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## Measuring The Self-Perceived Transformational Leadership Skills Of School Counselors: A Comparison Across Settings

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MEASURING THE SELF-PERCEIVED TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS OF  
SCHOOL COUNSELORS: A COMPARISON ACROSS SETTINGS

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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## DEDICATION

To my sweet Olivia, in hopes that as you mature you will inspire and lead others with the intent to make a difference in this world. You have unknowingly pushed and motivated me to reach my own dreams so that I can be the role model and mother you deserve.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the past few years, I have received support and encouragement from numerous individuals. Alex, you have been my rock and my support through this process; always understanding the time involved and making sacrifices to help our family thrive while I was committed to researching and writing. Mom and Dad, you have always been so proud of me. Thank you for encouraging me to reach my goals.

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## ABSTRACT

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership that is well suited for the nature of the modern school counselor. Previous research has shown the ways in which a school counselor can incorporate transformational leadership components into his or her school counseling program. However, little research has currently been conducted to assess what factors contribute to counselors' self-perceived transformational leadership. This study aimed to examine influential factors in the development of transformational leadership skills of school counselors across the United States. This study took into account age, years of experience, school setting (i.e., elementary, middle or high school) and leadership in a professional organization. As such, a sample of 102 practicing school counselors completed a demographic form and the transformational leadership inventory. A multiple regression examined if age and/or years of experience have a relationship to self-perceived transformational leadership skills. In addition, an ANOVA assessed the differences that exist among counselors in different school settings (elementary, middle, or high school) and school counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations on their self-perceived transformational leadership abilities. Results indicated there is no statistical significance between age and self-perceived SCTLTI scores, but there is a negative correlation between years of experience and SCTLTI scores. Additionally, there are no significant differences between school settings, but a positive correlation between prior/current professional organization leadership and SCTLTI scores. Finally, implications for counselor educators and school counselor leaders are discussed.

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS

$P$	Probability of rejecting the null hypothesis, when the hypothesis is true
$n$	Sample Size
$F$	The variance between or within groups
$f$	Effect Size
$\alpha$	Alpha statistic used to determine the significance level, set prior to data collection
$\beta$	Beta statistic used to determine the probability of failing to reject the hypothesis tested when the hypothesis is not true
$B$	Beta coefficient, which are estimates resulting from an analysis carried out by independent variables that have been standardized so that variances are 1
SE B	The estimated standard error of b
CI	Confidence Interval
$r$	Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, a measure of the linear correlation between the independent and dependent variable
$r^2$	Coefficient of determination, indicating how well data fit a statistical model; total variance explained by the model
df	Degrees of Freedom
$\eta$	Eta squared, the measure of effect size for ANOVA

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASCA.....	American School Counselors Association
CACREP.....	Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
CSI .....	Chi Sigma Iota
IRB.....	Institutional Review Board
ANOVA .....	Analysis of Variance
SCTLI .....	School Counseling Transformational Leadership Inventory
SPSS.....	Statistical Package of the Social Science
TLQ.....	Transformational Leadership Questionnaire

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a characteristic many school counselors aim to embody in order to possess the authority to make the best decisions for students' overall well-being. School counselors are trained to provide interventions for students who are struggling socially, emotionally, and academically (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012). In order for a school counselor's voice to best be heard, the counselor should encompass the traits of a leader. However, what defines a leader and the skills that the school counselor should employ to be effective can be difficult to identify. In addition, a school counselor who aims to be a leader within his or her school system must understand that it is a long-term process; becoming a leader does not happen overnight (Dollarhide, Gibson & Saginak, 2008). The school counselor must be patient and prepared for setbacks. But, if they obtain the appropriate leadership skills, the school counselor's intentions of becoming a leader may come to fruition.

