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Date May 26, 1971

ATTITUDES AND ROLE EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS THE SCHOOL

COUNSELOR AS PERCEIVED BY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

by

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A professional paper submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

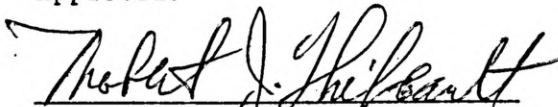
of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

with concentration in:

Counseling

Approved:


Head, Major Department


Chairman, Examining Committee


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MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

June, 1971

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ABSTRACT

This study is primarily a literature survey to gain an understanding of the attitudes and role expectations school administrators have towards school counselors. There is a need for this area to be studied since role clarification is frequently a problem of school counselors, since models for counseling programs are weak in the opinions of school administrators and since school administrators generally determine the direction of the counseling program. The major concentration is from 1960 to the present.

The review is divided into three sections. In the section, The Past Roles of the Counselor, it was determined that many groups thought negatively of the role of the counselor. Many, but certainly not all, thought of the counselor as a quasi-administrator who was basically incompetent and ineffective as a personal-emotional counselor. The next section, Two Major Counseling Roles, discusses the two diverse roles of the therapeutic counselor and the consultant counselor. Many writers support the role of the therapeutic counselor with the backing of the American Personnel and Guidance Association. They feel strongly that the counselor should spend the majority of his time working with individuals on a feeling level. A smaller group supports the consultant role. The consultant should spend the majority of his time with teachers and parents in an attempt to help the child by changing his environment.

The third section deals with the studies of the opinions of administrators. It was found that the various studies concluded a wide variety and even opposing results. Some concluded that administrators and counselors tend to agree on the ideal role of the counselor; others concluded that there is a large discrepancy between the two groups of opinions. Some studies indicated that most administrators felt that the major function of a school counselor should be personal and social counseling. Others reported that the major function should be that of consultation. Still others felt the counselor should function primarily as an academic advisor.

This paper suggests that further work needs to be done to define and refine the role of the school counselor. In general it appears that counselor educators and counselors tend to hold different points of view than administrators. It is felt this is due to many possible misconceptions. Therefore, it seems essential that these groups work together on a national level to establish the objectives and functions for effective counseling services in the schools. It is hoped that the direction of the therapeutic counselor is chosen and that this concept will filter down to the local level through in-service training. A direct implication of the above is a revamping of many counselor trainee programs and the requirements for certification of school counselors.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a study conducted by Nelson and Fredrickson in Colorado and Massachusetts (22) it was decided that the problem of role clarification of school counselors was one which was very frequently a concern of school counselors themselves. The literature on this subject seems to indicate that there is wide disagreement as to the role the school counselor should assume. This may well be a major concern of the school counselor who may find himself caught somewhere in the middle of this disagreement.

Many believe the counselor should spend most of his time being a consultant to teachers, administrators, and the community. They seem to feel that the ability of an individual to help another individual through therapeutic counseling is minimal and therefore the way to be truly effective is to somehow change the environment of the individual in the school, home and community.

On the other side of the disagreement are those who believe the way in which the counselor can be truly effective is to help the individual through therapeutic counseling. They believe this is where the majority of his time should be spent, that is, working with individual students in helping them overcome their personal emotional problems.

There appears to be a general agreement with Shaw and Tuel in their statement of the purpose of the counseling program. They state, "The basic purpose of the guidance specialist is to maximize the learning of all students and to enable them to use their learning effectively." (29:828). The disagreement comes when one begins to discuss how this goal can best be effected.

There appears to be a need to discover what the various aspects of the disagreement are and whether they are as wide and fundamental as they seem or whether there is really a more general agreement. A clarification of these issues will help the elementary and secondary school counselor to have a better understanding of what will be expected of him on the job.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this paper will be to investigate the literature for an understanding of the attitudes and role expectations school administrators have towards school counselors and to determine if further research is necessary in this area. The scope of the paper will include both secondary and elementary administrators.

NEED AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Arbuckle states that the question of the function and responsibility of the school counselor has been an issue for some time. Because of this disagreement he believes the effective functioning of the counselor has been impaired (4). Arbuckle and others (6;25;29) make broad statements about the direction school counseling should take and the general attitudes persons of various positions (administrators, teachers, counselors, college departments, etc.) have taken, but present little evidence that this is actually the case. This investigator is interested in studying one small phase of this disagreement. That is, have there been sufficient studies conducted to show what the attitudes and role expectations of elementary through high school administrators are, and is there really as much disagreement as Arbuckle and some others indicate?

