The relationships between experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level of National Certified Counselors

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THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EXPERIENCE, CREDENTIALS, EGO DEVELOPMENT, AND CONCEPTUAL LEVEL OF NATIONAL CERTIFIED COUNSELORS

A Dissertation presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Education

by

Joel Foster Diambra

May 1997
THE RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN EXPERIENCE, CREDENTIALS,
EGO DEVELOPMENT, AND CONCEPTUAL LEVEL
OF NATIONAL CERTIFIED COUNSELORS

by

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family. First, my loving and dedicated wife, Tricia, who has endured countless hours of single adulthood and parenthood during the course of graduate school. Tricia, you are the "wind beneath my wings." Second, to Nathan and Nicole, my two children, who provide palpable reasons to enjoy each day, minute by minute, even during the toughest moments of the dissertation process. And third, to my parents, Raoul W. Diambra and Eileen F. Diambra, who passed away while I worked toward completing my doctoral degree. The work ethic and perseverance, modeled by my parents, was a driving force leading to the completion of this dissertation.
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THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EXPERIENCE, CREDENTIALS, EGO DEVELOPMENT, AND CONCEPTUAL LEVEL OF NATIONAL CERTIFIED COUNSELORS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate National Certified Counselors and relationships between their experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level. Benefits to continuing education requirements, developmental growth, and counselor insight were identified as justification for the research. It was hypothesized that there would be statistically significant positive correlations between counselor experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level. Four hundred (400) National Certified Counselors were randomly selected and contacted by mail survey using a General Questionnaire, Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test, and Hunt's Paragraph Completion Method. One hundred and thirty-four (134) responses were received. Significant correlations were found supporting previous research and developmental theory. One null hypothesis was rejected when a statistically significant correlation was found regarding counselor experience, determined by work setting, and ego development; mental health and community counselors scored significantly higher on ego development than school counselors. Though statistical significance was not attained at the .05 level, a trend was apparent with conceptual level scores correlated with counselor work setting; mental health and school counselors scored higher on conceptual level than did community counselors. Several conjectures are made as to the statistically significant relationship between work
setting and ego development. Counselor supervision is proposed as the most worthwhile approach to address school counselor growth and development, given the finding that school counselors' scored lower on ego development. Further study is needed to determine if current findings can be replicated. Improvements are offered to enhance information collected in the General Questionnaire. A larger sample size, stratification, and an expansion of the population is recommended to include a cross section of counselor types in order to raise external validity.

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THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EXPERIENCE, CREDENTIALS, EGO DEVELOPMENT, AND CONCEPTUAL LEVEL OF NATIONAL CERTIFIED COUNSELORS
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the relationships between experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level of National Certified Counselors (NCCs). The human relationship between counselor and client provides the context for change in therapy (Frankl, 1973). Friedman (1988) points out that interpersonal relationships as well as family, group, and community relationships are necessary for healing to begin. More specifically, one of the most critical concerns in order for healing to occur begins with a specific healer and the relationship between counselor and client (Friedman, 1988). Because of the important role of relationships and personal characteristics of each person within the therapeutic relationship, counselors must better understand their own development and characteristics in order to be more effective helping professionals. Jung (1933) suggests that the counselor must smooth a path for the client and one of the means to accomplishing this is create the disappearance of "egohood." Understanding the relationships between significant variables that influence counseling relationships may provide personal insight and aid the counselor in establishing a therapeutic relationship. The focus of this study concerns the relationships between experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level of National Certified Counselors.

Justification for the Study

Three points will be highlighted to substantiate the need for counselors to understand themselves better in order to counsel their clientele with more effectiveness:
continuing education requirement, developmental benefits, and counselor insight.

Continuing Education Requirement

Professional counselors are charged with efficiently and effectively assisting clients through changes during the client's growth and development. Researchers have argued that counselor training programs should include real life therapy experiences for the trainees, in the role of counselee (Aponte, 1988; Guldner, 1978; Harvancik, 1987; Moore, 1987). This personal experience -- counselor in the role of client -- adds significantly to the counselor's academic preparation work and personal growth and development (Woody, 1971). Beyond formal degree programs, counselors are expected to grow and develop by continuing the learning process. In order to maintain certification, National Certified Counselors must document at least 100 hours of continuing education every five years or retake and pass the National Counselor Examination within a year of the expiration date (NBCC Recertification Guidelines, 1995). This requirement encourages counselors to stay abreast of current knowledge, practice, and to understand "self" in the process of helping others through counseling. Continuing education requirements exemplify the importance for counselors to learn more about themselves in order to provide a therapeutic relationship and climate for their clients.

Developmental Benefits

People grow and develop into and through different stages during the course of their lives. Growth through development stages occurs for both clients and counselors. This makes it more imperative that counselors understand these developmental changes,
in their clients, but first, in themselves. This understanding can help counselors to heighten empathy (Carlozzi, Gaa, & Liberman, 1983), examine numerous variables and help clients to think more divergently (Murphy & Brown, 1970), illuminate a greater variety of learning strategies (Hunt & Joyce, 1967), reason in more abstract terms (Robinson & Holliday, 1987), and create a more flexible and tolerant frame of reference in the learner (Harvey, 1964). These characteristics imply that these traits improve overall counseling effectiveness. An assumption of developmental theorists is that individuals at higher stages of development are capable of processing and responding to their experiences more effectively than individuals at lower stages. Glassberg (1979) reported that at higher stages of ego development an individual performs more abstractly, complexly, comprehensively and empathically. Higher stages of development are considered more acceptable and desirable since conjecturally they envelop more viewpoints and allow for more empathic role taking and sufficient problem solving. More specific to ego development, people can comprehend ego levels lower than their own, but not those ego levels that are much higher. This has been corroborated in investigations by Redmore (1976) and Blasi (1976). More recently, Hauser (1993) suggests new frontiers for research and implies that teaching and counseling styles will probably be contingent on the level of students' and clients' ego development. And, the fit between teacher/counselor and student/client levels of ego development needs further research.

Considering the role of supervision for educators, Peace (1995) and Paisley (1990) remind teachers and counselors of the importance of receiving collegial support and
mentoring to foster professional growth and development.

Counselor Insight

Counseling professionals assist clients in their growth and development in order to influence productive change. Of equal importance, counselors must introspectively investigate their own personal characteristics in order to effectively serve their clients (Skovholt and McCarthy, 1988).

The traditional psychoanalytic belief that the therapist be impersonal and viewed as a "blank slate" in the counseling relationship, has given way to recognition that therapists' use of self is instrumental and that some of the therapist's values are unavoidably conveyed to the client (Tjeltveit, 1986). Therapists and counselors recognize that their own experiences and values are inevitably communicated to the client (Bergin, 1980; Strupp, 1980). Furthermore, it can be argued that counselors should use their own experiences to improve self-perception and counselor "use of self" to better understand clients. Cormier (1988) substantiates this argument by indicating that counselors' own feelings, unfinished work, and personal crises and issues affect their responses to clients. In a qualitative study that elicited counselor's reactions and comments, Skovholt and McCarthy (1988) found that the two most predominant ingredients that affected counselor development were relationships with clients and the counselors own life experiences. Simon (1989) solidifies the notion that counselors are to be aware of family patterns, both the clients' and the therapists'. From this perspective, both the counselors' developmental past and his/her present are to be considered. The past and present are a worthwhile coalescence for counselors, whose mission is to help clients take the
collective past and create change in the present.

It is appealing for therapists and counselors to investigate the ingredients that advance their own professional growth and development (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992). A common theme that occurs for all counselors, as well as their clients, is that of growth and development across the different developmental stages. Life cycle changes and the developmental processes significantly affect our lives, our view of the world, and our interactions with others (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989).

O'Leary-Wiley and Ray (1986) investigated student counselors and counseling supervisors. They found that supervisee developmental level was positively related to supervised counseling experience. This provides credence that developmental level and experience are related. However, little attention has been extended to this aspect of counselor development, especially after the counselor has completed formal degree requirements and attained certification and/or licensure.

Theoretical Rationale

Hudson (1980) recounts that separating life into stages has historically occurred in Greek, Latin, and later Hebrew literature. Even Shakespeare's character, Jaques, in As You Like It, alludes to the growth and development of human life into stages when he declares (As You Like It, II, vii, 139-165):

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloons,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene o all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

As this well known passage demonstrates, human beings develop through sequential stages during the course of their lives. Developmental theory, from an individual perspective, will be discussed as rationale for this study.

**Individual Developmental Theory**

Researchers have investigated individual human growth and development and a number of theories have been proposed. Personality theorists, such as Freud, Jung, Adler, and others, emphasized periods of psychological development in the life of the child (Hall & Lindzey, 1978). Piaget (1952) addressed childhood cognition and maturation. Erikson expanded on Freud's psychoanalytic approach by developing the theory that social forces influence the person's development. Ambron and Brodzinsky (1982) note that Erikson maintained that a series of life crises occur in response to demands society places on the developing individual.
More specific to this study, Loevinger's ego development theory and Hunt's Conceptual Systems Theory (CST) will be combined with counselor experience and credentials to investigate relationships.

**Cognitive Developmental Theory**

Cognitive developmental theorists have a particular group of suppositions and principal constructs in common. These paradigms portray the type of cognizance and information counselors and clients might use at different stages of development. The framework shared by these theorists considers the counselor and client in terms of thought and processes. Rest (1986) listed three core concepts that create the essence of cognitive-developmental theories. These central ideas include (1) structural organization, (2) developmental sequence and (3) interactionalism.

**Structural Organization**

A person's problem-solving approach and structural organization are the behavioral aspect of greatest concern to the cognitive-developmentalist. These include (a) the information and cues the individual attends to most frequently, (b) the manner in which the individual contemplates or sorts the stimuli comprehended, and (c) the canons and integrating laws the individual utilizes to make sense out of the experiences to solve problems and to make decisions (Glassberg, 1979). Cognitive structures are internalized theoretical frameworks and problem solving approaches. The individual's conceptual basis will be the interceding structure which governs how the individual will decipher external reality.

**Developmental Sequence**
The following stage characteristics are held constant across most cognitive developmentalists.

(1) Each level is qualitatively different in design from the preceding level.

(2) Different structures fashion an invariant progression in individual growth and development.

(3) Each different and sequential manner of reflection forms a structural whole,

(4) Higher stages reintegrate the structures found at lower stages.

**Internalization**

Growth and development happen within the individual's existing cognitive structure so that the person will unearth more effective means to understand experiences. Individuals are continually confronted with environmentally created dissonance. This disequilibrium forces the individual to alter his cognitive structure. Sequential stages posed by different developmental theorists are not identical, however there are persistent likenesses. When describing these similarities, Loevinger (1976) explained, all of the concepts assign a theoretical continuum that is a developmental sequence and a magnitude of individual differences at any given age. All represent holistic views of personality and see behavior in terms of purpose and meaning. All conceptions are concerned with interpersonal relationships and with cognitions including self-concept.

Accordingly, cognitive-developmental theorists speculate that people's actions are regulated by an inner moderating cognitive process and that the caliber of such mediation will differ by age and stage of development. Also, individuals at elevated levels will operate at a more comprehensive and empathic level. Thus, cognitive developmental
theory provides a foundation from which this investigation will take place.

**Ego Development**

Loevinger began her investigation into ego development by, first, trying to understand the personality of mothers in terms of the family. Loevinger (1993) recounted some of her earliest research focused on women's attitudes toward the problems of family life. The findings, when test items didn't fit smoothly into the two basic (and popular for the time) categories of punitiveness and permissiveness, began to invoke a new perspective. From this start, Loevinger and colleagues attempted to measure women and mothers with a newly devised Authoritarian Family Ideology (AFI) scale in hopes that this would more accurately define the traits that were left unexplained by their original research. However, the researchers felt the AFI was less-than-satisfactory when compared to actual clinical experience with mothers. From this research grew the notion of ego development as a construct to more accurately investigate women's parental attitudes.

Loevinger defines stages of ego development as progression through the course of normal development from the pre-social/symbiotic stage to the integrated stage. She also supports the idea that ego development is interpersonal functioning and more advanced stages are characterized by pronounced flexibility, differentiation, tolerance for conflict and ambiguity, and conceptual complexity. These types of attributes are highly desirable in counselors (Robinson & Holliday, 1987).

**Conceptual Level**

Schroder, Driver, and Streufert (1967), in reviewing the early cultivation of
conceptual level (CL), gave credence to the view that CL was a bonafide concept in need of further research. They felt it would be more meaningful to compare subjects in terms of the level of complexity (conceptual level) each is capable of developing rather than subjects' ability to learn a response. CL was considered to be a more salient factor underlying learning ability.

Johnson & Heppner (1989) discuss counselor traits relative to cognitive processing of complex information gathering regarding clients. In New Zealand, Robinson & Holliday (1987) have provided insights that connect conceptual level with counselor skills. They suggest that cognitive processes and skills involved in problem understanding are as important as the manner in which counselors communicate with the client. Evidence points to more experienced counselors' ability to take in more information and process it more objectively (higher CL) in relation to additional incoming client details (Robinson & Holliday, 1987). Martin (1984) calls for additional research in cognitive mediation in counseling and Heppner and Krauskopf (1987) call for a closer examination of how counselors process information.

Harvey (1964) provided compelling evidence that conceptual structure and conceptual level are learned characteristics. This suggests counselors can improve their counseling skills and effectiveness through increasing conceptual level.

**Experience, Ego Development, and Conceptual Level**

Experience, ego development and conceptual level are interwoven human characteristics. Sprinthall (1994) summarized the importance between the relationship of these constructs associated with counselor adeptness:
"If the task at hand involves complex human relationship skills such as accurate empathy, the ability to read and flex, to select the appropriate model from the professional repertoire, then higher order psychological maturity across moral, ego, and conceptual development is clearly requisite."

Freed (1983) attempts to link experience with development, and life stage theories. She asserts that to be effective, counselors must weave between and among theories, picking and choosing combinations that are most compatible and applicable to the individuals served. This learning may take place over time and across many experiences. Freed (1983) goes on to say, "The greatest contribution these theorists [i.e., developmental, family systems, life cycle stage, object relations, self psychology, ego development] could make would be to comprehend the total life cycle, and to recognize the changes that occur with maturation" (p.180).

