

Effectiveness of School Counselor Supervision With Trainees

Utilizing the ASCA Model

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Abstract

This study sought to determine if differences existed in the supervision of school counselors in traditional school counseling programs versus Recognized ASCA Model Programs (RAMP). The findings indicated that there are significant differences between traditional counseling supervisors and RAMP counseling supervisors across all supervisory activities. In addition, it was found that the school counseling supervisors involved in RAMP had more years of work experience than supervisors in traditional programs. Implications of these findings for school counseling theory, research and practice are also discussed.

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Utilizing the ASCA Model

The professional school counselor plays a significant role in equipping student with the skills needed to manage stressors and other issues they experience (Studer, 2006). Through the development of a comprehensive school counseling program, the school counseling function is treated as an equal and valued component of the work of school districts (Gysbers, 2005). Today's school counseling is no longer an individual-one student-focused program, but a program integrated with school-wide curriculum to assist all students.

The demand for school counseling programs to assist all students called for a change from the past model to an all inclusive one. The paradigm shift of The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) guidelines has led to the endorsement of a comprehensive, developmental model as described in the ASCA National Model[®]. The transformation of counseling programs have come about so that school counselors can better assist all students and negotiate the demands of the 21st century (ASCA, 2005).

Systemic Application with the ASCA Model

Stone (2006), ASCA's past president, postulated that school counselors are moving from just focusing on one student at a time to a systemic approach; the focus is on the entire school. Traditional training for school counselors was based on a remedial-reactive approach that emphasized counselor services or functions rather than emphasizing student competencies and outcomes (Akos & Galassim, Gysbers & Henderson, as cited in Studer & Oberman, 2006). The professional school counselor, operating in a program reflecting the guidelines of ASCA National Model[®], provides

advocacy, leadership, collaboration, and systemic change within a framework that includes the program foundation, accountability, delivery system, and management system (ASCA, 2005). By reframing traditional interventions to a broader, more systemic approach that contributes to improving student promotion, achievement and post-secondary education goals, school counselors are helping more students than ever before (Stone).

Despite the decade of rapid progress for school counselors, the transition from the traditional model to the ASCA Model has been met with challenges. There continues to be discrepancies between preparation and practice (Stone, 2006). Studer (2006) stated that it is unfortunate that many school counselors are uncertain of the “how to” of supervision; many are unaware of the various developmental stages, uninformed of the various roles of supervision, and reluctant to work with college and university programs. School counselor trainees express frustration when they learn about the benefits of the ASCA framework but receive supervision in a school counseling setting that is not yet fully transformed into utilizing the ASCA Model (Studer & Oberman, 2006).

Supervision Readiness and Activities

In a review of the literature related to training professional counselors, a historical perspective and a variety of themes related to counseling effectiveness emerged (Brott, 2006). A review of the abstracts for published articles in Counselor Education and Supervision on counseling effectiveness in counselor training programs dates back at least to 1967 (e.g., Johnson, Shertzer, & Linden, 1967). Further literature surrounding school counselor effectiveness dates back at least to the 1950s (e.g. Kaczowski & Rothney, 1956; Rothney, 1958). However, two carefully guarded professional truths are

the nonexistence of a common set of supervisory expectations, tasks, and responsibilities provided to all school counselor trainees (Henderson, 1994; Nelson & Johnson 1999, as cited in Studer, 2006) and that for the most part, professional school counselors have not received instruction in supervisory practices for students training school counselors (Nelson & Johnson, 1999 as cited in Studer). There is little evidence that the literature discloses the effectiveness of supervision. It is imperative that supervision is at least as effective as the preparation received during master's level programs.

Stone (2006) suggested the profession begins and is directly affected by what happens in the school counselor education programs at colleges and universities across the country. However, the preparation of school counselors alone will not move school counselors from focusing on one student at a time to embracing ASCA's National Model[®]. She also stated that preparation at the college level must include the onsite supervisor who will help bridge the gap between preparation (the master's level school counseling programs) to practice (the internship of school counselor trainees). The effectiveness of supervision for trainees utilizing the ASCA Model is determined by supervision readiness and supervision activities. ASCA offers solutions that would further equip school counselor programs to supervision effectiveness.