Universities are geared in a variety of directions in training counselors. These counselors then expect and desire to find positions related to the type of training they have. University counseling departments could possibly find that clarification of the school administrators' opinions and positions is an aid in planning their programs.

A study done in Colorado and Massachusetts showed that role clarification was the very problem counselors were most frequently

concerned about (22). This study gives another indication that more study is needed in this area and that it is a major concern of a large number of individuals.

William McDougall and Henry Reitan stated that models for elementary school guidance and counseling programs are very weak in the opinions of elementary school administrators. Usually the role the counselor plays in the school is largely determined by the administrators. It therefore seems highly desirable that there be a sampling of those attitudes and opinions which elementary principals hold (20).

Studies by Martyn (17) and Tennyson (34) showed that when school counselors did not have a clear concept of their role they tended to perform more clerical and administrative tasks than they did guidance or counseling.

The sources referenced above indicate strongly that some studies should be conducted to uncover the attitudes and role expectations of school administrators towards school counselors. This paper will then be a survey of the literature in order to bring together previous work on the subject and to test the hypothesis that additional research needs to be done.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

The following are several questions that will hopefully be answered in the general categories of attitudes, role expectations and future research.

ATTITUDES

What attitudes do administrators have toward school counseling? To be more specific, do they feel it is an important or unimportant aspect of a child's education? If they feel it is important, how important is it?

ROLE EXPECTATIONS

What roles do school administrators expect the counselor to take in the school program? Do they expect the counselor to be primarily a consultant? Do they expect him to work primarily with individual students? Do they feel clerical and administrative work is part of the role of a counselor? What aspects of the counselor's job do the administrators consider to be of most importance? How should the counselors time be divided? Should the counseling or consulting aspect be extended to teachers, administrators, parents and the community? If individual counseling is favored, is there any particular school of thought school administrators prefer? Do school administrators feel that there should be some differences in the

elementary and secondary school counseling program? How involved do they feel school counselors should be in establishing the policies of the counseling program?

FUTURE RESEARCH

Is further research needed to clarify the role of the counselor?

GENERAL PROCEDURE

The procedure of this study will be a survey of the literature concerning the attitudes and role expectations school administrators hold towards school counseling. Since some significant changes have been made in the last ten years in school counseling the main emphasis will be from 1960 on.

DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

When only a survey of the literature is taken, the investigation is inherently delimited. Only the opinions and research of other writers and investigators can be studied.

There appear to be two main limitations. Many of the articles are the opinions of the writers rather than a study of the facts. Another limitation is that this paper will investigate only one aspect of the problem--that of role clarification of the counselor. For a proper and balanced understanding of the counselor's role, the

attitudes and expectations of all those within his professional environment (such as teachers, the general public, counselors themselves and renowned people of the profession) need to be considered.

SUMMARY

There appear to be some basic disagreements as to the role of the school counselor. The gap of the disagreement seems to be wide in that some emphasize the role of consultant and others adhere to the role of therapeutic counseling. Partially because of this disagreement, school counselors have expressed that role clarification is one of their major concerns.

A survey of the literature will be taken of the attitudes and role expectations of school administrators towards school counselors in order to have an understanding of what the literature now indicates and to test the hypothesis that further research needs to be done in this area. Several questions to be hopefully answered through the survey have been raised.

It is realized that only one aspect of the problem of role clarification will be studied and that this is a major limitation. However, it is believed by the investigator that this is the most important area since it is usually the school administrator that presently establishes the direction of the school counseling program.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter will be a survey of the literature. There will be three major sections. The first will be concerned with the role which the counselor has assumed in the past. It has been discovered that this role has been viewed as primarily negative by many groups of people. The second section will deal with the role two diverse groups feel the counselor should assume, i.e., the therapeutic counselor verses the consultant. The third section will review some studies that have been conducted to indicate administrators' opinions about the role of the counselor.

PAST ROLES OF THE COUNSELOR

Bruce Shertzer and Shelley Stone (31) have been critical of the past image of the school counselor. They maintain that a great deal of confusion has surrounded the counselor's role as a result of contradictory and conflicting expectancies of his various publics, i.e., pupils, teachers, administrators and parents. They feel that the views of these publics can be a profitable means for seeing the role the counselor is playing. They claim that another important factor is that up to now the opinions of the counselors' publics, particularly that of the administrators, have largely determined the role of the counselor.

Shertzer and Stone review harshly what they claim to be the views of the counselors' publics. They deal with the opinions of four publics, namely pupils, teachers, administrators and parents. They cite studies which lead to the conclusion that students do not view the counselor as being an effective source of help except in the area of educational-vocational decision making. The pupils indicated that others should have the benefit of the counselor in personal-emotional problems but that they themselves would not seek the assistance of a counselor. Shertzer and Stone blame the counselor for allowing himself to be overly involved in tasks irrelevant to the basic function of his job, i.e., personal-emotional counseling.

