development and career decision making. During this time, many states began developing their specific counseling program and hiring school counselors for elementary-age students (ASCA, 2007; Gyspers, 2010; State University, n.d.).

Movement Towards Comprehensive School Counseling

Starting in the 1980s, the role of the school counselor, including the job title, was in the spotlight (Gyspers, 2010). There were conflicting views on the focus of the counselor. Questions remained concerning whether they should they focus on academics, social/emotional factors, and college and career, or take a more holistic approach and focus on all of these (Gyspers, 2010). During this time, school counselors began partnering with principals and other stakeholders. They began to be an integral part of the student's educational environment. Counselors received multicultural training that encouraged them to advocate for the academic achievement of all students. Effective counselors used teaching, coaching, directing, tutoring, training, and instructing to help students. Counselors, like teachers, aimed to help students get the most out of school and realize their full potential as responsible and productive citizens (Myrick, 2003).

Comprehensive School Counseling Program

The ASCA National Model advocates that the role of the 21st-century school counselor should be one of an integrated leader throughout the school (ASCA, 2019a; Stone & Clark, 2001). The ASCA National Model, first released in 2003, consists of four components: foundation, management, delivery, and accountability (Table 1). Many framework components require collaborative efforts from the community, parents, school staff, and school administrators.

The publication of the ASCA National Model stimulated the expansion of a more holistic counseling program that has helped with consistent services throughout each state and the country (ASCA, 2019a; Gyspers, 2010). Camelford and Ebrahim (2017) highlighted that counselors are both proactive and preventative with services. Furthermore, they are focused on helping all students acquire the knowledge, skills, self-awareness, and attitudes necessary for normal development.

Recognized American School Counselor Association Model Program

RAMP recognizes schools committed to delivering comprehensive, data-informed school counseling programs (ASCA, 2021). To be recognized as a RAMP school, school personnel must document how the school is managing, delivering, and assessing a CSCP. The tasks of managing, delivering, and assessing align with ASCA's requirements for a CSCP.

Table 1 is an adaptation of the School Counseling Program Assessment chart created by ASCA (2019a). The following items are required to be considered a RAMP school.

Table 1

Requirements for Recognized American School Counselor Association Model Certification

ASCA National Model components	Description
Manage	
Vision & mission statement	Aligned with ASCA's National Model
Data	Summarizing and prioritizing data from SC program
Annual student outcome goals	Review school improvement plan to identify priorities, write outcome goals based on school and district data, and align the ASCA National Model using goals written in SMART format: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound
Use-of-time calculator	Logging time use at least twice a school year. ASCA model suggested time on counseling-related duties is 80%.
Annual administrative conference	SC and principal meeting once a year to agree on time use and goals of SC program. Template completed and signed by school counselor and supervising administrator within first two months of school.
Advisory council	Meetings to discuss goals of SC program. Agendas and minutes completed from at least two meetings.
Action plans	Classroom and group Mindsets & Behaviors action plan detailing classroom lessons and groups aligned with the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors. Curriculum mapping to close gaps and plans detailing lessons and groups
Lesson plans	Specific outline of lesson, standards covered, and how data will be assessed and used
Calendars	Highly detailed annual calendar documenting all activities, events, and services within the CSCP. Weekly calendars available for each school counselor
Deliver	
Direct student services	Classroom lessons, large-group activities, small-group sessions documented
Indirect student services	Documented services on calendars
Assess	
Assessment	The following assessments should be completed annually. • Classroom and Group Mindsets & Behaviors Results Report(s) • Closing-the-Gap Results • ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies assessment School Counseling Program Assessment • School Counseling Program Assessment • School Counseling Performance Appraisal Document how data are shared

Note. Adapted from *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* (4th ed., p.

157-158, by American School Counselor Association, 2019a.

Collaborative Leadership

Based on the ASCA National Model (2019a), collaborative leadership is an important component of an effective program. Collaborative leadership occurs when there is mutual respect and understanding of roles and responsibilities. Using the RAMP framework, annual administrative meetings are required for school counselors and the principal. This meeting includes an agreement on counselor time use and counselor role clarification (ASCA, 2019a). The agreement promotes communication, understanding of roles, as well as clearly outlining expectations. Some of the expected behaviors include demonstrating leadership, advocacy, and helping to create systemic change through the implementation of a school counseling program (ASCA, 2019a, p.119-121).

School counselors can use the ASCA National Model to understand the leadership characteristics they should strive for, as it aligns with research relating to principal–counselor collaborative relationships. Furthermore, the ASCA National Model allows principals to assist in removing barriers, create learning opportunities, and collaborate with stakeholders (Mullen, 2019).

Barriers That Affect Implementation of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program

Several barriers identified in the literature affect implementation of a CSCP. Key themes identified include; administrative support, including opportunities (time) to communicate and collaborate; role ambiguity and conflict, including equal respect of roles and inappropriate job duties (Camelford & Ebrahim, 2017; Finkelstein, 2009; Yildirim, 2008).

Administrative Support

Three separate studies found that administrative support is critical for the implementing and maintaining a CSCP (Camelford & Ebrahim, 2017; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Yildirim, 2008). This includes opportunities for the counselor to communicate and collaborate with the principal. In a collaborative project supported by Finkelstein, ASCA, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals and compiled by Finkelstein (2009), counselors and principals both ranked communication as one of the most important elements in a successful principal–counselor relationship, though they each addressed some specific differences (Finkelstein, 2009). In the survey, principals noted the quality of communication as being most important and counselors indicated the frequency of communication was most important. Time to communicate and collaborate was also noted as a barrier in the principal–counselor relationship. Principals agreed that more quality time to collaborate and communicate would lead to increased student success (Finkelstein, 2009).

Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity was another identified barrier throughout the research (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Dodson, 2009; Dollarhide et al., 2007; Edwards et al., 2014; Finkelstein, 2009; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012). To fully support a school counselor, a principal should understand the role of a school counselor. There has been an ongoing discussion on the lack of understanding of a school counselor's role due to the historical nature of the change and differing perspectives of administrators, despite ASCA's attempts to clarify the school counselor's role (Armstrong et al., 2010; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012).

The misunderstanding of roles creates a barrier between school principals and counselors in a couple of ways. First, principals do not always know how to include the school counselor in leadership roles that are not considered administrative, such as supervision or discipline (Amatea and Clark, 2005; Dollarhide et al., 2007; Edwards et al., 2014; Zalaquett, 2005) and second, lack of role understanding amplifies communication issues (Camelford & Ebrahim, 2017; Finkelstein, 2009; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012).

For administrators who do have an understanding of counseling roles, a gap in "actual time" versus "ideal time" spent on counseling duties has been identified (Dodson, 2009; Wilkerson, 2010; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012). In these three similar studies, principals believed school counselors' roles should include individual and group counseling, classroom guidance, teacher, parent consultation, exceptional student coordination, scheduling, and standardized testing (Camelford & Ebrahim, 2017; Finkelstein, 2009; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012). However, principals differed in prioritizing these various roles. Principals indicated that counselors should be spending more time on counseling related duties, but because of barriers mentioned above, it does not always occur (Finkelstein, 2009).

Overall, principals with knowledge of a CSCP prioritized individual and group counseling, classroom guidance, providing teacher support and interpretation for student data compared to administrators without knowledge of CSCP (Dodson, 2009). Furthermore, when evaluating time on non-counseling duties such as supervision, testing coordination, etc., principals saw these activities as taking less time than counselors did (Finkelstein, 2009).

Job Duties

Inappropriate job duties were cited as a major factor for role conflict and misunderstanding for school counseling positions (Camelford & Ebrahim, 2017). Culbreth et al. (2005) found that one of the biggest predictors of role stress was the perception of the job verses actual practice experiences.

CACREP accredited master's School Counseling programs are built on the ASCA National Model. This means that counselors are taught that 80% of their time should be spent doing counseling duties. In addition, they are specifically taught appropriate and inappropriate duties of counselors. Table 2 is a list of appropriate and inappropriate activities for a school counselor from ASCA (2019a).

Table 2

Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors

Appropriate activities for school counselors	Inappropriate activities for school counselors
Advising and academic planning	Building the master schedule, schedule changes
Academic advising and coordination for new students	Paperwork and registration of new students
Consulting with teachers to schedule and present school counseling curriculum lessons	Covering classes when teachers are absent or to create teacher planning time
Consulting with teachers (building classroom connections, effective classroom management, etc.)	Supervising classrooms or common areas such as the lunch room
Advocating for students at meetings such as case reviews, 504's, behavioral and attendance	Coordinating individual education plans, 504 plans, student study teams, response to intervention plans, multitiered system of support, English language learners, and school attendance review boards
Interpreting student records	Maintaining student records, including serving as a data entry clerk
Providing counseling to students who are tardy, absent, or who have disciplinary problems	Performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences

Note. ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (4th ed., p. 22), by American School Counselor Association, 2019.

When counselors are employed following their master's program, they are often faced with the reality of their new position. School Counselors who are able to implement a CSCP are less susceptible to burnout because their administrator understands their role, are supportive, and find ways to allow counselors to perform their duties as taught (Camelford et al., 2017). In two separate 2006 studies, researchers found that school counselors' satisfaction and commitment were correlated to the performance of appropriate versus inappropriate duties as defined by the ASCA National Model (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006).

Another barrier found in the literature is shared vision and decision-making (Finkelstein, 2009). Through Finkelstein's survey, it was discovered that counselors did not see eye to eye on the importance of decision-making. Counselors indicated that shared decision-making on initiatives that impact student success was one of the most significant gaps in practice, while principals felt that the importance and presence of the practice were fairly even (Finkelstein, 2009).

Caseload, while an important barrier to discuss, surfaced less than communication, time, role understanding, and shared decision making (Finkelstein, 2009). ASCA (2019a) recommends one counselor to every 250 students. The national average is approximately 1:450. Counselors and principals both indicated that if there were more counselors to spread duties, there would be more time to collaborate and communicate (Finkelstein, 2009).

Mental Health Needs in K-12 U.S. Education

School counselors assist with the psychological, emotional, and social issues of students, which requires the continuous engagement of their active attention and empathic skills (Dahir & Burnham, 2010). Traditionally, counselors in grades 6-12 are also tasked with making academic recommendations, record keeping, report writing, vocational planning, test administration and scoring, scheduling, and other assigned administrative duties (Tang & Erfod, 2004).

Mental Health Gap

Increasing mental health needs of students puts a heavier burden on school counselors, as they try to manage all the responsibilities within their role, make referrals for mental health counseling, and help bridge the gap in services while students and families wait for services (Dahir & Burnham, 2010).

Mental Health Needs (Prepandemic). Even before the COVID-19 pandemic which began in March 2020, the literature discussed strategies for counselors in addressing the rising cases of mental health issues in the classroom. Furthermore, studies were conducted on mental health needs of students in the US. Hospitalizations for listed mental health conditions increased by nearly 50% among children aged 10 to 14 between 2006 and 2011. Inpatient visits for suicide, suicidal ideation, and self-injury increased by 104% for all children (Torio et al., 2015). Rising mental health issues mean increased diagnosis and increased need (Rosenburg, 2019). According to The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI; 2020), suicide is the second leading cause of death for people

ages 10-34. The overall suicide rate has increased 31% since 2001 (NAMI, 2020). Furthermore, 50% of all lifetime mental illnesses begin by age 14 (NAMI, 2020).

COVID-19 Pandemic. A growing body of research is documenting the increased mental health needs of K-12 students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Chan et al., 2021; Husson, 2021; Pompeo-Fargnoli et al., 2020). Husson (2021), found that as the COVID-19 pandemic has worn on, youth show more consistent elevations in anxiety, depression, and stress. As a result of rising needs, school counselors spend a good amount of time with referrals for families. Families request mental health services for their children but may be met with a lack of available resources, creating a cycle of need that cannot be filled (Christidis et al., 2018). School counselors help bridge the gap while families wait for services (Pompeo-Fargnoli et al., 2020). As a result, school counselors are exposed to higher levels of emotional stress (Jones, 2019; Pompeo-Fargnoli, 2020).

