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School Counselor Knowledge, Beliefs, and Practices Related to the Implementation of Standards-Based Comprehensive School Counseling in the United States

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Abstract

As school counselors have adapted to changing policy and social structures, their beliefs, knowledge, and practices have evolved. Over the past two decades, a body of survey research has examined school counselors' beliefs, knowledge, and practices, though no systematic review exists. In this review, we synthesize and evaluate survey research on the knowledge, beliefs, and practices relevant to the implementation of a standards-based comprehensive school counseling model in the United States. We identify the most salient findings, evaluate the research, identify the most rigorous studies, discuss their findings, and provide recommendations for future research. Considering the recent changes to how funding is distributed to states and schools within the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, such research is both timely and necessary to help clarify and increase the role school counselors play in helping schools achieve the goals of legislation.

Keywords: knowledge, beliefs, practice, implementation, standards-based comprehensive school counseling

Introduction

The role of US school counselors has shifted and expanded many times in the profession's history, often in response to broader educational, societal, political, and economic issues (Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008). These changes in policy and social structures have been relatively dramatic, requiring counselors to be flexible and adaptable. Although substantial research has emerged over the past 20 years examining school counselors' perspectives, knowledge, and practices (e.g., Bardhoshi, Schweinle, & Duncan, 2014; Rayle & Adams, 2007; Sink, & Yillik-Downer, 2001), a comprehensive review of this literature is absent. Consequently, many scholars and practitioners in the US view this work as a set of disparate studies as opposed to a unified collection of research. In this systematic narrative review, we synthesized investigations on school counselors' beliefs, knowledge, and practices within the historical context of school counseling in the US and associated policies.

School Counseling History and Associated Policies

Vocational guidance, which gave rise to the field of school counseling, originated in the US in the early 20th Century (Gysbers & Henderson, 2014). At the time, the profession's focus was to guide students to make appropriate occupational choices. During the 1940s and 1950s the field was strongly influenced by the humanistic movement as school counselors began to also attend to students' personal and social development. Later, with the National Defense Education Act of 1958 the priority became identifying academically talented students for college (Wingfield, Reese, & West-Olatunji, 2010). Although school counselors' role continued to expand throughout these decades, the profession maintained a position-service orientation and school counselors' work was considered ancillary to the schools' educational mission (Gysbers & Henderson, 2014).

The Comprehensive Developmental Guidance Program (CDGP) movement emerged in the 1970s as an attempt to reframe school counselors' work to an intentional, preventative, and programmatic approach (Martin, Carey, & DeCoster, 2009). This new approach moved the profession from a staff position to a program-centered role in which school counseling was considered an organized program within schools that delivered a complex array of preventive and remedial services with the intention of promoting students' development across a wide range of domains (Trevisan & Carey, in press). Counselors designed developmental programs that served all students in the building through classroom guidance lessons, small group counseling, individual counseling, consultation, and service coordination. By the mid-1990s about half of the states were implementing a CDGP (Sink & MacDonald, 1998). This emphasis on the programmatic nature of school counseling activities is one of the most salient ways that school counseling in the US differs from school counseling in other countries. This programmatic approach was also reflected in two additional, though less predominant, models of school counseling: Developmental Guidance and Counseling (Myrick, 1987) and Results-Based Guidance (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the standards-based educational reform and accountability movements emerged in the US. A standards-based concept of education was endorsed in the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Standards-based educational reform focused on developing a set of standards that identified what students should know and be able to do; these standards were meant then to be reinforced by teachers, curriculum, and assessment measures. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 emphasized holding schools accountable for meeting these standards through testing (National Academy of Education, 2009). The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 replaced the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 preserves the focus on standardized assessment but returns much of the oversight and funding to the states. Despite efforts to reframe the school counselors' role through the CDGP movement, school counselors have largely been omitted from these educational reform agendas (Dahir, 2004; House & Hayes, 2002). In subsequent years, school counseling professional organizations have offered three policies in response to educational reform movements. These policies constitute what we are referring to as standards-based comprehensive models of school counseling. Below we describe the policies and the educational, societal, political, and economic issues that influenced their development.

The Transforming School Counseling Initiative.

In 1997, the Educational Trust launched the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) to better align school counselor preparation and practice with standards-based education reform (Martin, 2002). The TSCI encouraged school counselors to move beyond supporting students' social emotional development to promoting high academic achievement. Grounded in the principles of access and equity, this new vision of school counseling encouraged using data for student advocacy efforts, adopting a systemic perspective to addressing barriers to academic success, and working as agents of change in closing the achievement gap (House & Hayes, 2002; Martin, 2002; McMahon, Mason, & Paisley, 2009).

The National Standards for School Counseling Programs. In response to the standards-based educational reform movement, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) established program standards in 1997. The National Standards for School Counseling Programs (NSSCP; Campbell & Dahir, 1997) included specific competencies articulating what students should know and be able to do as a result of a standards-based comprehensive school counseling program (Dahir & Stone, 2009). The NSSCP included

nine standards, three in each of the academic, personal-social, and career development domains (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Additionally, the NSSCP listed activities considered appropriate for school counselors and encouraged leadership in the reform movement (Dahir, 2001).

