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The Development and Exploration of the Psychometric Properties of the Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development Survey

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The newly developed Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development (ASNPD; Dahir & Stone, 2003a, 2003b) survey measures school counselors' readiness to deliver comprehensive school counseling programs (ASCA National Model®; American School Counselor Association, 2005) and appraises school counselors' beliefs, priorities, and practices. The purpose of this study was to describe the development of the 57-item ASCNPD survey and to explore—for the first time—its factor structure. The study sample included 834 school counselors from one southeastern state. Based on an exploratory factor analysis approach, a six-component structure offered the most interpretable and parsimonious solution. Recommendations for using the ASNPD survey to clarify which specific school counseling skills are in place and which may need improvement are discussed.

National educational policies and initiatives around the start of the 21st century, including the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), changed the nature and operation of schools across the United States. Today, as schools face growing educational demands and expectations, they have taken into account how to respond to societal factors, including economic instabilities, nontraditional family configurations, transiency, increasing numbers of English-language learners, and evolving technological advancements (Amatea & Clark, 2005). The impact of these demands has forced educators to rethink what needs to be accomplished in schools, and by whom (Gardner, 1999; Schlechty, 1997). The need to reconsider how school counseling programs operate also came under scrutiny as the 20th century drew to a close (ASCA, 1997; Herr, 2001; House & Martin, 1998; Lapan, 2001; Lee & Walz, 1998).

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Significant Changes in School Counseling and the Role of the School Counselor

Historically, school counselors' voices were never on the forefront when educational reform was debated and legislative acts were discussed (House & Martin, 1998; Stone & Dahir, 2006, 2007). However, efforts to change the trend appeared in the late 1990s as school counselors began to offer a unified conviction to become "leaders and advocates for student success in schools" (House & Martin, p. 284). Hart and Jacobi's (1992) work was pivotal for such change. Not only did Hart and Jacobi deliberate on issues facing school counseling, but they gained the attention of stakeholders that would eventually change school counseling programs prior to the 21st century (The Education Trust, 1997). With the embedded desire to ensure success for all students and to close the achievement gap, changes in school counseling were initiated by The Education Trust (2003b). In its Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI), The Education Trust set out to "identify what school counselors need to know to be able to help all students succeed academically" (The Education Trust, 2003a, ¶1). Over time, the Transforming School Counseling Initiative moved

school counseling toward a new vision that included a social advocacy model (The Education Trust, 1997) rather than the traditional service delivery model. The new vision, as described by House and Martin (1998), intended school counselors to be at the "vanguard of educational reform" (p. 285), which included closing the achievement gap for poor and racial minority students and ensuring success for all students.

American School Counselor Association: The National Model

The emergence of the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Standards (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) played a key role in defining the function and role of the school counselor. The ASCA National Standards served "as the foundation for the ASCA National Model®" (ASCA, 2003, p. 22). The ASCA National Model has now become the national blueprint for the development of school counseling programs. Based on the new vision, the ASCA National Model proposes that 21st century school counselors are leaders, collaborators with other school professionals, advocates for students, and users of data for the selection and validation of their strategies—as well as counselors, consultants, coordinators of services, and deliverers of classroom guidance lessons (Bemak, 2000; Brown & Trusty, 2005; House & Martin, 1998). The National Model also promotes a stance that engages school counselors in systemic issues and change.

The release of the ASCA National Model ® provided the current impetus of change in school counseling (Stone & Dahir, 2006). At this time, more than 30 state departments of education and state school counselor associations have complied with the new vision for school counseling by either refining or redefining their existing state models for school counseling based on the new paradigm. ASCA's intention for the 21st century is for school counselors to contribute to school improvement by shifting the focus from individual problems to impacting the greater student population.

