

SCHOOL COUNSELING SITE SUPERVISORS:
THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND PRACTICES IN THE
STATE OF TEXAS

by

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As I reflect on my doctoral journey, I am struck with a copious memory. I can hardly believe that I am writing this section and so close to finishing. I have always been a person who enjoyed challenging myself, especially in an academic setting. However, there were times during this process that I was unsure if I would ever finish. But alas, the finishing line is in sight, and I can see the end. What a feeling! But before I finish, I feel compelled to acknowledge the people who cheered me on throughout the process. I wish to sincerely thank the counseling professors at Texas Christian University (TCU). I would like to recognize Dr. Marcella Stark, my dissertation chairperson, for her unwavering support and guidance during this process. Dr. Frank Thomas, who served as my doctoral advisor: thank you for providing such wisdom and knowledge of the counseling profession to me during my graduate school career. To Dr. Becky Taylor, who served as my advisor while pursuing a master's degree and my doctoral confidant: your encouragement, knowledge, and positivity aided me in countless ways. I wish to recognize other professors are Dr. Michelle Bauml and Dr. Marla McGhee, for serving on my committee. You all have encouraged me, challenged me, and helped me improve professionally and personally. Thank you!

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DEDICATION

To my daddy who smiled down on me throughout this entire process.

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ABSTRACT

SCHOOL COUNSELING SITE SUPERVISORS: THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND PRACTICES IN THE STATE OF TEXAS

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School counselors play a vital role in shaping children's social and emotional welfare. They are often asked to perform other functions, such as providing supervision services to local graduate school counseling students. Although certified school counselors complete counseling coursework as part of their master's degree studies, many may never receive any supervisory education informing their supervisory practices. This study examined the perceptions of seven current school counseling site mentors (SCSM). The current study focused on defining effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM and understanding what informed their supervision practices. The findings resulted in five major themes for each of the research questions. Even though study participants thought there were various effective characteristics and behaviors of site mentors, SCSM advocated strongly about needing a better framework to provide future counselors' supervision. Implications and inferences for future studies are discussed.

keywords: school counseling site mentors, supervision, characteristics, practices

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

School counselors can play a pivotal role in shaping children's social and emotional welfare. They are often asked to perform other functions, such as providing supervision services to local graduate school counseling students. Although certified school counselors complete counseling coursework as part of their master's degree studies, many may never receive any supervisory education informing their supervisory practices. The state of Texas offers specific guidelines for an individual to become fully certified as a school counselor, and such guidelines include receiving oversight from a university professor. There are currently few guidelines or guidance for the school counselor's site mentor to follow while school counselor interns complete their practicum experience. This lack of education and training leaves most school counseling site mentors (SCSM) guessing what it means to provide appropriate supervision.

Background of Study

By examining the school counseling profession's historical evolution and the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) formation, school counselors nationwide can identify a framework for professional counseling duties. In the state of Texas, school counselors also have a state counseling program model to follow. One critical element of a school counselor's professional duties, supervision, is noticeably absent. This section will highlight the importance of school counseling, school counselors' roles according to ASCA, and supervision on school counseling.

School Counseling

The school counseling profession has gone through many transformations since its birth in the early twentieth century. School counseling began as vocational guidance in the early

1900's without an organized career structure (ASCA, 2005). The school counseling role has been delineated and updated throughout time, often in response to societal demands or occurrences (Beesley, 2004). Dahir (2004) believed that "the history of school counseling has depicted a profession in search of an identity" (p. 345). Adding to the perplexity of the situation is that the duties assigned to school counselors vary widely across the nation, from district to district and from institution to institution (House & Hayes, 2002). With these differences in mind, one may find it difficult to define school counseling roles.

American School Counseling Association National Model

In 1952, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) was formed to offer a professional organization for school counselors. American School Counseling Association (2005) also provided a foundation for school counselors to refer to when developing and implementing a school counseling program. The ASCA National Standards mission statement says that "all school counseling programs should help students develop competencies in academic achievement, career placement and personal and social development" (ASCA, 2005, p. 166). To support such a challenge, the ASCA National Model (2005) includes four elements: foundation, delivery system, management systems, and accountability. This model establishes the school counseling program as an important part of each student's social, emotional, and academic path. School counseling mentors who provide supervisory services to school counseling interns are expected to use the ASCA National Model to inform their supervisory practices because it is considered the national framework for all school counseling programs. Texas state offers no information about how SCSM use the ASCA National Model in its supervisory practices.

Texas Education Agency and Texas counselor certification. The Texas Education Agency in 1990 published a school counseling program model with four components that form a comprehensive guidance program for Texas. These four components include a guidance curriculum, responsive services, individual planning, and systems support. Like the ASCA model, Texas school counselors are to deliver the guidance component to students systematically. Within the component of responsive services, counselors should address the immediate concerns of students. School counselors typically accomplish this task or goal during individual and small group counseling, using accepted theories and techniques appropriate to school counseling. To enrich their work with students, public school counselors should regularly consult with parents and other school staff members, including administrators and other school district personnel. School counselors can also synchronize with the school and various community members to assemble community resources available for the students; likewise, if resources are not readily available in the school or the community, the program calls upon the school counselor to employ an efficient referral process to assist students and parents with finding outside support. The individual planning component asks counselors to help students survey and comprehend their personal growth and guide them through their educational, career, and personal plans. School counselors in the system support component are to arrange, execute, and appraise the school's comprehensive counseling program by using applicable data. These four components provide a model for all school counselors in the state of Texas.

Whereas counselor certification requirements vary state by state, it is important to know Texas's counselor certification requirements. In a policy research report, the Texas Educational Agency (TEA; 2019) reported that the initial certification requirements for obtaining a school counseling license have recently changed as of September 2019. To become a school counselor

in the state of Texas, individuals must (a) have at least a master's degree, (b) hold a current Texas teacher certificate, (c) teach a minimum of two years, (d) complete at least 48 graduate-level course work hours with certain requirements, and (e) successfully pass the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards in school counseling (TEA, 2019). For the academic requirement, individuals must complete one course in counseling guidance program development, two courses related to the direct services that help the counselor understand the “physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of children,” and 21 hours of coursework devoted to assessment, providing resources, guidance, and a supervised practicum (TEA, 2019, p. 4). For the ExCET counseling exam, the testing objectives include proficient knowledge in developing guidance programs, human development, counseling theories, assessment, individual and group counseling theories, and career development. Additional questions aim to determine whether the potential school counselor understands how students learn, how to promote learning and achievement by all students, and how to address program development in a learner-centered environment.

Supervision

A vital component in becoming a counselor is receiving supervision from a seasoned counselor. Carroll (2014) also sees supervision as “a relational conversation where the supervisee reflects on their work experiences to learn how to practice better” (p. 124). The process of supervision is highly interactive, and constant feedback helps counselor interns learn professional behaviors. Bernard and Goodyear (2014) believed that “every mental health professional should acquire supervision skills because virtually all counselors will supervise others in the field at some point in their career” (p. 2). Bernard and Goodyear also theorized that clinical supervision is an intervention in itself, as clinical supervision directs those who act as

supervisors to receive appropriate instruction in supervisory practices. Additionally, the supervisor serves as a gatekeeper for the profession (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Holloway and Neufeldt (1995) agreed that “supervision plays a critical role in maintaining the standards of the profession” (p. 207).

Association for Counselor Education and Supervision

The main objective of the Associated for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), a branch of the American Counseling Association (ACA), is “to advance counselor education and supervision to improve the provision of counseling services in all settings of society” (ACES, 2011, p. 1). ACES created its Best Practices in Clinical Supervision Taskforce in 2011 to develop a meaningful and practical set of supervisory practices applicable to a wide range of work settings. The first seven of 12 recommendations highlight the significance of the rapport between the counseling supervisor and the counseling intern. For example, one recommendation stresses that the “supervisor operates with an awareness that the supervisory relationship is key to the effectiveness of supervision as well as the growth of the supervisee” (ACES, 2001, p. 7). The remaining five recommendations stress the importance of the supervisors’ holding themselves accountable to the supervisory process. For example, the Practices recommend supervisors adopt applicable supervisory formats in an ethical way that upholds the credentialing bodies’ accreditation standards and regulations (ACES, 2001). A school counseling mentor could use these 12 recommendations to develop further an effective approach to providing supervisory services to school counseling interns. The suggestions support the ACA ethical guidelines for counseling supervisory practices.

ASCA supervision. More relevant to school counseling supervision, the ASCA (2009) defined 11 core competencies for counseling supervisors. These competencies include counseling

knowledge and personal traits that characterize effective supervisors. The ASCA touted that effective counseling supervisors have broad theoretical knowledge and understand how to apply theory and methods to various counseling situations. School counseling supervisors should commit themselves to continuous professional development opportunities meant to improve their supervisory skill set and learn about the counseling profession's ethical and legal aspects. Counseling supervisors need to be able to apply theoretical knowledge to supervision practices. They must also demonstrate the same conceptual knowledge and application in supervisory methods and techniques, including "the counselor developmental process, conceptualization and management in client care, assessments and evaluations, and oral and written reporting and recording of client records and evaluation methods for the supervisee" (ASCA, 2009, p. 30-32). ASCA encourages the counseling supervisor to stay attuned to the most current research regarding counseling supervision.

Supervision of school counselors in Texas. The role of a school counselor in Texas varies widely between each campus and district. Although the state of Texas delineates the duties a school counselor should perform, it leaves actual counseling duties up to the lead school administrator, who may have little education regarding the appropriate duties a school counselor must perform (Herlihy et al., 2002). According to Herlihy et al. (2002), many campus administrators believe that the school counselor mentor should focus chiefly on academic consulting, creating schedules, providing psychoeducation, and delivering group guidance having counseling interns practice their clinical counseling skills.

The leading campus administrator supervises and evaluates school counselors, and he or she may use teaching models as a guide. This approach may confuse school counselors about their role (Glaes, 2010; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Serving as a school counselor site mentor

does not negate any other counseling duties assigned by the lead campus administrator, which means that SCSM need to delicately balance the supervisor's role and attend to their assigned counseling duties. Site mentors may experience added stress when they need to provide effective supervision and ensure a comprehensive counseling program is in place.

Another important point to consider is that some school counselors may not have volunteered to act as a site mentor; rather, they may see serving as a site mentor as a part of their professional duty. Because supervisory training is usually not part of master's level graduate coursework and the TEA gives no specific guidance, the school counselor mentor may scramble to identify which supervisory practices to follow (Glaes, 2010). School counseling site mentors who provide supervision to school counseling interns under these pretenses leave themselves vulnerable to violating ethical standards of practice and providing ineffective supervision. This situation may also lead them to question whether they possess an effective site mentor's characteristics or behaviors. Even if SCSM has supervisory training, they may also struggle with adequately adopting and implementing various supervision theories. Most supervisory models focus on clinical counseling and fail to acknowledge the wide-ranging duties, varying assignments, responsibilities, and school counselors' unique settings (Studer, 2005). Some SCSM may also face role confusion when acting as a site mentor because they lack a common set of supervisory guidelines for school counseling intern practicum experiences in Texas (Glaes, 2010).

ASCA (2005) provides a national model of a comprehensive school counseling program and school counseling site supervisors' ethical responsibilities. However, it is unclear how many Texas site mentors reference the ASCA supervision ethics in their practice. The TEA (1990) provides a structure for school counselors to develop a school counseling program. Still, it does

not specifically address a school counselor site mentor's characteristics, behaviors, and responsibilities.

Statement of the Problem

School counselors who serve as SCSM have little to no formal supervisory training. More specifically, a Texas public school counselor's roles and responsibilities vary by grade level, school, and district, and vital training in appropriate supervision practices is non-existent. For this reason, supervisory training offered for clinical counselors may not meet the needs or adequately address the responsibilities of Texas public school counselor mentors in a school setting. Depending on where the current SCSM is working, the campus counseling program may not be implementing a comprehensive counseling program as defined by ASCA. Because of this ambiguity, Texas SCSM must determine on their own how they should supervise interns. To compound the problem, TEA does not address the supervisory responsibilities and duties when counselors serve as site mentors. The situation can lead observers to question what informs site mentors' supervisory practices and their behaviors and characteristics.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the effective characteristics, behaviors, and practices of SCSM in the state of Texas. Unfortunately, to date, I was unable to locate literature that focuses on the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM across the nation, or more specifically in Texas. I found no literature on what informs SCSM supervisory practices. Using case study methodology, I addressed the following research questions: (a) how do school counseling site mentors (SCSM) describe the effective characteristics and the behaviors of SCSM in the state of Texas, and (b) what informs school counselors site mentor practices in the state of Texas?

Significance of the Study

In this study, I aimed to provide a clearer understanding of what counselors need to provide effective school counseling supervision to interns. Although many studies have examined the topic of clinical counseling supervision, there is a shortage of research exploring school counseling supervision. This study sought to highlight school counselor site mentors' perceptions as they supervise school counseling interns. The study sheds light on what an effective school counselor mentor's characteristics and behaviors are, and what informs the site mentor's supervisory practices. This study's findings may provide a useful narrative for universities, school districts, and individual school counselor site mentors to justify the development of programs specifically designed to educate and train current and future school counselor mentors.

Definition of Terms

Understanding the vocabulary of school counseling and supervision was an important element of this study. Key terms include school counselor, school counselor intern, site mentor, supervision, and supervisor. The following sections define these keywords and their application to the study.

School Counselor

Whereas this study focuses on school counselor site mentors and their supervisory practices, it also highlights a school counselor's role. A school counselor in Texas must have at least a master's degree in school counseling and have received certification by the state as a school counselor. A school counselor helps students achieve academic, emotional, social, and career aspirations while implementing a broad spectrum of programs to help with student success (TEA, 2018).

School Counseling Intern

School counseling interns in the state of Texas are master's-level graduate school students who are completing their mandatory practicum or internship experience in a school counseling setting. School counseling interns receive guidance, support, and evaluation of their counseling skills while also learning how to implement a Texas comprehensive school counseling program.

Site Mentor

Studer (2006) described a school counseling supervisor as a person who guides, models, and mentors a school counseling intern to help him or her become a competent school counselor. Whereas the term *supervisor* is used as a general term for a person serving in this capacity, the term supervisor generally identifies a person serving as a supervisor to a school counselor intern is referred to as a *site mentor* by the state. For this study's purpose, the supervising school counselor is referred to as the *school counselor site mentor* or *site mentor*. When referring to more than one supervising school counselor site mentor in this study, the term *school counseling site mentors (SCSM)* will be used.

Supervision

To serve as a school counseling supervisor, a counselor must understand school counseling and have an overview of supervision as a whole. Bernard and Goodyear (2014) described "supervision as an intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior colleague or colleagues who typically (but not always) are members of that same profession" (p. 9). Bernard and Goodyear (2014) noted the following characteristics of the supervisory relationship: it (a) evaluative and hierarchical; (b) spans over time; (c) and helps

guide and develop counseling interns' professional skills while examining the effectiveness of counseling skills to their clients.

Supervisor

Supervisors possess experience and have achieved recognition in their specific professional field through national or state licensure or certification to provide guidance and mentorship to those who seek membership into the same profession (Roberts et al., 2001).

Theoretical Framework

Turner (2017) stressed that stating a specific theory in a study can help set the foundation for practice because theory can supply a framework for describing and forecasting a phenomenon and can help practitioners predict outcomes and contemplate the dynamics of different social situations. Bandura's "Triadic Reciprocity" Theory (1985) served as the theoretical framework of this dissertation. Bandura's Triadic Reciprocity Theory, previously known as Reciprocal Determinism (Bandura, 1969), considers that human nature is filled with determinism and is voluntary. Bandura (1985) asserted that people are affected by their environment and can also change their environment.

Bandura (1985) stressed the interrelationship between the individual, the environment, and behavior. According to the Triadic Reciprocity Theory, three elements that form a relationship are the person's awareness and cognition (A), the person's behaviors (B), and the person's environment (C). In this triad, these three factors can influence and, in turn, be affected by the other two factors in an endless cycle. For example, a person's awareness and cognitions (A) directly affect their behaviors (B), and, in turn, their behavior influences their thinking (A). Another possibility of triadic reciprocity is how the person's thinking and beliefs (A) directly influence the person's environment (C). Another possible example asserts that a person's

behavior (B) can influence their environment (C). The figure below helps to illustrate how these three factors influence each other.

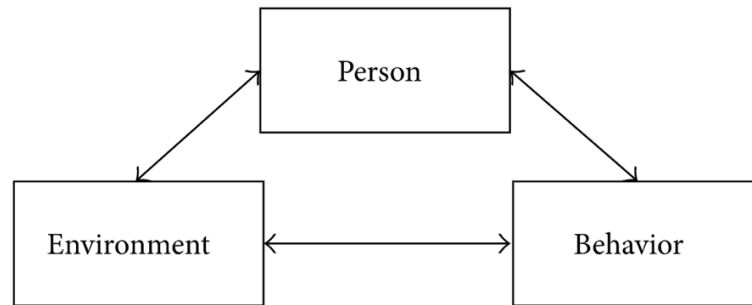


Figure 1. Figure of the Triadic Reciprocity Theory. Reprinted from Exploring the Triple Reciprocity Nature of Organizational Value Cocreation Behavior Using Multicriteria Decision Making Analysis, retrieved from <https://www.hindawi.com/>.

The following provides an example of the Triadic Reciprocity Theory related to a school counseling supervision scenario. First, if a school counseling site mentor is unsure about how to provide supervision (A) to an intern, supervision (B) may occur haphazardly, thus resulting in a school counseling site mentor doubting his or her abilities (A) to act effectively as a school counseling site mentor. Likewise, if a school counseling site mentor displays a tentative mindset about providing supervision (A), the school counseling site mentor may create an ambiguous setting for supervision (C). Lastly, if a school counseling site mentor is disorganized in supervision (B), the intern may experience the school setting as confusing and chaotic (C). Triadic Reciprocity helps to explain human behavior by revealing those personal characteristics, and the environment influences behavior. This reciprocal relationship among personal factors (i.e., beliefs, expectations, self-perceptions), behaviors, characteristics, and the environment can

help clarify site mentors' effective personal factors when they provide supervision to a school counseling intern.

Research Questions

This qualitative research study addressed the following questions:

- How do SCSM describe the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM in the state of Texas?
- What informs school counselor site mentor practices in the state of Texas?

Limitations

The current research was limited to SCSM in Texas, who met the selection criteria and agreed to participate in the study by completing the consent documentation. I could not control variables such as gender, age, years of supervisory experience, and years of school counseling experience in the sample population. There were sampling limitations in this study. The number of school counselors in the North Texas region who responded to the recruitment e-mail and the number of mentors referred to this study by other counselor educators determined the sample size. This research was limited to the self-reported data received from the interview protocols. Interview protocols may not capture every perception of SCSM or their specific behaviors, characteristics, and supervisory practices.

Another limitation concerns the timing constraints of the study. The study consisted of two school counseling site mentor interviews and one observation between each participant and their school counseling intern during the fall semester. In some cases, the observation and second interview possibly did not have enough time between them due to scheduling conflicts. Not allowing for adequate time to pass between the observation and the second interview could limit the results of the study. Additionally, I only observed one feedback session between the

participants and their school counseling interns, this observation only offered a glimpse of the participants' role while providing feedback to their intern.

Another limitation in this study is the wide range of experiences supervising interns, and the varied contexts in which the participants work may have affected the results. Participants were not selected based on the expectation that they had previous experience acting as a school counseling site mentor, nor were they recognized in their field as an effective school counseling site mentor. Some participants served as school counseling site mentors for the first time during the time of the study, while other had many years of experience providing supervision. These discrepancies could affect the overall findings of this study.

Delimitations

The delimitations in this study were formed based on the study objectives in understanding the characteristics, behaviors, and practices of school counseling mentors in the state of Texas. To gain current school counseling mentors' perspectives in North Texas, only participants serving as school counseling mentors in a public-school setting were recruited. Because the study only used participants who work in the North Texas region, the findings may not be generalizable to all public-school counseling mentors in the entire state of Texas or school counseling supervisors in other states.

Assumptions

In conducting this study, I made several assumptions. The study assumed that these study participants gave their consent freely to participate in the study. Other participants who responded to the initial participation inquiry but did not consent to participate were not included in the study's findings. Another assumption is that the participants understood the study scope,

the vernacular, and the concepts associated with school counseling and counseling supervision. I also assumed that the participants were honest, truthful, and forthcoming when answering the interview questions. The interpretation of the data correctly reflects the intent of the participants. The last assumption is that the study methodology suggests a logical and appropriate design.