The ASCA (2012) National Model. As the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 ushered in a new era of accountability, narrowing the goals of education primarily to academics, school counselors needed to reorient their role by demonstrating their contribution to student achievement. In response, ASCA created a new organizational structure for the profession, the ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (ASCA, 2003, 2012) that integrated key elements from the CDGP movement, TSCI, and NSSCP. By incorporating aspects of the other models, the ASCA National Model increased the recognition and prominence of comprehensive school counseling (Martin et al., 2009). School districts could use the ASCA National Model as a blueprint for designing and implementing a standards-based comprehensive school counseling program that aligned with the accountability movement and emphasized school counselors' role in improving student learning (Martin & Carey, 2014). Thus, in 2009 Martin and colleagues identified 51 states in various stages of implementing the ASCA National Model: 17 states had established programs, 24 states were progressing towards model implementation, and 10 states were just beginning implementation.

From the profession's singular focus on supporting students to make appropriate occupational choices to today's focus on improving student learning, school counseling in the US has changed a great deal in a short time. When implementing reforms that introduce significant changes to a profession, it is essential to understand how policy changes are adopted and to what degree policy effects practice (Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). Examining changes in the knowledge, beliefs, and practices central to those policy changes can contribute to an understanding of adoption and practice, and inform future implementation efforts and policy creation. With the passing of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 and subsequent changes in how funding is distributed to states and schools, school counseling organizations such as ASCA (2018) have identified an opportunity to increase the role school counselors play in helping schools achieve the goals of the legislation, thus making standards-based comprehensive models of school counseling even more relevant. This review synthesizes and evaluates the literature on the knowledge, beliefs, and practices of school counselors relevant to implementation of standards-based comprehensive models of school counseling.

The Relationship Between Beliefs, Knowledge, and Practice

School counselors' roles have continually evolved throughout the profession's history (McMahon et al., 2009), making understanding school counselor practice a moving mark for researchers. To explore the relationship among beliefs, knowledge, and practice, professionals must look to research in the teaching profession, a field in which the role is more consistent and research more abundant (Borg, 2015). Research over the past 40 years has explored teachers' cognition and the relationship between teachers' practice and cognition, including thinking, decision making, thought processes, knowledge, and beliefs (Borg, 2015). Teachers' beliefs and knowledge are tied to teachers' practices (Wallace & Kang, 2004) and to student outcomes (Brownell et al., 2014). Using surveys to examine these constructs is common with teachers (Kiely, Brownell, Lauterbach, & Benedict, 2015) and is the predominant approach within school counseling. While surveys are useful for collecting information about beliefs and knowledge, it is recommended that instruments be based on developed theories addressing their relationship to practice (Kiely et al., 2015). Furthermore, surveys themselves do not measure practice; surveys measure perceptions of practice and self-reported practice (Brownell et al., 2014). It is important to note that researchers investigating teachers' ability to self-report have found that memory rarely aligns with actual practice (Rowan, Camburn, & Correnti, 2004). Finally, although there is solid evidence that knowledge and beliefs influence teachers' practice, defining knowledge and beliefs is an ongoing issue in the literature on teachers (Borg, 2015). Researchers use the terms interchangeably and there is a proliferation of terminology associated with both constructs. Within this review of research, the distinction between beliefs and knowledge is equally murky.

Purpose

The purpose of the current investigation was to conduct a systematic review of the research on school-based counselors' beliefs, knowledge, and practice relevant to the implementation of standards-based comprehensive school counseling models and to determine which findings from this research base can contribute to an understanding of the implementation of these models. Systematic narrative review is the preferable method for summarizing a group of studies with heterogeneity (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The research reviewed was diverse in the beliefs, knowledge, and practices examined, as well as the participants, contexts, and analyses employed. As such, the findings are more amenable to summarization in a systematic review and narrative synthesis. What

distinguishes a systematic narrative review from other types of literature reviews is the inclusion of a clearly formulated question, the use of systematic and transparent methods to identify and select research, the explicit extraction and analysis of data from the studies, and a critical appraisal of that research included in the review (Wright, Brand, Dunn, & Spindler, 2007). The goal of systematic narrative reviews is to produce an unbiased assessment of the research and summary of the evidence.

To accomplish our purpose, we analyzed two discrete but integrated aspects of the literature. First, we synthesized the studies' content, presenting the most salient themes within and across studies. Second, we examined the studies' methodological characteristics to determine the rigor of the research. Through this process, we identified exemplars of survey research and established a framework for future research. The review was guided by two questions. First, what are the salient findings on school counselors' beliefs, knowledge, and practices with respect to standards-based comprehensive school counseling models? Second, do the studies on standards-based comprehensive school counseling models meet the basic standards for survey research?

Methods

Literature Search and Inclusion Criteria

We conducted a systematic review and evaluation of the research on school-based counselors' beliefs, knowledge, and self-reported practices related to the implementation of standards-based comprehensive school counseling models. Our interest was on the implementation of entire models; therefore, we limited our review to studies on or about implementation of multiple aspects of the models. For example, we did not include studies that exclusively examined school counselor beliefs about a sole component of a model (e.g. multiculturalism) or studies with the sole intent to validate a measure. We reviewed studies published after 1997, the year ASCA and the Educational Trust put forth the NSSCP and the TSCI policies respectively. Although there are many methods for examining beliefs, knowledge, and practice, the predominant approach within the field of school counseling is the use of surveys. Thus, we focused exclusively on research using survey methods and quantitative analysis. We limited our review to empirical, peer-reviewed research that used original data.

