Educational Intervention and Teachers' Pre and Post Perceptions about Counsellors Roles in Girls' Private Schools – Saudian Context

Nawal G. Alghamdi

Department of Educational Psychology and Guidance

Program of Educational Graduate Studies

King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah 21551

Saudi Arabia

researchkkw@gmail.com

Abstract

Teacher is the backbone and a pivotal stake holder in any educational setup, any set of reforms to be introduced cannot bear fruits if the perception of teachers, regarding the reforms, are not accounted for and addressed prior to implementation of the reforms. This paper evaluates the pre and post perception of teachers regarding suitable and unsuitable roles of female counsellors working in private girls schools in Saudi Arabia. The perception of teachers regarding the role of counsellors is reviewed with the help of questionnaire (ASCA, 2005) consisted of 28 roles of which 14 are suitable and 14 are unsuitable roles of counsellors in a school. Moreover, this study explores whether teachers' views are affected, by an educational intervention in the form of a brochure containing information about the role of counsellor's, or not. Data has been collected before and after teachers were provided educational intervention - brochure. Pretest results revealed that half of the teachers think that 12 of the 14 responsibilities must be fulfilled by the counsellors. However, posttest results concluded that 50% of the teachers think that 11 out of 14 responsibilities are suitable to be handled by school counsellors. The present study is cross-sectional in nature and descriptive. For visual representation of the results two histograms-one for the pretest and another for posttest have been constructed, compared and discussed.

Keywords

Perception, Educational Intervention, Counsellors' Role, Private Schools.

Introduction

Teachers' are the main implementation link in any educational reform strategy without their being actively involved in the decision making and comprehending the strategy achieving positive results will be a fallacy. Teachers' proper comprehension regarding the roles of all stake holders, specially the school counsellors, in an educational set up plays a key role in effective policy implementation at all levels. The role of school counsellors in the facilitation of students has been questioned quite often. The profession of school counseling is going through a phase of transformation as reported by Education Trust's Transforming School Counselling Initiative (1999) and National Standards (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Previously, the responsibilities of school counsellors included keeping track of student's attendance, maintaining their discipline, fulfilling the needs of teachers or principals when they are absent, checking out the grades, management of special education, managing halls, helping in the maintenance of school records, creating new schedules and carrying out variant clerical works (Hatch & Bowers, 2002). According to the new version of counseling, the work requires counsellors to take role for the success of students (Beale, 2004). The school counsellors are also encouraged for developing comprehensive and accountable programs of school counseling that match up with the programs offered by the schools (Dahir, Stone, Cobb & Burham, 2010).

In spite of the fact that the role of school counsellors has been clearly defined, the profession is still facing disparity in its role (Dahir et al, 2010. Most of the school counsellors have to justify and defend their roles in order to enhance the scope of the work they do (Dahir et al, 2010).

Counsellors must amend the effectiveness of the programs that they offer as this might increase the support they have. Counsellors have to provide evidence of their intervention value to stakeholders for the purpose of educating them about their advantages (ASCA, 2005). When stakeholders will be clear regarding their role in school, they will provide their support to the whole program.

The basic purpose of this research is to find out how educational intervention regarding the responsibilities and roles of counsellors will affect the perception of teacher regarding suitable as well as unsuitable activities of school counseling. The entire data has been collected with the help of pretest and a posttest.

Literature Review

The basic concept of school counseling originated in 18th and 19th century and it resulted from Industrial Revolution and change of political, economical and social climate of the US (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). The accomplishment of its implementation in schools was achieved in the 20th century though (Henderson & Gysbers, 2001). Teachers used to provide other guidance to the students besides performing their teaching duties (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). The basic job of teachers was to prepare their students to face all kinds of transitions that take place in life after school. They used to help them in finding out matching careers according to their abilities and interests (Gysbers, 2001). No formal structure of guidance existed at that time. The role of guidance was acquired by the teachers and they were expected to exhibit other duties besides their teaching job (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). A new structure of guidance emerged in 1930s (Gysbers & Lapan, 2001). This new structure was known as pupil personnel work. This work incorporated different kinds of faculty that included visiting teachers, school physicians, vocational counsellors as well as school nurses.