Collaborative Principal and School Counseling Relationships

The literature reflects the importance of collaborative school counseling and principal partnerships (ASCA, 2019b; McConnel et. al, 2020; Salina et al., 2013; Zalaquette, 2005). Though much of the research is from the counselors' perspective, two studies explored the principals' perspective (Cisler & Bruce, 2013; Zalaquette, 2005). These studies, although dated, provide relevant information into how a principal values a counselor and how they perceive the collaborative partnership. Zalaquette's (2005) qualitative study on elementary principals revealed a perception of counselors having a positive impact on the academic, behavioral, and mental health development of their students. However, despite the positive view of counselors, less than one third of the

elementary school principals believed that the adoption of the ASCA National Model by the state of Florida would help counselors focus on their relevant job duties. It should be noted that this study occurred when the first ASCA National Model was published (Zalaquette, 2005).

Cisler and Bruce (2013) quantitatively examined perceptions of school counselors and principals using a Likert scale design. Results indicated that there was a gap in understanding the roles of principals and school counselors. Both school counselors and principals can benefit from understanding roles and evaluating how to complement each other. Cisler and Bruce's study provided insight into how principals viewed working with a school counselor.

School Counselors

A school counselor must have a deep sense of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making in order to lead effectively (Bowers et al., 2017). Numerous studies indicated the benefits of school counseling leadership, counselor development, and school counselor/principal collaborative partnerships (ASCA, 2019b; Kneal et al., 2017; Ziomek-Daigle et al., 2016). An empirical research study conducted by ASCA reviewed forty-three peer-reviewed articles on the topic of counselor leadership and CSCPs. The study supported the value of school counseling leadership, particularly in the areas of academic development, college and career readiness, and social/emotional development (ASCA, 2019b). In addition, the empirical study found that school counselors should be intentional, have comprehensive programs, and be advocates for their students, school,

and profession. School counselors can be a critical part of school improvement efforts

(Barna et al., 2014; Education Trust, 2019; Mullen et al., 2019; Salina et al., 2013) but

must have access to opportunities to collaborate with other building leaders. According to

Mullen et al., (2019), school counselors with defined leadership roles, and higher levels

of resiliency are more likely to seek out opportunities to lead and persist when setbacks

occur. Giving school counselors the tools they need, especially when starting out in the

counseling profession or switching to a new school, can help support and develop

leadership skills (Curry & Bickmore, 2012; Kneal et al., 2017; McCarty et al.,

2014). This research informs mine, as it supports the need for CSCPs and counselor

leadership. This research also helps to identify barriers in collaborative partnerships and

reveals that almost all research regarding this topic is from the perspective of the school

counselor. There is a gap in the literature that studies successful principal counselor

partnerships from the perspective of the principal. Furthermore, gaps remain on how

barriers are removed to create that partnership.

Principals

Principals are the face and main leaders of a school. In many ways, they are the

bridge to other administrators and board members outside of the building. A principal is

one of the key players in shaping a school environment. Administrators and school

counselors are trained separately and do not have many opportunities to interact or

collaborate during their graduate programs (Shoffner & Briggs, 2001; Williams &

Wehrman, 2010). They are expected to work together but may not fully understand how

to collaborate effectively (Cisler & Bruce, 2013). Despite ASCA's National Model's

attempt to clarify the functions of school counselors, it is evident that many differences of opinion still exist among school principals (Shoffher & Williamson, 2000). McConnel et al. (2020) stated that school principals view of the school counseling role indicates a lack of cohesion in understanding. Furthermore, the school counselor's role can look different under different principals, depending on each principal's understanding of the school counselor role, the principal's leadership style, and the school culture (McConnel et al., 2020). Role confusion remains an impediment to progress in establishing the counselor's role within a CSCP (Ponec & Brock, 2000; Young & Bryan, 2015).

In a qualitative study completed by Zalaquett (2014), teamwork is a deciding factor in determining the effectiveness of CSCP. Similar studies completed by Stone-Johnson (2015) and Edwards et al. (2014), found that the effectiveness of school counselor practice is determined by the knowledge of school counselor roles and responsibilities, as well as the strength of the relationship with the principal. Principals need to be knowledgeable of challenges and about the counselor's role within the school (O'Connor, 2002; Taylor, 2002).

Summary

This chapter outlined relevant literature relating to school counselors, principals, and collaborative partnerships. While there is research supporting the value of school counselors and the need for collaborative partnerships, most of the literature is from the perspectives of the school counselor. Although the perspective of the school counselor is beneficial, it is not a complete picture of what is happening and what needs to happen to

make partnerships work. As leaders, principals have an enormous amount of influence and can lead the way on removing common barriers (Issah, 2018).

Furthermore, this chapter outlined the need to use hermeneutic phenomenology. While it is possible to bracket certain phenomenon, it is not possible to bracket an individual's experience and perception of the phenomenon. So, while I can understand or bracket a principal's role, a school counselor's role, or how a school functions, I cannot bracket the experience or perception of a principal working with a counselor, or a counselor working with a principal, or an experience of being in a particular school. There may be similar experiences and themes that can be taken away, but each individual will have unique experiences based on their own previous knowledge and perceptions of being within a school and working collaboratively (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The aim of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to illuminate the lived experience of principals who utilize counselors in leadership roles, creating a collaborative partnership between principals and counselors. By using phenomenology, I obtained a rich and in-depth perspective on the lived experiences of principals in the education system. I identified, described, and interpreted these experiences by using interpretative phenomenology. The hermeneutic phenomenology approach enabled an exploration of how the principal experiences working with school counselors and what language the principal uses to enhance meaning.

This chapter details the research design and rationale for the study. A description of the role of the researcher, including the population and the sampling design, is provided, followed by a description of the data collection procedures implemented in the study. The instrumentation and data analysis are discussed. This chapter closes with a description of ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness.

Research Design and Rationale

The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic study was to examine the lived experiences of principals as they navigate barriers that prevent them from having effective partnerships with school counselors. As described in more detail below, the process of this hermeneutic study includes investigating an experience as it is lived rather than as it is conceptualized. Therefore, the following research question was used to address this study: What are the lived experiences of principals who utilize counselors in

school leadership by helping to remove barriers for a more effective principal/counselor partnership?

Central Concepts/Phenomenon

Qualitative research is a multifaceted field of inquiry that draws on various assumptions but comprises a few common characteristics and perspectives (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). It is a method of inductive exploration with which researchers strive to bring meaning and understanding and increase learning through the lens of the researcher (Bingham, 2022). Like quantitative research, the qualitative method is a systemic process that follows a specific decision-making process. In contrast, qualitative methodology is interpretive, holistic, and contextual (see Creswell, 2013; Crowther & Thomson, 2020; Stake, 2000).

Phenomenology has a strong foundation in philosophy, and as a research methodology, it is positioned to assist researchers to learn from the experiences of others. Some of the key thinkers of this tradition include Husserl, Heidegger, Satre, and Merleau-Ponty (Duquesne University, 2022). This research pulled from Heidegger and used hermeneutic phenomenology. The hermeneutic tradition pushes beyond the descriptive understanding and is rooted in the interpretation of experiences and phenomenology (Neubauer et al., 2019).

The goal of phenomenology is to describe the meaning of an experience or phenomenon, by describing what and how the phenomenon was experienced (Neubauer et al., 2019). Using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach is to take meaning and

description and gain a sense of understanding through interpretation (Shaw & DeForge, 2014).

Role of the Researcher

The role of a researcher in hermeneutic phenomenology is to gather, organize, and analyze perceptions from people who have experienced a phenomenon (Dawidowicz et al., 2016; Sloan & Bowe, 2013; Smith, 2009). When looking at the hermeneutic circle, what the researcher brings to interpretation should be examined (Robinson & Kerr, 2015). My preunderstanding was based on 18 years in education, six of which were as a school counselor. As I went through the research process, my understanding was confirmed or revised based on what was discovered.

Although my experience as a school counselor created my preunderstanding, I did not have any influence over the principals who participated in my study. I did not use principals from the school district where I was employed as a school counselor, as they did not meet the requirements of my study.

All research has potential for bias; thus, reducing bias is a responsibility of any researcher. Novice researchers can use methods such as interviewing and transcribing to become more acutely aware of biases and preconceptions. I used interviewing and transcribing, which allowed me to explore the phenomenon and reduce bias (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013).

Following standards such as trustworthiness, credibility, applicability, and consistency, outlined by Hammarberg et al. (2016), ensured that I reduced any potential biases as much as I could. In addition, several tools were used, including reflexivity,

coding, and member checks, which will be described in more detail throughout this chapter.

Keeping a reflective journal (reflexivity), along with audio taping and transcribing, enabled a reconstruction of conversation, instead of using one method alone (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). It allowed me, as a researcher, to be immersed and engaged in the research. The reflective journal was utilized before interviews and after them, to record my thoughts, impressions, and analytical notes. Grant et al. (2012) outlined the benefits of using a reflective journal. Benefits include identifying researcher biases, values, and ideologies, as well as reflecting on the data that emerge as the study unfolds. Gadamar (2006) noted that removing barriers that prevent understanding and bringing biases to light will prevent researchers from acting with prejudice toward the phenomenon, which could act as a barrier to understanding (Gadamar, 2006). Keeping a reflexive journal allowed me to bring to light any preconceptions I held about principal and counselor collaborative relationships prior to conducting my interviews. Preconceptions without complete information will likely lead to misinterpretation of participants' experiences, which can reduce trustworthiness of research (Gadamar, 2006).

The hermeneutic circle helped me with reflexivity in this study. Defining anticipatory ideas and making them clear helped me check against what I learned about principal–counselor collaborative relationships through participant experiences (see Gadamer, 2006). When understanding a phenomenon, Gadamer (2006) stated that the "meanings represent a fluid multiplicity of possibilities" (p. 271). This means that the true meaning of the phenomenon is somewhere in the middle of all the possibilities, as no

two experiences are identical. I can never know the absolute truth about an individual's experiences, as I have not lived my participants' lives, and discussions and reflections of discussions constitute an interpretation (Gadamer, 2008; Heidegger, 2010). However, through the use of the hermeneutic circle, I learned more about how my biases and experiences compared against the experiences that my participants shared. For example, several participants discussed using the school counselor in a pseudoadministrator way in a positive light. I had previously associated a pseudoadministrator approach in a negative way. Using the hermeneutic circle, I was able to understand that using school counselors in a pseudoadministrator way allows school counselors to be seen as leaders and empowers them, as long as there is a balance of expectations and role understanding that still aligns with RAMP criteria. I was able to move in continually smaller and deeper circles of enhanced understanding of the participants' experiences of what it means to work with counselors in a collaborative partnership. I was able to take this understanding and compare experiences to my own through reflective journaling.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The population used in this study consisted of principals who were currently working at RAMP-certified schools in Indiana. It was crucial that they were not 1st-year principals, as they were not part of the process to gain or maintain RAMP certification. RAMP certification requirements are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

Requirements for Recognized American School Counselor Association Model Certification

ASCA National Model components	Description
Manage	
Vision & mission statement	Aligned with ASCA's National Model
Data	Summarizing and prioritizing data from SC program
Annual student outcome goals	Review school improvement plan to identify priorities, write outcome goals based on school and district data, and align the ASCA National Model using goals written in SMART format: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound
Use-of-time calculator	Logging time use at least twice a school year. ASCA model suggested time on counseling-related duties is 80%.
Annual administrative conference	SC and principal meeting once a year to agree on time use and goals of SC program. Template completed and signed by school counselor and supervising administrator within first two months of school.
Advisory council	Meetings to discuss goals of SC program. Agendas and minutes completed from at least two meetings.
Action plans	Classroom and group Mindsets & Behaviors action plan detailing classroom lessons and groups aligned with the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors. Curriculum mapping to close gaps and plans detailing lessons and groups
Lesson plans	Specific outline of lesson, standards covered, and how data will be assessed and used
Calendars	Highly detailed annual calendar documenting all activities, events, and services within the CSCP. Weekly calendars available for each school counselor
Deliver	
Direct student services	Classroom lessons, large-group activities, small-group sessions documented
Indirect student services	Documented services on calendars
Assess	
Assessment	The following assessments should be completed annually. • Classroom and Group Mindsets & Behaviors Results Report(s) • Closing-the-Gap Results • ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies assessment School Counseling Program Assessment • School Counseling Program Assessment • School Counseling Performance Appraisal Document how data are shared

Note. Adapted from *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* (4th ed., p. 157-158, by American School Counselor Association, 2019a).

Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were used in this study to identify individuals who met the criteria and identify cases of interest by sampling people who knew potentially eligible participants (Groenewald, 2004). What was important was that participants had experienced the phenomenon being studied rather than adopting another sampling method where, for example, the researcher seeks out those with a wide variety of demographic characteristics (Jackson et al., 2018).

Criteria

The criteria were as follows: (a) principals who led a RAMP school in Indiana, (b) principals who had more than 1 year of being in a RAMP school, and (c) principals who were pursuing RAMP certification. RAMP-certified schools are published each year with ASCA. Principals who have had less than 2 years at a RAMP school have not assisted in going through RAMP certification, as it is a year-long process. Length at a school was determined by a preliminary phone or email interview that determined eligibility.

Saturation Versus Sample Size

Phenomenology is about getting the depth, not the breadth, of people's perceptions (Dawidowicz et al., 2016). There are currently 92 RAMP schools in Indiana (ASCA, 2021). For a phenomenological study, most often, participant numbers are between five and 15. (Dawidowicz et al., 2016). Often, the sample size is between eight and 12 (Dawidowicz et al., 2016). Eleven participants volunteered for the study. Saturation was met at eight participants.

Procedures

The following procedures were used for my study.

1. Create a list of schools and principals that meet initial criteria. Schools that meet the criteria for RAMP status are listed on ASCA's website. Each school listed has a website with contact information for the school principal.

2. Contact principals, one at a time, to determine interest and eligibility in the study. Principals were contacted via phone or email to determine interest in the study. Once interest was determined, criteria were examined to determine eligibility for the study, as mentioned above. Length of time in current RAMP-certified building could be no less than 1 year.

3. Interview: The interview(s) occurred at the location of the participant's choice (onsite, virtually, by phone) and was approximately 1 hour long. Forty-five minutes were planned for the initial interview, and 15 minutes were planned for a follow-up interview if needed to fill in any gaps in information from the initial interview. Interviews were completed in settings that were quiet and free from distractions. I addressed terms of confidentiality and explained the format, structure, and process of the interview (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I did not use the principals' or schools' names to assist with confidentiality and increase the participants' willingness to be open during the interview. The interview was a series of semistructured, open-ended questions (see Appendix), and the reflections of participants were captured on audio.

To ensure the proper exit of the interview process, the participants were asked if they had anything to add to the topic that they did not get to discuss. This ensured that participants felt heard and helped provide closure to the interview process (see McGrath et al., 2018). Follow-up interviews occurred to address any gaps in data such as misunderstandings and missing or unclear information. This occurred after member checks, as described below.

4. Transcription: I transcribed the recordings, removing identifying information and unneeded words or phrases ("umm," etc.).

5. Coding: Reflective journaling was used to identify initial codes. After coding each interview, I documented my reactions to the participant's stories. Throughout the analysis, my role was to use my reflective journal to recognize interactions between themes identified and the phenomenon as a whole (Neubauer et al., 2019). The journal, combined with the transcription, assisted in a more detailed and critical examination of the ideas that emerged in relation to the research questions as the research progressed. It also contained reflections and insights related to the research that influenced its direction (see Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007).

Instrumentation

Semistructured interviews and researcher notes were used to collect data from participants. The semistructured interviews involved a set procedure, including reflexivity, along with member checks and follow-up interviews to address any gaps in information, such as needed clarification or examples from participants.

To establish content validity, interview questions were reviewed with the committee prior to being used during actual interviews with the principals to provide feedback on the appropriateness of the content for interview questions and how well each question measured the construct in question (see Adams, 2015).

Data Analysis Plan

Table 4, adapted from Ajjawi and Higgs (2007) and Peoples (2021), outlines the specific data analysis plan I used for my research.

Table 4

Data Analysis Plan

Stage	Tasks
1. Immersion	• Journal about experiences and reflections of each interview. • Transcribing audio interviews into text • Thorough reading of texts and taking out unnecessary language (ex: "umm," "you know," etc.)
2. Understanding	• Preliminary interpretation of texts to facilitate coding • Coding of data • Generate final meaning units (themes) for each interview/survey question
3. Synthesis and theme development	• Synthesize meaning units into major themes of participants
4. General narrative	• Compile the themes into a summary description of participants' experiences
5. General structure	• Discuss common themes present in all or most participants, shifting from individual participants to the population
6. Phenomenological reflection	• Reflect on general structures through a hermeneutic lens

Note. Developed based on the work of Ajjawi and Higgs (2007) and Peoples (2021).

Illustrated Data Analysis Steps

1. The first step, immersion, involved reflecting on my notes (journal) from interviews, listening to the audio recorded interviews and transcribing, verbatim. I then read the initial transcript in its entirety and removed filler words such as "um" or "well".

   Participant P01: "I feel like (um) if you have a good relationship between the counselor and the administrator, you can do almost (ya know) anything."

   Participant P01 Revised: "I feel like if you have a good relationship between the counselor and the administrator, you can do almost anything."

2. My next step was understanding. In this step, I was able to have an initial understanding of the text, which helped when identifying meaning units as I was coding.

   Participant P05: "One of the other things we had to do, is become a little bit more realistic of what we were asking our counselor to do."

   From this text, I was able to pull the meaning unit "realistic expectations". I did this for each interview, paragraph by paragraph as I read the transcript.

3. I then began synthesizing information and identifying units (themes) from each of the interviews.

   P01 Themes:

   - *Communication and collaboration efforts improve when a trusting relationship is built*

   - *Trusting relationships promote counselor empowerment and leadership*

- *Tailoring the counselor role assists with setting realistic expectations and teamwork*

- *Shared understanding of roles enables a trusting relationship*

4. The next step was the general narrative. General narratives unify common themes for the general description. While common themes were shared, it was important to also highlight experiences on an individual participant level.

   Common Theme: *Shared understanding of roles enables a trusting relationship*

   Individual Participant Experience P03: *Understanding what the counselor role is, that is, mutually shared between the principal and counselor, is really important. I was a teacher before I became an administrator, and I didn't understand what a counselor was supposed to do until I took the time as an administrator. Having a shared understanding helps foster a better working relationship.*

5. The next step was the general structure. Major themes that were found with all or most of the participants were discussed (See Table 2). This was a shift from specific experiences to a more general population experience of the phenomena.

6. The final step was phenomenological reflection. During this step I reflected on the general structure through a hermeneutic lens.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To establish credibility, member checking and saturation were used. Member checking potentially enhances the accuracy of the data (see Birt et al., 2016). Each participant was provided questions of clarification throughout the interview. None of the participants wished to review their transcribed interview. However, some of the participants were contacted after the interview was transcribed to ask clarifying questions. For example, I contacted Participant P02, P04, and P07 to collect more demographic information that was not collected during the initial interview.

Transferability

Thick description was used for transferability and credibility. Thick description goes beyond just recording and describing (Drew, 2021). It is essential to increase the complexity of research by writing detailed narratives that clearly describe the participants and experiences to produce complex interpretations and findings, otherwise known as "thick interpretation" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p.201). This allows readers to make more contextualized meanings of findings. For example, participant P02 shared a unique barrier that other participants did not. He stated, "I think some of the barriers have less to do with anything about her position so much. She's a mom. She's got four kids. There's times, where I really need her, and she can't be here because her kids are sick." The context of this principal/counselor partnership is that there is one principal and one counselor. When either of them are gone, the partnership is weaker, potentially damaging trust and perception of ability where leadership is concerned.

Dependability and Confirmability

Researchers establish dependability when the future researcher can repeat the study with similar results and confirmability when findings emerge from data without bias. Member checking and saturation support dependability and confirmability (Marshall & Rossman 2016). Furthermore, rigorous adherence to the data, identification, collection, analysis, and presentation contributes to the dependability and confirmability of the study (Yin, 2013). Interviews were completed until saturation occurred. Participants had the opportunity to review the transcript after the interview.

Ethical Procedures

Approval was obtained from Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (08-30-22-1009787). No data gathering took place until an approved IRB application approval was in place. Identifying information about the individual participants was not provided in my study to protect the participants. All direct quotes were given a participant number for the protection of the participant. I am the only one with identifying information.

Information that identifies participants and all audio files, transcripts, notes, etc., are currently kept in a separate electronic file utilizing password protection for folder access. All folders and files are stored on an external hard drive stored in a fire-safe and secure location at my residence. Only I have access to the data. I will keep the data in a secure location for a minimum of five years. Data will be destroyed per Walden process and policy, which included deleting electronic information in a way that cannot be restored.

Summary

This study aims to understand principals' lived experiences in working with school counselors. Specifically, how principals can assist with removing barriers in order to have an effective collaborative relationship. In this section, I have described the purpose of this research study, the population, sampling, and methods and processes. Data collection and analysis were also included, along with strategies to ensure issues of trustworthiness are outlined and addressed. Chapters 4 and 5 includes data results, applications, and implications for social change.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of principals working with school counselors, specifically as it related to how principals assist in removing barriers to have a collaborative partnership. Using the hermeneutic phenomenological method, I focused on identifying common themes associated with each principal's experience. In this chapter, I also provide information related to the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and the results of this study. I offer my coding process along with the thematic identification. I placed themes in context based on the participants' feedback. I explored the participants' interviews to reveal commonalities between their experiences.

Setting

I obtained participants from the list of Indiana RAMP-certified schools, offered through the ASCA (2021) website. There were 92 RAMP schools listed, and I contacted each principal via email as I went through the list alphabetically, using purposive sampling. I also used snowball sampling for one participant, as they were pursing RAMP status. In total, there were 11 willing participants, but three were not used due to not meeting the specific criteria set. Eight participants were used due to the abundance of rich data that allowed for saturation. The transcripts from the interviews of the participants culminated in 60 pages of typed text. I conducted all interviews via Zoom or by phone, depending on the participant's choice. There were no personal or organizational conditions influencing the participants or their experience during the time of the

interviews. The lack of personal or organizational conditions decreased the chances of influence and effect on the interpretation of the study results.

Demographics

A total of eight participants participated in the study. Participants varied in experience and the levels at which they were currently employed as a principal. Table 5 outlines the demographics collected during each interview.

Table 5

Demographics of Participants

Participant	Gender	Experience as administrator	Administrator in school	Level
P01	Female	22 years	11 years	Middle school
P02	Male	8 years	4 years	Elementary
P03	Male	15 years	15 years	High school
P04	Male	17 years	7 years	High school
P05	Female	9 years	3 years	Elementary
P06	Male	14 years	9 years	High school
P07	Male	9 years	7 years	K–8
P08	Female	7 years	7 years	Elementary

Note. P = Participant.

The demographic information presented provide future implications for additional research, which I discuss later in Chapter 5.

Data Collection

I interviewed a total of eight participants regarding their experience of working with school counselors, specifically as it related to assisting in removing barriers to have a collaborative partnership. The data collection instrument that I used was an interview, consisting of several semistructured, open-ended questions. For the interviews, the

participants selected private settings of their choice. I met with all eight participants, one at a time, and the duration of the interviews varied.

I documented the meetings using the record button on Zoom. After recording each interview, I transcribed the interview, checking for accuracy. I left out any identifying information such as participant names, counselor names, or school name. I used member checking to clarify and ensure that I was capturing the essence of each participant and ensuring content validity. I made every effort to follow the data collection process and did not identify any variations in my intended process. Some of the techniques I used to gain pertinent information included asking open-ended questions, summarizing, paraphrasing, note taking, and reflecting content during the interview. In-depth follow-up interviews were not required because the participant gave very thoughtful, reflective, and detailed responses to the interview questions. However, brief follow-up interviews were needed with two participants to expand on statements that they had originally made. Furthermore, some basic background information was needed from participants, so email communication was required post interview.

Data Analysis

By using hermeneutic phenomenology to conduct in-depth interviews, recordings, verbatim transcribing, reflective journaling, and a detailed qualitative analysis, I categorized the most common responses from the interviews and hand coded the data while keeping the overarching research question concerning principals' lived experiences of working with school counselors to create collaborative relationships at the forefront of

my thinking. I utilized reflexive journaling to note emerging patterns within and between interviews to build on emerging themes (see Patterson & Williams, 2002).

