Benchmark Quantitative Research Reporting Assignment

Sarah DeVoe

Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies, Liberty University

Author Note

Sarah DeVoe

I have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sarah DeVoe.

Email: srdevoe@liberty.edu

Quantitative Research Reporting Assignment

In this case scenario, the quantitative research study asked whether the addition of Mindfulness Therapy to standard treatment would improve the efficacy of treatment for adolescents with smoking dependence. The study used a between-groups design, specifically the post-test only control group design. Forty participants were randomly assigned to two groups: one control group who participated only in the standard smoking dependence treatment program, and one group who participated in the standard smoking dependence treatment program with mindfulness therapy. The Nicotine Dependence Syndrome Scale (NDSS) was used as a post-test to collect data. The NDSS has a good level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .82 (Nonnemaker et al., 2004). To analyze data, the study used an independent samples t-test to determine whether there is a relationship between the variables in the study. The independent t-test is the correct test to use as it studies variances between two groups with different conditions- the control group, and the mindfulness therapy group (Heppner et al, 2015). Tests with p values of .05 or lower are determined to be statistically significant- the results of this test were statistically significant with a p value of .000. The case scenario used the null hypothesis to theorize that there would be no difference in scores on the NDSS between those who receive the standard treatment, and those who received the standard treatment with Mindfulness Therapy. This hypothesis was rejected as there was a difference in results between groups, with the Mindfulness Therapy group receiving lower scores on the NDSS. The implications of these results are that the addition of Mindfulness Therapy to standard smoking treatment programs can significantly improve outcomes and combat the complicating factor of depression in teens who smoke. For the counseling field, these results show the power of treating root causes of undesired behaviors, such as depression, instead of simply treating undesired behaviors, such as smoking.

Resources

Heppner, P.P., Wampold, B.E., Owen, J., Wang, K.T., & Thompson, M.N. (2015). *Research Design in Counseling* (4th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Nonnemaker, Mowery, Hersey, Nimsch, Farelly, Messeri, & Haviland. (2004). *Nicotine Dependence Scale for Adolescents (NDSA) | Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences (DCCPS)*. https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brp/tcrb/measures-guide/nicotine-dependence-scale-adolescent

Benchmark Research Proposal

Sarah R. DeVoe

School of Behavioral Sciences, Liberty University

Author Note

Sarah R. DeVoe

I have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sarah R. DeVoe

Email: srdevoe@liberty.edu

Abstract

School counselors consult and collaborate with program stakeholders as part of a comprehensive and ethical school counseling program. School counselors collaborate with community-based counselors when student needs dictate, although there is little evidence making this a data-driven practice. The aim of this proposed research project is to broaden research into school counselor and community-based counselor collaboration and provide empirical evidence of its impact. This quantitative study will investigate the correlation between frequency of school counselor and community-based counselor collaboration, and program outcomes. This study seeks to further the idea that there is wisdom for guidance in collaboration. The findings of this proposed study would provide the field of school counseling with further data upon which to base best practices.

Keywords: *school counselor, community-based counselor, collaboration, consultation, research*

Benchmark Research Proposal

Literature Review

Consultation and collaboration are indirect student services that school counselors perform as part of a comprehensive school counseling program. School counselors may consult and collaborate with a variety of stakeholders who have an interest in a student's well-being. In order to best serve students who receive mental health services, the American School Counselor Association's Ethical Standards for School Counselors dictates that school counselors are to establish collaborative relationships with mental health service providers outside of the school after securing a release of information (American School Counselor Association, 2022). This standard is relevant in that school counselors often interact with students who receive mental health treatment outside of school. According to the 2021 National Health Institute Survey, 14.9% of school-aged children had received mental health treatment within the last year (Zablotsky & Ng, 2023). Additionally, 8% of children took prescription medications for mental health reasons, and 11.5% had seen a counselor or therapist. School counselors are to refer parents of students whose needs may be outside of the scope of the school counseling practice to a list of outside mental health agencies if they are not already receiving services (American School Counselor Association, 2022). Collaboration is part of a comprehensive school counseling program in which school counselors work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders.