The second public dealt with is the teachers. Shertzer and Stone summarize the opinions of teachers from other studies. They list a cutting five-fold description:

...(1)counselors are administrators and the nicest thing you can say about administrators is that they are a necessary evil which may be tolerated but better yet eradicated; (2)counselors provide auxiliary services and are therefore expendable; (3)counselors coddle and pamper those who would, and perhaps should, flunk out; (4)the counselor's pseudo-Freudian, pseudo-psychometric jargon is the purest nonsense; and (5)his pretense of confidentiality is merely a shield to hide behind when the welfare of the institution is involved or his activities challenged. (31:688).

They are afraid that the teachers' negative assessment of the role of the counselor may have definite grounds. They agree with the teachers in that this type of counselor is worthless and expendable.

The third category of public is the administrator. Here Shertzer and Stone cite studies which report that administrators believe that counselors have not been particularly competent to handle student personal-emotional problems. They feel that this is evident in the assignments made by school administrators, i.e., many counselors are functioning as clerks or quasi-administrators. They rise to the defense of the counselor at this point. "To relegate an employee to the position of jack-of-all trades and then condemn him for his failure to perform the unique service for which he was originally employed is grossly unfair and possibly represents deceitful hiring practice." (31:689). They are not too quick to praise the counselor, however. They find it even more disturbing that the counselor has used this subtle and shrewd way to avoid facing the real test of his skills and services.

The last category is that of parents. Here Shertzer and Stone claim that the general expectations parents have of the counselors' role are primarily limited to the outdated notion of program planning. Also, parents frequently want the counselor to perform a persuasive function in the areas of educational and occupational choice.

It should be clarified that the role these groups see the counselor playing is not the role that Shertzer and Stone believe is right. Also, they do not believe that the counselor should be

eliminated, but rather that he must find a new role which will be more effective for all of these groups.

Two studies conducted by Pruett and Brown (27) and McCreary and Miller (19) are not so harsh on the school counselor. McCreary and Miller conducted their study by questionnaire with elementary school counselors, principals and teachers in California. In contradiction to the claim of Shertzer and Stone that counselors spend little time with students, this study reported that they spent 50 percent of their time working with students. However, in the study conducted by Pruett and Brown it was found in a survey of elementary and secondary counselors in Indiana, that the counselors spent only 35.9 percent of their time with individual students. Only 12 percent of that was personal counseling. The balance of the 35.9 percent was split between educational counseling, 18.2 percent, and vocational counseling, 5.7 percent. Non-guidance activities such as clerical work, scheduling, and administrative activities consumed 38.5 percent of their time. This study seems to be somewhat in agreement with Shertzer and Stone.

McCreary and Miller disagreed widely with Shertzer and Stone on teachers' rating of counseling services. Their study showed 48 percent of the teachers felt that the services were excellent, 24 percent said that they were adequate, and only 6 percent felt that they were inadequate.

McCreary and Miller also found evidence to support the criticism of counselors for spending too much time in activities inconsistent with their role as counselor. Some counselors in their study were handling disciplinary cases, serving as teachers in the absence of regular teachers and performing administrative duties unrelated to the guidance program. The researchers stressed that these roles are detrimental to the counselor being an effective personal-emotional counselor.

TWO MAJOR COUNSELING ROLES

There appear to be two major schools of thought on the role which the school counselor should assume. One role is that of a therapeutic counselor who spends most of his time counseling with the individual student. The other side believes the counselor should be primarily a consultant to teachers, parents and administration, in an attempt to change the individual's environment.

THERAPEUTIC COUNSELOR

Arbuckle (4) states that some degree of skill in counseling must be a minimal prerequisite for anyone who calls himself a school counselor. He feels that it is crucial that the counselor be viewed by students as a caring and helping individual. He needs to be an individual with whom the student can feel free to be totally honest.

Arbuckle feels strongly that the counselor should be an "...expert in problems dealing with human communications; he should know much about people and their behavior; he should have diagnostic capabilities and skills; he should know much about the non-school world of work and further education; above all he should be capable of relating in a positive way with individuals who resist and resent any attempt at human communications and closeness." (4:343-344).

