A Student's Pathway to Success: Understanding the Connectivity Between High School Counselors' Self-Efficacy and College and Career Advising

Amanda Belanger LaCerte

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A STUDENT’S PATHWAY TO SUCCESS: UNDERSTANDING THE CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS’ SELF-EFFICACY AND COLLEGE AND CAREER ADVISING

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Education

by

Amanda Belanger LaCerte
B.A., Louisiana State University, 2008
M.P.A., Louisiana State University, 2015
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I dedicate this dissertation to my mom who was taken too soon to celebrate the end of this journey with me. Also, to my daughters Ava and Margaret, who unknowingly, supported me through this process by allowing me the ability to focus and write. Lastly, to my biggest cheerleader, my dad. Thank you for always believing in me and being by my side. I love you all very much and could not have done this without you.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how a high school counselor’s perceived self-efficacy impacts high school student advising sessions as it pertains to the student’s program of study and course selection. The foundation of this study was grounded in Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). This single case study was conducted at The Red Stick School located in an urban area in the Deep South. The study included 5 high school counselors as participants who participated in virtual interviews. Explanation building was the qualitative analytical technique used to analyze the data and explain how and/or why students were advised to select certain courses and diploma pathways.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

School counselors are arguably one of the most important personnel on a school campus. Typically, they are charged with a myriad of duties such as academic advising, mental health counseling, test preparation, and wellness checks (Lambie, Stickl Haugen, Borland, & Campbell, 2019). The presence of a school counselor and their rapport with students is a catalyst in driving student success and positive decision-making (Bird, Kim, & Wierzalis, 2008). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) (2019) emphasizes the connection between the school counselor and their impact on academic success. The ASCA National Model suggested that school counselors “must be skilled in addressing students personal, social, and career needs which directly impacts academic success” (ASCA, 2019).

The role and expectations of a school counselor have changed substantially over the past several decades. This has led to an extreme disconnect in school counselor identity and lack of a clearly defined role. According to ASCA (2019), the profession itself is over a century old. School counseling originated in the early 1900s as vocational counseling positions predominately held by teachers or available administrators who possessed a single list of duties, but no formal programmatic structure or delivery model (ASCA, 2019, p. vii). The shift in counseling began in the 1920s and continued throughout the twenty-first century. In the 1920s, the counseling profession shifted its focus from “economic issues to psychological issues with an emphasis on counseling for personal adjustment” (ASCA, 2019, p. vii). The 1930s shifted to a more defined role of a counselor and created an organizational structure that focused on creating a role with a structure for guidance services as opposed to a list of duties. The 1940s and 50s boasted two new Acts, the Vocational Education Act (1946) and National Defense Education Act (NDEA; 1958) which assisted in selecting and training counselors. The 1950s also gave birth to
ASCA which gave counselors a professional organization and national community. In the 1960s and 1970s the profession began to crystallize as a whole and really gained momentum in the 1980s and 1990s. The argument to define the role of a school counselor began to take shape during these two decades; however, there was no resolution about the defined role until the beginning of the twenty-first century. In 2003, ASCA developed its first National Model which many states and districts began to adopt. While the school counseling profession is ever evolving, the importance of the role of a school counselor and the implementation of the ASCA National Model (2019) is now consistently viewed as the standard within the profession. While the ASCA National Model (2019) addresses the way to deliver the counseling program, school counselors must receive a solid educational foundation to meet the demands of the model. This solid educational foundation is found by enrolling in a college or university that has a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited program.

CACREP is arguably the foremost accrediting body for counselor education programs. They provide standards that institutions must abide by to produce highly skilled counselors. The 2016 CACREP standards offer specialty areas for counselors to select an area of concentration. Noteworthy, the school counseling specialty specifically focuses on best practices for college and career advising (CACREP, 2015). However, prior to the 2016 CACREP standards, there was no focus on college and career advising (CACREP, 2009). Future school counselors who enroll in this specialty area should possess higher levels of self-efficacy relative to college and career advising due to the exposure of the specific content and requirement of practical experience under a supervisor (Burns & Cruikshanks, 2018). However, a disconnect exists between school counselor education and training and the role they fulfill upon employment. This disconnect has
led to numerous challenges in the profession as well as tension between school administration and professional school counselors.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) showed the most recent dropout rates for high school students, students aged 16-24 years old, was 5.4% (NCES, 2020). The highest dropout rates are found in underrepresented minority populations of Hispanic and African American students. White and Asian students maintained the lowest dropout rates. While the data shows a downward trend, roughly 3% over the past decade (NCES, 2020, p. iii), understanding the role school counselors have in retention and student success is important. Current literature about dropout rates suggested several reasons and this study focused specifically on potential dropout factors that stem from school counselor related variables such as perceived self-efficacy. Alger and Luke (2015) explained that school counselors are “advocates as well as liaisons among education stakeholders to ensure students’ academic achievement and preparation for life” (p. 17). The truth behind this statement further emphasizes the importance of the role of the school counselor and implementation of the 2019 ASCA National Model.

One of the main hindrances for effective school counseling is the disregard for the recommended student-to-counselor ratio. ASCA suggested a school counselor ratio of 250-to-1, but the national average of 2018-2019 showed a ratio of 430-to-1 (ASCA, n.d.). These high student-to-counselor ratios mixed with role confusion and low self-efficacy are two important variable that negatively impact students and lead to unintended negative outcomes for students.

**Statement of the Problem**

Many school counselors lack the proper educational training, professional development, and self-efficacy to effectively implement the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2019). This lack
of preparation leaves high school counselors stuck in antiquated models (guidance models from
the 1900s) or in schools with nonexistent counseling programs which leads to poor advising for
students. An additional challenge is that school principals charged with hiring school counselors
do not have a clear understanding of the role and function of an effective school counselor
(McGlothlin & Miller, 2008; Lambie, Stickl Haugen, Borland, & Campbell, 2019). The problem
between the lack of robust course offerings specifically related to school counseling and
misalignment of school counseling duties with the ASCA National Model (2019) may cause low
self-efficacy and in turn negatively impact student advising.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how high school counselors’
perceived self-efficacy impacts high school student advising sessions as it pertains to the
student’s program of study (e.g., diploma pathway) and course selection. This study can add to
the knowledge of the need for appropriately prepared high school counselors which supports the
need for appropriate educational training (e.g., implementing the ASCA National Model (2019)
and attendance at CACREP accredited programs). This study also highlighted potential areas for
high school counselor professional development needs and shed light on ways in which the
LDOE can achieve its 2025 Fast Forward Initiative goals.

**Theoretical Base**

The researcher used Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) as her theoretical framework to
develop the interview protocol and survey questions. SCT, conceptualized by Bandura (1997),
suggests individuals learn based on their surroundings and interpretations. The theory originally
started as the Social- Learning Theory of Identificatory Processes (SLT) in the 1960s and later
morphed into the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) in 1986 (LaMorte, 2016). The overarching
principle behind the theory is that an individual learns from experiences within a social context. SCT uses the notion of an agent, which Bandura claims is the key tenet to the theory (Bandura, 2005). The definition of an agent is a person or thing that takes an active role or produces a specified effect. The updated theory adopts an “agentic perspective to self-development, adaptation, and change” (Bandura, 2005). The agent in the updated theory can be a person, place, thing, or concept that influences an individual to feel or think a certain way that further influences behavior. This theory focuses on how an individual is intentionally influenced and the causation of the influence on behavior. Based on these influences, an individual is poised to respond a certain way to life choices (p. 9). In this study, the high school counselors are viewed as the agents who in turn influence students’ course selection and programs of study.

Research Questions

1. How do high school counselors perceive their college and career advising self-efficacy?
2. How do school counselors’ self-efficacy impact student advising and the completion of the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP)?

Methods

Most of the research concerning the impact self-efficacy has on school counselors has been from a qualitative perspective. The goal of this study was to understand how high school counselors’ self-efficacy impacts high school student advising sessions as it pertains to the student’s program of study and course selection. This study was focused on interpretations between high school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy and the relationship to effective student advising. An exploratory single case study design was used for this study.

One school, The Red Stick School, is the single case to be studied. The school is in an urban location in the Deep South and serves over 1,300 students. The school enrolls students in
grades 9-12 and offers students the ability to take dual enrollment courses, advanced placement courses, or earn an industry-based certification. A total of five interviews were conducted with school counselors. The participants chosen for the interviews were currently employed high school counselors within the school. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format and were conducted through Zoom. They were recorded and transcribed for coding.

This single case study was bound by place and time. The participants that were interviewed and studied were the currently employed high school counselors at the same high school that currently advised students. Because these counselors advised students during the spring semester, I bound the case by this time. The interviews occurred during the time in which counselors were completing the IGP with students and working on course scheduling. Advising and course scheduling typically occurs between late February through mid-May. All counselors were knowledgeable of the ASCA National Model (2019).

Prior to conducting data collection, the researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board at Louisiana State University. The Red Stick School did not have to approve the study since participants completed a participant consent form; however, the researcher did obtain approval from the school administrator using an administrator consent form.

The researcher used Yin’s (2018) explanation building technique to analyze the data. Explanation building takes the theoretical proposition and uses the data to explain how or why the outcomes occurred (Yin, 2018, p. 179). Using this analytic technique helped the researcher confirm or deny the proposition that high school counselor self-efficacy directly correlated to how a counselor advised students.
Limitations

There were few limitations for this study. The interviews occurred at one school which limits the ability to gather a larger scale of data. However, utilizing this one school allowed the researcher to interview a staff that worked with a diverse and well-represented student population and had an expansive student demographic enrollment.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms were used in this study:

1. American School Counselor Association (ASCA) - the professional school counseling association that supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, career and social/emotional development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society (ASCA, 2020).

2. Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) - the main accrediting body for counseling programs that publishes standards for all counseling education programs.

3. Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) - a plan developed by the school counselor with the students beginning in eighth grade that is reviewed annually and lists the required core/foundational courses to be taken throughout high school (LDOE, 2016, p. 10).

4. Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) - a state agency that oversees all public education within the state to include charter schools

5. Louisiana School Counseling Model (LaSCM) - the state’s comprehensive state model that defines the role of a school counselor and creates a cohesive and comprehensive professional school counseling plan (LaSCM, 2010).
6. *Self-efficacy* - a person’s belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1997).
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Chapter 2, the researcher divided the literature review into four different categories to provide readers with an understanding of the role, expectation, and job duties of high school counselors, specifically in Louisiana. These sections were as follows: a) accreditation standards for school counselor programs, Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2015), b) counselor self-efficacy, c) college and career counseling, and d) educational shifts in Louisiana education. The first section described the 2016 CACREP standards and their applicability to the role of high school counselors. CACREP is the main accrediting body for school counseling programs. Secondly, the researcher provided an overview of the efficacy of a high school counselor and challenges in the current climate of school counseling. This part of the literature review also discussed the importance of developing rapport with students and the impact of culturally responsive counseling. Third, the researcher discussed Louisiana’s high school graduation requirements and literature relative to college and career counseling. The final section discussed the shifts in secondary education in Louisiana over the past decade.

CACREP Standards

Since 1981, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) has published standards for counselor education programs. CACREP accredited institutions complete a rigorous application process as well as a site evaluation to demonstrate adherence to the standards. To date, three iterations of CACREP standards exist. The first published standards were the 2001 standards, followed by the 2009 standards. The most recently published standards are the 2016 standards and were “written with the intent to promote a unified counseling profession” (CACREP, 2015, p. 3). CACREP (2015) allows accredited
programs autonomy while maintaining a streamlined level of rigor but does not mandate how schools must adhere to or implement the standards. The standards inform counselor education programs of best practices in the field.

The purpose of having a CACREP-accredited program is to ensure that graduates are prepared for careers in the following specialties: mental health, human services, education, private practice, government, military, business, and industry (2015). The standards were organized into six sections, with each section elaborating on each individual standard. An important note regarding the new standards is the fact that they only became effective as of July 1, 2020. Therefore, programs with specialty areas in Career Counseling, College Counseling and Student Affairs, and School Counseling require an additional twelve hours of credit for all students enrolling in these programs (CACREP, 2015). This change suggested the need for additional learning in those specialty areas based on results from those programs. However, after further review by the CACREP Board of Directors, the decision was made to extend the sixty-hour requirement for compliance with the 2016 standards to July 1, 2023 (CACREP, 2018). The board acknowledged that the increase in credit hours was to promote the “unification of counselor preparation” (p. 2). Still, many challenges arose during the period leading up to the 2020 deadline from currently accredited programs as well as those seeking accreditation. One of the main challenges of implementing the sixty-credit hour requirement was creating a unified identity for a counselor. Merlin, Pagano, George, Zanone, and Newman (2017) explained that professionals identifying as a counselor struggled to find a singular definition for the role and the intent of moving to the sixty-hour requirement would unify degree expectations and in turn define the identity of a counselor (p. 76). According to CACREP’S special announcement report (2018), one of the successes attributed to the counseling profession was the “development of a
consensus definition of counseling” (p. 1) by the ACA 2020 Task Force. Due to the recent consensus definition, CACREP allowed more time for restructuring certain counseling concentrations in order to adhere to the sixty-hour requirement.

For the purpose of this study, the CACREP standards most relevant to the particular case study were: Section 2: Professional Counseling Identity and Section 5: Entry-Level Specialty Areas. The Professional Counseling Identity section further categorizes standards applicable to entry-level and doctoral programs. These categories, Foundation and Counseling Curriculum, detail the overall program objectives and discuss the importance of the field while also mentioning the specialty areas of counseling. The overall counseling curriculum highlights eight core areas: ethical practice, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, career development, counseling and helping relationships, group counseling and group work, assessment and testing, and research and program evaluation (CACREP, 2016, pp. 9-12). These areas demonstrate the core curriculum areas that a future counselor receives in his educational journey and suggests that the future counselor receives exposure in a diverse curriculum.

As in most career fields, specialty areas delineated knowledge and skills for a particular focus and allow the individual to develop specialized knowledge and skills. Specialty areas, as defined by CACREP, were “a structured sequence of curricular and clinical experiences...housed within a master’s degree program” (p. 44). The CACREP standards (2016) outline the entry-level specialty areas in section five. Seven specialty areas make up this section of standards, and the researcher found importance in three specific areas. These specialty areas include career counseling, college counseling and student affairs, and school counseling. The standards in each section were thorough and well-laid-out, but the challenge posed to future counselors is the ability to blend theories and skills from career counseling and college counseling into the school
counseling specialty area. Indeed, it is possible for a student to attend a university that offers a school counseling specialty area only, and never take a career or college specialty course. Yet, one could argue that high school counselors really are a mix of these specialty areas.

However, CACREP (2016) offered three essential standards in the specialty area of school counseling under section three, practice, “g. strategies to facilitate school and postsecondary transitions, j. interventions to promote college and career readiness and k. strategies to promote equity in student achievement and college access” (p. 33). These practice area standards suggested future school counselors receive exposure to theories and skills/strategies for postsecondary life, but to what extent? And what specific knowledge, skills or competencies would align to these standards? This question shifted the researcher to focus on the importance of CACREP standards in the school counseling specialty area.

Interestingly, the 2009 CACREP standards, the iteration before the 2016 standards, did not include information specific to postsecondary transitions, college and career readiness, and the promotion of equity in achievement and college access (CACREP, n.d.). The section “School Counseling” focused on counselors’ knowledge of the ASCA National model (2005), and models developed by states in response to the national model, as well as promoting student growth and parental involvement (pp. 46-52). This suggests that prior to the 2016 standards implementation on July 1, 2016 (CACREP, 2015, p. 1), students enrolled in CACREP accredited programs did not receive intentional knowledge surrounding postsecondary transitions as well as equitable access to rigorous college-prep programs while in high school. As the researcher noted, even the 2016 standards do not explicitly state the level to which counselor education programs should implement student knowledge and theory to postsecondary transition or the relationship between high school student achievement and college access.
CACREP and The American School Counselor Association (ASCA)

Bauman, Siegel, Szymanski, Davis, and Seabolt (2003) discussed the trends over a fifty-year period in school counseling journals. They focused on the inception of counseling journals and the writing included in these journals to magnify the type of discussions revolving around the counseling profession and how those conversations morphed over a period of fifty years. They focused on the specialty area of school counseling and its attainment of the status of a profession (p. 79). This attainment was marked by the formation of a professional organization in 1952, known as the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) (p. 79).