We searched several databases including ERIC, Psych Info, Academic Search Premier, ProQuest Education Complete, and Google Scholar using a matrix of key terms, including: (a) school counseling, guidance counselor, school counselor, and guidance counseling; (b) instrument, survey, questionnaires, policy, and

educational reform; and (c) Comprehensive School Counseling Model, ASCA National Standards, ASCA National Model, and Transforming School Counseling Initiative. We explored electronic search results until items returned were loosely related to search terms. In addition, we conducted a physical hand search of the table of contents of relevant journals, including *Professional School Counseling*, the *Journal of Counseling & Development*, the *Journal of School Counseling*, *The Professional Counselor*, *CORE Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation*, *Counselor Education and Supervision*, the *Journal of School Health*, and *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*. Finally, we reviewed article reference lists. Initially, we identified approximately 100 articles. We used publication abstracts to further narrow the search results. From this group of studies, studies not meeting our inclusion criteria and studies that were redundant, meaning the study was included multiple times, were discarded. We included 20 articles in the final review.

Coding Procedures

Researchers engaged in two coding processes. In the first process, we used open and axial coding with constant comparison to identify the most salient themes within and across diverse contexts and variables (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In the second coding process, studies were thematically coded based on methodological characteristics. Throughout the data analysis process, researchers engaged in peer debriefing about the codes formed at each stage to promote trustworthiness (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005).

Coding for salient themes. Initially, the first and second authors identified all findings presented in each manuscript. Each finding was entered into Excel, and all coding was done within this software. Each finding was assigned an *in vivo* open code, capturing the meaning of the finding (e.g. time in administrative and clerical work, hours spent per week on other duties). Next, we collapsed these open codes into more abstract categories (e.g. time, activities, and context). Finally, axial codes were generated as we developed connections between categories and subcategories by posing how, why, when, and where questions (e.g. school counselors spend a portion of their time on non-counseling duties, and this did not vary based on the context in which they worked). We examined the data first within each data source itself, creating memos regarding the ways in which the codes related to each other within that data source alone. We next examined the data across the data sources, creating memos regarding the ways in which the codes related to each other across sources. We engaged in procedures to promote credibility and trustworthiness of our data

analysis process. Two researchers coded the findings of each article and reached consensus for the codes assigned. Throughout each stage of data analysis, we engaged in peer debriefing about codes formed and the emerging patterns (Brantlinger, et al., 2005).

Methodological coding. Each article was scrutinized for relevant methodological data, and to identify relevant passages by the first, third, and fourth authors. These passages were thematically coded, focusing on methodological data that would enable us to evaluate the quality of each study. First, we coded for participant and contextual characteristics, such as members of ASCA or another professional organization, in what location the study was conducted, and at what school level the school counselors worked. Second, we coded for the description of the methodology, including research questions, assumptions, type of analysis performed, types of conclusions drawn, properties of measures, response rate, sample size, the presence of a theoretical orientation, and the identified limitations. The coded data were compiled in Excel, summarized, and used to identify exemplary studies. To promote credibility and trustworthiness of our data analysis process, three researchers thematically coded the methodological data of each article and reached consensus for the codes assigned. Furthermore, at each stage of the methodological coding (i.e. thematically coding methodological data, compiling methodological data, summarizing methodological data, and identifying exemplary studies) we engaged in peer debriefing (Brantlinger, et al., 2005).

Results

Salient Findings

We identified four broad themes as most salient. These included school counselors' knowledge, beliefs, and practice related to: (a) the creation of standards-based comprehensive school counseling models and subsequent reform policy; (b) the conditions under which implementation of standards-based comprehensive school counseling models are perceived as effective; (c) the specific tasks, activities, and duties associated with the implementation of standards-based comprehensive school counseling models; and (d) the influence of standards-based comprehensive school counseling model implementation on job satisfaction. A narrative synthesis of the salient findings is presented (see Table 1 for a summary of the findings).

Model creation and subsequent reform policy. In three studies, researchers examined school counselors' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to the creation of standards-based comprehensive school counseling models (Dahir, 2004; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Pérusse Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004). Researchers surveyed school counselors to

inform the development of standards-based comprehensive school counseling models (Dahir, 2004) and to understand how these efforts related to the practices and beliefs of school counselors (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Pérusse et al., 2004). In addition, researchers examined school counselors' support for the transformation of the school counseling profession and their beliefs about potential impact. Researchers also used surveys to examine school counselors' beliefs about which tasks should be emphasized and what specific activities associated with school counselors should be included in a standards-based comprehensive school counseling model.

Researchers in all three studies concluded that school counselors supported efforts to transform the field of school counseling. More than 80% of school counselors surveyed endorsed the development of national standards (Dahir, 2004), both school counselors and principals indicated that the national standards should be emphasized in school counseling practice (Pérusse et al., 2004), and school counselors reported that it was important to identify explicit goals for the school counseling program (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). Although there was general support for these changes within the profession, there was no consensus among school counselors regarding which specific activities should be included or emphasized in actual practice.

The activities which school counselors considered most important in their practice differed across school contexts, including (a) elementary or high school level, (b) urban or rural setting, and (c) high or low socioeconomic status (SES) of students in the school. Elementary school counselors prioritized personal-social development, whereas high school counselors indicated stronger support for goal planning and career development (Dahir, 2004; Pérusse et al., 2004). School counselors in urban settings placed greater emphasis on understanding the factors that lead to achievement than did rural school counselors (Dahir, 2004), while school counselors in lower SES schools prioritized developing study skills and time management (Dahir, 2004; Pérusse et al., 2004).

Activities with more general support across school counselors included emphasizing diversity and academic skill development (Dahir, 2004; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Pérusse et al., 2004). Whereas, school counselors consistently reported not using data (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Pérusse et al., 2004). Only Pérusse et al. (2004) compared the practices of school counselors at the time of the study to the practices considered appropriate within the standards. The authors reported greater differences between actual practice and practices promoted in the standards for secondary school counselors as compared with elementary school counselors.