Leadership in school counseling calls for a set of skills that takes long-term commitment and vision (Dollarhide, 2003; Dollarhide et al., 2008). Galassi and Akos (2004) describe school counselors as leaders in their educational community who not only work with students, but with parents, teachers, administrators and other stakeholders to create a learning environment that nurtures academic, career, and social/emotional competence of students. Leadership continually builds on this notion by nurturing relationships among all involved in the process (e.g., individuals, groups, and other

stakeholders) (Lewis & Borunda, 2006). School counselors are also in the position to work collaboratively and lead stakeholders within the school system to ensure student success, as well as to build trust and improve communication with such stakeholders to improve student motivation and achievement (Dollarhide et al., 2008).

School administrators have high tactical goals to meet each year via test scores, graduation rate, and the school report card (Siedman & McCauley, 2011). The individuals in school leadership positions strive for operational excellence in the areas in which can be measured, and they do so relentlessly. This type of leadership is transactional in nature because it can be measured through data. Seidman and McCauley (2011) asserted that school-wide leaders who employ transactional methods of leadership get so caught up in meeting district and state level of expectations, they forget to incorporate others' ideas or involve other stakeholders in the decision process. Thus, high pressure on these leaders from district superintendents, school board, and state's department of education produces a narrowing effect on perspectives and skills (Seidman & McCauley, 2011). Unfortunately, there may be school administrators that have not been trained to be effective leaders who embrace ideas of others and have the support of the staff at their school. However, school administrators may have extra help by working closely with school counselors who may view school reform in a different light.

School counseling leadership has expanded and has been discussed in several ways including leading program development, supporting advocacy, undertaking school reform, taking on numerous roles and recognizing leadership contexts (Lewis & Borunda, 2006). A challenge for school counselors is how to take a stance regarding school counseling program development, professional identity in the school community, and

accountability for all students. One style of leadership that may help is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership involves the interaction between leaders and followers so that both parties become highly motivated toward working on shared goals (Miller, Marchel & Gladding, 2010). Transformational leaders immerse themselves into the needs and desires of others in such a highly motivating way that the end result is transformation of their followers and team members.

Weichun, Sosik, Riggio, and Yang (2012) suggested transformational leadership produces a positive effect on both follower attitudes and performance. The positive effect on performance has been observed in both the leaders' personal and organizational lives (Weichun, Sosik, Riggio, 2012). Weichun and colleagues (2012) suggested transformational leaders are more likely to have skills to help followers strongly identify with their organization. Thus, transformational leaders instill leadership in others and help them grow professionally. These leaders are whom counselor educators hope to produce as effective school counselors who make the best and most effective judgments for their students and school.

The call for school counseling leadership has been highlighted by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2012), yet little previous literature has touched on the subject. The ASCA (2012) has provided a list of leadership activities, based on those of Bolman and Deal (2008) and Dollarhide (2003) that correlate to leadership components of the ASCA National Model (2012). How to implement these activities is usually left up to the school counselor, with hopes that they will choose a style of leadership that supports academic achievement, advances an effective delivery

system of a school counseling program, promotes professional identity, and overcomes challenges of role consistency (ASCA, 2012). However, factors such as age, years of experience, school setting and leadership in a professional organization can all influence a school counselor's self-perceived transformational leadership skills (Gibson, Dollarhide, Conley & Lowe, 2014). Chapter Two will provide a more detailed discussion of the relevant literature.

### **Statement of the Problem**

**Transformational leadership.** Leadership can be defined as the ability to lead and the capacity to be a leader (Schwallie-Giddis, Mat & Pak, 2003). School counselors often have the role of addressing issues of today's schools and as such, should be viewed as leaders of their school counseling programs (Dollarhide, 2003). The ASCA National Model (2012) emphasizes the importance of school counselors engaging in leadership and advocacy. Furthermore, for today's school counselor, in order to validate the job's roles and responsibilities, accountability is especially important. School counselors can use their unique abilities in leadership to gain the trust of others and enhance communication, qualities that are imperative for leaders (Dollarhide, Gibson & Saginak, 2008). The skills that counselors already seem to encompass - such as fostering relationships and building rapport - relate specifically to transformational leadership (Clemens, Milsom, & Cashwell, 2009).