Organization of the Study

Chapter One provided a brief background on school counseling supervision and the current problem and purpose of the study. Also included in this chapter are the key terms and definitions. Chapter Two will encapsulate and expound on the studies regarding school counseling supervision and site mentors. Chapter Three will explain the methodology of this study. They will provide a review of the research design, a detailed description of the participants and participant recruitment, the study setting, and the procedures used during data collection and analysis. I will also attempt to establish trustworthiness and creditability. Chapter Four provides the results of my qualitative multiple case study. Chapter Five summarizes the study and an interpretation, implications, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Experts define the professional practice of supervision differently. Bradley and Kottler (2001) described the supervision process as “when an experienced person, a supervisor with appropriate training and experience, mentors and teaches a subordinate” (p.4). Borders (1991) defined supervision as a cycle in which a supervisor gives feedback, the counseling intern practices the counseling skill, and the counseling supervisor then gives additional feedback. Miller and Dollarhide (2006) focused on school counselor supervision as a “means of teaching professional values, mores, and behaviors, helping counselors to understand the ASCA model and to work towards program transformation” (p. 298). Even though a plethora of literature exists that supports the ideas that counseling supervision is an essential part of counselor development and that it improves both personal and professional growth (Bradley & Kottler, 2001), a lack of research of characteristics and behaviors of school counseling site mentors (SCSM) in the state of Texas still exists.

In this chapter, I will provide a closer examination of the literature needed to help address my research questions:

- How do SCSM describe the effective characteristics and the behaviors of SCSM in the state of Texas?
- What informs school counselor site mentor practices in the state of Texas?

The purposes of the review of the literature include (a) providing an overview of supervision best practices, (b) examining supervision in school counseling, and (c) highlighting the characteristics and behaviors of SCSM.

Supervision Best Practices

The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) consists of professional counselors who participate in future counselors' professional education and supervision. The ACES touts acting as a counseling supervisor carries unique roles, such as acting as an administrator, clinical supervisor, or program developer. Because these different roles can be cumbersome, ACES created best practices guidelines of supervision to support counseling supervisors. The ACES Best Practices (2011) offered practical, relevant supervisory guidelines to help counseling supervisors act ethically while providing supervisory services to counseling interns. Three major themes found in ACES Best Practices (2011) consist of organizing supervision, the supervisory relationship, and supervisor behaviors.

Organizing Supervision

One theme of the ACES Best Practices (2011) highlights the importance of the supervisor's ability to organize supervision sessions. Four different sub-sections fall under the organizing supervision theme, which focuses on the supervisor's responsibility to initiate supervision, set appropriate goals, provide feedback, and conduct supervision sessions.

Initiating Supervision

The practice of initiating supervision places the counseling supervisor in charge of using informed consent procedures before the first counseling supervision session. The counseling supervisor should provide a written copy of the supervisory agreement referred to during the supervision period. Essential elements of informed consent include detailing the counseling intern's expectations and the supervisor, evaluation criteria, consequences for not meeting professional expectations, overall objectives of supervision, and ethical and legal concerns of the counseling profession. Eley and Murray (2009) concurred, stating, "it is important to define what

will take place in the supervisory process - what the counseling supervisor will and won't do" (p. 35). Engaging in an open dialogue about the supervision process helps build the supervisor and counseling intern's working alliance. Morrison and Lent (2018) stated: "a good supervisory working alliance may, in turn, be seen by the therapist as reflecting favorably on the supervisor's beliefs about the therapist's efficacy" (p. 515). However, ACES (2018) stressed that initiating supervision acts as the foundation of any supervision experience.

Goal Setting

The counseling supervisor is responsible for collaborating with the counseling intern and developing specific goals for supervision. The goals should directly benefit the counseling intern and the client and aid in the counseling services' overall effectiveness. The counseling supervisor acknowledges, addresses and evaluates the goals set in each supervision meeting.

Feedback and Evaluation

Part of the ACES Best Practices (2011) asked professional counseling supervisors to offer consistent and continuous feedback. The feedback must be constructive and not too harsh and critical. One way to assess what kind of feedback is warranted is to balance thought-provoking and affirmative feedback based on the counseling intern's developmental level, professional skill set, and the intern's client's needs. At the same time, the counseling supervisor gives direct feedback on specific behaviors that need improving and provides alternate examples of professionally acceptable behaviors to guarantee that therapeutic sessions meet clients' needs. Another part of the ACES Best Practices (2011) called for the counseling supervisor to use formative and summative feedback from different sources, such as clients, colleagues, or other site counseling supervisors, through informal and formal methods. Efstation et al. (1990) suggested that supervisors use the Supervisory Working Alliance (SAW) supervisor and

supervisee form for formal assessments and various informal observations to provide constructive feedback to the counseling interns.

Another ethical standard that a counseling supervisor should recognize is the importance of evaluating counseling interns. The counseling supervisor must acknowledge that providing evaluations serves as the foundational base of supervision. The counseling supervisor acknowledges and accepts the responsibilities that come with providing evaluative services. Lowry (2001) maintained that the counseling supervisor must show competence in using formal and summative evaluations, including self-evaluations. Through self-evaluation, the counseling supervisor possesses the opportunity to aid the counseling intern in developing and enhancing his or her self-reflection and self-evaluation skills.

The counseling supervisor should use evaluations frequently and communicate how those evaluations help design supervision services. The evaluation process allows the counseling supervisor to take appropriate action when professional remediation is warranted or when the counseling intern struggles to apply theoretical knowledge in a clinical setting. The counseling supervisor should give assessments throughout the entire supervision process, highlighting the counseling interns' strengths and limitations. Highlighting the school counseling intern's strengths and limitations through assessments helps develop a new school counseling intern's professional skill.

Supervision Format

The ACES Supervision Best Practices (2011) recommended that the counseling supervisor consider and implement different supervisory formats, such as individual, triadic, and group structures. The counseling supervisor must also remember that they must adhere to any national, state, or accreditation regulations when employing a certain supervisory format. Eley

and Murray (2009) highlighted that the supervisory format might be different for each counseling intern. Counseling supervisors should select supervisory formats based on which one will enhance the supervisory process and aid in the counseling intern's professional development, not on what saves time.

Documentation

The ACES Best Practices (2011) called for an effective counseling supervisor to provide documentation of the counseling supervision sessions. An effective counselor supervisor properly documents the supervision contract, supervision session notes, and any counseling intern evaluations. Other items to document include proof of the informed consent between all parties, the discussion content of the supervisory session, the material reviewed in the session, overall goals of the counseling session, and suggestions for future counseling sessions or client care.

Other Supervision Responsibilities

When providing supervisory services, ACES (2011) best practices recommended four supervision elements to consider. The counseling supervisor makes a conscious effort to adopt and practice the professional standards set forth for counseling supervisors, such as conducting supervision in a professional setting and meeting face-to-face with the counseling intern. The second element of conducting supervision entails ensuring that counseling supervisors provide a secure, empathetic, and well-thought-out supervision environment. Barnett et al. (2007) added that effective supervisors demonstrate strong relationship skills such as being approachable and open toward their counseling intern's ideas and opinions. Counseling supervisors using various supervision interventions to help aid the counseling intern's professional growth based on various assessments of the counseling intern's professional developmental level, confidence, and

learning preference. Eley and Murray (2009) concurred that effective supervisors could change their practice over time as research changes and as the counseling intern develops. A part of conducting supervision requires the counseling supervisor to evaluate the supervision process's effectiveness through the supervision period's entirety.

Supervisory Relationship

One of the most important aspects of providing an effective supervisory experience is nurturing the relationship between the counseling supervisor and the counseling intern. The ACES Supervision Best Practices (2011) emphasized the supervisory relationship by encouraging supervisors to develop a healthy alliance between themselves and the counseling intern. Another aspect of the ACES Best Practices (2011) encouraged the counseling supervisor to purposely engage with the counseling intern to build a beneficial relationship and positive working partnership. Barnett et al. (2007) touted that the best supervisory experience comes from an authentic supervisory relationship. The counseling intern thinks that the counseling supervisor is emotionally invested in the relationship. Lowry (2001) advised that counseling supervisors act with empathy and flexibility in their communication and the theoretical approach adopted during the supervisory process. To encourage a healthy supervisory relationship, ACES recommends that the counseling supervisor consider the ethical and cultural issues that may influence the supervisory relationship.

Diversity and Advocacy Considerations

Diversity issues are also addressed in the best supervision practices outlined by ACES. The counseling supervisor acknowledges the various multicultural elements of the counseling experience and incorporates them into the supervision approach. Counseling supervisors should encourage counseling interns to weave diversity and activism into their counseling sessions with

clients. Eley and Murray (2009) stressed that effective counseling supervisors consider the counseling intern's unique cultural qualities and carefully adjust the supervision style to improve the supervision process and develop a strong supervision working alliance.

Ethical considerations. Perhaps one of the most significant considerations for an effective counseling supervisor lies in adopting and adhering to the ethical standards defined by the American Counseling Association (ACA), ACES, and other credentialing bodies, including all state mental health credentialing boards. Barnett et al. (2007) stated that "modeling ethical and professional behavior along with stressing a focus on ethical practices throughout the supervisory process are essential qualities of effective supervisors" (p, 270). Ellis et al.(2014) discovered nearly half of 363 the counseling interns in the study recounted that they observed their counseling supervisor engaging in at least one unethical practice throughout the supervision process.

The counseling supervisor can use the ACES Best Practices recommendations to adhere to the professional ethics set forth from the national counseling associations and avoid unethical behaviors. Next, the counseling supervisor should avoid engaging in inappropriate relationships or dual relationships with the counseling intern. Dual relationships arise between the site mentor and the counseling intern when the site mentor serves in more than one role with the counseling intern. For example, if the site mentor engages in social interactions with the counseling intern, those interactions could impair the site mentor's evaluative function and difficult to provide objective feedback. Another example of a dual relationship occurs when SCSM establishes a therapeutic relationship between themselves and the school counseling intern. In this case, counseling supervisors are recommended to acquire more training on "managing the teaching, counseling, and consultative roles" (Herlihy, Gray & McCollum, 2002, p. 58). Likewise, if

counseling supervisors follow the ACES suggested best practices, they can help protect the counseling supervisor and the counseling profession.

In addition to the importance of following all ethical standards as stated by all professional counseling agencies, the supervisor also acts as a gatekeeper. Barbian-Shimberg and Bender (2018) highlighted that supervision is one of the primary forms of gatekeeping in the counseling profession. Professional counselor educators and supervisors should advocate for both our students and the counseling profession as a whole. Struder (2006) addressed how the gatekeeping responsibility applies to school counseling site supervisors. Struder stated supervisors are the gatekeepers to the profession and are instrumental links between the educational program and future work settings. It is incumbent upon school counselor program supervisors to place students in settings that reflect a transformed school counseling program with practicing professional counselors trained in supervision (Struder, 2006).

Supervisor Characteristics and Competencies

The counseling supervisor plays a profound role in the professional development of the counseling intern. ACES (2011) stressed that the counseling supervisor must show competency in providing clinical supervision. Lowe (2001) agreed, stating that counseling supervisors must possess clinical skills and knowledge to supervise counseling interns properly. ACES (2011) highlighted that an effective counseling supervisor could describe the reason behind conducting counseling supervision and tell the difference between counseling supervision and the counseling process.

ACES (2011) encouraged counseling supervisors to engage in self-reflection practices and other professional development areas regularly. Eley and Murray (2009) emphasized that an effective counseling supervisor participates in his or her reflective process of the supervision

process and encourages the counseling intern to engage in a self-reflection process. Lowery (2001) noted the importance of the counseling supervisor to have the desire to engage, train, and place a personal investment in supervision that includes using a self-reflective process. Barbian-Shimberg and Bender (2018) stressed that setting counseling supervision preparation guidelines not only safeguards the counseling profession as a whole but also, more importantly, protects the clients served. Eley and Murray (2009) added, “Supervisory training and development can help establish what expertise is needed and while some skills and aptitudes develop over time, it is important to define what these are and actively to manage their development” (p. 51). Some institutions may require supervision training as ACES (2011) recommends, but other institutions do not require supervision training.

Omand (2010) stressed that counseling supervisors must be prepared to learn. Learning is of critical importance in counselor education and supervision because learning is a dynamic process in which both the counseling supervisor and the counseling intern are allowed to grow professionally at the same time. When providing supervision services to counseling interns, counseling supervisors expound on ideas while also encouraging them to develop as practitioners. Berman (2000) stated that an area of difficulty for counseling supervisors lies in learning new supervision skills because this requires supervisors to recognize their lack of supervisory knowledge. In good supervision, the counseling supervisor needs to see the importance of learning and admit to not knowing all the answers. Riggs et al. (2009) discovered that many counseling supervisors receive little to no feedback on their supervisory skills or that the supervisor may not have completed supervision coursework.

Supervision in School Counseling

The school counseling profession has existed for more than a century. During that time, many challenges and conflicting professional identity issues have influenced school counselors' daily tasks, obligations, expectations, assessments, and supervision. Professional school counselors must represent themselves as experts in their field of practice with the knowledge and ability to develop and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program built around the ASCA National Model (2005) and other state models, such as the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) "A Model Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools" (2018).

The ASCA Model

The American School Counseling Association (2005) provided a foundation for school counselors to reference when developing and implementing a school counseling program. The ASCA National Standards mission statement states that "all school counseling programs should help students develop competencies in academic achievement, career placement and personal and social development" (ASCA, 2005, p. 166). The ASCA model (2005) includes four elements: foundation, delivery system, management, and accountability to support such a challenge.

Foundation. Establishing a firm foundation plays a vital role in building a solid school counseling program. An integral part of the foundation is set on each counselor's beliefs and philosophy when developing the counseling program, implementing and evaluating the program. An ASCA-compliant school counseling program focuses on a mission statement that outlines and highlights its purpose and main goal while also aligning with the school and district's main goals.

Delivery system. After building the foundation, the delivery system component of the ASCA model (2005) highlighted the counseling programs, the interactions between the counselors, students, staff, and the methods in which the interventions are delivered. The ASCA model delivery includes: (a) the school counseling core curriculum, which is interwoven into the overall school's curriculum and presented strategically through all grade levels, (b) individual student planning, (c) responsive services, and (d) indirect student services.

Management systems. The third component, the management system, helps with the organizational process of program development. The management system provides organizational tools, such as calendaring, to ensure the counseling program is clearly delineated, well organized, and reflective of the school's immediate needs. Although some counselors feel that this category places counselors in a management role, it helps counselors agree to the methods and the programs of that particular school while also holding them accountable to the administration team (ASCA, 2005). The management system component accounts for how public-school counselors develop a comprehensive school counseling program. For example, school counselors need to create clear action plans outlining and detailing how each competency will be achieved. The ASCA recommendation is that school counselors devote at least 80 percent of their professional time directly to students, which helps school counselors and administrators determine how much consideration and attention the other components receive (ASCA, 2005).

Accountability. The last component, accountability, centers on the measurable terms of a school counseling program. Counseling programs are encouraged to collect data to determine the overall efficiency of the school counseling program. The accountability component asks counselors to show how the programs presented directly influence overall student achievement and provide school counselor performance standards for counselor evaluations.

The figure below represents the ASCA National Model. The graphic shows the overall structure and relationships between an ASCA School Counseling Program's four components.

Figure 1.

The American School Counseling Program



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The graphic pictured above comprises four squares, with each square signifying one of the four major ASCA components. The arrows point to other squares, or components, of direct influence. The lowest square on the diagram, the foundation, provides an unwavering base to construct the management and delivery stage of the ASCA National Model. Accountability standards are developed and adopted through the management and delivery stages. Shifting to a different perspective, the accountability components then point directly down to the foundation level. The words that border the ASCA National Model highlight school counselor skills and attitudes of “leadership, advocacy, and collaboration” and play a role in developing a comprehensive and effective school counseling program (ASCA, 2005, p 12).

Texas Education Agency Counseling Guidelines

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provided school counselors with “A Model Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools” (2018) as an additional guide to help reinforce the roles and responsibilities of school counselors. The guide, comprised of four components, provides a foundation for all state of Texas public school counselors to design and build a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate counseling program in Texas public schools. It also provides a strategic, deliberate approach system for all public-school students to develop and practice necessary life skills by using school counselors’ expert knowledge and skills. The four components of a comprehensive school program in the state of Texas are (a) guidance curriculum, (b) responsive services, (c) individual planning system, and (d) system support.

Guidance curriculum. The first component, guidance curriculum, aids students’ development of basic life skills. The state emphasizes four areas that need attention in this component. Areas of importance include “(a) intrapersonal effectiveness; (b) interpersonal effectiveness; (c) post-secondary education and career readiness; and (d) personal health and safety” (Zambrano et al., 2018, p.84).

Responsive services. The purpose of the responsive services component is to intercede when students’ private apprehensions or problems place any future personal, educational, or occupation training in jeopardy. Texas school counselors can address any worries exhibited to them by students, but the state identifies some topics as having priority or greater relevance to students’ overall development. Responsive services categories include (a) preventative services, (b) remedial services, and (c) crisis services (Zambrano et al., 2018). Preventive services in school counseling encourage counselors to engage with students before academic or social-

emotional issues become problematic. The remedial services category calls for the school counselor to respond to a situation after the situation occurs and calls for immediate intervention. The last category of responsive services is crisis services. The term crisis service indicates that a crisis transpired and that prompt and swift intervention is warranted. Responsive services topics under the responsive services component umbrella consist of other issues such as “(a) school attendance, (b) stress and anxiety, (c) study skills, (d) violence and school safety, (e) financial aid, (f) drug use, and (g) cross-cultural effectiveness” (Zambrano et al., 2018, p. 91). These are responsive services because they facilitate discussions on meeting students’ immediate personal and academic needs. Most responsive services topics, such as academic failure and success, school attitudes and behaviors, and grade-level transition events, are viewed as preventive interventions for students struggling to make healthy and appropriate choices when trying to solve their problems. Some responsive services topics are considered secondary interventions because some students have already made poor choices or are not coping well with problem situations. School counselors can deliver these responsive services through individual counseling or in small groups of students.

Individual planning. The individual planning component aims to encourage school counseling programs to guide students appropriately through their educational careers. For example, school counselors need to help students plan, navigate, assess academic needs, and provide social-emotional support. School districts in Texas have the autonomy to systematically use school resources and staff to provide information and activities to focus students’ attention on their personal growth. The desired goal of individual planning is to set occupational, academic purposes, and meaningful personal goals based on self-actualization and the guidance learned from the educational institution, their community, and the globe. Another objective of

this component specifies that students make specific plans for achieving their personal and academic dreams by forming short and long-term goals. Students need guidance on evaluating their strengths and weaknesses and how those elements strengthen or thwart their goals to formulate goals. One duty of school counselors is to help students evaluate their real-life progress toward achieving their goals. The goal of this is that the student takes appropriate action that accurately reflects their plans. The individual planning component also includes: “(a) age-appropriate, objective-based activities; (b) relevant, accurate, and unbiased information; and (c) coordinated advisement procedures to facilitate appropriate placement decisions by students and their parents” (Zambrano et al., 2018, p. 97).

System support. Whereas the previous three components focus on how school counselors and the school counseling program directly assist students, the system support component illustrates the various options and available organization activities that further promote student success. Some examples of the system support component include (a) interpreting state and local standardized testing data, (b) facilitating community outreach efforts, (c) involving in developing and implementing campus-based school improvement strategies, and (d) collaborating with other staff members (Zambrano et al., 2018). School counselors must confer with other school staff members, collect data, coordinate guidance-related activities assigned to them by their building administrators, and participate in counseling staff development to further improve their counseling skill set.

Challenges of School Counseling

Texas school counselors strive to build effective school counseling programs by following the ASCA National Model and the TEA Guide for Program Development; however, many school counselors face role confusion in the profession. Several factors that impact school

counselor role identity include various roles identified by school counseling experts, high counselor-to-student ratios, increasingly diverse student populations, and accountability concerns.

Paisley and McMahon (2001) identified 13 different roles that school counselors perform daily that place school counselors in an “unrealistic position of trying to be all things to all people” (p. 2). Some of the 13 counseling roles include: (a) providing individual and group counseling; (b) delivering guidance lessons; (c) working with community agencies and other school staff members; (d) serving in leadership roles and influencing policy-making; (e) meeting the needs of at-risk students; (f) preventing suicides, pregnancies, dropouts, and drug use; and (g) be the mental health specialist and expert in all the above areas to ensure quality in all intervention programs (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). However, it is common that program development captivates school counseling rather than providing individual services to the students (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). Herlihy et al. (2002) stated daily tasks “that school counselors perform had become a hodge-podge of activities chosen, assigned, or added by happenstance” (p. 56). Professionally inappropriate duties and tasks, such as coordinating standardized tests and hall monitoring, severely limit a school counselor’s ability to design and implement effective programming (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). This lack of clearly defined counseling roles leads school counselors to place little importance on school counseling interns (Herlihy, Gray & McCollum, 2002).

Ratios. Adding to a school counselor’s role confusion is high counselor-to-student ratios. The American School Counselor Association (2017) recommends a 250-to-1 ratio; however, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Wyoming are the only states that maintain a ratio lower than 250- to-1. The national average is 482-to-1, and Texas holds a 450 -to-1 ratio (ASCA, 2017).