The profession of school counseling evolved when American School Counseling Association was developed in 1953 (Williamson & Lambie, 2004). Later on, National Defense Act was developed that worked to offer funds for the upgrade of employed counsellor's skills in order to prepare more people to work as school counsellors. In addition, it worked to incorporate programs or counseling and elementary guidance to schools (Gysbers, 2001). The professional school counsellors were using the term of services for the description of their work (Gysbers & Lapan, 2001). The six kinds of services that were performed by the school counsellors included counseling, assessment, orientation, information and follow up (Gysbers, 2001).

A lot of work was done for the development and implementation of school counseling programs in 1970s and 1990s, yet the profession had its entire focus on management and administrative responsibilities (Gysbers, 2001). The role of school counsellors was redefined by ASCA with the help of ASCA National Model in 2005. The model combined different aspects of ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), already existing models (Johnson & Johnsons, 1982; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Myrick, 1993) and TSCI initiative (1999). Its basic objective was the development of data drive, comprehensive and a model based on results that could help in creating counseling programs for all schools.

The school counseling programs are formulates for assisting the students in developmental works that actually feature every stage of development (Borders & Drury, 2001). The process of guidance mainly considers the characteristic of human development that further includes tasks and stages that individuals experience with their growth (Imonikhe, Aluede & Afen-Akpaida, 2007). Furthermore, these programs assist students in getting more skills, knowledge and required attitude for mastering important tasks (Drury & Borders, 2001).

Gysbers and Moore developed the concept of comprehensive counseling programs. The concept was again worked on by Henderson and Gysbers in 2000. The model that was developed by them was then integrated in ASCA Model that provided counsellors with necessary recommendations for responsibilities and roles. Comprehensive counseling program model was formulates for the development, designing, implementation and evaluation of counseling programs in schools (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). The programs were designed for addressing difference developmental aspects of students by offering full time services that assist students in gaining skills and knowledge that is required for mastering in normal tasks of development (Borders & Drury, 1992).

(Sink & MacDonald, 1998) described the attributes of counseling programs and stated that these programs involve promotion of counseling functions and experiences of groups that are designed in order to provide support in necessary skill development of students to make them responsible and highly productive citizens. Furthermore, all the counseling programs have proper structures that incorporate specific objectives, missions and scheduled curriculum (Aluede et al, 2007).

With the aforementioned background of counsellor guidance we now look into the teachers' perceptions about the counsellors' responsibilities. Teachers are the most influential figures in an educational setup; most of their time is spent with students. Gaining the support of teachers is essential for school counsellors to be able to perform their jobs well (Nugent, 1990; Jackson et al., 2002; ASCA, 2005). Their comprehension regarding the school counsellors' roles is of utmost importance reason being if the teachers' perception differs from that of counsellors, conflict can ensue. Davis and Garrett (1998) explained that teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor's role can act as a barrier that inhibits school counsellors from effectively providing services. Most of the

times counsellors rely on teachers for student referrals, so teachers play a decisive role in referring students to the counseling center. ASCA (2005) maintained that effective implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program requires the collaboration of faculty members.

Not many studies have been conducted regarding teacher's perceptions of the responsibilities of school counsellors. Myrick (1993) listed various commonly held misconceptions teachers have concerning the duties of counsellors. Reiner et al. (2009) examined to what extent teachers agreed that school counsellors should engage in appropriate and inappropriate duties as defined in the ASCA National Model (2005). The findings revealed that teachers endorsed school counsellor's engagement in 5 of the 12 inappropriate activities and 13 of the 16 appropriate activities. From the literature review we can make out that before the teachers formulate accurate perceptions about school counsellors they should be well aware of what are the suitable and unsuitable responsibilities of the counsellor are.

Limited number of studies are conducted about the impact of the educational intervention on the teachers' pre and post perceptions regarding counsellors' responsibilities in the private sector setup and that to especially in the Arab world.

Research Objectives

There were two main objectives of this study:

1. To explore which of the 14 suitable and 14 unsuitable responsibilities (as defined by ASCA, 2005) teachers' view school counsellors are responsible for?
2. To explore whether or not teachers' perceptions of the counsellors' responsibilities are affected by educational intervention (specific kind of brochure containing information about the responsibilities of the school counsellor).