General implementation. The authors of seven studies examined the conditions under which implementation is perceived as effective (Barna & Brott, 2012; Barnes, Scofield, Hof, & Vrbka, 2005; Dahir, Burnham, & Stone, 2009; Hatch, Poynton, & Pérusse, 2015; Poynton, Schumaker, & Wilczenski, 2008; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001; Studer, Diambra, Breckner, & Heidel, 2011). This line of research focused on school counselors' concerns related to model implementation, the value school counselors placed on implementing a model, the importance assigned to specific model components, and school-level differences that impacted school counselors' perceptions of model implementation.

Barnes et al. (2005) concluded that while all counselors surveyed reported broadly implementing a standards-based comprehensive school counseling model, actual implementation of various components of the model was uneven. These researchers discovered that schools implemented different aspects of the model, and the presence of one component did not ensure the presence of other components. Studer et al. (2011) suggested that school counselors' perceptions changed as their programs moved towards greater model implementation. School counselors in early phases of implementation placed great importance on having a supportive administration which understood the model (Studer et al., 2011). As school counselors became more involved in implementation, they ranked administrative support as less important (Hatch et al., 2015). The more involved school counselors were in model implementation and the longer they had been implementing the model, the fewer concerns they reported (Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). Specifically, school counselors experienced in implementation expressed significantly fewer concerns about competing tasks, assigned less value to noncounseling duties, and placed greater value on using data and on implementing a model (Hatch et al., 2015; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). For example, school counselors in Massachusetts who were aware of but not fully implementing the model reported more personal concerns about whether the model represented an improvement over their current way of working, how their role would change, and methods for collecting data to assess their own impact (Poynton et al., 2008). In contrast, Barna and Brott (2012) found that school counselors already engaged in implementing the model made decisions about interventions based on what they perceived as important to the school counseling program, not on what was important to them personally.

In three studies, researchers examined school level differences in the value school counselors placed on particular tasks (Dahir et al., 2009; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001; Studer et al., 2011). Elementary school counselors demonstrated greater adherence to programs'

competencies and less concern related to development and implementation of tasks associated with the model than did high school counselors (Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001; Studer et al., 2011). Differences were reported across grade level regarding which components of the model school counselors emphasized. High school counselors placed higher priority on academic, career, and postsecondary development, while elementary school counselors emphasized personal-social growth and implemented more guidance curriculum (Dahir et al., 2009; Studer et al., 2011). These results support Dahir (2004) and Pérusse et al. (2004) earlier findings that elementary school counselors prioritized personal and social development, whereas high school counselors prioritized goal planning and career development.

Specific tasks, activities, and duties. The authors of six studies addressed a narrower concept of implementation, examining the specific tasks, duties, and activities in which school counselors engaged (Astramovich & Holden, 2002; Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy, & Mitchell, 2005; Oberman & Studer, 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2007; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). These researchers focused on whether school counselors reported performing duties defined by the models as counseling duties (i.e., appropriate tasks) or non-counseling duties (i.e., inappropriate tasks) and the amount of time spent on those tasks. These researchers also examined how time spent on particular tasks varied across settings, such as high- and low-performing schools, school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school), and in particular environments (e.g., urban schools).

Rayle and Adams (2007) found that 59% of school counselors reported implementing a standards-based comprehensive model of school counseling, with a greater number of elementary school counselors running a program based on the ASCA National Model as compared to middle and high school counselors. More than 34% of the school counselors in another study responded that they were fully implementing a comprehensive developmental program model, while 12% indicated that their program was not operating within a standards-based comprehensive model (Oberman & Studer, 2008). School counselors implementing a standards-based comprehensive model expressed mixed responses about whether they were performing counseling or non-counseling duties. According to Rayle and Adams (2007), school counselors currently implementing a program based on the model reported delivering fewer direct services, such as crisis response counseling and small group counseling sessions. Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) demonstrated that school counselors preferred to spend their time engaged in activities associated with the standards-based comprehensive model of school counseling, specifically in providing interventions

associated with positive student outcomes, and preferred not to spend their time in activities associated with nonguidance duties.

Authors of five different studies demonstrated that school counselors often spent time on nonguidance tasks. Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell (2005) discovered that school counselors spent approximately 13% of their time engaged in administrative and clerical work. Oberman and Studer (2008) found that more than 80% of counselors reported performing noncounseling duties from an “average extent” to a “consistent” basis. Counselors who tracked the number of hours they spent in various tasks scored “other duties,” or non-counseling duties as their second highest rated activity (Fitch & Marshall, 2004). However, school counselors in higher achieving schools reported spending more time aligning their program to national standards than counselors in low achieving schools.

Across elementary, middle, and high schools, school counselors reported spending the most time engaged in IEP/504 plan writing and planning and school-wide testing (Rayle & Adams, 2007). Elementary school counselors also reported spending more time covering for teachers’ classrooms, conducting school bus duties, and monitoring lunchrooms. Lastly, Astramovich and Holden (2002) found that 62% of school counselors indicated that time spent in noncounseling tasks hindered their ability to serve students.

The amount of time school counselors spent on specific activities associated with the model also varied significantly across studies. Astramovich and Holden (2002) discovered that the mean amount of time school counselors spent counseling students was 61% of their total hours. Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell (2005) found that while 85% of school counselors reported engaging in counseling services, the reported time ranged from 3% to 90%. School counselors in elementary schools reported the highest daily percentage of time devoted to counseling services, followed by school counselors in middle schools, then high schools (Astramovich & Holden, 2002). Rayle and Adams (2007) revealed little overlap in the model-related activities performed at elementary, middle, and high school levels, with the exception being that both elementary and middle school counselors reported often spending time consulting and collaborating with teachers. We discovered inconsistent findings regarding school counselors’ engagement in advocacy, use of curriculum, collection of data or assessments, provision of direct services to students and parents, and caseload size. As a consequence, we were unable to draw conclusions about the specific activities in which school counselors reportedly engaged and the relationship between these activities and their beliefs and knowledge.