Demanding that school counselors shoulder such a wide range of responsibilities and carry a large student caseload may push counselors beyond possible or effective supervision.

Diverse student populations. Lee (2001) asserted that school counselors should remain culturally aware and respond appropriately to meet diverse student populations' needs adequately. Diversity not only includes race and ethnicity issues but also means understanding and responding appropriately to varying socio-economic statuses found in the school environment, appropriately supporting students with disabilities, recognizing urban/suburban lifestyle differences, and addressing sexual orientation issues (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). School counselors must demonstrate cultural competence and cultural responsiveness to attend to students' needs effectively. The lack of appropriate diversity training may leave school counselors feeling deficient in meeting all the learners' complex needs in their institutions (Paisley & McMahon, 2001).

Accountability. Accountability within the educational environment also challenges the professional school counselor's role identity. Struder (2005) noted, "School counselors have the responsibility to assess the program and personal performance so that stakeholders can make decisions regarding program viability" (p. 358). Baker (2000) stated that school counselors prove in quantifiable terms the efficacy of their work. Baker (2000) explained accountability means demonstrating that something is worthwhile is happening. In a public-school setting, this principle may be manifested in procedures used to show taxpayers that they are getting their money's worth. In such situations, counselors are challenged to develop evaluations of their efforts and their consumers' opinions while also being accountable for their time. (p. 31)

School counselor programs are traditionally designed around bettering student outcomes. School administrators, legislators, and other community stakeholders, in the current political

climate, desire data that displays counseling programs' effectiveness. Paisley and McMahon (2001) noted that the data are directly linked to include grades, enrollment in program courses, test scores, attendance, and behavior referrals, not students' overall well-being. In sum, school counselors assume many roles in the school environment, leaving little time for them to focus on the supervision duties of SCSM.

Challenges for School Counseling Site Mentors. Several challenges face SCSM. One challenge of SCSM lies in school administrators' performance reviews and the lack of district administration support. Many building administrators perceive school counselors' role as being focused on performing academic advising, creating schedules, providing psychoeducation to students, and delivering group guidance. Many school administrators view providing supervision services "as a less-than-useful reason for taking school counselors away from their time spent in such direct services to students" (Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Herlihy et al., p. 232). School counselors' administrative supervisors may not place importance on SCSM to have extra time to provide effective supervision to school counseling interns.

Another challenge for SCSM is the lack of support at the district administration level. In the state of Texas, some public-school districts employ a director of counseling and guidance. The director of guidance and counseling in a school district is an advocate for all the school counselors in that school district. The director typically oversees the counseling program development, adheres to the ASCA Code of Ethics, and helps define counselors' roles in that district. Some districts do not staff a director of counseling and guidance or hire someone who holds an administration certificate but has little or no professional school counseling experience. When a school district does not have a director of counseling and guidance or when the person in the director's position is not trained as a school counselor, it leaves school counselors working in

the district without the vital support needed when trying to define the professional roles of a school counselor more clearly. Without this support, SCSM may feel even more isolated because they do not have an advocate who can support them through the challenges of providing effective supervision to school counseling interns.

Despite these challenges of providing supervision services to school counseling interns, there are some advantages to serving as a school counselor site mentor. Ladbury (2012) explained SCSM “become involved in school counseling supervision as a part of their professional growth, continual development of the counseling profession, and to maintain the professional identity of a school counselor” (p. 231). Magnuson et al. (2001) highlighted that “seasoned school counselors who are skilled supervisors can become a powerful influence and a valuable resource for new counselors” (p. 216). Providing supervision services can also aid in building higher self-efficacy in SCSM. Cashwell and Dooley (2001) indicated that providing counseling supervision assists professional school counselors’ development by increasing levels of counselor self-efficacy regarding “micro-skills, counseling process, dealing with difficult client behaviors, cultural competence, and values” (p.44).

Supervision Best Practices in School Counseling

The ASCA Code of Ethics (2016) clearly defined the professional, ethical responsibilities and norms for all professional school counselors and provided clear direction for the entire profession. In addition to the ASCA Code of Ethics for school counselors, ASCA suggested 14 ethical competencies for SCSM (ASCA, 2016). These suggestions provide an important foundation for SCSM to follow when providing supervisory services. This study highlights these competencies as part of the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM. The 14 ASCA (2016) competencies that explain the national supervision expectations are the following:

- Certified or licensed school counselors possess knowledge regarding counseling programs and the ethical standards of the profession.
- Receive education and continue to pursue educational training to provide clinical supervision.
- Encourage supervisors to use a collaborative approach with counseling interns that includes fostering further professional growth, espousing best counseling practices, assessing a counseling intern's professional growth, consulting on cases, and developing an action plan.
- Urge SCSM to be culturally aware and consider cultural factors on the supervisory relationship.
- Discourage dual relationships with counseling interns.
- Comfortability in using technology to perform supervisory responsibilities.
- Understand the differences between providing online supervision and face-to-face supervision.
- Provide direct and clear information about how technology may play a part in supervision.
- Make school counseling interns aware of the policies and procedures related to the supervisory process.
- Provide feedback promptly using objective standards placed forth by the learning institution and use relevant evaluation tools that measure the school counseling intern's competency.
- Use national state-approved school counseling evaluations provided by the school district.

- Communicate the school counseling intern's professional limitations to the university counseling department promptly.
- Help school counseling interns obtain proper remediation as necessary.
- Ask for a school counseling intern dismissal when the school counseling intern cannot demonstrate the competencies outlined by the ASCA School Counselor Competencies and other state counseling standards (ASCA, 2016).

Role of School Counseling Site Mentors

School counseling site mentors (SCSM) play a valuable role in school counseling interns' professional development. The literature suggests a lack of supervisory practice competency when examining how SCSM supervise and train hopeful school counselors (Henderson, 1994; Nelson & Johnson; 1999). Struder (2005) contended that SCSM provides supervisory services without the benefit of training. Even more concerning is: Two carefully guarded professional secrets are the non-existence of a common set of supervisory expectations, tasks, and responsibilities provided to all school counselor trainees and those supervisors, for the most part, have not received instruction in supervisory practices for students training for the profession of school counseling (Henderson, 1994; Nelson & Johnson; 1999, Struder, 2005, p. 124).

Glaes (2010) stated that most school counselors across the nation do not receive any clinical supervision training and that many SCSM does not perceive the need for supervision. This lack of perceived need for training is pronounced even further because there is little literary support regarding recommendations or a framework to follow when supervising a school counseling intern (Getz, 1999; Goodyear & Bernard, 1998; Henderson, 1994). Herlihy et al. (2002) suggested that the reason for the scarcity of supervisory practices for SCSM is because "in most jurisdictions, post-master's degree supervision of school counselors is not mandated"

(p. 135). More specifically, in Texas, supervisory requirements are only placed on Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) who provide supervisory services to licensed professional counseling interns, thus exempting school counselors from following the same supervisory standards.

School Counselor Development

A plethora of literature exists that highlights the importance of counseling supervision. There are also specific recommendations and requirements within counselor education programs to help facilitate and aid counselors who desire to become SCSM. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) (2018) standards calls for site mentors to “(a) have at least a master’s degree, preferably in counseling, or in a mental health field; (b) hold a valid certification or license from the state where they practice; (c) two years of relevant professional experience in the specialty in which the counseling intern is studying; (d) knowledge of the counseling interns counseling program requirements, expectations, and evaluations procedures for the counseling interns; and (e) relevant training in counseling supervision” (CACREP, 2018, p. 4). Even though CACREP provides a standard for counseling site supervisors to follow and some educational programs include specific training for site mentor development, many counseling students do not take a formal supervisory class (CACREP, 2018; Struder, 2006). A more significant problem lies in that not all counseling education programs follow the CACREP accreditation standards.

Even if the counselor takes a supervisory class from a CACREP accredited institution, the supervision topics may not specifically address school counseling supervision or school counselors’ immediate needs working in a school setting. Proctor (1994) suggested that as school counselors serve as SCSM to counseling interns, doubt about supervisory responsibilities and

proficiency surface. In these cases, SCSM may duplicate their professional experience of supervision with the counseling intern or just superior counseling skills to school counseling interns because they are unsure what constitutes good site supervision. Other SCSM may rely solely on years of school counseling experience to dictate supervisory practices. Unfortunately, Bradley and Whiting (2001) asserted that experience does not qualify one as an effective supervisor.

Another issue facing SCSM is the difference between school counseling supervision as compared to post-graduate mental health counseling supervision. To become a professional school counselor, school counseling interns are not required to complete post-degree supervision, whereas mental health counselors seeking licensure must engage in a lengthy supervision process (Borders & Cashwell, 1992). Dollarhide and Miller (2006) stated that because post-degree supervision is not required for school counselors, school counselors may not recognize supervision as “necessary for professional viability” (p. 246). Conversely, in a study by Page et al. (2001), 70% of professional school counselors wished to receive supervision from other professional school counselors who received supervisory training. Page et al. found that 57% of professional school counselors desired to receive clinical supervision (p. 146). Despite literature that suggests that professional school counselors yearn for counseling supervision and training, Dollarhide and Miller (2006) reported that less than 50% of professional school counselors receive post-graduate supervision or supervisory training. Even then, what constitutes supervisory training remains ambiguous.

Texas state requires training for those who play a role in developing the school counseling intern. The Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35(g) and (h) requires that supervision of each candidate shall be conducted with the structured guidance and regular

ongoing support of an experienced educator trained as a field supervisor. Supervision provided on or after September 1, 2017, must be provided by a field supervisor who has completed TEA-approved observation training. (p. 24). The field supervisor training offers standards and specific direction for university field supervisors to support SCSM and school counseling interns seeking certification in their field of study and participating in the state-required practicum experience. The field supervisor training focuses on the structure and practices that help develop school counselors' professional identity, focusing on state certification standards, including what training SCSM needs when supervising a school counseling intern. Some universities provide SCSM with a guide to reference while working with a school counseling intern to meet the state training requirement. One university's Counseling Mentor Handbook (n.d.), the role of the school counseling site mentor is to:

Teach the students about school counseling and the role of school counselors, to model appropriate counseling behaviors, strategies, and counseling techniques, coach the student so their skills can be developed in a supportive environment, and provide opportunities for the school counseling practicum student to reflect on the many aspects of the role of school counselors and the counseling process (p. 7).

Characteristics and Behaviors of Site Mentors

Even though some universities may provide minimal training for SCSM, it does not necessarily mean that the site mentor is defined as good or exceptional. According to Ladbury (2012), effective school counseling mentoring aids in counseling interns' professional counseling growth and development. It also encourages building a united professional alliance for the intern between SCSM and other school staff and establishes and maintains an environment conducive to learning. Ladbury (2012) defined exceptional SCSM as always being conscious of the

counseling skill level of the school counseling intern; assuming the roles of educator, counselor, and consultant throughout the school counseling intern's practicum experience; and continuing to be self-aware and reflective of themselves as a professional school counselor.

Struder (2005) stated that good SCSM understand the importance of changing roles throughout the supervision process. To further understand the changing roles during the supervision process, Furr and Carroll (2003) suggested adopting a three-stage developmental supervision approach that encourages SCSM to evaluate the school counseling intern's cognitive learning and base the supervision approach on the most appropriate supervision counseling theoretical model throughout the practicum experience. Depending on the stage of the supervisee, SCSM characteristics and behaviors must shift.

In the initial stage, Furr and Carroll (2003) suggested SCSM shift between two different roles: teacher and counselor. When acting in the teaching role, SCSM recalls prior teaching experiences and uses those teaching characteristics and behaviors that encourage and aid in the counseling intern's developmental growth. Likewise, when acting as a counselor, SCSM invites the school counseling intern to deliberate on their viewpoints, attitudes, and postulations through different questioning strategies like facilitative questioning (Furr & Carroll, 2003).

Furr and Carroll (2003), in the middle stage, asserted, as the counseling intern learns and applies counseling skills correctly, the site mentor must decide which characteristics and behaviors to display as a teacher or counselor, based on the level of confidence the school counseling intern exhibits (Nelson & Johnson, 1999). In the middle stage, the site mentor must be willing and able to redirect and challenge the school counseling intern's problematic behaviors when appropriate. For example, if a school counseling intern shows frustration in the classroom when delivering a guidance lesson and the participants are not cooperative. The school

counselor site mentor may model specific behaviors and characteristics that may help the school counseling intern learn classroom guidance management techniques. Alternatively, the site mentor may ask the school counseling intern to reflect on the experience and problem.

Furr and Carroll (2003) last stage occurs as the school counseling intern gains more confidence in their counseling skills. As the counseling intern develops independence, the site mentor acts as a consultant. As a consultant, a school counselor site mentor provides more logistical support, offers self-reflection opportunities for the counseling intern to engage in, and assists the school counseling intern in determining what professional development areas need addressing.

Struder (2005) also identified various supervision behaviors that may provide for an effective supervisory experience. Struder (2005) maintained that effectively matching a site mentor with a school counseling intern includes “careful consideration of similar beliefs, willingness and the ability to work with supervisees of varying levels of ability” (p. 354). Jackson et al. (2002) warned how a counselor assimilates into the school system is directed by a school district’s mission statement. Consequently, assimilating may challenge finding a school counseling site mentor who embodies a similar school counseling viewpoint. Struder, like the ACES Best Practices, emphasized the need for a supervision contact that represents a collaborative effort between the site mentor and the school counseling intern. Effective SCSM also displays behaviors guided by how a school counseling program is maintained and delivered. However, finding effective SCSM who display these types of characteristics and behaviors presents a professional challenge. There is a shortage in the literature that clearly identifies the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM.

Summary

An abundance of literature exists that emphasizes the counseling supervision process. However, much of the literature provides effective supervision in clinical counseling, not effective school counseling supervision. For example, ACES provide clinical supervisors with specific recommendations to adhere to during the supervision process. However, such suggestions may not apply to a school counseling supervision process. Many SCSM lack exposure to supervision models during their graduate school studies and may not have received any post-graduate supervision training specifically focused on providing effective supervision to school counseling interns. Furthermore, even if SCSM has received some supervision training through a CACREP accredited program or a professional development opportunity, many supervision models do not readily apply to school counseling supervision.

The literature supports the need for further investigation of the school counseling supervision field. Many authors focus solely on important supervision topics found in clinical counseling, providing specific supervision techniques and current supervisors' training opportunities. There is a literature shortage that focuses on the same supervision techniques and training for school counseling supervision. When reflecting on the responsibilities of SCSM in Texas, prominence is placed on teaching the ASCA National Model and implementing an effective school counseling program based on TEA guidelines. Many school counselors face role confusion and other professional challenges because of their different responsibilities.

Gaining insight into school counseling supervision and the behaviors and characteristics of effective SCSM in the state of Texas could help transform the supervisory experience in school counseling. Due to the absence of literature on the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM, the need for further research is evident. Page et al. (2001) indicated that 70% of school

counselors prefer SCSM with supervision training. Through a closer examination of effective SCSM, the supervision needs of the current SCSM can be achieved through targeted education programming of SCSM.

Gaps exist in the literature on supervision requirements, competencies, and training for SCSM. To date, some degree of empirical research that supports best practices for clinical supervision used in the school counseling setting exists. This study aims to clarify and explore the characteristics and behaviors of effective school counselors in Texas and what processes inform their supervisory practices. The study will help fill the gaps for SCSM and enhance the literature promoting SCSM roles and clarify important attributes in future school counseling supervision teaching models.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the proposed research was to identify and describe school counseling site mentors' effective characteristics and behaviors (SCSM) when working with school counseling interns. I examined SCSM perceptions and how those perceptions inform their supervisory practices throughout eight weeks. I focused this study on SCSM in a school setting because little empirical research focused on on-site mentors' effective characteristics and behaviors (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Borders & Brown, 2011; Kermer et al., 2014). Chapter three contains the following components: (a) research questions, (b) research design, (c) positionality of the researcher, (d) setting, (e) participants, (f) procedures for recruiting participants, (g) data collection, (h) data analysis, (i) trustworthiness, (j) ethical considerations and (k) summary.

Research Questions

I attempted to answer the following questions in this study: (a) how do school counseling site mentors (SCSM) describe the effective characteristics and the behaviors of SCSM in the state of Texas, and (b) what informs school counselors site mentor practices in the state of Texas?

Research Design

I used a qualitative, multiple case study design to answer the research questions. Patton (2015) argued that a qualitative study embodies three basic postulations. First, there is a universal view that seeks to understand a phenomenon as a whole. The second assumption is that qualitative research encourages the researcher to limit presumptions related to the studied phenomenon. My purpose is to identify and highlight patterns and themes as the data are analyzed and critiqued. Third, qualitative research uses a naturalistic inquiry process to

understand the phenomena as it occurs in a real-life context. Merriam (2009) concluded that overall meanings “are constructed as they (the researchers) engage with the world they are interpreting” (p. 23). I applied a real-life view as I sought to discover and understand the phenomenon of a particular supervision process in a natural school setting.

Because of my interest in gaining an in-depth understanding of the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM and what informs their mentoring practices, a qualitative case study was implemented. A case study is an “empirical research method that investigates a certain phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be evident” (Yin, 2018, p. 15). I used a multiple-case study design to strengthen the evidence and make it more persuasive and robust. The study was implemented in two parts: (a) the development of each case study and (b) a cross-case analysis. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) stated, “In essence, we see the primary defining features of a case study as being a multiplicity of perspectives which are rooted in a specific context (or in several specific contexts if the study involves more than one case)” (p. 52). In this study, I strive to capture study participants’ experiences and make sense of a phenomenon of their lived experience while serving as a school counselor site mentor. This qualitative multiple case study focuses on uncovering and interpreting participants’ thinking regarding a common experience, such as providing supervision services. I strive for the final results to improve my understanding of what it is like for Texas school counselors to act as SCSM in a public-school setting. In this study, SCSM reflect on their different experiences and perceptions of the site mentoring experience. Various perspectives and cognitions are captured through two interviews and one observation with each participant.

Researcher Positionality

Lincoln and Guba (2000) stressed the importance of researchers disclosing their positionality to aid in the “process of reflecting critically on the self as a researcher, the human as an instrument” (p. 183). Maxwell (2005) contended that the purpose for exposing the researcher’s positionality is not to limit “variance between researchers in values and expectations they bring to the study, but with understanding how a particular researcher’s values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusion of the study” (p. 108). To acknowledge the researcher’s positionality, I exposed professional highlights, possible biases, and additional factors that may have influenced the study.

I am a certified school counselor in Texas and have worked for nine years as a public high school counselor in several districts serving the North Texas area. Before becoming a high school counselor, I taught high school English for 12 years in various districts across the Dallas-Fort Worth area. I am also a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor in the state of Texas. Additionally, I am a doctoral candidate at Texas Christian University and a member of several professional organizations, including the American Counseling Association (ACA), Texas Counselor Association (TCA), and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA).

I went to graduate school to pursue certification and licensure for counseling beginning in late 2006; however, none of the master’s level coursework included training in counselor supervision. Before completing all graduation requirements on an emergency certification, I was hired as a counselor, which meant that I could work as a school counselor in a public school while completing certification during the first year. I was mentored by a school counselor who had over 30 years of school counseling experience. The school counselor site mentor guided me

on implementing a school counseling program but struggled to guide me in applying counseling theory to practice with students during my first year as a school counselor.

My school supervision consisted only of principal evaluations, which occurred yearly at the end of each academic year. As a school counselor, I was evaluated by five different principals using teacher evaluation tools. Most principals did not have extensive knowledge regarding the comprehensive school counseling model. The administrators were receptive to me educating them on school counselors' roles and responsibilities that TEA and the district outline. However, one principal thought that school counselors had little function in the school system and did not know how to evaluate counselors based on that argument. Interestingly, at that time, two schoolteachers were completing their counseling internships in the counseling office, but I was not their designated site mentor.

As part of my doctoral coursework, I was required to take one supervisory course focused on providing supervision for seeking a master's in counseling. Part of the course requirements was to provide extra supervisory support to master-level counselor interns pursuing a school counseling certification so about six weeks into the semester, I was assigned two school counseling interns to provide supervisory support. Part of what made this supervisory experience beneficial was that I received guidance and instruction on supervisory theory and practice while applying supervisory theory to the master level school counseling interns' practicum experience.

Interestingly, both interns reported vast differences in their supervisory experiences with their respective SCSM. One school counseling intern had a school counselor site mentor who encouraged the school counseling intern to practice personal counseling skills and conduct various counseling groups. Still, the site mentor did not help in finding students who could benefit from such services. The other school counseling intern was assigned more administrative

work duties and had to seek out more direct client/student duties. Neither intern thought that their school counseling site mentor mentored them; instead, they saw their site mentors as someone that just signed off on the required practicum time forms.