Research Questions

In order to achieve the above objectives, two following main research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the suitable and unsuitable functions of secondary school counsellor as viewed by teachers? (Data will be collected both before and after teachers were given information about the role and responsibilities of school counsellors)?

2. Is there any impact on teachers perception after the information about the roles and responsibilities of the female counsellors were made known to the teachers?

Research Methodology

Descriptive statistics will used to summarize the collected data and answer both research questions. For each of the 28 items on the pretest and posttest, the frequency of selection will be counted. In addition, a histogram will be created to show a visual impression of the distribution of data on the pretest and posttest. Research questions will be tested by analyzing the frequency of teachers who selected each item. Research questions regarding comparison of suitable and unsuitable tasks will be

tested by comparing the frequency of selection of each item on pretest with the frequency of selection of each item on the posttest to determine if there were any.

Design

It is a descriptive study with pretest-posttest analysis.

Sampling

70 female teachers from two private girls' secondary schools in Jeddah. The sample was selected for a reason that all of them were full time teachers and they were teaching in the secondary schools. The study was limited to secondary school teachers only.

Instrument

The pretest and posttest were created using a list of 28 suitable school counseling activities defined by ASCA, 2005 .Though no validity or reliability studies are conducted on ASCA, 2005 of suitable activities. It is considered to be an educational tool for highlighting the responsibilities of the school counsellor that best allows for the implementation of school counseling program.

Setting

Prearranged schedule of meeting with the female teachers with the consent of the principal. A faculty meeting was arranged where all the teachers of secondary school were gathered to fill the pretests.

Pretest

The pretest was passed on to the teachers during a meeting that was conducted in the secondary schools. They were given 20 minutes to fill up the pretests. These pretests were saved in confidential cabinet after the completion of faculty meeting.

What Intervention Introduced Before Posttest

Distribution of brochure containing information regarding the duties and roles of counsellors were distributed to the teachers. It took a week to distribute these brochures to the teachers. After two weeks of distribution of the brochure (educational intervention), another faculty meeting was arranged for posttests. The teacher filled out the posttest and gave their feedback.

Findings

Pretest Suitable Responsibilities

There were 14 suitable responsibilities listed on the pretest and for convenience purposes are shaded as grey. The activities that ASCA approve as suitable include items number 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, and 28. At least half of the teachers who took the pretest perceived that counsellors were responsible for 12 of the 14 suitable responsibilities. The suitable responsibilities chosen by majority of teachers were as follows: counseling students who have disciplinary problems (Item number 28 = 93%); assisting school principal identifying and resolving student issues, needs, and problems (Item number 20 = 90%); advocating for students (Item number 16 = 89%); interpreting student records (Item number 13 = 86%); working with students to provide small and large group counseling services (Item number 18 = 85%) ; ensuring that student records are maintained as per state and federal regulations (Item number 22 = 80%); individual academic planning (Item number 1

= 80%); and Interpreting cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests (Item number 3 = 75%). The lowest teacher selected suitable activities included the following: disaggregated data analysis (Item number 15 = 26%); and providing teachers with suggestions for better management of study halls (Item number 24 = 20%).

Table 1. Teachers knowledge of school counsellors responsibilities- pretest & posttest

Items	% of Teachers who selected item (Pretest)	% of Teachers who selected item (Posttest)
1. Individual student academic program planning	80%	86%
2. Registration and scheduling of all new students	90%	84%
3. Interpreting cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests	75%	65%
4. Coordinating or administrating cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests	52%	40%
5. Counseling students who are tardy or absent.	71%	74%
6. Performing disciplinary actions	1%	2%
7. Counseling students as to suitable school dress	54%	61%
8. Data entry	35%	40%
9. Collaborating with teachers to present guidance curriculum lessons	55%	35%
10. Sending students home who are not dressed properly	1%	0%
11. Analyzing grade point averages in relationship to achievement	60%	65%
12. Preparation of individual education plans and school attendance review boards	69%	54%
13. Interpreting student records	86%	80%
14. Working with one student at a time in a therapeutic, clinical mode	62%	56%
15. Disaggregated data analysis	26%	26%
16. Advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards	89%	70%
17. Assisting with duties in the principal's office	8%	6%
18. Working with students to provide small and large group counseling services	85%	94%