ASCA has instituted guidelines that are sufficient to frame school counseling programs, yet, not all schools are ready to embrace the model. Gysbers suggested that time is a factor in the consideration of the program development process (2005). While timing is a factor, ASCA offers training to schools that are ready to utilize the National Model[®]. ASCA hand-selects trainers to help entire school counseling departments or

districts comprehend the ASCA National Model; and, to figure out the best way to implement the model in their district or individual school. Schools in training may select from one of the following workshop options: Getting Started with the ASCA National Model; The ASCA National Model: The Next Step; and, Customized Training: The ASCA National Model.

Effective supervision for school counselors in pre-K-12 school setting is both a responsibility and a challenge for professionals in the field (Kaffenberger, 2007). The study investigates supervision effectiveness, which is supervisory readiness and supervisory activities with trainees framed in the ASCA model. Many graduate programs have incorporated student skill acquisition based on the ASCA model. During the school counseling internship, the objectives are learning activities that include developing and implementing a successful project, and the review of case presentations from a theoretical perspective that is articulated as a personal model of counseling. The problem is most internship experiences are not in schools that embrace the four components (Foundation, Delivery system, Management systems, and Accountability systems) postulated in the ASCA model. Therefore, when the intern enters a school to integrate the theories learned with practices promoted in school counseling programs, the traditional programs are implemented at best. Most traditional school counseling programs do not utilize the ASCA model. Thus, there is a discrepancy between supervisory readiness and supervisory activities of school counselors with the intern who has been trained in the ASCA model during graduate school.

Review of Literature

ASCA National Model

The ASCA National Model integrates the three widely accepted approaches, comprehensive, developmental, and results-based to program models (Myrick, 2003 as cited in Studer, 2005). As a framework for school counseling programs it keeps the development of the total student at the forefront of the education movement and forms the needed bridge between counseling and education (ACA, 2005). In the ASCA model, programs must be delivered to all students, providing them the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to effectively navigate the educational system (Blackburn, 2006). The four components of the ASCA model are Foundation, Delivery system, Management system, and Accountability or Evaluation.

Counselor Education Programs

In structuring school counseling programs, counselor educators have several guidelines from which to consider and choose (Perusse, Goodnough, & Noel, 2001). In the recent past, guidelines specifying what school counselor education programs should teach was remised (Perusse, et al., 2001). Yet, efforts were made to prepare new professional school counselors; Stone and Hansen (2002) stated 10 universities in 1998, were supported with a planning grant, given by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Foundation (DWRD). The grant was managed by the Education Trust, a nonprofit organization, to demonstrate how university school counseling preparation programs can better prepare school counselors to have an impact on the academic achievement of all students.

School counselor trainees receive two formal sources of supervision. One source of supervision is with the university supervisors, who receive their framework for supervisory activities from ASCA's National Model[®] (2005) and CACREP's professional standards (2001). The on-site supervisor is the second source of supervision. However, the on-site supervisor may not be familiar with the guidelines used to frame university school counseling programs (Studer, 2005). Similarly, some counselors in college counseling centers may be called on to supervise counseling interns and other counselors despite having had little or no specific training in counseling supervision (Wood, 2005).

School Counseling Supervision

The importance of supervision was emphasized in 1990 by the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD, now ACA) and asserted by ACA (2005) Code of Ethics (as cited in Dollarhide & Miller, 2006). As early as 1972, a model of collaboration between counselor educators and practicing school counselors was the approach suggested for providing supervision to deal with the isolation and challenges of beginning school counselors (Segrist & Nelson, 1972 as cited in Crutchfield & Borders, 1997). Boyd and Walter (1975) also postulated counselor supervision as a viable mode of assistance for the school counselor trainee. Empirical support of school counseling supervision concluded that counselors benefited more from supervised experience and demonstrated little growth from unsupervised experience (Crutchfield & Borders). Similarly, Henderson and Lampe (1992) emphasized the personalized nature of counseling supervision as an enhancer of the professional development of school counselors.