The following year, I acted as a school counseling site mentor for two school counseling interns at the public school where I was a school counselor. I received communication from the university supervisor at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. I was responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating the school counselor intern's progress throughout the semester. My experience plays a significant role in the study's assumptions and preconceptions. It is critical to research integrity to openly acknowledge these assumptions and biases and note these biases throughout the different phases, including the data collection analysis processes when bracketing my biases.

Listed below are my identified biases, assumptions, and pre-conceptions of when the study began. I believe that most school counseling intern practicum experiences are lightly structured, leaving the school counselor site mentor to dictate what is taught, modeled, and experienced. This belief comes from my own mentor experience, my own practicum experience, and observing other site mentor practices. It is also my assumption that SCSM implements and follows TEA school counseling program guidelines. I assume that many SCSM, like myself before my doctoral coursework, never received any supervisory training aimed explicitly at guiding school counseling interns. I also assume that many SCSM feel inadequate or reluctant to provide supervision to school counseling interns because of their lack of specific training in supervisory practices.

Setting

The setting of this study took place in various public schools within the North Texas region. Participants worked in a public-school setting either at an elementary, middle, or high school. The study included three elementary schools, one middle school, and three high schools from two North Texas independent school districts. The table below provides the demographics of the schools where each participant works.

Table 1

Participant Setting Information

| Participant | School Level | Counselor-Student Ratio | Summary of Student Demographic |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------------|--|
| Kelly | Elementary | 419-1 | Ethnic Distribution: African American 15.4 % Hispanic 52.7 % White 23.7 % American Indian 0 % Asian 4.2. % Pacific Islander 0 % Two or More Races 4.0 % Economically Disadvantaged 62.6 % English Language Learner 36.5 % At-Risk 53.8 % |
| Mallory | Elementary | 280-1 | African American 39 % Hispanic 12.9 % White 75 % American Indian 0 % Asian 36 % Pacific Islander 0 % Two or More Races 0% Economically Disadvantaged 10.4% English Language Learner 2.1 % At-Risk. 16.1% |

| | | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|-------|--|
| Alice | Elementary | 410-1 | African American 24.6 % Hispanic 23.7 % White 28.8 % American Indian 0 % Asian 17.3 % Pacific Islander 0 % Two or More Races 5.6 % Economically Disadvantaged 61.2 % English Language Learner 33.7 % At-Risk 50.7 % |
| Peter | Middle | 405-1 | African American 4.7 % Hispanic 14.1 % White 70.3 % American Indian 0.04% Asian 6.7 % Pacific Islander 0.4% Two or More Races 3.6 % Economically Disadvantaged 16.2 % English Language Learner 2.3 % At-Risk 30.5 % |
| William | High | 348-1 | African American 3.1 % Hispanic 11.1 % White 78.1% American Indian 0.03% Asian 4.9 % Pacific Islander 0.02% Two or More Races 2. 3% Economically Disadvantaged 5.3 % English Language Learner 1.5 % At-Risk. 17.7 % |
| Nancy | High-Secondary Counselor Support | 284-1 | African American 6.7 % Hispanic 41.6 % White 46.3 % American Indian 0.4 % Asian 2.8 % Pacific Islander 0.1% Two or More Races 1.9 % |

| | | | |
|------|---|-------|--|
| | | | Economically Disadvantaged 32% English Language Learners 6.9% At-Risk 37.6% |
| Kate | High – Alternative Education Setting | 150-1 | African American 22 % Hispanic. 40 % White 30 % American Indian 0 % Asian .10 % Pacific Islander 0 % Two or More Races 0 % Economically Disadvantaged 58 % English Language Learners 0% At-Risk 99.9 % |

Participants

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) highlighted that demographic data is vital in discovering and describing similarities, differences, and individual observations of the study's participants. Thus, asking participants to provide specific demographic data helped me identify the participants' specific characteristics in the study.

The study included seven current professional school counselors certified through the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Criteria for the school counselor site mentor participation were as follows: (a) currently meets counseling certification standards through TEA, (b) works as a K-12 school counselor in a public-school setting in Texas, (c) serves as a school counselor mentor in the current school year, and (d) identified by a university counselor educator or a director of guidance as a school counselor site mentor for the current school year.

Description of Participants

Participants' descriptions were compiled from the information in the participant demographic questionnaire. In this study, there were seven participants, two males, and five females. All participants except for one female identified as white. One participant identified as

Hispanic/Latino. The study participants are introduced to their school-level assignments (elementary, middle, and high school). The following pseudonyms were used for each of the participants to ensure confidentiality. Kelly, Mallory, Alice, Peter, William, Nancy, and Kate kindly agreed to share their experiences acting as a school counseling site mentor. The table below provides a summary of each participants' demographic information.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Information

| <u>Participant</u> | <u>Gender</u> | <u>Ethnicity</u> | <u>Degree</u> | <u>CACREP accredited Program</u> | <u>LPC</u> | <u>Years of Experience Total/School Counselor</u> | <u># of Interns Supervised</u> | <u>Professional Organizations</u> |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------|--|--|------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Kelly | Female | White | B.A. Interdisciplinary Studies Early Childhood/M. Ed in School Counseling | No | No | 21 years/13 years | 1 | None |
| Mallory | Female | Hispanic | B.A in Reading/Elementary Education/M.Ed. in School Counseling | Yes | No | 29 years/20 years | 2 | NEA/LSSSCA/TCA |
| Alice | Female | White | B.A. in Early Childhood Education/M. S in School Counseling | Yes | No | 17 years/9 years | 1 | LSSSCA |
| Peter | Male | White | B.S. in Sports Management/ M.Ed. in School Counseling | No | Yes | 18 years/ 12 years | 12 | ASCA, LSSSCA/TCA |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|--------|-------|--|-----|----|-------------------|---|--------------|
| William | Male | White | B.A. in Psychology/M. S in Counseling Development | Yes | No | 20 years/10 years | 2 | ASCA/LSSSCA |
| Nancy | Female | White | B.A. in Art Education/M. S in School Counseling | No | No | 22 years/8 years | 2 | ASCA, LSSSCA |
| Kate | Female | White | B.A. in Secondary Mathematics/ M. Ed in Counseling | Yes | No | 18 years/14 years | 7 | None |

Individual Descriptions of Participants

Kelly was one of the elementary counselors interviewed for this study. Kelly has worked in a school setting for over 21 years, 13 of which as a school counselor. Kelly's 13 years as a school counselor all took place in the state of Texas. She graduated with a master's degree from a non-CACREP accredited university and has a Texas school counseling certificate but is not a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). Currently, Kelly works in an urban school district in an urban area as an elementary school counselor for kindergarten through fifth grade. She describes her school as extremely diverse. She does not belong to any professional organizations at this time. At the time of the study, Kelly served as a school counseling site mentor for the first time.

The second participant, Mallory, has worked as an elementary school counselor for 20 years in Texas. In total, she has worked in Texas public school settings for a total of 29 years. Mallory has acted as a school counseling site mentor for two years. She is extremely involved in several national and state professional organizations, including the National Education Association, the Lone Star State Counseling Association, and Texas Counseling Association.

Mallory earned a master's degree in Education with an emphasis in Counseling from a CACREP-accredited program. She currently works at an urban elementary school.

Alice was the third elementary school counselor participant. Alice has worked in education for over 17 years. She has been a school counselor for nine of those 17 years. This was Alice's first time acting as a school counseling site mentor. Alice is involved in the Lone Star State Counseling Association (LSSCA). She earned a master's degree in Education with an emphasis on school counseling from a CACREP-accredited university. She currently works in a large urban elementary school that is extremely diverse and serves students from kindergarten to fifth grade.

The fourth participant, Peter, currently works in a large suburban district in the DFW region. He is one of the two male participants in this study. Peter has worked in education for a total of 18 years, 12 years as a school counselor. He is extremely active in national and state counseling professional organizations, including the American School Counselor Association, the Lone Star State Counseling Association, and Texas Counseling Association. Peter has been a school counseling site mentor for seven years and has provided supervision for over ten school counseling interns. He is one of two counselors at his large middle school that serves grades fifth through eighth-grade students. He earned a master's degree in School Counseling from a non-CACREP accredited institution and is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Texas.

William, the fifth participant, and the second male participant are currently high school counselors at a large suburban school. William holds a Master of Science in Counseling and Development from a CACREP-accredited program. William is an active member of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and the Lone Star State School Counseling Association (LSSCA). He is one of eight counselors on his campus, serves as the lead counselor,

and acts as the school counseling site mentor when there is a school counseling intern on campus. He has been in education for over 20 years, ten as a school counselor. William has acted as a school counselor site mentor for two interns.

Nancy, the sixth participant, is a high school counselor and serves as the second counselor support specialist in her district. Her role is unique in that she directly supports all secondary counselors in her district and provides counseling services when needed in a large urban high school. She earned a Master's in Counseling from a non-CACREP accredited university. Nancy has a total of 22 years in education, serving eight years as a school counselor. She is active in national and state professional organizations such as the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and the Lone Star State School Counseling Association (LSSSCA). Nancy has served as a school counseling site mentor for two interns.

Kate, the seventh and last participant in the study, currently serves as a high school counselor at a non-traditional high school in a large urban school district. Kate has 18 years of experience in education, 14 of whom serving as a school counselor. She graduated with a Master of Education in counseling from a CACREP-accredited university. She disclosed that she is not a member of any professional counseling organizations this year but has held memberships to some national organizations in the past. She served as a school counseling site mentor seven times.

Participant Recruitment and Consenting Procedures

Purposeful sampling was used for this study because I used specific selection criteria for participants. Merriam (2009) believed purposeful sampling is based on the desire to find, comprehend, and increase further understanding into a certain experience. I selected participants who could help me learn the most about the particular phenomenon of acting as a school

counselling site mentor. Site mentors who currently serve in a supervisory role have insight into site mentors' characteristics and behaviors and can help provide valuable insight into their practices while offering a detailed description for this study. I identified participants by accessing my contacts of guidance counselor directors and current SCSM in local school districts after gaining approval from the Texas Christian University (TCU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix A & B). I also accessed a list of current SCSM who currently supervise school counseling interns from one local university. Then I formulated a list of potential participants through these two methods and organized and recorded potential participant contact information.

I contacted each participant by phone and email to invite them to participate in the study (see Appendix A). Each participant who expressed interest was sent the study's informed consent form and permission to record to review (see Appendix B & I). The participants then reviewed the informed consent and permission to record (see Appendix B&I), completed the consent and recording document, including a demographic information sheet (see Appendix C), and returned the information to me. I was available for a personal meeting for any participant who has more questions regarding the study.

Interview Question Development

To conduct the interviews, I set forth an interview protocol that included designing questions that directly corresponded to the research questions. In some cases, the interview questions connected with the theoretical framework found in the first chapter. I also consulted with a panel of supervision experts who reviewed and made suggestive edits to the interview questions that included deleting unnecessary questions and minor verbiage changes to the questions for more clarity.

The experts on my research panel included Dr. L. DiAnne Borders, Ph.D., LPC, NCC, ACS, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Dr. Dilani Perera-Diltz Ph.D., LPC-S, LCDC, NCC, MAC, an associate professor at the University of Houston Clear Lake, teach and supervise school counselors. Both teach and supervise school counselors. Dr. Borders is considered a leading expert in counseling supervision and supervisory training. She is also the editor for the journal, *The Clinical Supervisor*, and serves as an influential member of numerous counseling taskforces on supervision, professional standards, and ethics. Dr. Borders has been recognized numerous times for her research and contributions to the topic of counseling supervision. Another expert panel member included Dr. Perera-Diltz who has over 13 years' experience supervising school counselors and researching school counselors and school counseling practices and a Piper Award Finalist for her research contributions in the counseling supervision field. Dissertation members Dr. Michelle Bauml and Dr. Marcella Stark also reviewed the interview protocol and made suggestive edits.

Interview Protocol

To learn about the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM, I conducted two interviews and one observation. Merriam (2009) touted that the primary purpose of using qualitative research interviews is to acquire a distinctive kind of data, such as what someone else is thinking. Interviewing is also vital when behaviors cannot be observed, such as emotions or how others process and interpret the world around them. The interviews in this study followed a phenomenological interview process. Merriam (2009) highlighted that a phenomenological interview strives to unearth the true “essence of an individual’s experience and focuses on the deep, lived meanings that events have for individuals, assuming that these meanings guide actions and interactions” (p. 93). To gain insight into the reality of SCSM, I used a semi-

structured interview to provide a variety of structured and less structured interview questions (see Appendix D). Following a semi-structured interview also allowed interview questions to be used with greater flexibility and keep the interview questions consistent among the study's participants. The following is an outline of the interview questions.

Interview Question Guide

First Interview

1. What made you decide to become a school counseling site mentor?
2. Tell me about your experience as a school counseling intern?
3. Do you use anything you learned from that experience with your school counseling interns?
Explain.
4. In your own words, how do you define an “effective” school counselor site mentor?
5. What are the characteristics necessary for an effective school counselor site mentor?
6. What behaviors are expected from an effective school counselor site mentor?
7. Have you ever received mentoring or supervision training? If so, please briefly describe what type of training you received. What was missing from your training? What new info would you need?
8. What helpful strategies do you use to gain knowledge regarding supervision?
9. When acting in a mentoring role, how do you determine what daily activities the counseling intern will engage in?
10. Please provide an example of your thought process as you decide what tasks you ask your school counseling intern to engage in while providing mentoring services.
11. Please describe one of the best examples of you providing mentoring services to a counseling intern this semester or in previous years.
12. How do you know the mentoring experience is going well?
13. Please describe a time when mentoring an intern was particularly challenging? Explain how you handled that situation.

14. How did you know what to do in this situation?
15. Now consider the opposite. Think about times when working with a school counseling intern who is excelling in the counseling setting. How do you provide feedback for more professional growth?

Second Interview

1. What task did you ask the intern to complete before the feedback/observation session? Why?
2. What informed that decision?
3. What was the outcome of the feedback session?
4. On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with the outcome of the situation? Explain.
5. What would you have changed, if anything?
6. Card sort activity- Consider a difficult feedback session. The student researcher provide potential responses of processes recorded on note cards (e, g., call a friend, consult the ASCA code of ethics). The scenario is described, and then the participant is given choices about which process they would use. Ask about when they would utilize each process. In your opinion, what characteristics do you think you have that show that you are an “effective” school counseling site mentor?
7. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate yourself as a school counseling site mentor? Explain.
8. What would the next number look like?
9. In your opinion, what are the most difficult aspects of acting as a school counseling site mentor?
10. In your opinion, what would make engaging as a school counseling site mentor easier/better?
11. What advice would you give to a new school counseling site mentor?

In addition to the two semi-structured interviews, I conducted one observation. Marshall and Rossman (2014) stated, “Observation is the systematic description of the events, behaviors, and artifacts of a social setting” (p. 79). The observation took place between the first and second interviews. For this study, I observed the school counselor site mentor and the school counseling

intern. I maintained an overt observation stance (Kawulich, 2012) in this study where participants were aware that I was observing them for the sole purpose of answering the research questions.

A rationale for including observation in this study is that observation allows a direct account of what effective characteristics and behaviors SCSM used when working with school counseling interns in the state of Texas. Conducting an observation also permitted me to provide rich, detailed descriptions of the supervision setting that may not be accessible to anyone besides the school counseling site mentor and the school counseling intern.

Data Collection

Face-to-face, individual interviews were scheduled at two and twelve weeks into the fall semester at the participant's convenience. All participants were able to schedule their interviews within one week of initial contact. The interviews took place in the school counselor site mentor's office or another available space in the school building. I used an interview guide that include a broad set of questions (see Appendix D). I used guides to help ensure greater consistency in the questioning lines during each interview, thus allowing myself more freedom to explore particular topics in a natural, conversational manner (Patton, 2015). The interviews ranged range from 25 minutes to 45 minutes in length.

I used a digital recorder to record the interviews during the interview sessions. After the completion of each interview, data were transcribed. Charters (2003) believed that "transcription is a stage where qualitative researchers attempt to show respect for both their participants and their future readers, bearing in mind that the act of transcription is a highly interpretive process" (p. 79). In this study, I viewed the transcription process to solely focus on the school counselor site mentor's personal experiences.

To add to the richness of the data, between the first and second interviews, I conducted a field observation where the school counselor site mentor provided feedback to the school counseling intern. During this segment of the data collection process, I sat quietly and took detailed field notes (Merriam, 2009). I was interested in observing how the school counselor site mentor provided feedback to the counseling intern. I wanted to observe what role the school counselor site mentor took during the feedback process.

After each participant-researcher interview, I conducted an interview check with each participant, the school counselor site mentor. I performed the first check of the data as part of the second interview. After the second interview, I sent a copy of the transcribed interviews to each participant for review. I also invited participants to participate in a follow-up phone call or personal meeting to discuss the transcript changes after the second interview. Only one participant had some changes after the member check regarding the grammar of the second interview. However, no additional comments or deletions were deemed necessary. After the study, I emailed the study findings to each participant. I ensured each participant's anonymity and confidentiality by securing all participants' contact information, audiotape files, transcriptions, and coding analysis throughout the research process.

Data Analysis

Merriam (2009) stated, "The process of data collection and data analysis is recursive and dynamic" (p. 169). I collected each piece of data and continuously analyzed the data from the beginning of the study until the completion. Marshall and Rossman (2006) touted that the seven stages of the data analysis process include: organizing the data, immersion in the data, coding, developing themes and categories, interpretation of the data, searching for varying meaning and understandings from the data collected, and writing the final report. I followed these steps to

ensure the most accurate results. I used Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2020) guide to cross-case analysis. Miles et al. (2020) proposed three major phases of data analysis: data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification.

Data reduction refers to how a large amount of data are to be organized, focused, simplified, and transformed so that the data can be understood. After the first interview took place, I listened to and transcribed each participant's interview. When listening, transcribing, and reading the notes from the first interview, I noted other questions that emerged and added them to the second interview to elaborate or clarify the data. For example, when conducting the first interview, I may not have always asked the best follow-up question to elicit additional data from the participant. Through this process, I took note of this and adjusted or added questions to the second interview to help address the overall perceptions and informed practices of SCSM.

After completing each participant interview, I transcribed each interview, fully immersing myself in the raw data. During this time, I began to write down big ideas or themes that started to emerge through a with-in case analysis of each participant's interview. I used two different coding methods, values coding and in vivo coding, for data analysis. Values coding aims to show a "participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 67). Miles et al. (2020) continue to explain that values coding is also suitable for studies that investigate "intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions in case studies" (p. 67). The second coding method used, in vivo coding, contains words or short phrases from the participant's verbiage in the data codes. In vivo coding strives to "prioritize and honor the participant's voice" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 68).

In the beginning, I read through each of the interviews and made notes in the margins based on values coding. I used values coding because I wanted my study to reflect a school

counseling site mentor's values, attitude, and beliefs regarding their perspective of acting as a current school counseling site mentor. After finishing the transcript reading, I reviewed all the notes and formulated a list of all the themes and key points that emerged during the initial reading. I then set the transcripts aside and re-read the transcripts and used in vivo coding for further analysis and noted any other key points or themes that emerged. I used in vivo coding to help capture current SCSM perspectives and help preserve participants' meanings of their views and actions of providing supervision to school counseling interns. The second round of coding resulted in confirming the themes from the first round of coding but also resulted in several new emerging themes. I also reflected on new personal thoughts that surface during this time.

After completing the coding, I used a cross-case analysis method (Miles et al., 2020) to compare common codes and themes. I took these common codes and themes and categorized the information. Each theme represented was assigned a color. I then reviewed each transcription again and highlighted the themes in the corresponding color. When the data was thoroughly analyzed, I conducted a member check (Merriam, 2009). During the check, the participant checked data, the emerging themes, and how the themes related to the study's research questions. If a participant disagreed with the findings, their feedback was noted in the results. Some participants required more explanation regarding the counseling supervision process because that was not their area of expertise. Other participants desired to know more about how I addressed data analysis procedures and trustworthiness in the study. Chapter Four contains the findings of this study.

The exemplary display is the next step of Miles et al.'s (2020) qualitative data analysis. The data display provided a structured compilation of data that allows conclusions to be drawn.

After the major themes emerged, I highlighted the themes and displayed them in a matrix that help better show the effective behaviors, characteristics, and processes of SCSM.

Conclusion drawing and verification is identified as the last step in Miles et al. (2020) cross-case analysis. In the conclusion and verification drawing stage, I stepped back and looked at what the analyzed data meant and attempted to evaluate how data answers the research questions proposed. I revisited the data frequently to cross-check the emerging themes. Through this process, I provided an explanation and an interpretation of the study's findings.

Trustworthiness

Because qualitative research cannot fully represent an unbiased truth, there are various approaches the qualitative researcher can utilize to increase the credibility of the study's findings. Merriam (2009) proposed that:

because human beings are the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research, interpretations of reality are accessible directly through their observations and interviews" and that the researcher is to present the findings as "a holistic interpretation of what is happening in the participant's world. (p. 216)

Some ways to increase the overall integrity of a qualitative study and ensure trustworthiness is triangulation, member checks, performing an audit trail, making sure data are rich and contains thick descriptions and maximum variation (Merriam, 2009). In the next section, I outline the different methods used in the study to ensure the study's trustworthiness. I hoped that the methods used lent to the credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability of this study.