Job satisfaction. The final identified theme examined how implementing a standards-based comprehensive model influenced school counselor job satisfaction (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Bardhoshi et al., 2014; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Kolodinsky, Draves, Schroder, Lindsey, & Zlatev, 2009). Researchers included in this section examined specific activities in which school counselors engaged, but additionally explored how these activities affect school counselors' job satisfaction.

The role school counselors play in schools and how this role influences job satisfaction was explored in four studies. Across investigations, researchers found that school counselors reported being satisfied with their jobs (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Bardhoshi et al., 2014; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Kolodinsky et al., 2009). School counselors who were implementing standards-based comprehensive models demonstrated greater job satisfaction (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006). Sources of satisfaction were related to less tangible aspects of their jobs, such as creativity and perceiving that they mattered to students, parents, teachers, and administrators (DeMato & Curcio, 2004). Receiving professional support (i.e., supervision from a peer or the district), holding accurate expectations for the job, and feeling well prepared for the position improved job satisfaction (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006). Researchers also examined sources of dissatisfaction for school counselors. Compensation, lack of a state mandate for elementary school counselors, and high-stakes testing were all found to contribute to job dissatisfaction (DeMato & Curcio, 2004). In addition, school counselors expressed that spending time on non-counseling duties was a source of stress or dissatisfaction in their jobs (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; DeMato & Curcio, 2004).

Authors of two studies (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Kolodinsky et al., 2009) examined the relationship between the specific activities in which school counselors engaged, as discussed in the previous section, and job satisfaction. The authors discovered that the way counselors spent their time was significantly related to job satisfaction. Bardhoshi and colleagues (2014) found that performing non-counseling duties predicted school counselor burnout, specifically related to exhaustion, perception of a negative work environment, and deterioration in a school counselor's personal life. Kolodinsky and colleagues (2009) suggested that job satisfaction was positively correlated with time spent counseling students and working with teachers and was negatively correlated with time spent responding to crises, providing system support, and performing nonguidance tasks. School counselors' most commonly cited job frustration was feeling overwhelmed by duties, specifically performing noncounseling tasks, with 61% of school counselors

reported feeling overwhelmed by noncounseling tasks (Kolodinsky et al., 2009).

Methodological Evaluation

To address the second review question, "Does the research meet the basic standards for survey research?" we examined the methods of all studies that met the inclusion criteria. We were interested in how this research base could inform an understanding of the implementation of a standards-based comprehensive school counseling model from a policy perspective. Ultimately, to draw conclusions about implementation researchers must engage in methodologically rigorous research. Survey researchers must avoid the four most common types of errors in data collection: coverage, sampling, nonresponse, and measurement (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). Furthermore, researchers must ensure the accuracy of their conclusions by supporting their interpretations with an appropriate analysis of the collected data and by contextualizing the interpretation within theory (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). See Table 3 for a summary of how each study met these indicators of methodological rigor.

Sample. A primary requirement of survey research is that the sample be representative of the population being studied (Gall et al., 2007). The studies we reviewed included samples from several states across the US (Astramovich & Holden, 2002; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Pérusse, et al., 2004; Rayle & Adams, 2007; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001); specific regions of the US (Oberman & Studer, 2008; Studer, et al., 2011); single states within the US (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Barna & Brott, 2012; Barnes, et al., 2005; Dahir, et al., 2009; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Kolodinsky, et al., 2009); or did not report the states or regions in which school counselors in the study worked (Bardhoshi, et al., 2014; Dahir, 2004; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Hatch, et al., 2015; Poynton, et al., 2008). The studies in this review included a wide variety of sample sizes and response rates (see Table 1). Analyzing the appropriate sample size for survey research is essential to avoid sampling errors and nonresponse bias, and enables researchers to generalize findings back to the population (Barlett, Kotrlik, & Higgins, 2001). None of the researchers in this review reported analyses of the sample size. Furthermore, some of the researchers reported using professional organizations to recruit participants (Dahir, 2004; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Hatch et al., 2015; Pérusse et al., 2004; Poynton et al., 2008; Rayle & Adams, 2007). Relying on samples recruited exclusively from professional organizations can be problematic, as not all school counselors are likely to be members. While there are no studies examining the rate of participation

in professional organizations, there are many well-known barriers, including the cost of membership dues (Wichtner-Zoia, 2013). Thus, drawing exclusively on a sample from a professional organization limits the likelihood that the survey is sampling a representative population. Due to the lack of sample size analyses and problematic sampling procedures, we cannot determine if the sample sizes were appropriate or representative and caution should be used when generalizing the findings of any study in this review.

Reliability and validity. Researchers must examine the reliability and validity of the measures used to avoid measurement error. Five studies reviewed lacked information about the reliability and validity of the measures used (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Oberman & Studer, 2008; Pérusse et al., 2004). While researchers from four studies reported both reliability and validity (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Barna & Brott, 2012; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001), many only reported reliability (Astramovich & Holden, 2002; Dahir, 2004; Dahir et al., 2009; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008) or only validity (Barnes et al., 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Rayle & Adams, 2007; Studer et al., 2011). Some authors chose measures or items from instruments used in previous studies and reported already established reliability or validity. However, two authors failed to report the original validity or reliability (Hatch et al., 2015; Poynton et al., 2008). Additionally, a common error was researchers' reliance on previous statistics for measures modified for the study, without a pilot of the current use of the measure to establish the reliability and validity of the modified measure. Subsequently, it was impossible to ensure the measures were in fact measuring the constructs the authors claimed they were measuring. Thus, the authors' interpretations were spurious.