Epperson, Bushway, and Warman (1983) looked at client self-terminations in relation to counselor experience, gender, and problem recognition. Results indicated clients tended to self-terminate more frequently when problem recognition was absent. This finding was more evident when counselors were more experienced, highlighting the notion that there may be a negative relationship between counselor experience and counseling continuation when problem recognition is absent in more experienced counselors. The authors indicate that early termination occurred more frequently with female counselors than with male counselors and that this finding was consistent with previous research.
Insufficient developmental research has focused on the therapist or counselor as subject. Though some research has centered on student counselor growth during training (Heck & Davis, 1973; O'Leary-Wiley, 1986; Rosenthal, 1977; Holloway, 1987), little notice has been given to the working years beyond graduate school. Furthermore, limited examination regarding the impact of experience and credentials as well as professional functioning has been conducted (Guy, 1987). Given this relationship, the relationships between counselor growth and development, specifically ego development, conceptual development and experience merits investigation.

A more thorough understanding of counselors' experience related to ego development and conceptual level would help counselors understand themselves more completely. This study will examine the relationship between counselor experience related to ego development and conceptual level. Beneficially, this understanding will enable counselors to understand the necessity for continued training and experience, especially as related to the variables of ego development and conceptual level. Furthermore, resulting information will help educators who are preparing students for the field of counseling to promote student awareness regarding the importance of counseling experience and training to their own ego development and conceptual level. Findings will assist counselor educators to establish and refine graduate counselor education programs.

Leahy, Szymanski, and Linkowski (1993) suggest that the need for this type of research is important due to considerable expansion in the field of counseling encompassing places of employment, emerging populations of clientele, and new knowledge application because of legislative directives, programmatic changes, and field research. Insights
gleaned will heighten counselor's understanding of self. The same benefits may apply to practicing counselors and other human service professionals who are interested in their own professional growth and development.

The purpose of this study is to examine more closely the relationships between experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level of National Certified Counselors.

**Definition of Terms**

**National Certified Counselor (NCC):** Individual who has been credentialed through the National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. (NBCC) and is on the NBCC April 1996 mailing list.

**Ego Development:** Loewinger (1994) recalled why the term ego development was originally used in her research and what it means. "The term ego development was selected in the first place to denote what is involved in some broad aspect of personality development: motives, moral judgment, some aspect of cognitive complexity, interpersonal integration, and above all, ways of perceiving oneself and others."

**Conceptual Systems Theory (CST):** A conceptual system is a schema that provides the basis by which the individual relates to the environmental events s/he experiences (Harvey, Hunt, and Schroder, 1961).

**Conceptual Level (CL):** "A personal characteristic, indexing both cognitive complexity (differentiation, discrimination, and integration) as well as interpersonal maturity (increasing self-responsibility). A person at a higher Conceptual Level is more structurally complex, more capable of responsible actions, and, most important, more
capable of adapting to a changing environment than a person at a lower Conceptual Level" (Hunt, 1975, p. 218).

**Counselor Experience:** Amount of counselor experience was determined by number of years the respondent had been a National Certified Counselor. Experience was also identified by counseling setting. The three settings were community, school, and mental health (which was assumed to include private practice).

**Counselor Credentials:** Credentials were determined by highest academic degree and whether the National Certified Counselor (NCC) had a state license to practice counseling.

**Research Questions**

Specific research questions to be investigated included:

(1) Is the amount or type of counselor experience related to ego development of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCC) as measured by Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test (SCT) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled?

(2) Is the amount or type of counselor experience related to conceptual level of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCC) as measured by Hunt's Paragraph Completion Method (PCM)) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled?

(3) Are counselor degree and licensure credentials related to National Certified Counselor (NCC) ego development as measured by Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test (SCT) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are
controlled?

(4) Are counselor degree and licensure credentials related to National Certified Counselor (NCC) conceptual level as measured by Hunt's Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled?

Sample Description

The population for the study was comprised of National Certified Counselors from a comprehensive mailing list obtained from the National Board of Certified Counselors, Inc. There were approximately 24,300 National Certified Counselors at the time of this study.

Data Gathering Procedures

A mail survey format was used for the collection of data. Three instruments were mailed to 400 randomly selected National Certified Counselors. Sample subjects received a letter that explained the study and asked for their participation. The instruments used to gather data were a General Questionnaire, Sentence Completion Test (SCT), and Paragraph Completion Method (PCM). A written consent form was included in the survey. A returned signed consent form indicated subject's consent.

As a subtle incentive, gourmet tea bags were provided within each survey packet. It was suggested that the National Certified Counselor have a cup of tea while filling out the questionnaires. A small pencil was included in the survey packet for convenience. On each pencil a statement of gratitude was engraved, "NCC - thank you for participating."
Limitations of the Study

Several limitations exist for this study. First, a limitation inherent to correlational research design is that of inability to establish cause and effect relationships (Borg & Gall, 1989). When significant correlations are found to exist between two variables, other causal inferences can be established which are equally likely. Artifacts may occasionally contribute to the relationship rather than the independent variable(s) (Borg & Gall, 1989). A second limitation inherent to correlational design is that of over simplification. Research studies attempt to break down complex behavior or interactions into simpler, measurable elements. Consequently, a careful interpretation of findings was conducted to clearly express the results of the study. Third, general applicability of the results may be limited. Results were gathered from a national sample of National Certified Counselors and can only be generalized to that greater population. Different but similar groups, such as state licensed professional counselors, may share characteristics of National Certified Counselors. However, generalization of the data in this study to different groups can not be recommended. Fourth, subjects who chose to return the survey could be inherently more interested in personal growth and development than subjects who did not choose to return the survey. This may have biased the results, increasing representation of counselors with an interest in self-development versus counselors as a whole. Fifth, Loevinger (1994) warned that a problem in doing research related to ego development is that the people in most therapeutic settings represent a narrow range of ego levels.
Ethical Considerations

All participants in this study were fully informed of the purpose of the research project prior to participation. Informed written consent was received from participants at the time of their involvement. The Consent Form was included with the survey packet and introduced prior to requesting the subject complete the questionnaires.

Confidentiality, as per professional counseling ethics, was maintained throughout the study. All information disclosed was considered confidential. Confidentiality was maintained by assigning code numbers to National Certified Counselors and using these numbers on all data and evaluation tools. Names and numbers were accessible only to the researcher. All personal references that could be linked back to the National Certified Counselors in this study were eliminated following the investigation. National Certified Counselor subjects were given the option of receiving the study results. Subjects who signed the Request Form and returned it to the primary researcher will receive a summary of the research results.

None of the National Certified Counselors participating in this study requested the desire or need for counseling resulting from their participation in this research. The investigator had planned to refer any NCC subjects requesting counseling to another National Certified Counselor -- one in close proximity to the respondent. This would have been accomplished by matching caller’s zip code to NCC zip codes from the complete NBCC mailing list.

Summary

In the preceding chapter, the problem was described, justification was given to
conduct the study, a theoretical basis was established, definition of terms provided, research questions posed, the subject sample described, data gathering procedures explained, limitations explored, and ethical concerns considered.

Plan for the Study

Chapter Two includes a review of the literature associated with counselor experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level. Chapter Three provides the blueprint of this study to include population, design, instrumentation and methods. In Chapter Four, results are summarized. Chapter Five contains a discussion of results, further findings, limitations, and recommendations. Appendices come after the References.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In the preceding chapter an argument was made justifying the need to further research counselor characteristics in order to assist counselors in the process of growth and development, thereby improving their effectiveness with clients. Developmental theory and life stage development were given as frameworks for understanding the impact of counselor characteristics related to the counseling relationship. This chapter introduces research regarding counselor experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level.

Theoretical Introduction

The study of the child as an individual has been examined extensively from a number of different perspectives. Beginning with Freud and continuing with Jung, Adler, and other personality theorists, the importance of various periods in the psychological development of individuals has been emphasized (Hall & Lindzey, 1978). Piaget (1952) wrote about changes in cognition that occur as the child grows. Sheehy (1976) based her work on Levinson and addressed the struggles and changes faced by adults as they age. However, Erik Erikson's (1963) theory of the tasks of ego development was the first to introduce the concept of continuing psychological challenges into adulthood. Erikson's life cycle stages of development, though recognized as having established a significant niche in the study of ego psychology, is also said to be vague and unclear. Rapaport (Rapaport in Erikson 1959) cautioned: "Erikson's theory (like most of Freud's) ranges

20
over phenomenological, specifically clinical psychoanalytic-psychological propositions, without systematically differentiating among them."

Loevinger (1969) continued the study of ego development and developed a more precise theory that is considered clear and measurable. Hauser (1976, 1993) comments, that Loevinger's ego development theory provides a clear series of steps along a continuum. He also asserts that Loevinger's design permits orderly experimental research. Oja's (1979) use of the term, "complexity" to describe a quality of Loevinger's ego development theory suggests a link between conceptual level and ego development.

Hunt (1987) reflects on the beginning of his research career when working with Rotter (1954) and learning theory. Hunt, near the beginning of his career, conceptualized that behavior was a function of the person's interactions within the environment. Later, Hunt (1966) began investigating his newly formed Conceptual Systems Theory (CST) and later focused more specifically on the notion of Conceptual Level (CL) or the level of complexity a person is able to utilize to think, contemplate, and resolve problems. Hunt, Butler, Noy, and Rosser (1978) designed a semi-projective instrument that consists of six paragraph stems that subjects are asked to answer in written sentence format. From respondents' answers, a score based on four levels of CL is determined.

In the following section, relevant research articles will be reviewed and critiqued in regard to counselor experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level.

Experience and Credentials

Kunce and Angelone (1990) investigated personality characteristics of counselors by comparing practicing rehabilitation counselors with counseling students. Using the
Personal Styles Inventory, the researchers found significant differences between the two groups on 17 of 27 personality scores.

In the area of cognition, rehabilitation counselors and student counselors had very different patterns. Rehabilitation counselors' styles of thinking were more oriented to introversion and stability. Significantly higher scores for rehabilitation counselors were found on traits such as individualistic, empirical, realistic, and convergent. Counseling students scored above average in the traits labeled as ideological, abstract, and divergent. The authors discuss the impact that job roles, task responsibilities, and work experience have on counselor personality traits. Findings appear to coincide with Loevinger's development sequence of ego stages; as one grows and develops, a higher likelihood exists that ego development advances. As student counselors move into the world of counseling work, they are likely to change. Yet, this study suggests that counseling students become convergent rather than divergent in their personality styles. It appears a combination of convergence and divergence skills would be found in Loevinger's more advanced stages of ego development.

Epperson, Bushway and Warman (1983) focused their research on client self-terminations and the relationship between counselor gender, counselor experience, and counselor problem recognition. Subjects in this investigation were students who initiated counseling at a large northwestern university counseling center and 34 counselors who worked at the center over the course of three semesters. Counselors consisted of 19 staff members or psychologists (10 male and 9 female), 3 interns (1 male and 2 female), 12 practicum student counselors (5 male and 7 female). Practicum student counselors were
experiencing their first or second supervised practicum, the interns and 5 staff members had earned master's degrees, and the remaining 14 counselors had obtained doctoral degrees.

Data collected on 758 clients and their respective counselors included two of the variables proposed in this study: counselor gender and counselor experience. Counselor experience was determined by level of training, years of experience, and function they play in their counseling setting. Unfortunately, due to the small number of counselors (34) groupings of interns, staff members, and affiliated psychologists were made. This grouping decreased the sensitivity of experience as a factor.

Clients and counselors, separately, were given a 21 item presenting problem check list following an initial interview with their client. They were instructed to pick the best presenting problem that best fit their experimental counseling experience. Blind raters analyzed the counselor/client responses. Additionally, a second blind rater was used to corroborate findings.

As the authors predicted, male counselors had lower rates (20%) of early terminations than did female counselors (33%). An earlier study by Epperson (1981) found similar findings. Interestingly, the interaction of counselor experience and problem recognition was mixed. Rates of premature termination for less experienced counselors were not very dependent on counselor ability to recognize the problem; 27% rate of early termination with recognition and 32% rate without recognition. Conversely, early termination for more experienced counselors was very dependent on the counselor's ability to correctly recognize the client's problem, 17% premature termination rate with
recognition and 59% premature termination rate without recognition. The three parameters that best predicted continuation of counseling were counselor gender, problem recognition, and counselor experience combined with problem recognition, with the main effect of counselor experience controlled to preserve the hierarchical nature of the model. Epperson, Bushway, and Warman (1983) provide empirical evidence that counselor experience, including credentials and years of experience, the skill to recognize presenting client problems, and counselor gender are variables that influence the counseling process.

O'Leary-Wiley and Ray (1986) explored the relationship between counseling supervision with supervisee developmental level in an attempt to discover salient traits in "the lifelong process of becoming a master counselor" (p. 444). Supervision dyads (N = 107) from nine different university counseling centers were analyzed. Supervisors completed the Supervision Level Scale (SLS) and supervisees reported their level of satisfaction and offered their opinion of their own learning through supervision. Results suggested that supervisee developmental level was positively correlated with the average number of semesters the supervisee received counseling supervision (i.e., experience). This finding did not hold up for those counselor trainees that did not receive a supervised counseling experience. Further findings indicate that because of the range of training experience evident at each developmental level, developmental level and training level (experience) are not interchangeable variables.

O'Leary-Wiley and Ray (1986) suggest that subsequent research should identify other factors that change across developmental levels. This current investigation responded to their charge by exploring the developmental characteristics of ego and
conceptual level coupled with counselor experience and credentials.

Leahy et al. (1993) explored certified rehabilitation counselors. Specifically, they investigated counselors' perceived importance of knowledge areas underlying credentials of rehabilitation counselors as related to effective counselor practices. Subjects had a minimum of 5 years of counseling experience, differing levels of education, and practiced in a variety of work settings.

2,478 counselors were sent a complete survey questionnaire packet along with certification renewals. 1,535 questionnaires were returned: a response rate of 62%. Women comprised 60% and men 40% of the respondents. Educational levels were divided with an emphasis focused more on rehabilitation related programs and credentialed programs. Subjects' educational level ranged from baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees. The most prominent group was master's level followed by baccalaureate, and doctoral representing less than 2% of the sample. Direct service providers accounted for 53% of the sample, whereas 27% of respondents performed supervisory or education/training roles. Respondents worked in a variety of counseling settings: Mental health settings and hospitals 13%, schools 6%, public or state-federally funded 18%, and private for profit community employment settings 43%. Finally, subjects reported their years of experience as 1-7 years, 25%; 8-13 years, 38%; and 14 plus years, 37%.

The purpose of their study was to examine and validate the importance of knowledge areas coupled with practice. Counselors' perceived level of importance of knowledge areas was measured across a variety of characteristics: gender, education level,
job title, job level, and years of experience. Gender was significant ($p < .01$), with women indicating three knowledge areas important to counseling over men: medical and psychological aspects of disability; family, gender, and multicultural; and environmental and attitudinal.