The steps I took in the data analysis process included reading the eight transcribed interviews to ensure that they coincided with the recorded interviews. I then generated codes, based on words, phases, sentences, and paragraphs captured in the participants' interviews using Microsoft Excel. Frequently, I used the research questions and codes/themes that appeared to direct me to the final codes for each interview. I then synthesized codes from the participant interviews into categories and subcategories and checked the condensed codes against my research questions. The procedure generated codes on how principals had experienced counselors as leaders, how they had experienced barriers, and how principals had assisted with the removal of barriers to have a collaborative relationship. Once meaning units were assigned, I listened to the audio recordings again and explored additional meaning units from participant responses, moving into Ricoeur's understanding by enacting the hermeneutic circle (Paterson & Higgs, 2005; Ricoeur, 1981). From the meaning units, I assigned codes for a general narrative, describing meaning units such as *exemplary relationship*, where participants shared "trust," "respect," and "communication." The *leadership* code reflected how counselors were demonstrating leadership in the building. Words and phrases for this code included "creating programs and activities," "mediating," "partnering," "presence," and "involvement." The code *barriers* included participant responses such as "time," "burnout," "role confusion," and "isolation." The code *fixing barriers* included responses such as "collaboration," "communication," "realistic expectations," being "student-

focused," "time," "relationship building," training," and "tailored to the specific school."

I used highlighting in the Excel spreadsheet to see what categories were coded most often

and analyzed participant responses to explore frequency as a pattern coding method (see

Saldana, 2016). I then shifted from participant experiences to the population in the

general structure. I incorporated my preunderstanding of the phenomenon without

bracketing and utilized the reflexive journal to note my findings as I reviewed transcripts

and patterns (Dowling & Cooney, 2012; Kafle, 2013; Ricoeur, 1975, 1981). Lastly, I

reflected on the general structure through a hermeneutic lens.

Discrepant Cases

Investigating discrepant information allows the researcher to consider whether

there is sufficient evidence of information not anticipated in the initial questioning. The

researcher can decide to pursue it further or disqualify it as unresponsive in answering the

research questions posed in the study (see Saldana, 2016). For my initial 11 participants, I

identified three cases that warranted not being included with the data. One of the

interviews was not included due to the amount of time that the principal had been in the

position. Initial inquiries revealed that the principal had been with the school for more

than a year; however, during the interview, it was discovered that the principal held other

positions within the school but was not the principal of the RAMP school for more than a

year. The second interview was conducted via phone, and the participant was driving to

work. I did not feel that there was enough usable data to include in the research. The third

interview was discarded as it was apparent that although the school had met criteria at

one point for RAMP certification, it no longer met the RAMP criteria.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Throughout the data collection and data analysis, I was attuned to enhancing trustworthiness. I verified trustworthiness by examining the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the outcomes. Qualitative researchers also use terms such as *quality* or *rigor* to describe trustworthiness. Reflecting interview data with the participant enhanced the accuracy of the data (Birt et al., 2016).

Consistent with Houghton et al.'s (2015) suggestions, to ensure that the reader could create a realistic understanding of the participants' experience, I provided a rich and thick description of the information they shared. Using the transcriptions, I documented the participants' replies to reflect the rich and detailed information they offered. The credibility rested on verifying themes, patterns, and quotes from each participant's description of their experience with working with counselors (Houghton et al., 2015). I also incorporated self-reflection to describe my feelings related to my experiences as a counselor and my experiences interviewing each principal and how it influenced my interpretations of the findings. Using a process referred to as *reflexivity*, while I was coding, I would take walks and think about the choices I made (see Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). I would contemplate whether my personal biases interfered with my decision and then return to being the analysis again, with fresh eyes and thoughts.

Credibility speaks to ensuring that the transcripts accurately reflected what research participants related to me. The process included examining the appropriateness of the content in the interview questions and how they related to the overarching research

question (Simon, 2011). Qualitative researchers use the term *dependability* as a

replacement for *reliability*, which is used primarily in quantitative studies (Houghton et

al., 2013; Simon, 2011). I established dependability by checking transcripts for mistakes,

confirmed codes, and used definitions consistently (Houghton et al., 2013.) Dependability

strategies in the data analysis process underscored the accuracy of my findings

(Houghton et al., 2015; Kornbluh, 2015).

Simon (2011) suggested that qualitative researchers have no expectation of exact

replication. Qualitative researchers use persistent observation to establish a match

between the responses from the researcher and the data identified in the study (Cope,

2014; Simon, 2011). For example, I checked the participants' responses to each interview

question to confirm that they were identical to the transcribed interviews before

identifying codes within the study. The interviews and detailed transcripts included the

required information to elucidate the experiences of principals working with school

counselors. Insights gleaned from the lived experiences of these participants may be

similar to insights in other educational settings. One should consider the setting, the

participants, and their experiences before generalizing any findings. The themes and

general narrative and general description about this phenomenon may offer insights for

educators, counselors, and principals (Peoples, 2021).

In conclusion, I conducted an ongoing process of coding and categorizing during

the data analysis process. I started by identifying initial codes, which became more

detailed and elaborate categories. Following this, I grounded the categories into a formal

data analysis process regarding the principals' experience in working with counselors

(Simon, 2011). It was evident that I achieved saturation when no new codes or categories emerged (Hennink et al., 2017; Simon, 2011).

Results

The hermeneutic phenomenological design supported gaining a deeper understanding of principals' lived experiences. Through the data collection and analysis phases of this hermeneutic design, I presented how immersion and understanding led to the synthesis of codes and development of thematic meaning units. A general narrative, general structure, and phenomenological reflection are also provided in this section. As a review, the demographic information is in Table 6.

Table 6

Demographics of Participants

Participant	Gender	Experience as administrator	Administrator in school	Level
P01	Female	22 years	11 years	Middle school
P02	Male	8 years	4 years	Elementary
P03	Male	15 years	15 years	High school
P04	Male	17 years	7 years	High school
P05	Female	9 years	3 years	Elementary
P06	Male	14 years	9 years	High school
P07	Male	9 years	7 years	K–8
P08	Female	7 years	7 years	Elementary

Note. P = Participant.

Thematic Meaning Units

The research question (What are the lived experiences of principals who remove barriers to have a more effective principal/counselor partnership?) guided the data collection and analysis process, which yielded five emerging themes.

There were five themes that emerged from the interviews:

1. Communication and collaboration efforts improve when a trusting relationship is built.

2. Trusting relationships promote counselor empowerment and leadership.

3. Building a program that is tailored to the school assists with setting realistic expectations and teamwork.

4. Frequent communication ensures professional needs are met.

5. Shared understanding of roles enables a trusting relationship.

Table 7 highlights each theme and which participants indicated that an emphasis on the theme assisted in removing or reducing barriers in their specific school.

Table 7

Themes

Theme	P01	P02	P03	P04	P05	P06	P07	P08
Communication and collaboration efforts improve when a trusting relationship is built	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Trusting relationships promote counselor empowerment and leadership	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tailoring the counselor role assists with setting realistic expectations and teamwork	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Frequent communication ensures professional needs are met		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shared understanding of roles enables a trusting relationship	X	X	X	X			X	X

Theme 1: Communication and Collaboration Efforts Improve When a Trusting Relationship Is Built

According to all participants, collaboration was one of biggest ways they helped remove barriers. Collaboration efforts were noted 29 times and present in all eight interviews. Participant P05 shared, "Currently the [principal–counselor] relationship and

even in all my other buildings [with past experiences], we work very closely together. We do consider [counselors] to be a part of the leadership team." Participant P03 shared,

> That's our latest thing, is really defining things like what does the data show, and what systems do we have for sharing of information between teachers and counselors so that everybody is working as a team, wrapping around the kids and their needs, as opposed to in a disconnected way.

Participant P06 stated,

> I treat our counselors here as almost pseudo-administrators. We talk a lot. We meet a lot about kids, about programming, about teachers, about how to help teachers, how to help students. That give and take, that constant conversation between the counselors and administrators is important to not only help them in the work they do with our students, but also in the work that I do with our teachers.

Participant P07 stated,

> My experience of an exemplary principal–counselor relationship is built on trust and understanding. Trusting each other to follow through, trusting each other to put kids first, that sets the foundation so that the work we do can be really impactful for kids and families.

Theme 2: Trusting Relationships Promote Counselor Empowerment and Leadership

All participants agreed that building a trusting relationship has a direct correlation with counselor empowerment and leadership from their experience as an administrator. Participant P03 shared,

In my experience, I find it important to come to trust a counselor's judgment, maybe more than anything else. When I have somebody whose judgment I trust, then I can really give them a lot of latitude to just be creative, and to go solve problems.

An example that participant P03 specifically provided was how the participant, along with the assistant principal, had assisted the counseling department of 12 to form a cohesive unit. "The counseling department is formed of counselors with different specialties, all benefiting the school in different ways." The counselors working together allowed the participant to trust and give the department more latitude.

Participant P06 shared evidence of how a trusting relationship is seen by teachers and other staff and allows counselors to be seen as leaders in the building.

The relationship that I have with our counselors, our teachers see it, and they realize that, "If I can't get to the principal, maybe I can get to my counselor who's going to know the answer, because they work so closely together."

Participant P07 shared an example of how the trusting relationship promotes empowerment.

A counselor can come to me and say, "Hey, I've got this situation. Let me talk it through with you. What do you think we should do?" We talk it through together, and the counselor then feels empowered to do the plan that we put into place because they've talked about it with me.

Participant P08 shared,

I have an assistant principal, and my counselor really is my third person in line. She's almost like a second assistant principal to me because she often is the one because of her expertise and just her disposition. She is able to de-escalate quickly, and she is able to have that calm ability to just to redirect the kid and distract the kid if there is an unfortunate situations of undesired behaviors that have caused some big emotion.

Theme 3: Tailoring the Counselor Role Assists With Setting Realistic Expectations and Teamwork

Setting realistic expectations of a counselor was noted as a barrier with all participants, but one RAMP administrators are continually working through to have a collaborative and successful partnership with counselors. The theme was present in every interview and tied closely to role understanding. Participant P03 shared, "After a few years of experience, I did feel like I was able to better understand what their expectations should be, and how to help really support them, and how to advocate for them when that needed to happen." Participant P01 stated,

I feel like what you offer your kids is not just the counselor's responsibility, it's everybody's responsibility. So, I'm always on the hunt for a program that will help build character, will address the needs of our kids, will build self-esteem.

Participant P05 discussed how they helped reduce the time barrier with realistic expectations.

One of our other things is we had to become a little bit more realistic of what we were asking our counselor to do. It's impossible for her to do classroom guidance twice a month if you have twenty-eight teachers and she has to do the guidance twice a month [in each classroom], but then she have kids that need her on a weekly basis, and then some kids were biweekly. It's being more realistic in the time constraints that we do have.

Participant P06 shared an experience from a smaller school.

We're a small school. We only have 435 students or so, so I think we are able to be more nimble and work differently than some of your larger school districts that have a huge amount of staff. Likewise, because we have such a small staff, we have to share responsibilities.

When asked for a specific example, P06 shared,

We attempt to meet weekly and we assign important tasks to members of the counseling department or admin team based upon skill set and what they see as challenges looming ahead for the next week. With strong relationships and trust, it is not uncommon for counselors to pick up some administrative tasks, while an administrator may work directly with a student/parent regarding career or

postsecondary planning. In that way, we try to support our students/families, while also continuing the high-level programming and services we offer.

Although each school in the study met criteria for RAMP certification, most participants noted that it is important to consider staffing available, funding, and the location of the school. P01 stated,

> Once a week, we have a PLC [professional learning community] where our counseling group gets to focus on their processing groups that they need to design or revise or topics they need to cover. So, I think our school does it the way it should be done ... I don't know if there's a perfect model. I think it should be based on what the school needs.

Participant P02 spoke about tailoring a leadership spot out for the counselor in a unique position, "It was more like just creating a process that didn't exist before that."

Theme 4: Frequent Communication Ensures Professional Needs Are Met

According to most participants, successful principal/counselor partnerships have frequent and meaningful communication. Participant P02 reflected on his experience and how he was able to help break the communication barrier.

> At the beginning, it was probably more my fault than hers in a way, just because I was uncomfortable in the role [as principal]. It was a lot more like, I'm going to do this. You're going to do that. We'll talk in between, but there wasn't really a ton of interaction.

Participant P02 went on to share, "Now, we have a lot of debriefing time together."

Participant P04 stated, "I do check-ins pretty regularly just to ask, 'How are things going?