In 1985, Bass and Avolio pioneered the first study measuring transformational leadership behavior; they continued their research throughout the 1980's and 1990's. Over several research projects, they found transformational leadership should incorporate four key characteristics: inspirational, charismatic, individually considerate, and

intellectually stimulating (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Bass, Avolio & Atwater, 1996). Inspirational leaders provide optimism to inspire others within an organizational group. Charismatic leaders find a common vision for a group and empower the others in the group to become involved. Individually considerate leaders work with other team members on their needs and help them to get past those needs to work at a higher level. And lastly, intellectually stimulating leaders involve group members in looking at problems in a new way (Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996).

Over the past twenty years, the basic assumptions Bass and Avolio (1985) provided through their work has been expanded upon and critiqued. In recent literature, researchers within several disciplines have discussed transformational leadership (Dollarhide, 2003; Dollarhide et al., 2008; Sagnak, 2010; Seidman & McCauley, 2011; Weichun et al., 2012). This type of leadership develops new relationships, refocuses and enhances teamwork, and engages stakeholders in working together towards a common goal.

Bolman and Deal's (2008) transformational leadership model has four contexts in which the person inspiring to be a leader should attempt to operate: Structural Leadership, Human Resource Leadership, Political Leadership and Symbolic Leadership. Bolman and Deal (2008) posit that one does not have to incorporate all four contexts into their leadership style all at once, but can work to solidify one context before moving on to the other three contexts of transformational leadership.

Bolman and Deal's (2008) model of transformational leadership has four main components. Structural leadership is the structure of the organization. For example, in a school, the structure of leadership could be a principal, assistant principal, counselors,

and other faculty and staff. Human resource leadership is similar to inspirational leadership in Bass and Avolio's model (1985). This type of leadership incorporates the empowerment and inspiration of others. Political leadership is the use of organizational or interpersonal power. This type of leadership is self-evident in many school systems as many individuals attempt to move up the "totem pole" within the organization. Lastly, symbolic leadership is how the leader and followers interpret the meaning of change in the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Dollarhide, 2003).

Unfortunately, Bolman and Deal's (2008) model of transformational leadership is lacking a valid and reliable instrument to assess leadership ability. Therefore, a new instrument has been established called the School Counseling Transformational Leadership Inventory by Gibson, Dollarhide, Conley and Lowe (2014). The new instrument has been found to have high reliability and validity. However, no research has yet to be conducted on school counselor's leadership ability and any factors that may have a significant relationship with the development of transformational leadership skills. Furthermore, no research has been done on the inter-relationship of age, years of experience, school setting and leadership in a professional organization with self-perceived transformational leadership in any discipline.

**Age versus years of experience.** In a study by Dollarhide (2003), a recently graduated middle school counselor became a leader of the school counseling program in which she inherited. This new counselor used Bolman and Deal's (2008) framework of transformational leadership to facilitate the redesign of the school counseling program. This new counselor successfully managed to incorporate all four contexts of Bolman and Deal's (2008) model of transformational leadership into her leadership abilities to



promote the change of the school counseling program. While the research did not reveal the age of the new counselor, it did report that the counselor had no previous experience as a school counselor (Dollarhide, 2003).

In a longitudinal research study by Miller, Marchel, and Gladding (2010) it was found that over the course of ten years, mental health counselors who worked in response to the disaster on 9/11 in New York City had shown evolution and integration in their leadership style over time. This evolution could be described as internalized/reflective growth, focusing on minor but deep expressions of humanity, or externalized/active growth working in more expanded contexts such as mental health, legal or military policy (Miller, Marchel & Gladding, 2010). These findings suggest that years of experience could have an impact on the development of transformational leadership in school counselors. The type of transformational leadership this research focused on was primarily counselor-client centered, whereas transformational leadership in a school setting would be focused on stakeholder involvement to work towards mutual goals to change the school counseling program. However, one could argue that both counseling and transformational leadership are similar in that the main focus is to inspire others into action or to change on their own (Jacob et al., 2013).