No significant differences were found at the $P < .01$ level of significance regarding educational level. The authors point out that these findings may be misleading; findings cannot be construed as proof of the null hypothesis, as respondents represent a highly educated group (high education homogeneity).

Differences in employment setting lead to differences in knowledge importance. Counselors in different settings rate areas of knowledge importance differently. It appears professionals in each work setting have different ideas as to what counseling knowledge is most crucial.

No significant differences ($p < .01$) were found across years of experience on any of the knowledge importance domains. Leahy, Szymanski, and Linkowski (1993) provide groundwork for the current research under investigation. The researchers investigate gender, experience (level of education and number of years) among other counselor traits related to perceived knowledge of counseling related information. Though significant findings were not found related to experience or education, the researchers did not investigate developmental character traits such as ego development or cognitive complexity.

A review of research related to counselor experience and credentials and a variety of other factors was conducted. Conflicting evidence is found in the literature related to
the importance of counselor experience and credentials. The studies reviewed above indicate that the significance of counselor experience and credentials is dependent on the variables to which these factors are compared. Counselor experience and credentials have not yet been compared to ego development and conceptual level. This study explores aspects of this undertaking.

**Ego Development**

Loevinger constructed a model of ego development with the idea that adulthood may engender a succession of changes in cognitive complexity that may be crucial to comprehending adaptive processes (Labourvie-Vief, 1994). Loevinger (1994) explains that the term *ego development* was originally selected in order to describe the characteristics involved in personality development: motives, moral judgement, cognitive complexity, interpersonal integration, and most important, methods of perceiving oneself and others.

In her theory of ego development, Loevinger (1976) has conceptualized ten sequential, invariantly ordered, hierarchical stages. Assigning an ordinal value to each stage results in 10 interval values. Loevinger (1976) substantiates the use of ego levels as interval measures stating, "experience has shown that about the same results are obtained by item-sum scores. They build in an assumption of an interval scale.... it seems to give as satisfactory scores as any other method, and it probably does not introduce gross distortions." The following is a chronological listing of Loevinger's stages: pre-social/symbiotic, impulsive, self-protective, self-protective/conformist, conformist, self-aware, conscientious, individualistic, autonomous, and integrated (see Figure 2.1).
Figure 2.1
Ego Development Scale
According to Loevinger (1976)
and Border, Fong, & Neimeyer (1986)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinal Value</th>
<th>Ego Level</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I-1</td>
<td>Pre-social/Symbiotic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I-2</td>
<td>Impulsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Self-Protective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Delta/3</td>
<td>Self-Protective/Conformist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I-3</td>
<td>Conformist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I-3/4</td>
<td>Self-Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I-4</td>
<td>Conscientious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I-4/5</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I-5</td>
<td>Autonomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I-6</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each phase is more complex than the last and none can be omitted in the course of development. However, different people may stabilize at a specific stage, resulting in a lack of development beyond that stage. Adult representatives of each stage can be identified, who are then depicted in the nomenclature of the properties distinctive to the stage at which they stabilized.

Loevinger (1994) describes the stages as being indicative of people's behaviors and, more importantly, structures. Structure implies a means of perceiving, knowing, acting, and thinking. Loevinger (1994) provides descriptions of structures and behaviors at each of her stages (Figure 2.2). For example, a person at the Conformist level tends to speak, and presumably to think, in terms of cliches, often moralistic ones.
Interpersonal interaction is seen primarily in terms of behaviors rather than in terms of feelings. Often interpersonal behavior is described as just talking.

**Figure 2.2**

Name and Characteristics of Ego Development Stages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-social/Symbiotic</td>
<td>The stage characteristic of newborn infants and severely regressed psychotics, in which an individual is incapable of discerning self from others. Symbiotic relationship with parent is retained and self-differentiation begins. These are pre-verbal stages, making measurement difficult (Hauser, 1976).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulsive</td>
<td>The individual is egocentric and absorbed with gratifying physical needs. Impulses are punished or rewarded (external), but regulated by internal rules. This is the first stage measurable with a verbal instrument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Protective</td>
<td>Individual is dependent, demanding, egocentric and conceptually simplistic; sees others as sources of supply. Behavior is regulated by rules and punishment; obstacles are external; and identifiable feelings are limited. The individual attempts to control others and doesn't own dishonest actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Protective/Conformist</td>
<td>A transitional stage in which the most predominant theme is concrete, conventional sex roles. An individual's submission and compliance to social norms is founded in rudimentary and absolute rules. Feelings are quasi-physiological; cleanliness and physical appearance are important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformist</td>
<td>The person obeys rules because they are rules, a conformist. Self-development gives way to relationships as more important. Attitudes, thoughts, and roles are concrete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Aware</td>
<td>A transitional stage in which the individual permits exceptions to rules and discerns multiple possibilities in circumstances, although still in terms of conventional classifications. The increase in self-awareness allows some discrimination of self from the group. Interpersonal interactions are depicted in terms of feelings or attributes. This is likely the modal level of young adults (ages 18-25) (Loevinger, 1985)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conscientious</td>
<td>A stage in which the individual is immersed with accomplishment and responsibility, and self-criticism by internalized moral principles. An individual has a richly differentiated inner life, a perception of a prolonged time outlook, and a elevated facility to discriminate between others. Psychological causality is fathomed. Interpersonal relations are established on deeper feelings and the needs of others. This may be the modal stage for most graduate students (Swenson, 1980).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>A transitional stage in which an individual is increasingly cognizant of friction between others' needs and one's own needs and of their own internal struggles. Predominant themes are a intensified sensation of individuality and a regard for emotional autonomy. Interpersonal relationships are appreciated and are seen as continuing or changing over time. There is a separation between process and outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>Stage of cognitive complexity in which the individual is able to cope with inner conflict and value paradoxes. Individual differences are cherished; contention is accepted as part of the human condition. A person recognizes the need of others for independence and permits others to be themselves. The individual has patience for ambiguity; is preoccupied with self-fulfillment; and wants to be pragmatic, unbiased, and unprejudiced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>A stage in which the individual encourages the growth and development of others, having accepted and learned to handle complexities and paradoxes. The primary aim is achieving an integrated identity. There is existential humor, value for justice, and idealism, and reconciliation to one's destiny. Few people achieve this level, which resembles Maslow's self-actualized person.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Loevinger & Wessler, 1970; Loevinger, 1979; Swenson, 1980; Borders, Fong, & Neimeyer, 1986; and Jennings & Armsworth, 1992.

Loevinger characterizes the substance of the ego as, "the striving to master, to integrate, to make sense of experience is not one ego function among many but the essence of the ego" (Loevinger, 1969, p. 85). Oja (1979) points out a quality that makes Loevinger's definition of ego different from psychoanalytic definitions. Conceptually,
ego development is a series of steps along a continuum of differentiation and complexity. A second quality is also apparent; Loevinger's demarcation, by design, permits systematic empirical research (Hauser, 1976). Loevinger claims a "unitary" nature of her scheme in describing the ego as providing the frame of reference that structures one's world and within which one perceives the world. The ego is an "inner logic" which maintains its stability and identity and its structure by selective inattention to factors inconsistent with its current ego level (Loevinger, 1969). Loevinger describes the defining characteristics of the successive stages of ego development in terms of impulse control, interpersonal style, conscious preoccupation and cognitive style.

Aronoff, Stollak, and Woike (1994) studied undergraduate psychology students in order to investigate the hypothesis that the breadth of responsiveness to a social event depends on adaptive abilities that allow an individual to experience subjective states evoked by the interaction. Focused on counselors, the study considers the notion that counselors' reactions to their clients hinges upon counselor adaptive capability which may be subject to unconscious personal biases. Results indicated that more ego-adaptable subjects made greater contact with others, became more acutely occupied with the task, communicated their subjective states through elevated cognitive and behavioral fantasy, and reacted more intensely across a wider range of emotion than did less adaptable subjects.

Sullivan, McCullough, and Stager (1970) in an early study looked into the relationships between ego, conceptual, and moral development. They found that, as predicted, moral development, conceptual level and ego development followed age
parameters; as age increased so did these characteristics. They suggested further investigation to corroborate their findings and to discover the relationships between these three variables.

Borders, Fong, and Neirmeyer (1986) studied 63 graduate counseling students, ranging in age from 21-51, to determine the relationship between perception of clients to ego development and level of experience. Although no significant relationships were found, there was a suggested relationship between students' ego levels and the content of their perceptions of clients. More precisely, counseling student subjects who measured at the Self-Aware (I-3/4) ego level were more likely to use more psychological descriptions than did other students. On the other hand, subjects scoring at the Individualistic (I-4/5) level better understood mutuality of relationships. These same students used more interaction descriptive statements and were gravitating toward an increased awareness of interdependency.

This study also provides some descriptive characteristics that may describe counseling students in terms of ego development. Most subjects were functioning at or above the Conscientious (I-4) level of ego development. At this stage individuals use internalized moral principles, understand psychological causality, sense a longer time perspective and view interpersonal relationships in terms of deeper feelings and the need for others (Border, Fong, and Neimeyer, 1986).

Drawbacks to Border, Fong, and Neimeyer’s (1986) research, perhaps hindering their efforts in finding statistically significant results, consist of selecting a local sample from a convenient group of students rather than random selection from a wider range of
students. Additionally, the investigators studied students rather than practicing counselors. Ego development stage may reveal differences more clearly delineated once subjects progress and move beyond the role of student.

Bernier (1980) conducted a pilot study on in-service teachers and counselors who were involved in an in-service training and found them at a mean ego level of I-3/4 (Self-Aware); this stage has also been reported by other researchers to be the most predominant adult ego level (Hauser, 1976; Loevinger, 1976). Bernier (1980) discusses the notion that because most subjects were at the I-3/4 ego level, it may be a particularly stable level and advancement beyond it may be more difficult.

McNergney and Satterstrom (1984) also explored student teachers and their characteristics related to performance. Their study sought the effects of seven demographic and psychological characteristics of elementary school student teachers and their student teaching performances. Character variables included conceptual level and ego development, among others. Results suggested that student teacher performance was dependent on level of ego development (r = .38, p < .05) but only to a minimal degree on the other measures. Conceptual level was positively correlated with performance but not at a significant level.

The sample was predominantly female student teachers (52 females and 4 males). The sample's limited diversity, decreases the ability to generalize the results. A broader cross-section of subjects would be beneficial for external validity. Measures used were the Paragraph Completion Method for conceptual level and the Constantinople Test for ego development. To further validate the reliability of the relationship of ego
development on performance across instruments, the Sentence Completion Test was used in this study.

In a longitudinal study of 90 women, early adult measures of personality characteristics, SAT verbal scores, flexibility and middle life nodal events were compared with middle life ego level (Helson & Roberts, 1994). The researchers found that ego development during adulthood is substantiated and that ego level was somewhat predictable by earlier measures of SAT verbal ability, psychological characteristics, and life experiences. Difficult nodal life events experienced by the subjects, that involved the development of new schema (accommodation rather than assimilation), were most strongly predictive of ego levels. Higher ego levels were not found to be related to higher flexibility as expected. However, the instrument used was the California Psychological Inventory (CPI). The investigators postulated that flexibility on this instrument may be a characteristic that involves receptivity to change but also difficulties to commitment to change. They also note that flexibility was related to psychological mindedness and that this relationship may have influenced ego level indirectly.

The present study proposed that a different measure (i.e., SCT), which measures like characteristics of flexibility, be used in association with counselor's perspective (i.e., ego development). Furthermore, both male and female subjects will be investigated to determine if differences exist according to gender.

**Conceptual Level**

Hunt (1987) reviews the process in which he nurtured and developed Conceptual Systems Theory (CST). He recounts that, as a doctoral student, he studied under Rotter.
Hunt (1987) corrects published accounts that Bandura and Walters were the founders of social learning. Hunt states, "Most psychologists think that social learning was concocted by Bandura and Walters (1963) and remember Rotter primarily for his internal-external locus of control model." However, Rotter's social learning theory preceded Bandura and Walter and was a personality theory of generalized formulas. It was being developed in the 1950, well before Bandura and Walters published in 1963.

Hunt (1987) asserts that his Conceptual Systems Theory (CST) provides an interactive account of how persons might become more independent. Hunt bases CST partly on Lewin's (1935) well recognized formula, \( B = f(PE) \). \( B = f(PE) \) describes human behavior as a function of the interaction between the person and the environment (Lewin, 1935, p. 73). Rotter's social learning theory and Lewin's theory provide the foundation from which Conceptual Systems Theory was developed.

Harvey, Hunt, and Schroder (1961) further developed CST as a theory of personality development in an attempt to describe a person's level of cognitive conceptual complexity. They described it as, "A conceptual system .... that provides the basis by which the individual relates to the environmental events he experiences" (Harvey, Hunt, and Schroder, 1961, p. 244-245). Later, in a 1985 review of the literature relevant to CST, Stoppard and Miller summarize CST as a personality theory that highlights individual variations in social cognition within a developmental framework. It presents a stage-sequence version of cognitive change akin to those of Kohlberg and Loevinger.

The notion of Conceptual Level (CL) developed from CST. Hunt (Hunt & Sullivan, 1974; Hunt, 1975) proposed that CL explains a person's behavior as being a
function of the unique experiences s/he encounters and the level of cognitive complexity at which a person is able to process those experiences.

Specifically, Hunt (1975) described CL as:

"a person characteristic, indexing both cognitive complexity (differentiation, discrimination, and integration) as well as interpersonal maturity (increasing self-responsibility). A person at a higher Conceptual Level is more structurally complex, more capable of responsible actions, and, most important, more capable of adapting to a changing environment than a person at a lower Conceptual Level (p.218).

The above definition suggests the notion that higher CL scores are more desirable than lower scores. Of the original trio of CST researchers, Hunt initiated person/environment research, as a component of the CST model, in the educational arena. Since Hunt's induction of CL research, he and other researchers have looked more closely at CL coupled with other aspects of the learning process. Additionally, conceptual level has been investigated in relationship to counseling psychology.

Connecting Lewin's interaction formula and Hunt's notion of CL, Holloway & Wampold (1986) offers a stage model. Their three primary axioms consist of: (1) conceptual level as a cognitive structure in thought processing, (2) environmental structure, and (3) matching of individual CL level and environment (degree of structure). Furthermore, McCullen (1987) offered the insight that for each level in the stage model, the principal objective is to deal with the equilibrium/disequilibrium or matching/mismatching of the environments for each stage.