Arbuckle (4) and Pruett and Brown (27) backed their statements with the statement of position which the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) formulated in 1962. Arbuckle (4) feels this position represents the attitude of literally thousands of counselors and counselor educators. The APGA stated that it is the responsibility of the counselor to:

1. Assist each pupil to meet the need to understand himself in relation to the social and psychological world in which he lives. This implies helping each pupil to understand his aptitudes, interests, attitudes, abilities and opportunities for self-fulfillment, and the interrelationships among these.
2. Assist each pupil to meet the need of accepting (defined as being able to behave consistently with) his aptitudes, interests, attitudes, abilities and opportunities for self-fulfillment.
3. Assist each pupil to meet the need to develop personal decision-making competency. Included is the responsibility of assuring that the pupil's opportunities for self-understanding and self-fulfillment are not restricted by the group consideration and processes inherent in schools.

4. Assist all members of the staff and to provide information, material and consultative assistance aimed at supporting their efforts to understand pupils.
5. Determine the influence of the school program on pupil educational and psycho-social development and to convey such information to other staff members.
6. Inform other staff members of significant changes in the school and non-school environments which have implications for instruction, the psycho-social well-being of pupils. Participate in related program development.
7. Assist parents to understand the developmental progress of their child, his needs and environmental opportunities, for purposes of increasing their ability to contribute to the development of their child.
8. Interpret to the community the importance of consideration for the individual and the contribution of the school counseling program to that end.
9. Promote in the community non-school opportunities necessary for pupil development.
10. Use and/or promote community resources designed to meet unusual or extreme needs of pupils which are beyond the responsibility of the school. (3:114-115).

To show the importance individuals should have for the counselor the APGA also recommends that the counselor spend from two-thirds to three-fourths of his time, in either the elementary or high school, committed to counseling students and consulting with teachers, administrators and parents as they in turn deal with students. The same document goes on to recommend that at least 50 percent of the counselor's time be spent with students. (37:137).

Patterson (25) strongly supports this side of the disagreement by pointing out fallacies in the arguments for the consultant role. However, he does not claim that the consultant role has no place.

C. H. Patterson (24) in another article very strongly supports the role of the therapeutic counselor. He contends that the term counseling has been contaminated to mean anything that anybody does to help another individual. "We are now in a state of confusion....It is necessary to restrict, or delimit, the meaning of the word counseling so that it has a clear denotative meaning. And when this is done, we reach a definition that does not differ in any essential respect from a definition of psychotherapy." (24:16).

Patterson goes to some extent in his article to argue with four definitions that have been presented to distinguish between counseling and psychotherapy. One of the differential definitions centers around the severity of the client's disturbance, i.e., the counselor deals primarily with "normal" people with mild problems while the psychotherapist deals with the more serious problems. Patterson challenges this differentiation by reminding the reader that no sharp normality lines can be drawn, and suggests the possible ridiculous outcome "...this position implies that a client being 'treated' by a psychotherapist no longer needs the special skill or help of the psychotherapist once he reaches 'normality'...but should

then be transferred to a counselor if he still desires further help." (24:2-3).

A second differentiation has centered around the nature of the problem of the client, i.e., counseling deals with reality-oriented problems rather than intrapersonal or internal personality conflicts. Patterson adequately argues that these simply are not that easily separated and that each contains elements of the other.

A third differentiation involves goals. According to Tyler (35) psychotherapy is directed toward a personality change whereas counseling refers to a helping process whose aim is not to change the person, but to enable him to utilize the sources he now has for coping with life. More briefly stated, psychotherapy is remedial in nature while counseling is preventive. Hahn and MacLean (14:31-32). also make this distinction. Patterson (24:4) strongly argues this point. "It hardly seems possible to separate personality change...from changes represented in greater utilization of the capacities of the individual....Changes in perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, values, feelings and emotions all occur as a result of counseling. Who would say that these are not basic personality changes?"

A fourth distinction attempted between psychotherapy and counseling concerns methods or techniques. However, in reviewing the literature there appears to be no method used by one and not the other. "Everyone...seems to agree that counseling or psychotherapy is a

personal relationship, involving a personal interaction, mainly verbal but also on a non-verbal level, characterized by attentive listening and empathetic understanding, a nonpossessive warmth, respect and acceptance and a genuine, real, honest relationship." (24:52).

After this lengthy discussion Patterson concludes that there truly are no basic differences between counseling and psychotherapy.

CONSULTANT COUNSELOR

Shaw and Tuel (29) contend that it is unrealistic to expect the direct approach to individual students to be effective when the current counselor-student ratio is so large. They claim that very few schools have even a 300 to 1 ratio. With that kind of ratio they question the extent of any effectiveness a counselor could have on an individual basis. They therefore propose that the guidance program have an indirect focus. It should primarily be aimed at improving the educational environment. Shaw and Tuel emphasize three results of this proposal: (1) that the guidance specialist is responsible for services to all students, (2) that his purpose is to enhance the learning environment. (3) that to do this effectively he will do less direct work with students and more with teachers and parents.