Through the ASCA, the first school counseling journal, The School Counselor, was published and dedicated to publishing articles relative to the field of school counseling (p. 80). Bauman et al. (2003) researched how well the 2001 CACREP standards were being covered in the journals dedicated to school counseling. In this researcher’s opinion, Bauman et al.’s research on the publishing of the 2001 CACREP standards and the visibility to professional school counselors helped guide the shifts in standards throughout the years in an effort to strengthen not only the identity of the profession but the competencies as well. By publishing findings, professionals within the field were able to dialogue and problem solve challenges or gaps with the standards. An important takeaway from Bauman et al’s (2003) findings was that “collaborative contributions by university authors and K-12 coauthors peaked in the 1970s and then decreased” in the 2000s (p. 82). This researcher noted this finding as important due to the knowledge demands for a K-12 counselor as it related to student matriculation into a postsecondary environment.

ASCA is a professional association dedicated to school counselors. The association is membership-based, but offers support to nonmembers through professional development and
published resources. ASCA’s main focus is to “enhance school counseling programs and research effective school counseling practices” (ASCA, 2020). ASCA (2020) claims to be “the home for counselors since 1952,” and it appears to be precisely that. After further review of their site, fifty states plus the territory of Guam have individual chapters through ASCA (ASCA, 2020). An important note is that membership is not required in ASCA if a school counselor is a member of the state/territory association. This suggests that individual state associations are given autonomy to develop their own plans and goals, as well as school counseling models, based on state policy while under the guidance of ASCA.

**Accreditation Standards and School Counselor Preparation**

Honderich and Lloyd-Hazlett (2015) surveyed graduate counseling students in order to assess factors that influenced graduate program enrollment decisions. They noted “research to date has not surveyed counseling students about their knowledge of CACREP accreditation prior to enrolling in graduate-level counseling programs” (p. 124) with the majority of surveys published seeking to address enrollment factors for undergraduate students. Honderich and Lloyd-Hazlett pointed to studies completed by Kallio (1995) and Poock and Love (2001) which highlighted the most influential factors for program participation and enrollment (p. 125). They drew on information from these studies to develop their study in order to highlight the importance of accreditation, specifically CACREP, as an indicator for enrollment. They discussed the perceived benefits and challenges of CACREP accreditation and the impact on student enrollment choice. Surveyed students noted “increased internships and job opportunities, student quality, and increased faculty professional involvement and publishing” (p. 126) as benefits for enrolling in a CACREP accredited program. While licensure requirements vary by state, surveyed students also noted the likelihood to earn professional licensure by enrolling in
CACREP accredited programs (p. 126). Honderich and Lloyd-Hazlett (2015) also noted that some state licensing boards required more documentation, or supplemental documentation, to substantiate training adherence to licensure requirements which required additional work on the applicant (pp. 126-127). While Honderich and Lloyd-Hazlett studied the benefits for enrolling in CACREP versus Non-CACREP accredited programs from student perspectives, additional literature reviewed the importance of hiring graduates of CACREP versus Non CACREP accredited programs.

According to McGlothlin and Miller (2008), “principals do not always have a full understanding of the role and function of effective secondary school counselors” (p. 61) but are often the hiring decision makers for school counseling positions. They discussed the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) on the counseling role and the importance of hiring a school counselor from a CACREP accredited program. McGlothlin and Miller (2008) highlighted the shift ASCA 2005 made as a response to NCLB by creating the National Model which moved the focus “away from counselors working as alienated ancillary staff members to being leaders of the school counseling program” (p. 62.) which aligned directly with the ASCA standards. Clerical duties and record maintenance, which were often duties previously performed by school counselors were rid when the ASCA National Model was formed (McGlothlin and Miller, 2008, p. 63). The authors noted the significant variation in the roles of a school counselor which aligns with the shift in CACREP standards review and the CACREP Board’s decision to postpone the sixty hour requirement due to a lack of a defined role of the school counselor (CACREP, 2018). McGlothlin and Miller (2008) explained that CACREP accredited programs required clinical experiences through a practicum and internship which is not mandated in programs without CACREP accreditation (p. 65). This suggests another important characteristic
of CACREP accreditation status in that graduates of accredited programs will not only have an understanding of their role and expectations, but the counselors of accredited programs have more practical experience upon graduation that is well-documented and supervised.

While the literature suggested the importance of students enrolling in CACREP accredited programs for the benefits and the reasons that school leaders should hire counselors from CACREP accredited programs, in 2015, the state of Louisiana required school counselors to complete a CACREP accredited program in order to earn the state license. Prior to 2015, CACREP accreditation did not impact school counselor status. The specific requirements for school counselor k-12 certification are 1) completing a master’s degree from a CACREP accredited college or university in school counseling, 2) a practicum or internship, and 3) successfully passing the PRAXIS exam in school guidance and counseling (Office of Certification, Preparation, and Recruitment, 2012). This researcher noted that these requirements became effective January 1, 2013, and candidates enrolled in programs prior to this date were given until June 30, 2017, to adhere to the requirements for coursework from CACREP colleges (Office of Certification, Preparation, and Recruitment, 2012).

Louisiana’s Bulletin 746 outlines the requirements for personnel to receive ancillary certification in school counseling and was updated as of October 2020 by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). The bulletin states that “individuals who have completed all courses and degree requirements for the previous policy by June 30, 2017, will be allowed to have this endorsement added to their certificates” (BESE, 2020) which further suggests that the current school counselors likely did not receive training from a CACREP accredited institution and are grandfathered in by the previous policy.
Further, the researcher noted according to CACREP’s list of accredited institutions in Louisiana only thirteen colleges and universities are accredited with eleven specifically designated as having school counseling programs (CACREP, 2020). This suggested that preparation as a school counselor is robust in Louisiana; however, after further review of five of the eleven colleges and universities, the researcher noted there is minimal focus on the practice expectations outlined in the 2016 CACREP school counseling standards (CACREP, 2015). For example, the program of study listed for these colleges and universities show that a majority of the programs are geared towards mental health counseling according to the listed course descriptions. These listed programs of study do not support direct alignment with CACREP standards for school counseling specifically as it relates to “strategies to facilitate school and postsecondary transitions, skills to critically examine the connections between social, emotional, and behavior problems and academic achievement, and approaches to increase promotion and graduation rates” (CACREP, 2015). This suggests to the researcher that upon certification in school counseling, many high school counselors are ill-prepared for their actual role as a counselor in a secondary setting.

One university’s college of education reviewed by the researcher laid out the program of study for the counseling program. Two concentrations were listed as options within the program, school counseling and mental health counseling. The review of each program revealed many course similarities between both curriculum lists such as the required courses, counseling across the life span and counseling theory and techniques, but there were definitive differences for each pathway that aligned nicely to the new CACREP (2016) standards. For example, two courses under the school counseling curriculum list were very specific to the school counseling field and did not include overarching principles to other fields such as mental health counseling. This
university specifically offered a k-12 career and college readiness course and further review of
the other programs around the stated confirmed this university’s program was the only one in the
state to offer such course. As noted, not all the Louisiana CACREP-accredited programs
delineated their courses like this. This is an important note when understanding the educational
background and knowledge capacity of school counselors.

Student-to-Counselor Ratios

The most recent report published by ASCA highlights the student-to-counselor ratio by
each state as well as the national average (ASCA, n.d.). This report was done in conjunction with
the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) with the data coming
from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) utilizing the most recent school years
available, which were 2018-2019 (ASCA, n.d.). The report noted the average national ratio is
430 while ASCA recommends a ratio not to exceed 250 students to 1 counselor (ASCA, n.d.).
According to Tang and Ng (2019) who completed a retrospective correlational study regarding
postsecondary enrollment, found that many predictors impact a students’ enrollment in a
postsecondary institution, with the most significant predictor being school counselor contact.
Their study suggested that students who met with their counselors for college planning were 1.4
times more likely to enroll in a postsecondary institution (p. 353). These findings are vital to the
researcher because consideration must be given to the daily duties of school counselors to ensure
sufficient time to meet with students regarding college and career planning.

The results from the NACAC and ASCA report (n.d.) show a steady trend of student-to-
counselor ratios from 2004-2015 with only a one percent increase over ten years. Louisiana,
however, showed the most significant growth, with a 114% increase in the student-to-counselor
ratio over ten years (n.d.). See figure 2.1 for Louisiana’s ten-year trend.
The increase in students, coupled with the decline in school counselors, does not bode well for increasing postsecondary enrollment in Louisiana based on Tang and Ng’s (2019) results.

Similarly, Belasco (2013) completed a quantitative study to measure whether school counselors affected postsecondary enrollment (p. 785) and concluded that students do not have sufficient access to a school counselor. He controlled variables such as gender, grade-point average, and socioeconomic status (SES) and found school counselors were reported to be the most influential person for promoting college enrollment with all variables controlled (p. 795). He also stated the “multifarious role of the school counseling profession” (p. 782) presents additional obstacles, which is a shared concern of this researcher. This researcher suggests that obstacles such as performing clerical duties inhibits school counselors’ ability to dedicate the
necessary time to students as per the ASCA model (2019) and CACREP (2016) standards. Recent literature suggests that school administrators must be mindful of the daily duties performed by a school counselor to maximize individual student growth and ultimately adhere to the national counseling models which address a counselor’s use of time as seen in the ASCA (2007, 2012, 2019) school counseling model.

**Louisiana’s School Counseling Model**

According to the Louisiana Department of Education (2010), the department, known as the LDOE, worked on a comprehensive guidance model in 1998 (p. 3). In 2002, the LDOE released its first version called the Louisiana Model for Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling (p. 3), which came after ASCA finalized its comprehensive national model in 2000. During the two years prior to publishing the model, the LDOE collaborated with the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the School-to-Work Office, and the Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) to offer professional development to nine schools from different regions of the state with the focus of piloting the model. The following year, 2001, new schools participated in training with the most successful schools serving as the state model for the implementation of the model (p. 3). Between 2007-2010, the Professional School Counseling Task Force was charged with “developing recommendations to assist school counselors in increasing student achievement” (p. 3) and consisted of appointed members (p. 5). The task force’s work led to an emphasis being placed on hiring certified professional school counselors and linking grant funding to support these initiatives (p. 3) as well as designing an updated model that addressed the unique needs of Louisiana students (p. 5). The final product became known as the Louisiana School Counseling Model (LaSCM), and it “solidified the definitive presence of school counseling as a profession” (p. 5).
The purpose of the LaSCM (2010) is to “create one vision and one voice for school counseling programs” (p. 5) in Louisiana by providing “comprehensive, developmental, and professional counseling services equitably for all students” (p. 5). The entire document is approximately one hundred pages and includes numerous resources and references to assist with program implementation. The introduction clarifies two important action items for counselors to complete which are known as the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) and Academic Profile. The IGP should be completed by the end of students’ eighth grade year in consultation with parents/guardians. This plan becomes part of students’ record and should be updated annually by students, counselors, and families. The IGP is a roadmap for each student’s high school career and lays out the “sequence of courses that is consistent with the student’s stated goals for one year after graduation” (p. 6). The Academic Profile, like the IGP, should be done in consultation with each student and family. The information gained from the Academic Profile should be included in the IGP and digs deeper into each student’s future goals. This profile should be completed during ninth grade using an appropriate web-based student guidance system (p. 6). All academic, personal goals, college and career plans, extracurricular activities, and skills/interests make up the Academic Profile (p. 6). As with the IGP, the Academic Profile should be reviewed annually.

While all seven chapters included important information, the researcher focused on four out of seven chapters in the LaSCM. Chapter one gave an overview of the LaSCM and detailed its benefits. The numerous benefits were broken down into the following categories: (benefits to) students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, boards and departments of education, school counselors, counselor educators, post-secondary education, student services personnel, and community: business, labor, and industry (pp. 10-12). The benefits for school counselors and
post-secondary education were of particular interest and were addressed in the later chapters in
detail. Of note, defining the responsibilities while seeking to eliminate non-school
counseling activities and supporting access to each student (p. 11) as benefits for school
counselors was important to the researcher because it aligns directly with the program
implementation phase discussed in chapter seven particularly where the LaSCM mentioned that
the school counseling program must operate in a supportive work environment where
administrators support the school counselor’s program priorities and demands (p. 48).

Chapter two covered the entirety of the LaSCM and elaborated on its connectivity to the
ASCA national model. Figure 2.2 depicts the ASCA national model and was adopted for the
LaSCM (p. 13) to stress the “importance of using information learned through the accountability
process to refine the foundation of an effective school counseling program” (p. 13). See Figure
2.2.

Figure 2.2. LaSCM Accountability Connection Model
Reprinted from The Louisiana School Counseling Model: A Comprehensive Student
Development Program by the Louisiana Department of Education. (2010) with permission
http://www.louisianaschoolcounselor.com/uploads/7/7/1/9/77191223/la_school_counseling_mod
el.pdf
The figure represents a visual graphic for the movement between the entire school and function of the LaSCM. The use of time and calendars were discussed and fall under the delivery system of the graphic. Important information was given relative to appropriate and inappropriate use of counselors’ time. The LaSCM stated “a comprehensive counseling program requires a school counselor to spend the majority of his/her time in direct service (contact) with students” (p. 15). The researcher noted the relevance of this statement given that a majority of Louisiana school counselors spend their time on other tasks not related to direct student service. The LaSCM stated school counselors should use calendars, both a master calendar and weekly calendar, to plan and ensure activities aligned to the model are adhered to (p. 15). See Figure 2.3 for LaSCM’s sample distribution of annual counselor time spent on tasks (p. 37). Counselors and administrators must work collaboratively together to ensure counselor’s have the capacity to follow anything similar to the sample schedule. As noted in the aforementioned student-to-counselor ratio section, a student-to-counselor ratio of 468 to 1 would make adherence to this schedule challenging.

![Sample Distribution of Total School Counselor Time](http://www.louisianaschoolcounselor.com/uploads/7/7/1/9/77191223/la_school_counseling_model.pdf)

**Figure 2.3. School Counselor Work Time Distribution**

Reprinted from The Louisiana School Counseling Model: A Comprehensive Student Development Program by the Louisiana Department of Education. (2010) with permission
Chapter five focused on the management system which “describes various organizational processes and tools needed to manage a school counseling program” (p. 30). This chapter discussed the importance of collaboration between school counselors and school administrators, the importance of student data, and effective use of time. As mentioned in chapter two, effective use of time is imperative to reaching all students and adhering to the equitable access and direct contact the LaSCM calls for. Particularly important, chapter five discussed the use of data and its connectivity to planning and closing the achievement gap for students. According to the LaSCM, eighty percent of a counselor’s time should be spent on direct service to students while the other time is spent on program management (p. 38). This means that a school counselor should spend twenty percent of his time creating calendars, gathering and analyzing data, and interpreting student records. All of these tasks are listed under the appropriate activity list for counselors (p. 39) and if completed, only strengthen student performance.

Lastly, chapter seven, “Implementation,” went into detail regarding the work environment and alignment to ASCA (p. 48). When considering implementation of the LaSCM, schools were directed to staff at a student-to-counselor ratio of 250 to 1 which is appropriate to implementing the program (LDOE, 2010, p. 48; ASCA, 2019, p. 4). Under LaSCM, all school counselors must hold a valid certification from their state. According to the Louisiana Counseling Association (LCA), persons seeking to become a Louisiana professional school counselor must satisfy two criteria. They must have earned a master’s degree in school counseling from a CACREP accredited university and pass the Praxis examination in School Counseling and Guidance (LCA, n.d.). Most noteworthy is that chapter seven states that “all staff members accept responsibility for the infusion of school counseling standards and competencies”
(p. 48) which further emphasizes that the LaSCM is a holistic comprehensive approach the entire school should adopt.