In addition, research in recent years has discussed the elements of transformational leadership such as interpersonal behaviors (i.e., the ability to communicate effectively and empathy) that are important factors in an individual's ability to motivate others in various disciplines (Jacob et al., 2013). However, little to no research has been done on the relationship of age and years of experience to self-perceived transformational leadership skills of school counselors and specifically, if age

and years of experience plays a role in honing their leadership skills. Very few, if any, research studies have focused on the development of transformational leadership skills of school counselors. Lastly, there has been very little research conducted on age, years of experience, setting, and leadership in a professional organization in any discipline that utilizes transformational leadership.

**School Setting.** For the purposes of this study, age and years of experience are the key variables that were analyzed related to the development of transformational leadership skills. However, the school setting in which the counselor works could impact whether or not the counselor perfects his or her leadership skills. The organization of each school setting varies drastically. Perhaps a high school counselor is seen as a leader within the organization of the school system more so than an elementary school counselor. This is an area in which research is has not been conducted but could confound the results of the study.

**Leadership in a professional organization.** A study of prior and/or current leadership experiences in professional organizations may provide insight on whether or not such individuals have high self-perceived transformational leadership scores. Little research has been conducted on leadership experiences of counselor or counselor educators in professional organizations, and no research has been conducted on this information in relationship to self-perceived transformational leadership.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The specific purpose of this study was to examine influential factors in the development of transformational leadership skills of school counselors across the United States. This study takes into account age, years of experience, school setting (i.e.,

elementary, middle or high school) and leadership in a professional organization.

Currently, no research has been conducted to measure the correlation of transformational leadership skills of school counselors and their age, years of experience, school setting, and leadership in a professional organization.

The goal of this study was to determine if school counselors can possess transformational leadership skills as a young adult versus an older adult, and if years of experience have positive or adverse effects on the development of the transformational leadership skills. In order to implement the American School Counselor's Association National Model (ASCA, 2012) in school counseling programs, school counselors must have leadership abilities in order to create change (Dollarhide, 2003; Dollarhide et al., 2008; Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2003; West, Bubenzer, Osborn, Paez, & Desmond, 2006). ASCA's National Model (2012) creates accountability for the school counseling program through data-driven changes, which provide more organization and time to meet the needs of the students. School counselors are perceived as those who should perform clerical duties such as record keeping, class registration, and test administration (Bryant & Constantine, 2006).

This study contributes information on developing effective leaders in the field of school counseling. The American Counselor Association (2012) expects counselor educators to produce effective leaders, but information on how leadership develops is imperative to best help future counselors obtain the needed skills.

## **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

*Research Question 1:* What is the relationship between years of experience, the age of the school counselor, and self-perceived transformational leadership skills as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014)?

*Hypothesis 1:* There will be a statistically significant positive correlation between years of experience, the age of the school counselor, and self-perceived transformational leadership skills. As the years of experience increases, the age of the school counselor and their self-perceived transformational leadership skills will increase.

*Hypothesis 2:* Age and years of experience will be unique predictors of counselors' self-perceived transformational leadership abilities by measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et. al., 2014). The relationship between the variables will be positive, in that as age and years of experience of the school counselor increase, SCTLI scores will increase.

*Research Question 2:* What differences, if any, exist among counselors at school settings (i.e., elementary, middle, high school), and those who have held leadership positions in professional organizations versus those who have not on their self-perceived transformational leadership abilities as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014)?

*Hypothesis 3:* There will be a significant difference among counselors at different school settings (i.e., elementary, middle, high school) on their self-perceived transformational leadership abilities as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014). High school counselors will have the highest self-

perceived transformational leadership, followed by middle school counselors, then elementary school counselors.

*Hypothesis 4:* There will be a significant difference in self-perceived transformational leadership abilities between school counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations and those who have not. School counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations will score higher on the SCTLTI than those who have not.