Credibility

In a qualitative study, the researcher must address creditability issues by asking if the study makes sense or paints an accurate picture of the study findings. Merriam (2009) stressed the most effective way to tell if a study is credible is if the participants' perceptions of their lived experiences accurately reflect the researcher's portrayal of them. A credible study takes place when the researcher spends extended periods with the participants by observing them in their natural settings or through the use of member checks, participants' checks, or co-analysis (Morrow, 2005).

Triangulation methods were utilized to add to the verification and validation of the data analysis. I used data triangulation to gather the participants' perspectives through the interview process at three different times, twice during the two, semi-structured interviews and once during the observation portion. Patton (2015) encouraged researchers to "check for the consistency of what people say about the same thing over time;" thus, I encouraged the participants to cross-check the data as a way of allowing the participants to review the transcribed interview responses and providing the participants an opportunity to review the transcripts (p. 195). According to Merriam (2009), researchers must continuously engage with the participants during the data collection phase to help data reach saturation. In this study, saturation took place as the responses from all the interview questions began to be answered in the same manner throughout the two interviews. The study findings were also clear, coherent, and systematically related, supporting research credibility (Miles et al., 2020).

Participant checks were also used to help strengthen the study's credibility. Participant checks, according to Maxwell (2005), are:

the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on and being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstanding of what you observed. (p. 111)

After each interview, I transcribed each participant's interview response. Between the first and second interviews, I provided the fully transcribed portion of their interview. The participant reviewed the transcribed interview before the second interview. As part of the second interview, I set aside time for the participant to make comments or amend their responses to the interview questions. This procedure was repeated following the conclusion of the second interview. However, I asked the participants to either set up a follow-up meeting to review the interview transcript or respond by email. During this time, the participants clarified any misunderstandings or misinterpretations. When the study was complete and ready for publication, I emailed a copy of the entire study to each of the participants for their files.

Due to the large data set, I used peer debriefing to help increase reliability in the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that a peer debriefer is an individual who keeps the researcher "honest," who asks the researcher challenging questions about various parts of the research study (e.g., procedures, interpretations), and who provides the researcher with the opportunity for catharsis by identifying with the researcher's feelings. For this study, I had two people act as peer debriefers.

Dr. Olivia Wedel and I met monthly throughout the data collection process to discuss the collected data's initial reactions. When the data were thoroughly analyzed, I met with Dr. Wedel for a final time and concurred about the final themes found in the data. The third reader, Dr.

Marcella Stark, met with me at least once a month throughout the length of the study and was debriefed about the data and analysis process.

Dependability

Dependability in a qualitative study addresses the quality and integrity issues found in research. Gasson (2004) encouraged data to be collected across a period, researchers, and data analysis. Furthermore, the way the study's findings are derived should be precise, and the results should be replicable. It is suggested that the researcher in a qualitative study use an audit trail to carefully track the research design, the process of the research, influences on data collection, how the data was analyzed, emerging themes, categories, and other memos made by the researcher. To increase the dependability and credibility of the study, I kept a detailed audit trail throughout the study length.

Transferability

Merriam (2009) identified transferability as "the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations" (p. 223). For transferability to occur, like external validity in quantitative studies, the researcher must provide data reflecting the study participants' characteristics, settings, methodology, and the association between the research and the participants to ascertain how the conclusions could transfer. For the reader to make that decision, I reported the overall results in thick and rich descriptions and included important context and background information. For example, I used participant quotations cited in each of the interviews and the participant's viewpoint and demographic information gathered at the beginning of the study to support each major theme. Another way transferability occurred was that the study examines any limits on the participant selection and crucially studies its ability to generalize to other school counseling settings and contexts.

Ethical Considerations

In this study there are several ethical considerations essential to consider. This research project was approved by the Texas Christian University Human Subject Institutional Review Board (TCUHSIRB). I also obtained informed consent from each participant and each school counseling intern (see Appendices B & H) who took part in the study. The informed consent verified that participants understand the time frame of the study, the details of their commitment, acknowledge possible risks involved in participating, that all materials and data collected will be held in strict confidence, and that participant identity will be protected. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym and a number to ensure confidentiality. Only I was privy to the participants' real names and identities. All data collected were stored in a locked filing cabinet during the duration of the study. Finally, participants understood that they could withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or penalty.

To my knowledge, there were minimal risks or discomforts involved by participating in this research project except for the time lost due to participation. There may be several benefits to participating in the study. By participating in the study, the site mentor may better recognize their expertise and increase their self-efficacy as a school counseling mentor. The school counseling profession could benefit from the research because the results may help school counseling programs identify the effective characteristics and behaviors of school site mentors in a public-school setting in Texas. This research may also help school counseling programs recognize how SCSM inform their practices when providing supervising services to school counseling interns. Participants may enjoy contributing to school counseling mentoring's professional standards and participating in this study to be rewarding because it may increase their own professional identity and autonomy.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the methodology and design of the study. The purpose of this qualitative study was to find how SCSM describes the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM and what informs their practices when providing supervisory services. I developed a semi-structured interview protocol and observed the site mentor giving feedback to a counseling intern, which allowed for rich and thick data to be obtained. Using purposeful sampling, the participants were recruited from north Texas graduate school programs or directors of guidance in the public school system. Cross-case qualitative data analysis was used to analyze the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to explore current school counseling site mentors' (SCSM) perceptions of effective characteristics and behaviors displayed while providing supervision services to school counseling interns. Another purpose was to help understand what informs SCSM supervision practices. This chapter presents my findings. After conducting two in-depth interviews and one observation with seven participants using a case study approach, I used values and in vivo coding to analyze each case study's data. I listed the emerging themes found in each case study. Five major themes emerged to answer the first research question, and five themes were found from the second research question. I then used cross-case analysis to compare each code and theme. I begin this chapter by addressing my research questions using the results of the cross-case thematic analysis. I conclude the chapter by giving other overarching themes that emerged from the data.

Question 1

How do SCSM describe the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM in the state of Texas?

The study participants noted a variety of effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM in the state of Texas. The seven participants' different responses, based primarily on the first interview, observation, and the beginning part of the second interview, led to five emerging themes. The themes, in no particular order of importance, are addressed individually throughout this section. The overall arching themes in answering the first research question include *feedback, leadership qualities, reflective practices, relationship, and teaching*. The following table gives an example of each theme and corresponding codes from Question 1.

Table 3*Example of Each Theme and Corresponding Codes*

| Question 1- Major Theme with codes | Example of theme |
|--|---|
| Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct • Indirect • Formal • Informal • Constructive • Negative/bad • Constant/Frequent/Immediate • Positive/Encouraging/Motivating • Helpful • Appropriate | <p>“I think it’s also important to be able to give feedback to the person and to feel free to say.”, ‘That’s not going so well; you need to work on that.’”- Mallory</p> |
| Leadership Qualities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence • Availability/Accessibility • Flexibility • Professionalism • Consulting • Goal-oriented • Sensitive • Culturally Sensitive | <p>“And so, I thought if they recognized me as a leader to ask me to mentor them, then it’s just right that I share my knowledge with them. I also recognized that after coming to this campus that we needed more help, and I asked how we could get more support.” - Kate</p> |
| Reflective Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrapersonal communication • Self-Reflection • Reflection • Ethical | <p>“I ask myself in a self-reflective way, ‘What is it that I need to get done in my role and how can my school counseling intern learn. And then identify are these the things that I need to get done. How can she help me with that?’ - Kate</p> |
| Relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal • Rapport • Collaboration • Curious • Talking • Building relationships • Understanding | <p>“I think an effective site mentor, first of all, has to be in tune with your intern. You find out what they’ve already learned, what they’re good at by discussing and working together.”- Mallory</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| Teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching • Modeling • Coaching • Showing • Telling | “I might have to teach the intern how to use appropriate grade language in elementary school if the intern doesn’t have elementary school experience.” -Alice |
|---|---|

Feedback

When asked about what effective characteristics and behaviors SCSM embody, all seven participants identified giving some sort of feedback as an effective behavior of SCSM. The first major theme of feedback was the school counseling intern’s reaction to a counseling task and plan to develop specific school counseling skills. Participants responded to one question regarding how they give feedback to an excelling school counseling intern during the practicum experience. Specific codes such as feedback, positive feedback, constructive feedback, constructive criticism, negative feedback, informal, formal, evaluation, and assessment were assigned to the overarching theme of feedback. These codes dealt with the various ways the study participants gave feedback to their school counseling interns.

Part of the feedback theme included the various types of comments SCSM used to deliver criticism. All participants indicated that they met at least once a week with the school counseling intern to provide feedback. During this time, SCSM gave either formal feedback, as required by the school counseling intern’s university program, or gave informal feedback about the specific counseling tasks the intern was assigned. Throughout the study, all SCSM participants indicated that informal feedback was an effective characteristic of site mentors. All seven participants also said they frequently used informal feedback when working with school counseling interns and noted that giving immediate feedback to the school counseling intern was an extremely important part of giving feedback. All seven participants gave examples of how they used informal feedback with a school counseling intern. When observing the feedback session, most

participants used encouraging words and complimented the intern on the completed task. For example, Kelly's intern was asked to lead a girls' small group. The intern had made a Jeopardy-type game that was extremely engaging to the group. When Kelly and the school counseling intern met immediately following the small group, Kelly made it a point to directly compliment her intern by saying, "You did a good job. The lesson was perfect." During the observation portion, all SCSM gave some informal and direct feedback verifying the importance each placed on this effective supervisory behavior.

Whereas all participants stressed the importance of providing feedback, each participant had his or her way of providing feedback to the school counseling interns. For example, Mallory indicated that she has her approach to how she delivers informal feedback. Mallory first informally assesses the school counseling intern's developmental level and then delivers feedback on the counseling intern's needs. She says:

Early in the practicum experience, I usually give immediate feedback once an intern completes a task; however, as the intern develops his or her counseling skills, I wait to deliver feedback based on how they assessed themselves in that task.

Kate follows a similar feedback structure with her counseling interns. Kate believes that providing informal feedback gives her intern a chance to reflect on how he or she did with that specific task or counseling skill but allows Kate to verbalize how she feels the intern performed as a whole. Kate thought it was important to praise her intern for a "fantastic job and to help the intern process what they would do differently in the future."

In contrast, one of the participants gave insight into how he approaches feedback in two parts. In the first part, William described how his informal feedback sessions are quickly delivered after the school counseling intern completed a counseling task. For example, suppose

the school counseling intern was working directly with a student. In that case, William “could hang out and kind of be a fly on the wall and deliver constructive feedback directly on a counseling technique or strategy.” William highlighted that he liked to give positive feedback during this time so that the intern is more likely to repeat certain counseling skills. William may say, “I thought it was really cool when you did that, and I appreciated what you did with that student.”

However, the second part of William’s feedback method included “assessing, evaluating, and introducing data-driven decision-making and to make sure that we’re doing is purposeful and it fits with what our needs are.” William relies on more formal data to help him deliver feedback to help steer the counseling intern to more meaningful tasks. When observing William giving feedback, this two-part feedback process was evident. In the beginning, William delivered positive feedback such as “I appreciate your hard work,” but then his feedback became more direct. For example, his school counseling intern was simultaneously completing two practicums and needed to stay on a strict schedule to complete the practicum requirements. William asked the counseling intern about a specific task, and the intern did not have any new information to share; he said directly, “It’s been five days with no response, so it’s time to follow up.” During the observation, he also added that he was making decisions based on the counseling intern’s needs and the counseling staff and students. For example, he was conscious of delicately balancing the school counseling intern’s professional needs and his school campus’ needs. William stated that it was comfortable for him to break feedback down into two parts, providing direct and indirect feedback, so that he could be, in his mind, as effective as possible.

Another effective feedback characteristic identified by the participants was in how the SCSM approached giving constructive feedback. Many of the participants had their ideas about

how to give constructive feedback effectively. Some participants voiced that it was an important characteristic of SCSM to be comfortable with giving a blend of positive and constructive feedback during the practicum experience. Alice, Peter, Nancy, and Mallory discussed how giving constructive criticism is an effective characteristic while providing supervision. Alice emphasized that while she felt “comfortable with providing feedback, she does not like to give bad feedback.” Alice stated, “I don’t like to hurt people’s feelings...but we all have places that we can grow, and so I say more of, well maybe next time you can try this approach.” Alice stated that she encourages the school counseling intern to think of other possible ways to approach a problem. By asking the intern to think about another possible solution, she provides the critical feedback one needs to grow professionally. Another participant, Peter, mentioned that the approach that he found most effective when dealing with constructive criticism was to adopt a “growth mindset.” Peter continued saying, “I like to stay positive because I want my intern to feel successful and that they are in a steady incline.” But he added that when providing negative feedback, it “shuts down the brain” and does not feel that those responses are helpful or effective in providing mentoring services.

Nancy thought that giving positive feedback is important, giving direct and honest feedback. For example, Nancy “values being direct and honest with people. I’m non-confrontational at work, but I’m comfortable with having those conversations. I can provide feedback in a way that isn’t mean.” Mallory also said something similar, saying, “I think it’s important to be able to tell the person that’s working with you what areas they need to work on; that’s a huge piece.” Kelly emphasized the importance of giving more effective feedback than just saying “good job” because that does not necessarily encourage professional growth. Hence, she likes to ask them what they would do differently next time, even if they completed the task.

Leadership Qualities

Another theme that emerged from the participants' responses was leadership. There were not any direct questions in the interview protocol asking specifically about leadership. Still, five out of seven participants indicated that an effective characteristic of SCSM lies in one's ability to guide a school counseling intern through the practicum. Participants also demonstrated leadership in their ability to lead an intern through the observation portion's supervision process. The participants' responses varied, but the theme of leadership was derived from codes including displaying confidence, being available and accessible to the school counseling intern, demonstrating flexibility, and demonstrating professionalism.

Confidence

In this study, confidence was a major contributor to one's ability to lead a person or a group of people. I defined confidence as to how the school counseling site mentor viewed his or her ability to perform as a school counseling supervisor. Specific participant responses such as confidence, self-confidence, assurance, and certainty were assigned to the confidence code. When the participants were asked on a scale of one to ten how confident they regarded their ability to perform as a school counseling site mentor, all ranked themselves at a seven or higher, except for one who ranked herself as a two. Kate, who ranked herself as an eight out of 10, replied that she thinks that she is good at teaching the technical tasks of school counseling, such as analyzing student transcripts and explaining the differences among various high school graduation endorsements in the state of Texas. Another participant, Mallory, who ranked herself as an eight, assertively said that "I'm not perfect, but I think I am pretty good" and concluded that she feels this way because of her past work with other school counseling interns. She added that acting as a mentor brings a different element to the professional counseling role in that she

sees herself as a mentor and a teacher at the same time. When asked to further elaborate, she went on to say that “you must feel good about knowing your role as a counselor and how to provide emotional support to an intern, as well as knowing how to teach them the ethical guidelines and professional skills of the counseling profession.” Alice ranked her mentoring confidence at a seven because she “is always looking for ways to be better.”

Interestingly, Alice said she was confident acting as a school counselor. Still, when it came to mentoring her school counseling intern, she had difficulty being an observer and not an active participant. She elaborated that while she trusts herself to complete a task, she needed to practice letting go and “not always being a part of a session and sitting over there and giving her intern more control.” Despite this concern, Alice did not think that she displayed a lack of confidence in her school setting; instead, she sees saw it as something she could practice and work on with future school interns.

When observing the SCSM and the school counseling intern, it was noticeable whether the participant behaved confidently in supervising the school counseling intern. For example, Peter engaged with his school counseling intern and asked for feedback regarding how the school counseling experience was going for her and what else he could do to deepen the practicum experience. He also discussed with his school counseling intern how his 19 years of educational experience helped him become more confident in dealing with challenging counseling experiences. Peter further elaborated that working as a school counselor is “second nature and that [he] feels good about [his] ability to provide a system of checks and balances” when undertaking various counseling roles. During Nancy’s observation portion of the study, she displayed confidence when the school counseling intern asked how a school counseling program is designed. Nancy, who was extremely active in the state of Texas’ branch of the American

School Counseling Association (ASCA), discussed with assurance the ASCA model and briefly explained each component and how her district implements the ASCA model into the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) four counseling pillars. Nancy did not hesitate to explain and even seemed to enjoy showing the school counseling intern the different ASCA model and the TEA.

Availability/Accessibility

The participants also viewed availability and accessibility as important components of the leadership characteristic when acting as a school counseling site mentor. Most of the participants mentioned that being present and for their school counseling intern was vital in acting as supervisors and leaders. Specific references that contributed to the availability and accessibility code included "available", "accessible", "being there", "present", "at the moment", "open door", and "immediate".

For example, Alice said that she strives to be there for her school counseling intern. She noted that being a school counseling intern was a difficult task, and "nobody is there to tell if you if you are doing it right, so being available is probably the biggest effective trait." Alice felt that it demonstrated to the school counseling intern a willingness to help or guide if you made yourself available. She continued by saying that it is her job as a school counseling site mentor to answer questions and guide them as much as possible, so she views availability as a critical leadership characteristic.

William also sees being available to his intern as indicative of leadership. However, William viewed leadership in this capacity as taking on a consulting role with his school counseling intern. He indicated that it was important for the intern to have someone to bounce ideas off of frequently. William thought that acting as an active sounding board for his school counseling intern was vital. He elaborated that school counseling interns are always thinking

about concepts, topics, and situations where they have little to no experience dealing with and need immediate guidance. William summarized his thoughts on the importance of being available to his school counseling intern by saying:

So just making sure that you have a consultation base--someone to reach out to and say this is what's going on, here is what I'm thinking about trying, what would you do, and that sort of piece, this was very valuable to me. And so, I think making sure that I'm available to my interns when I have them navigate those waters.

Kate stressed the importance of being accessible by emphasizing that you must teach the school counseling intern how to deal with difficult counseling scenarios. For Kate, being accessible was part of taking on a leadership role during supervision. She felt a leader must exhibit a strong counseling skill set and teach the school counseling intern successfully. For example, when dealing with a sensitive topic, Kate tried to allow the school counseling intern to observe and watch how she handled the situation first, which meant the school counseling intern must have immediate access to the school counseling site mentor. Kate highlighted that she wanted her school counseling intern to hear and see what she does with sensitive scenarios first so that the school counseling intern can better grasp what skills are needed in those types of circumstances. Kate thought being accessible allowed the intern to safely learn the counselor's role, rather than the school counseling intern guessing what to do in certain situations.

Flexibility

Some participants noted that part of being a leader required them to be flexible while providing supervision. Most of the participants were respectful of the school counseling intern's university program requirements and the school counseling intern's schedule. For example, one participant noted that he must sometimes adjust his supervision plan based on the school

counseling intern's specific needs. In the past, Peter noted that he had supervised many school counseling interns who had a career goal of working in higher education rather than becoming a school counselor. In these cases, Peter tried to mesh the school counseling interns' interests to activities or duties similar to higher education activities. He said, "I have a higher-ed experience at working with degree plans and that kind of stuff and then part-time job at a local college I was like [an] on-call counselor and advisor. So, then I'm giving her bits and pieces from all different angles." According to Peter, he feels like providing a meaningful intern experience was more important than just "checking off the boxes" of supervision. Peter continued saying, "I do have the experience to say hey, if middle school or this age group is not your deal, this is what's it's going to look like when you get to higher ed, and this is the things you'll be doing there." According to Peter, this flexibility helped persuade several of his past school counseling interns to become school counselors instead of continuing higher education.

Another way the participants indicated that SCSM must be flexible is in their cultural sensitivity. Two of the seven participants were supervising school counseling interns who were of Hispanic or Asian descent. Mallory, who supervised a school counseling intern who identified as Asian, tried to be respectful and understand her school counseling intern working with a student experiencing grief after a family member died. According to Mallory, the school counseling intern struggled to work with the student due to her cultural values related to grief. Mallory found that she needed to step back and listen to her school counseling intern's concerns about providing grief counseling for students with different cultural beliefs. Mallory admitted that attending to her school counseling intern's cultural needs created certain challenges but trying to be culturally sensitive was an important leadership attribute. Peter concluded, saying, "You have to be open to understand the intern's background and knowledge of where they're

coming from” when dealing with a variety of cultural influences as a school counseling site mentor.

Professionalism

When asked about what effective characteristics and behaviors an SCSM possessed, many of the participants discussed professionalism. To some participants, having a good working knowledge and understanding of the counseling profession was important when providing supervision but acting or serving in a leadership role was an effective characteristic when providing supervision. Even though they did not directly say that their professionalism was an effective characteristic, they indicated that receiving supervision from someone who had strong professionalism skills was important. Four of the participants held leadership roles in their respective school districts. For instance, two participants acted as the lead counselor at their school. One participant served as the Director of Secondary Counselors in her district. Also, most of the participants indicated that they took an active role in Texas school counseling associations and attempt to keep abreast of the most current school counseling professional development opportunities. One of the participants was a Licensed Professional Counselor, licensure requiring more direct client contact hours and professional development than a school counselor credential. Professional leadership was a characteristic that all participants recognized and felt was important in displaying in a supervisory role.