What do you need from me type thing, how can I support you?'" Participant P04 stated,

> We will oftentimes just pop into each other's office. As a matter of fact, on the
> way back to my office [to meet you], we were walking back together from the
> meeting that we were just in. And that's just how we move. I'm really appreciative
> and thankful that we have that connection. And I have a pretty good rapport with
> all the counselors in the same way. He's officially a part of it [leadership team].

Participant P05 discussed their experience after communicating with a school counselor
about their needs,

> We saw that most of her kids receiving her services were kids from [a certain]
> program. So then it's like, 'Wait a minute. We have to revamp this once again.'
> That's when we said we can't offer all those slots just to that particular group. We
> agreed [that the group] will get weekly sessions, but it was no longer they were
> going to be the priority. Now this year [the counselor] was like, "Oh my
> goodness, you don't know how much my schedule opened up once I removed so
> many of the high ability students from my schedule!"

Participant P06 shared,

> I start every year by saying, "Hey, the four of us, we're tight. We're a network.
> What's said in this room stays in this room. We work collaboratively for what's
> best for our kids and our teachers." This allows counselors to be open about what
> they need and helps us to work together to serve our school.

Theme 5: Shared Understanding of Roles Enables a Trusting Relationship

Most participants agreed that role understanding is one of the biggest barriers but is an important part of building a collaborative relationship with their counselor. Participant P06 stated, "The relationship between administrator and counselor is vital to the success of our school." Participant P07 noted that counselors understanding the principal role also helps establish a trusting relationship.

So, there's a give and take there that exists. I respect counselors and they understand that counseling is one of the things that I have to think about, but I think about a lot more. Having that trust and relationship makes it easier to do good work for kids.

Most participants noted that role understanding includes keeping up with the evolving role that counselors have as well. Participant 01 talked about the historical roles of counselors and how they have evolved during the time she has been a principal.

In my experience, the counselor role has been focused more on social-emotional learning, and people now focus more on how the brain works. Before that time, counselors were looked at as the testing experts, not how to decipher the information, but how to administer and organize the test. Prior to that, they were looked at as the schedulers. I have seen the role of the counselor evolve based on building needs and on other people's role in the school. It's a fluid role, so whatever they were trained for, I can promise them within five years, that role will be obsolete.

Participant P03 shared,

We shifted that a little bit at a time in various ways. I hired an assistant principal about 8 years ago, who had a background in counseling. They really knew the field better than I did and had a vision for it and had a vision of it being student support as opposed to just student logistics. She, along with the head of counseling at the time, re-envisioned what the role would be, which was really student support focused.

General Narrative

All participants, as they experienced the increase of a trusting relationship with their counselor, also saw an increase in counselor empowerment and leadership. There were several examples that participants noted throughout the interviews. Participants experienced counselors displaying confidence to take the lead in organizing programs within the school and outreach for students and families.

Participants agreed that tailoring the counselor role to meet their specific building needs, helped with setting realistic expectations for counselors. P01, P02, P05, P06, and P8 indicated that tailoring programs also involved shared responsibilities and more teamwork with their counselors. Many principals treat their counselors as pseudo-administrators.

Most participants experienced a positive increase in relationship with their counselor as they better understood the role of the counselor. As participants P02, P03, P04, P07, and P08 noted, the increase in relationship, increased trust, and connection, which in turn assisted with collaboration efforts. Most participants noted that as they

experienced frequent communication, there was an increase of professional needs being met for both the participant and counselor.

General Structure

Relationship is the core of success when it comes to a successful principal and counselor partnership. Principals and counselors who are able to see each other in their professional roles and as individuals with struggles, create mutual respect and trust between them. When principals allow themselves to see the counselor for who they are and what they can be, they experience an increase in counselor empowerment and leadership.

As principals gain experience and knowledge, they are able to revise their understanding of the counselors' role and set realistic expectations for the counselors by tailoring their role to meet the specific needs of the school community. Sometimes tailoring the counselor role means shared responsibilities and additional teamwork.

Role understanding increases trusting relationships between principals and counselors. The greater the increase in relationship, the greater increase of trust and connection, which in turn assists with collaboration efforts. Some principals find that increased communication helps with connection and equates to an increase of professional needs being met.

Phenomenological Reflection

The relationship between principal and counselor can only be successful in a revisionary process. As principals and counselors seek to understand one another's *Dasein*, their being-there, they lay aside pre-conceptions and are able to create new

understandings to better the needs of the school community. In understanding one

another's being-in-the world, it is essential to grasp an understanding of the other's entire

world, that is professional and personal. Since individuals are always being-there in the

world and the circumstances of their existence, the personal life and its consequences do

not simply go away when entering the professional life. Hence, when principals can

understand counselors' entire *Dasein*, only then can there be a whole relationship where

revisions of pre-conceptions can occur authentically.

When principals allow themselves to see the counselor's entire *Dasein*, personal

and professional, there is a trust that is built between the two, and counselors feel more

empowered in their roles to make leadership decisions. It is in this *Mitsein* stage, this

being-with, that empowerment is created through trust.

As principals experience being-with counselors, they are able to better understand

the counselor role. In this understanding, a revision of fore-conceptions occurs. This

revision allows for more realistic expectations to be set for counselors. In *Mitsein*, *Dasein*

changes.

The professional relationship between principals and school counselors is a

revisionary process. As *Mitsein* increases, the trusting relationship between principals and

counselors grows. The greater the increase in relationship, the greater increase of trust,

connection, and communication, which in turn assists with collaboration efforts and

professional satisfaction for both principals and counselors.

Summary

There were eight principals interviewed for this qualitative study. These principals have revised their understanding of a principal and counselor partnership through experience and relationship building. Common themes from the research include: a focus on connection that assists principals and counselors with communication and collaboration efforts, trusting relationships promote counselor empowerment and leadership, building a program that is tailored to the school, assists with setting realistic expectations and teamwork, and frequent communication ensures needs are met.

These themes ultimately became the answers to this study's central question and will serve as the foundation for Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, I review the purpose, key findings, and discuss the interpretation of the findings. Limitations and recommendations are discussed. Implications for positive social change are shared, including recommendations for practice.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Effective principal–counselor partnerships have been shown to increase the probability that a school will meet its goals and vision (ASCA, 2019; Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Principals, as leaders in the school, are in the position to assist with removing common barriers, such as role understanding, counselor time use, and communication. The purpose and nature of this study was to explore the lived experiences of principals who utilize counselors as leaders and assist with removing barriers to create a more effective partnership. I chose eight experienced building principals who were part of a CSCP for my study.

This chapter includes a discussion of key findings as they relate to the literature around the collaborative relationship of the principal and school counselor. I focus on all supportive, contradictory, and surprising findings from participant answers to my research question, "What are the lived experiences of principals who utilize counselors in school leadership by helping to remove barriers for a more effective principal/counselor partnership?" I discuss how these findings relate to the theoretical framework I chose for this study and some potential implications of these key findings for school counselors, counselor educators, and principals. Key findings in this study included five overarching main themes:

1. Communication and collaboration efforts improve when a trusting relationship is built.

2. Trusting relationships promote counselor empowerment and leadership.

3. Building a program that is tailored to the school assists with setting realistic expectations and teamwork.

4. Frequent communication ensures professional needs are met.

5. Shared understanding of roles enables a trusting relationship.

I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the limitations of this study, recommendations for current practice and future research possibilities, ideas for social change, and a brief summary.

Interpretation of the Findings

During the analysis of my data, five main themes emerged. Those themes included stories related to what barriers principals are seeing and how they are helping to remove barriers. In this section, I describe in what ways the findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline by comparing them with what has been found in the peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2. I also analyze and interpret the findings in the context of the phenomenology framework. I specifically discuss how my experiences affected how I interpreted the data from my interviews, how my participants were affected by our interaction, and how my study builds upon the literature around effective principal–counselor partnerships.

Study Confirmations and Extensions

When comparing my study with the Chapter 2 literature, there were confirmations that were found and extensions to current research that my research was able to add.

Barriers

The participants noted barriers that reflected previous research, with time and money being the top two mentioned. Time and money are consistently seen in the literature as a barrier (Camelford & Ebrahim, 2017; Finkelstein, 2009; Yildirium, 2008). What was different in my study was the mention of how personalities, or the "human factor," were sometimes barriers. The way that one conducts oneself, and even work ethic, was pointed out as a potential barrier to a collaborative relationship by my participants.

Relationship

The research shows that collaboration is important for successful partnerships (ASCA, 2019; Mullen, 2019), but my research extends current knowledge by putting a focus on a relational factor. Building trust through time and communication allows for more counselor freedom, which provides more empowerment and leadership opportunities for counselors.

Communication

It is well documented in the literature that communication helps build productivity and enables a working relationship (Curry & Bickmore, 2012; Kneal et al., 2017). However, my research highlighted the importance of communication assisting with professional needs being met. When someone feels seen and heard, they experience increased confidence, resiliency, and overall workplace satisfaction (Ceniza-Levine, 2021; LaGree, 2021).

The Researcher's Experience

Dasein and Fore-Sight/Fore-Conception

Heidegger (1968) discussed the importance of being in the world. His conceptualization of being there was that human beings are always in the world and always within their unique experiences. As a previous school counselor and now counselor educator, I have training in being a school counselor. I worked in public education for 18 years as a teacher and then as a school counselor before becoming a counselor educator. Purposefully becoming aware of how I interpreted participants' experiences came to the forefront of my thinking. Using my reflexive journal, I was able to note my original experiences as a school counselor, specifically trying to work collaboratively with my principal so that I would make any biases explicit. Then, as I conducted my interviews, I returned to my journal on multiple occasions and looked at what I knew from my experiences and compared it to what my participants discussed as their experiences and was able to see this process through new lenses.

Hermeneutic Circle

Heidegger (1968) discussed how one must engage with a phenomenon with the hermeneutic circle as a way of gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. In my study, I used the circle to move back and forth between my understanding of what it meant to have an effective principal–counselor partnership and what my participants' experiences were in assisting to remove barriers in order to have an effective partnership with their counselor. During my iterative use of the hermeneutic circle, I noted several things. One issue that continued to occur in my thinking was a feeling of camaraderie

when participants shared the struggles of working in a school and navigating the many barriers that arise throughout the year. While this did not seem to detract from experiences that participants shared, I had to work hard to not let my feeling of camaraderie shape or influence participants' responses as they shared their experiences.

The Participants' Experience

Dasein and Fore-Site/Fore-Conception

Throughout the interview process, I took steps to ensure that my participants' stories were influenced as little as possible by my experience. Each of my participants had a unique experience, and I wanted to be sure to capture the essence of their experience as accurately as I could. In capturing experiences, I discovered that all participants indicated that communication and collaboration efforts improve when a trusting relationship is built between principals and counselors. All participants found that trusting relationships promote counselor empowerment and leadership. Most participants found that tailoring the counselor role assists with setting realistic expectations. Most participants found that a shared understanding of roles helps to enable a trusting relationship.

Hermeneutic Circle

Each of my participants acknowledged that growth and experience allowed them to understand the principal–counselor partnership in a new way. The action that followed their new understanding was what made a lasting difference in the ability to remove barriers and have a successful partnership.

Dialogue With the Literature

The scholarly literature about principal–counselor partnerships has historically focused on the counselor perspective. Counselors have understood through this literature how to approach a partnership with the principal, why it is important to be a leader, and how to have a CSCP. The gap in the literature was the impetus for this study. There are very few studies on principal–counselor relationships from the principal perspective. In this section, I discuss what the literature shows about principal–counselor partnerships, counselor leadership, and how the experiences of my participants add to the literature.

Evolution of the School Counseling Role

The role of the school counselor was listed frequently in the literature as a barrier, as it is misunderstood and always evolving (Camelford & Ebrahim, 2017; Finkelstein, 2009; Yildirium, 2008). My participants' experience reflected this struggle. Many of the participants shared that, even with consistent work in this area, it is difficult to fully understand what a counselor does because their role is always changing. Understanding, educating staff, and working closely with counselors on their specific and tailored role for the school community are a few ways that this barrier was reduced for participants.