The literature postulated the lack of congruency of the trainees from CACREP approved graduate programs in school counseling and the on-site supervision received at traditional school counseling programs, performing inappropriate roles (Studer, 2005). Most school counseling programs are framed in the traditional model, even though the trainee has been taught the ASCA model in their graduate school counseling programs. Therefore, the focus is supervision effectiveness, namely supervisory readiness of and supervisory activities by professional school counselors with trainees utilizing the ASCA model.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the difference between supervision readiness and supervision activities of traditional school counseling programs and Recognized ASCA Model Programs (RAMP) and whether appropriate training is provided with trainees utilizing the ASCA National Model. The results of this study will assist the field in establishing appropriate supervision sites that utilize the ASCA model with trainees. Additionally, results may prompt CACREP to review and reframe standards and recommendations for counselors in schools and the certification or credentialing of school counselor supervisors. Finally, the results will heighten the need to further design and research additional models for school counseling supervision.

Research Questions

1. Does supervision readiness in RAMP schools utilizing the ASCA model differ when compared to supervision readiness in schools utilizing the traditional counseling programs?

2. Are supervisory activities (foundation, delivery systems, management systems, and accountability systems) in RAMP schools with the internship trainee utilizing the ASCA model different when compared to the supervisory activities of trainees utilizing the ASCA model in traditional school counseling programs?
3. Do school counselors with fewer years of experience supervise school counselor trainees utilizing the ASCA model?

Method

Population and Sampling

Participants were school counselors eligible to serve as supervisors. All participants were from either the ASCA Model Programs (RAMP) or the traditional school counseling programs. Participants included 113 traditional school counselors and 68 RAMP school counselors who are members of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) professional organization. Convenient sampling was utilized for soliciting the participants. The lists of RAMP programs and traditional programs were provided by ASCA.

The average age of RAMP counselors was 44 years of age, while the average age of traditional counselors was 46. Regarding years of experience, RAMP counselors averaged 12 years of experience, and the traditional counselor averaged 10 years of experience. 83.8% of RAMP counselors and 84.1% of traditional counselors were females who participated in the study. RAMP counselors reported 28 hours trained using the ASCA model, and the traditional counselors reported being trained 26 hours in the using the model.

Measures

The School Counselor Supervision Questionnaire

The School Counselor Supervision Questionnaire (SCSQ) was developed by Studer and Oberman and piloted by a cadre of practicing professional school counselors throughout the nation and is considered to have content validity. The questionnaire was adapted to use with both groups (RAMP and traditional school counselors). The questionnaire consisted of 30 questions divided into three sections: demographics, supervisory experiences, and program development. The participants rated each question on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 (none), 2 (infrequent), 3 (sometimes), 4 (often), and 5 (all of the time).

A scoring scheme for the SCSQ was devised to quantify items 3-9 (supervisory activities) in order to make parametric comparisons between the mean scores of counselors in traditional and RAMP schools. The revised items 4-9 are each measured on a five point Likert scale and responses will be summed. A total score will then be derived by summing the values of items 3-9. No psychometric properties were reported before the study. A Cronbach's alpha was conducted to assure the internal reliability of this total score. Internal reliability was .96 on the SCSQ.

The School Counselor Supervisors Checklist

The School Counselor Supervisor's Checklist (SCSC) is administered to school counselor supervisors to assess their readiness. The readiness of school counselors to begin the supervisory relationship with trainees utilizing the ASCA model is ascertained through self-reflection, answers given on the checklist.

Response options for the SCSC are all measured on a five point Likert scale. Each of the 11 subscales will be scored individually by summing the values of the items in that subscale. A total score will also be obtained by summing the subscale scores. No psychometric properties were reported before the study. A Cronbach's alpha was run to confirm the appropriateness of using a total score. Internal reliability was .95 on the SCSC.

Procedures

The School Counselor Supervision Questionnaire and The School Counselor Supervisors Checklist were sent to all RAMP school counselors across the United States and traditional school counselors in the central region of the United States. The RAMP school counselors and the traditional counselors are members of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) who are qualified according to CACPREP standards to supervise interns.

Included in the research packets was information that stipulated the following guidelines: (1) The school counselor must be an active member of ASCA; from a RAMP program or a traditional school counseling program. (2) Only one school counselor should complete both the questionnaire and checklist from one school counseling program. (3) The questionnaires should be returned electronically or mailed using the pre-paid envelop. (4) The consent form should be should be signed and returned in the prepaid envelope.