Analyses. It is essential that researchers use methods that address their research questions, meet the assumptions underlying the analysis conducted, and appropriately interpret the findings. Descriptive statistics can be used for describing and summarizing data, whereas inferential statistics can be used for examining relationships between variables (Gall et al., 2007). It is also essential that researchers include sufficient information about their methods and data to ensure others can evaluate the findings quality and potentially conduct studies to replicate their findings.

In four studies, researchers used only descriptive statistics, including central tendency (i.e., mean, median, and mode), and measures of spread (i.e., standard deviation, variance, and range; Barnes et al., 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Oberman & Studer, 2008; Poynton et al., 2008). The remaining

researchers included questions that could be answered using descriptive and inferential statistics (Astramovich & Holden, 2002; Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Barna & Brott, 2012; Dahir, 2004; DeMato, & Curcio, 2004; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Pérusse et al., 2004) or only included questions that could be answered using inferential statistics (Bardhoshi et al., 2014; Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Hatch et al., 2015; Rayle & Adams, 2007; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001; Studer et al., 2011). All of these researchers, excluding DeMato and Curcio, (2004), provided sufficient information regarding the analysis to evaluate their rigor, addressed the descriptive analyses properly, used the appropriate analysis to address the specific question, and met the assumptions underlying their analyses. DeMato and Curcio (2004) used a measure of central tendency (i.e., mean) to improperly address questions of variance (i.e., a measure of spread) and correlation (i.e., an inferential statistic; DeMato & Curcio, 2004). The rigor with which researchers approached their descriptive analysis means their conclusions about questions that did not examine the relationship between variables are trustworthy.

In addressing inferential questions, the researchers were less consistent in providing enough information to evaluate the methods, choosing appropriate analyses, conducting the analysis properly, and addressing the necessary assumptions. In two studies, researchers included all necessary components in addressing inferential questions (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001). In eight studies researchers did not include all the important information needed regarding the analysis of at least one inferential question (Astramovich & Holden, 2002; DeMato, & Curcio, 2004; Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Dahir, 2004; Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Hatch et al., 2015; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Rayle & Adams, 2007). For example, multiple researchers did not provide a description of the procedures for the analysis (DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Dahir, 2004; Hatch et al., 2015; Kolodinsky et al., 2009; Rayle & Adams, 2007). In four studies, researchers chose to analyze data using the wrong method or did not address limitations within their chosen method of at least one inferential question (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Pérusse et al., 2004; Studer et al., 2011). For example, Baggerly and Osborn (2006) analyzed variables that were categorical (i.e., duties and inappropriate duties) as if they were continuous. In two studies, researchers attributed greater magnitude of the effect sizes than was warranted (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). For instance, Baggerly and Osborn, (2006) stated that a 0.15 effect size was a medium effect, when is a consistently regarded as a small effect, and Hatch & Chen-Hayes (2008) reported that an effect

size of 0.20 was a large effect, when it is commonly regarded as a small effect. Others like Bardhoshi and colleagues (2014) and Barna and Brott, (2012) failed to report an effect size, leaving out an important metric of practical importance. Mistakes made by many researchers in addressing inferential questions makes it challenging to trust the conclusions drawn on questions examining the relationship between variables, excluding Scarborough and Culbreth's (2008) and Sink and Yillik-Downer's (2001).

Theoretical foundations. To interpret the findings of research on beliefs and knowledge, it is essential that researchers draw on theories that relate these constructs to practice (Kiely et al., 2015) to contextualize the findings. Few studies reviewed in this chapter were grounded in theoretical frameworks. Barna and Brott (2012) drew upon self-determination theory, which examines the psychological needs underlying behavior, such as competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Hatch and Chen-Hayes (2008) drew on Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, which makes explicit connections between a person's beliefs and their actions, stating that a person's attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control shape a person's intended behavior and actual behavior. Poynton and colleagues' (2008) research relied on the Concern Based Adoption Model (CBAM; Hord & Hall, 2001), which posits that people considering and experiencing change evolve in the kinds of questions they ask and in their use of the promoted behavior. These questions represent different "stages of concern," and it is essential that those promoting the change support the changes a person is making by addressing the questions that arise. Sink and Yillik-Downer (2001) administered the Perceptions of Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Inventory (PCGCI) survey based on the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoC), which was also grounded in CBAM (Hord & Hall, 2001). Finally, Bardhoshi and colleagues (2014) referenced a clinical burnout framework, developed by Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001), that defines burnout as ongoing emotional and interpersonal stress which leads to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment in those who work in caregiving roles. The remaining studies did not provide a theoretical foundation for their research.

Discussion

We evaluated the studies included in this review based on four criteria: sampling and response rates, inclusion of the reliability and validity of the measures used, the use of appropriate analysis for the interpretations drawn, and the presence of theory linking the findings to practice. Results indicated that only one researcher (Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001) drew upon theory, used appropriate analyses for making inferences,

and reported reliability and validity. A second study by Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) met these same standards but did not ground the research in a theoretical framework. The researchers did, however, provide literature in the introduction linking the studies' purpose to practice. Below, we discuss these two exemplary studies, what conclusions are cautiously generalizable to the field of school counseling, and give recommendations for future research.