After researching current literature relative to Louisiana counseling models and shifts in counseling policy, the researcher could not find information or studies specifically related to Louisiana’s implementation of the LaSCM or its effectiveness. The researcher noted these gaps and considered future studies should be done on the overall implementation of the CACREP 2016 standards and LaSCM to be a benefit to Louisiana school policy makers, school system leadership, and other stakeholders in Louisiana schools and much available through databases or the LCA or LDOE websites and publications. However, in 2014 the LDOE released its first iteration of the Louisiana High School Guidebook. A recent update was made and the newest edition of the guidebook was published on May 19, 2020, which stated the guidebooks were updated annually. While this document addressed the high school program as a whole, accountability scores, enhancing college and career readiness, it had a section directly related to school counselors and IGP development (LDOE, 2020). The guidebook’s purpose is to condense policies and resources into one document for effective high school planning (LDOE, 2020, p. 2). All iterations of the guidebooks discussed IGPs and impactful strategies for school counselors (grades eight-twelve) to effectively plan for postsecondary opportunities. Adhering to the strategies for IGP development (annual review, career exploration, course and grade data tracking) can ensure that students and counselors have deep conversations relative to postsecondary planning. As previously stated, the IGP serves as a roadmap for the student’s high school pathway and should be modified and reviewed as needed. Students should rely heavily on counselor input which means a well-rounded counselor is imperative to student success, retention, promotion, and matriculation.
Counselor Efficacy

Social cognitive theorist, Bandura (1997), studied behavior and motivation. Bandura’s (1997) definition of self-efficacy and its applicability to the school counseling profession became a focus for this researcher. Not only did Bandura define self-efficacy, but he also gave a succinct understanding of how self-efficacy impacts an individual in terms of goal setting. Bandura (1986, 1995) explained that people who had higher self-efficacy in specific areas of their behavior were more likely to set higher goals, have stronger commitment, be more motivated and resilient, persevere, and lastly, more likely to achieve the higher goals they set. Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines, and Johnston (2008) highlight the importance of theorists like Bandura and their impact on perceived self-efficacy (p. 166). They used Bandura’s thought that “self-efficacy beliefs are at the core of human behavior and influence the choices people make and the courses of action they pursue” (Holcomb-McCoy et. al., 2008, p. 166) to explain why individuals with “little motivation to pursue ambitious goals and to persevere in the face of difficulties” (p. 166) do not believe they can produce a desired outcome and implications for future research related to improving school counselor self-efficacy based on the results of the School Counselor Multicultural Self-Efficacy Scale (SCMES). When paralleling this notion to the work of a high school counselor, this researcher determined that a school counselor’s self-efficacy is a central focus for effective student outcomes. If the school counselor feels efficacious in topics such as career and college counseling, the counselor would be more likely to advise on such topics as opposed to a colleague who does not feel efficacious in that specific area. Holcomb-McCoy et. al. (2018) reviewed “perceived self-efficacy,” which referred to one’s belief in his own capabilities to attain a certain level and concluded that the use of self-efficacy scales and assessments were crucial tools needed to fully understand the effectiveness of a counselor which
in turn could lead supervisors to identifying much needed professional development opportunities (pp. 166-167). The researchers also noted that a myriad of research has been conducted on school counselor competency but not on self-efficacy.

Their study, which used 181 members of ASCA, was to understand the correlation between an individual counselor’s characteristics with their level of multicultural self-efficacy in order to highlight gaps that need to be addressed in training for school counselors in diverse school settings (Holcomb-McCoy et. al., 2018, p. 168). The study findings showed that while respondents were earning their master’s in counseling degrees from CACREP accredited institutions, those who enrolled in at least five to seven courses specifically related to multicultural counseling rated themselves higher in self-efficacy on the SCMES (Holcomb-McCoy et. al., 2018, p. 172). By taking a key finding from Holcomb-McCoy et. al.’s (2018) study that school counselors with perceived higher self-efficacy in multicultural counseling are more likely to believe they have capacity to understand multicultural concepts for students (p. 177), one can conclude that there is a direct relationship between school counselors’ course progression/choices taken during their education and their ability to perform specific work-related duties. The impact of this study suggested to this researcher that institutions of higher education offering degrees in counseling need to have a deep understanding of the connectivity between courses offered and the correlation to self-efficacy. This study also provided a clear indication for counseling supervisors (e.g., school principals) to understand the individual counselor needs to better serve students in a school setting.

**Self-Efficacy and Impact**

Bodenhorn, Wolfe, and Airen (2010) similarly studied counselor self-efficacy and explained that school counselors must understand the impact that their individual student
counseling programs have on student achievement and equity (p. 165) and the relationship
school counselors should have with other school stakeholders to best implement a high-quality
school program. Counselors should also look through the lens of the achievement gap and
understand their impact on closing the achievement gap that was established under the No Child
Left Behind Act of 2002 (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2001). They reviewed
academic achievement data from the National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP)
from 2007 and dropout data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) from 2008
and noted that African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian students on average
performed worse than and dropped out more frequently than Caucasian and Asian students
(Bodenhorn, Wolfe, & Airen, 2010, pp. 165-166). From this data, as well as the review of other
studies, Bodenhorn et. al. (2010) determined that the “school counseling program can be
beneficial to students and schools in regards to academic grades and attitude” (p. 166). The
purpose of their study was to “expand and update the knowledge about school counseling” (p.
166) by examining self-efficacy as a variable. Their three research questions focused on the
relationships between school counselor perceptions of the achievement gap and counseling
programmatic approach, self-efficacy and the achievement gap status and equity, and self-
efficacy’s relation to the utilization of the school counseling program approach (pp. 168- 170).
Bodenhorn et. al. found that the specific counseling program approach does not have a direct
relationship with the achievement gap status or equity issues, but that most respondents who
rated low with self-efficacy skipped the questions regarding the achievement gap and equity (p.
171). The results of their study also supported the assumption that school counselors with high
self-efficacy have a different and more positive impact on students than counselors with lower
self-efficacy ratings. Lastly, their study noted that school counselors with higher levels of self-
efficacy were more likely to advise equitably to all students which led to more equitable academic opportunities regardless of SES (p. 171).

Bodenhorn et. al.’s (2010) study suggested to this researcher that a direct relationship exists between school counselor self-efficacy and the impact on student success and equity. The results further suggested the importance of counselor ownership of program implementation within the school and the need to involve multiple stakeholders. Assuming school counselors possess mid to high levels of self-efficacy, they would need to work collaboratively with school staff (teachers, leaders) to ensure proper implementation of counseling programs and obtain data on students and the success of program implementation. Conversely, school leaders should have a mutually shared responsibility of understand the school counselors’ level of self-efficacy and offer professional development as needed. This collaborative approach, based on findings from this study, would suggest students would perform greater academically, in turn closing the achievement gap, and offer more equitable outcomes for all students.

Role Confusion and Conflict

Bodenhorn, Wolfe, and Airen (2010) discussed the importance between school counselors and stakeholders and additional literature examined the role confusion for school counselors and conflict prevalent between school counselors and administrators. The educational reform in school leadership practices had a direct impact on the role of a school counselor (Beale & McCay, 2001). This shift, while positive for school principals, led to many challenges for school counselors who were also revamping their practices through national models (ASCA) and standards (CACREP). The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) led the way for positive collaboration between school principals and counselors but like with any policy change, unintended outcomes occur (Carnes-Holt, Range, & Cisler, 2012; NCLB, 2002). In the case of
NCLB (2002), discord between school counselors and principals erupted in the form of job dissatisfaction due to role confusion and ambiguity (Pyne, 2011).

ASCA (2009) defined the role of counselors to “address all students’ academic, personal/social, and career development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating, and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success.” However, research showed this was not the only thing counselors spent their time doing. Professional school counselors were now responsible for fulfilling the role outlined by ASCA (2009) and the myriad of additional duties assigned by school leadership which caused role conflict for counselors (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011, p. 5). A survey conducted by Leuwerke, Walker, and Shi (2009) showed that school principals were not familiar with the ASCA National Model and in turn led school principals to add additional duties such as clerical or administrative tasks to the workload of school counselors in addition to the current workload. The results from the survey which proves there is a clear disconnect between the perspectives of school leadership and counselors regarding the role of a counselor further supports the need for collaboration, communication, and professional development for school counselors and principals. This also explains why school counselors have loosely written job descriptions that are not aligned with the ASCA (2009) duties or the structures for best practices in school counseling listed in the CACREP (2016) standards. The confusion between expected duties and the role duties defined by ASCA (2009) lead to unintended stress within the role (Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, & Solomon, 2005).

**Educational Shifts in Louisiana**

Louisiana created its first *Louisiana Guidebook* in 2016 that was a series of booklets (available electronically through the LDOE website and in print) designed to educate the public
on state policies and provide tools for informational purposes and resource utilization (LDOE, 2016). The guidebook series had three individual guidebooks: early childhood, high school student planning, and the principal teaching and learning guidebooks that allowed stakeholders to effectively plan and implement the new educational reform.

Louisiana Believes, which was the state’s “comprehensive plan to prepare students for college and career success” (LDOE, 2016, p. 3) replaced the previous guidance from LDOE related to areas of concentration for career and technical education and diploma types. The shift in diploma types was implemented with the 2014-2015 freshman cohort (LDOE, 2016). The major shift was a more centralized focus for career and technical education and alignment to TOPS aligned curriculum. Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) is a state funded scholarship available for Louisiana residents enrolling in approved postsecondary colleges and universities or training institutions for a prescribed period (TOPS, n.d.). The TOPS University diploma and Jump Start TOPS Tech diploma were created and went into effect for the ninth-grade class of 2014-2015 through Act 403 of the 2015 Louisiana Legislative Session (LDOE, 2016, p. 21). The TOPS University diploma ensured all Louisiana high school students pursuing this diploma took core and elective courses that made the eligible for TOPS. The Jump Start TOPS Tech diploma ensured students planned and prepared were prepared for industry by completing industry-based certifications while in high school and most of their coursework was aligned to TOPS (LDOE, 2016, p. 21).

These two new diploma types have been implemented over the past five years. With a decent amount of data collected from the past five years, the department decided to implement a new major initiative in the spring of 2021 known as Fast Forward. The purpose of Fast Forward is to ensure all students are on track to a professional career, service, or college degree by
prioritizing dual enrollment, specifically the attainment of an associate’s degree (LDOE, 2021). Fast Forward takes the current diploma types, TOPS University and Jump Start TOPS tech, and offers a third diploma type known as the “Fast Forward Diploma” (LDOE, 2021). By earning a Fast Forward diploma, students are prepared for “current and emerging careers and professions that expose students to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations” (LDOE, 2021). Students who pursue this diploma can opt into one of three pathways: Fast Forward Jump Start 2.0, Fast Forward TOPS University, or Fast Forward High-Demand Apprenticeship. The Fast Forward initiative is meant to assist in achieving the joint Louisiana state goal of having every graduate of 2025 earning at least one dual enrollment credit (LDOE, 2021).

With the shifts in diploma types, increase in pathway opportunities, and emphasis on advanced course selections such as dual enrollment, high school counselors must be capable of multifarious counseling and advising.

**Theoretical Framework**

The researcher used Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) as her theoretical framework to develop the interview protocol and survey questions. SCT, conceptualized by Bandura (1997), suggests individuals learn based on their surroundings and interpretations. The theory originally started as the Social- Learning Theory of Identificatory Processes (SLT) in the 1960s and later morphed into the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) in 1986 (LaMorte, 2016). The overarching principle behind the theory is that an individual learns from experiences within a social context. SCT uses the notion of an agent, which Bandura claims is the key tenet to the theory (Bandura, 2005). The definition of an agent is a person or thing that takes an active role or produces a specified effect. Howard and Myers (1990), psychological researchers, defined agency as human power or capacity and explained the power of agency may or may not be present in day-to-day
activities. The updated SCT theory adopts an “agentic perspective to self-development, adaptation, and change” (Bandura, 2005). The agent in the updated theory can be a person, place, thing, or concept that influences an individual to feel or think a certain way that further influences behavior. Bandura (2001) explained that “cognitive factors do quite well in predicting human behavior” (p. 3) which supports the notion that human agency strongly influences decision making (Howard & Myers, 1990, p. 227). Nonagentic causes (e.g. genetic disposition, environmental processes, or social forces) also influence human behavior which posits there are additional reasons for decision-making (Howard & Myers, 1990, p. 227). However, nonagentic factors are limited because they cannot be changed or disrupted thus leaving personal agency as the ultimate change agent in decision making (Bandura, 2001, p. 5; Howard & Myers, 1990, p. 228).

The SCT focuses on how an individual is intentionally influenced and the causation of the influence on behavior, which would be considered the agentic influence. Based on these influences, an individual is poised to respond a certain way to life choices (p. 9). Chen (2006) explained the importance of human agency as an essential element in the psychological process. He explained the complexities of human agency and the impact on self-efficacy through vocational and career counseling (Chen, 2006, pp. 133-135). He used Bandura’s SCT to “provide sound rationale for applying the agency construct to career development practice” and further support the notion that counseling should always help facilitate the client’s inner perspectives (Chen, 2006, p. 133). In this study, the high school counselor is viewed as the agent who influences students’ course selection and programs of study.

The agentic perspective of SCT focuses on self-actualization and goal setting. Several core features exist of human agency and they all center on forethought and future-directed plans
Bandura explains that the agent also acts as a monitor and self-regulator based on the influences around the agent. The most salient concept of SCT is that “personal agency operates within a broad network of sociostructural influences” (p. 10) which is important because it proves that “people create social systems to organize, guide, and regulate human activities” (p. 10). Bandura further explains that the development of SCT was due in part to his frustration with behaviorism theories during the start of his career. Through his own analyses, he quickly realized that behavior was not necessarily explained just by individual actions, but rather the external stimuli and social environment which he calls social modeling. Social modeling is when an individual mirrors the behavior of his social setting (mainly another person’s behavior).

Secondary to the agentic perspective of SCT comes the ability for one to exercise self-regulatory behaviors. This means an individual learns from the modeled behavior but also possesses the ability to self-regulate (p. 16) in order to make appropriate decisions and behave accordingly. Bandura (year) contends that an individual forms an opinion based on the influences but can decipher a response. He uses the example of fortuitous influences and encounters to explain self-regulating. He explains that “fortuitous influences are ignored in the causal structure of social sciences” (p. 19) but that an individual’s ability to respond is always present and typically modeled after observed behaviors. He also shares that fortuity does not have to be uncontrolled and an individual could influence fortuitous encounters by pursuing an active (or more active) life (p. 20). In conclusion, Bandura explains that SCT focuses on “integrative principles that operate across differing spheres” (p. 21) and influenced applications in educational development.

SCT is an important framework for understanding the best approach to advising high school students because it offers an approach that accurately reflects how students make
decisions. This is important for school counselors because they must be aware of their own individual biases that would potentially act as an agent and influence student behavior and goal setting. The study will use this framework to analyze the relationship between a high school counselor’s ability to conduct student advising sessions and complete the individual graduation plan and the program of study or pathway selected by the student.
CHAPTER 3. METHODS

Introduction

In Chapter 3, the researcher included a description of the exploratory single case study, specific details regarding the method and design, the purpose of the study, research questions, the participants, and procedures. The researcher explained the strategies for collecting data and analyzing the data. The researcher concluded with information on the reliability and trustworthiness of the study, limitations, and assumptions. A brief summary was provided at the conclusion of this chapter.

Rationale for Qualitative Inquiry

A qualitative research design was used for this study to understand how high school counselors’ self-efficacy impacts high school student advising sessions as it pertains to the program of study and course selection. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a qualitative design which seeks to gather information using an interpretive theoretical framework, such as SCT, allows the researcher to formulate an approach appropriate for understanding this specific phenomenon (p. 8). Qualitative research also draws on the ideas and interpretations of the researcher which makes this type of inquiry the best fit for the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Since this study was focused on interpretations, a qualitative approach allowed the researcher to best explore the relationship between high school counselors’ perceived efficacy and the correlation to effective student advising and course selection. Creswell and Poth’s narrowing of qualitative approaches to inquiry to just five worked best for guiding the exploration of the problem or issue presented in this study (Creswell & Poth, pp.10-11, 2018).
Further exploration of the five approaches led the researcher to choose the case study approach to examine this educational phenomenon.