19. Clerical record keeping	10%	8%
20. Assisting the school principal with identifying and resolving student issues	90%	65%
21. Supervising study halls	4%	15%
22. Ensuring that student records are maintained as per state and federal regulations	80%	75%
23. Maintaining student records	89%	80%
24. Providing teachers with suggestions for better management of study halls	20%	30%
25. Computing grade point averages	45%	61%
26. Teaching classes when teachers are absent	0%	7%
27. Signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent	12%	0%
28. Counseling students who have disciplinary problems	93%	97%

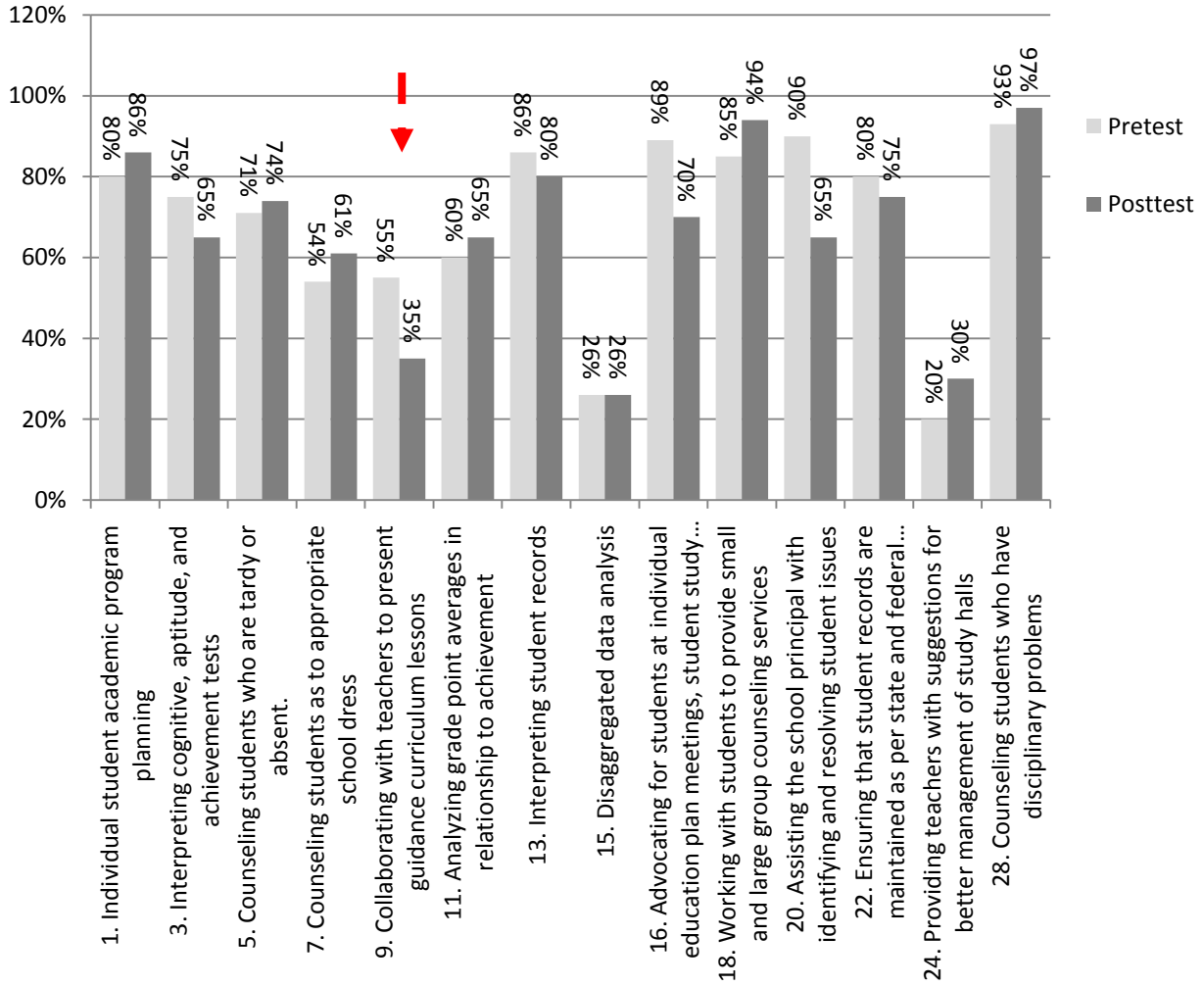
Posttest Suitable Responsibilities

Out of the teachers who read the brochure, at least 50% believed that counsellors were responsible for 11 of the 14 suitable responsibilities. The suitable responsibilities preferred the most, by the teachers who went through the brochure were as follows: counseling students who have disciplinary problems (Item number 28 = 97%); working with students to provide small and large group counseling services (Item number 18 = 94%); individual student academic program planning (Item number 1 = 86%); interpreting student records (Item number 13 = 80%); ensuring that student records are maintained as per state and federal regulations (Item number 22 = 75%); counseling students who are tardy or absent (Item number 5 = 74%) and advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards (Item number 16 = 70%) .The suitable activities selected least by teachers who read the information contained in the brochure were as follows: disaggregated data analysis (Item number 15 = 26%); and providing teachers with suggestions for better management of study halls (Item number 24 = 30%).