Comprehensive School Counseling Program

The development of the ASCA's National Model assisted with understanding counselor roles and allowed schools to provide a more comprehensive service to students (ASCA, 2019; Gyspers, 2010). ASCA's RAMP models specifically what schools should be doing and requires documentation for how schools are managing, delivering, and assessing their program. Participants from the study noted that in addition to being aware

of a counselor's responsibilities, tailoring a program to their specific needs is the key to success. So, although ASCA's appropriate and inappropriate activities for a school counselor are black and white, the most successful schools are able to find the balance in responsibilities to meet the school community's needs. For example, counselors may use their responsibility of fair share "lunch duty" to connect with kids and see them in their environment, while a principal may meet with families to talk about college and career planning.

Barriers That Affect Implementation of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program

There are numerous barriers that affect the implementation of a CSCP, according to both the literature and the participants in my study. Key barriers identified in literature include money; opportunities to communicate and collaborate (time); role ambiguity and conflict, including lack of equal respect for roles and inappropriate job duties; shared vision and decision making; and caseload (Camelford & Ebrahim, 2017; Finkelstein, 2009; Yildirim, 2008). Participants noted each of these were barriers as well and indicated ones that they were working consistently on. Participants also noted that human factors such as personality and work ethic can sometimes be barriers as well.

Mental Health Needs in K–12 U.S. Education

The COVID-19 pandemic brought new mental health concerns across the United States beginning in March 2020. Even before the pandemic, however, the mental health system was taxed (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022; Panchal et al., 2022). For school counselors, trying to fill in the gap of services while families wait

creates extra pressure and higher levels of emotional stress (Christidis et al., 2018; Pompeo-Fargnoli et al., 2020). During my study, some participants spoke to their experiences with this. P04 shared,

> That's what I've observed, is that their caseloads are large, there's a lot of demands. And I've also learned that counselors are the first line of defense. When there's an issue with the student or even with a teacher, sometimes the counselor might be the first one to get that call or that email even before me, even before one of our deans or assistant principal. They have a lot on their plates.

Collaborative Principal and School Counseling Relationships

Cisler and Bruce completed a quantitative study in 2013 that examined perceptions of school counselors and principals. The results of this study indicated a gap in role understanding of both principals and counselors (Cisler & Bruce, 2013). The importance of role understanding was mentioned by most of the participants in this qualitative study, and role understanding is a key component of a successful partnership. The participants were able to learn through time and experience and adjust. Role understanding led them to adjusting counselor expectations and personalizing the role. Although counselor roles are outlined in the literature, they have never been articulated in a way that also shows the need for tailoring the counselor position to maximize the utilization of the counselor role. For example, some participants shared that they treated their counselor as a pseudoadministrator. The literature outlines the role of the counselor and has appropriate and inappropriate duties for counselors listed (ASCA, 2021). An inappropriate activity listed by ASCA is administrative duties. However, the participants'

view of responsibilities was more than just a black-and-white list. The administrators and counselors were fully committed to serving the students and the staff. That meant, occasionally, that the principal and counselor would step out of their "assigned role." The principal would meet with parents about college and career planning, and sometimes the counselor would coordinate programs, such as a student intervention team.

School Counselors

An empirical study completed by ASCA (2019) found that school counselors can be a critical part of school improvement efforts but must have access to opportunities to collaborate with other building leaders (Mullen et al., 2019; Salina et al., 2013). Participants discussed the importance of including the counselor in leadership meetings. Several participants gave examples of how they had seen the counselor be empowered through opportunities to collaborate with building leaders.

Principals

Principals are the leaders in the school and are a major determining factor in a principal–school counselor partnership. The literature review revealed that a principal and school counselors are trained separately and do not have the opportunity to interact as they are training. This may lead to them not fully understanding how to collaborate effectively (Shoffner & Briggs, 2001; Shoffher & Williamson, 2000; Williams & Wehrman, 2010; Zalaquett, 2014). My study also indicated this, as some principals spoke to not really understanding what the role of a counselor was when they were teachers and beginning in administration. They especially did not understand how to utilize a counselor effectively. My study adds to the literature, as some principals discussed

ongoing professional development. Counselors and principals frequently go to different trainings throughout each year, and it is imperative for them to communicate what they have learned and how they can relate the training to each other's individual roles and to the school.

Limitations

This study provided valuable in-depth data describing the lived experiences of principals working with counselors in leadership; however, this study had a few limitations. Given the focus of the phenomenon of the study and the criteria outlined, there were some challenges with participant recruitment. There are 92 RAMP schools in the state of Indiana, and only 10 principals volunteered and eight principal interviews were used. Some of the principals were contacted more than once to reach saturation with the study.

The generalizability of the findings is limited to principals who are leading RAMP schools in the state of Indiana. The study did not focus on assistant principals, who often work closely with school counselors as well. The study also did not include experienced and successful principals or assistant principals who were not part of RAMP schools for one reason or another. However, despite a school's RAMP status, this information could also be generalized with other principals and academic leaders as a model for best practices.

Recommendations

Based on the strengths and limitations of this study, there are future research recommendations, action recommendations for principals, and action recommendations

for school counselors. Below are current action recommendations based on study findings.

Future Research Recommendations

More studies are needed on principal–counselor collaborative relationships from the principal perspective. The collection of rich and thick descriptions offered in future studies, will continue to decrease the literature gap on this population. Other recommended research on this topic could include:

1. How training differences between principals and school counselor effect principal and school counselor collaborative relationships.

2. How leadership styles effect principal and school counselor collaborative relationships.

Action Recommendations for Principals

The following action recommendations are made for principals and school counselors. These recommendations are based on the literature review and participant interviews.

1. Understand what barriers are preventing a successful principal/counselor partnership in your school.

2. Get to know the counselor, who they are as a person, what skills they bring to your school, and what their role as counselor should be, following ASCA's guidelines.

3. Tailor the counselor's role to specifically meet the needs for your school community and based on ASCA's guidelines.

4. Communicate with the counselor and include them in leadership opportunities.

5. Educate teachers, staff, school board, and community about the role of a school counselor.

Action Recommendations for Counselors

1. Understand what barriers are preventing a successful principal/counselor partnership in your school.

2. Get to know the principal, who they are as a person, and what specific skills they bring to your school. Understand their role.

3. Be ready and willing to take on leadership roles within the school as they relate to school counseling.

4. Communicate with building administrators and be a team player as it relates to the role in your school.

5. Educate teachers, staff, school board, and community about your role.

<div align="center">

Social Change Implications

</div>

When principals and counselors are able to achieve an effective, collaborative partnership, everyone in the school benefits, as it creates a trickle-down effect (ASCA, 2021; Greene & Stewart, 2021). This study demonstrated that when principals and counselors have better relationships, they experience an increase in understanding of each other's roles, achieve a higher level of mutual respect, better communication which helps with better flow of day-to-day operations, and experience an increase in the potential to have a higher job satisfaction rate. Teachers and staff benefit by leadership being in sync

with one another, as they are also more likely to receive consistent and accurate information about what is happening in the school. Teachers and staff are more likely able to feel supported and part of the school community when principals and counselors work together effectively. Feeling more supported leads to the possibility of lower job stress and higher job satisfaction (Buonomo et al., 2020; Sparks, 2017; Will, 2022).

When principals, counselors, and teachers have higher job satisfaction, students benefit (Sparks, 2017; Toropova et al., 2020; Will, 2022). Research shows that lower job satisfaction and higher job stress effects the quality of instruction, classroom management, and relationships with students (Sparks, 2017; Will, 2022). When principals have a better understanding of a counselor's role, and counselors and principals have found a way to tailor the counselor's role to fit the needs of the school building, counselors can be more readily available to assist students in a way that ASCA recommends, which includes supporting teachers, students, families, and helping to identify and address issues that contribute to academic failure (ASCA, 2021; Edwards et al., 2014; Finkelstein , 2011). Furthermore, principals and counselors working together allow for a higher possibility that teachers feel supported, which in turn means a higher probability that students will feel supported (Lei et al., 2018; Sparks, 2017; Will, 2022). Students feeling supported leads to increased attendance and academic performance (ASCA, 2022, Finkelstein, 2011; Lei et al., 2018). Students who attend school regularly and have a higher academic performance are more likely to pursue education and training beyond high school (Sparks, 2017; Will, 2022). Access to education and training mean students are more likely to live a healthier lifestyle and live longer. "When an entire

society is educated, productivity increases, average income increases, and unemployment decreases. This leads to economic growth and stability of a society as a whole. It starts with education" (Nair, 2022, p.8).

Conclusion

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of principals who work collaboratively with school counselors. I conducted this study to add to the literature of principal and school counselor partnerships, as well as fill the gap of understanding partnerships through a principal's perspective.

I conducted this study by implementing a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. I recruited eight experienced school principals, who were part of a RAMP school. These principals have removed barriers in order to become a RAMP school and continue to work on removing barriers to have a successful collaborative partnership with counselors. I used semi-structured, qualitative interview process and data collection to invite participants to share their stories of working with counselors.

I transcribed interviews by hand and coded them using Microsoft excel. This led to the final identification of five themes:

1. Communication and collaboration efforts improve when a trusting relationship is built.

2. Trusting relationships promote counselor empowerment and leadership

3. Building a program that is tailored to the school assists with setting realistic expectations and teamwork.

4. Frequent communication ensures professional needs are met.

5. Shared understanding of roles enables a trusting relationship.

The purpose of this chapter was to explain this study's findings based upon the existing scholarly literature on principal and counselor partnerships. In addition, I analyzed and interpreted the findings based on existing literature, phenomenological framework, as well as participant input. I addressed the limitations of this study as well as recommendations for future research. Finally, I summarized the implications for positive social change based on the findings of this research.

References

Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. In J. S. Wholey, H. P.

Harty, & K. E. Newcomer (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (pp.

492–505). Jossey-Bass. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19

Ajjawi, R., & Higgs, J. (2007). Using Hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate how

experienced practitioners learn to communicate clinical reasoning. *The*

Qualitative Report, *12*(4), 612–638. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-

3715/2007.1616

Amatea, E., & Clark, M. (2005). Changing schools, changing counselors: A qualitative

study of school administrators' conceptions of the school counselor role.

Professional School Counseling, *9*(1), 16–27.

https://doi.org/10.5330/prsc.9.1.w6357vn62n5328vp

American School Counselor Association. (2007). *History of school counseling*: *Norman*

Gysbers: History of school counseling.

https://videos.schoolcounselor.org/norman-gysbers-history-of-school-counseling

American School Counselor Association. (2019a). *ASCA National Model: A framework*

for school counseling programs (4th ed.).

American School Counselor Association. (2019b). *Empirical research studies supporting*

the value of school counseling.

https://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/7d00dcff-40a6-4316-ab6c-

8f3ffd7941c2/Effectiveness.pdf

American School Counselor Association. (2020). *Current RAMP schools*.

https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Recognition/RAMP/Current-RAMP-Schools

American School Counselors Association. (2021). *Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP)*. https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Recognition/RAMP

Armstrong, S., MacDonald, J., & Stillo, S. (2010). *School counselors and principals: Different perceptions of relationship, leadership, and training.* https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ885153.pdf

Baggerly, J., & Osborn, D. (2006). School counselors' career satisfaction and commitment: Correlates and predictors. *Professional School Counseling*, *9*(3),197–205. https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x0500900304

Bardhoshi, G., Schweinle, A., & Duncan, K. (2014). Understanding the impact of school factors on school counselor burnout: A mixed-methods study. *The Professional Counselor*, *4*(5), 426–443. https://doi.org/10.15241/gb.4.5.426

Barna, J., Wilkerson, K., & Morgan, S. (2014). *An overview of comprehensive school counseling program assessment instruments to inform future research*. VISTAS Online. https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/vistas/article_65915a22f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf?sfvrsn=f4c422c_4

Bingham, A. J., & Witkowsky, P. (2022). Deductive and inductive approaches to qualitative data analysis. In C. Vanover, P. Mihas, & J. Saldaña (Eds.), *Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data: After the interview* (pp. 133–146). SAGE Publications.