Reflective Practices

Another effective characteristic of SCSM, according to the participants, was the importance of reflective practices. Codes that made up the over-arching theme of reflective practices included “intrapersonal communication”, “self-reflection”, “reflections”, and “ethics”. The participants identified self-reflective practices or intra-personal practices as effective

characteristics. However, not all participants viewed intra-personal practices in the same manner. According to Kate, she spent time highlighting that self-reflection was important to her to provide a positive practicum experience for her school counseling intern. To do so, she shared, “that’s something that I struggle with is just getting the time for me to go back and sit down and process, because it’s so fast-paced and coming and going all the time.” A reason for taking the time to be self-reflective was so that she can give constructive feedback.

Additionally, taking the time for self-reflection allows Kate to determine what type of tasks she might assign her school counseling intern. She said she first identified her role as a school counselor and the task that she must complete, but she reflected on how her school counseling intern could best help her complete those tasks. Kate continued to say it was this type of self-reflection that helped her feel more confident in providing supervision.

William also noted that self-reflection was important during the supervision process. William described it as making sure “reflection pieces” are part of a school counselor’s daily thinking. He stressed that it was important for school counselors to always ask themselves about “why” they are completing a task. He continued saying that if the “why” matches the need of the school or duty of the profession, you are doing a good job as a school counseling site mentor.

Mallory self-reflects differently from Kate and William. Mallory used self-reflection as part of her ethical responsibility in providing supervision. For example, when given a hypothetical supervision situation, Mallory stated that she felt it was necessary to gather all sides of the story and then go back and “ethically self-reflect” and see if the situation warranted a certain course of action. She said she used the ethical counseling codes as the basis for self-reflection. Regardless of how the participants used self-reflection, some participants felt that using personal reflection was an effective characteristic of SCSM.

Relationship

Even though inter-personal reflection was identified as an effective behavior, all participants indicated developing a relationship with the school counseling intern that was the most effective characteristic as an SCSM. These responses came from the interview protocol question that directly asked the participants to identify any effective characteristics or behaviors of SCSM. Additionally, participants demonstrated building relationships by asking the school counseling intern curiosity questions during the observation portion of the study. The participants' specific responses varied, but the theme of relationships developed from codes including "interpersonal communication", "rapport", "collaboration", "curiosity", "talking", "building relationships", and "understanding".

All participants indicated that building a good relationship was a highly effective characteristic and behavior of SCSM. Kate mentioned, "Building rapport and building relationship is the number one thing." She continued to discuss how developing a rapport with her school counseling intern was important so that she could trust her intern to complete the certain tasks she was assigned when Kate was out of the building for the day. To build that trust, Kate elaborated that you must be willing to get to know the counseling intern so that you can work together through the practicum experience. Another participant, Peter, worked on building rapport even before the school intern began the practicum experience with him. He said he interviewed each potential school counseling intern to see if the intern would "be a right fit or wrong fit," He felt it was important to begin building rapport with the school counseling intern before he or she reported to his campus. After the school counseling intern had begun the practicum experience, he "tries to stress building relationships, building rapport, and breaking down those walls" as the most important trait in developing a good supervision experience. He

continued emphasizing that building rapport is the single most important characteristic of any good counseling supervisory relationship.

Mallory also discussed rapport as an effective characteristic of SCSM. She said she takes the time to build rapport with her school counseling interns and considered it the “baseline for everything.” To build rapport with her school counseling intern, she took a curiosity approach by asking open-ended questions until she found a connection. Mallory emphasized that SCSM must be “in tune” with your school counseling intern to provide a positive supervision experience.

Nancy also discussed the importance of having good communication and rapport with her school counseling intern. Not only did she try to get to know her intern, but she also looks for rapport by taking note of the school counseling intern’s actions. She said she knew she was building good rapport when the school counseling intern came to her as a school counseling site mentor and asked questions. She indicated that when school counseling interns ask questions, “that means that they feel comfortable with you as a site mentor and see you as willing to answer their questions.” Nancy took this behavior as evidence that the supervision experience is going well overall and that you had a good rapport with your intern. During observation of Nancy working with her school counseling intern, the intern actively engaged with Nancy, asking her multiple questions regarding a counseling skill. Nancy was relaxed, open, and thorough when working one-on-one with her school counseling intern.

Another component of the relationship theme included the importance of working collaboratively with school counseling interns. Collaborating with the school counseling intern was an important characteristic because it allowed the participants and the school counseling intern to work together on important counseling projects and at the same time develop rapport. It also provided an opportunity for the participant to guide and teach the school counseling intern.

For example, Kelly described a time where she felt like she used collaboration with her school counselor that she found effective. Kelly's school counseling intern was given the task of developing small groups at her elementary school. When first discussing the task, the intern had too many ideas regarding how to put together groups. Kelly then suggested, "a primary and intermediate lesson. And then the school counseling intern told me that she was going to conduct the group a certain way." Kelly continued listening to her school counseling intern's ideas but then redirected her when appropriate. Kelly reinforced the fact that she felt like it was important that she and the intern work collaboratively "so she knew what she needed to do and then I could help facilitate those ideas" but thought it was also important to allow her school counseling intern the freedom to develop the groups given certain parameters.

Alice believed that working collaboratively provided a time for her to be creative with her school counseling intern. She said, "spending time encouraging them and providing that kind of wealth of information and giving them the resources but also having them be creative and giving them that opportunity to be creative with you" was an important part of the practicum experience. She found that working together with her school counseling intern was exciting and fun and greatly enhanced the supervision experience. Alice reiterated that she felt like it was important to validate the school counseling ideas regarding how to develop small groups but then spent time readdressing any issues that might appear, such as using appropriate vocabulary depending on the age and grade level of students.

William provided his perspective on why collaboration was an effective characteristic. William worked with eight other counselors on his campus, providing him many opportunities to collaborate. He believed that consulting and collaborating with other school staff members enhanced his work as a counselor and helped support a strong counseling program at his school.

William said, “we use the resources that are available around us and consulting in collaboration. I love collaborating, and so whether it’s the district counsel coordinator, the university, or our counseling staff here, it’s about collaboration.” His passion for collaborating was seen during the observation portion of the study. William’s school counseling intern was on a strict timeline to complete her practicum experience, and with the added requirements came certain challenges. William admitted that sometimes they needed to collaborate with the other support personnel and counselors to meet the supervision criteria. William suggested to his school counseling intern that she reach out to some additional support personnel on campus and in the district to help her complete her strict practicum requirements.

Teaching

The last theme of teaching derived from the participant responses to the first research question. Participants described teaching as one’s ability to show or explain how to do something to someone and cause someone to understand by providing an example of an experience. Two participants specifically responded that teaching was an effective characteristic of SCSM. Specific codes such as “teaching”, “modeling”, “coaching”, “sharing”, and “telling” were the responses assigned to the central theme of teaching.

Kate provided her perspective as to why she views teaching as an effective characteristic of SCSM. Kate emphasized that so much of the role you play as a school counseling site mentor depends on teaching. She uses her skills as a former teacher to guide her school counseling intern through the practicum experience. Kate said, “I mean, strategies for being a teacher - modeling, showing, telling, relationship... I want to train her to learn” was a vital part of this process. Without the learning taking place, Kate found it difficult to believe that the supervision process was helpful. Kate further elaborated, saying that “it is these specific strategies and techniques,

building relationship, modeling, showing, teaching, giving her practice. I guess those are unofficial terms for how to be a good teacher or to be a good mentor.”

Peter also views teaching as an effective characteristic of SCSM. However, Peter’s perspective takes the fundamentals of teaching (modeling, etc...) and adds a coaching element that he finds helpful. Peter highlighted that some school counseling interns come in with little educational knowledge, and he thinks it is important to teach them those fundamentals. Those fundamentals might include teaching them “what a 504 is, what RTI, monitoring academic progress that kind of stuff and just the school culture and problems that come about during with students.” According to Peter, this process takes time and means providing experiences and teachable moments where the school counseling intern can watch and learn. Peter’s coaching model comes into play during this learning time by encouraging during these learning moments.

Question 1 Cross-Case Analysis

As referenced in Chapter 3, I used Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña’s (2020) recommendations for qualitative data analysis to guide the cross-case analysis and answer the first research question: How does SCSM describe the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM in the state of Texas? As a result, five major themes emerged. The following table gives a visual display of the cross-case analysis of the data.

Table 4

Visual Display of the Cross-Case Analysis of the Data

| | <i>Theme #1</i> | <i>Theme #2</i> | <i>Theme #3</i> | <i>Theme #4</i> | <i>Theme #5</i> |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Participant | Feedback | Leadership | Reflective Practices | Relationship | Teaching |
| Kelly | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | Direct Informal | Confidence Availability | | Interpersonal Rapport | |

| | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|--|---|---------------------------------|
| | Positive Helpful Appropriate | Flexible | | Collaboration | |
| <i>Observed</i> | Informal Positive Appropriate | Availability Flexible | | Interpersonal Talking Collaborative | Teaching Telling |
| Mallory | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | Frequent Direct Informal Constructive Encouraging Appropriate Helpful Negative | Confidence Consulting Sensitivity Culturally Sensitive Available | Intra-personal Communication Reflection Ethical | Interpersonal Rapport Curious Understanding Collaborative | |
| <i>Observed</i> | Direct Informal Encouraging Appropriate Helpful | Confidence Consulting Accessibility Flexibility | | Interpersonal Rapport Curious Understanding Building Relationships | Teaching Sharing Telling |
| Alice | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | Direct Informal Indirect Constructive Positive Constant Helpful | Confidence Availability Professionalism Goal-Oriented | | Interpersonal Collaborative Talking Building Relationships Understanding | Teaching Telling Modeling |
| <i>Observed</i> | Direct Informal Appropriate Encouraging | Confidence Accessibility Flexible | | Interpersonal Collaborative | |
| Peter | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | Direct Informal Positive Constructive Constant Helpful Negative | Confidence Accessibility Flexible Goal-Oriented Culturally Sensitive | | Interpersonal Rapport Building relationships Collaborative | Coaching Modeling Telling |
| <i>Observed</i> | Direct Informal Appropriate Positive | Professionalism Sensitive Flexible Culturally Sensitive | | Interpersonal Rapport Curious Understanding Collaborative | |

| | | | | | |
|------------------|--|---|--|---|--|
| William | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | Direct Informal Constructive Immediate Helpful Appropriate | Confidence Availability Consulting Professionalism | Intra-Personal Communication Reflection | Interpersonal Collaborative Talking Building relationships | |
| <i>Observed</i> | Direct Informal Encouraging Appropriate | Confidence Accessible Consulting Goal-Oriented | | Interpersonal Collaborative Curious Building Relationships | Teaching Modeling Sharing Telling |
| Nancy | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | Direct Indirect Informal Positive Frequent Constructive Helpful Appropriate | Confidence Professionalism Goal-Oriented Flexible | | Interpersonal Rapport Talking Understanding | |
| <i>Observed</i> | Direct Informal Positive Appropriate | Confidence Goal-Oriented Flexible Professionalism | | Interpersonal Rapport Understanding Curious | Teaching Modeling Sharing Telling |
| Kate | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | Direct Informal Positive Encouraging Frequent Helpful | Confidence Professionalism Accessible | Intra-personal communication Self-Reflection | Interpersonal Rapport Building relationships Collaborative | Teaching Modeling Telling |
| <i>Observed</i> | Direct Informal Positive Helpful Immediate Appropriate | Confidence Availability Flexible Sensitive | | Interpersonal Rapport Building Relationships Curious Collaborative | Teaching Sharing Telling |

The following sections highlight case examples of similarities and differences (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2002) organized around how the participants identified what they believe to be effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM in Texas.

Feedback

When asked about feedback, all the participants indicated that providing and delivering feedback was an important characteristic of SCSM. The study achieved saturation when all participants said they used a combination of direct and informal feedback the most. Some highlighted that they felt that giving feedback promptly was important. Additionally, all participants strived to give appropriate and helpful feedback to the school counseling intern to encourage strong professional growth. In contrast, some participants admitted they hesitated to provide more constructive feedback to the school counseling intern or did not know how to deliver constructive feedback but admitted that they could give more constructive feedback if warranted. When observed, all participants gave indirect feedback to the school counseling intern that was positive, encouraging, and appropriate.

Leadership

Leadership was another effective characteristic identified by the participants; however, all participants had various leadership definitions. All participants highlighted the importance of acting confidently as a school counseling site mentor. Another commonality of the participants' responses regarding professionalism included their availability or accessibility as an important characteristic of the school counseling site mentor's effectiveness. However, some participants felt that other characteristics made up the leadership theme. For example, some participants mentioned and were also observed being goal-oriented in how they structure supervision. Those participants they felt following a structured supervision schedule made them effective SCSM. Another difference in perspective regarding the leadership theme was found when only two participants mentioned cultural sensitivity.

Reflective Practices

In this study, only three of the seven participants noted engaging in reflective practices as a school counseling site mentor. However, the participants who noted reflective practices as an effective behavior of SCSM used their professional reflection in their own way. In one case, one participant used the behavior of reflective practices as her ethical check to make sure she was following the governing counseling agencies' best practices. The other two participants used reflective practices as an effective way to guide supervision practices.

Relationship

All participants readily identified the supervision relationship as the most effective characteristic of SCSM. Not only did participants identify the relationship as the most effective characteristic, but they were also observed actively participating in developing a relationship with the school counseling interns. All participants noted that they used interpersonal communication to exchange ideas, information, and emotions with their school counseling intern. Additionally, all participants were observed using interpersonal communication strategies to build a better relationship with the school counseling intern. Another saturation level was achieved when all participants identified building rapport as an important trait in developing a relationship. An additional, prominent code that most participants noted as an effective supervision characteristic was collaboration. Six participants directly referred to collaboration as one of the most important traits when building a relationship with the school counseling intern. In contrast, five participants were directly observed collaborating with the school counseling intern by asking questions, taking the school counseling intern's ideas, and incorporating them into the supervision experience.

Teaching

The last theme that answered the first research question was teaching. Three out of seven participants noted teaching as an effective characteristic of SCSM in the state of Texas. However, some participants mentioned that they use different modalities of teaching for supervision purposes. For example, one participant noted that he follows a coaching model that incorporates teaching fundamentals in his supervision practices. Two participants mentioned modeling as a modality of teaching they used with working with a school counseling site mentor. In contrast, all participants were observed actively teaching the school counseling intern various counseling skills. Even though some participants did not directly identify teaching as an effective characteristic during the interview portion of the study, the participants relied on their knowledge and expertise to strengthen their supervision practices as SCSM.

In summation, the first research question of how SCSM describes the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM in Texas was answered by all participants during the first interview, the observation, and part of the second interview of the study. The overarching themes of *feedback*, *leadership qualities*, *reflective practices*, *relationship*, and *teaching* were identified, defined, and discussed throughout the chapter. All participants added detailed descriptions of how they perceived these themes to reflect effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM in the state of Texas.

Question 2

What informs school counselor site mentor practices in the state of Texas?

The participants in the study stated that there were many contributing factors to what informed their supervision practices. The seven participants' various responses were based on the interview questions in the first and second interviews. For example, participants were asked during the first interview to describe their thought processes as they assigned their school

counseling intern tasks. In the second interview, the participants were asked to tell me what thought process informed the feedback that they gave the school counseling intern during the observation. The participants' responses to the second research question resulted in five themes. The themes, in no particular order of importance, were addressed individually throughout this section. The overall arching themes in answering the second research questions included *governing counseling agencies, SCSM personal intern experiences, feedback, university/district/school standards, and logistical challenges*. Table 5 gives an example of each theme from Question 2.

Table 5

Example of Each Theme from Question 2

| Question 2- Major themes and codes | Example |
|---|--|
| Standards of Governing Counseling Agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACA/TCA • ASCA • TEA | "We're planning to go to the TCA Conference in November." -Nancy |
| Personal Experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive • Negative • Past supervision experiences | "The many times I was in her office, she never turned me away, never was annoyed by all the things I was asking, and I'm very grateful to that person."- Kate |
| Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting as a site mentor • Intern • Other feedback | "I do feel like, over the weekend, I'm thinking about what we are going to set up for the week and ask myself if I have included those objectives"- William |
| University/District/School Admin Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University • Campus • Other counseling tools | "And I help her kind of figure out how she's going to satisfy all of the requirements of her school, plus the requirements of the district. And I connect her with different people to help her get that done."- Kelly |
| Logistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Location • Space | "It's hard because of the timeline; you can't force certain things with emotions."- Mallory |

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

Standards of Governing Counseling Agencies

During the second interview, participants were asked what specifically informed their supervision practices. Participants were asked to describe their thought process as they discussed informed supervision. All participants during the second interview indicated that they considered at least one of the standards of governing counseling agencies, including the American Counseling Association (ACA), American School Counseling Association's Code of Ethics (ASCA), and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) when providing supervision. In several cases, when observing the participant and the school counseling intern, participants mentioned either ACA, ASCA, or TEA when providing guidance. The codes of ACA, ASCA, and TEA made up the governing counseling agencies' standards.

ACA/TCA

Peter, a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Texas, was the first participant. He emphasized that he tries to attend professional development opportunities hosted by the American Counseling Association (ACA) or the Texas Counseling Association (TCA). He discussed how he felt he made better supervision decisions based on the national and state supervision recommendations. Peter stated that he intentionally looked for supervision training because he felt that they help him make informed decisions when providing school counseling interns supervision. He also believed that referring to these various counseling agencies allowed him to guide the school counseling intern in whatever counseling track the school counseling intern followed post-graduation. For example, Peter said he uses the ASCA counseling model and the TEA four pillars of counseling with school counseling inter who plan on pursuing a career in school counseling. When Peter worked with a school counseling intern who plans on

pursuing a clinical counseling position in addition to a school counseling certification, he informs his decision based on ACA, ASCA, and TEA governing agencies.

Nancy, Mallory, and Kelly indicated that their decision-making process was informed by the national and state governing agency's recommendations. All three participants noted that they were planning on attending the state's counseling conference and noted that attending conventions helped guide them in their supervision practices. However, Mallory indicated that most supervision break-out sessions focused more on providing clinical supervision, and few sessions primarily focus on school counseling supervision. In these cases, Mallory made the supervision information applicable to school counseling supervision.

An example was revealed when I directly observed Nancy refer back to the ASCA counseling model and TEA's four pillars of a counseling program when providing feedback to her school counseling intern. In this case, the school counseling intern understood the ASCA counseling model and the TEA counseling program. Nancy took her time explaining each of the models and then showed her school counseling intern why it was important to base decisions on these counseling models. Because the school counseling intern intended to continue school counseling after graduation, Nancy felt it was important to inform her supervision guidance based on what these governing counseling agencies endorsed. No other participant openly discussed or referenced the governing counseling agencies' standards with their school counseling intern during the observation portion.

ASCA Ethics

One of the most strongly noted behaviors declared by all the participants was the importance of considering and basing supervision practices on counseling ethics. Mallory noted, "then it is my job to go back ethically and see, okay, did their piece add anything that made a

difference or not? Am I still holding to the ethics code? Because that is what we go by for everything.” Mallory continued, saying informing her practices of the ASCA ethical model helped her ensure quality supervision. All participants reiterated similar responses when asked how they would handle a situation where a school counseling intern could not act appropriately. Besides noting that they would discuss the issue personally with the school counseling intern, all seven participants said they would inform their decision based on the ASCA code of ethics and proceed as needed. Kate believed she would “go back to what I know is black and white and ethically correct both with ASCA and the district just to confirm once again what I’m seeing.” Kelly also saw the ASCA code of ethics as an extra layer of support for her base decisions. She explained that she felt this way because she was the only counselor on her campus, and it was sometimes hard to get hold of another counselor to consult on difficult issues. She viewed the ASCA code of ethics as something that she could use to inform her decisions independently.

Texas Education Agency

Most of the participants’ last governing counseling agency was about the Texas Education Agency’s four pillars of a counseling program. Nancy explained that serving as a director of secondary counselors for a school district allowed her to see that some school counseling interns come in with a limited understanding of the responsibilities of being a secondary counselor. She said:

I’ve noticed with interns that they’re still kind of classroom-minded and academic-minded. I have to push them to think beyond academics. And with this high school intern I have now, she’s very, like graduation and graduation plan. And that is a big part of the high school experience, but she is missing the other components of the four counseling pillars.

Nancy continued explaining that she needed to go back and re-direct her school counseling intern in this case. In cases like these, she used the four counseling pillars of TEA to help inform her supervision practices so that her school counseling interns have a depth of how to structure a counseling program.