**Single Case Study Design**

The goal of the study was to understand the relationship between high school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy and student advising. The “case” studied and focus of inquiry was the high school. For the purpose of this study, an exploratory single-case study design was used. According to Robert Yin (2018), multiple-case designs are typically preferred over a single-case design because more information is produced for data analysis and review (p. 61). The single-case study is considered “vulnerable” because there is only a singular event to explore and nothing to compare (Yin, pp. 61-62, 2018). I chose the single-case design because one school generated enough data to analyze since multiple counselor interviews were conducted. While the researcher was singularly concerned about the outcome of advising sessions based on the self-efficacy of the counselor, relying on one counselor’s perspective would likely not produce sufficient data to generate future studies; however, the data gathered from multiple counselors highlighted potential gaps that should be evaluated in future studies. The Individual Graduation Plan (IGP), which is a document completed during the advising session, details the outcome of student advising sessions. These artifacts, along with interviews, and an additional instrument to be used in the study for data collection assisted in identifying research for subsequent studies, which was the purpose of an exploratory case study (Yin, 2018). Future research should be done for best strategies for student advising and topics for professional development for high school counselors.

This single case study was bound by place and time. The participants that were interviewed and studied were the currently employed high school counselors at the same high
school that currently advised students. Because these counselors advised students during the spring semester, I bound the case by this time. The interviews occurred during the time in which counselors were completing the IGP with students and working on course scheduling. Advising and course scheduling typically occurs between late February through mid-May. I sent a recruitment email (Appendix A) asking the counseling department to participate in the study.

Site of Study

The researcher used a pseudonym for the selected school and counselors interviewed. The school is in an urban area in the Deep South. The Red Stick School serves 1,360 students in the state of Louisiana. The overall student capacity is 1,510 students for grades 9-12. Demographics hereafter depict this group. The graduation cohort rate, released annually, has sat in the 60% range over the past three years.

The 1,360 high school students reside primarily in the southeast region of the parish, but students throughout the entire parish are enrolled in the school for specialized programs such as culinary. Most of the student population is on free and reduced lunch as well as considered a minority population. The school has an ESL/ELL student population of 9.2% and an overall Hispanic population of 14%. The majority of the student population is Black/African American at 61%. White students are at 20% and 3% are Asian/Pacific Islander. Only 1% of the student population identified as Native American/Alaskan Native. Figure 3.1 depicts the overall student population.
Research Questions

The goal of this study is to explore the connection between high school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy and student advising specifically related to postsecondary planning—college or career. The following questions were developed to help guide the study:

1. How do high school counselors perceive their college and career advising self-efficacy?

2. How do school counselors’ self-efficacy impact student advising and the completion of the IGP?
Bracketing Bias

In order to bracket my own bias and disclose my positionality as a researcher, some of my own background may be helpful. As a district supervisor and former high school principal, I wondered how effectively school counselors advised students and if their knowledge gave students the best chance at setting realistic and attainable career and post-secondary goals. I also wondered the input level of each student and if the counselor treated the advising sessions like a rote task. I sought to understand the relationship between counselors’ perceived ability, based on their own preparation, and how they worked with students who desperately needed advising. Ultimately, I wanted to know if counselors felt equipped to properly advise students for their future and allow the results to highlight the current situation in Louisiana’s counseling workforce. If they did not feel prepared, I wondered what might help them to become better trained to serve in this role.

About the Researcher

For over a decade, I have worked in the educational field in the public sector. I have been a high school teacher, high school assistant principal, high school principal and school director, and a director of dual enrollment and workforce programs at a community college. I currently serve as the executive director of an online charter school system where I oversee the early college program, staff professional development programs, and all federal programs and grants management. My experience in these positions is what led me to complete my dissertation on the impact of high school counselor efficacy and advising.

I grew up in a middle-class family with a stay-at-home mom and attended a private all-girls Catholic school in New Orleans. I was unaware of the opportunities granted to me through
my fortunate upbringing and private schooling. The lack of opportunities granted to impoverished, often minority, youth became apparent during my first job as an English teacher at an inner-city low performing high school in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The inequities I witnessed between my education and that of the students I was teaching was astonishing and I continued to witness these disparities throughout my career. I was pushed by my high school counselors to enroll in advanced placement and honors courses, while the schools I taught at and was an administrator at offered very few of these opportunities to students. The overarching theme that resonated with me was the lack of guidance provided to students, mainly of color, relative to advanced course options in high school and postsecondary options and the belief that these were attainable options for this population of students. I observed many counselors feeling overwhelmed with tasks unassociated with students such as testing coordination and paperwork as well as classroom substituting when an abundance of teacher absences caused a shortage of adult supervision. In other words, over the years, I noticed the tremendous impact a lack of purposeful counseling and advising had on students, particularly of high school juniors and seniors which can be seen through low graduation rates, poor standardized-test scores, and lower postsecondary enrollment rates.

My studies through my masters and doctoral programs afforded me knowledge surrounding organizations, finance, and real inequities in education. During my Master of Public Administration program, I took several courses on public finance. I paired my knowledge gained in these courses with the practical knowledge I had of school funding and began to review how school systems expensed public dollars. My review left me with the opinion that funding counseling programs and positions should not be a barrier. These findings motivated me to seek information that could help students and inspired me to focus my research on the impact of self-
efficacy on student advising. Because I have never been through a counseling education program and only worked closely with counselors through my career and volunteer work, I had to be cognizant of any preconceptions or notions I had for the study.

Significance of the Study

Beginning with the incoming freshman class of 2014-2015, LDOE changed its diploma offerings to the TOPS Core and Jump Start diploma. The TOPS Core diploma allows students to attend a four-year college or university while the Jump Start diploma focuses on earning industry-based credentials and allows graduates to attend a two-year college or trade school. An additional purpose of the Jump Start diploma is to assist students in becoming employable upon graduation from high school due to the credentials earned. Students can opt into either diploma at any point in their high school career, but it is advised to make the determination in consultation with the high school counselor between tenth and eleventh grade.

In 2021, LDOE released a new initiative known as Fast Forward. The objective of this initiative is to pave the way for high school students to earn associate degrees or apprenticeships concurrently with their high school diploma and to ensure that by 2025, every high school senior graduates with at least one college credit through dual enrollment (LDOE, n.d.).

The Red Stick School gave students the opportunity to earn college credits through dual enrollment and advanced placement. The school also allowed students to earn industry-based certifications throughout their high school career. This study allowed the researcher to analyze data that gave potential indicators for the success of the Fast Forward initiative and highlighted gaps that should be addressed in order to attain the LDOE’s 2025 goal of every high school senior graduating with at least one college credit.
Identification of Participants

Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that good data collection comes from purposeful sampling that generates data which best allows a researcher to examine the problem. Selecting the right participants should be thoughtful and “have experience of the phenomenon being studied” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 157) to provide insightful context. They explain that for case study research the best size to sample is less than five (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159). For this study, one case was developed and analyzed.

I used convenience case sampling. Creswell and Poth (2018) explained this approach is useful because it allows a researcher to “represent sites or individuals from which the researcher can access and easily collect data” (p. 158). Sampling the counselors for the interview allowed me to make estimations about the broader pool of high school counselors (statewide) because it is assumed that their responses reflect those within the field (Yin, 2018, p. 56). For the 2020-2021 academic year, Red Stick School had a total of seven high school counselors. Each counselor oversaw a specific student group based on the students’ last name. This meant that all counselors worked with students in grades 9-12. Two of the counselors did not work directly with students. One served as the site testing coordinator and the other counselor served as the department clerk and secretary.

For this study, the researcher utilized an instrument called the school counselor self-efficacy survey to identify five counselors for the interview. The counselors selected for the interview were chosen based on their responses to the instrument and their direct daily duties. All participants scored themselves mildly confident to highly confident.
Data Collection Methods

Before beginning the data collection phase, I received approval from the Institutional Review Board at Louisiana State University. I sent The Red Stick School an administrator consent form to make him aware of the study; however, this was not needed to conduct the study. All participants completed the participant consent form prior to scheduling an interview and completing the self-efficacy questionnaire.

According to Yin (2018), collecting multiple sources of data helps establish the construct validity and reliability of evidence (p. 126). For this reason, I conducted five interviews and reviewed five physical artifacts (IGPs). Yin (2018) argued that “one of the most important sources of case study evidence is the interview” (p. 118) which is why I interviewed the counselors. Data obtained by a review of the IGP corroborated the interview responses from participants.

I sent an introductory e-mail to the counselors explaining the purpose of the study and asked them to complete the self-efficacy questionnaire so that I could identify which participants I would interview. I explained the intent of reviewing at least five IGPs and asked the counselors to redact student names prior to review. Once the five counselors were identified, I sent the self-efficacy questionnaire to participants and scheduled the interviews. The purpose for sending the self-efficacy questionnaire prior to the interview was to allow me the ability to understand their perceived levels of self-efficacy. This case study interview occurred during one sitting period that lasted approximately 45 minutes. However, participants were not censored in their speech and were able to discuss as much or little as they wished. One participant interview lasted one hour. The interview protocol was designed to illicit open-ended feedback and was a semi-structured interview in order to promote free speech and allowed interviewees to express
themselves openly (Hancock and Algozzine, 2017). I conducted the interviews through the virtual platform, Zoom. Pseudonyms were given to each employee interviewed. Participants were eligible to receive one of two $25 Amazon gift cards and all responses remained confidential.

**Data Analysis**

According to Yin (2018), analyzing case study evidence must be methodical and intentional due to “evidence being one of the least developed aspects of a case study” (p. 165) and rely on the “researcher’s own style of rigorous empirical thinking… and careful consideration of alternative interpretations” (p. 165). I “search(ed) for patterns, insights, or concepts” (Yin, 2018, p. 167) to begin my analysis and created themes, subthemes, and codes for the interviews. Yin (2018) explained four general strategies for case study data analysis and five analytic techniques.

The most appropriate strategy for analyzing my case study was to rely on theoretical propositions. Yin (2018) explained that propositions most likely led a researcher to develop the research questions for the study which in turn assists a researcher in pointing out “contextual conditions” (p. 169). The theoretical proposition for my study was that counselor self-efficacy directly correlates to how a counselor advises students. In other words, a counselor with low self-efficacy will likely not advise a student the same way as a counselor with high self-efficacy.

Explanation building was the analytic technique used to analyze the data. Explanation building takes the theoretical proposition and uses the data to explain how or why the outcomes occurred (Yin, 2018, p. 179). The codes from the interviews were used to either confirm or deny
my initial theory that self-efficacy is directly related to student advising. This created either a “plausible or rival explanation” (Yin, 2018, p. 181) that allowed me to refine my original theory.

The interviews were recorded using Zoom and I transcribed the interview using the feature in Zoom and then again using Microsoft Word. Yin (2018) discusses multiple computer-assisted strategies for data analysis for qualitative studies and I do not feel that is a necessary approach for this case-study. I reviewed each transcription looking for themes and subthemes to create codes. After establishing codes, I applied the explanation building technique described by Yin using the strategy of relying on theoretical propositions. I organized and reviewed the themes based on my research question and the theoretical framework to draw conclusions about the impact of perceived self-efficacy on advising.

Validity and Credibility

Yin (2018) explained the best way to establish construct validity and reliability is to abide by the four principles of data collection. The four principles are: using multiple sources of evidence, creating a case study database, maintaining a chain of evidence, and exercising care when using data from social media sources (Yin, 2018, pp. 126-137). Most applicable to my study was the first principle of using multiple sources of evidence. By using multiple sources of evidence (interviews and physical artifacts), I was able to triangulate data. I audited the research data which also established dependability and confirmability (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 255).

Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed another approach to validating the data through the “participant’s lens” (p. 260) known as member checking and seeking participant feedback. I brought the coding, themes, and interpretations to the interviewees for review and feedback. I solicited their feedback to ensure their experience of the study was well represented. Using the
member checking and seeking participant feedback strategy for data analysis was a critical component of having credible data.

**Assumptions**

I assumed that the interviews would generate open and honest feedback. I felt as though the rapport I established with the participants helped establish open communication and allowed participants to feel comfortable sharing. Secondly, I hoped that the counselors would score in all ranges of the self-efficacy scale. Unfortunately, they did not and were all on the confident end of the self-efficacy scale. Lastly, I assumed there would be a direct correlation between the recurring themes from the interviews and the participants’ self-efficacy rating.

**Limitations**

Few limitations existed for this study. The interviews occurred with only one school and did not capture all high school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy and approaches to advising students. Selecting this school; however, allowed the researcher to interview a staff that worked with a diverse and well-represented student population since the school enrolled the most students in the parish and had an expansive demographic enrollment that highlighted all student types.
CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF DATA AND FINDINGS

Summary of the Study

The researcher investigated the lived experiences of currently employed high school counselors working full time with students in grades nine through twelve. A qualitative, exploratory, single case study design guided the data collection and analysis. This exploratory single case study captured the lived work experiences of five high school counselors with different educational backgrounds. Participants were encouraged to speak freely during their interviews and recount their time as a high school counselor while focusing primarily on their current work position. The researcher’s goal was to make connections between the high school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy and their current work of advising students. To do so, the research questions guiding the qualitative single case study were:

1. How do high school counselors perceive their college and career advising self-efficacy?

2. How do school counselors’ self-efficacy impact student advising and the completion of the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP)?

Study Procedures

Once approval was received from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher sent an administrative consent form to the school administrator to contact the school counselors and conduct the interviews. With the school level administrator’s consent, the researcher then reached out to the school counselors to obtain participant consent, demographic information, and schedule interviews via Zoom.
Participants

The qualifying criteria for participants of this study included: (a) the participant must be working full time as a high school counselor, (b) the participant must be responsible for providing career and academic advisement to students. This eliminated one high school counselor who only served as a testing coordinator and did not work directly with students. With IRB approval and the school administrator’s consent, the researcher gathered the high school counselors’ email addresses from the school website and sent an introductory email explaining the purpose of the study and a link to complete the demographic questionnaire. The researcher informed counselors that by completing the demographic questionnaire, they were agreeing to participate in the study and would need to schedule an interview, complete a self-efficacy questionnaire, and submit a completed participant consent form. All five school counselors completed the demographic questionnaire and consent form, scheduled and completed the interview, and completed the self-efficacy questionnaire. The participants were entered to win a $25 Amazon gift card for full participation in the study. No participants had to be excluded from the study. The research findings reported in this chapter are based on the following data sources: semi-structured interviews, transcripts from the interviews, memos from the coding process, and the self-efficacy questionnaire. According to Yin (2018), the use of multiple sources lends more support for case studies and improves the overall quality of the study because it is in-depth and contextual (pp. 126-127). The researcher triangulated the data using these multiple sources to ensure the case study findings were more accurate (Yin, 2018).

Rigor and Trustworthiness

Immediately following the Zoom interviews, the researcher reviewed the autogenerated transcript from Zoom, listened to the interview herself while reading the Zoom transcript to
check for accuracy, and then completed her own transcription when she listened to the interview for a second time. The interviews from all participants were viewed twice and transcriptions read four times. The researcher transcribed the interviews using Microsoft Word while viewing the recording of the interview for the first time. The researcher then sent both the Zoom and researcher-composed transcripts to each participant to confirm accuracy of the information gathered during the interview by member checking. Embedding member checking strategies allowed the researcher to enhance confidence in the research findings by ensuring the researcher had an accurate interpretation of the participants’ meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Only one participant responded with a correction and that correction was to her educational background that was accidentally reported incorrectly on the transcript. The researcher corrected this inaccuracy, and all other transcripts were verified by participants.

During the time of the interviews, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic still prohibited in-person meetings, so all interviews were conducted virtually through Zoom. The researcher remained on camera for all interviews, but only one participant agreed to remain on camera. All other participants turned off their camera once the researcher began recording. All interviews were recorded then reviewed and transcribed immediately afterwards. The recordings were saved to the researcher’s jump drive. Each interview lasted between thirty to sixty minutes. No interview last longer than 58 minutes.