Boy and Pine (7) also support the consultant role of the counselor. They, however, suggest that this approach be a complement to the therapeutic approach and a new position be created in schools--that of a school sociologist.

Faust (11) strongly supports the consultant role in the elementary school. He has formulated a hierarchy of consultation roles. Since the teacher is perceived as the most crucial agent of change for the child in school, consultation with groups of teachers was placed first and consultation with individual teachers was placed second on the hierarchy. Faust feels working with teachers, especially groups of teachers, is far more economical than just working with students.

ADMINISTRATORS' OPINIONS

Arbuckle (4) made three statements that he felt were unfortunately representative of at least a significant number, if not the majority of administrators' opinions of school counselors. First, there is a degree of suspicion among administrators and some teachers of things psychological and therapeutic. Second, the administrator sees no apparent clash between various functions and responsibilities the counselor might hold, such as that of the authoritarian role of teacher and administrator as opposed to that of counselor. Third, if there is no particular difference in the functions and responsibilities of the counselor and the administrator, then there is no need for any special training or education for the counselor.

Dunlop (10) can lend some support to Arbuckle's second statement. In his study he found that administrators were reluctant or

unwilling to distinguish between the role of teacher and counselor, and related the desirability of counseling to the effect it might have on students' academic achievement.

A study conducted by McDougall and Reitan (20) refutes Arbuckle's third statement, at least for the elementary principal. Their study was a survey of the elementary counselor as perceived by the elementary principals in Idaho, Oregon and Washington. A large majority of the respondents favored specially trained elementary school counselors.

There are many studies which indicate administrators are in favor of counselors performing personal counseling with students. In Schmidt's study (28) secondary school principals ranked personal and social counseling first in the ideal role of the counselor. The ideal role, as they perceived it, also included vocational and educational counseling, interpreting test results to students, maintaining occupational and educational information and identifying exceptional children. These same principals tended on the average to perceive a positive relationship between what the counselor in their school was doing and what they felt he should do ideally. This was in very close agreement with what the counselors themselves felt they were doing and what they thought they ideally should be doing. A similar study by Sweeney (33) reports comparable results.

McCreary and Miller (19) found that elementary principals ranked counseling as the first important function of the elementary counselor. Table I, which shows the various rankings, is taken from their article. (19:496).

Table I. Functions of the Elementary Counselor

Administrators rank order of importance	Counselors rank order of importance	Counselors actual time in rank order
Counseling	Counseling	Counseling
Teacher consultation	Teacher consultation	Teacher consultation
Parent consultation	Parent consultation	Testing program
Testing program	Testing program	Parent consultation
Community and district referrals	Administrative (guidance program)	Record keeping clerical
Administrative (guidance program)	Community and district referrals	Administrative (guidance program)
Research studies	Research Studies	Community and district referrals
Record keeping clerical	Record keeping clerical	Research studies

This same study asked, "What skills and competencies should the elementary school counselor possess." (19:496). The majority of the principals indicated that proficiency in test administration and interpretation and proficiency in counseling techniques were the most significant competencies expected of elementary counselors.

McDougal (20) in another study of perception of elementary counselors by elementary school principals, found that 98 percent of the principals considered counseling individual students with

personal and social problems to be either very important or important. The other functions found to be important in the study were very similar to the findings of McCreary and Miller.

Many of the studies cited thus far indicate that counselors and administrators tend to agree that the proper role for counselors should be one of a personal counselor. Other studies conclude that they do not agree and that many administrators support the consultation role.

In the study by Hart and Prince (15) a questionnaire was sent to all secondary school principals employed in the state of Utah. The purpose of this study was to discern (a) any discrepancies between the principals' expectations of the counselors' roles and the ideal role as taught to counselors during their training, and (b) the effect counselor training and counseling experience have had in shaping the way principals' perceive the counselors' roles. Hart and Prince found that the ideal counselor training teaches that (a) discipline is not part of his role, (b) clerical responsibilities are inappropriate, (c) opportunity is needed to deal with personal-emotional problems, (d) it is inappropriate to reveal confidential information, and (e) maintaining a professional role related to counseling students is important as opposed to being a jack-of-all trades.

The principals were divided into four groups according to their own individual counseling training and experience. The results,

showing their agreement or disagreement with the ideal role of the counselor as established by counselor educators, are shown in Table II.

Table II. Differences in Role Expectation for Counselors as Seen by Counselor Educators, Compared to Principals.