Kate also used the TEA counseling program model to help inform her supervision practices:

I want them to have the tools and the savvy, the – a plan when they get their first assignment – when they get their first counseling job. To go in there and scope out the environment and the people in the environment to set themselves up to have the best counseling program possible.

Through consulting the ACA, ASCA, and TEA standards and guidelines, most participants felt that using these counseling governing agencies played an important part in forming their supervision practices.

Personal Experiences

Participants also noted that another factor that informs SCSM supervision practices was their personal supervision experience. In the first interview, participants were asked to describe their own practicum experiences when they were a school counseling intern and asked if their personal practicum experience was part of what informed their current supervision practices. Overall, most participants felt that their school counseling practicum experience was positive; however, others felt they did not receive good guidance. Regardless of their supervision quality, participants indicated that they did base some supervision practices off their practicum experiences when they were school counseling interns. In addition to applying what they observed during their school counseling intern experience, some participants indicated that their

personal experience serving as a school counseling site mentor and years of school counseling experience helps inform their supervision practices. The codes that make up the theme of personal experiences include positive, negative, and past supervision experiences.

Some participants indicated that their private school counseling intern experience was positive and that positive experience shaped their supervision practices. Peter described his school counseling intern experience as a positive experience that was a “hands-on” type of practicum where he learned to do much academic planning. Peter believed that as a school counseling site mentor, he constantly transferred the experience he had to all of his school counseling interns by providing a more experiential experience. For example, “working at the college level and doing my internship there prepared me here at the middle school level to advise students on how to navigate high school with all the course requirements and then how this springboards them into preparing for college.” Peter used this experience and knowledge to teach his school counseling interns during their practicum experience.

Kelly’s practicum experience was unique because two counselors provided her supervision experience. She recounted, “it was really interesting because I was able to see how one of them did things and then see how the other one did things.” This experience helped enrich her practicum experience, and in turn, Kelly tried to provide a strong practicum experience for her school counseling intern. Kelly said that she tried to reflect and remember that experience and provide the same type of experience for her school counseling intern, encouraging her school counseling intern to be engaged in as many counseling activities as possible. Kelly articulated that she tried to recollect how encouraging her school counseling site mentors were during her practicum and gave her school counseling intern the same kind of encouragement that she found beneficial.

Several participants even expressed that a negative practicum experience helped inform their supervision practices as a school counseling site mentor. Mallory described how her negative practicum experience as a school counseling intern informed her current supervision practices. She remembered, “My supervisor was not as kind to me and told me I would never make a good counselor.” She said she recalled that experience every time she meets with her school counseling intern and always tried to be encouraging despite her painful experiences. Additionally, Nancy expressed that her school counseling site mentor was wonderful, but her practicum experience was not effective. Nancy remembered it as:

Pretty kind of hands-off, you know, I didn’t have much direction from her. I did what my university required of me, and there was nothing much after that. It was kind of grunt work stuffing packets, working on schedule changes, and learned about that kind of stuff. And I did some individual counseling with some students, and she was valuable with that kind of stuff. But I kind of just observed how she ran her office and how she interacted with her parents.

Nancy stated that her experience informs her practice when acting as a school counseling mentor. She takes this experience as what she does not want her school counseling intern to feel during practicum. As a result, she tries to be available to her school counseling intern at all times, assigns interactive counseling tasks, and provides other valuable experiences.

Another factor that some participants noted as influential in their supervision practices was their past experiences with former school counseling interns or their years of experience as a school counselor. Five participants responded that they had previous experience working with school counseling interns. Peter reported that he acted as a site mentor over 12 times, Kate had the second-highest number of interns with seven interns, and Mallory, Nancy, and William had

two past school counseling interns. Some of the participants based their supervision practices on past experiences with school counseling interns. Additionally, a few participants noted that they felt that their years of education developed their supervision practices. Nancy noted, “this is the second intern that I’ve had. I had another one two years ago. I thought it was just really rewarding to see a brand-new person that wants to be a school counselor come in and kind of navigate that, and I can give them many tricks of the trade that I’ve learned and stuff like that over the years as a school counselor.” Mallory also indicated that it was her years of experience in education that informed her supervision practices; “Well, I’ve been in education for 30 years. I think that’s helped a lot in how I act as a school counseling site mentor.”

Feedback

The third major theme of feedback was found when participants answered the second research question. In this case, some participants viewed that reflecting upon the current school counseling intern tasks informs their supervision practices. Others discussed how they use the feedback from other school staff and students to inform their supervision practices. Last, I observed how the participants informed their supervision decisions when the school counseling intern gave the participant feedback regarding supervision. The specific codes that made up the feedback included acting as a site mentor, intern feedback, and other feedback.

William specifically discussed how his reflection on his supervision practices informs his supervision. School counseling site mentors are required to meet weekly with their school counseling interns. William dedicates Monday mornings to meet with his school counseling intern as SCSM are required to meet weekly with their school counseling interns. However, before meeting with his school counseling intern, William reflects the night before thinking about his supervision role. He said, “I do feel like, over the weekend, I’m thinking about what

we are going to set up for the week. We schedule it [the weekly meetings] on Mondays, so we can lay it out every week and have a plan moving forward.” It is this type of self-reflection that informs William’s weekly supervision practices.

Kate informs her supervision practices on the feedback she receives from other staff and students. Last year, Kate had a school counseling intern struggling with building rapport with other staff members and students. She said, “I had several different staff members come to me and tell me the intern was struggling. And then the kids told me that nobody would go to see the school counseling intern. So, I knew things weren’t going well.” Katie continued emphasizing that she relies on student feedback about the intern to tell her how she can better support her school counseling intern’s professional growth.

I also observed how the school counseling intern’s feedback informed the participants’ supervision practices during the observation portion. The observation portion consisted of me watching a feedback session between the participant and the school counseling intern. As I observed Nancy with her school counseling intern, the intern inquired about school counseling programs. Nancy was surprised that the school counseling intern did not have some fundamental understanding of school counseling’s ASCA model or TEA standards. Nancy used her school counseling intern’s questions and quickly adjusted the session to teach the intern how school counseling programs are built. The session between Kate and her intern provided another example of how the school counseling intern’s feedback help inform Kate’s supervision practices. The school counseling intern had recently developed and implemented a guidance lesson. Kate listened intently to her school counseling intern’s account of events. When the intern expressed her satisfaction with the outcome but also critiqued herself and how the lesson could improve, Kate appropriately shifted her approach from teacher/counselor to consultant.

University/District/School Admin Standards

Another theme discovered when participants were asked what informed their supervision practices as a school counseling site mentor was the school counseling intern's university practicum requirements, district standards, and school administration specifications. All participants responded that they review and follow the school counseling intern's specific university requirements to earn credit and become eligible for certification through the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Some participants also indicated that sometimes there are district requirements to be aware of and followed. Some participants relied on their campus administration's expectations or other counseling tools available to them at the campus level. Specific responses that made up the university/district/school administration standards theme included "university", "district", "requirements", "principal", "requests", and "counseling tools".

All participants emphasized that they depend on the school counseling intern's university program to inform their daily supervision practices. William specifically described how he adapts his supervision practices to the requirements of the university's counseling program:

Whenever you start with a new mentee, you get information from the universities that say these are our expectations. In this case, I feel like that the needs of what the student is required to do for the university are driving a lot of the decisions of how we're organizing supervision and her time.

Some participants described how their supervision practices are informed by blending the school counseling intern's university requirements and the site mentor's district requirements. Nancy discussed in detail how she bases her supervision practices on what her district requires for school counseling interns to focus on while completing their practicum experiences and using the university requirements. She said, "I look at the timeline and the scope and sequence that her

university gives her. And then I kind of match it up with what our district requires because a lot of what the district requires kind of matches.” Nancy then uses those various requirements and develops a supervision plan for each of her school counseling interns to ensure a comprehensive practicum experience. Alice stressed that basing supervision practices of the school counseling intern’s university program and the district’s standards ensured that the school counseling intern received a strong practicum experience. For example, her current school counseling intern’s university program did not clarify if the school counseling intern needed to develop a small counseling group. However, Alice’s district requirements specified that school counseling interns were to develop a small group. Alice said this was how she allowed both the university’s requirements and the district standards to inform her supervision strategies.

Some participants also added that other counseling tools informed their supervision. Mallory mentioned that she relies on her crisis NOVA training to help build her supervision plans. She feels that there is not enough crisis training for school counselors required by university programs. Nancy also mentioned using additional counseling tools such as Texas Youth Connections (Texas Youth Connection, n.d.) and Rainbow Days (Rainbow Days, n.d.) to make her supervision more robust. She said, “I think it's perfect for beginning counselors because it lines everything up for you.”

Whereas all participants felt that following the requirements set forth by the school counseling intern’s counseling program was most influential in informing their supervision practices, others added that it was important to consider any other district requirements and consult other counseling tools to help inform their supervision.

Logistics

Logistic challenges were the last theme that emerged from the data when participants were asked what informed their supervision practices. All participants noted at least one logistic challenge as an element that informed their supervision practices. The specific codes that made up the theme of the logical challenge consisted of time, location/space, and not being on campus with their school counseling intern.

Mallory adamantly stated that it was the element of time that informed her supervision practices. She said that the most difficult element of providing a quality supervision experience was “juggling your program while you’re juggling supervision because those responsibilities and roles while they are very similar... A lot of it is you have to jump in and get it done because you’re still meeting the timelines and the deadlines for the district. So, that is hard.” Mallory continued discussing how sometimes she had to narrow and focus on completing just the required objectives set forth by the school counseling intern’s university program instead of allowing for a richer, more organic practicum experience.

William also discussed how time informed his supervision practices. He said, “just making sure during a limited amount of time whether it’s a semester or two that an intern is staying with us that we try to provide as much of the experiences and as much depth as we possibly can so that they could have a clear picture of what it [a good counseling program] looks like.” But he added this was difficult because there are always unexpected challenges in school counseling. William had to consider how much time the school counseling intern had to complete the needed program requirements and complete his professional tasks. He admitted that sometimes he was successful, and other times there were missed learning opportunities.

Some participants mentioned the logistics challenge and did not have adequate space for their school counseling intern. Peter mentioned that sometimes he had to consider a space for his

school counseling intern to meet privately with students. He discussed how he did not mind allowing the school counseling intern to use his office, but there were times where the school counseling intern could have a better practicum experience if they had a dedicated space. He did not think that the lack of dedicated space diminished the school counseling intern's supervision experience but that he had to think strategically about using his space efficiently to continue to meet with students, parents, and other school personnel.

I also observed how the logistic challenge of space informed some participant's supervision practices. In most cases, all participants tried to have a dedicated space for their school counseling interns and were more than willing to use their offices or rooms. However, some of the participant's offices were small and did not allow for a separate space for the school counseling intern. In one observed session, Mallory discussed where her intern could meet alone with a student because the student seemed always to be distracted with the other counselor in the room. Mallory also discussed the need for a more private space, so the student felt comfortable discussing something private. She also mentioned that she felt that meeting in a private space helped the school counseling intern develop a better rapport with the student because there were limited distractions.

The last logistical challenge that informed some participant's supervision practices was not being on the same campus as their school counseling interns. In two cases, both participants were acting as emergency placements for two school counseling interns. Nancy, who acted as the Director of Secondary Counselors in her district, stepped in to help provide supervision to a school counseling intern whose practicum site did not have a willing school counseling site mentor. Nancy stated that being off campus from her school counseling intern created many difficult supervision challenges that informed her supervision practices. The biggest challenge

Nancy faced was feeling connected to her school counseling intern and not be readily accessible to her school counseling intern. Nancy admitted it was not an ideal situation but a situation that could not have been avoided. She said she has become hypervigilant about connecting with her school counseling intern daily to help or answer questions. Nancy also coordinated more with other staff members, such as the behavior interventionist, at the practicum site to help the school counseling site mentor complete her practicum requirements.

Alice was also acting as a school counseling site mentor for a school counseling intern who was a teaching on a different campus in the district but was completing part of her practicum at Alice's campus. Alice discussed how not having her school counseling intern on campus full time was difficult and changed how she approached supervision. In particular, she believed that not having her school counseling intern on campus did not allow for an authentic school counseling experience. Alice sometimes thought they were just completing the requirements for the school counseling intern's program versus having a rich practicum experience. She also mentioned that it was sometimes difficult for her to answer her intern's questions because of logistical constraints, even though they have a set weekly meeting.

Question 2 - Cross Case Analysis

As previously referenced, Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020) qualitative data analysis recommendations were used to guide the cross-case analysis to answer the second research question: What informs school counselor site mentor practices in the state of Texas? As a result, five major themes emerged. The following table gives a visual display of the cross-case analysis of the data.

Table 6

Visual Display of the Cross-Case Analysis of the Data

| | <i>Theme #1</i> | <i>Theme #2</i> | <i>Theme #3</i> | <i>Theme #4</i> | <i>Theme #5</i> |
|------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Participant | Standards of Governing Counseling Agencies | Personal Experiences | Feedback | University District School Admin. Standards | Logistics |
| Kelly | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | ACA/TCA ASCA | Positive | | University | Time |
| <i>Observed</i> | | | Intern | | |
| Mallory | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | ACATCA ASCA | Negative Past Experience | Intern Other feedback | University District School | Time Space |
| <i>Observed</i> | | | Intern | University District | Space |
| Alice | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | ASCA | Positive/ Negative | Intern Other Feedback | University District | Time Intern on a different campus |
| <i>Observed</i> | | | Intern | University District | |
| Peter | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | ACA/TCA ASCA TEA | Positive Past Experience | Intern Other feedback | University | Time Space |
| <i>Observed</i> | | | Intern | University | Space |
| William | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | ASCA TEA | Positive Past Experience | Acting as SCSM Other feedback | University | Time |
| <i>Observed</i> | | | Intern | University | Space |
| Nancy | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | ACA/TCA ASCA | Negative Past Experience | Intern Other feedback | University District School | Time |
| <i>Observed</i> | ASCA TCA | | Intern | University District | Intern on a different campus |
| Kate | | | | | |
| <i>Interview</i> | ASCA TEA | Positive Past Experience | Acting as SCSM | University District | Time |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|-------------------|------------------------|--|
| | | | Other feedback | | |
| <i>Observed</i> | | | Intern | University District | |

The following sections highlight case examples of similarities and differences organized around how the participants identified what they believe informs their supervision practices when acting as a school counseling site mentor.

Standards of Governing Counseling Agencies

During the interviews, all participants indicated that following the various governing counseling agencies' various standards play an important role in shaping their supervision practices. Some participants mentioned the local agencies more frequently than the larger national counseling organization; however, all emphasized that they felt it was more helpful to follow the state chapters of the governing counseling agencies because the supervision recommendations would be applicable to state school counseling requirements. However, only one participant was observed referring to the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and Texas Counseling Association (TCA) when conducting her weekly meeting with her school counseling intern.

Personal Experience

All participants indicated that their personal experience as a school counseling intern played a part in informing their current supervision practices. Four participants said they felt they had a positive school counseling intern experience and that positive experience helped guide their supervision practices. One participant indicated that her school counseling intern experience had positive and negative experiences that informed her supervision practices. Conversely, two SCSM indicated that their supervision experiences as a school counseling intern were negative.

However, they used the negative experience to guide them to provide a more positive supervision experience for school counseling interns. Five participants also felt that having previous experience as a school counseling site mentor also helped inform their supervision practices.

Feedback

Four participants noted that feedback from their school counseling intern informed their supervision practices. All but one participant was observed taking feedback from their school counseling intern and using that feedback to guide their supervision practices. Three participants noted that they also use the feedback they receive from other school support staff to help guide them in their supervision practices. Two participants said they also use their self-reflective feedback to develop better supervision practices.

University/District/School Administration Standards

All participants acknowledged that they relied on the school counseling intern's university program to inform most of their daily supervision practices. All participants emphasized that they strictly follow the university school counseling goals and objectives of the practicum course. Several participants mentioned that by not following the university program's standards, they could jeopardize the school counseling intern's completion of the program. Five of the participants also worked for a district that set forth certain supervision standards that reinforced most of the school counseling intern's university program's supervision standards. However, one of the five participants seemed confused about combining the university standards and the district standards. Two participants mentioned that they also take into consideration the campus expectations. They highlighted that they mainly inform their university and district

standards' supervision practices and considered what is expected of them from their school campus leaders and found a way to blend all three standards.

Logistics

Each participant mentioned some sort of logistical challenge when asked about what informed their supervision practices. All seven participants mentioned time as a logistical component that influenced their supervision practices. However, all seven described different challenges associated with time. For some participants, time constraints made it difficult for them to meet all the university standards. Another participant noted that sometimes timing conflicts made it challenging to allow the school counseling intern to fully experience what it was like to be a school counselor. Another logistical challenge that informed supervision practices was the space where the school counseling intern could work. All participants voiced that they were more than willing to allow the school counseling intern to work in their office; however, not all office spaces were conducive, nor was it practical for the school counselor or school counseling intern. During the observation portion of the study, I observed three of the participants attempt to make room for the school counseling intern to feel comfortable in the space. The other logistic noted that was having school counseling interns who were not completing their practicum experiences on the site mentor's campus. These two participants noted that not being on the same campus played a part in informing their supervision practices.

Summary

This chapter described the study results, described the multiple case study, connected the cross-case analysis back to the two research questions, and demonstrated that the results reach saturation. Seven participants were interviewed for this multiple case study. Interview questions were designed to understand what current SCSM in the state of Texas perceive as effective

characteristics and behaviors when supervising a school counseling intern. All participants, at the time of the study, were supervising school counseling interns. All but two participants had provided supervision for at least two school counseling interns before the study.

Consistent with Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2020) guide to cross-case analysis, four major data analysis phases included data reeducation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. I used two different coding methods, values and in vivo coding, for data analysis. In answering the first research question, 34 codes were identified, leading to the five major themes: feedback, leadership qualities, reflective practices, relationship, and teaching. Answering the second research question resulted in 15 codes, leading to five major themes: governing counseling agencies' standards, personal experiences, feedback, university/district/school administration standards, and logistics.

There were many characteristics and behaviors that the participants felt were effective as a school counseling site mentor. However, many defined those characteristics and behaviors differently. When asked what informs their supervision practices, all participants agreed that certain national, state, and local counseling agencies focus on supervision. The participants also included that their personal experiences factored into their supervision practices. Whereas all participants knew directly what informed their supervision focus, all had varying ideas of the effective behaviors and characteristics of SCSM.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Chapter five begins with a summary of the study and then presents the major findings related to the perceived effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM and what informs their supervision practices. The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the effective characteristics, behaviors, and practices of SCSM in the state of Texas. Through a close examination of school counseling site mentor perceptions, I examined what effective characteristics and behaviors contributed to providing supervision by a school counseling mentor of school counseling interns through a multiple case qualitative study. The participants each provided different perspectives acting as a school counseling site mentor. The participants discussed their personal experiences providing supervision to a school counseling intern during two interviews. I also observed the participants giving feedback to their school counseling interns. Field notes included one in-the-moment observation, as well as my reflections. All participants reported that they were happy to provide supervision to a school counseling intern and felt that it was part of their professional duty to help guide school counseling interns in their professional careers. The cumulative findings from these data points will be further described and explained in this chapter.

Discussion of the Findings - Question One

To address the first research question, I asked participants to describe the effective characteristics and behaviors of school counseling site mentors (SCSM) in the state of Texas. The seven participants gave a wide range of responses resulting in 34 codes developed into five

major themes of feedback, including leadership qualities, reflective practices, relationship, and teaching.

Feedback

The Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) Best Practices (2011) encourages professional counseling supervisors to offer regular and ongoing feedback during the supervision process. All participants indicated that providing and delivering feedback was an essential characteristic of SCSM. Not only did they indicate that giving feedback was important, but they stated how and when the feedback was delivered critically. One possible reason some participants found giving feedback to be crucial was to help direct the school counseling intern. The ACES Best Practices (2011) suggests that counseling supervisors give reliable and ongoing feedback based on the counseling intern's counseling skill level and professional skill set. Yet, some participants noted that they sometimes felt uncomfortable giving constructive feedback. One possible explanation for this may be that they felt such feedback might not benefit the school counseling intern and could harm their relationship with their school counseling intern. Participants may also have trouble delivering constructive feedback due to cultural differences or personal disagreements. Another possible explanation is that the supervisor may not want to appear to be critical of the intern.

However, the ACES Best Practices (2011) encourages all types of feedback, stating that it is important to emphasize the counseling interns' strengths and limitations throughout the supervision process. Gross (2005) encourages SCSM to give feedback that is "balanced between support/reinforcement and challenge/criticism." In addition to providing positive and constructive feedback, participants indicated that delivering feedback quickly was an important feedback component. One likely reason for this was that the supervisor' immediate feedback that

allowed the school counseling site mentor to support the school counseling intern was important to support the school counseling intern appropriately and promptly. Newman (2010) also suggested that feedback should be provided frequently and be based on the school counseling intern's professional work. Likewise, if the feedback was more corrective, it should be well-timed, precise, fair, based on the counseling intern's behavior, and provide direction for improvement.