From extensive study, Hunt (1971) made modifications to his model of conceptual development. The model consists of four conceptual level stages (see Figure 2.3).
### Figure 2.3
Hunt's Four Stages of Conceptual Complexity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Self-centered, unorganized stage before incorporation of cultural standards</td>
<td>Negatively unsocialized; ego centric; impulsive actions; persons who oppose and evade impositions from external sources; Ambiguity can't be accepted and facts are processed in a elementary, concrete manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Learning the ground rules or cultural standards which apply to everyone</td>
<td>Polarized or dichotomous processing (right-wrong or good-bad); individuals are interested in acting in a socially admissible manner, deference to authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Learning about oneself and how one is distinct from generalized standards</td>
<td>Open to others' ideas; recognizes and evaluates alternatives, but does not integrate them into a solution; striving for independence; increased tolerance; Absolute thinking is questioned and challenged. Individuals are more accepting of others' opinions, are interested with others' ideas, are concerned with their own thoughts and feelings, and strive for autonomy. Tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty increases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Applying self-anchored dimensions to an empathetic understanding of other persons and differences between them. Placing the dimensions applicable to self and others into meaningful, integrated solutions</td>
<td>Considers and weighs alternatives... integrates them into a solution; concern for both own and others' ideas...seeks compromise when possible; accepts responsibility and consequences for decisions'; marked by an interdependence between one's self and one's environment and incorporates clear understanding of the self, a discerning openness to external intrusion, and a refrain from dependency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hunt's conceptual level model uses a continuum from concrete to abstract levels of conceptualization and thinking. Concrete tangible thinkers use limited reasoning alternatives to consider behavior and to make sense of person/environment interactions. The use of dichotomous and opposite position poles (e.g., bad versus good, lazy versus industrious) are more apt to be used at this lower conceptual level. However, on the other end of the spectrum, Holloway and Wampold (1987) describe abstract conceptualization as the person's capability to enlarge the number of possible alternatives in evaluation and conduct, reacting more relativistically and less dichotomously as a function of person and environment.

The concept of higher CL scores being more desirable than low CL scores is especially applicable in the field of counseling. Oja (1980) reviewed abstract conceptualization and related characteristics associated with the higher end of the Hunt's conceptual level continuum. Oja (1980) found that abstract thinking is associated with greater flexibility, greater threshold for stress, a broader assortment of coping behaviors, and creativity. A counselor equipped with these attributes, due to a higher order of CL, inherently has a stronger chance of offering these coping qualities to clientele. Other researchers have found CL relationships relevant to counselor/teacher related skills and performance. Hunt and Joyce (1967) discovered that more complex or higher CL was related to style of instruction. Joyce, Weil, and Wald (1973) identified a link of CL to ability to acquire varied teaching repertoires. Moellenberg and Williams (1969) found a correlation with role perception of school administrators and conceptual level. Silver (1975) reviews the finding that higher CL is related to more openness to others'
perspectives. Silver (1975) investigated school principals' conceptual complexity levels and found relationships between higher CL and person-oriented leadership styles and increased interactions with staff members.

Holloway and Wampold (1986) conducted a meta-analysis to review 24 studies regarding counselor conceptual level and counseling-related tasks. The authors' investigation focused on three areas: (1) the effect of CL on counselor performance (i.e., higher levels of CL perform superior), (2) matching CL and structure of the environment (i.e., higher structure environment individuals perform better than lower structure environment individuals), and (3) interaction of CL and environment structure. The authors used a psychological abstract computer search program called PsycINFO to examine studies related to Conceptual Systems Theory (CST) from 1967-1983. Two doctoral counseling psychology students were used to quantify methodological characteristics of the studies and to calculate effect size. A number of methodological characteristics were teased out: sample size, age, population, situation (subjects in the role of counselee, counselor, etc.), random or non-random assignment, ratio of smallest and largest sample size cell, ecological validity, instrumentation, complexity of task, evaluation of design, CL instrument, assignment to CL group, inter-rater reliability of CL instrument and complexity discrepancy. A comparison of means was made of different levels of CL in each study.

Holloway and Wampold's (1986) findings corroborated that for type A studies (CL compared to counselor related tasks not taking environmental structure into consideration) high CL subjects perform better than low CL subjects. However, for type
B studies (CL compared to counselor related tasks and environment structure and the match of CL and environment) the same finding was not found. In type B studies, however, evidence was found supporting the notion that subjects in higher environmental structure performed better than subjects in lower environmental structures. The hypothesis that subjects in suitable matched conditions (i.e., high CL counselors matched with low structure and low CL counselors matched with high structure) perform better than subjects in mismatched conditions was also substantiated.

When Holloway and Wampold (1986) looked more closely at the different results between type A and type B studies regarding the same hypothesis (i.e., higher CL subjects will perform better than lower CL subjects) they found several variables that might help understand this conflicting finding. In type A studies, differences in environmental structure were not considered. More carefully designed type A studies had smaller effect size, and experimenter expectations may have affected the results because type A study researchers were attempting to find the hypothesis in question. In type B studies, experimenters were not interested in the above hypothesis, increasing the likelihood that experimenter bias was not a confounding variable. Effect sizes for type B studies were not affected by moderating variables, and there was a greater number of type B studies creating more robust results. The authors concluded after investigating this discrepancy that type B study results were more credible.

Holloway and Wampold's (1986) meta-analytic study may be the only meta-analysis focused on CL and counselors. Therefore, the study merits serious consideration. The authors' overall effort and methodology were sound. However,
several limitations were noted. Given the need to categorize studies into type A and type B methodology, several studies not matching either type were thrown out. Forced omission of other researchers' missing data was another drawback hindering validity. A third limiting factor was the fact that the ratio of effect size was quite large given the small number of studies suggesting an unknown, but large, dependency among the effect size measures. Finally, given the sample was not drawn from a homogeneous population, generalizability to counselors is limited.

In another study focused on counselor characteristics and CL, Holloway and Wolleat (1980) explored counselor CL and hypothesis formation. Thirty-seven first semester graduate counseling students were given the PCM and then asked to view a counseling video one month later. Immediately following the video, subjects were then given the Clinical Assessment Questionnaire (CAQ) in order to measure clinical hypothesis formation.

Results showed that CL, not professional experience, is associated with the caliber and clearness of expression evident in counselors' clinical analysis and the quantity of different questions offered regarding client behavior. The findings also suggest a significant relationship between counselor's CL and clinical assessments regarding counselor's search for information.

Although Holloway and Wolleat's (1980) research was based on a small sample size of 37, the basic analogue nature of the design, and the limited sample pool, findings may be relevant to support the need for continued education for counselors. Counselors can be trained how to construct problem identification issues rather than simply what to
think about a particular client in a specific situation.

Suit and Paradise (1985) explored the effects of four different types of counselor-offered metaphors, varying in conceptual complexity, on measures of counselors CL, perceived empathy, regard, expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. Eighty volunteer introductory psychology undergraduate students (32 males, 48 females) were divided into two groups (high CL and low CL) based on CL score using the Hunt et al. (1978) PCM. Subjects were then randomly assigned to one of four treatment groups and presented with a 10 minute audio tape excerpt of a counseling session. Audio tapes were similar except for the four different metaphors, at the end, acting as the independent variables or treatments: complex metaphor, narrative analogy, cliche, and facilitative response.

The most notable finding was that high CL subjects were able to more accurately discern counselor intent when the counselor used the complex metaphor. This is consistent with Reider (1972) and Sharpe's (1968) previous anecdotal and experiential research where they recommend caution regarding the use of metaphors in the counseling relationship.

The homogeneous population and sample, the analogue nature of the study, and the limited use of only four metaphors place restrictions on the generalizability and external validity of the data.

Strohmer, Biggs, Haase, and Keller (1983) investigated the influence of counselor CL, general client observation, and specific client observation on the effect of hypothesis formation and the number of questions counselors use to assess these hypotheses.
Subjects included 20 female and 15 male volunteer master's level counselor training students at a large northeastern university. The mean age of subjects was 23 years of age. Six case folders were developed for hypothetical clients. Clients were all female sophomores. Case folder information was varied to provide different independent variables: consistently positive and healthy client, consistently negative unhealthy client, and inconsistent information (one scale indicating disturbance and the other scale not indicating disturbance). Clients were also described as having a physical disability or no disability. Then the six case folders were constructed by crossing the two factors.

CL was assessed using Hunt's (1978) PCM prior to exposure to the case folders. Subjects were divided into high and low CL groups based on a median split. After completing the PCM, subjects were given the six client folders and asked to form hypotheses about why the client came in for counseling and to list the questions they would use to perform an interview to test the subject identified hypotheses. A 2 (High CL/low CL) X 2 (disability/ non-disability) X 3 (positive/negative/ inconsistent psychological information) analysis of variance with one between-factor (CL) was conducted on quality of hypotheses and quantity of non-respondent questions posed. Results indicated that no significant findings were found in regard to CL and quality of hypotheses or number of non-redundant questions generated. These findings are incongruent with Holloway and Wolleat's (1980) findings. One explanation may be found in the procedural differences when rating hypotheses. Additionally, this study controlled gender on a fairly homogeneous population (using only female master's level counseling students). However, this doesn't offer an explanation for why there wasn't
a significant relationship between CL and number of questions produced. This contradictory finding suggests further investigation is needed to understand the role CL plays in counselor behavior.

In another study, Berg and Stone (1980) explored the effects of CL and supervision structure on counselor skill development. One hundred female students were given the Hunt's (1978) PCM. An extreme scores approach was used to separate the top 30 scores and the bottom 30 scores. The remaining sixty female undergraduate students were randomly assigned to high structured supervision, low structured supervision, or no supervision (control group) with 10 high CL and 10 low CL subjects in each group. Reflection of feeling results indicated significant findings with high CL subjects emitting more facilitative responses than low CL. Quantifiable measures of reflection of feeling responses showed that both high and low CL performances were significantly greater than the control group. Additionally, low CL subjects in high structured supervision groups scored significantly higher than did low CL in the control group. Empathy results suggested that low CL subjects receiving high structure had significantly higher levels than controls. Regarding perceived amount learned, a significant finding was that low CL subjects who received high structure reported they learned more compared with low structure subjects. Also, both low CL subjects in high structure and high CL subjects in low structure groups indicated they learned more than did controls.

In summary, low CL subjects reported profiting more from high structure supervision in terms of greater satisfaction, supervisor helpfulness, and amount learned. Also, low CL controls preferred high supervision structure whereas high CL controls
preferred less structure. These results support the CL matching model, highlighted in Holloway & Wampold (op cit.) most notably within the low CL groups.

Berg and Stone's (1980) research leaves a number of points requiring critical attention. Their method of dividing subjects into two extreme groups raises the issue of cutoff point when differentiating high and low CL subjects. Experiment group's scores, when compared to controls, may have been affected by additional exposure of reflection by supervisors rather than supervision and feedback specifically. The analogue approach does not represent real counseling experiences nor does it accurately represent longer-term supervision. Retention of skills and attributes associated with the treatment variables was not pursued. And, finally, generalizability of results is limited.

Stoppard and Miller (1985) in a review of the CL literature suggest that future investigators need to have a large pool of therapists from which to select different CL types. This investigation sampled NCC's from a national population resulting in a variety of CL levels represented in the sample.

The above studies, when compiled, offer preliminary findings that necessitate more in-depth and continued investigation regarding counselor conceptual level and ego development as related to experience and training.

**Ego Development and Conceptual Level**

The above review of the literature was conducted in order to identify research relevant to each of the major variables being investigated in this study. Overlaps and relationships between the variables have been suggested. Regarding ego development and conceptual level, overlapping findings suggest a relationship. First, it appears obvious
that a relationship exists based on the definition of each construct. Each uses the other to help define itself and its origin. This is seen clearly when conceptual level is considered with the construct of cognitive complexity. Oja's (1979) use of the term complexity to describe a quality of Loevinger's ego development theory suggests a link between conceptual level and ego development. Furthermore, research has supported this relationship. Labouvie-Vief (1993) states that in her own work, she has discovered that ego level and emotional maturity form a factor that is related to cognitive complexity. Individuals high in cognitive complexity demonstrate independence, dominance, social responsibility, lack of prejudice, and most important to this proposed study, advanced ego level.

Noem (1993) challenges Loevinger's notion that ego stages are associated with increased maturity. The author asserts that ego stage and conceptual complexity are harmoniously linked through the developmental process. Noem's (1993) research on ego stage and psychopathology argues that each elevation in ego complexity creates the possibility to convert vulnerabilities to establish more mature changes. On the other hand, each elevation also allows the occasion for more complex and internalized self-destructive behavior.

Three studies reviewed earlier suggest a relationship between ego development and conceptual level. In the first, McNergney and Satterstrom (1984) found a tendency that elementary school student teacher performance was related to level of ego development. Though not at a level of statistical significance, conceptual level was positively correlated with performance. The second study, cited by Silver (1975), found higher conceptual
level being related to openness to others' perspectives. This openness to others' perspectives is indicative of Loevinger's (1976) higher levels of ego development (i.e., Conscientious, Individualistic Transition, Autonomous, and Integrated). Finally in the third investigation, Holloway and Wampold (1986) completed a meta-analysis reviewing counselor conceptual level and counseling-related tasks in 24 studies. Hypotheses related to environmental structure and counselor performance were investigated. Some evidence was found to indicate that counselors in higher structured settings, or settings matched to their conceptual level, performed better. Loevinger's earlier ego stages (i.e., Conformist and prior stages) identify characteristics that indicate the need for higher structure (e.g., obedience and conformity to social norms based on simple rules).

![Figure 2.4 Comparison of Loevinger's and Hunt's Stages of Development (adapted from Oja, 1980)]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EGO DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>CONCEPTUAL LEVEL</th>
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<tr>
<td>LOEVINIGER</td>
<td>HUNT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presocial</td>
<td>Unilateral Dependence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Symbiotic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impulsive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Protective Transition</td>
<td>Negative Independence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conformist</td>
<td>Mutual Dependence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Aware Transition</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conscientious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualistic Transition</td>
<td>Interdependence</td>
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<td>Autonomous</td>
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<td>Integrated</td>
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Some evidence has been found connecting ego development and conceptual level. However more research is needed to more clearly understand this relationship.
Leahy, Szymanski, and Linkowski (1993) studied rehabilitation counselors in an attempt to examine counselors' perceived level of importance in empirically identified knowledge domains (i.e., vocational counseling and consultation services, medical and psychosocial aspects of disability, individual and group counseling, program evaluation and research, case management and service coordination, family, gender and multicultural issues, foundations of rehabilitation, workers' compensation, environment and attitudinal barriers, and assessment) in relation to counselor characteristics (e.g., gender, educational level and relatedness, job title, job setting, job level, and years of experience).