The only item that has reversed, from being above 50% to less than 50%, is collaborating with teachers to present guidance curriculum lessons (Item number 9) in pretest it was 55% but in posttest it is 35%.

The histogram at Figure 1 exhibits the pretest and posttest percentages regarding teachers' perception of the counsellors' suitable responsibilities.

Figure 1. Teacher knowledge of suitable school counselling activities



Pretest Unsuitable Activities

There were 14 unsuitable activities listed on the pretest and which are not shaded in table 1. The activities that ASCA deems unsuitable include items number 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, and 27. At least half of the teachers who took the pretest believed that counsellors were responsible for 5 of the 14 items. These items included registering and scheduling all new students (Item number 2 = 90%); maintaining student records (Item number 22 = 89%); preparation of individual education plans and school attendance review boards (Item number 12 = 69%); working with one student at a time in a therapeutic, clinical mode (Item number 14 = 62%) and administering cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests (Item number 4 = 52%). The lowest teacher selected unsuitable activities included the following: teaching classes when teachers are absent (Item number 26 = 0%); performing disciplinary actions (Item number 6 = 1%); sending home students who are unsuitably dressed (Item number 10 = 1%); supervising study halls (Item number 21 = 4%); assisting with duties in the principal's office (Item number 17 = 8%) and clerical record keeping (Item number 19 = 10%).