Leadership Qualities

The participants identified leadership as an effective characteristic but provided various definitions of what leadership looks like when acting as a school counseling site mentor. A possible reason for the various leadership definitions was that some participants saw themselves as a leader when asked to act as an SCSM. Another probable explanation was that they highlighted their leadership characteristics when they provide supervision to a school counseling intern. Several participants noted the importance of being involved in national or state counseling programs as an indicator of displaying leadership characteristics. Participants did not state whether they felt such involvement enhanced their professional counseling supervision skills, nor did they make a connection between how participating in professional networks enhanced their supervision practices. Some participants mentioned that they were assigned a leadership position in their district or campus, making them aware of leadership effectiveness as a school counseling site mentor. Even though the participants saw leadership as a valuable characteristic, no participant connected how leadership qualities aided in the supervision process. The ASCA Code of Ethics (2016) did not provide insight into developing leadership skills as a key component in supervision practices. Leadership was not mentioned as a best practice, so it was unclear why the participants considered leadership an effective characteristic.

Reflective Practices

Another finding was the importance of reflective practices in school counseling supervision. Lowery (2001) highlighted the importance of the counseling supervisor to use self-reflective practices when engaging in supervision. Surprisingly, only three of the seven participants mentioned self-reflection as an effective supervision behavior. However, all three had different views on the benefits of practicing self-reflection. For example, one participant noted that they found it beneficial to stop and reflect on how to guide the school counseling intern better. Another participant found it beneficial to self-reflect on providing ethically sound supervision.

Interestingly, the third participant saw self-reflection practices as connecting the “why” to duties assigned to the school counseling intern. Eley and Murray (2009) stated that an effective counseling supervisor should not only engage in their self-reflective practices regarding supervision but encouraged the counseling intern to do the same. In this study, out of the three who responded that self-reflection was an important behavior of SCSM, none discussed the importance of encouraging their school counseling interns to do the same. The participants noted that they used modeling when teaching school counseling site mentors professional counseling practices, yet they did not model self-reflection with their school counseling site mentors. It was possible that because the study focused only on the perspectives of SCSM, the participants did not think to mention having their school counseling intern engage in self-reflection practices. Even though the other four participants did not mention the importance of self-reflection, it is possible that they used self-reflection regularly but just did not identify it as an effective characteristic. Participants were not directly prompted to speak about their self-reflection practices as part of the interview protocol; therefore, it was difficult to ascertain whether self-

reflection was an effective supervision characteristic or whether the remaining participants did not realize the significance of participating in self-reflection.

Relationship

Every participant indicated that building a relationship with the school counseling intern was the most effective characteristic of a school counseling site mentor. Yet, each had a different approach to developing and nurturing the relationship between themselves and the school counseling intern. All participants indicated that having a good relationship with their school counseling intern was the most effective characteristic of SCSM during the first and second interviews of the study. A possible explanation for this unanimity could be that each participant used their supervision approach with a school counseling intern based on the intern's needs and personalities and felt confident in developing rapport when providing supervision. The ACES Supervision Best Practices (2011) stressed the importance of creating and nurturing the relationship between the counseling supervisor and the counseling intern but did not detail how the supervision relationship should be built. Barnett et al. (2007) provided more detail, suggesting the supervisor must be present in the supervision process and have an emotional investment in the supervision relationship. In this study, the strongest response noted from all the participants was the importance of cultivating a strong relationship. Still, none of the participants elaborated on how they exactly fostered a relationship with their school counseling intern. On the other hand, participants were not asked to comment directly on how they develop relationships with school counseling interns. Even though the participants did not delineate how they specifically built a relationship with their school counseling intern, they realized that developing a positive relationship was a priority. A possible reason for this could be because the participants wanted to provide an effective supervision experience for their school counseling intern.

Teaching

Three participants identified teaching as an effective characteristic of SCSM. In Texas, public school counselors must be certified teachers and serve as schoolteachers for at least two years before becoming school counselors. Even though only three participants identified teaching as an effective characteristic, all participants were observed teaching their school counseling interns. During the observation portion of the study, it appeared that all participants recalled their past work experience as a teacher to help facilitate supervision. Additionally, some participants identified specific teaching modalities, such as modeling, when working on a specific counseling skill.

In contrast, other participants simply indicated that their background knowledge and teaching experience helped them during the supervision process. Surprisingly, one participant highlighted that she believed that an important role of SCSM depends on the site mentor's ability to teach and learn. Another participant noted that teaching or modeling served as a foundation for any good supervision experience. Highlighting Bernard's (1979) discrimination model, Furr and Carroll (2003) supported these findings as part of their three-stage developmental supervision approach by shifting between two different roles: teacher and counselor. In the teacher role, SCSM recalls prior teaching experiences and uses teaching characteristics and behaviors to develop the school counseling intern's developmental approach. It could be that the participants were relying on previous mentoring experiences or that they were dependent on using their teaching skills to aid in the supervision process, but whether this is true remains unclear after conducting the study. However, even though teaching is a valuable characteristic, it may not be a true indicator of effective supervision. The participants were not observed making judgments about their school counseling interns' abilities or changing supervision roles as appropriate

according to the discrimination model or other similar supervision models. Struder (2005) suggested that expert SCSM recognize the importance of shifting supervision roles throughout the supervision process. None of the participants mentioned following any type of formal supervision model, nor did they indicate that they had received any formal supervision training on different supervision models that exist. Proctor (1994) surmised that SCSM learned supervision skills while completing their counseling duties rather than formal supervision training. Bernard and Goodyear (1998) called an untrained counseling supervisor a “paraprofessional” counselor who has learned some supervision skills but does not have a fundamental understanding of the supervision process.

Discussion of the Finding - Question Two

To address the second research question, participants were asked what informed their supervision practices. The results included 15 codes and five major themes governing counseling agencies’ standards, personal experiences, feedback, university/district/school administration standards, and logistics.

Standards of Governing Counseling Agencies

Barnett et al. (2007) stressed that “modeling ethical and professional behavior along with stressing a focus on ethical practices throughout the supervisory process are essential qualities of effective supervisors” (p. 270). When the participants were asked what informed their supervision practices, all stated that the governing counseling agencies, such as the American Counseling Association (ACA), Texas Counseling Association (TCA), and the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), guide their counseling decisions. All but one participant were members of at least one of the governing counseling agencies. They acknowledged that the ASCA Code of Ethics and the Texas chapter of ASCA informed most of their professional

practices. These findings suggest that the participants rely on the Texas chapter of counseling governing agencies to help guide and help them in developing their professional and supervision practices because the state organization focuses on specific school counseling program recommendations, professional practices of school counselors, and ethical codes Texas.

All participants indicated that they were aware of the ASCA Code of Ethics for school counselors and used the code of ethics in some way when acting as a school counselor and as a supervisor. Even though other national counseling organizations were mentioned, the participants indicated that they relied more on the state counseling organizations' information to guide their professional and supervision practices. The participants' recognition and application of these governing counseling agencies support the ACES Best Practices (2011) and the ASCA Code of Ethics (2016) recommendation for school counseling site mentors to possess knowledge of counseling programs and the ethical standards of the counseling profession and to receive education and pursue educational training in supervision practices. These findings suggested that participants in this study follow school counseling's governing standards and provide a good ethical professionalism model.

Personal Experiences

All participants noted that they felt that their previous school counseling practicum experience influenced their current supervision practices. If participants reported that they did not feel they had a positive practicum experience, they were aware of the type of effective behaviors and characteristics needed to create a more positive experience for their school counseling interns. Bandura's triadic reciprocity theory (1985) supports the participants' rationale. It focuses on the reciprocal relationship between their own beliefs and expectations regarding providing supervision, behaviors, and characteristics as a school counseling site

mentor and their environment. For example, when determining what type of duties to assign the school counseling intern, participants thought back to what duties they were asked to perform and questioned whether they were appropriate for a school counseling intern to perform in the school. However, Proctor (1994) cautioned that SCSM who question their supervision capabilities may rely too much on their personal, and professional experience with the school counseling intern or resort to modeling counseling skills because they are unsure of what constitutes good supervision. These findings suggested that previous practicum experiences may play a major role in informing supervision decisions.

Feedback

As discussed in Question 1, all participants noted the important characteristic of giving their school counseling interns feedback. However, when asked what informs their supervision practices, they indicated that taking feedback from different sources, such as other teachers, students, parents, and staff members, was important. Another part of the ACES Best Practices (2011) endorsed using feedback from other direct sources, such as students (clients), colleagues, and other faculty, in determining best supervision practices. Using feedback from other sources could give the school counseling site mentor a different perspective on how the school counseling intern performed in a different context. Only four participants specifically mentioned that taking feedback from their school counseling intern helped shape their supervision practices. However, all but one participant was observed asking for feedback from their school counseling intern regarding the practicum experience. Eley and Murray (2009) encouraged counseling supervisors to engage in an open dialogue about the supervision process, helping facilitate a better working alliance between the supervisor and counseling intern. However, the data from this study suggested that the participants were looking to provide a more personalized

supervision experience dependent on the school counseling intern's limitations rather than how the school counseling intern viewed the supervision experience.

University/District/School Admin Standards

All seven participants recognized the influence of the school counseling interns' counseling program expectations on their supervision practices. Yet, some participants expressed that they often felt confused by the expectations of the university counseling program. In these moments of confusion, the participants either recalled past supervision experiences to help guide them through the program requirements or reached out to the university program sponsor for clarification. Several of the participants worked in a school district that provided extra supervision support that gave the SCSM a more detailed approach to providing supervision. Five of the participants worked for the same north Texas school district and had a director of guidance familiar with the challenges of providing supervision in a school district. As a result, the guidance director provided extra guidance and support for the school counselors with school counseling interns. However, not all school districts had a director of guidance, nor did having a director of a guidance guarantee that school counselor site mentor's particular district received additional support and guidance in supervision.

Glaes (2010) warned that school counselors across the nation did not receive any clinical supervision training and that many SCSM did not perceive the need for supervision training. This lack of perceived need for training was further pronounced because there was little support in the literature regarding supervision in a school setting (Getz, 1999; Goodyear & Bernard, 1998; Henderson, 1994). Due to this absence of training, SCSM became over-reliant on the university counseling program's expectations. Indeed, some participants noted that they relied heavily on the university counseling program guidelines. However, all university programs'

practicum requirements differed. Unless the participant was familiar with the program guidelines or expectations, they had to interpret what they felt was important to teach the school counseling intern. Given the small sample size, these results only suggested that participants depended heavily on the university requirements to inform their supervision practices. In contrast, some SCSM has some basic guidance in what informs supervision practices. However, many more SCSM may be perplexed regarding what informs their supervision practices.

Logistics

All participants noted that logistics play a part in informing their supervision practices. All participants felt time was the most influential factor in determining the supervision process's nature because of the school counseling interns' practicum requirements. For most school counseling university programs, the required practicum must be completed within one semester. The state of Texas required school counseling interns to complete at least a 160-hour practicum. All participants noted that they felt that the number of required hours was appropriate but made scheduling the required counseling components with the school counseling intern challenging. Furthermore, they noted that they desired more time to develop their school counseling intern's counseling skills or to spend more quality time with their school counseling intern. Paisely and McMahon (2001) suggested that school counselors juggle 13 different roles daily. Participants may have felt limited due to the time constraints of meeting their district or campus expectations and providing supervision. Herlihy, Gray, and McCollum (2002) warned that school counselors were asked to perform a "hodge-podge of activities assigned or added by happenstance" (p. 56). It appeared that the copious number of duties may interfere with an SCSM's ability to provide good supervision. Several participants mentioned that they underestimated how much time supervision required or wished for more time to communicate with other school counseling site

mentors or the university counseling program professor. A possible reason for this desire could be that some participants had limited experience with providing supervision to a school counseling intern and may have been unsure how to use the time they did have efficiently for supervision purposes.

Implications for Future Practice for SCSM

The findings of this study could have far-reaching implications for many SCSM in the state of Texas. Acting as an SCSM comes with many challenges but recognizing effective characteristics and behaviors of current SCSM and what informs their supervision practices might help create a framework for future SCSM to follow. Even though there is a plethora of literature providing a foundation for clinical supervisors to follow, there is a shortage of literature for SCSM to follow. This study identifies several effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM in the North Texas region and identified what informed SCSM supervision practices. For SCSM who desire specific supervision guidance, this study offers significant insight into the necessary supervision training.

The ASCA National Model provides little guidance on what types of training SCSM should receive before providing supervision. The unfortunate implication for SCSM is that this could lead to school counselors ill-equipped to offer school counselor interns supervision. For example, in this study, some SCSM struggle in providing feedback. Research questions one and two highlight the need for more professional development training for how and when to deliver feedback to a school counseling intern. More specifically, SCSM need clarity on how to deliver constructive feedback. The implication for SCSM is the continuous need to improve their ability to assess, evaluate, and communicate to the school counseling intern and demonstrate their supervision competency. Another professional development training need for SCSM focuses on

how SCSM change their feedback based on the supervision role. Many SCSM do not have formal clinical supervision training and may not be aware of the changing roles a supervisor moves through depending on the counseling intern's developmental level. The implication for SCSM is that without a consistent supervision framework, the school counseling intern may not receive effective instruction on how to develop their professional counseling skills.

Another important finding related to SCSM and the supervision process deals with the perceived importance of developing a successful relationship with the school counseling intern. All professional counselors are specifically asked to focus on cultivating a positive relationship with the counseling intern in all national and state professional ethical codes. The data from this study suggests that taking the time to establish a rapport with the school counseling intern may be the single most effective characteristic of acting as a school counseling site mentor. The implication for SCSM is that time spent developing the relationship is crucial to the supervision process. For example, one participant notes that he interviews potential school counseling interns to discern whether they were a good fit for his supervision style. Determining a school counseling intern's fit with the SCSM supervision style could be a helpful first step in building a successful supervision relationship.

This study is also expected to be useful to those interested in the self-reflection part of supervision. ACES (2011) encourages counseling supervisors to participate in self-reflection. However, in this study, only three participants mention self-reflection as a practice, and none mention asking their school counseling interns to engage in self-reflection activities. For SCSM who participate in regular self-reflection activities, these activities may help develop supervision skills, facilitate better supervisor and counseling intern rapport, and help identify personal values and perspectives (Sommer et al., 2010). Therefore, the data suggest that additional self-reflection

training may be helpful for future SCSM. Another self-reflection avenue for SCSM to pursue is in peer case consultation. Peer case consultation occurs when two or more people who provide supervision services join together and collaborate on the supervision experience. McKenney et al. (2019) suggest peer group supervision, a type of group in which colleagues provide support to one another for case consultation, professional support, and self-reflection in a mental health setting. Peer consultation groups are also used in other professions, including in education. Some participants note that having more peer support might be helpful when providing supervision. For SCSM, exploring and creating peer consultation groups may allow an avenue for site mentors to not only take part in self-reflective activities but also receive much-needed supervision support.

Implications for Future Practice for University Programs

For people concerned with providing support to SCSM, this study highlights the need for more supervision support and networking between school counseling college programs, directors of counseling at the public schools, and SCSM. The participants also noted the lack of support they felt from the university counseling program. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) delineates supervisors' qualifications (2016). One of the highlighted prerequisites includes that university supervision professors must have counseling supervision and supervision training. They are also to provide a frame of reference, consultation, and ongoing professional development to site mentors. Perhaps school counseling programs could provide more professional development opportunities than Texas's required training for SCSM. Training topics could include feedback, supervision roles, ethical concerns in supervision, and professional skill development.

Additionally, sometimes SCSM had little guidance on what to cover during the supervision and were left to make their own best professional judgment regarding delivering supervision. Even though each school counseling intern had a university professor overseeing the supervision process, the SCSM in this study sometimes felt more networking or case consultation would enhance the supervision experience.

Creating networking situations may provide SCSM with more support, guidance, and a solid supervision framework to follow when providing school counseling site interns supervision. In turn, the university program could use the time to provide a more detailed approach to the counseling program's expectations during supervision.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Even though careful thought was put into designing this study, it did have certain limitations. For one, the study's sample size would limit its generalizability. The study was limited to Texas SCSM in the North Texas region who met the selection criteria and agreed to participate in the study by completing the consent documentation. Seven participants completed the consent documentation and successfully engaged in the three-part process of the study. Variables such as gender, age, years of school counseling experience, and school counseling supervision were not be controlled in the sample population. It was also important to note that the sample size was determined by the number of school counselors referred to this study by counseling educators.

In some cases, it proved difficult to recruit current SCSM. I began the recruitment process in late summer when most school counselors are back on campus. However, the beginning of the school year was a busy time of year for school counselors, who were juggling many different tasks and may not have wanted to take on another professional duty. It was

possible that starting the recruitment process during the previous semester, when SCSM and school counseling interns were matched to complete the required practicum, could have produced a greater number of possible participants. Also, because the study only included participants in the North Texas region, the study's finding would not be generalizable to all public-school counseling mentors in the entire state of Texas or SCSM in other states.

Another limitation concerns the timing constraints of the study. The study consisted of two school counseling site mentor interviews and one observation between each participant and their school counseling intern during the fall semester. I scheduled and conducted the first interview with all participants without any issue. However, when arranging the second interview and the observation portion of the study, scheduling became more arduous. In some cases, the observation and second interview possibly did not have enough time between them due to scheduling conflicts. Not allowing for adequate time to pass between the observation and the second interview could limit the results of the study. Additionally, I only observed one feedback session between the participants and their school counseling interns, this observation only offered a glimpse of the participants' role while providing feedback to their intern. Had I observed the participant's interactions with the school counseling intern, may have resulted in a richer understanding of the participants perspectives.

Another limitation in this study is the wide range of experiences supervising interns, and the varied contexts in which the participants work may have affected the results. Participants were not selected based on the expectation that they had previous experience acting as a school counseling site mentor, nor were they recognized in their field as an effective school counseling site mentor. Some participants served as school counseling site mentors for the first time during

the time of the study, while other had many years of experience providing supervision. These discrepancies could affect the overall findings of this study.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Because this study is designed to examine the perspectives of current SCSM in the North Texas region, the participants interpreted the effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM. However, their responses were not meant to be an all-inclusive list of all effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM. Future research might include a more comprehensive study that specifically looks at the various perspectives of SCSM throughout the state of Texas. Due to the small sample size, future studies might include more participants either from the entire state of Texas or across the nation. Specific studies could categorize SCSM by grade level, experience with supervision, years of experience as a school counselor, gender, and ethnicity.

All seven participants in this study indicate that feedback was an effective characteristic of SCSM. They also indicate that they use feedback to inform their supervision practice. However, some participants seem unsure or hesitant in delivering constructive feedback to school counseling interns. Future studies might focus on types of feedback that inform their supervision practices. More specifically, other studies could focus on how SCSM delivers feedback and what type of feedback they are giving. Future studies could focus on providing professional development that includes feedback training or supervision training specifically aimed at the needs of SCSM.

Likewise, none of the participants report having attended formal supervision training provided by one of the national or state counseling agencies. Future studies comparing SCSM who have supervision training to those who never receive any supervision training could understand how supervision models enhance supervision practices by SCSM.

More in-depth studies could highlight whether SCSM switches between the various roles associated with the discrimination model and how they shift their supervision practices depending on the school counseling intern's professional needs. These future studies could help further define other effective characteristics and behaviors of SCSM or could further define what informs SCSM supervision practices.

The participants used many different definitions to describe effective leadership characteristics in SCSM; therefore, one definition of what leadership entails in a school counseling site mentor is difficult to ascertain just from this one study. Due to the numerous definitions of what leadership constitutes, future studies might focus on whether leadership is considered an effective characteristic of SCSM and what role leadership plays in SCSM supervision tasks. Few participants note that self-reflection as an important part of providing supervision, so it might help examine what role self-reflection plays in supervision.

Conclusion

Seven participants from the North Texas region agreed to participate in the study. During the study, the participants worked in the public-school setting in elementary, middle, and high schools. The qualitative study consisted of two in-person interviews and one observation between each participant and their school counseling intern.

In this study, I set out to answer two research questions. In the first question, I explored current SCSM's effective characteristics and behaviors when providing school counseling interns supervision. The second question I asked the participants what informs SCSM supervision practices. The data collected for the first question resulted in 34 codes that were categorized into five major themes: feedback, leadership qualities, reflective practices, relationship, and teaching. The data related to the second research question resulted in 15 codes and five major themes:

standards of governing counseling agencies, personal experiences, feedback, university/district/school administration standards, and logistics.

The study findings help clarify the perspectives of some north Texas SCSM and provide a framework to help other SCSM who may be considering providing supervision to school counseling interns. Future research is needed to provide a better foundation for SCSM providing supervision at the school counseling level.

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