Role	Expectation
Discipline	1 group disagreed
Clerical activities	4 groups disagreed
Personal-emotional counseling	4 groups disagreed
Confidentiality	4 groups disagreed
Professional role	4 groups disagreed

Stated briefly, the counselor develops a philosophy of counseling designed to help him assist students in self-discovery and adjustment in many areas of their lives, and the principal sees counseling more as academic advising, essentially regardless of his own counseling training and experience.

A study conducted by Graff and Warner (13) reached similar conclusions to those of Hart and Prince. That is, administrators (and teachers) tend to view counselors as quasi-administrators and do not put the same emphasis on the counseling function as do the counselors. Graff and Warner question if this is not partly the fault of the counselor in that he has not clearly explained to administrators and teachers what he sees to be his objectives and functions.

Somewhat in support of the above two studies Muro (21) found that principals tended to consider the consultation function of a counselor to be his major role with the counseling and coordination function being of less importance. Muro claims this supports the joint ACES-ASCA committee's preliminary statement of the role of the counselor. This also means that Muro disagrees with the studies which concluded that counselors saw the counseling function to have the most importance.

Cawelti (9) also took the same ACES-ASCA preliminary statement and found similar results, that is, principals found more of a need for the consultation function than did the counselors. Cawelti, however, also found that principals saw a real need for more time to be spent in actual counseling--even slightly more than the counselors themselves!

Shertzer and Lundy's study (30) also supported more of the consultant role. They sent a questionnaire to 300 elementary school principals in Indiana, concluding that elementary school principals perceive elementary school counselors to be preventative, problem-solving, remedial agents who assist teachers in the educative process. They found that the principals' image suggests that the counselor serve as a co-ordinator, consultant and counselor, in that order. The elementary counselor would serve as a co-ordinator for processing and using pupil data, as a consultant to teachers and parents in the

realm of pupil adjustments, and lastly as a counselor to pupils in crisis situations.

SUMMARY

Shertzer and Stone have been very critical of the past image of the school counselor. They claim that value of the counselor can be seen through the eyes of the counselor's publics. They maintain that these publics view the counselor as a quasi-administrator who is a necessary evil. Other articles were more positive towards the past role of the counselor.

A survey of the articles on the roles of the counselor has disclosed two different types of roles that the counselor ought to assume, i.e., a therapeutic counselor and a consultant counselor. The therapeutic counselor has the backing of APGA which Arbuckle claims has the backing of literally thousands of counselors and counselor educators. The consultant role seems to be a newly emerging school of thought.

In many of the studies of the administrators' opinions, it was found that counselors and administrators tend to agree on the role of the counselor. The role of therapeutic counselor appears to have the major support. Most administrators reported that one of the major functions of the school counselor was personal and social counseling. They did not omit the role of consultation but they did not consider

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter first summarizes the varied conclusions of the studies reviewed. It is shown that many varied and opposite conclusions were found and reasons for the discrepancies are suggested. The primary conclusion is that more study and communication between counselors and administrators is needed to establish an effective role for the school counselor.

The implications of this study are then discussed, and several recommendations are made. Patterson (24) and others were used to support the role of the therapeutic counselor and are used as a guide to foster a clearer understanding among administrators as to what an effective counselor should be. It is suggested that there have been many misconceptions on this point and that there is need in many places to develop a better, more definite understanding.

CONCLUSIONS

Nearly all of these studies strongly suggest that more needs to be done in further defining and refining the role the counselor should assume, whether in the secondary or elementary school system. This is further emphasized here with the various studies having widely varied conclusions. Several studies conclude the exact opposite of other similar studies. Some studies concluded that there is little

difference between the ideal role of the counselor as the administrator understands it and as the counselor understands it. Other studies conclude just the opposite, i.e., there is a very large discrepancy between the opinion of administrators and counselors. Some studies have concluded that one or the other understands personal-emotional counseling to be the most important function of a counselor and others claim that administrators, counselors or both see the consultation function to have primary importance.

Several possibilities can account for the extremely varied results. One is that many of the studies were not properly conducted. Another is that the studies did not cover a large enough sample--that the generalization the researchers assumed was not valid. Another possibility is that the questionnaires used were biased. (This appears to be a real possibility as this investigator sees it. However, it is very difficult to judge when none of the questionnaires used in the studies were published.) Another possibility for the discrepancy is that perhaps the results are dependent upon the section of the country, the size of the school system or other such variables that were not controlled or investigated. Another and probably most important reason for the confusion is misunderstandings which have contaminated the term counseling.

In Chapter I several questions were posed which this study might answer. Several questions were answered and a few were left

unanswered. The section on implications will deal with the unanswered questions. Most of the questions which were answered deal with role expectation. However, none of the answers are clear cut.