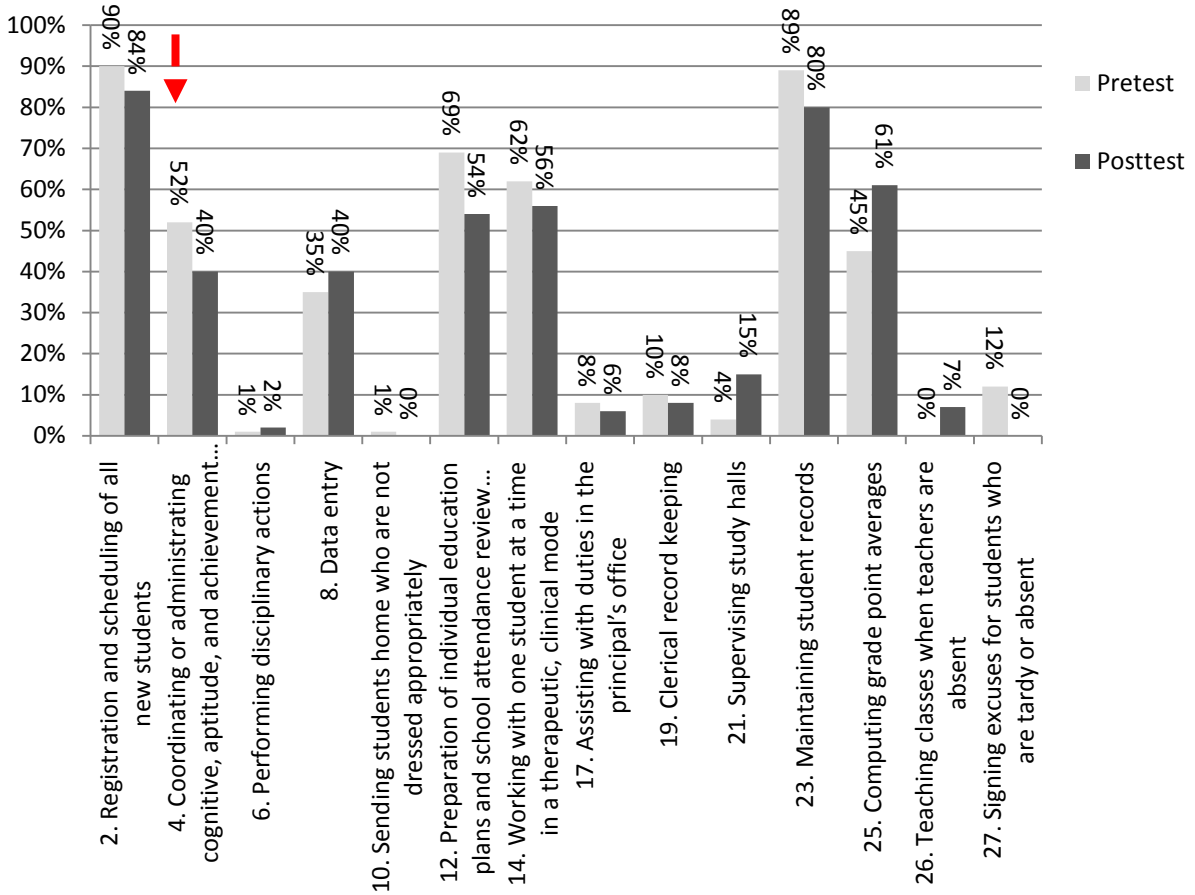
Posttest Unsuitable Responsibilities

At least 50% of the teachers who took the posttest and read one or more of the information sets believed that counsellors were responsible for 4 of the 14 items. These items included registering and scheduling all new students (Item number 2 = 84%); maintaining student records (Item number 23 = 80%) and computing grade point averages (Item number 25 = 61%). The lowest teacher selected unsuitable activities included the following: signing excuses for students who are tardy (Item number 27 = 0%); sending home students who are unsuitably dressed (Item number 10 = 0%); performing disciplinary actions (Item number 6 = 2%); performing disciplinary actions (Item number 19 = 3%); assisting with duties in the principal's office (Item number 17 = 6%); teaching classes when teachers are absent (Item number 26 = 7%); and clerical record keeping (Item number 19 = 8%).

The only item that has reversed, from being above 50% to less than 50%, is coordinating or administrating cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests (Item number 4) in pretest it was 52% but in posttest it is 40%.

The histogram at Figure 2 exhibits the pretest and postest percentages regarding teachers' perception of the counsellors' unsuitable responsibilities.

Figure 2. Teacher knowledge of unsuitable school counselling activities



Discussion and Conclusion

The study basically examines the suitable and unsuitable activities of counseling that were recommended by ASCA, 2005. The data was gathered before and after but after the pretest the teachers were provided with brochure regarding responsibilities and roles of school counsellors and then posttest data was collected.. The paper addressed two research questions. The first question was to determine suitable and unsuitable activities of school counsellors that teachers believed they are responsible for. The second research question helped in determining the change in the perception of female teachers before and after introducing an educational intervention in the form of a brochure. Leading to the fact that proper information regarding the counsellors role is disseminated to the stake holders in an educational set up only then we can reap the benefits of counsellors output.

The pretest suggested that teachers believe the school counsellors are held responsible for many tasks that are endorsed by ASCA as suitable responsibilities. In addition, the results also suggested that the secondary school teachers are supportive of counsellors and their roles that are listed by ASCA. However, the perception of teachers regarding unsuitable activities differs with the ones recommended by ASCA.

The set of suitable activities that were chosen by the secondary school teachers were almost the same before and after they were provided with the information sets. 50% of the total teachers selected 12 out of 14 as suitable responsibilities of the counsellors. The two activities that were least selected included: a) disaggregated analysis of data (item number 15) and b) provision of suggestions to the teachers regarding better management of halls for study (item number 24).