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health*

Research, *26*(13), 1802–1811. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870

Bowers, H., Lemberger-Truelove, M. E., & Brigman, G. (2017). A social-emotional leadership framework for school counselors. *Professional School Counseling, 21*(1b), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x18773004

Buonomo, I., Fiorilli, C., & Benevene, P. (2020). Unravelling teacher job satisfaction: The contribution of collective efficacy and emotions towards professional role. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(3), Article 736. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17030736

Bynum, W., & Varpio, L. (2017). When I say … hermeneutic phenomenology. *Medical Education*, *52*(3), 252–253. https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.13414

Camelford, K. G., & Ebrahim, C. H. (2017). Factors that affect implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program in secondary schools. *Ideas and Research You Can Use: VISTAS Online*, Article 9. https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/vistas/comprehensive-school-counseling.pdf?sfvrsn=4

Camelford, K. G., Ebrahim, C. H., & Herlihy, B. (2017). The relationship between implementation of the American School Counselor Association National Model and secondary school counselor burnout. *Georgia School Counselor Association Journal*, *25*, 20–33. https://doi.org/https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1178330

Ceniza-Levine, C. (2021, June 23). New survey shows the business benefit of feeling heard—5 ways to build inclusive teams. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinecenizalevine/2021/06/23/new-survey-

shows-the-business-benefit-of-feeling-heard--5-ways-to-build-inclusive-teams/?sh=63355ebf5f0c

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, March 31). *New CDC data illuminate youth mental health threats during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/p0331-youth-mental-health-covid-19.html

Chan, M.-ki, Sharkey, J. D., Lawrie, S. I., Arch, D. A., & Nylund-Gibson, K. (2021). Elementary School teacher well-being and supportive measures amid COVID-19: An exploratory study. *School Psychology*, *36*(6), 533–545. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000441

Chen-Hayes, S. F., Ockerman, M. S., & Mason, E. C. M. (2014). *101 Solutions for school counselors and leaders in challenging times*. Corwin.

Christidis, P., Stamm, K., & Lin, L. (2018, April). *An unmet need for mental health services*. American Psychological Association. https://www.apa.org/monitor/2018/04/datapoint.html

Cilesiz, S. (2010). A phenomenological approach to experiences with technology: Current State, promise, and future directions for Research. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *59*(4), 487–510. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-010-9173-2

Cinotti, D. (2014). Competing professional identity models in school counseling: A historical perspective and commentary. *The Professional Counselor*, *4*(5), 417–425. https://doi.org/10.15241/dc.4.5.417

Cisler, A., & Bruce, M. A. (2013). Principals: What Are Their Roles and

   Responsibilities? *Journal of School Counseling*, *11*(10), 1–27.

   https://doi.org/https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1012313.pdf

Cope D. G. (2014). Methods and meanings: credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative

   research. *Oncology nursing forum*, *41*(1), 89–91.

   https://doi.org/10.1188/14.ONF.89-91

Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods

   Approaches*. 4ᵗʰ Edition, SAGE Publications, Inc.

Crowther, S., & Thomson, G. (2020). From description to interpretive leap: Using

   philosophical notions to unpack and surface meaning in hermeneutic

   phenomenology research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*, 1–11.

   https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920969264

Culbreth, J. R., Scarborough, J. L., Banks-Johnson, A., & Solomon, S. (2005). Role stress

   among practicing school counselors. *Counselor Education and Supervision*,

   45(1), 58–71. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2005.tb00130.x

Curry, J. R., & Bickmore, D. (2012). School counselor induction and the importance of

   Mattering. *Professional School Counseling*, *15*(3).

   https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x1201500301

Dahir, C. A., Cinotti, D. A., & Feirsen, R. (2019). Beyond compliance: Assessing

   administrators' commitment to comprehensive school counseling. *NASSP

   Bulletin*, *103*(2), 118–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636519830769

Dahir, C. A., Burnham, J. J., Stone, C. B., & Cobb, N. (2010). Principals as partners:

Counselors as collaborators. *NASSP Bulletin*, *94*(4), 286–305.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636511399899

Dawidowicz, P., Burkholder, G. J., Crawford, L. M., & Cox, K. A. (2016).

Phenomenology. *The scholar-practitioner's guide to research design* (pp. 203–

214). essay, Laureate Publishing.

Dodson, T. (2009). Advocacy and impact: A comparison of administrators' perceptions

of the high school counselor role. *Professional School Counseling*, *12*(6).

https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x0901200606

Dollarhide, C., Smith, A., & Lemberger, M. (2007). Critical incidents in the development

of supportive principals: Facilitating school counselor-principal relationships.

Professional School Counseling, *10*(4), 360–369.

https://doi.org/10.5330/prsc.10.4.k111116677917913

Dowling, M., & Cooney, A. (2012). Research approaches related to phenomenology:

Negotiating a complex landscape. *Nurse Researcher*, *20*(2), 21–27.

https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2012.11.20.2.21.c9440

Drew, C. (2021, November 5). 5 key principles of 'thick description' in research (2022). 5

Key Principles of 'Thick Description' in Research. Retrieved from

https://helpfulprofessor.com/thick-description/

Duquesne University (Ed.). (2022). Qualitative research methods: Phenomenology.

Qualitative Research Methods. Retrieved from

https://guides.library.duq.edu/c.php?g=836228&p=5972144

Duslak, M., & Geier, B. (2016). Communication factors as predictors of relationship

quality: A national study of principals and school counselors. *Professional School Counseling*, *20*(1), 115–126. https://doi.org/10.5330/1096-2409-20.1.115

Eberle, T. S. (2015). Exploring another's subjective life-world: A phenomenological approach. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *44*(5), 563–579. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241615587383

Education Trust. (2019, February). School Counselors Matter. *The Education Trust*. 1-3. Retrieved from https://edtrust.org/resource/school-counselors-matter/

Edwards, L., Grace, R., & King, G. (2014). Importance of an effective principal-counselor relationship. *Alabama Journal of Educational Leadership*, *1*, 34–42. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1097546.pdf

Finkelstein, D. (2009). *A Closer look at the principal-counselor relationship: A survey of principals and counselors*. 1–15. The College Board. https://doi.org/https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/nosca/a-closer-look_2.pdf

Finlay, L. (2009). Debating phenomenological research methods. *Phenomenology & Practice*, *3*(1), 6–25. https://doi.org/10.29173/pandpr19818

Gadamer, H.-G. (2006). Classical and Philosophical Hermeneutics. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *23*(1), 29–56. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276406063228

Grant, M. A., Rohr, L. N., & Grant, J. T. (2012). How Informants Answer Questions? Implications for Reflexivity. *Field Methods*, *24*(2), 230–246. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X11432081

Greene, N., & Stewart, P. (2021). The school counselor and the principal: Keys to

successful collaboration, 1-9. New Hampshire Association for Supervision and

Curriculum Development.

https://nhascd.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/02/p15828coll10_421.pdf

Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International*

Journal of Qualitative Methods, *3*(1), 42–55.

https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300104

Gysbers, N. C., & Henderson, P. (2012). *Developing and managing your school guidance*

program (5th ed.). American Counseling Association.

Gyspers, N. (2017). Embrace the past, welcome the future: A brief history of school

counseling. American School Counselor Association, 1-2.

https://www.schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/52aaab9f-39ae-4fd0-8387-

1d9c10b9ccb8/History-of-School-Counseling.pdf

Gysbers, N. C. (2010). *Remembering the past, shaping the future: A history of school*

counseling. American School Counselor Association.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2010). Leadership for learning: Does collaborative

leadership make a difference in school improvement? *Principles of School*

Leadership, 38–53. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526436030.n4

Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., de Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: when

to use them and how to judge them, *Human Reproduction*, 31(3), 498–501.

https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dev334

Hanson, A. R., Riggs, N., Mingola, N., Toll, R., Rigles, B., Pulskamp, A., Duey, S., &

Branson, K. (n.d.). *Understanding and cultivating a positive school climate*.

Retrieved from https://cde.state.co.us/schoolclimate/schoolclimatewhitepaper

Hanson, C., & Stone, C. (2002). Recruiting leaders to transform school counseling. *Theory Into Practice*, *41*(3), 163–168. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4103_4

Hatch, T., Hartline, J., & Holcomb-McCoy, C. (2014). *The use of data in school counseling: Hatching results for students, programs, and the profession*. Corwin.

Havlik, S., Ciarletta, M., & Crawford, E. (2019). "If we don't define our roles, someone else will": Professional advocacy in school counseling. *Professional School Counseling*, *22*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x19848331

Heidegger, M. (2010). *Being and time: A revised edition of the Stambaugh translation*. (J. Stambaugh, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2017). Code Saturation Versus Meaning Saturation: How Many Interviews Are Enough? *Qualitative Health Research*, *27*(4), 591–608. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316665344

Hines, P. L., & Lemons, R. W. (2011). Poised to Lead: How School Counselors Can Drive College and Career Readiness. K-12 Practice. *Education Trust*, 1–12. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED527908.pdf

Horrigan-Kelly, M., Millar, M., & Dowling, M. (2016). Understanding the key tenets of Heidegger's philosophy for Interpretive Phenomenological Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *15*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406916680634

Houghton, C., Murphy, K., Shaw, D., Casey, D. (2015). Qualitative case study data

analysis: an example from practice. *Nurse Researcher. 22*(5), 8-12.

https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.22.5.8.e1307

House, R. M., & Hayes, R. (2002). School Counselors: Becoming key players in school

reform. *Professional School Counseling*, *5*(4), 249–256.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234646712_School_Counselors_Becom

ing_Key_Players_in_School_Reform

Husson, A. (2021, November 30). *The impact of COVID-19 on adolescents' mental

health [Interview]*. UNC: College of Arts & Sciences. Retrieved from

https://college.unc.edu/2021/11/covid-mental-health/

Indiana Department of Education. (2020, April 26). Indiana academic standards. IDOE.

Retrieved May 21, 2022, from https://www.in.gov/doe/students/indiana-

academic-standards/

Issah, M. (2018). Change leadership: The role of emotional intelligence. *SAGE Open*,

8(3), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018800910

Jackson, C., Vaughan, D. R., & Brown, L. (2018). Discovering lived experiences through

descriptive phenomenology. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality

Management*, *30*(11), 3309–3325. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-10-2017-0707

Janson, C., Militello, M., & Kosine, N. (2008). Four views of the Professional School

Counselor-principal relationship: A Q-methodology study. *Professional School

Counseling*, *11*(6), 353-361. https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x0801100601

Jones, C. (2019, November 19). Schools keep hiring counselors, but students' stress

levels are only growing. EdSource, 1-9. Retrieved from

https://edsource.org/2019/schools-keep-hiring-counselors-but-students-stress-levels-are-only-growing/620281

Kafle, N. P. (2013). Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *5*(1), 181–200

https://doi.org/10.3126/bodhi.v5i1.8053

Kalkan, Ü., Altınay Aksal, F., Altınay Gazi, Z., Atasoy, R., & Dağlı, G. (2020). The relationship between school administrators' leadership styles, school culture, and organizational image. *SAGE Open*, *10*(1), 1-15.

https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020902081

Kaplan, L. S., & Owings, W. A. (2015). *Introduction to the principalship: Theory to practice* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Kneale, M., Young, A. A., & Dollarhide, C. T. (2017). Cultivating school counseling leaders through district leadership cohorts. *Professional School Counseling*, *21*(1b), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x18773275

LaGree, D., Houston, B., Duffy, M., & Shin, H. (2021). The effect of respect: Respectful communication at work drives resiliency, engagement, and job satisfaction among early career employees. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 232948842110165. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211016529

Lambie, G., & Williamson, L. (2004). The Challenge to Change from Guidance Counseling to Professional School Counseling: A Historical Proposition. *Professional School Counseling*, 124–131. https://www.jstor.org/stable/42732614

Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison

of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of*

  Qualitative Methods, *2*(3), 21–35. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690300200303

Lei, H., Cui, Y., & Zhou, W. (2018). Relationships between student engagement and

  academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Social Behavior and Personality: An*

  International Journal, *46*(3), 517–528. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.7054

Lewis, T., Jones, K. D., Militello, M., & Meisenhelder, R. (2020). A clear and consistent

  focus on students: Principals' perceptions of the role of school counselors.

  Journal of School Leadership, *32*(1), 3–26.

  https://doi.org/10.1177/1052684620972067

Manen, M. (2017). Phenomenology in its original sense. *Qualitative Health Research*,

  27(6), 810–825. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317699381

Matua, G. A., & Van Der Wal, D. M. (2015). Differentiating between descriptive and

  interpretive phenomenological research approaches. *Nurse Researcher*, *22*(6), 22–

  27. https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.22.6.22.e1344

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. (2016). Designing qualitative research. 6th Edition, SAGE.