Results

Demographic Data

A total of 181 professional school counselors participated in the study. Sixty-eight (62.4%) were RAMP School Counselors and 113 (37.6%) were traditional school counselors. RAMP and traditional groups were similar in that most of the participants were female (RAMP = 83.8%, traditional = 84.1%) and their highest degree received was a master's degree with additional hours (RAMP = 63.2%, traditional = 70.8%). Also, the majority of both groups received their degree in school counseling (RAMP = 79.4%, traditional = 76.1%) and work with students in grades 9-12 (RAMP = 33.8%, traditional = 33.5%).

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 assumed that supervision readiness in schools utilizing the ASCA model is significantly different from supervision readiness in traditional counseling programs. The hypothesis was rejected; there was no significant difference between supervisory readiness across both groups. The *t* tests were performed to evaluate differences between RAMP and traditional based school counselors with regard to their supervisor readiness as measured by the 11 subscales on the School Counselor Supervisor's Checklist (SCSC). In Table 1, the means and standard deviations of each item on the SPSC is compared across groups.

Table 2 provides the results of *t* test of independent samples using the 11 subscales on the SCSC. As may be seen from this table, only one *t* test has a significant finding. The test between groups regarding supervisory relationships resulted in $t = 1.98$, ($df = 152$), $p = .049$. The subscale looked at the conceptual knowledge of the

personal and professional nature (knowledge of individual differences, sensitivity to the needs of trainee, expectation for trainee to own responsibility for actions, and evaluation nature of supervision for self and trainee) of supervisory relationships across groups. Specifically, RAMP counselors had a higher mean score ($M = 41.70$) than traditional counselors ($M = 40.25$). All other contrasts between the groups resulted in non-significant findings.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation for SCSC Across Groups

Subscales	Group	N	M	SD
Knowledge & competencies score	RAMP	50	16.28	3.38
	Traditional	16	16.44	2.19
Personal trait score	RAMP	54	40.48	3.50
	Traditional	104	40.22	3.32
Ethics, legal aspects score	RAMP	54	25.57	4.84
	Traditional	106	25.18	3.44
Supervisory relationship score	RAMP	53	41.70	3.50
	Traditional	101	40.25	4.68
Supervision methods score	RAMP	53	38.21	6.37
	Traditional	103	36.97	6.23
Counseling development process score	RAMP	51	29.31	4.57
	Traditional	97	28.53	4.71
Case management score	RAMP	50	46.68	8.26
	Traditional	101	46.09	7.00
Student assessment score	RAMP	46	15.83	3.91
	Traditional	65	16.77	3.26
Report writing score	RAMP	49	26.27	4.89
	Traditional	100	25.53	4.59
Evaluation of performance score	RAMP	46	29.70	5.05
	Traditional	102	28.54	5.14
Research in supervision score	RAMP	50	17.66	5.51
	Traditional	104	17.31	4.76

Table 2

Independent Samples Test

Subscale Scores	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Knowledge & competencies	-.17	64	0.86
Personal trait	.46	156	0.65
Ethics, legal aspects	0.60	158	0.55
Supervisory relationship	1.98	152	0.049
Supervision methods	1.16	154	0.25
Counseling development process	0.98	146	0.33
Case management	.46	149	0.65
Student assessment	-1.38	109	0.17
Report writing	0.90	147	0.37
Evaluation of performance	1.46	146	0.21
Research in supervision	.41	152	0.68

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 assumed that supervision activities (Foundation, Delivery systems, Management systems, and Accountability systems) in RAMP school counseling programs with trainees utilizing the ASCA are significantly different when compared to supervision activities with trainees utilizing the ASCA model in traditional school counseling programs. The hypothesis was accepted; there was a significant difference between supervisory activities between RAMP and traditional programs. A Cronbach's alpha was conducted to test the internal consistency of adding together the scores used in items 3 through 9, on the School Counselor Supervision Questionnaire (SCSQ). This resulted in Alpha= .96, indicating strong internal reliability. A *t* test for the independent

sample was then performed to test for difference between the groups. Table 3 provides the total SCSQ scores by groups. The t test resulted in $t = 3.77$, ($df = 107$), $p = .00$. Thus, it may be concluded that there is a significant difference between the groups. Specifically, the RAMP counselors had a higher mean score for supervision activities ($M = 116.49$) than the traditional counselors ($M = 99.55$).