Undoubtedly, the structural changes in school counseling programs described in the National Standards and the ASCA National Model have allowed the school counseling field the opportunity to "transform school counseling from a marginal, peripheral service [into] a program" (Lapan, 2001, p. 297). This opportunity makes school counseling an integral part of the educational environment, rather than the traditional ancillary entity often played out in past decades. Yet, the task of moving from a traditional school counseling model to a "new vision" philosophy, as stated in the ASCA National Model and described by House and Martin (1998), is not an easy assignment. Thinking about program changes requires a corollary assurance that practitioners already have the requisite attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to embrace change and move seamlessly from traditional practice to the comprehensive model (i.e., new vision) with little or no formal professional development. Moreover, critical to success is a commitment to provide such professional development to school counselors when deficits exist and to offer the administrative support necessary to help them transition from traditional programs to a new way of working that carries high expectations for student outcomes (Carey, Harrity, & Dimmitt, 2005; Dahir, Sheldon, & Valiga, 1998; House & Martin; House & Sears, 2002; Kaffenberger, Murphy, & Bemak, 2006). As more programs commit to the ASCA National Model, measuring school counselors' readiness to implement this "new vision" is vital. A measure of readiness that yields scores that are reliable and valid is necessary in order to measure movement toward the described new vision in school counseling. This was the impetus for this study.

Readiness Instrument: Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development (ASCNPD) Survey

To measure readiness to implement the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003, 2005), Dahir and Stone (2003a, 2003b) presented the Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development (ASCNPD) survey as an instrument with 57 items based on the following areas: the respondent's school setting, priorities, and work with students. The ASCNPD survey was developed to explore school counselor readiness to deliver comprehensive school counseling programs as defined by the ASCA National Model and to measure school counselor beliefs, priorities (e.g., "counselors are viewed as school leaders"), and practices (e.g., "school counselors use data to assess student performance and develop necessary services") around the key counseling attributes put forth by the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (The Education Trust, 1997, 2003a, 2003b). Those key counseling attributes included collaboration, consultation, counseling, teaming, advocacy, data use, and leadership. The ASCNPD survey pinpoints a variety of perceptions of school counselors (e.g., "the importance of serving on committees"; "how often counselors have worked with serious mental health problems among students"; "the importance of increasing the participation of underrepresented students in higher-level academics")—all of which can help the counseling director or counselor educator determine which professional development

issues need to be addressed and which ones are already in place within the school district(s).

Development of the ASCNPD Survey

The ASCNPD survey was first developed by Dahir and Stone (2003a) to assess the professional development needs of school counselors in a high school district in New York City. The ASCNPD survey has 57 items representing key concepts and repeated themes that were revealed in the school counseling literature after an extensive review conducted by the developers. Themes included key school experiences, services and activities delivered to students, and counseling priorities. The items were developed primarily to address the beliefs, priorities, and practices with regard to the conceptual framework of the Transforming School Counseling Initiative. The developers believed that these attributes (e.g., leadership, advocacy, counseling, use of data, teaming, collaboration) were essential to implementing both the ASCA National Standards (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) and the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003, 2005).

Prior to use, the ASCNPD survey was field-tested and a pilot study was also conducted (Dahir & Stone, 2003b), as described in this section. During field-testing, steps were taken to evaluate the item content of the ASCNPD survey. Suggestions from school counseling experts in one large, urban school district and later by an advisory committee were gathered and utilized to determine which items should be included, deleted, or modified on the survey.

Item content analysis included the following procedures (Dahir & Stone, 2003b). First, the ASCNPD survey was distributed to administrative teams and building-level supervisors in the former Manhattan High School District (January 2003) in New York City for review and input. After this first review, suggestions and refinements were incorporated to ensure that the questions also reflected the competencies that support (a) the ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) in academic, career, and personal-social development; (b) the new vision's skills, promoted by The Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative; and (c) the recently released ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003).

The second iteration of the pilot study (Dahir & Stone, 2003b) involved further field-testing by a 35-member New York Institute of Technology School Counseling Advisory Team (February 2003). Representing practitioners, counselor educators, and school counseling supervisors from a diverse cross-section of urban, suburban, and rural school settings, the Advisory Team offered further feedback. Suggestions included the need to clarify several items on the survey that appeared to have value and meaning only for an urban school environment. In addition, the Advisory Team asked that language be broadened to use general concepts such as "school leadership" or "school improvement team," as opposed to specific terms assigned to particular committees in the New York City Public Schools. Suburban leaders also sought to ensure that raising student aspirations would address college planning as well as increasing the high-school graduation rate. Both groups saw the ASCNPD survey as a valuable tool to establish a baseline for school counselor professional development and to identify what is needed to help school counselors achieve the goals of 21st century school counseling, as defined by ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003, 2005) and The Education Trust (1997).