Exemplary Studies

Sink and Yillik-Downer (2001) conducted an exploratory national survey to investigate school counselors' perceptions about their district's development and implementation of CGCP. The research questions explored school counselors' need for program collaboration, concerns about tasks to be implemented, beliefs about how CGCPs impacted student outcomes, level of involvement with their CGCP, and the importance they ascribed to this program. Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) explored variables that influenced the discrepancies between actual and preferred school counseling practice and whether school counselors prefer to spend their time in activities aligned with standards-based comprehensive school counseling programs.

Although these were the most methodologically sound studies we reviewed, the sampling procedures and response rates varied. Sink and Yillik-Downer's (2001) sample was from eight states across three regions, included 1,033 participants with a 78% response rate. The authors of this article sampled school counselors from a previous study (Sink & McDonald, 1998), including only school counselors working in schools implementing the model. Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) included a more limited sample from two eastern states, which included 361 participants with a 60% response rate. Researchers identified participants from employed school counselors in one state, and members of a profession association in the second. Neither study included an analysis of the sample size, thus, the findings are cautiously generalizable.

Sink and Yillik-Downer (2001) and Scarborough and Culbreth's (2008) reported both reliability and validity. Sink and Yillik-Downer (2001) administered the PCGCI survey, based on the SoC (Hall et al., 1975). The SoC was originally developed to measure teachers' concerns about changes in education and led to the creation of the concerns-based adoption model (Hord & Hall, 2001), a theory of how teachers experience change, though this was not discussed in this article. Sink and Yillik-Downer (2001) validated the PCGCI and found strong internal consistency ($r = .92$) and factorial validity. In Scarborough and Culbreth's (2008) study, the school counselors completed three

different surveys: the *School Counselor Activity Ratings Scale* (SCARS; Scarborough, 2005), the *Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale* (CSS; Sutton & Fall, 1995), and the *School Climate Scale* (SCS; Sutton & Fall, 1995). Reliability and validity were assessed for each instrument, and Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) reported internal consistency for the SCARS subscales ($r = .43$ to $.93$), internal consistency for the CSS subscales ($r = .61$ to $.83$), and internal consistency for the SCS ($r = .95$). As mentioned previously, Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) did not explicitly use theory, but extensively reviewed the literature on the potential variables related to school counselor practice.

Both Sink and Yillik-Downer (2001) and Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) addressed questions that could be answered using inferential statistics. As mentioned previously, the authors of these two studies included all the necessary elements for answering questions with inferential statistics, provided enough information to evaluate the methods, chose appropriate analyses, properly conducted the analysis, and addressed the necessary assumptions.

Although the authors of these two studies looked at very diverse aspects of implementation, making it difficult to compare findings across studies, there were some promising results that warrant further research. For instance, Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) found counselors preferred to engage in activities aligned with a standards-based comprehensive school counseling program and preferred not to spend time performing nonguidance tasks. Counselors in high schools, counselors with less experience, and counselors who reported less outcome expectancy and perceived support by administration for the school counseling program spent less time engaged in their preferred activities. Therefore, while school counselors preferred activities associated with a standards-based comprehensive school counseling program, individual and contextual factors influenced what counselors reported spending their time doing. Sink and Yillik-Downer (2001) found that school counselors' concerns about the tasks associated with implementing a new model decreased as program implementation progressed and/or the more involved school counselors became with the program. Interestingly, counselors with more experience in the field expressed less concern about collaboration. In general, concerns were greater among high school counselors than elementary school counselors. Finally, Sink and Yillik-Downer (2001) discovered that counselors from the Midwest, the region where CGCP originated, reported higher concerns than counselors from other regions. This demonstrates that individual and contextual factors influenced school counselors' concerns. Further research is warranted on which individual, contextual, or social supports promote school counselors' use of particular practices and how

to reduce concern related to implementation.

Limitations

While we aimed for transparency and methodological rigor in our review, there are two potential limitations. First, though we tried to include search terms and procedures that would lead to an exhaustive set of studies, it is possible that including different search terms, searching different data bases and journals, and using different procedures could have resulted in our locating studies that were not included in our final list of 20 studies. Second, our inclusion and exclusion criteria may have excluded studies that were relevant. For example, it is possible that by including only peer review published studies, we may have excluded studies that may have led to different conclusions about this literature base.

Conclusions

The quality of the studies included in this review varied significantly. Consequently, drawing conclusions about survey research on the implementation of policy-driven models was difficult. We were unable to generalize most of the findings to the broader field of school counseling. From the exemplary studies, though, we can draw limited conclusions about this policy effort in the US. It is important to note making recommendation for practice based on these limited findings without additional research is premature. For example, Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) and Sink and Yillik-Downer (2001) findings demonstrated that individual and contextual factors influenced school counselors' concerns and what practices they engaged in. We know little of what those individual or contextual factors were. Furthermore, these studies were published 10 and 17 years ago, thus it is quite possible the individual and contextual factors may have changed. For example, the context in schools is probably different with the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. Therefore, making recommendations for how to promote the desired practices or to reduce concerns without further research could lead to misguided policies. As considerable variability exists around the globe in terms of the organization, structure and activities associated with school counseling (Harris, 2013), care should be taken to avoid overgeneralizing the findings of the present study to other national contexts.

This review demonstrates that research on school counselors' beliefs, knowledge, and practice has potential to help professionals, practitioners and educators understand standards-based comprehensive model of school counseling implementation in the US, however, much work is needed to strengthen the field's research base. Future research should address the methodological limitations identified in this review.