Significant differences (p < .01) were found in three knowledge domains with respect to counselor gender: medical and psychosocial aspects of disability; family, gender, and multicultural; and environmental and attitudinal barriers. Women rated these three knowledge area significantly more important than did men.

Knowledge importance differences were found according to employment setting. Significant differences were discovered in all domains (p < .01). Counselors in mental health settings rated the importance of knowledge in Consultive Services and Vocational Counseling as less important than counselors in private-for-profit, non-profit, state-federal, colleges, and other settings. Private-for-profit counselors rated this same knowledge area significantly higher than counselors in medical, private-nonprofit and other counseling settings. In the areas of Individual and Group Counseling, respondents from the private-for-profit settings rated knowledge importance as less significant than all the other settings. In the Medical and Psychological Aspects of Disability domain,
private-for-profit counselors rated the area higher than did those respondents from the public schools, mental health, and private non-profit arenas. Leahy, Szymanski, and Linkowski (1993) found other differences related to knowledge domains and counselor settings. The authors indicate that investigating counselors, according to place of employment and counselor's job title, accounts for the most recurrent differences in perceived knowledge importance among all the variables explored. They suggest that these setting-specific elements may account for the primary differences in counselor perception of knowledge domains within the rehabilitation counseling field. Employment setting factors such as policy, philosophy, mission, goals, clientele served, and procedures were proposed as underlying elements.

These respondent differences suggest that there may be different types, qualities, or perspectives of counselors at different work settings. Counselor characteristics will be further investigated in this investigation as they relate to ego development and conceptual level across counselor settings (i.e., community, school, and mental health provider). Additionally, the current study will broaden the scope of rehabilitation counselors to NCC's which encompass a variety of counselors in three types of work settings.

In Leahy's et al. (1993) study, significant differences were not found for level of education and number of years of experience. The authors caution that though respondents ranged in years of experience (1 year to 14+ years) the respondents were all highly educated. They state that their findings may be misleading and that results cannot be considered proof of the null hypothesis. Years of experience were divided into three
groups (i.e., 1-7 years; 8-13 years; and 14+ years of experience). These groupings appear to be randomly determined by the authors and may have influenced the sensitivity of results.

Helson and Wink (1987) compared the relationship between ego level and social competence. They explain that ego development speculates that maturity advances with growth in cognitive complexity, acceptance of ambiguity, and lack of prejudice; the emphasis is on individuation, autonomy, and intrapsychic differentiation. Social competence underscores, instead, alignment with social rules and controlling behavior by decreasing conflict and gaining rewards in social life. These two constructs may tap different components of self-development. One may be more associated with facets of the environment that advance cognitive complexity (e.g., experience, education, training, and socioeconomic class); the other related more to the family of origin's emotional climate (e.g., parents' warmth, lack of irritability, and freedom of conflict) (Labouvie-Vief, 1994).

Labouvie-Vief (1994) asks two questions extremely relevant to the focus of this current investigation: "If it is true that processes of ego and self organization may be regulated by two rather different systems, then how those are to be integrated within one single system will require the evolution of new and broader strategies." She goes on to query, "A question of extreme urgency, and one that should complement the attention to overall levels, is how and why individuals do not marshall all of their cognitive potential to develop openness and flexibility, but co-opt some of that potential and subordinate it to the goal of creating increasing levels of rigidity, fragmentation and foreclosure (p.36)."
The current investigation does not attempt to answer such difficult and far ranging questions. However, it does begin the investigation into the relationships between the four characteristics of counselor experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level as they relate to one another and the formation of personality and adult growth and development.

Summary

A review of the literature focused on counselor experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level did not identify a single study that investigated the four variables simultaneously. Though a number of studies focused on counselor trainees as graduate students or rehabilitation counselors, few concentrated specifically on a generic group of practicing counselors. However, evidence was found suggesting that relationships between the four variables exist. Furthermore, evidence would suggest that these relationships will exist for a similar population: National Certified Counselors.

The current study adds to the already existing body of research and more specifically investigated the relationships between counselor experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level of National Certified Counselors.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter three describes the sample population and data collection procedures. Instrumentation, research design, and statistical analyses used in this investigation are examined. Finally, specific research hypotheses are listed and ethical considerations discussed.

Sample Population

The population for this study included National Certified Counselors. These counselors were randomly drawn from the August 1996 National Board of Certified Counselors mailing list. The total population includes 24,300 National Certified Counselors. Of the 24,300 representing the population, NCCs' reside in all of the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Approximately 190 NCCs are listed as residing outside the contiguous 48 states plus Alaska and Hawaii. From this total population, 400 subjects were randomly selected from the National Board of Certified Counselors computer database.

National Certified Counselors are credentialed through the National Board of Certified Counselors. Credentialing encompasses a number of criteria. National Certified Counselors must have a counseling related master's degree (minimum 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours) that includes the necessary course work requirements as determined by the Board of National Certified Counselors. Within the academic course work, two supervised field experiences in a counseling setting are required. Additionally, National Certified Counselors must have a two year post master's
counseling experience (3000 hours) with (100) hours of face-to-face supervision by an NCC or equivalent as determined by the NBCC (Clawson, 1995).

Once all the above criteria are met and approved by the National Board of Certified Counselors, the National Certified Counselor candidate must pass the written National Counselor Exam. Cut off scores are determined by a modified Angoff process. Every three years, a cadre of ten to twelve National Certified Counselors gather to review the National Counselor Exam questions, item by item. Through this process, this group determines the percent of questions that would be answered correctly by minimally qualified counselors. Once this is determined, the modification process takes place after each administration of the exam. An item difficulty is used by gathering most recent National Counselor Exam scores and using the standard deviation and mean to help determine the final cut off score for the upcoming group of test takers. The passing score is usually in the ninety percent range.

Data Collection Procedures

Questionnaire packets were sent to 400 randomly selected National Certified Counselors from a target population of 24,300. A survey letter (Appendix B) explaining the purpose of the study was sent accompanied by a Consent Form (Appendix C), a Request for Study Results (Appendix D), and the three research instruments (Appendices E, F, & G). A tea bag was provided as a small inducement. It was suggested that the National Certified Counselor have a cup of tea while he or she filled out the survey packet. A small pencil inscribed, "NCC - thank you for participating," was included in the packet for convenience. A return self-addressed stamped envelope was provided,
making the return of the survey packet more convenient for respondents.

One week after mailing the initial packet, a reminder postcard was sent to all of the randomly selected participants. The postcard reminded the National Certified Counselor that he or she received the initial survey packet. It also reminded each NCC to complete the instruments and return the survey packet within the week.

Two weeks following the initial mailing, a second reminder postcard was sent. The National Certified Counselor was prompted to complete and return the survey packet. When respondents' returned survey packets were collected, information was tabulated.

In the event questionnaires raised issues, questions, or concerns for the National Certified Counselor, the researcher's name and address was offered. Participants were encouraged to contact the researcher regarding survey questions or personal concerns related to the study. Precautions were taken to address the unlikely event that a respondent would require counseling due to responding to the survey packet; it was predetermined that any NCC respondent requesting or requiring counseling be referred to a nearby National Certified Counselor. This NCC would have been identified through the National Board of Certified Counselors mailing list by comparing zip codes.

**Instrumentation**

Three instruments were used to collect information on the factors of interest in this study: the General Questionnaire, Sentence Completion Test, and Paragraph Completion Method.

**General Questionnaire**

The General Questionnaire (Appendix E) is a one page demographic survey
developed by the researcher. It asked respondents general questions in order to ascertain subjects' age, number of years as a National Certified Counselor, gender, sexual orientation, race, counseling clientele, counseling setting, predominant theory of counseling, licensure status, and academic degree held. Its intent was to identify counselor variables that were then explored for significance when compared to ego development and conceptual level.

**Sentence Completion Test**

The Sentence Completion Test (Appendix F) is also called the Washington University Sentence Completion Test. The Sentence Completion Test (SCT) of ego development is founded on the supposition that every individual has a core level of ego at which they function (Loevinger, Wessler, & Redmore, 1970). The test is designed to ascertain this core level by specifying an ego level for each person based on the distribution of ratings of responses to the 36 sentence stems in the test.

Williamson and Vincent (1985) reviewed Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test and indicated that raters can be self-taught using Loevinger's two test and rating volumes. These reviewers indicate that Loevinger compared professionally trained raters with those who had been self-taught and found no significant difference between the two groups. Inter-rater reliability ranged from .90 to .96 for professionally trained raters and .89 to .92 for self-taught raters. In this study, National Certified Counselor responses to the SCT were coded by a trained rater. The rater used a scoring manual to compute a final score from 1 to 10. The use of a trained rater, blind to the purpose of this research, decreased experimenter bias.
Originally the SCT was designed exclusively to measure women's responses. However, two gender specific forms have been developed; one for women and the other for men. Additionally, the 36 items have been decreased to 18 items per instrument. There is a manual for women, for men, or for both for the revised instruments. Loevinger (1985) reviewed the revised versions of the SCT. Data collected from a number of disparate samples indicate the correlation of item rating with total protocol rating (median item validity) higher for women (approximately .50) than for men (approximately .46). However, she resolves this difference by explaining it is caused by difference in the variance of the samples (Loevinger, 1985). One other SCT finding cited by Loevinger (1985) is that impersonal stems are more valid for men whereas first-person stems and impersonal items are equally valid for women. The revised SCT has more impersonal items included on it.

A number of SCT stems are included in the following text to provide the reader with an example (refer to Appendix F to view the complete 18-item SCT instrument): When they avoided me...; If my mother...; Being with other people...; The thing I like about myself...; What gets me into trouble is...; Education...; When people are helpless... (Loevinger, 1985).

The rationale, properties and complex scoring system have been carefully analyzed and, across a variety of studies, reliability scores consistently fall within the .76 to .85 range (Holt, 1974; Loevinger, 1972; Loevinger & Wessler, 1970; Redmore & Waldman, 1975). Hauser (1976) concluded that there are very favorable reliability data for the test itself and for the scoring system. Williams and Vincent (1985) reviewed the technical
aspects of the SCT and found a test-retest correlation of .91 in a study of 81 college students. More recently, seventeen years after his initial review and with a substantial body of literature measuring ego development with the SCT, Hauser (1993) maintains, Loevinger's ego development work has a reciprocal relationship between theory and systematic data collection and that this is an outstanding feature. Holt contended that Loevinger's SCT not only measured an important construct, ego development, but that the scoring system was highly developed and reliable. As evidenced by the studies reviewed earlier, construct validity has been established by correlating ego development with other instruments measuring developmental constructs (e.g., conceptual level). In summary, Loevinger's SCT and ratings for ego development are substantial contributions to the assessment of personality for research purposes and clinical assessment.

Paragraph Completion Method

Conceptual Level was measured by use of the Paragraph Completion Method (Appendix G). The PCM has also been called the Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ). The Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) is a semi-projective measurement for assessment of cognitive development-conceptual level (Hunt et al., 1978). The Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) contains six themes, each on a separate page (Appendix G): (1) What I think about rules... (2) When I am criticized... (3) What I think about parents... (4) When someone does not agree with me...(5) When I am not sure... and (6) When I am told what to do... Each subject is requested to write down three sentences for each topic. Clinical judgement was used by a trained rater to score each response. A score of 0-3 was allocated to each of the six responses. A total Conceptual Level (CL)
score of 0, 1, 2, or 3 was then tabulated and assigned as a final score. This was done by calculating the averages of the three highest scores. The trained rater used the following scale as generic referents:

For a score of 0: very undifferentiated response, overgeneralized exclusion of any negative input, lack of affective control.
For a score of 1: categorical judgements, overgeneralized and unqualified acceptance of single rule, recourse to external standards.
For a score of 2: some form of conditional evaluation, beginning self-delineation, expression of alternatives.

Hunt et al. (1978) recommend standard ranges of scores for the designation of groups as low CL (0-1.0), moderate CL (1.1-1.9), and high CL (2.0+). However, because of practical demands, most authors select experimental groups on the basis of median splits or extreme scores. Stoppard and Miller (1985) strongly encourage researchers to use the extreme groups approach where subjects are selected with reference to the above pre-existing norms. In this investigation, however, continuous scores were used; an artificial dichotomy method was not devised. Continuous scores most accurately represented subject's responses within Hunt's model consisting of four stages of conceptual development:

Stage - 0.0: Unsocialized persons who oppose and evade impositions from external sources. Ambiguity can't be accepted and facts are processed in an elementary, concrete manner.

Stage - 1.0: Individuals are interested in acting in a socially acceptable manner, and information is dichotomously processed (right-wrong or good-bad).
Stage - 2.0: Absolute thinking is questioned and challenged. Individuals are more accepting of others' opinions, are interested with others' ideas, are concerned with their own thoughts and feelings, and strive for autonomy. Tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty increases.

Stage - 3.0: Marked by an interdependence between one's self and one's environment and incorporates clear understanding of the self, a discerning openness to external intrusion, and a refrain from dependency (Hunt, 1971).

Other more content-based instruments are also available to measure CST related constructs: Harvey's (1973) "This I believe" (TIB) test and Tuckman's (1966) Interpersonal Topical Inventory (ITI). However, Miller (1981) found that the two types of measures, content-biased versus structure, did not intercorrelate to a significant degree. This finding created some question of the legitimacy of the CST. Of all the cognitive complexity instruments constructed, the PCM is the most widely used by researchers.

The Paragraph Completion Method has been used on six graders through adults. Several investigators provide a closer examination of the validity and reliability of the PCM. After conducting several experiments, Schroder, Driver, & Streufert (1967) found that the items that produce the highest construct validity and inter-rater reliability are those that (a) imply the presence of alternatives, absence of structure, or alternatives ("When I am in doubt..."); (b) imply the imposition of externals standards ("Rules..."); "Parents..."); and (c) imply interpersonal conflict "When I am criticized..."). "Parents..." seems to be a less reliable item when used with older respondents. This same item is less effective in producing nonconstruct-relevant responses. Schroder, et.
al (1967) summarize the PCM items as presenting discrepancy, uncertainty, constraint, and/or control and that the responses encourage respondents to form resolution responses. Construct validity is improved when such responses are elicited. Inter-rater reliability measures have been reported as .80 to .95 (Schroder, et. al., 1967) and .80 to .85 (Hunt, 1978). Hunt (1978) reported test-retest reliability for the PCM over a one-year period as ranging from .45 to .56 and for a three-month period as .67. Regarding validity, Gardiner and Schroder (1972) assert validity has been established in over 100 studies; its validity is generally accepted in the educational community.