As a result of the instruments' review by the two panels of experts, the instrument was modified slightly and revised to ensure applicability to all demographic environments (Dahir & Stone, 2003b). Another pilot study was conducted with the third draft at the New York State School Counselor Association Conference in March 2003. Afterward, the final instrument was administered first to the New York City High School District counselors (April 2003). By request of the administrators in the Department of Education, the instrument was further distributed in a series of five professional development workshops in April and May 2003 to the same participants.

Since 2003, the ASCNPD survey has been used in a variety of situations as requested by administrators: large urban and suburban districts, statewide samples (e.g., Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, West Virginia), and a statewide administration in Alabama with a customized section to address specific state needs. Not including the present study, approximately 2,000 surveys have been administered.

Purpose of the Present Study

The purpose of the present study was to explore the psychometric properties of the ASCNPD survey for the first time. With good psychometric properties, the ASCNPD survey can be offered as an important tool to gain information about school counselors' readiness for change during a time that more states are adopting the ASCA National Model's philosophy and goals. Our present study specifically examined data from school counselors (n = 834) in one southeastern state.

Method

Participants

All public school counselors in one southeastern state were invited to participate in this study. Of those counselors invited (1,691) from the 166 public school systems in the state, 1,244 participants or 74% returned the survey. However, the final sample for the study was 834 school counselors during the year of data collection. Participants with incomplete surveys were not included in the analysis in this study.

Participants' teaching experience was diverse, with participants self-reporting no formal teaching experience (17%, *n* = 142), 1-10 years of experience (49%, *n* = 408), 11-25 years of teaching experience (27%, *n* = 225), and more than 25 years of teaching experience (2%, *n* = 17); 5% (*n* = 42) of the participants did not respond to this question. With regard to target counseling population, a significant number of participants were working with elementary school students (37%, *n* = 461). The remaining participants were working with the following populations: middle school (18%, *n* = 224), high school (25%, *n* = 312), K-12 (6%, *n* = 74), and other (14%, *n* = 171), whereas .02% (*n* = 2) of the participants did not respond to this question. No other demographic information (e.g., gender, race, age) was collected for the purposes of this study.

Procedure

All data were collected at school. After Institutional Review Board approval was obtained by the researchers at the three institutions involved in this study, packets of surveys were mailed to all public school coordinators of counseling in October 2004. All state coordinators were asked to distribute the survey packets—which contained an endorsement letter from the state superintendent along with one copy of the survey—to all school counselors in their respective districts. Each of the coordinators was provided postage-paid reply envelopes addressed to the principal investigator of this study.

Instrumentation

Demographic questions. Participants were asked to provide select background information. This instrument, created for our study, asked for information regarding current job title, length of time in current position, school level in which participant is currently employed, and roles in which participant is regularly engaged (e.g., school governance committee, school-community partnerships).

Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development Survey (ASCNPD).

The 57-item ASCNPD survey was used in the current study. The ASCNPD survey was developed to explore school counselor readiness to deliver comprehensive school counseling programs as defined by the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003, 2005). Readiness was measured according to how participants responded on a 5-point Likert-format scale ranging from "not at all accurate" to "very accurate." Sample items include "counselors are viewed as school leaders," "school counselors use data to assess student performance and develop necessary services," and "school counselors use the national standards for school counseling programs to deliver specific study competencies in academic, career, and personal-social development." The higher the score on the ASCNPD survey, the more likely the counselor is ready to carry out a school counseling program consistent with the ASCA National Model. The range of scores on the ASCNPD survey are as follows: School Counseling Priorities (SCP) 18 - 90, School Setting Perceptions (SSP) 16 - 80, Personal-Social Development (PSD) 10 - 50, Career and Post-Secondary Development (CPS) 5 - 25, Academic Development (AD) 3 - 15, and Program Management (PM) 3 - 15.