Specifically, we recommend researchers: (a) ensure that samples are representative of the population being investigated by conducting and reporting the results of a pre-study power analysis and ensuring that the minimum participants are included and reported consistent with the assumptions of the analytic procedures; (b) ensure that sample is representative of the entire profession and not limited to members of professional organization; (c) examine the reliability and validity of the measures used to limit measurement error; and (d) use methods that address the stated research questions, meeting the assumptions underlying the analysis conducted, and appropriately interpreting the findings. Furthermore, we challenge researchers in this field to develop and draw on existing conceptual frameworks when designing and interpreting research findings.

On a final note, there were two areas underrepresented in this research that are ripe for future research. First, very few studies examined how policy implementation influenced school counselor knowledge. It is essential that researchers determine what knowledge school counselors need to implement the practices promoted by a standards-based comprehensive model of school counseling. Second, none of the researchers in the literature reviewed engaged in authentic research on practice, and instead relied on self-reported practice that can lead to inaccurate findings about the practices in which school counselors are engaged. Researchers could use multiple methods to understand what practices in fact contribute to improved student outcomes and which do not, and to determine the essential knowledge and beliefs of school counselors. In-depth qualitative studies can help identify the different types of knowledge needed, and how school counselors use this knowledge to implement practices promoted by a standards-based comprehensive model of school counseling. Such research findings can then be used, as they have been by Deborah Ball and other researchers examining teachers (e.g., Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008; Hill, Schilling, & Ball, 2004), to develop quantitative assessments of school counselor knowledge and practice, which can be used to predict student outcomes (e.g., motivation, achievement). These qualitative and quantitative studies can help researchers solidify the knowledge and practices school counselors need to improve implementation of a standards-based comprehensive model of school counseling and outcomes for students. Findings generated from such studies can also help to define the content of initial preparation and professional development. Considering the recent changes in how funding is distributed to states and schools within the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, such research is both timely and necessary to help clarify and increase the role school counselors play in helping schools achieve the goals of legislation.

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Table 1

Overall Themes and Summary of Findings from Coding for Salient Themes

Themes	Summary of Findings
Model Creation and Subsequent Reform Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School counselors supported transforming the field of school counseling in different areas, though no pattern emerged to which activities should be emphasized. 2. There were school level differences in what school counselors considered important to their practice. 3. School counselors generally supported emphasizing diversity and academic skill development.
General Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Model implementation varied across studies, but as schools moved towards greater implementation there were positive impacts (e.g. fewer concerns). 2. There were school level differences that influenced school counselors' perceptions and values related to model implementation.
Specific Tasks, Activities, and Duties	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Model implementation varied across studies and there was no consistent pattern in model implementation and performing counseling duties or non-counseling duties. 2. School counselors often spend time in nonguidance tasks, though they prefer counseling duties to non-counseling duties. 3. There were school level differences in how school counselors spend their time.
Job Satisfaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School counselors overall reported being satisfied with their jobs. 2. The ways school counselors spend their time is related to job satisfaction and spending time on non-counseling duties was a source of dissatisfaction. 3. School counselors implementing standards-based comprehensive models reported higher job satisfaction.

Table 2

Sample Size and Response Rates

	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)
Astramovich & Holden (2002)	207	40
Baggerly & Osborn (2006)	1,280	53
Bardhoshi, Shcweinle, & Duncan (2014)	252	26
Barna & Brott (2012)	212	39
Barnes, Scofield, Hof, & Vrbka (2005)	428	46.7
Dahir (2004)	1,127	56.4
Dahir, Burnham, & Stone (2009)	1,244	74
DeMato & Curcio (2004)	301	76
Fitch & Marshall (2004)	62	*
Hatch & Chen-Hayes (2008)	1,279	43
Hatch, Poynton, & Pérusse (2015)	617	4.8
Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell (2005)	102	38
Kolodinsky, Draves, Schroder, Lindsey, & Zlatev (2009)	155	*
Oberman & Studer (2008)	73	37
Pérusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones (2004)	1,111	55.6
Poynton, Schumaker, & Wilczenski (2008)	140	10
Rayle & Adams (2007)	388	78.1
Scarborough & Culbreth (2008)	361	60
Sink & Yillik-Downer (2001)	1033	78
Studer, Diambra, Breckner, & Heidel (2011)	53	65

Note. * Indicates this information was not provided.

Table 3

Indicators of Methodological Rigor

	Reliable	Valid	Analysis	Theory
Sink & Yillik-Downer (2001)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scarborough & Culbreth (2008)	✓	✓	✓	x
Bardhoshi, Shcweinle, & Duncan (2014)	✓	✓	x	✓
Barna & Brott (2012)	✓	✓	x	✓
Barnes, Scofield, Hof, & Vrbka (2005)	x	✓	✓	x
Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell (2005)	x	✓	✓	x
Poynton, Schumaker, & Wilczenski (2008)	x	x	✓	✓
Hatch & Chen-Hayes (2008)	✓	x	x	✓
Oberman & Studer (2008)	x	x	✓	x
Astramovich & Holden (2002)	✓	x	x	x
Dahir (2004)	✓	x	x	x
Dahir, Burnham, & Stone (2009)	✓	x	x	x
DeMato & Curcio (2004)	✓	x	x	x
Rayle & Adams (2007)	x	✓	x	x
Studer, Diambra, Breckner, & Heidel (2011)	x	✓	x	x
Baggerly & Osborn (2006)	x	x	x	x
Fitch & Marshall (2004)	x	x	x	x
Hatch, Poynton, & Pérusse (2015)	x	x	x	x
Kolodinsky, Draves, Schroder, Lindsey, & Zlatev (2009)	x	x	x	x
Pérusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones (2004)	x	x	x	x

Note. ✓ Indicates the authors met the indicator; x = did not meet the indicator.