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 proposed the assumption that school counselors' with fewer years of experience supervise counselor trainees utilizing the ASCA model. The hypothesis was rejected; counselors with fewer years of work experience do not supervise trainees utilizing the ASCA model more than counselors with more years of work experience do. The goal is to determine if there is a significant difference between counselors who have and have not supervised a trainee utilizing the ASCA model, with regard to their years of work experience. Table 4 presents a summary of the mean years of experience of the two groups. The t test for independent samples conducted to test for differences resulted $t = .323$, ($df = 175$), $p = .002$ indicating that there is a significant difference between groups. Specifically, counselors who have supervised trainees utilizing the ASCA model have significantly more experience ($M = 12.57$) than counselors who have not supervised trainees utilizing the ASCA model ($M = 8.99$). The finding was directly opposite to what was hypothesized.

The major findings of this study reveal that there is not a significant difference between RAMP and traditional counselors in regards to supervisory readiness. However, RAMP programs are significantly better with supervisory activities than traditional programs. Lastly, school counselors with fewer years of work experience do

not supervision trainee utilizing the ASCA model more than school counselors with more years of experience.

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation for SCSQ across Groups

SCSQ Total Score 3-9	Group	N	M	SD
	RAMP	43	116.49	22.67
	Traditional	66	99.55	23.13

Table 4

Mean and Standard Deviation for Years of Experience across Groups

	Supervised Using ASCA Model	N	M	SD
More Years of Experience	Yes	77	12.57	6.81
Fewer Years of Experience	No	100	8.99	7.70

Discussion

In this study, of the 11 supervisory readiness components, there is only one significant finding across groups dealing with the conceptual knowledge of the personal and professional nature of supervisory relationships. RAMP counselors are significantly better in conceptualizing knowledge of the personal nature of supervisory relationship with trainees than traditional counselors. The other 10 components resulted in no significant differences between the RAMP programs and traditional school counseling programs.

The conceptual knowledge of the personal and professional nature of the supervisory relationship across groups resulted in a significant finding for RAMP programs surveyed. The finding seems appropriate, in that RAMP counselors reported spending almost twice as much time ($M = 3.42$) supervising trainees than traditional counselors ($M = 1.75$). Because professional literature on supervision for school counseling interns within the framework of ASCA Model has been nonexistent (Murphy and Kaffenberger, 2007) this finding seems helpful, in that, it expands what is known about the supervision effectiveness of school counselors, specifically those who work in programs that are RAMP approved, framed in the ASCA model.

In this study, supervisory activities resulted in a significant difference between RAMP programs and traditional programs. RAMP counselors ($M = 116.49$) had a higher mean score for supervision activities than traditional counselors ($M = 99.55$). Therefore, the four components of the ASCA model (Foundation, Delivery System, Management System, and Accountability) provide supervisory activities for school counselor trainees in RAMP programs significantly more than in traditional programs.

The significant findings suggest the activities provided by counselors in RAMP schools are congruent with what is taught to new school counselors in counselor education programs. It is likely that new trainees supervised in RAMP school programs will experience activities within the four components of the ASCA model. Therefore, this finding suggests that RAMP approved programs are suited as appropriate school counseling sites for new school counselors in the profession.

The final result in this study is the mean years of experience between counselors who have and who have not supervised trainees utilizing the ASCA model. The years of

experience of counselors in RAMP and traditional programs are considered. Counselors who have supervised trainees utilizing the ASCA model have a little more than 3.5 years of experience ($M = 12.57$) than counselors who have not supervised trainees with the ASCA model ($M = 8.99$). It appears that counselors who have more years of experience in the profession utilize the ASCA model with trainees. This finding was directly opposite to what was hypothesized. School counselors with fewer years of experience were trained in graduate programs with the ASCA model, while school counselors with more years of experience were not trained with the ASCA model. Therefore, the finding suggests that RAMP counselors with more years of experience are the counselors who instigated the shift to utilize the ASCA model with trainees.