Analytic Plan

Using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, an exploratory factor analysis with the varimax rotation was conducted to determine the factor structure of the ASCNPD survey (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). Before conducting the principal component analysis, we ensured that we had complete data for all participants included in the analysis. We also reviewed the results of the Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) to clarify the factorability of the data, and Kaiser-Meyer-Okin (Kaiser, 1970, 1974) to measure the sampling adequacy, which was favorable at a level of .93. Other analyses were conducted to determine the internal consistency of the underlying constructs of the ASCNPD survey.

Several factors influenced our rationale for this data-analytic approach. First, we used an exploratory factor analysis approach because this is the first study to examine the psychometric properties and the factorial validity of scores yielded by the ASCNPD survey (Gorsuch, 1983; Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). Second, we selected principal component analysis in order to identify a few coherent constructs that best reflect the various aspects of school counselors' development, (i.e., beliefs, priorities, and

practices) related to the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003, 2005) and other specific school counseling activities. To inform the retention of the components and to avoid under- and over-factoring, we used several methods: scree plot, eigenvalue of 1, and parallel analysis. For transformation, we used the varimax rotation.

Table 1

Rotated Pattern/Structure Coefficients and Communalities for the Six Component Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development Survey (56 items)[a]

	Pattern/structure coefficients[b]						
Item	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	h^2
34	**.723**	.158	.143	.135	-.004	.170	.62
32	**.716**	.158	.041	.143	.177	.170	.62
39	**.695**	.184	.138	.072	-.147	-.112	.58
41	**.690**	.206	.113	.110	.097	-.129	.57
30	**.681**	.279	.062	.069	.003	.042	.55
33	**.680**	.157	.164	.071	-.105	.195	.57
38	**.674**	.176	.138	-.081	.118	-.211	.58
29	**.671**	.092	.124	-.026	.017	.252	.53
40	**.640**	.191	.188	.038	.097	-.168	.52
37	**.639**	.183	.072	.053	.164	-.245	.54
36	**.601**	.179	.069	.305	.101	.005	.50
25	**.564**	.017	.200	-.205	.078	.296	.49
24	**.549**	.063	-.054	.089	.214	.174	.39
23	**.534**	.213	.043	.191	.158	.025	.39
26	**.518**	.067	.308	-.202	.024	.244	.46
22	**.517**	.242	.177	-.264	.107	-.251	.50
35	**.504**	.091	.251	.039	-.155	.443	.54
27	**.468**	.066	.209	.149	-.179	.206	.36
11	.153	**.775**	.075	-.017	.058	.093	.64
9	.130	**.774**	.098	-.014	-.050	-.025	.62
5	.092	**.745**	.084	.046	-.050	-.056	.58
7	.118	**.744**	.071	.059	.137	-.053	.59
10	.211	**.715**	.154	.004	.081	.009	.64
12	.186	**.709**	.132	.065	.092	.168	.53
3	.175	**.635**	.121	.065	.068	.077	.46
16	.200	**.611**	.070	.145	.228	.162	.51
1	.113	**.608**	.115	.122	.044	.015	.41
6	.105	**.601**	.221	-.221	.088	-.188	.51
13	.240	**.585**	.106	.025	.297	.190	.53
8	.113	**.570**	.109	.059	-.017	.089	.36
18	.246	**.537**	.227	-.053	.144	.230	.47
14	.133	**.537**	.117	.127	.034	.366	.47