**Control Variables**

Other variables were controlled in order to rule out confounding characteristics that might have influenced results. These included race and sexual orientation. Additionally, gender was controlled and identified as an independent variable. As noted in several counseling and gender related studies reviewed earlier (Epperson, 1981; Epperson, et. al., 1983; Leahy, et. al., 1993) gender is an important variable to consider when studying counselor related factors. Due to the research reviewed and additional research indicating gender as an important variable in need of attention (Hewitt, 1972; Stoppard and Miller, 1985), gender was treated as an independent variable and results were evaluated accordingly.

**Research Design**

A descriptive and correlational research design was used to determine relationships between variables through the use of linear stepwise multiple regression statistical procedures. Follow-up ANOVAs were run to identify the relationships between Gender
and Ego Level and Gender and Conceptual Level. Borg and Gall (1989) expressed the purpose of correlational statistics as follows: "The purpose of the correlation coefficient is to express in mathematical terms the degree of relationship between any two variables" (p. 573). Specifically, the purpose of this design was to explore the degree of relationship between counselor experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level for National Certified Counselors.

Null Hypotheses

The following segment includes null hypotheses explored in this study. The research questions from Chapter 1 are restated below as null hypotheses:

(1) The amount or type of counselor experience is not related to ego development of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCC) as measured by Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test (SCT) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.

(2) The amount or type of counselor experience is not related to conceptual level of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCC) as measured by Hunt's Paragraph Completion Method (PCM)) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.

(3) Counselor degree and licensure credentials are not related to National Certified Counselor (NCC) ego development as measured by Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test (SCT) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.

(4) Counselor degree and licensure credentials are not related to National Certified Counselor
Counselor (NCC) conceptual level as measured by Hunt's Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.

**Limitations**

As in any study, limitations existed within the design of this research investigation. The use of volunteers threatens external validity. An elevated level of motivation or greater interest in research are characteristics of volunteers (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1975). Given ethical standards, coercion was obviously not an alternative for encouraging participation; the use of volunteers was the only available option. Gage (1985) offers a hopeful outlook on this research related predicament. He points out that as successful research results become common knowledge, participation increases; volunteers comprise a greater percentage of the population as a whole. Therefore, results will become more accurately generalized to the greater population.

The population consisted of National Certified Counselors. Further study, with different counseling professionals as the population, will need to be conducted in order to attribute research findings to other target groups. Research results gleaned from this study were generalized only to NCC's.

The Hawthorne Effect may have attributed to subjects' responses and participation in the study; the researcher's special attention provided to the subject may have influenced subjects' responses. To address the Hawthorne Effect, a statement was made indicating that there were no wrong or right answers to the survey questions. Additionally, the researcher minimized attention to the subjects by using mail
correspondence only.

History was a difficult ecological variable to control. It was understood that in the strictest sense, results could only be applied to the time (in history) in which they were received. It didn't appear that any notable counseling related historical events occurred at the time the survey packets were sent out.

Dependent variable measures can have an influence on research findings. The PCM is considered a semi-projective test. The SCT is also considered a semi-projective test, but the SCT provided more direction to the respondent; its sentences are more specific in nature. The General Questionnaire asked forced choice questions coupled with open-ended short answer items.

Experimenter bias was limited due to the objectiveness of the written instructions and due to the mail survey method used to collect data. Another type of bias, treatment fidelity, was reduced due to the separation of "investigator" and "experimenter" roles. One trained rater scored each instrument: all SCTs were scored by a paid rater in Tennessee; all PCM's were scored by one (a different) paid rater in Minnesota; and all General Questionnaires were tallied by the principal investigator. The two paid raters had no knowledge of the purpose of the investigation; they had no knowledge of the other instruments being used. The principal investigator only tallied objective responses, no subjective interpretation of responses was required. These precautions limited conformity to the investigators expectations.

A moderate sample size was used given the constraints of funding and the high cost of scoring instruments. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) suggest that with a population
of 24,300 a sample size of approximately 377 be obtained. This study surveyed 400 NCCs. One hundred thirty-four (134) responses were received (33.5% return rate). This number of respondents provided ample statistical power for this study.

Not all participants returned survey packets. This decreased external validity. On a positive note, random selection was obtained by computer, making randomization error remote.

Statistical regression is a confounding variable when subjects are selected due to extreme scores and whenever a test-retest procedure is used. Statistical regression was less of a concern in this study since only one instrument administration was given and all participant results were used.

This study has limitations, as does any research. Key threats to validity were addressed and precautions taken where applicable. As noted in Borg and Gall (1989) correlational research does not provide a cause effect answer.

Ethical Considerations

This research study was submitted to and approved by the Committee for Research on Human Subjects at the College of William and Mary before the research began. Subject confidentiality was assured.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Sampling Procedures

In October and November 1996, envelopes containing the Sentence Completion Test (SCT), Paragraph Completion Method (PCM), and General Questionnaire were sent out by mail to four hundred (400) National Certified Counselors across the United States.

The initial survey design randomly selected two hundred (200) NCCs; however, due to a low number of responses, an additional two hundred (200) subjects were randomly selected and survey packets sent. The additional two hundred (200) surveys were sent out in November 1996. All responses were completed and received by January 1997. The data collection process occurred from October 1996 though January 1997.

Demographic Data Results

Four hundred NCC's were mailed survey packets. Of the four hundred (400) packets sent, One hundred thirty-four (134) were returned completed. This yielded a return rate of thirty-three and a half percent (33.5%).

Of the One hundred thirty-four (134) responding NCCs, one hundred twenty-four (124) responded to all survey questions; ten (10) did not fully complete all the instruments. These ten respondents omitted information from the General Questionnaire: five (5) respondents omitted their primary counseling theory; four (4) other respondents omitted their income; and one (1) omitted the number of years as a NCC. Results were still analyzed from these ten respondents.
Descriptive Data Results

Descriptive data and measures of central tendency indicated that of the one hundred thirty-four (134) respondents the mean age was 47.58 years (standard deviation = 10.44) with a range of 25-74 years of age. Females were more represented than males; one hundred-two (102) females (76%) compared with thirty-two (32) males (24%) responding. Respondent's race consisted of one hundred thirty (130) white NCC's, three (3) black NCC's, and one (1) other; represented as white (97%), black (2.3%), and other (.7%). NCC's described themselves, in terms of sexuality, as heterosexual (N=126; 94%); homosexual (N=5; 3.7%), and bisexual (N=3; 2.2%). Annual income range was established from $2,460 - $110,000, with a mean annual income of $37,478 (standard deviation $17,020).

Counselor experience was defined in relation to number of years as an NCC and counseling setting for purposes of this study. The average number of years as an NCC was determined to be 6.43 years (standard deviation of 4.32 and range of .50 - 13.00 years). Counseling setting was represented, in descending order, with 43% of NCC respondents in mental health setting, 31% in school setting, 24% in community setting, and remaining 3% in other settings. When asked to categorize predominant clientele served among three choices (i.e., individual, group, or marriage & family), NCC respondents identified individual as most predominant category (N=100; 74%). Group (N=14; 10.4%) and marriage & family (N=13; 9.7%) were the second and third most frequent responses, respectively. A small number of respondents indicated two category answers: individual and group (N=3; 2.2%); individual and marriage & family (N=2;
1.5%); and group and marriage & family (N=1; .7%).

National Certified Counselor credentials (academic degree and licensure) were also investigated in this study. Of the one hundred thirty-four (134) responding NCC's, thirty (30) had earned a doctoral degree (23%), one hundred one (101) had earned (as their highest academic degree) a master's degree (75%), and three (3) had earned an education specialist degree (2%). Regarding licensure, fifty-seven percent (57%) of the respondents listed themselves as licensed (N=76). The remaining forty-three percent (43%) of NCC's were not licensed (N=58).

Ego development scores obtained on the Sentence Completion Test revealed five consecutive stages of ego development being represented by responding NCC's: conformist, self-aware, conscientious, individual transition, and autonomous. The sixth stage, self-aware (I-3/4), had the most number of respondents (N=97) followed by the seventh stage, conscientious (I-4), with twenty eight (N=28) respondents (see Table 4.1).

TABLE 4.1
NCC Responses by Ego Development Stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinal Score</th>
<th>Loevinger's Stage Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conformist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Self-Aware</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>72.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Conscientious</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Individual Transition</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td></td>
<td>134</td>
<td>100.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Respondent's conceptual level scores obtained on the Paragraph Completion Method revealed scores within the three highest of Hunt's four stages. Measures of central tendency for PCM scores were very consistent: mean = 1.97, median = 2.0, and mode = 2.0 (standard deviation of .32). Scores ranged from 1.0 to 2.8 (see Table 4.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCM Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review of Null Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were examined in this study. Data collected by all instruments were scored and compared for significant differences to test the stated research hypotheses.
Null Hypothesis One

The first null hypothesis stated there would not be a statistically significant correlation (p < .05) between the amount or type of counselor experience and ego development of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCCs) as measured by Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test (SCT) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.

Result of Measures for Null Hypothesis One

Stepwise multiple regression was used in hypothesis one with ego development as the dependent variable in the equation. The independent variables were counselor experience identified as type (setting; community, school, or mental health setting) and amount of experience (years as an NCC).

Race, sexual orientation, and clientele responses were homogeneous; not enough variance was found for statistical relevance. Gender was included and controlled. The level of inclusion for this research investigation was set at .05. The Beta weights for school setting and gender were significant at the .05 level. The R square for the equation was .14 which indicated that these variables accounted for approximately a seventh of the ego development variance. The F for this equation was 5.16 which was significant.
Table 4.3  
Null Hypothesis One - Statistics

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
<td>.37268</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>.13889</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td>.11198</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Error</td>
<td>.58829</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Variance

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.14495</td>
<td>1.78624</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>44.29866</td>
<td>.34608</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ F = 5.16129 \]  
Signif F = .0007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YRSNCC</td>
<td>-.00229</td>
<td>.011901</td>
<td>-.015428</td>
<td>-.187</td>
<td>.8517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUN.</td>
<td>.112736</td>
<td>.129291</td>
<td>.077483</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td>.3849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td>-.367285</td>
<td>.119752</td>
<td>-.270822</td>
<td>-3.067</td>
<td>.0026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>-.325277</td>
<td>.120574</td>
<td>-.223562</td>
<td>-2.698</td>
<td>.0079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>7.000786</td>
<td>.240107</td>
<td>29.157</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Null Hypothesis one was rejected for school setting; NCCs in schools had statistically significantly lower ego development scores than NCCs in community and mental health settings (p<.001). However, the null hypothesis was accepted for community and mental health settings as well as years as NCC. It should be noted gender appeared to be statistically significant, with men NCCs scoring higher on levels of ego development (p<.001).

Null Hypothesis Two

The second null hypothesis stated that there would not be a statistically significant correlation (p<.05) between the amount or type of counselor experience and conceptual level of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCC) as measured by Hunt's Paragraph Completion Method (PCM)) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.
Result of Measures for Null Hypothesis Two

The results yielded an F value of .22 (R square = .04) which was not statistically significant at the .05 level; thus accepting the null hypothesis that there was no statistically significant correlation between the amount or type of counselor experience and conceptual level of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCCs) as measured by Hunt’s Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.

Null Hypothesis Three

The third null hypothesis stated that there would not be a statistically significant correlation (p < .05) between counselor degree and licensure credentials of National Certified Counselor (NCC) ego development as measured by Loevinger’s Sentence Completion Test (SCT) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.

Result of Measures for Null Hypothesis Three

The results yielded an F value of .056 (R square = .06) which was not statistically significant at the .05 level; thus accepting the null hypothesis that there was no statistically significant correlation between counselor degree and licensure credentials of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCC) and measures of ego development as measured by Loevinger’s Sentence Completion Test (SCT) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.

Null Hypothesis Four

The fourth null hypothesis stated that there would not be a statistically significant
correlation (p < .05) between counselor degree and licensure credentials of National Certified Counselor (NCC) conceptual level as measured by Hunt's Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.

Result of Measures for Null Hypothesis Four

The results yielded an F value of .2668 (R square = .03) which was not statistically significant at the .05 level; thus accepting the null hypothesis that there was no statistically significant correlation between counselor degree and licensure credentials of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCC) and measures of conceptual level as measured by Hunt's Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter includes a discussion of results, further findings, limitations, and recommendations based on the findings in Chapter 4. References and appendices follow Chapter 5.

Discussion of Results

The focus of this research as stated in chapter one was to explore the relationships between experience, credentials, ego development, and conceptual level of National Certified Counselors. The literature review in chapter two pointed to prior studies conducted with a graduate students, rehabilitation counselors, school counselors, and the like, as the subject pools. Studies indicated that although ego development and conceptual level have been shown to be related, research had not yet decisively shown how these variables relate to counseling experience and credentials. Therefore the basis of this study came out of the apparent need for continued research focused on the topic of growth and development for counselors.

Although NCCs are required to continue their counseling related education to maintain NCC credentials, the written requirements allow the NCC great latitude in the direction and type of continued education. The value placed behind continued counseling related education, coupled with the impact counselor relationship has on clients (and clients on counselors), substantiates that counselors should examine their own growth and development. Two important variables identified in this study are indicators of counselor growth and development: ego development and conceptual level. The primary purpose
of this study was to examine the relationships between ego development, conceptual level and counselor experience and credentials. In addition, this study explored correlations among other related variables such as age, gender, sexual orientation, income, and clientele.

This study consisted of a national random sample of four hundred (400) National Certified Counselors (NCCs) resulting in one hundred thirty-four (134) NCC respondents. Survey packets were sent out and returned by surface mail. The packets included the General Questionnaire, Sentence Completion Test, and Paragraph Completion Method.

The theoretical foundation of the study was based on developmental theory specific to Loevinger's ego development stages and Hunt's conceptual systems theory focused on the construct of conceptual level. An assortment of related research has been conducted, but none with the specific focus of this study: the relationships between NCC experience and credentials with ego development stages and conceptual level.

Following collection of the data, multiple regression and correlational statistics were performed on the data. Some additional findings, those not directly asked in the research hypotheses, substantiate theoretical assumptions and prior research. Results indicated that ego development and conceptual level were positively correlated ($p = .019$). Age and income were positively correlated ($p = .016$); income increased with age. Income was also positively correlated with years as an NCC ($p = .000$). As might be expected, Years as an NCC positively correlated with age ($p = .000$); as NCC Years increased so did age. Other findings that might be predicted along with growth and development were that income increased with those NCC's that were licensed and that
increased NCC years was positively associated with licensure (p = .000).