Despite the emphasis on school counselor and community-based counselor collaboration, little research has been done into the frequency or impact of these collaborations on a national scale. Much of the existing research into school counselor and community-based counselor collaboration is small in scale and focuses on perceptions, and there is little empirical evidence to

substantiate the impact of these collaborations (Low & van der Laan, 2023; Moran & Bodenhorn, 2015) . One study based in Singapore found that community-based counselors felt that school counselors could become more familiar with community resources (Low & van der Laan, 2023). This study concluded that due to uneven perceptions, more research was needed into the nature, quality, and frequency of these interactions and how they influence perceptions. Another study that interviewed ten Elementary school counselors found that they believe collaboration with community mental health providers is important, and that they must be proactive to build these relationships (Moran & Bodenhorn, 2015). As this study was small in scope, researchers suggested that future research include a larger number of school counselors from Elementary to High School. This proposed project would address the gaps in research on collaboration by looking into the frequency and impact of school counselor and community-based counselor collaborations on a large scale to provide evidence of the importance of these collaborations.

When it comes to evidence-based practices to best help students, consultation has been overlooked as an element of school counseling and research (Savitz-Romer et al., 2018). Studies on consultation between school counselors and community-based counselors are hard to find as many studies focus on other stakeholders in collaboration. A 2018 study by Savitz-Romer et al. investigated the impact of school counselor collaboration with teachers and students and found that this collaboration did positively impact student outcomes. Another study found that school counselors collaborate as part of a leadership role and can effect change and build community through this role (Bryan, Young, Griffin & Holcomb-McCoy, 2017). This proposed project seeks to broaden research into the area of collaboration between school counselors and community-based counselors, to determine if these collaborations have an impact on student outcomes.

Method

The proposed research question is as follows: Does the frequency of school counselor and community-based counselor interaction impact school counseling program outcomes? This research question is significant in that school counselor and community-based counselor collaboration is emphasized within the field of school counseling, but there is little empirical evidence as to its impact. School counseling practices should be data-driven, and this study would provide a source of data and insight into best practices of collaboration between school counselors and community-based counselors (Savitz-Romer et al., 2018). Participants of this study will be school counselors who are members of the American School Counseling Association, selected using systematic random sampling. A descriptive field study design will help to answer the research question as there will be no experimental control and it will be conducted in the real-life setting of school counseling (Heppner et al., 2015). The study will produce quantitative data pertaining to the independent variable of frequency of interactions and the dependent variable of program outcomes- which includes academic, discipline, and attendance data. Frequency data will be collected through survey research and measured on a Likert scale, and program outcomes will be taken from the Department of Education's school quality profiles. The hypothesis of the study is that there will be a positive correlation between variables, which is a rejection of the null hypothesis indicating no relationship between variables.

Integration

The preamble to the American School Counselor Association's Ethical Standards for School Counselors states that part of a school counselors' role is to be a collaborator and consultant to ensure the best outcomes for students (American School Counselor Association, 2022). This may look like seeking advice or further information about a student, providing

information to their community-based counselor, or collaborating on a plan to help the student consistently in and out of school. Working together to find the wisdom to guide others is a principle that is promoted throughout the scriptures; according to Psalms 11:14, “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety” (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2021). This applies to all forms of consultation where school counselors are seeking to acquire and distribute information and guidance in making decisions. By investigating the impact of school-counselor and community-based counselor collaboration, quantifiable evidence is provided as to the wisdom of these practices. While there is little data on school counselor and community-based counselor collaboration, data on collaborations with other stakeholders shows desirable outcomes for students and wisdom in collaboration (Molina, Lemberger-Truelove & Zieher, 2022). This research seeks to further the Biblical and ethical idea that there is wisdom in collaboration by establishing school counselor and community-based collaboration as best practice.

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