	Pattern/structure coefficients[b]						
Item	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	h^2
15	.125	**.449**	.088	.319	.138	-.010	.34
2	.051	**.412**	.319	-.079	.053	.334	.40
50	.127	.167	**.789**	-.117	.049	.172	.67
51	.173	.117	**.765**	-.070	.205	.052	.71
55	.147	.134	**.711**	.132	.192	.085	.62
44	.083	.200	**.697**	.025	-.027	.292	.64
45	.111	.172	**.689**	.105	.189	.126	.58
52	.156	.135	**.598**	.023	.224	-.062	.45
56	.115	.155	**.591**	.226	-.121	-.037	.45
47	.107	.092	**.578**	-.102	.068	-.075	.37
46	.105	.115	**.531**	.326	.031	.098	.42
57	.180	.194	**.477**	.097	.427	-.016	.49
49	-.008	.032	-.039	**.800**	-.038	-.136	.66
48	.103	.073	.200	**.774**	.113	-.025	.66
53	.165	.156	.225	**.671**	.130	-.141	.58
31	.492	.043	-.081	**.603**	.019	.264	.68
28	.503	.007	-.103	**.524**	.076	.274	.62
42	.076	.138	.283	.039	**.705**	.102	.61
43	.042	.172	.263	.270	**.678**	-.033	.63
54	.167	.148	.416	.341	**.468**	-.020	.55
19	.044	.397	.316	-.021	.097	**.532**	.55
21	.204	.371	.109	-.108	.379	**.439**	.53
17	.078	.272	.094	-.255	.399	**.428**	.49
20	.168	.318	.233	-.241	.345	.359	.49
Eigenvalues	15.03	4.62	3.59	3.17	1.87	1.65	

[a] Descriptions of the ASCNPD items are found in Appendix A. Component 1 = School Counseling Priorities; Component 2 = School Setting Perceptions; Component 3 = Personal-Social Development; Component 4 = Career Development; Component 5 = Academic Development; Component 6 = Program Management.

[b] n = 894; Boldface indicates salient Pattern/Structure Coefficients (i.e., > . 40). h^2 = communality estimates.

Results

Principal Component Analyses

Principal component analysis with the varimax rotation was performed on self-reported responses from the participants using the 57 items on the ASCNPD survey. The first analysis used two criteria to guide our data extraction method: (a) retain components with eigenvalues of 1.0 or greater (Kaiser, 1958) and review the Cattel's scree plot of the factor variances (Cattel, 1966). In addition, we delimited the retention of an item if its pattern/structure coefficient was .40 or higher (Grice, 2001). This study resulted in an extraction of 10 components that, taken together, accounted for 61% of the variance. The results showed that 15 items had coefficients on more than one component (using the *a priori* criterion of retaining items with pattern/structure coefficients of .40 or higher); two items did not have pattern/structure coefficients that were significant on any component (i.e., Items 4 and 15). A review of the scree plot suggested that the Kaiser (1958) method produced an overextraction of components; thus, our initial interpretation based on the scree plot was that the ASCNPD survey is measuring six or seven components with this population of school counselors. Next, to see if we could increase the clarity between and among the components, we reanalyzed data specifying a seven- and six-factor solution.

A six-factor solution using a varimax rotation yielded the most interpretable and parsimonious solution. Four criteria were used to extract, retain, and evaluate a meaningful component final solution: (a) review the Cattel's scree plot for the number of components above the elbow (Cattel, 1966), (b) retain items loading .40 or higher, (c) extract six factors, and (d) conduct a parallel analysis (Horn, 1965). As previously mentioned, we used principal component analysis with the varimax rotation. We also examined an oblique transformation, which yielded very similar findings (i.e., same explained variance and similar pattern/structure coefficients) and thus for ease of interpretability we report the findings from the varimax rotation.

An interpretation of the solution revealed a six-component solution as the most parsimonious description of the data (see Table 1 for pattern/structure coefficients and communalities). Moreover, the six components represent distinct constructs of the ASCNPD survey. Each subscale was homogenous and distinct from the other subscales. The six interpretable rotated components, taken together, explained 53% of the total variance. Component 1, *School Counseling Priorities*, explained 14% of the variance and contained 18 items; Component 2, *School Setting Perceptions*, explained 14% of the variance and contained 16 items; Component 3, *Personal/Social Development*, explained 10% of the variance and contained 10 items; Component 4, *Career Development*, explained 6% of the variance and contained 5 items; Component 5, *Academic Development*, explained 5% of the variance and contained 3 items; finally, Component 6, *Program Management*, explained 4% of the variance and contained 3 items. Additional details (e.g.,eigenvalues) about the components are presented in Table 1.