It appears from the studies cited, that most administrators do see a need for the school counselor. Seemly, most of them prefer that he be more of a personal-emotional counselor than a consultant. However, many principals question whether this has the importance that many counselors feel it has. Most principals see the counselors' role to include many administrative and clerical duties, but vary in the degree they attach to it. Some principals still see the counselor as primarily a quasi-administrator and some principals believe that the counselor can function best as a consultant.

The primary conclusion here then, is that there is still a lot of varying opinions which administrators hold concerning the role of the school counselor and considerably more study and communication is needed to establish a clearer understanding between the counseling profession and school administrators to develop an effective role for the counselor. This need is particularly pressing since presently it is the administrator who usually determines the direction of the school counseling program.

IMPLICATIONS

This investigator feels that further work needs to be done to clarify the role of the counselor within the school system. In general it appears that counselor educators and counselors tend to hold different points of view than administrators. There is a definite need for these groups to get together to establish the objectives and functions for effective counseling services in the schools. If the counselor is to be effective in whichever role he assumes he needs to have the support of the administrators. If they have different perspectives of the counselors' functions, then the effectiveness of the program will be stymied.

It is recommended by this investigator that a program on a national level be started in which thorough discussion can take place between counselors, counselor educators, principals and teachers. Much research has been conducted to support the personal-emotional counseling function. Although this need not be the only function of the counselor it is hoped that this discussion would result in a general policy which would consider this to be a primary function.

Patterson's arguments (24) that there are no significant differences between counseling and psychotherapy should be made clear to administrators and if they could be helped to understand the purpose of a true counselor then there should be no problem in defining the

counselor's role within school systems. It is strongly felt by this investigator that a major reason for the confusion administrators seem to have is a result of a lack of education among administrators regarding counseling and psychotherapy. They simply do not have the proper background for understanding it's goals, purposes and methods. What is needed is a reeducation of the administrators as to what a counselor truly is and should be. Administrators need to know that counseling consists of a relationship

...in which one individual seeks help from a person skilled in providing a helping relationship. The help needed or problem is of a general nature, rather than information or solution of a specific problem. The problem involves affect or feeling, and is not mainly a cognitive problem resolvable on a purely objective or rational basis. The nature of the relationship which is effective in counseling or psychotherapy consists of a core facilitative condition of empathetic understanding, nonpossessive warmth and genuineness. It is suggested that counseling or psychotherapy be restricted to a relationship in which these (and perhaps certain other related conditions) are sufficient for positive results. (24:10).

Patterson emphasizes that a lack or deemphasis of the core conditions mentioned above results in a relationship which is essentially teaching. This is an important differentiation which administrators need to be well aware of and have a basic understanding of when they establish a counseling program within their school systems.

It is then recommended that this understanding be taken to the local level by in-service training of administrators and teachers in which clarification of the purposes, goals and methods for personal-

emotional counseling can result in an understanding and acceptance of this function. An additional function of these groups would be to foster an understanding of the need for this function of the counselor.

The above has direct implications on the program of preparation for the counselor. If Patterson's arguments are accepted, that there is no basic difference between the function of a counselor and a psychotherapist, then we need to take a long and serious look at many of our school counselor training programs and the accepted practice of requiring teaching experience. The recognition that counselors should truly be counselors and not quasi-administrators, information givers or teachers means that they must be adequately prepared to deal with and relate to a wide variety of people in a close interpersonal relationship. This point of view should suggest a revamping of many counselor trainee programs. (Also perhaps a closer look should be taken at the education requirements for administrators. It should be helpful in fostering a better understanding if administrators have a few courses in the basics of counseling and psychotherapy.)

The above also has direct implications on the practice of requiring teaching experience in order to become a school counselor. If we truly want counselors to counsel--which indeed only makes sense and for which much need has been shown--then a legitimate question is whether teaching experience in any way is necessary or even desirable. The counseling profession has moved in the direction of not requiring

teaching experience as evidenced in recent statements (1;2;5).