Inconsistent with previous research, findings for ego development and conceptual level were below expectations for this population. The modal level for ego development was the self-aware stage (72% of respondents scored at this level). Loevinger (1985) identified this stage as the modal level for most adults (ages 18-25); 48 was the mean age for NCCs in this study. Conscientious was the ego level represented by the next largest percentage of NCCs (21%). Swenson (1980) described the conscientious stage as fitting most graduate students. Responding NCCs, in the current study, had ego development scores inconsistently lower than previous predictions.

The mean NCC respondent conceptual level score attained was 2.0. It appears scores closer to Hunt's (1971) level three would befit the conceptual level required for highly educated and licensed counselors. Hunt's descriptors at level three (e.g., "considers and weighs alternatives... integrates them into a solution") appears to exemplify the cognitive complexity necessary for effective counselors.

The lower-than-expected findings for, both, NCC ego development and conceptual level scores were unexpected. Conjectures are made more specific to findings specific to each hypothesis.

**Hypothesis One**

Hypothesis one stated that the amount or type of counselor experience are related to ego development of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCC) as measured by Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test (SCT) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled. The results indicated a significant positive
statistical correlation between NCC ego development and type of counselor experience (work setting); NCCs in mental health and community settings had statistically significant higher ego development scores than NCCs in school settings (p < .001).

It is interesting to note that in Kunce and Angelone's (1990) study cited earlier, the authors compared rehabilitation counselors with student counselors and discussed the impact that job roles, task responsibilities, and work experience have on counselor traits. Their findings suggested that experience is related to personality traits. Kunce and Angelone's identified rehabilitation counselors (perhaps equated with community and mental health counselors in this study) scored higher on traits identified as individualistic, empirical, realistic, and convergent than the counseling students. These findings appear to challenge the current study's findings when comparing NCC number of years of experience and higher ego development stages for community and mental health counselors with lower ego development scores for school counselors. In hypothesis one, findings indicated that years of experience were not significantly related to ego development levels. Kunce and Angelone's findings suggest experienced rehabilitation counselors differ from less experienced counseling students. In the same hypothesis, however, ego development was related to counselor work setting, implying that community and mental health counselors have higher stages of ego development than school counselors. Kunce and Angelone's investigation indicates, at face validity, that the less experienced student counselors had characteristics that appear more closely related with more advanced stages of ego development; ideological, abstract, and divergent. This discrepancy is intriguing and validates the need for further research in this area.
The finding that NCC counselors in schools had lower ego development scores stimulates a discussion of possible reasons. Three conjectures are presented here. First, school counselors are engaged with children and younger adults in the counseling process. School counselor exposure to clients at lower ego levels may be related to lower ego levels in school counselors. Perhaps community and mental health counselors' ongoing exposure to adult clients, representing a greater range of ego development stages within the counseling setting enhances the counselor's level of ego development. Earlier it was cited that Hauser (1993) suggested teaching/counseling styles will be contingent on the level of students' and clients' ego development. Also, Frankl (1973) had identified the determining counseling factor as the human relationship between counselor and client. The mutual relationship between counselor and client is a two way street whereby both client and counselor are changed; perhaps ongoing exposure to clients with lower ego levels is related to lower counselor ego development level. Hauser's (1993) charge that the fit between teacher/counselor and student/client ego development levels is a factor in need of further research appears to be corroborated.

Second, there has been a long standing debate regarding the desirability of School Counselors first being teachers. Baker (1994) reviews the past and present research and concludes that research findings do not support assumptions that counselors with teaching experience are better than those without it. However, a number of states still require teaching experience as a prerequisite to being a school counselor (Baker, 1994; Hoffman, Gerstein, Lichtman, 1992). For the purpose of the current study, it would be interesting to identify how many school NCCs have prior teaching experience. Perhaps community
and mental health counselors are more specifically tracked to a counseling related degree in their academic training process than school counselors. This is particularly possible, in contrast to school counselors, if many school counselors were trained, first, in the teaching career. The finding that school NCCs had lower ego development scores than community and mental health NCCs may rekindle this debate about the relationship between academic preparation and ego development. The reader is reminded that the current investigation was of a correlational design and findings only suggest relationships between variables. Cause and effect relationships cannot be inferred from the findings. The above discussion points are extrapolated from the findings for discussion; they do not imply that there is a causal relationship. Further research is needed to determine if other critical variables can be identified as indicator variables and to identify a causal relationship between school NCCs and lower ego development scores.

Third, and perhaps the most conspicuous suggestion, is that school counselors need to receive adequate supervision and mentoring from experienced counselors. Sprinthall (1994) reviewed works related to promoting ego development through counseling and role taking. He concludes that role taking provides practical real-world experience enhancing skill acquisition and developmental growth for counselors. Matthes (1992) pursued school counselor development by further investigating school counselor identified difficulties: lack of professional support, interpersonal struggles, and role confusion. Matthes (1992) noted that beginning school counselors tended to rely on teachers and administrators for professional guidance. It is becoming increasingly evident that school counselors need effective counselor supervision for optimum professional
growth and development.

Paisley (1990) found that counselors can provide effective support for beginning teachers' developmental growth. It would seem that experienced school counselors make even more effective mentors for other school counselors. Peace (1995) supports this belief. She initiated an educational counselor supervision program that promoted school counselor developmental growth. Peace (1995) found that conceptual development and moral reasoning increased following implementation of a comprehensive two semester counselor mentoring and supervision program. The finding in hypothesis one, in the current study, underscores the importance of school counselors receiving sufficient and ongoing supervision in order to continue their personal and professional growth and development, including ego development.

**Hypothesis Two**

Hypothesis two stated that the amount or type of counselor experience are related to conceptual level of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCC) as measured by Hunt's Paragraph Completion Method (PCM)) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled. The results showed no significant statistical relationship between counselor experience and conceptual level. As a follow-up procedure, in order to further investigate this relationship, age was controlled. When age was controlled, significance was found at the .05 level. NCCs in community settings scored significantly lower on the Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) than school or mental health NCCs.

The positive relationship between conceptual level and school and mental health work settings creates a discrepancy when compared with results from hypothesis one;
positive relationship between ego development and mental health, community NCCs. The one constant in both of these findings is that NCCs in mental health settings scored higher in ego development and conceptual level. Leahy et al. (1993) suggests that counselors perceive work related areas of knowledge according to their work setting. Perhaps critical counselor variables (perceived importance of work related knowledge areas as one) are associated with mental health settings that account for elevated scores. Holland's (1973) vocational trait factor theory may also provide a framework to help explain conceptual level and differences between work environments. Fredrickson (1982) recounts Holland's axiom that "birds of a feather flock together" when describing how similar types of people congregate in certain vocations. Conceivably, conceptual development may be one of the traits underlying this concept. This supposition requires further investigation.

Holloway and Wampold's (1986) research indicated that conceptual level was related to structured environments and related work tasks. Another factor to consider may be that NCCs in mental health settings are better matched to the environment and work related tasks. Further research is required to continue this investigation and more clearly understand the factors underlying these relationships.

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three stated that counselor degree and licensure credentials are related to National Certified Counselor (NCC) ego development as measured by Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test (SCT) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.
The results indicated no statistically significant relationships between degree and licensure credentials with ego development. However, a trend was apparent. Results approached significance at the pre-designated .05 level; the level of significance attained for hypothesis three was .056. Given the correlational design of this study, it is not possible to determine whether degree or licensure had an causal influence on ego development or visa versa. Questions for future research are prompted. Do NCCs with higher ego development tend to pursue higher degrees and licensure? Or, does the process of attaining advanced degrees and licensure influence NCC ego development?

It should be noted that this trend occurred even though the population studied is quite homogeneous in regard to academic degree. All respondents have a master's degree and have pursued post master's degree academic credit hours in order to be an NCC. Another point worthy of attention is that licensure is not offered in all states. NCC respondents who were not licensed may have had all the licensure requirements met, but have no state credentialing agency to grant licensure. This would confound the dichotomy between licensed and non-licensed NCCs. This trend requires further exploration.

Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four stated counselor degree and licensure credentials are related to National Certified Counselor (NCC) conceptual level as measured by Hunt's Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled.

The results indicated no statistically significant relationships between experience
and credentials with conceptual level. This lack of statistical significance may be a result of homogeneity. Population homogeneity in regard to academic degree is apparent. Respondents have a master's degree and have pursued a minimum of 30 semester credit hours after receiving their master's degree as per NCC requirements. Also, licensure is not offered in all states. Non-licensed NCC respondents may have completed all the requirements necessary for licensure, but have no state licensing agency in place to grant licensure as a professional counselor. This discrepancy from state to state might distort the dichotomy between licensed and non-licensed NCCs.

Further Findings

Three findings appear to support developmental theory in regard to ego development and conceptual systems theory (conceptual level). Ego development and conceptual level scores were correlated ($r = .20; p = .019$). This finding was consistent with previously cited research (Labouvie-Vieg, 1993; Noem, 1993). And, ego development scores clustered within five successive ego stages. Though conceptual level scores ranged from 1 - 2.8, the mean, mode, and median conceptual level scores were all 2.0. This appears to be a germane mean score for this NCC sample and compatible with mean ego level scores.

As Table 4.1 illustrates, most NCC respondents' (72.4%) ego development scores were in the Self-Aware (I-3/4) stage. This finding was consistent with previous research findings that indicated most adults are found at this level and that advancing beyond the self-aware stage may be especially difficult (Bernier, 1980; Hauser, 1976; Loevinger, 1976). However, Loevinger (1985) also described the self-aware (I-3/4) stage as the
likely modal level of young adults (18-25 years of age) and Swenson (1980) described the next stage, conscientious (I-4), as a modal stage for most graduate students. Given these descriptions, it appears the majority of NCC respondents in this study may have scored below the expected ego level given age and education. This finding may highlight the importance and benefit of continuing education. Graduate students are submerged in a stimulating environment of learning, self-awareness, and personal growth. This environment, and the characteristics within it, may positively impact ego development. Based on this hypothesis, counselors could benefit in terms of ego development growth, with continued education. Further research is needed to identify clearly the factors underlying discrepancy between ego development level for graduate students and NCCs.

Findings can also be used to stimulate counselor insight. Counselors may benefit from information and feedback regarding counselor characteristics. Data presented in this current investigation, can stimulate counselor awareness and refresh the ongoing internal investigation of self-exploration and insight.

Two findings highlight the continuing struggle for women to receive equal pay for equal work. The first was that female respondents made less income than their male counterparts. More alarming was the finding that gender was correlated with licensure (r=.17; p=.048); female NCCs were licensed more than male NCCs. Even with increased licensure credentials, woman were earning less than their male counterparts. However, these findings need further study. Respondents were simply asked to indicate income. There was no clarification as to whether the NCC was currently working part-time, full-time, or unemployed. Additional income data need to be acquired in order to
analyze these findings further. Another finding regarding gender, was that male NCCs scored higher than female NCCs on the SCT ($r = -.21; p = .014$). However, Loevinger’s revised 18 question SCT was used in this study. It has been reported (Loevinger, 1976) that this revised SCT has more impersonal items on it (when compared to original 36 item SCT) which may favor male responses. The revised SCT may have accounted for some of the gender differences related to ego development scores.

**Limitations of the Study**

A number of limitations exist for this study. First, a limitation inherent to correlational research design is the inability to establish cause and effect relationships (Borg & Gall, 1989). When significant correlations were found to exist between two variables, other causal inferences might be established which are equally likely; artifacts may occasionally cause the relationship rather than the independent variable(s) (Borg & Gall, 1989).

A second limitation inherent to correlational design is that of over simplification. Research studies attempt to break down complex behavior or interactions into simpler, measurable elements. Consequently, a careful interpretation of findings was conducted to clearly express (and not over express) the results of the study.

Third, general applicability of the results may be limited. Specifically, the results were gathered from a national sample of National Certified Counselors and can only be generalized to that greater population. Different but similar groups, such as state licensed professional counselors, may share characteristics of National Certified Counselors. However, true generalization of the data in this study to different groups can not be
recommended. The number of respondents totalled one hundred thirty-four (N=134). This number was lower than the N of 379 suggested for a population of 30,000 (Krejcie, 1970) for p < .05 confidence level. This small sample size decreased statistical power.

Fourth, due to the small number of minority counselors (i.e., race and sexual identity) that responded to the survey, respondents may not have adequately represented "minority" National Certified Counselors. Thus, National Certified Counselors of racial, ethnic, sexual identity minorities were not well represented in this study and findings should not be generalized to this population. Male respondents (N=32; 24%) were less prevalent than female respondents (N=102; 76%). This small number of male respondents may have provided skewed data and may limit generalizability to the greater population of male NCCs.

Fifth, subjects who chose to return the survey could be inherently more interested in personal growth and development or have other defining characteristics than subjects who did not choose to return the survey. This may have biased the results, increasing representation of counselors with an interest in self-development versus counselors as a whole.

Sixth, Loevinger (1994) warned that a problem in doing research related to ego development is that the people in most settings represent a narrow range of ego levels. This was true in this present study. The range of ego development stages was limited to five stages (conformist, self-aware, conscientious, individualistic, and autonomous). Moreover, the vast majority (N=97) of respondents scored in the self-aware stage (72%).

Seventh, on the General Questionnaire, income was not clarified in terms of
annual, part-time, full-time, retired, or family versus individual. Respondents may have understood this question differently and answers may reflect different interpretations.

Eighth, not all states offer a state counseling license. NCCs were given the option to indicate if they licensed or not. No clarifying information was requested regarding licensure. NCCs respondents may have other credentials that are equivalent to state licensure, but these credentials were not considered in this investigation.

Ninth, NCC respondents were asked to list the highest degree obtained. No clarifying information was sought. Some respondents may have listed a master's degree when they actually acquired two master's degrees. Or, Respondents who were working toward completing a doctoral degree and even "all but dissertation" (ABD) were considered only in terms of the highest degree completed. This may have less accurately represented the true level of academic performance obtained for NCC respondents.

Loevinger (1994) warned that ego development research can be troubled by a narrow range of ego development being represented in targeted populations. This was true in this present study. The range of ego development stages was limited to five stages, from conformist (3) - autonomous (5). Moreover, the vast majority (N=97) of respondents scored in the self-aware stage (72%). This narrow range of represented stages of ego development may have decreased the likelihood of significant findings.