**Data Analysis**

The Zoom transcriptions were compared to the researcher’s transcription during the first review to create overall themes for each interview. Using the explanation building analytic technique discussed by Yin (2018), the researcher reviewed the transcripts three additional times to highlight words and phrases that paralleled the questions on the self-efficacy questionnaire.
This allowed the researcher to generate causal sequences that reflected critical insight into the ability for school counselors to be effective in their roles (Yin, 2018, pp. 179). From here, the researcher began to code and searched for important data directly related to the research questions and looked for any outlier codes. Words and phrases emphasized by the participants were capitalized and noted for importance and underlined for coding purposes. Throughout the semi-structured interview questions, participants voiced improvements in their overall approach to adhering to the ASCA model, expressed their comfort in delivering college and career advising, and shared equal disdain for the IGP. The researcher compared the codes against the scoring on the self-efficacy questionnaire to complete an iterative review process to determine an explanation for levels of self-efficacy and the counselors’ effectiveness with college and career advising as part of the data analysis process suggested by Yin (2018, p. 181).

The codes generated from the interview transcripts relied heavily on the notion of repeated information from all five interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 194). The explanation building technique revealed themes based on participant responses from the interviews and responses to the self-efficacy questionnaire by allowing the researcher to highlight patterns between conditions for the school counselor (daily routine) and outcomes (ability to advise students) (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 194-195). This further aided the researcher in understanding the counseling approach used by the counselors and the lack of correlation between responses on the self-efficacy questionnaire and interview questions. All transcripts were sent to participants for final review to confirm accuracy of the reported data. All participant voices were used and placed under the themes that they most appropriately fit.

This chapter details the results of the data collected through this exploratory single case study. The chapter is organized by the introduction of participants, presentation of findings
through the participants lens, and summary of the findings by using Yin’s (2018) explanation building technique for data analysis. The overall themes derived from this study are: 1) Role Confusion and Misalignment of Duties; 2) Lack of Professional Development and Training; and 3) High Levels of Self-Efficacy with Low Rates of Student Advising.

**Introduction of Participants**

All participants were currently employed and working directly with high school students in grades 9-12. Participants were asked to choose a pseudonym for this study. Table 4.1 gives the demographic profile for the participants in this study.

Table 4.1. Demographic Profile of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Certification Type</th>
<th>Attended CACREP Accredited Institution</th>
<th>Learned the ASCA National Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>Ancillary-Counselor, Teaching</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payton</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ancillary-Counselor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>National Board Certified, Ancillary-Counselor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ancillary- Counselor</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ancillary- Counselor, LPC</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All participants’ names listed in Table 4.1 are pseudonyms which were chosen by the researcher. The information presented in this document utilize only the pseudonym for identification purposes.
Presentation of Findings Through the Participants’ Lens

The presentation of findings was derived from the data of each participant interview and their individual responses to the self-efficacy questionnaire. The School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005) allows counselors to rate themselves using a Likert scale numerically from one (not confident) to five (highly confident) with responses falling into five categories: (1) Collaboration, (2) Leadership and Assessment, (3) Personal and Social Development, (4) Career and Academic Development, and (5) Cultural Acceptance. The questionnaire consists of forty-three questions and each component is aligned with the ASCA (2016) national standards (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005).

Sam: “The Optimistic Novice”

Sam is a White female who started her career in education as a middle school teacher. She was drawn to the counseling field after an experience with a student. Sam reported that a student in her class informed her that she had been raped and no one was listening to her. Sam asked the student if she reported this information to anyone and would like to meet with the school counselor. The student informed Sam that she already spoke with the counselor who brushed her off. This did not sit well with Sam, so she began her journey of applying to a school counseling program. She said she wanted to “be that person that would listen and hear” students.

Sam chose high school counseling because she felt that her “personality did not mesh well with the younger students” and she preferred to work with students where she could “actually see their growth throughout school by preparing them for life after high school.” Sam completed an online master’s degree program where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in General Studies and a Master of Science in School Counseling. To become certified, she
submitted a certification application to the LDOE and received an ancillary certification in school counseling.

According to the self-efficacy questionnaire results, Sam is moderately confident in her abilities to be an effective school counselor. She rated herself the highest in career and academic development with a 4.2. Her lowest rating was in leadership and assessment with a rating of 3.4. Personal and social development was the second lowest with a rating of 3.8. All of her ratings were within less than a point difference with no major deviations. The ratings from the self-efficacy questionnaire correlated with her responses to the interview questions.

**Preparedness and Self-Efficacy**

Sam stated she felt most comfortable advising students on college and career choices, but she did not have the experience doing so. She completed her internship at her current school and the practicum was conducted through her graduate school. She recalled the hours combined between the internship and practicum totaled approximately four hundred hours. She said that while she was supposed to have a 60/40 ratio of direct-to-indirect student contact during her internship, most of her time was spent “filing paperwork and doing clerical type things.” During her graduate program, she reported taking one course that centered around career development. Sam reported that she was “moderately prepared to complete” her duties as a school counselor after her internship and practicum. Lastly, the interview revealed that she was unfamiliar with the LaSCM and only knew of the ASCA model which she learned through her graduate program.

According to Sam’s self-efficacy ratings, she rated herself highest in two component areas, collaboration and career and academic development. While her efficacy rating showed she felt prepared to advise students on career options, her response to several interview questions
suggested she felt most uncomfortable with career advising. She admittedly said during the interview when asked how prepared she feels to counsel students on career options or pair students’ personalities with a career field that “I really need the most work here as I feel like I don’t know how to best advise students.”

**Advising Students**

Sam explained that she had a large student case load of approximately four hundred students. When asked how she implemented the IGP, she stated this was essentially “viewed as a compliance document” and did not serve a huge purpose. Advising at her school, she further explained, consisted of large group sessions where she would go to a core education class that all students were mandated to take such as English and complete “advising sessions where [she] basically explained the upcoming school year schedule.” When the researcher asked about student and family input relative to student course selection, Sam noted there was very little. She explained that while parents and students were required to sign off on the IGP annually, that served little purpose because student schedules were essentially created during the ninth-grade year and listed on the IGP. She said rarely did anyone go back to review and discuss the IGP other than to gain the signatures required for compliance purposes.

**Payton: “The Connector”**

Payton is a Black/African American female with eleven years of experience. She graduated from a CACREP accredited program and is well-versed in the ASCA national model. Payton’s desire to become a high school counselor was influenced by her observations of African American males and the statistics of their low matriculation to college. She felt that this subgroup of students was capable of much more and she wanted to be a change agent for them.
She stated she chose high school because she “wanted to be the bridge between secondary and postsecondary and push students to the next level.” She concluded by saying, “I wanted to ensure these students knew about the free opportunities available to them because I certainly did not.”

Payton has a Bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s in counselor education from a CACREP accredited program. She explained to the researcher that she did not need to be a licensed professional counselor in order to become a high school counselor, but rather, she needed to obtain an ancillary certification. Payton’s graduate program required an internship; therefore, she chose a school site within the school system where she wanted to be employed and is still currently working in. She felt fortunate with her internship placement because it was a high school setting and her supervisor showed her exactly what she would be doing as a school counselor in this system. Payton attributed this internship experience to her feeling of confidence when becoming a school counselor full-time after graduating.

According to the self-efficacy questionnaire results, Payton is generally confident in her abilities to be an effective school counselor. She rated herself the highest in cultural acceptance with a 4.75. Her lowest rating was in leadership and assessment with a rating of 4.0. Career and academic development were a close second lowest with a rating of 4.1. All of her ratings were within less than a point difference with no major deviations. The ratings from the self-efficacy questionnaire correlated with her responses to the interview questions.

**Personal Self-Efficacy and Career and College Advising**

Payton’s self-efficacy rating for career and academic development was a 4, confident. During the interview, she said that she was knowledgeable of both college and career advising but that only the senior counselor did college and career advising while all other grade level
counselors focused on ensuring students met graduation requirements. This meant that Payton did not actually advise her students on colleges or careers. She defined postsecondary planning as “planning as early as the ninth grade so students are not making decisions at the last minute” and she explained that she was not able to do this under the “current school counseling structure.”

Payton was familiar with strategies and tools to advise students on both. She used the occupational outlook handbook and career assessments. The researcher noted that while she is knowledgeable of these tools and strategies, she did not actually use them because individual advising sessions were nonexistent. She told the researcher that she felt there was a disconnect with the certifications embedded within the Jump Start pathways and that “consistency was needed in order to help with scheduling.” She explained that “the state tells us that these certifications make students employable but then we heard from employers that the certifications don’t matter.” For example, she explained students would earn automotive certifications such as the student ASE certification, but the automotive industry would only accept the regular ASE certification and not the student ASE certification. She used this as one example and informed the researcher that was true for other industries as well. She told the researcher this made advising on JumpStart difficult and the school chose to put all students on the TOPS University diploma pathway and students had to “self-identify that they wanted to change to the Jump Start diploma.” This is when career advising would potentially occur. She said her current caseload prevented individual counseling sessions so students who wanted to change their IGP (which was the only time she used the IGP for advising) had to complete a Google Form at the counseling team’s front office requesting a session. She said the majority of her time was
allocated to testing such as the LEAP 2025 and ACT and conducting “clerical duties as assigned by the administration or district.”

**Professional Development and Training**

Payton clearly understood the ASCA national model, however, she had never heard of the LaSCM. When asked if she was able to attend professional development, she told the researcher that “we attend monthly PD offered by the system, but it does not really develop us on topics relative to ASCA and we’ve never heard LaSCM mentioned.” The purpose of systemwide monthly professional development was to update counselors on the electronic student information systems or any other updates relative to new initiatives. She wanted professional development relative to advising students and specifically career advising. Payton’s graduate program offered one course on career counseling, but she confirmed it was not helpful. She explained that “the annual Jump Start convention serves as a professional development opportunity but strategies for advising students are not covered here.”

The ability to select individualized training would come at Payton’s expense. She did not know if there was a policy or requirement for professional development, but she explained that she needed a minimum number of continuing education hours for her certificate. She said the professional development offered through the school system was applicable to these hours. She said she “did not have the extra money to pay for trainings [she] wanted to attend” and did not know if any funding opportunities existed. This was the main reason she did not seek additional professional development even though she wanted to enhance her career and college advising skills.
Jordan: “The Change Agent”

Jordan is a White female with seven years of experience and is a National Board Certified Counselor (NBCC) and ancillary counselor certification. She became a school counselor because she did not appreciate her experience with school counselors when she was in school. She knew she wanted to be in education, but she did not want to be a teacher and thought “being an administrator was too hard and stressful.” She chose high school counseling because of her practicum experience through her graduate program. She was placed with elementary school students, and she explained that “they were cute but [she] didn’t have the ability to connect with them on any level since [she] did not have any kids.” Her internship was at a high school and she much preferred that experience. She clarified that she “felt like [she] could counsel any age but preferred high school.”

Jordan had a diverse educational background that she felt prepared her for high school college and career advising. She spent two years at a junior college and transferred to a four year university where she earned her degree in psychology. Her graduate program was in counseling and focused on graduating students with a National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) certificate first and foremost. She has this certification and an ancillary school counselor certificate. She did not recall the amount of time she spent in her practicum and internship, but she felt both prepared her for her job as a high school counselor.

According to the self-efficacy questionnaire results, Jordan is generally confident in her abilities to be an effective school counselor. She rated herself the highest in collaboration and personal and social development both with a rating of 5. Her lowest rating was in career and academic development with a rating of 3.71. There were no other areas close to this one and this area was her outlier area. The remaining four areas were within less than a point difference with
no major deviations. The ratings from the self-efficacy questionnaire correlated with her responses to the interview questions.

**Graduate School and Current Role**

Jordan rated herself the lowest, and had the lowest rating of all participants, on the career and academic development self-efficacy scoring. Her responses to the interview questions shed light on this low rating. She said her internship was under a person who had “been in the system a really long time and was completely checked out and gave [her] all of the work and did nothing.” She said, “doing the grunt work allowed [her] to know what [she] was getting into as a high school counselor in the district.” She explained that while the internship did not align with her graduate program, the experience allowed her to feel knowledgeable of the day-to-day life of a high school counselor where she would work.

The graduate program offered one course related to career advising. She took one career theory course and she explained that this course did not teach her anything about advising. She said she “learned about career theory and how to identify career pathways for students by utilizing career interest inventories.” She said she rarely did this in her current role as all students were placed on the TOPS University diploma; and if students switched to Jump Start, they would have to make an appointment with a counselor. She said, “our caseloads really prevent us from meeting individually with students anyway.”

When the researcher asked about the IGP, she revealed her disdain for this tool. She said, “in all honesty this document is a complete waste of time and serves as a compliance document that no one even looks at; It is pointless!” She felt confident in completing the IGP and explained that the IGP was basically a “plug and play form” meaning the counselors entered the prescribed
courses for the TOPS University diploma during the students ninth grade for their entire high school career. She said, “we already use a degree audit sheet for students and that is more important to us than the IGP.”

**Role in Career Development and Future Training Opportunities**

Although Jordan did not advise students for the Jump Start pathways, she felt confident in her abilities to advise students. She told the researcher that she was asked to sit on a system planning team for the new Fast Forward initiative where they “prioritized earning an associate degree in a technical field such as welding.” She was excited to be part of this team and felt that this could potentially bring more students over to the career pathway offerings as opposed to just the four-year college pathway. She said she was “surprised that [she] was asked to be part of the planning team because [she] was pretty vocal about [her] dislike for the Jump Start program and the disconnect for students.” The purpose of the planning committee was to create an easy-to-understand guide for counselors to advise students. However, Jordan admitted that a lot of training needed to happen for counselors and school leaders needed to prioritize “time for counseling sessions as opposed to secretarial tasks like filing paperwork such as test reports in cumulative folders.”

Jordan echoed the other participants’ desire for more direct professional development centered around advising students. Because Jordan holds a national certification in counseling, she said she was required to maintain a certain amount of continuing education units annually. She said the district provided monthly training, but “it had nothing to do with the current role as a counselor.” She informed the researcher that she was able to self-select professional development, but only at her expense which she was unwilling to do. Jordan’s professional development...
development came through organizations such as the Louisiana School Counselor Association (LSCA) and provided “more direct training related to [her] role as a school counselor.”

**Ryan: “The Realist”**

Ryan is a White female with sixteen years of experience (the most of all participants), and she did not attend a CACREP accredited program. However, she did learn about the ASCA national model through her program. She had the highest ratings of all participants on the self-efficacy questionnaire with her lowest rating in the collaboration category. She has an ancillary-counselor certification, and her background is in rehab and vocational counseling. She was the only participant who has been a school counselor in multiple states.

Ryan became a high school counselor by default, not choice. She was looking for a position and the only availability was in the high school. She originally started as a 504 coordinator and then served as the SBLC coordinator in which her primary function was to assess any special needs for students seeking accommodations, academic or behavioral. She did not discuss her educational journey in detail like the other participants but told the researcher her “experience as a rehab and vocational counselor prepared [her] for the role as a high school counselor.” She completed her practicum in a rehab clinic and did not focus on school counseling. Her practicum was mental health and she explained that her internship, which she hardly remembered, was supposed to be directly working with students but she did not. She said no correlation existed between her practicum and internship with her current role and there was a “huge disconnect.”

According to the self-efficacy questionnaire results, Ryan is generally confident in her abilities to be an effective school counselor. She rated herself the highest in cultural acceptance
with a 5. Her lowest rating was in collaboration with a rating of 4.54. Career and academic development was a close second lowest with a rating of 4.57. All of her ratings were within less than a point difference with no major deviations. The ratings from the self-efficacy questionnaire correlated with her responses to the interview questions.

**Implementation of the LaSCM**

Ryan was the only participant who had heard of the Louisiana School Counseling Model (LaSCM). She could not tell the researcher anything about it other than she heard the model mentioned at some point during her career. She informed the researcher that she did not feel any model, ASCA or LaSCM, was being implemented in her school and that she doubted if her administrators knew what they were. She thought the curriculum for the ASCA national model was appropriate and would benefit her school. She pointed to the curriculum implementation as her biggest request if administrators considered changing the counselors’ daily activities.