As a final step, using parallel analysis (Horn, 1965), we compared the eigenvalues derived from the study data to those derived from simulations of our data produced by Monte Carlo methods. All eigenvalues evinced in the study were significantly higher than those produced by the parallel analysis and thereby support the six-component structure interpretation.

Score Reliability of the ASCNPD Survey

Component correlations are shown in Table 2. Correlations among the subscales were all moderate to high, ranging from .20 to .57 (all $p < .01$). Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the instrument subscales. Internal consistency was assessed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (see Table 3). We found internal consistency in an acceptable range—for an exploratory study—of .69 to .94.

Discussion

Component Analysis

Based on this exploratory study of the constructs of the ASCNPD survey, the six-component structure offered the clearest delineation of the duties expected of school counselors. The six components that emerged from the ASCNPD survey—that is, *School Counseling Priorities*, *School Setting Perceptions*, *Personal-Social Development*, *Career Development*, *Academic Development*, and *Program Management*—were typically salient with one component. There were a few exceptions. For example, on *School Counselor Priorities*, one item, "Counsel students individually about personal and

Table 2

Correlations of Six Components of the Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development Survey

Components	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. School Counseling Priorities						
2. School Setting Perceptions	.48**					
3. Personal-Social Development	.41**	.44**				
4. Career Development	.33**	.21**	.57**			
5. Academic Development	.31**	.38**	.56**	.31**		
6. Program Management	.34**	.54**	.28**	.02	.32**	

Note. ** Correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients with 95% Confidence Intervals for the Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development Survey

Components	*M*	*SD*	No. of Items	Alpha Coefficient	95% Confidence Interval for Alpha
1. School Counseling Priorities	73.89	10.06	18	.92	0.90—0.92
2. School Setting Perceptions	53.41	7.86	16	.91	0.90—0.92
3. Personal-Social Development	47.19	7.73	10	.86	0.85—0.87
4. Career Development	17.74	4.41	5	.81	0.79—0.82
5. Academic Development	10.41	2.21	3	.76	0.73—0.78
6. Program Management	11.07	1.42	3	.69	0.65—0.71

Note. $n = 834$

social issues," correlated above .40 with *Program Management. Personal-Social Development* had one item, "Time and task organizational skills," that also correlated with *Academic Development*. *Career Development* also had one item, "Help students identify their future educational and career options," that correlated above .40 with another component, *School Counseling Priorities*. Additionally, *Academic Development* had one item, "Improving grades," that also correlated with *Personal/Social Development.* For *School Setting Perceptions* and *Program Management*, no items correlated above the .40 criterion with other components.

Of the 57 items on the original ASCNPD survey, one item (i.e., Item 4 in Appendix A) was dropped after the analyses were completed because all correlations were below .40. The deleted item was "Counselors demonstrate the belief that all children can achieve to high levels."

Assessment of School Counselor Needs Professional Development Survey (ASCNPD)

Subscale 1, *School Counseling Priorities*, is composed of 18 items. The items were developed to examine the priorities of school counselors. Sample items include "Advocate for change policies and practices that can negatively impact student success" and "Help teachers improve classroom management skills." Scores range from 18 to 80, with lower scores indicating a potential need for professional development.

Subscale 2, *School Setting Perceptions*, includes 16 items. Certain items examine knowledge, skill, collaboration, and consultation in the counselor's current school setting. Examples from this subscale include "School counselors regularly consult with parents, teachers, and school administrators" and "Teachers and counselors work together to identify students." Scores range from 16 to 80, with lower scores indicating a potential need for professional development.

Subscale 3, *Personal-Social Development*, is composed of 10 items related to the ASCA Personal-Social Development domain. Sample items include "Personal/social issues," "Diversity issues," and "Managing emotions." Scores range from 10 to 50, with lower scores indicating a potential need for professional development.

Subscale 4, *Career Development,* is composed of 5 items and was designed to capture specific behaviors related to career counseling. Sample items on this subscale include "Help students identify their future educational and career options" and "Work with students individually or in groups on career planning activities." Scores range from 5 to 25, with lower scores indicating a potential need for professional development.