Recommendations

Further inquiry is recommended to address a number of issues. Replication of this study's findings is an initial reason further research is suggested. Further study related to this topic would need to include a larger sample size to ensure that an adequate number
of counselors are sampled to better represent the population. A larger sample size may also promote a more equivalent representation between male and female counselors. Stratification by race or ethnicity, when possible, would allow for greater external validity. Along this same vein, additional research would need to expand the population from NCCs to include counselor types from different domains such as psychology, social work, and psychiatry. This broader scope of "counselor" would provide a more comprehensive look at a variety of counselor training programs in relation to experience and credentials related to ego development and conceptual level. This more inclusive population may influence a greater representation of counselors considered minority (i.e., race & ethnicity).

General demographic questions should include follow-up inquiry to better determine the accuracy of data provided. For example, income was requested of each respondent. In further studies, it is recommended that the researchers ask subsequent questions to ensure information is clear (e.g., "Are you employed full-time or part-time, retired?"; "If part-time, how many hours per week do you work on average?"). These follow-up questions will better enable the researcher to be sure s/he is comparing like responses. The question of licensure requires clarification; respondents should be prompted to indicate if their state offers licensure and be able to list all certification credentials to better measure NCC credentials. Along this same line, demographic questions regarding work environment may want to include specific definitions for each. In this study, mental health and community settings may have been ambiguous for some respondents.
One further recommendation regarding the use of instruments is offered. Loevinger's 36-item SCT is a more objective measure as it is not reported to bias male responses. Future investigators are encouraged to use Loevinger's 36-item SCT in place of the revised 18-item SCT.

Further research is recommended to ascertain if study results can be replicated, instrument changes made to strengthen the accuracy of data collected, a larger, more representative cross section of counselors sampled to increase external validity. Though information was not available to allow for stratification of subjects in this investigation, future researchers are urged to stratify subjects according to race or ethnicity. This will strengthen generalizability of results.
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Studies in Education.


Redmore, C. (1976). Susceptibility to faking of a sentence completion test of ego


APPENDICES
Additional Findings

Null hypothesis two, that there would not be a statistically significant correlation (p<.05) between the amount or type of counselor experience and conceptual level of Nationally Certified Counselors (NCC) as measured by Hunt’s Paragraph Completion Method (PCM)) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled, failed to be rejected (see Table A.1).

Table A.1
Null Hypothesis Two - Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>YRSNCC</td>
<td>0.001380</td>
<td>0.006427</td>
<td>0.018642</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>0.8303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.069815</td>
<td>-0.211267</td>
<td>-2.256</td>
<td>0.0258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
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<td>0.064665</td>
<td>-0.129256</td>
<td>-1.389</td>
<td>0.1673</td>
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<tr>
<td>GENDER</td>
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<td>0.069295</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.129655</td>
<td>14.948</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

F = 1.45092    Signif F = .2211

However, when age was added to the multiple regression equation and controlled, F was significant at the .05 level (see Table A.2). NCCs in community settings scored significantly lower on the Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) than did NCCs in school or mental health settings. Additionally, NCCs that were older scored significantly higher on the PCM than did younger NCCs; PCM scores increased with NCC age.
Null hypothesis three, that there would not be a statistically significant correlation (p < .05) between counselor degree and licensure credentials of National Certified Counselor (NCC) ego development as measured by Loewinger's Sentence Completion Test (SCT) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled, failed to be rejected. However, results yielded an F value of .0561. This closely approached the .05 level set for rejection. Gender was the variable most associated with SCT scores; men scored significantly higher on SCT scores than did women. Multiple regression results are displayed in Table A.3.
Table A.3
Null Hypothesis Three - Statistics

Multiple R  .23992
R Square   .05756
Adjusted R Square  .03530
Standard Error  .61238

Analysis of Variance

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<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>.96961</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
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<td>47.62551</td>
<td>.37500</td>
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</table>

\[ F = 2.58561 \quad \text{Signif } P = .0561 \]

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<th>Beta</th>
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<th>Sig T</th>
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<td>(Constant)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>19.423</td>
<td>.0000</td>
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</table>

Null hypothesis four, that there would not be a statistically significant correlation (p < .05) between counselor degree and licensure credentials of National Certified Counselor (NCC) conceptual level as measured by Hunt’s Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) when demographic variables of gender, race, and sexual orientation are controlled was not rejected. However, results yielded an F value of .2668. Although this did not approach the .05 level set for rejection, the Beta weight for Degree related to conceptual level (PCM score) was .1573. This suggests a small relationship between degree and conceptual level. Multiple regression results are displayed in Table A.4.
Table A.4
Null Hypothesis Four - Statistics

<p>| | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
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<td>R Square</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
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Analysis of Variance

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<td>.10185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ F = 1.33228 \quad \text{Signif } F = .2668 \]

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<th>Sig T</th>
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<td>-.082</td>
<td>.9350</td>
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<td>GENDER</td>
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<td>.066629</td>
<td>.086544</td>
<td>.975</td>
<td>.3313</td>
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<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.709575</td>
<td>.174161</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.816</td>
<td>.0000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

One Way ANOVA Follow-up Tests

One way ANOVAs were run to further investigate the relationship between gender and ego development (SCT scores) and conceptual level (PCM scores). Results from the one way ANOVA measuring mean scores of gender and ego development (SCT scores) indicated significance \( F = .0142 \). Findings resulting from the one way ANOVA measuring gender and conceptual level (PCM scores) did not yield a significant F score \( F = .6753 \).

Correlational Follow-up Tests

In follow up tests, correlation coefficients with two tailed significance were determined with the following results. PCM scores were positively correlated with SCT scores \( r = .20; p = .019 \). Income positively correlated with age \( r = .21; p = .016 \); as NCC age increased, so did income. Income was correlated with years as an NCC.
(r = .32; p = .000); as NCC years increased, so did income. And, years as an NCC correlated with age (r = .43; p = .000); as NCC years increased, so did age; gender and income were correlated (r = -.18; p = .048); male NCCs made more income than female NCCs. Income was correlated with licensure (r = -.23; p = .009); income increased with those NCC's that were licensed. NCC years was associated with licensure (r = -.32; p = .000); licensed NCCs had more years as an NCC. SCT scores were correlated with gender (r = -.21; p = .014); as noted in Null Hypothesis One, male NCCs scored higher on ego development than female NCCs. Gender was correlated with licensure (r = .17; p = .048); female NCCs were licensed more than male NCCs. And, most notable, NCC school setting was correlated with SCT scores of ego development (r = -.30; p = .000); NCCs in community and mental health settings scored higher than NCCs in school settings. These correlations can be seen in Table A.5.
### Table A.5
**Correlation Matrix**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>PCM</th>
<th>SCT</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>LICENSED</th>
<th>COMMUN.</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>YRSNCC</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(125)</td>
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<td>(126)</td>
<td>(126)</td>
<td>(126)</td>
<td>(126)</td>
<td>(126)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P=.391</td>
<td>P=.374</td>
<td>P=.016*</td>
<td>P=.048*</td>
<td>P=.009*</td>
<td>P=.169</td>
<td>P=.446</td>
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<td>-.0765</td>
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<td>(134)</td>
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<td>(134)</td>
<td>(133)</td>
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<td>P=.019*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>P=.392</td>
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<td>P=.000*</td>
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</table>

(*) attained statistical significance at .05 level

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NCC Theory Data

In the General Questionnaire, NCCs were asked to identify their primary mode of counseling theory. Responses were dispersed across fourteen (14) different counseling theories. Of these responses, only two had response rates above twenty; Cognitive (N=29) and Eclectic (N=23). Descriptive statistics are shared below in Table A.6.

Table A.6
NCC Theory - Descriptive Data

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21.6</td>
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<td>23.4</td>
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<td>Rogerian</td>
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<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
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</tr>
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<td>12.9</td>
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Valid cases 124 Missing cases 10
APPENDIX B

Survey Letter
SURVEY LETTER

October 10, 1996

Dear Fellow National Certified Counselor:

As part of a dissertation focusing on the relationships between "counselor experience and credentials, ego development, and conceptual level for National Certified Counselors", your input is vital.

The attached survey packet will help measure National Certified Counselor characteristics. You are participating in a nationwide study.

As a NCC, myself, I'm interested in the growth, development, and understanding of counselors. Therefore, I'm focusing my research on NCC characteristics. I'm conducting this dissertation study in a joint program with The College of William and Mary and Virginia Commonwealth University. Your response will help identify developmental changes that occur and characteristics that exist for NCCs. This information will provide important feedback to counselors.

It should take approximately 45 minutes to complete the entire packet. It will be appreciated if you will complete the enclosed forms prior to October 31, 1996 and return them in the stamped special delivery envelope enclosed. A pencil has been provided for your convenience. Please enjoy a cup of tea (enclosed) while filling out the survey forms.

Replies are confidential. However, as a safeguard (to avoid mixing up packets), you are requested to code each instrument with the last four digits of your Social Security number. All results will be held in strict confidence.

Other phases of the research cannot be carried out until I complete analysis of the survey data. In return for your participation in this study, I will be glad to furnish you with a copy of the final product.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this investigation. As a fellow NCC, I realize your time is valuable. I appreciate your cooperation. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at (804) 828-1335.

Sincerely,

Joel F. Diambra, NCC
Principal Investigator

enclosures
APPENDIX C

Consent Form
THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COUNSELOR EXPERIENCE AND CREDENTIALS, EGO DEVELOPMENT, AND CONCEPTUAL LEVEL OF NATIONAL CERTIFIED COUNSELORS

CONSENT FORM

I, ____________________, am willing to participate in a study of National Certified Counselors. I understand that this study is being conducted by Mr. Joel F. Diambra, a doctoral candidate in counseling at the College of William & Mary, to explore the relationships of counselor experience and training, ego development, and conceptual level. My involvement in this study will be approximately 45 minutes.

As a participant in this study, I am aware that I will be asked to complete three research instruments: the General Questionnaire, Sentence Completion Test (SCT), and Paragraph Completion Method (PCM).

As a participant in this study, I am aware that participation is voluntary and that I may choose to withdraw at anytime during the study. I understand that a copy of the study will be mailed to me upon request, and by making such request, I waive my right of anonymity to Mr. Diambra.

By participating in this study, I understand that there are no obvious risks to my physical or mental health.

Confidentiality Statement

As a participant in the study, I am aware that all records will be kept confidential. I will be identified only by the last four digits of my social security number.

I fully understand the above statements, and do hereby consent to participate in this study.

__________________________________________
Participant's Signature

__________________________________________
Date
APPENDIX D

Request for Study Results
REQUEST FOR STUDY RESULTS

Check all that apply:

_____ I would like to receive a copy of this study when it is completed.
   I understand that by making this request I will not be able to maintain my anonymity.

My NCC number is:

_________________________

My name and address are:

Name ____________________________

Address __________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

The last four digits of my Social Security number are:

____  ____  ____  ____
APPENDIX E

General Questionnaire
GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Last four digits of social security number ___ ___ ___ ___

Your Age: ___

Number of years as NCC: ___

Annual Income: ____________

Gender: ___ male
       ___ female

You consider yourself to be:
       ___ heterosexual
       ___ homosexual
       ___ bisexual

Your race:
       ___ White ___ Asian
       ___ Black ___ Hispanic
       ___ Indian ___ Other (please list) __________

Which one category best describes your clientele?
       ___ Individual
       ___ Group
       ___ Marriage & Family

Which one category best describes your counseling setting?
       ___ Community ___ School ___ Mental Health Provider

Your predominant counseling theory: ________________

Are you licensed? ___ yes ___ no

List the highest academic degree attained: ________________
APPENDIX F

Sentence Completion Test
SENTENCE COMPLETION TEST FOR WOMEN (FORM 11-60)

Last four digits of social security number ___ ___ ___ ___

Instructions: Complete the following sentences.

1. Raising a family

2. A girl has the right to

3. When they avoided me

4. If my mother

5. Being with other people

6. The thing I like about myself

7. My mother and I

8. What gets me into trouble is

9. Education
10. When people are helpless

11. Women are lucky because

12. My father

13. A pregnant woman

14. When my mother spanked me, I

15. A wife should

16. I feel sorry

17. Rules are

18. When I get mad
NUMBER COMPLETION TEST FOR MEN (FORM 11-66)

Last four digits of social security number ___ ___ ___ ___

Instructions: Complete the following sentences.

1. Raising a family

2. When a child will not join in group activities

3. When they avoided me

4. A man's job

5. Being with other people

6. The thing I like about myself is

7. If my mother

8. Crime and delinquency could be halted if

9. When I am with a woman
10. Education

11. When people are helpless

12. Women are lucky because

13. What gets me into trouble is

14. A good father

15. A man feels good when

16. A wife should

17. I feel sorry

18. A man should always
PARAGRAPH COMPLETION METHOD

Please indicate the last four digits of your social security number (for instrument matching purposes only):

— — — —

On the following six pages you will be asked to give your ideas about several topics. Try to write at least three sentences on each topic.

There are no right or wrong answers so give your own ideas and opinions about each topic. Indicate the way you really feel about each topic, not the way others feel or the way you think you should feel.

In general, spend about 3 minutes for each stem.
Try to write at least three sentences on this topic.

Last four digits of social security number ___ ___ ___ ___

(1) What I think about rules...
Try to write at least three sentences on this topic.

Last four digits of social security number ___ ___ ___ ___

(2) When I am criticized...
Try to write at least three sentences on this topic.

Last four digits of social security number ____ ____ ____ __

(3) What I think about parents…
Try to write at least three sentences on this topic.

Last four digits of social security number ___ ___ ___ ___

(4) When someone does not agree with me...
Try to write at least three sentences on this topic.

Last four digits of social security number ____ ____ ____ ____

(5) When I am not sure...
Try to write at least three sentences on this topic.

last four digits of social security number ___ ___ ___ ___

(6) When I am told what to do...
VITA

Joel Foster Diambra

Birthdate: May 13, 1960
Birthplace: Buffalo, New York

Education:

1993-1997 The College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia
Doctor of Education - Professional Counseling

1989-1993 The College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia
Education Specialist - Professional Counseling

1986-1989 Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
Master of Education - Counseling

1984-1986 The University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Bachelor of Arts - Psychology

Work Experience:

1993-1997 Private Practice (part-time)
Richmond, Virginia

1989-1997 Virginia Commonwealth University
Behavioral Intervention Program - Director
Richmond, Virginia

1986-1989 Virginia Commonwealth University
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center -
Employment Specialist
Richmond, Virginia

1984-1986 University of Minnesota
Upward Bound - Counselor & Tutor
Minneapolis, Minnesota