Maruna, S., & Butler, M. (2005). Phenomenology. *Encyclopedia of Social Measurement,*

  (Vol 3), 49-52. https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-12-369398-5/00563-6

McCarty, D., Wallin, P., & Boggan, M. (2014). Shared leadership model for 21st century

  schools: Principal and counselor collaborative leadership. *National Forum of*

  Educational Administration and Supervision Journal, *32*(4), 1–9.

  https://www.nationalforum.com/Electronic%20Journal%20Volumes/McCarty,%2

  0Darla%20Shared%20Leadership%20NFEASJ%20V32%20N4%202014.pdf

McConnell-Henry, T., Chapman, Y., & Francis, K. (2009). Husserl and Heidegger: Exploring the disparity. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, *15*(1), 7–15. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-172x.2008.01724.x

McConnell, K., Geesa, R., Mayes, R., & Elam, N. (2020). Improving school counselor efficacy through principal-counselor collaboration: A comprehensive literature review. *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*, *32*(2), 133–155. https://www.mwera.org/MWER/volumes/v32/issue2/V32n2-McConnell-FEATURE-ARTICLE.pdf

McGrath, C., Palmgren, P. J., & Liljedahl, M. (2018). Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical Teacher*, *41*(9), 1002–1006. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159x.2018.1497149

Meany-Walen, K. K., Davis-Gage, D., & Lindo, N. A. (2016). The impact of wellness-focused supervision on mental health counseling practicum students. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *94*(4), 464–472. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12105

Myrick, R. D. (2003). *Developmental guidance and counselling: A practical approach* (4th ed.). Educational Media Corporation.

Mullen, P. R., Newhart, S., Haskins, N., Shapiro, K., & Cassel, K. (2019). An examination of school counselors' leadership self-efficacy, programmatic services, and social issue advocacy. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy*, *6*(2), 160–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716x.2019.1590253

NAMI. (2020). Common Warning Signs of Mental Illness. Common Warning Signs of Mental Illness Infographic. https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-

Media/Infographics/NAMI-Warning-Signs-FINAL.pdf?sf233868201=1

NAMI. (2020). Suicide: National Alliance on Mental Illness. Suicide.

https://nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/Infographics/NAMI-Suicide-

FINAL.pdf

Nair, M. (2022, November 22). 10 benefits of education that will surprise you. University

of the People. https://www.uopeople.edu/blog/benefits-of-education-are-societal-

and-personal/

Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us

learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, *8*(2),

90–97. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2

NOSCA. (2011). National Office for School Counselor Advocacy

https://securemedia.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/nosca/NOSCA%20Over

view_1104.pdf

O'Connor, P. J. (2002). Administrative support of counseling programs: Defining it and

measuring it. *Journal of College Admission*, *177*, 13-19.

https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/administrative-support-counseling-

programs/docview/219105656/se-2

Oehrtman, J. P., & Dollarhide, C. T. (2021). Advocacy without adversity: Developing an

understanding of micropolitical theory to promote a comprehensive school

counseling program. *Professional School Counseling*, *25*(1), 1–9.

https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x211006623

Panchal, N., Kamal, R., & Cox, C. (2021, February 10). *The implications of COVID-19*

for mental health and substance use. Kaiser Family Foundation.

https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-

19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/

Peoples, K. (2021). *How to write a phenomenological dissertation a step-by-step guide*.

SAGE.

Peredaryenko, M., & Krauss, S. (2015). Calibrating the human instrument:

Understanding the interviewing experience of novice qualitative researchers. *The

Qualitative Report, 1-19*. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2013.1449

Pompeo-Fargnoli, A., Pulliam, N., Lapa, A., & Dutil, J. (2020). Experiential and

transformative learning for school counselors: Impacts of counseling first-

generation, low-income, college-bound students. *The Journal of Counselor

Preparation and Supervision*, *13*(3), 1–30.

https://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1408&contex

t=jcps

Ponec, D., & Brock, B. (2000). *Relationships among Elementary School Counselors and

Principals: A Unique Bond.*, *3*(3), 208–217. https://hdl.handle.net/10504/71821

Pyne, J. R. (2011). Comprehensive School counseling programs, job satisfaction, and the

ASCA National Model. *Professional School Counseling*, *15*(2), 88–97.

https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x1101500202

Ravitch, S., & Carl, N. M. (2016). Qualitative Research: Bridging the Conceptual,

Theoretical, and Methodological. Sage Publications.

Ricoeur, P. (1981). Hermeneutics and the human sciences. (J. B. Thompson, Ed.).

Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316534984

Robinson, D. M., Mason, E. C., McMahon, H. G., Flowers, L. R., & Harrison, A. (2019). New School Counselors' perceptions of factors influencing their roles as leaders. *Professional School Counseling*, *22*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x19852617

Robinson, S., & Kerr, R. (2015). Reflexive conversations: Constructing hermeneutic designs for qualitative management research. *British Journal of Management*, *26*(4), 777–790. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12118

Rosenberg, J. (2019, March 19). Mental health issues on the rise among adolescents, young adults. *The American Journal of Managed Care*, 1-4. Retrieved from https://www.ajmc.com/view/mental-health-issues-on-the-rise-among-adolescents-young-adults

Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2016). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research*. SAGE.

Salina, C., Girtz, S., Eppinga, J., Martinez, D., Kilian, D. B., Lozano, E., Martinez, A. P., Crowe, D., De La Barrera, M., Mendez, M. M., & Shines, T. (2013). All hands on deck: A comprehensive, results-driven counseling model. *Professional School Counseling*, *17*(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x0001700112

Shaw, J. A., & DeForge, R. T. (2014). Qualitative inquiry and the debate between hermeneutics and critical theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, *24*(11), 1567–1580. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732314549028

Shoffner, M. F., & Briggs, M. K. (2001). An interactive approach for developing

interprofessional collaboration: Preparing school counselors. *Counselor*

Education and Supervision, 40(3), 193–202. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2001.tb01252.x

Shoffner, M. F., & Williamson, R. D. (2000). Facilitating student transitions into Middle

School. *Middle School Journal*, *31*(4), 47–52.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00940771.2000.11494639

Simon, M. K. (2011). *Dissertation & scholarly research: Recipes for success* (2nd ed.).

Dissertation Success, LLC.

Sink, C. A. (2009). School counselors as accountability leaders: Another call for action.

Professional School Counseling, *13*(2), 68–74.

https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x0901300202

Sloan, A., & Bowe, B. (2013). Phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology: The

philosophy, the methodologies, and using hermeneutic phenomenology to

investigate lecturers' experiences of curriculum design. *Quality & Quantity*,

48(3), 1291–1303. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-013-9835-3

Smith, J. A. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis*. SAGE.

Smith, J. A., Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2012). *Interpretative*

phenomenological analysis. SAGE Publications.

Sparks, S. D. (2022, June 9). *How teachers' stress affects students: A research roundup*.

Education Week. https://www.edweek.org/education/how-teachers-stress-affects-students-a-research-roundup/2017/06

Spear, A. (n.d.) *Edmund Husserl: Intentionality and Intentional Content*. Internet

encyclopedia of philosophy. ISSN 2161-0002, https://iep.utm.edu/, January 28, 2023

Stake, R.E. (2000). Qualitative Case Studies. In N.K. Denzin, & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed). 443-466. Sage.

State University. (n.d.). *Guidance and school counseling - A brief history of school guidance and counseling in the United States*. Guidance and School Counseling. Retrieved March 13, 2022, from

https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2023/Guidance-Counseling-School.html

Streubert, H. J. & Carpenter, D. R. (2011). *Qualitative research in nursing: Advancing the humanistic imperative*. Wolters Kluwer.

Stone-Johnson, C. (2015). Intensification and isolation: Alienated teaching and collaborative professional relationships in the accountability context. *Journal of Educational Change*, *17*(1), 29–49. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-015-9255-3

Stone, C. B., & Clark, M. A. (2001). School counselors and principals: Partners in support of academic achievement. *NASSP Bulletin*, *85*(624), 46–53. https://doi.org/10.1177/019263650108562407

Tang, M., & Erford, B. T. (2004). The history of school counseling. In B. T. Erford (Ed.), *Professional school counseling: A handbook of theories, programs, & practices*, 11-23. CAPS Press.

Taylor, K. R. (2002). Do you know what your guidance counselor should know? *Principal Leadership, 2*, 59-62.

Toropova, A., Myrberg, E., & Johansson, S. (2020). Teacher job satisfaction: The importance of school working conditions and teacher characteristics. *Educational Review*, *73*(1), 71–97. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2019.1705247

Torio, C. M., Encinosa, W., Berdahl, T., McCormick, M. C., & Simpson, L. A. (2015). Annual report on health care for children and youth in the United States: National estimates of cost, utilization, and expenditures for children with mental health conditions. *Academic Pediatrics*, *15*(1), 19–35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2014.07.007

U.S. Congress. (1958) United States Code: National Defense Education Program, 20 U.S.C. §§ 401-589 . [Periodical] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/uscode1958-004020017/.

Van der Zalm, J. E., & Bergum, V. (2000). Hermeneutic-phenomenology: Providing living knowledge for nursing practice. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *31*(1), 211–218. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2000.01244.x

Wilkerson, K. (2010). School counselor reform and principals' priorities: A preliminary content analysis of the national association for secondary school principals. (NASSP) Bulletin (1997-2007). Informed by Guiding Documents for the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). *Education, 131*(2), 419-436.

Wilkerson, K., & Bellini, J. (2006). Intrapersonal and organizational factors associated with burnout among school counselors. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *84*(4), 440–450. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2006.tb00428.

Will, M. (2022, April 26). Teacher job satisfaction hits an all-time low. *Education Week*.

https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/teacher-job-satisfaction-hits-an-all-
time-low/2022/04

William & Mary Education. (2022, March 24). *A brief history of school counseling*.
William & Mary Education. https://counseling.education.wm.edu/history-of-
school-counseling

Williams, R. L., & Wehrman, J. D. (2010). Collaboration and confidentiality: Not a
paradox but an understanding between principals and school counselors. *NASSP
Bulletin*, *94*(2), 107–119. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636510374229

Wingfield, R., Reese, R., & West-Olatunji, C. A. (2010). Counselors as leaders in
schools. *Florida Journal of Educational Administration & Policy*, *4*(1), 114–130.
https://doi.org/https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ911435.pdf

Wrathall, M. (2005). *How to read Heidegger*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Yildirim, İ. (2008). Relationships between burnout, sources of social support and
sociodemographic variables. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International
Journal*, *36*(5), 603–616. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2008.36.5.603

Yin, R. K. (2013). Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations. *Validity
and Generalization in Future Case Study Evaluations*, *19*(3), 321–332.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1356389013497081

Young, A., & Bryan, J. (2015). The school counselor leadership survey: Instrument
development and exploratory factor analysis. *Professional School Counseling*,
19(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.5330/2156759x1501900104

Young, A., & Dollarhide, C. T. (2017). Introduction to the special issue: A case for

school counseling leadership. *Professional School Counseling*, *21*(1b), 1-8.

https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x18772988

Young, A., Dollarhide, C. T., & Baughman, A. (2015). The voices of school counselors: Essential characteristics of school counselor leaders. *Professional School Counseling*, *19*(1),1-10. https://doi.org/10.5330/2156759x1501900101

Young, A. A., Millard, T., & Kneale, M. M. (2013). Enhancing school counselor instructional leadership through collaborative teaming. *NASSP Bulletin*, *97*(3), 253–269. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636513483356

Zalaquette, C. (2005). Principals' perceptions of elementary school counselors' role and functions. *Professional School Counseling*, *8*, 451–451.

Zalaquett, C., & Chatters, S. (2012). Middle school principals' perceptions of middle school counselors' roles and functions. *American Secondary Education*, *40*(2), 89–103.

Ziomek-Daigle, J., Goodman-Scott, E., Cavin, J., & Donohue, P. (2016). Integrating a multi-tiered system of supports with comprehensive school counseling programs. *The Professional Counselor*, *6*(3), 220–232. https://doi.org/10.15241/jzd.6.3.220

Appendix: Interview Questions

1. What is your experience of an exemplary principal-counselor relationship?

2. How do you experience the role and function of school counselors, specifically as it relates to leadership?

3. Describe your experience with principal and counselor collaboration in your building.

4. What are some barriers you have experienced with a collaborative relationship with your counselor(s) and how have you assisted in removing those barriers?

5. What barriers still remain?

6. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding principal/counselor partnerships that I did not ask?