Subscale 5, *Academic Development,* consists of 3 items and was developed to capture specific behaviors and skills related to counseling directed toward student academic achievement (e.g., grades) and the ASCA domain of Academic Development.

Two sample items from this subscale are "Study skills" and "Test-taking strategies." Scores range from 3 to 15, with lower scores reflecting a potential need for professional development and training.

Finally, Subscale 6, *Program Management*, includes 3 items related to management and delivery of school counseling programs. Such items include "School counselors deliver guidance programs in classes" and "School counselors use the National Standards for school counseling programs to deliver specific student competencies in academic, career, and personal-social development." Scores range from 3 to 15, with lower scores representing a potential need for professional development and training.

Implications

Because the transition needed to implement the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003, 2005) is approximately three to five years (Carey et al., 2005), instruments that consider readiness for implementation are important in the school counseling field, especially in the post-ASCA National Model era. The readiness instrument described in this study offers utility for counselors, directors of guidance and counseling, counselor educators, and state departments of education (Carey et al.). Readiness surveys are useful for responsibilities such as collecting baseline data, identifying strengths and weaknesses (e.g., individual counselors, entire districts, states), planning for professional development training, evaluating skill development, providing pre-test and post-test data to measure skills and knowledge after professional development, and so forth.

There are numerous reasons to consider school counselor readiness to implement the ASCA National Model. The new vision intends for school counselors to be at the "vanguard of educational reform" (House & Martin, 1998, p. 285). The ASCNPD survey is a valuable instrument, necessary to ensure that school counselors implement comprehensive school counseling programs based on the ASCA National Model. Further, to be on the cutting edge, school counselors must have knowledge, skills, and training to carry out ASCA National Model stipulations, such as closing the achievement gap for underprivileged students, ensuring success for all students, and being skilled in collaboration, consultation, counseling, teaming, advocacy, data use, and leadership. Thus, quantitative readiness measures to evaluate skill, knowledge, and training are vital. Additionally, as counselor educators, guidance directors, and state departments of education push traditional school counseling programs toward a new way of work with high expectations for student outcomes (Carey et al., 2005; Dahir et al., 1998; House & Martin, 1998; House & Sears, 2002; Kaffenberger et al., 2006), a means of showing results-based accountability for implemented changes becomes imperative.

Why consider the ASCNPD survey as a useful instrument? The ASCNPD survey offers a quantitative measure of school counselors' beliefs, priorities, and practices. A potential strength of this instrument is the use of the subscales to pinpoint specifically which of these are in place and which need improvement (i.e., limitations, problem areas). The ASCNPD survey has a total score and six subscale scores across these six comprehensive school counseling areas: school counseling priorities, school setting perceptions, the ASCA domains (personal-social, career, academic), and management of the school counseling program.

When considering the use of the ASCNPD survey, note that each subscale offers evidence of school counseling tasks that are important to ASCA. To illustrate, three of the six subscales capture the domains of the ASCA National Standards, which "serve as the foundation for the ASCA National Model" (ASCA, 2003, p. 22). These subscales are represented by the personal-social, career, and academic ASCA domains. The remaining three subscales are the *School Counseling Priorities* that measure ASCA's desire to connect the work of school counselors to the goals of school improvement, the perceptions measured in *School Setting Perceptions* that relate directly to collaboration and consultation—two interventions that often need more training (Sink, 2005), and *Program Management*, which sheds light on concerns or strengths in the management area of the school counseling program. By using the ASCNPD survey, the counselor, evaluator, administrator, or counselor educator can identify and determine acquired skills and deficits across the six ASCNPD survey subscores.