Because of the findings in this study, it seems clear that more RAMP school counseling programs are better able to provide supervision effectiveness for the ASCA trained, new professional school counselor. With the development of the ASCA Model as the professional template for school counseling programs, a renewed awareness of, and appreciation for supervision effectiveness was explored in this study.

Limitations of the Study

The results of the study provide useful information concerning supervision readiness and supervisory activities to determine supervision effectiveness of RAMP and traditional school counseling programs. RAMP participants were from all regions, while the traditional participants were centralized in a particular region of the United States. This is a limitation of the study, in that generalizable findings for all school counseling programs were not feasible.

There were several RAMP programs that no longer had school counselors who adhered to all of the components of the ASCA model; several RAMP programs also had counselors who did not supervise utilizing the ASCA model. Therefore, the RAMP programs having counselors who do not follow the components of the ASCA model could impact the findings of the study. It was assumed that RAMP programs were synonymous with school counselors who implemented the ASCA model. This factor limited the number of RAMP participants for the study. A total of 14 school counselors were replaced in RAMP schools. Further examination is needed to determine how many counselors did not continue to utilize the ASCA components.

The instruments used to measure supervision readiness and supervisory activities are also limitations to the study. Both instruments did not have appropriate questions to gather demographic information, no reliability or validity studies were done on the tools, and the questionnaire was not designed for supervisors. Additionally, the self-report checklist provided only a personal view of the supervisor's effectiveness, which could be considered biased. Finally, there is a possibility of inflating the experiment-wise error by performing multiple t tests for each subscale of the SCSC.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several implications and recommendations emerge from the study. The researcher recommends that reliable instruments are designed and available for research with school counselor supervisors utilizing the components of the National model. Additionally, a recommendation is to examine RAMP programs in a longitudinal study design. RAMP programs have been in existence since 2005, and there are only 169 programs. Examining RAMP programs over a period of time will help to assess

supervisory effectiveness with trainees utilizing the model with programs in existence over five years. Also, examining RAMP programs in existence for equal years help to control for the lack of experience of RAMP programs with fewer years of experience. The final recommendation is to research if RAMP school counseling programs maintain utilizing the ASCA components in their programs with hired traditional counselors. It seems that traditional school counselors are hired in RAMP schools, when RAMP counselors relocate or change schools, causing a disconnect between RAMP programs and newly hired traditional counselors.

Implications for Professional School Counselors

Because the difference between school counselors' (RAMP programs = 62%; traditional programs = 29%) level of comfort utilizing the ASCA model with trainees, traditional school counselors' comfort level would seem to increase if they are trained to understand and implement the supervisory activities of the ASCA model.

It seems imperative for traditional school counselors to receive training by attending ASCA workshops and/or graduate courses in school counseling programs. Peer supervision with a RAMP counselor is also a viable option for traditional counselors to receive the necessary knowledge and experience to provide effective supervision to new trainees, utilizing the ASCA model. Then, the theory and practice of supervision with trainees utilizing the ASCA model may also be realized in traditional programs. Professional school counselors' supervisory readiness and supervisory activities are mandatory characteristics needed to provide effective supervision to trainees utilizing the National model.

Conclusion

RAMP programs are pivotal for the shift of professional school counseling programs becoming effective supervision sites utilizing the ASCA model. The supervision effectiveness of trainees utilizing the ASCA model is significant in RAMP school counseling programs. Traditional counselors must pursue avenues to training in supervision readiness and supervisory activities or traditional programs must move toward becoming RAMP programs. Ongoing training is imperative for new trainees and school counselors in traditional programs, so that school counselors not only in RAMP programs have viable on-site training for new trainees.

Therefore the results of this study, in contrast to traditional programs, show the enhancement in supervision readiness and activities imply RAMP approved schools are instrumental in the preparation of school counselor trainees utilizing the ASCA model. Such information is necessary as the transformation of the profession shifts from the utility of traditional school counseling programs to RAMP schools with significant findings that assure effective supervision.

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