The set of Unsuitable activities that were chosen by the secondary school teachers were almost the same with an exception of computing grade point average (item number 25) where the pre-test percentage was 45% but in posttest it rose to 61%. The finding of the posttest are consistent with previous research conducted by Leuwerke et al. (2009); regarding the perceptions of the principal, they found that principals exposed to information about the role of schools counsellor's rated ASCA's unsuitable tasks as less important compared to principals who did not receive the information.

The results of the study clearly points towards the lack of communication and coordination regarding the exact responsibilities of the female counsellors between the teachers and counsellors. The present study will provide guidelines to the educational managers for initiating such training programmes which help in evolving cohesiveness between the female teachers and female counsellors.

Limitations

This study was limited to girls' school teachers in private schools in Jeddah which limits this study's generalizability. A larger sample that includes more teachers from different cities and schools would allow for a broader examination of how teacher's knowledge is affected by information about the role and responsibilities of the school counsellor.

Future Implications

Future research could include gathering data on the perceptions of multiple stakeholders including other school stakeholder-parents, students, and the community. Using this information, school

counsellors could educate about their appropriate role activities and then analyze the impact that that said information will have on stakeholders' knowledge.

References

Aluede,O., & Imonikhe, J. S. (2002). Secondary school students' and teachers' perceptions of the role of the school counsellor. Guidance & Counseling, 17(2), 46.

Aluede, O., Imonikhe, J.S., & Afen-Akpaida, J. (2007). Towards a conceptual basis for understanding developmental guidance and counseling model. Education, 128(2), 189- 201.

American School Counsellor Association (ASCA). (2005). The ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs. Alexandria, VA: Author.

American School Counsellor Association (ASCA). (2005). The ASCA national model:A framework for school counseling programs. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Borders, L. D., & Drury, S. M. (1992). Comprehensive school counseling programs: A review for policy makers and practitioners. Journal of Counseling & Development, 70, 487- 498.

Beale, A. V. (2004). Questioning whether you have contemporary school counseling program. Clearing House, 78(2), 73-76.

Campbell, C. A., & Dahir, C. A. (1997). Sharing the vision: The national standards for school counseling programs. Alexandria, VA: American School Counsellor Association.

Dahir, C. A., Burnham, J. J., Stone, C. B., & Cobb, N. (2010). Principals as Partners: Counsellors as Collaborators. NASSP Bulletin, 94(4), 286-305. Doi:10.1177/0192636511399899

Dahir, C. A. (2001). The national standards for school counseling programs: Development and implementation. Professional School Counseling, 4(5), 320.

Davis, K. M., & Garrett, M. T. (1998). Bridging the gap between school counsellors and teachers: A proactive approach. Professional School Counseling , 1(5), 54-55.

Gysbers, N. C. (2001). School guidance and counseling in the 21st century: Remember the past into the future. Professional School Counseling, 5(2), 96-105.

Gysbers, N. C., &Henderson, P.(2000). Developing and managing your school guidance program (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Gysbers, N.C., & Lapan, R. (2001). The implementation and evaluation of comprehensive school

Guidance programs in the United States: Progress and prospects. International Journal for Educational & Vocational Guidance, 1(3), 197-208. doi:10.1023/A:101229731466

Jackson, C.M., Snow, B.M., Boes, S.R., Phillips, P.L., Powell-Standard, R., Painter, L.C., et al. (2002). Inducting the transformed school counsellor into the profession. Theory into Practice, 41, 177-185.

Johnson, C. D., & Johnson, S. K. (1982). Competency based training of career development specialists or "let's get off the calf path." Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 32, 327-335.

Leuwerke, W. C., Walker, J., & Qi, S. (2009). Informing principals: The impact of different types of information on principals' perceptions of professional school counsellors. Professional School Counseling, 12(4), 263-271.

Myrick, R.D. (1993). Developmental guidance and counseling: A practical approach. Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media.

Nugent, F. (1990). An introduction to the profession of counseling. Columbus, OH: Merril.

Reiner S., Colbert R., & Pérusse R. (2009). Teacher perceptions of the professional school counsellor role: A national study. Professional School Counseling, 12(5), 324-332. doi:10.5330/PSC.n.2010-12.324

Stone, C. B., & Dahir, C. A. (2011). The Transformed School Counsellor. (2nd ed.). Belmont.