Limitations

This study had a number of limitations that must be considered in conjunction with the study's findings. First, the current study was composed of a convenience sample of school counselors. It is possible the resultant sample was uniquely motivated to participate and thus we cannot rule out the potential for selection bias. Second, the data in the present study were all derived from a single-source design. Consequently, we cannot be sure that underreporting, minimizing, or overreporting of school counseling roles responsibilities, and practices among this sample did not occur; thus, self-report is a limitation of the study. Third, although it appears that the scores underlying the ASCNPD survey were reliable in the current sample, findings from the current study ought to be confirmed within additional samples. For example, the current sample was

delimited to school counselors working in one southeastern state. Future studies might include school counselors from diverse regions of the United States. Currently, it remains unclear if the ASCNPD survey would yield reliable and generalizable scores among populations in other regions of the nation.

Directions for Future Research

This study was the first examination of the psychometric properties of the ASCNPD survey. More research is necessary related to the component structure and the score validity of this instrument. Additional studies would offer needed comparisons and data from other regions of the United States and would shed light on the trends that were revealed in this study. Future studies should consider demographic factors such as gender, age, and racial identity and also measure the extent to which these factors explain a potential need for professional development. Overall, the ASCNPD survey offers a comprehensive tool for school counselors, counselor educators, and coordinators of counselors who want to examine school counselors' readiness to implement comprehensive school counseling model as promoted by the ASCA National Model and the second-generation models developed by the state departments of education and school counselor associations.

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Appendix A - Assessment of School Counselor Needs for Professional Development Survey

1. Teachers work with school counselors to improve student achievement.
2. Teachers regularly send students to the school counselor to deal with personal problems.
3. Teachers and counselors work together to identify students who are not performing to their best level.
4. Counselors demonstrate the belief that all children can achieve to high levels.
5. School counselors are part of key decision-making teams.
6. Teachers ask school counselors to consult with them on improving classroom management techniques.
7. Administrators work with school counselors to increase student academic performance.
8. My school has established strong collaborative relationships with local community organizations and agencies.
9. Counselors are viewed as school leaders.
10. School counselors develop strategies to change systems and practice that are impeding student success.
11. School counselors work with faculty and administration to improve the school climate.
12. School counselors provide leadership to promote every student's right to a quality education.
13. School counselors monitor and evaluate the impact of the school-counseling program on student achievement and success.
14. School counselors regularly consult with parents, teachers, and school administrators.
15. School counselors are increasing the participation of underrepresented students in higher- level academics such as honors, IB, AP classes.
16. School counselors use school data to assess student performance and develop necessary services.
17. School counselors deliver guidance programs in classes.
18. School counselors reduce social/institutional barriers that keep students from achieving success.
19. School counselors counsel students individually about personal/social issues.
20. School counselors provide group counseling based on identified student needs.
21. School counselors use the national standards for school counseling programs to deliver specific student competencies in academic, career, and personal-social development.
22. Help teachers improve classroom management skills.
23. Use grades to identify under-performing students.
24. Visit classes to help students develop long-term goals.
25. Work with students in small groups on personal/social issues.
26. Counsel students who have behavioral problems in classes.
27. Refer students to community professionals for mental health problems.
28. Work with students individually or in groups on career planning activities.
29. Develop and implement prevention programs.
30. Work closely with administrators and teachers on school improvement issues.
31. Help students identify their future educational and career options.
32. Evaluate the school counseling program effort to raise academic performance.

33. Reduce social/institutional barriers that keep students from achieving their potential.
34. Improve student access to academic intervention services.
35. Counsel students individually about personal and social issues.
36. Monitor student academic performance.
37. Attend academic department or grade-level meetings.
38. Provide professional development activities to teachers.
39. Advocate to change policies and practices that can negatively impact student success.
40. Serve on school committees.
41. Use data to identify specific areas of school improvement.
42. Study skills (note taking, outlining, reading).
43. Test-taking strategies.
44. Personal/social issues.
45. Decision-making skills.
46. Preventing problems (e.g., alcohol, teen pregnancy, truancy, dropout, etc.).
47. School discipline incidents.
48. Developing educational and career plans.
49. College admissions strategies.
50. Managing emotions (stress, anger, coping, etc.).
51. Strengthening interpersonal communication skills.
52. Diversity issues.
53. Educational program planning.
54. Improving grades.
55. Personal problems that affect grades.
56. Serious mental health problems (depression, addiction, etc.).
57. Time and task organizational skills.