Ryan explained that counseling roles were not defined by school administrators. She said, “if they [the administrators] had more autonomy in how they ran the school, we would likely have the ability to implement school counseling models we felt worked.” She felt constant support from school leadership but explained “a disconnect exists between district and school leadership which makes our roles ambiguously defined.” She told the researcher that “we do what we are told, and we don’t operate outside of what we are told to do because we need and like our jobs.” Other participant responses supported Ryan’s statement that school administrative support existed, but the counselors did not feel as though they had enough autonomy or support to implement the LaSCM or any other school counseling model.
Student Advising

Ryan felt most comfortable with academic advising for college. She explained that she received little training on Jump Start and that “too many pathways exist for counselors to even keep up with.” She also confirmed that few students were on the Jump Start diploma track and that she did not feel as though “the certifications students were earning would actually lead to a high earning job placement.” This left her feeling discouraged and in favor of advising against the Jump Start program. She was familiar with tools such as career interest inventories to help identify pathways for students, but she confirmed that individual advising was rarely done.

Ryan was the only participant to mention the impact COVID-19 had on student advising. “We barely saw students before, but the pandemic has made individual advising pretty much nonexistent,” she explained. She informed the researcher that she felt as though counselors were not prepared to meet the mental health needs of students caused by the pandemic and they were not given time to meet individually with students even if the counselors desired to. Ryan’s self-efficacy ratings were at the highest rating (5, highly confident) in the academic and career development category, but she told the researcher she “doesn’t do much career advising and would rather spend [her] time with social emotional counseling because that is [her] background.” She said she did not use the IGP other than to check a box for compliance and further explained that she “need to most training around strategies to help students make direct connections to their future.”

Ashley: “The Bleeding Heart”

Ashley is a Black/African American female who started her career as a licensed professional counselor (LPC) focusing mainly on substance abuse. In order to support herself
and her family, Ashley worked as an educational consultant while completing her graduate program for mental health counseling. As an educational consultant, she worked in school operations and testing, and she claimed this “piqued [her] interest in the school counseling field.” She was introduced to the school counselors and said she “felt the school counselors held all of the puzzle pieces to make the school run effectively and efficiently and this excited [her].” She said this experience led her to change her focus from mental health counseling to school counseling which is how she ended up becoming a school counselor.

She has seven years of experience as a school counselor and still uses her background in mental health counseling to guide her work with students. She was not taught the ASCA national model even though she attended a CACREP accredited program. She informed the researcher that in her first job as a school counselor at a charter school, her colleagues and counseling supervisors introduced her to ASCA, and they supported the implementation of it. She was well-versed in all aspects of the model and felt like direct student advising was the most important piece of the model because she “could still implement [her] training in mental health and help students focus on what was important to them.” Her current job placement does not implement the model and she said she felt “like a constant cog in a machine just working day in and day out to check boxes and push students along to graduation.”

According to the self-efficacy questionnaire results, Ashley is generally confident in her abilities to be an effective school counselor. She rated herself the highest in cultural acceptance with a 5. Her lowest rating was in leadership and assessment with a rating of 4.4. All of her ratings were within less than a point difference with no major deviations. The ratings from the self-efficacy questionnaire correlated with her responses to the interview questions.
Desire to Advise, Unable To

Ashley was most passionate about direct advising for students. Her lowest self-efficacy group was in leadership and assessment, while she rated herself the highest in cultural acceptance. Leadership and assessment was the only category that was not rated as highly confident and all others rounded up to the highest rating, five-highly confident. Her responses to the interview questions supported her ratings. She preferred to spend her time working directly with students but was unable to do so due to various reasons.

One reason she was unable to directly advise students was due to her caseload. She approximated her caseload to be at 370 students. She said her “desire to check in on students, especially if you notice their grades are slipping is extremely important but [she] can’t because of time constraints and our focus being on data entry.” She shared that her administrators supported the counseling team’s desire to work individually with students, but she got the impression that “school administrators were following the directives given from higher ups in the district.” She told the researcher that she met with school leadership to explain the importance of individual student advising sessions, but she was told by school leadership, “the budget does not support the hiring of an additional counselor at this time, so we have to work with what we have.” This meant that she would not have the time to meet individually with students.

Ashley also felt as though school counselor training needs were not prioritized or supported. She explained that she used resources to inform students, such as LOSFA and ONET, but these were very generic and discussed during whole group sessions with students. She said, “school leaders around the district could benefit from training on the ASCA national model and school counselors could benefit from career counseling professional development so we can support students pursuing Jump Start.” She felt confident in her abilities, and her self-efficacy
ratings also supported this claim, but she still expressed a desire to know “how to effectively advise students when they are so young and do not understand the importance of planning for their future.” She said she could seek out these opportunities on her own, but she personally could not financially support any trainings at this time. She said although she is, supported by [her] administrator, [she] doesn’t feel like they support us developmentally as school counselors. It’s like ‘Oh, they are school counselors and know everything about their role,’ but we aren’t always up-to-date on the latest trends and could use development there.

**Findings and Themes**

The literature focused on role confusion, professional education and certification of school counselors, counseling self-efficacy, and the importance of CACREP and ASCA. Scant research has been published specific to Louisiana regarding the topics covered in the literature. Specific to the recent reform in Louisiana’s education, the researcher sought to explore the connection between high school counselors’ self-efficacy and its impact on student advising. The explanation building technique comparing the interviews and responses to the self-efficacy questionnaire revealed three themes based on commonalities between interview responses and ratings on the questionnaire. These three themes centered around the research questions: *high do high school counselors perceive their college and career advising self-efficacy? and how does this self-efficacy impact student advising and the completion of the IGP?* The three themes are 1) Role Confusion and Misalignment of Duties; 2) Lack of Professional Development and Training; and 3) High Levels of Self-Efficacy with Low Rates of Student Advising.

There was one overarching theme aligned with the theoretical framework, Bandura’s (1997) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which served as the lens in which to understand the participants responses and construct meaningful themes. This theme is supported by LaMorte’s
(2016) notion that individuals learn from experiences within a social context and Bodenhorn and Skaggs’ (2005) argument that “self-efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act” (p. 14). The overarching theme derived from the data is high school counselors are most influenced by their education and current work environment which heavily impacts the way they work with students- advising and counseling.

As shown in Table 4.2, all counselors rated themselves generally confident or higher on the self-efficacy questionnaire for most of the questions. At worst, all counselors rated themselves moderately confident (3).

Table 4.2. Self-Efficacy Participant Response by Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Efficacy Scale Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership and Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career and Academic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development</td>
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<td>Personal and Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development</td>
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<td>Cultural Acceptance</td>
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This suggested to the researcher that counselors know how to do their job and properly advise students, but they are unable to effectively do so due to extenuating circumstances or
policies in place at the school. All but one participant stated that the internship and/or practicum was misaligned with the education received in their graduate program. This supports the notion that counselors have the self-efficacy to be effective and properly advise students, but the myriad of other duties not aligned with the role of a high school counselor prevent them from doing so.

**Theme 1: Role Confusion and Misalignment of Duties**

The first major theme was role confusion between school administrators and counselors which led to a misalignment of job duties compared to the ASCA model. As Beale and McCray (2001) explained the variance between school leaders’ expectations and school counselors’ expectations for school counselors’ role in the school causes a lot of distress for school counselors. The responses to the interview questions supported the notion that counselors do not have a clear job expectation aligned to the ASCA national model and most of their time was spent performing tasks outside of the model. The researcher asked participants to discuss their administrators’ familiarity with the LaSCM, their opinion on the implementation of the LaSCM or ASCA model within their school, and their thoughts on school counselors’ ability to fully implement the LaSCM.

All five participants stated their administrators did not know the LaSCM and had minimal knowledge of the ASCA model. Because all participants stated that administrators did not know the LaSCM, the following information reported refers strictly to the ASCA national model. The word “limited” was mentioned by every participant relative to the question: “what is your administrator’s familiarity with this model?” Jordan explained that the school administrators understood the models but did not know the purpose of the model nor the “expectations of an actual school counselor.” She further explained that the school counselors were viewed as “glorified secretaries and act as assistant principals without the pay.” Based on
Jordan’s statement, the researcher concluded that administrator knowledge of the model did not play an important role in the assigned duties of the counselors. Rather, school administrators assigned tasks that made the school function according to the administrator’s personal ideas. Aligning counselor duties with tasks that deviate from the ASCA framework made advising challenging for all participants. Ryan’s responses also supported this theme when she explained that “while administrators might know the purpose of the model, they assign us other tasks that are completely irrelevant and not our responsibility such as the school SBLC coordinator, 504 or testing coordinator.” This informed the researcher that the school administrator prioritized tasks that impacted the students from an academic lens, but not from an advising lens. Counselors would not have the capacity to utilize their skills to personally advise students on college or career options. Counselors would, however, be able to potentially analyze assessment data which does fall under the ASCA model framework. However, the ability to analyze the student data is pointless if the counselors do not have the ability to then advise students based on the data. Cervoni and DeLucia-Waack (2001) mentioned the high probability of school administrators assigning clerical and administrative tasks to counselors. Both Jordan and Ryan’s responses directly support this finding and led the researcher to conclude that without full administrative understanding of the ASCA model, school counselors will continue to operate minimally according to the national model and in turn, students suffer by not receiving the best possible services. In regard to the research questions, the correlation between counselor self-efficacy and their ability to advise students using the IGP proved to be irrelevant under this theme due to the counselors’ inability to even conduct an advising session with students due to the myriad of other tasks unrelated to student advising. For example, Ashley explained counselors were designated
as the 504 or SBLC chair for students they were assigned to which is not an appropriate role for school counselors.

The researcher asked the following questions: *to what degree has your school implemented the model and do you feel like you can implement the model, why or why not?* Interestingly, participants rated the degree to which they implemented the model between 20%-65%, with the average being 30%, and all five stated they did not feel like the model could be fully implemented.

Payton scored the implementation of the ASCA national model the highest at a 65% implementation. The researcher found that Payton’s response to this question did not align with her response to the follow-up question *do you feel like you can implement the model?* Payton said, “we work as a team and know it [the ASCA national model] is best for students but we have limited time to follow the model appropriately due to other tasks.” Her statement aligned with Ryan and Jordan’s and supported the researcher’s conclusion that having limited time negatively impacted their ability to conduct student advising sessions and made their levels of self-efficacy irrelevant. If the school implemented the model accordingly, then a correlation could potentially exist between their self-efficacy ratings and advising. However, at this point, it was clear to the researcher that counselors were not advising students because they spent their time on other tasks defined by either the school administrator or school system office. ASCA (2019) explained that delivery should account for eighty percent or more of the activity performed by a counselor (p. 44). Several of the activities listed for appropriate activities for school counselors which should account for the eighty percent of time included individual and group academic and behavioral counseling, utilizing data to make suggestions and inform decisions, and interpret aptitude and cognitive achievement tests (ASCA, 2019, p. 45). Sam,
Ryan, and Jordan echoed similar responses related to their thoughts about implementing the model. They each elaborated on the inappropriate activities for school counselors which they felt impeded their ability to fully implement the model within their school. When asked about the potential to implement the model moving forward, Ashley confirmed “this could potentially happen in stages, but it would be a huge culture shock and would need to roll down from above.”

Although all participants felt that the model was implemented in a limited scope, they all agreed that the misalignment of daily duties with the model created an environment that was challenging to fully perform according the ASCA national model. The researcher concluded that the lack of unintentional support of the model by school administrators will continue to complicate the role of high school counselors and lessen their ability to properly advise students. Ryan stated the counseling team could improve on their delivery of the ASCA curriculum, but that idea was far-fetched if they did not have the time to improve this. Lastly, the researcher concluded based on literature and responses from the study participants that school administrators need training on the role of a counselor and that without any emphasis on this, school counselors will continue to serve as “glorified secretaries” as Jordan stated.

**Theme 2: Lack of Professional Development and Training**

While the participants rated their career and college self-efficacy on average as moderately to highly confident, the researcher found they did not have sufficient preparation and training on career and college advising which stemmed from a lack of professional development and training. In other words, the adage, they didn’t know what they didn’t know might apply here. During the interview, the researcher asked participants about their knowledge of career and college advising and about their opportunity for professional development. The responses from following two questions directly related to supporting the finding regarding the need for
continuous professional development and training relative to career advising: how knowledgeable are you of college and career advising? and what trainings do you receive? All five participants stated in the interviews that they had a knowledge level of ninety percent or higher for advising on college and career opportunities. However, they all stated there was no opportunity for ongoing learning opportunities through professional development whether school/district offered or self-selected. They explained their approach to advising on careers and postsecondary options as well as remarked on the tools they used to assist students. The responses revealed the only approach to advising on career pathways was if a student self-selected to schedule an advising session. All counselors independently stated that at this point, they would use publicly posted, free resources found from a simple Google search.

Payton had the most succinct responses that assisted the researcher in identifying the relationship between the counseling approach and professional development. She stated that training “was always on systems and there was no training on student advising.” The feeling about the systems she referred to was echoed in the other four interviews which referred to management systems for student information mandated by the school system and the lack of connection that had with the role of a school counselor. Student management systems are essentially the student enrollment portal. This is where attendance and grades, as well as other pertinent student information, is housed. Payton also elaborated that training was “nonexistent relative to resources and tools that could be used to advise students on careers or how counselors could advise on JumpStart pathways.”
Educational Course Preparation and Funding for Ongoing Training

Each participant graduated from a CACREP accredited program and stated she took one course on career and college advising throughout her graduate studies. With the recent reform in Louisiana education to emphasize earning industry-based certifications in high-wage, high-demand fields or a transferable associate degree (LDOE, 2021), the researcher identified career and college advising as an important focus area to see how counselors thought about their role in moving students properly on these two pathways. The participants’ responses proved that they lacked the educational training from their graduate programs and confirmed that professional development for specific techniques and strategies for college and career advising was nonexistent.

Jordan explained that JumpStart brought too many pathways for counselors to advise students and there was no training offered by the school. She explained that “counselors have one training each year called the JumpStart convention that talks about statewide initiatives, pilot programs, and brings vendors to share programmatic career and tech ed resources” but this annual convention did not provide any insight into counseling practices albeit offering a session specifically for high school counselors. Sam, who had the least experience in counseling, said “the JumpStart convention does not assist me in advising my students on JumpStart pathways nor do I even understand all of the pathways.” Ashley, Ryan, and Sam shared that the annual JumpStart convention was the only training they received for career and college counseling, but the convention could not be considered an actual training because they all agreed that they did not walk away with any strategies that could assist them in advising students. All five participants stated the convention was helpful informing them about potential career and college pathway opportunities, but nothing was offered related to advising students.
When asked about their individual ability to participate in any trainings specifically on college and career advising, all participants had a similar response. They all stated that they felt they would be able to enroll or participate in a training, but the payment would be their responsibility. Ryan recalled one training that was delivered three years ago that addressed college and career advising, but no other participants shared this information. Even still, Ryan said it was trainings like this that were helpful in guiding an advising approach aligned to the ASCA national model, but “funding must be prioritized from the school or district in order to deliver these types of PD.” Funding for trainings was a shared concern among all participants as they all expressed a desire to attend trainings with specific concerns about their individual abilities to fund such opportunities. With the 2016 CACREP standard addition “to facilitate school and postsecondary skills transitions” (CACREP, 2015) and the understanding that most counseling programs do not prioritize this, offering ongoing training or professional development in career and college advising is crucial to practicing counselors. The desire to enroll in college and career advising trainings and the inability to individually support this desire was a common theme found among all participants.

**Theme 3: High Levels of Self-Efficacy with Low Rates of Student Advising**

The data displayed in Table 4.2 provided information on individually rated levels of self-efficacy by participants which were all moderately to highly confident and confirmed the researcher’s thought that the counselors felt confident in their abilities to perform effective college and career advising for all students. However, the responses to the interview questions related to direct student advising caused the researcher to draw parallels between their self-efficacy ratings and the reality that the counselors performed minimal individual academic advising. Participant responses to the following two questions allowed the researcher to identify
this theme: *what is your current student caseload? and what method do you use for student advising sessions?*

The common response from participants when asked about their student caseload was an audible laugh followed by their approximate caseload. This suggested to the researcher that the participants were unhappy with their caseloads and annoyed with their numbers. Participants were not stopped and asked to explain the laugh but did provide responses that supported the researcher’s conclusions of unhappiness and annoyance. Payton answered the question by first stating, “covid has made advising challenging,” and then explained that her caseload of approximately 360 students was already challenging. The researcher concluded that counselors were ill-equipped to respond to students virtually and self-efficacy was meaningless when the counselors do not have the ability to advise students because a virtual meeting space is not available.