Considerable research (8;12;16;18) has shown that counselors with teaching experience are generally more advising, evaluative, information-giving, probing, questioning and tutorial than counselors without teaching experience. These approaches have questionable therapeutic value. Peterson and Brown (26) found that counselors with teaching experience perceived themselves superior at school tasks such as scheduling, extracurricular activities, grading policies and discipline, whereas counselors with no teaching experience perceived themselves as superior in counseling ability, providing social information, using tests and conducting research. It certainly seems that those with teaching experience would make good quasi-administrators, which is of questionable value as far as being an effective counselor is concerned. If they are to function as administrators why not title them as administrators? Why contaminate the title of counselor still further? Those without teaching experience appear to qualify better as true counselors. Wittmer and Webster (36) lend some insight into a possible reason for this phenomena. They researched the relationship between teaching experience and counselor dogmatism. They say that this is very pertinent and meaningful since dogmatism has been shown to be a rather permanent global personality trait which is not mitigated by counselor training programs. The population of their study was taken from the students enrolled in a counseling program

during the 1968 summer quarter at the University of Florida. The results appear to support the following conclusions:

1. Counselor trainees with teaching experience are significantly more dogmatic than counselor trainees without teaching experience.
2. Neither sex nor age significantly differentiate groups with reference to dogmatism; however, dogmatism did tend to increase with age and might have been significant had a larger sample been used.
3. Amount of teaching experience and dogmatism are not significantly related; however, dogmatism did tend to increase with experience and might have been significant had a larger sample been used. (36:501-502).

Wittmer and Webster raise the question whether or not counseling students with teaching experience should be admitted to a counseling program or if possibly a selection battery ought to be used to determine amount of dogmatism. One reason for raising this question is the impact a dogmatic counselor might have upon his client. It has been established that clients tend to move in the direction of the counselor's value system. It is desirable that the client find the answers which are best for him rather than being openly or subtly persuaded to conform to the counselor's expectations, beliefs and values.

Wittmer and Webster adequately bring into question the doubtful practice of requiring teaching experience before an individual may become a school counselor. It is strongly suggested here, with the support of the above material, that it also be emphasized to administrators (and other important parties concerned) that the requirement

of teaching experience represents an obvious misunderstanding of the most effective role of a counselor and ought to be eliminated.

It is suggested again that the therapeutic role of the counselor must have primary importance but it is not meant to be suggested that the role of the consultant be totally ignored. Both the role of therapeutic counselor and consultant can serve an important function within a school system. However, in many ways the two roles are incompatible for one person. It is therefore recommended that if the resources are available, larger school systems could have different counselors fulfilling each role.

At the very least, it is recommended that both the administrator and the counselor individually clarify which role they prefer. A statement of objectives of the counseling service should be provided by both the administrator and the counselor before the counselor assumes a position within the school system so that neither one will find himself in a very undesirable position.

In order to improve communication within a particular school concerning the degree of responsibility for various activities of the counselor, Shumake and Oelke (32) constructed the Counselor Function Inventory. This instrument covers the areas of counselor, consultant and co-ordinator. This inventory was tested and found to be both valid and reliable. It is geared to the high school program but with a few changes could be usable in the elementary situation. This inventory

might profitably be used by both the administrator and the counselor for clarification of the counselor role within a particular school program. The location of this inventory is listed in the bibliography.

Some of the questions posed in Chapter I were not answered by the studies surveyed. It is therefore suggested that these are areas of possible further investigation. There are four specific suggestions: (1) To what extent should the counseling or consulting aspect be extended to teachers, administrators, parents and the community? (2) If therapeutic counseling is favored is there any particular school of thought which school administrators prefer? (3) Do school administrators feel that there should be some differences in the elementary and secondary school program and if so, what are they? (4) How involved do administrators feel that school counselors should be in establishing the policies of the counseling program? One question for possible research which was not raised in Chapter I is: Do administrators have a basic understanding of counseling and psychotherapy? Answers to these questions should be of great help in establishing a general policy for school counseling programs.

SUMMARY

The primary conclusion drawn from the studies reviewed is that more needs to be done to further define and refine the role of the school counselor and to foster a better understanding among adminis-

trators and counselors. The studies indicated no leanings in a particular direction among administrators but rather varied and contradictory results. Many means for this were suggested. The one general theme which did appear to be consistent was that most administrators did at least see a need for a school counselor, they just do not understand or agree what his functions ought to be.

The implication of this study is that administrators and counselors ought to study together, on a national level, the role of the counselor. It is hoped that the results of this study would lean decidedly in the direction of the therapeutic counselor since it is felt that anything less than this results in merely a quasi-administrator, information giver and individual instructor. Patterson's definition of a true counselor (24:10) is very precise, exact and acceptable. It is believed by this investigator that the administrators need to be reeducated to this way of thinking. It is then hoped that the therapeutic counselor concept will filter down to the local level by in-service training of administrators and teachers.

A direct implication of the above approach is a revamping of many counselor trainee programs and an elimination of the teaching requirement for certification of counselors as supported by the many authors mentioned.

At the very least it is recommended that each administrator and counselor clarify the role he prefers before a counselor assumes a

position. The Counselor Function Inventory (32) may be used to study the situation within a particular school by either the administrator or counselor. Several questions were raised for possible further study.

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