### **Theoretical Framework for Research Design of the Study**

As previously stated, the ASCA (2012) has a conceptual framework that suggests school counselors should act as leaders within their school system. The idea that a school counselor should be a leader is taught to graduate level students who aspire to work in a school system. In fact, Chi Sigma Iota Academy of Leaders for Excellence (1999) has developed a list of ten practices and principles for leadership excellence in counseling for counseling students. Many organizations affiliated with the counseling profession who suggest that a school counselor should be a leader within the school organization but very few of them provide standards on how the counselor should build skills as a leader. Dollarhide and colleagues (2003; 2008) are at the forefront of helping school counselors understand what skills are needed to become a transformational leader as a school counselor. However, no research has been done on the extenuating variables that could affect the development of these skills.

Transformational leadership inherently relates to many of the skills school counselors received during their training. Transformational leaders are great communicators, enthusiastic and motivate others (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Dollarhide,

2003; Dollarhide et al., 2008); all of these are characteristics school counselors likely identify with. This study aims to ask school counselors if they do in fact identify with transformational leadership skills. It then uses their responses in relationship to their age, years of experience, school setting and leadership in a professional organization to see if there is a relationship between the variables.

### **Data Analysis**

This study aims to understand if age and years of experience could have a role in how the school counselor develops and maintains transformational leadership skills. The information was gathered quantitatively: by surveying school counselors who are members of the ASCA (2012), and comparing the results of the survey to the demographic information of the participants, through a multiple regression analysis. The participants were asked provide their precise age and years of experience, rather than selecting a demographic category in the survey. Therefore, the variables of age and years of experience in this study are continuous in nature. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis model was implemented because there is more than one factor (age, and years of experience).

The school setting and professional leadership in an organization are categorical variables. Therefore, a different type of analysis will be used. A two-way between groups Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) design will compare school setting and the prior and/or current leadership experience of the school counselor to their self-perceived transformational leadership skills.

## **Instrumentation**

The study focuses on age, years of experience, school setting, and leadership in professional organizations. In order to assess whether or not these factors have a relationship or unique prediction, it was necessary to find out how school counselors rate themselves on the School Counselor Transformational Leadership Inventory (Gibson et al., 2014). The SCTLI is a survey that asks 15 questions related to transformational leadership. The SCTLI gives the participant a total score that will reflect the self-reported level of engagement in overall leadership performance.

The SCTLI measures aspects of an individual's leadership style specific to the counselor role by asking questions about their perceived behaviors, reactions, and attitudes in management and leadership situations. Groups of questions are related to eight different competencies that make the individual unique in their own leadership style and ability. The eight competencies are empathy, feedback, achievement, empowerment, communication, motivation, performance, and commitment. The SCTLI takes into account the eight competencies and gives the participant a total score (e.g., overall leadership score) to give an approximate indication of their overall leadership performance. The results summary of the SCTLI is based on a five-point scale linked to percentile scores. In order to receive these results, the participants must answer 15 questions on a Likert scale. The raw scores of the 15 questions are summed for the overall score of the transformational leadership competence the participant portrays.

## **Participants**

The population for this study involves members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) networking site ASCA Scene. Email addresses for

participants were collected from the ASCA Scene. In order for the results to be generalizable to the school counseling population and to address the variables being analyzed, a power analysis calculated how many responses are needed to detect the effect of the given sample size (Balkin & Sherperis, 2011). Therefore, in order to use random sampling, a number generator assigned a number to over 30,000 ASCA Scene members. Email addresses were collected from 500 ASCA Scene members whose number was generated.

The participants who agreed to take the survey were able to access the survey from a link sent to their email. By agreeing to take the survey, the participants gave their permission to be included in the survey. The informed consent letter stated this information and any additional risks before the participants began the survey. The selected participants were current school counselors or have had a job in school counseling in the past five years. The participants were required to enter their age, years of experience, and the school level in which they work on the survey.