Because counselors are primarily advocating for students in order to ensure their postsecondary success (Alger & Luke, 2015), counselors should have the appropriate number of students recommended by ASCA which should not exceed 250 students per counselor (ASCA, n.d.) so they have the physical time to meet and advise students. Every participant confirmed that they did not intentionally schedule one-on-one advising sessions. Rather, students could opt into an advising session if the student self-selected to attend a session by completing a Google survey at the front office. Bandura’s (2005) social cognitive theory explains behavioral influences. All participants rated themselves high on the self-efficacy questionnaire which addressed the researcher’s first question, but they could not fully explain their individual counseling styles. The researcher deduced from the participant interview responses that individual student advising was nonexistent in their work and they did not offer services recommended by ASCA. The
researcher concluded that the learned behavior by both school administrators (assigning tasks not aligned to the ASCA model) and counselors (focusing on checklists and compliance) continued to create a climate where students did not receive direct advising and more importantly, zero guidance on their college and career plans. The researcher’s conclusion was further supported when participants were asked about their implementation of the IGP tool and led to additional confusion as to why the counselors rated themselves so highly on the self-efficacy questionnaire.

When asked about their approach to completing the IGP, the researcher received another audible laugh. This suggested to the researcher that the counselors saw little importance with a document that was designed to help guide counselors in student advising sessions and was listed as a best practice by LDOE (2019). This led the researcher to conclude that the participants needed basic training on the importance of the IGP and the role of the IGP in student advising. Because state policy mandates that the IGP be completed annually in consultation with students and families (LaSCM, 2010), the researcher was surprised to learn that none of the participants met with families to review or adjust the IGP. They all stated that students, again, had to come to the counselor in order to opt out of the TOPS University diploma and into the Jump Start diploma. Most notable was Jordan’s feelings about the IGP and its purpose to school counselors. She stated the “IGP is a complete waste of time since we use a different document for the purposes of auditing student transcripts.” She explained that the school’s student information system automatically generated the IGP and counselors were responsible for handing them to students (usually through an English or math class) and did not review them with or advise students. She informed the researcher that the only group advising was done twice a year and one of those advising sessions was to disseminate the autocompleted IGP. There is clearly a disconnect between state policy and counselors’ perceptions of best practices. In alignment with
social cognitive theory, counselors learned to deviate from state policy at some point and continued to implement their own practices that are not aligned with the ASCA model. Implementing the use of a self-generated tool such as the degree audit as stated by Jordan only adds additional compliance items and does not enhance counselors’ abilities to conduct advising sessions. This suggested to the researcher that a disconnect may be more widespread between state policies and school counselor practices.

**Advising and Time Allocation**

The researcher concluded based on the self-efficacy questionnaire and interview responses that all participants had the ability to properly counsel students and the ability to adhere to the LaSCM, but they did not have the physical time throughout their day, and subsequently year, to offer any meaningful advising sessions for students. According to LaSCM (2010), school counselors should spend between twenty-five to thirty-five percent of their time on individual student planning. The researcher considered the 177-day maximum attendance requirement allowed for students and calculated a minimum percent of time for advising students at least thirty minutes for the entire academic year (LDOE, 2016) Mathematically, the researcher concluded that each counselor who did this would spend approximately twenty percent of her time planning individually with students. This is five percent less than the minimum suggested by LaSCM.

Jordan considered direct student advising to be “the fun stuff about the job” and acknowledged that this did not exist. Both Ashley and Payton echoed similar statements. Ashley smiled and said she “loves the ability to directly connect with the students because it helps [her] develop a strong rapport with them [the students]” when the researcher asked her about IGP completion and direct advising. Her smile suggested to the researcher that direct student advising
was the most enjoyable part of her job, and she did not have the time to do this; therefore, bringing unhappiness to her work. Her inability to control both her caseload and how she spent her time further impacted her ability to strengthen rapport with her students. Payton stated she preferred to spend more time in the classroom but enjoyed few opportunities she had to work one-on-one with students. While Payton and Ashley differed in their feelings about how to deliver information and work with students, both do not meet regularly with students either in whole group or individual counseling sessions. This negatively impacted students because the students do not receive the appropriate supports needed to plan for their futures in any meaningful way. All participants expressed direct student advising as the biggest area for improvement within their school’s counseling model and shared they were hopeful that this would be prioritized over other “clerical tasks” so they could meet the growing demands of the Fast Forward 2025 initiative. The data presented here informed the researcher’s conclusion that high levels of self-efficacy do not impact college and career advising because advising was essentially nonexistent. Lastly, the IGP played no role in student advising. The counselors’ learned behavior to use the IGP as a compliance document did not enhance the student experience and had no relevance in this study.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study presented emphasized the self-efficacy of five high school counselors and their effectiveness advising high school students on college and career options.

The findings are based on the researcher’s interpretation of the original theoretical propositions based on the data from the self-efficacy questionnaire and interview transcripts and confirmed by member checking and feedback from participants. The findings were arranged in
three themes with an additional subtheme. Both the themes and subthemes addressed the two research questions presented in the study and all data was analyzed using Bandura’s SCT using the participant’s lens.

According to the findings, all participants enjoyed their role as a high school counselor and possessed high ratings of self-efficacy. The years of experience ranged greatly but all participants rated themselves above average on all self-efficacy questions and their responses to the interview questions confirmed they had the knowledge to be effective college and career advisors. Most notably, the findings highlighted the importance for all stakeholders to fully understand the role of a counselor and possess a minimal knowledge of the LaSCM in order for counselors to be effective advisors. The findings also pointed to a lack of direct student advising and minimal group advising which is in direct opposition to the educational training high school counselors received through CACREP accredited programs.
CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents the central research questions and findings as well as an overview and purpose of the overall study. The comprehensive theoretical framework used to analyze the exploratory single case study will be discussed. The themes of the study will be highlighted with suggestions for future research being addressed. Lastly, the chapter concludes with implications for school and district leadership.

Summary of Findings

As an education administrator, I became concerned about new statewide initiatives, such as the Fast Forward 2025 initiative in which the goal is for all graduating seniors to leave high school with college credit, a postsecondary industry-based credential, or both (LDOE, 2021). My concern centered around the ability to achieve these statewide goals when the data from this study showed the negative impact high student caseloads had on direct college and career advising because counselors did not have the time to meet directly with students. Research shows that students who meet consistently with their counselors for college planning are more likely to take advanced courses such as dual enrollment and enroll in a postsecondary institution (Tang and Ng, 2019, p. 353). In my career, I have directly supervised school counselors and worked directly with all subgroups of students. I noticed that students might achieve much higher goals if they just had a person who worked directly with them and helped them develop confidence in their academic abilities regardless of historical performance. I observed the self-confidence in students’ abilities improved when they met individually with their counselors. I was curious to learn about the direct connection counselors’ self-efficacy had on their ability to advise high school students.
Throughout my career, I also developed an interest in the role of a high school counselor and what their daily duties should entail. Appropriate duties outlined by ASCA (2009) include direct student college and career planning. The heightened emphasis on career and college readiness (LDOE, 2021) made me increasingly interested in the connectivity between the high school counselors’ self-efficacy and its impact on advising to meet the demands for new statewide goals. I learned through literature that the counselors’ role was not only confusing to the counselor, but also to the administrators who oversaw the school counselors (Carnes-Holt et al., 2012). I recognized through the literature that school counselors and their rapport with students played a vital role in student success, both academic and personal (Belasco, 2013; Deslonde & Becerra, 2018, p. 13). I also noticed there was a scarcity of research published regarding self-efficacy and its direct relation to student advising. The purpose of this study was to describe the relationship between high school counselors’ self-efficacy and its impact on college and career student advising.

Central Research Question

The central research question that guided the study was, “How do high school counselors implement college and career advising based on their perceived school counseling self-efficacy?” Based on the literature, role confusion, lack of intentional and job-embedded professional development, and low levels of self-efficacy directly influenced student advising sessions (Bodenhorn et al., 2010; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011). Understanding how self-efficacy impacts college and career advising was a gap in the literature that needed to be addressed. One tool that could successfully guide student advising sessions was the IGP (LDOE, 2016). According to the LDOE (2016), completing the individual graduation plan was an important component of student advising and college and career planning. According to the data
from the interviews, these participants reported that they failed to utilize the IGP tool due to their lack of knowledge about the usefulness and purpose of the tool. The counselors represented in this study also lacked the ability to perform individual student advising sessions due to their assigned duties misaligned with the ASCA national model and lack of time present within their schedules which is commonly cited as a barrier in the literature (Pyne, 2011).

Individual student advising and utilizing research-based advising tools such as the IGP are crucial to successful student planning (LDOE, 2016). According to the participants, counselors advised in whole groups because they lacked the time to advise their students individually. Counselors rated themselves with high levels of self-efficacy to be successful student advisors, but they also reported that they did not perform individual advising. This led to frustration about their perceived role versus their actual role. ASCA (2019) expressed a clear direction for successful postsecondary student advising, which included direct student advising. McGlothlin and Miller (2008) explained that in order to implement a solid national model, school counselors must be the leaders of the school counseling program and their role must be respected by school administrators. The participants expressed support by the administration but did not favorably report their ability to implement any school counseling model. School counselors can advocate for themselves to allow for job duty alignment which will enable them to spend an appropriate amount of time working directly with individual students (Holman, Nelson, and Watts, 2019). While the counselors represented in this study rated themselves high in perceived efficacy for self-advocacy, none of the counselors articulated examples of advocating for themselves, or specifically for their role, which would allow for time to individually advise students.
Understanding the relationship between their self-efficacy and the counselors’ advising approach was important to this study. Based on the purpose of this exploratory single case study, the researcher explored the relationship between five school counselors’ perceived self-efficacy and its impact on student advising. The participants worked within the same site and had diverse educational backgrounds. Some of the counselors had prior classroom teaching experience and all had an ancillary certification in school counseling. Their experience in counseling ranged from one to fourteen years. All school counselors worked directly with students in a high school setting.

Data gathered for the case study included responses to a self-efficacy questionnaire and responses to a semi-structured interview. The data from this study produced key findings which produced three themes: 1) Role Confusion and Misalignment of Duties, 2) Lack of Professional Development and Training, and 3) High Levels of Self-Efficacy with Low Levels of Student Advising. In addition to the three themes, the research revealed additional findings about the perception the counselors shared relative to state initiatives and mandates.

All the participants expressed issues relative to their assigned duties and the misalignment with the ASCA national model (2019). They preferred to implement the model but were unable to do so. They did not use the state mandated IGP tool in a useful or meaningful way and viewed it as a compliance document. The Jump Start pathways were also viewed negatively by the counselors due to the confusion around student credentials and graduation requirements as it relates to postsecondary life.

All the participants preferred to spend their time utilizing counseling curriculum and in one-on-one student advising sessions. This led to negative feelings of their role as a school counselor. They reported feeling like “glorified secretaries” because they were often tasked with
filing and data entry of student records. This also led to a disconnect between intentional student advising and planning and the counselors’ daily routines. This resulted in all students being placed in the TOPS University pathway unless the student initiated a request to change their diploma pathway. This suggested there was a heavier emphasis on college planning and preparation than there was on career advising, leaving gaps for student matriculation to postsecondary.

Re-Visiting the Theoretical Framework

The comprehensive theoretical framework used was Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (1997). This theory was selected because it allowed for a better analysis for a qualitative approach that served as a lens to understand the reasons why counselors advised using certain approaches. SCT allowed the researcher to explore and understand the motivations behind the counselors’ behaviors and make sense of their approach to college and career advising. The high school counselors who participated in this study all reported high levels of self-efficacy and low levels of college and career advising. Using SCT allowed the researcher to understand the experiences of each counselor to explain the low levels of college and career advising. The framework also served as a lens to understand why the counselors did not have a sense of urgency to advocate on their behalf to individually advise students.

As shown in previous research on the confusion of the role of a school counselor and misaligned duties have been prevalent for a century (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011) and led to extreme job dissatisfaction due to the ambiguity of their role (Pyne, 2011). Bandura (2001) explained cognitive factors predict human behaviors. Howard and Myers (1990) furthered that additional external influences (nonagentic causes) also influence behavior. This suggested that the cognitive abilities coupled with external influences mold an individual’s behavior and
response to situations. In this study, there were examples given by all participants that confirmed a disconnect between their perception of their role and their principal’s perception of their role. The participants also explained their experiences during their graduate programs which shaped their behavior once they were hired as a school counselor. They talked about their internship and practicum experiences and explained that they modeled what they learned. This proved to be, in at least three instances, a negative effect because they shadowed a “seasoned” school counselor who did not receive training through CACREP accredited schools nor understood the importance of adhering to the ASCA national model. Following SCT, these experiences molded their perception of school counseling and guided their approach as a school counselor. They had the ability to perform the role of a school counselor, but their surroundings heavily influenced their approach to college and career advising.

The surroundings that shaped their work consisted of counseling approaches by their peers, principal expectations, school district expectations, and time constraints. All participants except Payton had poor experiences during their internship or practicum. Payton completed her experience in a high school setting which she felt prepared her for her role. The other participants stated their experiences did not adequately prepare them for the role they were eventually hired to do. While Payton said she felt prepared, her interview responses along with the other participant responses, suggested that their learning environment in their graduate programs did not heavily influence their current work performance. Instead, the data from this study suggested that the ambiguity of their duties allowed for them to negate their ASCA aligned duties to directly advise students.

The expectations of the school district and principal also seemed to influence their daily routines as counselors. Under the SCT framework, the thoughts and feelings about these
expectations suggested that the counselors had a sense of complacency in their roles. All participants reported confident levels of self-efficacy in the collaboration category which suggested they felt confident advocating for their roles as a school counselor. However, none of the participants advocated for more time to work individually advising students and continued with the daily routines and duties prescribed by the school principal or district. Rather, all participants reported they did not have time to work individually with students. This suggested that the counselors continued the same behavioral patterns because that is what they have always done, and they did not feel confident that their roles would ever change to allow for more direct advising and adherence to the ASCA national model.

The framework used in this study assisted in addressing the gaps in literature: the connection between a school counselor’s perceived self-efficacy and its impact on college and career advising. Also, zero exploratory case studies have been conducted in Louisiana connecting self-efficacy and its impact on student advising, specifically in the high school setting. In summary, this framework shed light on the connectivity between perceived self-efficacy and the work performed by a school counselor by making connections between prior experiences (internships/practicums) and personal beliefs and abilities.

Implications

The overall study provided insights on high school counselors’ efficacy and their ability to provide college and career counseling services. The results from this study suggest additional implications for high school counselors across the state. Based on the findings, there are concerns that without proper attention to how school counselors deliver college and career advising, the state will not achieve its Fast Forward goals; and subsequently, students will
continue to receive advising through group sessions and lack appropriate information needed to successfully plan for postsecondary life.

While the LDOE boasts lofty goals with its Fast Forward Initiative, specific focus should be given to lowering student-to-counselor ratios. ASCA (n.d.) reported that Louisiana’s student-to-counselor ratio was 468 while the actual average should be no more than 250 students. This would allow school counselors the proper amount of time for individual student planning (LDOE, 2010). All participants reported caseloads of at least four hundred students. The participants explained their caseloads prohibited them from completing classroom lessons, individual student advising sessions, and small group sessions. Local, state, and federal funding should be considered to add additional certified school counseling personnel to lessen the student-to-counselor ratio. This would allow students to meet more frequently with counselors and in turn make them more 1.4 times more likely to enroll in a postsecondary institution (Tang and Ng, 2019).

LDOE and school systems might consider additional methods to training school counselors on advanced course options for students and ensuring school counselors have the ability to advise students on these options. LDOE (2021) reported that dual enrollment programs positively impacted high school graduation rates and student persistence in postsecondary education and degree attainment. However, information was not provided regarding the statistics that support these claims. Enrollment in advanced courses such as dual enrollment should be reviewed by the school counselor and families prior to enrolling in the course (Walsh, 2016). The data from this study proved that individual advising sessions were impossible given the number of students in the counselors’ caseload compared to the amount of time in the academic year.
Additionally, all participants expressed concerns about a lack of professional development they received regarding college and career advising. While they reported they could self-enroll and participate in any professional development they desired, school systems should consider ongoing job-embedded professional development that teaches best practices for college and career advising. Lastly, another consideration should be given to offer professional development on the ASCA national model and specifically focus on appropriate versus inappropriate counseling duties for school level administrators. The myriad of additional and misaligned duties by school administrators often leads to role conflict for counselors (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011). Implementing professional development opportunities for school administrators could increase the capacity of school counselors and lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and retainment.

Future Research

The connection between perceived self-efficacy and its impact on college and career advising had not been explored, specifically in Louisiana. Much of the previous research focused on efficacy and impact on student success, role confusion, and the implementation of school counseling models (ASCA, 2009; Bodenhorn et. al., 2010; Pyne, 2011). This study was designed to understand the impact perceived self-efficacy had on college and career advising. This study provided another understanding of the impact through the lens of social cognitive theory which is that school counselors will advise based on their experiences. Their experiences could be prior educational training or current experiences such as high student caseloads.

The perspectives and feedback provided by the participants regarding their role ambiguity and misalignment to the ASCA national model was covered in this study and suggestions were made how to mitigate the challenges here. Future research can be conducted on
funding streams that can support school counselors that allow them to utilize their high levels of self-efficacy to be effective college and career advisers. Lastly, many of the initiatives in Louisiana are a less than five years old and some (Fast Forward) will not be measured until 2025. Future research can be done that connects school counselor advising and its impact on the success of reaching the goals of the initiatives.

Additionally, longitudinal studies can be performed once the initial Fast Forward goals are reported. Other influential factors, such as parental involvement, teacher advising, and personal student goals should be evaluated as variables. Researchers can identify the impact of the counselor on achieving the Fast Forward goals and make additional connections between the aforementioned variables. Based on this research, studies can be done on the allowability of funding in partnership between the Board of Regents and Department of Education.

**Personal Reflection and Connection**

Throughout this study, my personal beliefs on school counseling changed and I became more empathetic to and understanding of high school counselors, specifically their role and should be daily work duties. As a former high school principal, I was never familiar with the ASCA model. I understood the LaSCM but was never well-versed in its suggestions nor did I understand best practices for implementation. This work performed as part of this study highlighted the myriad of duties that have become commonplace to assign school counselors that negatively impact their work with students. This study also highlighted for me the lack of personal advocacy for one’s job. My personal growth as a result from this study has had a positive impact on my current work and has allowed me to better understand and support school counselors to make room for positive interactions between students and school counselors.
Conclusion

This chapter concluded the research of this exploratory single-case study. The central research question and purpose of the study along with a discussion of the main themes were addressed. The theoretical framework, SCT, and its relation to the themes was also discussed in this chapter. Finally, recommendations for the LDOE, school systems, and graduate training programs were given for how high school counselors can be more effective college and career advisors along with suggestions for future research.
APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL

TO: Curry, Jennifer  
LSUAM | Col of HSE | Education  
FROM: Paul Mooney  
Associate Chair, Institutional Review Board  
DATE: 07-May-2021  
RE: IRBAM-21-0550  
TITLE: A Student's Pathway to Success: Understanding the Connectivity Between High School Counselors' Self-Efficacy and College and Career Advising  
SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial Application  
Review Type: Exempt  
Risk Factor: Minimal  
Review Date: 07-May-2021  
Status: Approved  
Approval Date: 07-May-2021  
Approval Expiration Date: 06-May-2024  
Re-review frequency: (three years unless otherwise stated)  
Number of subjects approved: 5  
LSU Proposal Number:  
By: Paul Mooney, Associate Chair  

Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:  

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*  
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.  
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.

5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.

6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.


8. **SPECIAL NOTE:** When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.

*All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU’s Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at [http://www.lsu.edu/research](http://www.lsu.edu/research)*

Louisiana State University
131 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

O 225-578-5833 F 225-578-5983
[http://www.lsu.edu/research](http://www.lsu.edu/research)
APPENDIX B. RECRUITMENT EMAIL

My name is Mandy LaCerte and I am pursuing my Ph.D. from LSU in Educational Leadership and Research with a concentration in Higher Education Administration. The title of my dissertation is “A Student’s Pathway to Success: Understanding the Connectivity Between High School Counselor Self-Efficacy and College and Career Advising.” I am reaching out in hopes that you will participate in my dissertation study by agreeing to an interview. Interviews will be conducted with five counselors.

The purpose of this study is to explain the relationship between a counselor’s self-efficacy and advising students relative to college and career options. It is my hope that this study will lead to additional studies that dig deeper into the relationship between a high school student’s course progression and the impact that has on the student’s postsecondary pursuit along with the student’s desire to take advantage of opportunities such as dual enrollment and advanced placement.

I invite you to participate in the study by clicking THIS LINK in order to complete the questionnaire that will be used to gather basic background information. The questionnaire should take approximately 5-10 minutes and all responses will remain confidential. Should you choose to participate, you will be entered into a drawing to receive a $25 Amazon gift card. Two gift cards are available.

Please respond to the questionnaire by :Friday, May 14, 2021.

Thank you for your time and consideration to participate.

Best,
Mandy B. LaCerte
Mandy B. LaCerte, MPA
Ph.D. Candidate
Louisiana State University
225-439-5652
Mandy.lacerte@gmail.com
APPENDIX C. INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR CASE STUDY INTERVIEW

1. Study Title: A Student’s Pathway to Success: Understanding the Connectivity Between High School Counselor Self-Efficacy and College and Career Advising

2. The purpose of this research project is to determine the relationship between your self-efficacy and your approach to student advising. The interview will take place through a virtual platform, Google Meets or Zoom. Your expected time in the interview will be approximately 45 minutes to 60 minutes. The interview will be conducted in one sitting. During this interview, you will be asked a series of open-ended questions. My participation will be to ask the questions and record your responses. Follow-up questions may be asked based on your response.

3. Risks: There are no risks associated with this interview outside of those in your regular day to day life. However, risks are associated when using modern day technology such as video conferencing and email. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the best of my ability to the degree allowable by the technology.

4. Benefits: The interview may yield valuable information about training needs for current high school counselors that can impact stakeholder decisions to provide additional training opportunities for high school counselors.

5. Investigators: The following investigators are available for questions about this interview, M-F, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Mandy LaCerte, 225-439-5652 or Jennifer Curry, 225-802-7579

6. Performance Site: Virtual through Google Meets or Zoom

7. Number of subjects: 5

8. Subject Inclusion: High School Counselor. To participate in this interview, you must be currently employed at The Red Stick High School and working directly with students in an advising capacity.

9. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

10. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

11. Signatures:
   The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may
direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. For injury or illness, call your physician or the Student Health Center if you are an LSU student.

If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Alex Cohen, Chairman, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, or www.lsu.edu/research. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the researcher's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject Signature: ___________________________ Date: ______________

The study subject has indicated to me that he/she is unable to read. I certify that I have read this consent form to the subject and explained that by completing the signature line above, the subject has agreed to participate.

Signature of Reader: ___________________________ Date: ______________
APPENDIX D. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1 Which gender identity do you most identify?
   Male
   Female
   Non-binary
   Prefer not to answer

Q2 Choose one or more races that you consider yourself.
   White
   Black or African American
   American Indian or Alaska Native
   Asian
   Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   Other (please specify)

Q3 What certifications do you hold (including teacher or supervisory certifications)?

Q4 How many years of experience do you have as a school counselor (including the year you graduated)?

Q5 Did you graduate from a CACREP accredited program? (Yes or No)

Q6 Did you graduate from a program that taught you the ASCA Model? (Yes or No)
APPENDIX E. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Research Question: How do the high school counselors perceive their college and career advising self-efficacy and how does this impact student advising and the completion of the IGP?

Thank you for participating in this interview. As a reminder, this study is to describe the connection between counselor self-efficacy and the impact that has on student advising for postsecondary environments (college or career).

▪ What led you to this career field?
  o Tell me why you chose high school counseling.
  o How comfortable are you with advising students?

▪ What is your educational background?
  o How did you become a licensed school counselor?
  o What were the requirements of your internship/practicum?
    ▪ How did these experiences train you for your current job?

▪ How prepared were you to address career and college with students once you left your counseling program? What courses did you take in your counseling program that helped prepare you?

▪ Are you familiar with the Louisiana School Counseling Model?
  o To what degree has your school implemented this model?
  o What is your administrator’s familiarity with this model?
  o Do you feel like you can implement this model? Why?

▪ How do you define postsecondary planning?
  o How comfortable are you with advising students on postsecondary options?
How knowledgeable are you relative to career counseling?

- What tools/strategies do you use to help students plan for a career?
  - How prepared are you to use instruments that connect a student’s personality with a career?
  - How comfortable are you with advising students on Jump Start?
    - How prepared are you to connect Jump Start pathways with college options or business and industry?

How knowledgeable are you relative to college counseling?

- What tools/strategies do you use to help students plan for college?
- How prepared are you to advise students on TOPS U pathways?
- How prepared are you to advise students on college options?

How prepared are you to connect students’ high school pathway with a postsecondary option?

What is your current student caseload?

What method do you use for student advising sessions?

- How prepared do you feel to complete the IGP?
- How do you complete the IGP?
- What is the student’s input into the IGP? The parent/guardian?
- How often do you meet with your students?
- If a student is struggling to identify a future career, what types of interventions might you use to help the student?

What trainings do you receive?

- How often and are you able to self-select PD?
o What specific trainings have you received on academic advisement? College and/or career advising?
APPENDIX F. SELF-EFFICACY QUESTIONNAIRE

Nancy Bodenhorn, Virginia Tech, 2004

School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale

Below is a list of activities representing many school counselor responsibilities. Indicate your confidence in your current ability to perform each activity by circling the appropriate answer next to each item according to the scale defined below. Please answer each item based on one current school, and based on how you feel now, not on your anticipated (or previous) ability or school(s). Remember, this is not a test and there are no right answers. Use the following scale:

1 = not confident,
2 = slightly confident,
3 = moderately confident, 4 = generally confident, 5 = highly confident.

Please circle the number that best represents your response for each item.

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<td>Advocate for integration of student academic, career, and personal development into the mission of my school. (4)</td>
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<td>Recognize situations that impact (both negatively and positively) student learning and achievement. (4)</td>
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<td>Analyze data to identify patterns of achievement and behavior that contribute to school success. (2)</td>
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<td>Advocate for myself as a professional school counselor and articulate the purposes and goals of school counseling. (4)</td>
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<td>Develop measurable outcomes for a school counseling program which would demonstrate accountability. (2)</td>
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<td>Consult and collaborate with teachers, staff, administrators and parents to promote student success. (4)</td>
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<td>Establish rapport with a student for individual counseling. (4)</td>
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<td>Function successfully as a small group leader. (1)</td>
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<td>Effectively deliver suitable parts of the school counseling program through large group meetings such as in classrooms. (4)</td>
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<td>Conduct interventions with parents, guardians and families in order to resolve problems that impact students’ effectiveness and success. (4)</td>
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<td>Teach students how to apply time and task management skills. (3)</td>
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<td>Foster understanding of the relationship between learning and work. (3)</td>
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<td>Offer appropriate explanations to students, parents and teachers of how learning styles affect school performance. (3)</td>
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<td>Deliver age-appropriate programs through which students acquire the skills needed to investigate the world of work. (3)</td>
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15. Implement a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions. (3)  

16. Teach students to apply problem-solving skills toward their academic, personal and career success. (3)

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Numbers in parentheses reflect factor structure and should be deleted when administering scale.

Nancy Bodenhorn, Virginia Tech, 2004

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17. Evaluate commercially prepared material designed for school counseling to establish their relevance to my school population. (1)

18. Model and teach conflict resolution skills. (1)

19. Ensure a safe environment for all students in my school. (1)

20. Change situations in which an individual or group treats others in a disrespectful or harassing manner. (1)

21. Teach students to use effective communication skills with peers, faculty, employers, family, etc. (1)

22. Follow ethical and legal obligations designed for school counselors. (1)

23. Guide students in techniques to cope with peer pressure. (1)

24. Adjust my communication style appropriately to the age and developmental levels of various students. (1)

25. Incorporate students’ developmental stages in establishing and conducting the school counseling program. (1)

26. I can find some way of connecting and communicating with any student in my school. (5)

27. Teach, develop and/or support students’ coping mechanisms for dealing with crises in their lives – e.g., peer suicide, parent’s death, abuse, etc. (1)

28. Counsel effectively with students and families from different social/economic statuses. (5)

29. Understand the viewpoints and experiences of students and parents who are from a different cultural background than myself. (5)

30. Help teachers improve their effectiveness with students. (2)

31. Discuss issues of sexuality and sexual orientation in an age appropriate manner with students. (5)

32. Speak in front of large groups such as faculty or parent meetings. (4)

33. Use technology designed to support student successes and progress through the educational process. (3)

34. Communicate in writing with staff, parents, and the external community. (4)
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<td>35. Help students identify and attain attitudes, behaviors, and skills which lead to successful learning. (1)</td>
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<td>36. Select and implement applicable strategies to assess school-wide issues. (2)</td>
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<td>37. Promote the use of counseling and guidance activities by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate. (2)</td>
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<td>38. Develop school improvement plans based on interpreting school-wide assessment results. (2)</td>
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<td>39. Identify aptitude, achievement, interest, values, and personality appraisal resources appropriate for specified situations and populations. (2)</td>
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<td>40. Implement a preventive approach to student problems. (2)</td>
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<td>41. Lead school-wide initiatives which focus on ensuring a positive learning environment. (2)</td>
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<td>42. Consult with external community agencies that provide support services for our students. (4)</td>
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<td>43. Provide resources and guidance to school population in times of crisis. (4)</td>
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Numbers in parentheses reflect factor structure and should be deleted when administering scale.
APPENDIX G. PERMISSION TO USE QUESTIONNAIRE

Mandy LaCerte <mandy.lacerte@gmail.com>

Request for Permission to Use
2 messages

Mandy LaCerte <mandy.lacerte@gmail.com> Thu, Jan 21, 2021 at 6:34 PM
To: nanboden@vt.edu

Good evening Dr. Bodenham,

My name is Mandy LaCerte and I am a doctoral student (candidate) at Louisiana State University. I am currently crafting my proposal for approval and would like permission to use the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale in my research.


Best regards,
Mandy

Mandy B. LaCerte, Ph.D. Candidate
MBA, Louisiana State University
225-439-5652

Bodenham, Nancy <nanboden@vt.edu> Thu, Feb 11, 2021 at 3:16 PM
To: Mandy LaCerte <mandy.lacerte@gmail.com>

Hi Mandy, sorry for the tardiness of my reply.

Yes, you have my permission to use the SCSE in your dissertation. I hope that it meets the needs for your interesting study.

I have attached a version that includes the factors by number in parentheses.

Good luck – and skill!

Nancy

Nancy Bodenham
Associate Director, Office of Academic Programs
Associate Professor, Counselor Education
404 Wallace Hall
School of Education
Virginia Tech
540 231-8180
nanboden@vt.edu
REFERENCES


VITA

Amanda Belanger LaCerte is originally from New Orleans, Louisiana. She attended an all-girl’s Catholic High School and moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana for college. She graduated from Louisiana State University (LSU) with a Bachelor’s Degree in English with a concentration in Writing and Culture. After graduation, she earned her teaching certificate through alternative certification and taught high school English in North Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She eventually became an assistant principal and then high school principal and director. While working as a high school principal, she obtained a Master’s Degree in Public Administration from LSU. As a seasoned educator, Amanda has been committed to equity and excellence in education through vehicles such as dual enrollment and advanced placement.