Table 1.1

*Independent and Dependent Variables and Corresponding Instrumentation*

Variable	Type of Variable	Instrument
Self-Perceived Transformational Leadership	Dependent	SCTLI
Age	Independent	Demographic Survey
Years of Experience	Independent	Demographic Survey
School Setting	Independent	Demographic Survey
Leadership in Professional Organization	Independent	Demographic Survey

*Note.* **SCTLI** = School Counseling Transformational Leadership Inventory



One of the main strengths of quantitative research is that the results can be generalizable to the population and usually therefore hold more significance to people of power and authority (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). This information is vital to this study because in order to see changes happening in the development of leadership skills of school counselors, we need to know the relationships of various factors on the development of these skills, including age, years of experience, the school level in which the school counselor works, and leadership in professional organizations. Counselor educators can help students hone their leadership skills and recognize factors that may be holding them back from being productive leaders. Once the results of this study are relayed to people of authority (ASCA board members, counselor educators, and school administration), then counselors can make strides in the implementation of ASCA programs in our schools.

In addition, a quantitative method has been chosen rather than a qualitative method, as the goal is not to understand so much *how* age and years of experience could affect leadership skill development, but rather, *whether* these variables impact and/or correlate to the development of transformational leadership skills.

### **Significance of the Study**

**Knowledge generation.** Increasing amounts of research has been done over the years on transformational leadership across disciplines (Dollarhide, 2003; Dollarhide et al., 2008; Sagnak, 2010; Seidman & McCauley, 2011; Weichun et al., 2012). Researchers have discussed how to evolve from a transactional leader into a transformational leader. Counselor education students reading these articles may better develop transformational

leadership skills both if they know potential obstacles, and are prepared to actively gain more knowledge and skills in becoming a transformational leader.

**Professional application.** In order for counselor educators to better help counselors in training find their professional authority and identity, and become leaders in their schools (Lewis & Borunda, 2006), it is helpful to know whether or not age and the years of experience of their students will have an overall impact on the development of transformational leadership skills.

**Social change.** This study aims to identify whether or not age and years of experience has an effect on transformational leadership skills of school counselors. This information could be useful for school administrators. Specifically, the results of this study could impact how young school counselors are utilized as leaders in the school system, and the extent to which they can advocate for the social, emotional, and academic needs of their students.

### **Operational Definitions**

The following terms and definitions, based on review and analysis of peer-reviewed literature, will be used in this study.

- American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is the national professional organization of school counselors.
- ASCA National Model is a framework for the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program established by the American School Counselor Association (2012).
- Transformational Leadership refers to the basic tenets provided by Bolman and Deal (2008). An individual incorporates all four components (Structural

Leadership, Human Resource Leadership, Political Leadership, Symbolic Leadership) to be viewed as a transformational leader.

- The School Counseling Transformational Leadership Inventory (SCTLI) is a survey in which scores a participant's transformational leadership abilities.
- For the purposes of this study, a school counselor is an individual who has been employed in a school system as a counselor within the past five years. The individual can be an elementary school counselor (with students in grades kindergarten to fifth grade), a middle school counselor (with students in sixth through eighth grades), or a high school counselor (with students ninth through twelfth grades).

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

This study seeks to better understand whether or not age, years of experience, and leadership in professional organizations have a relationship of the development of self-perceived transformational leadership skills in school counselors across school settings. However, this study does not take into account geographic region, gender, or training. All of these variables could confound the results. As in any study, there are threats to internal validity that must be accounted for such as history, maturation, and regression. Threats to external validity must also be assessed to be confident the study can be generalized to the population. Post-stratification of the participant responses will be conducted to account for external validity. The hope for this study is that it has enough significance for knowledge generation, professional application and social change.

## **Summary**

Making the decision to become a leader as a school counselor is a long-term investment. School counselors have to actively employ transformational leadership skills to inspire others to make school wide changes. Transformational leaders usually act in equalitarian relationships with other faculty members and do not employ tactics that bring others down. Transformational leaders congratulate others on their successes and work hard to collaborate with as many stakeholders in the school system as possible to promote positive change. The development of these skills must be intentional and chosen by the school counselor with the understanding that change among all stakeholders may take significant time. These leaders must dedicate time and hard work to achieve their overall goals. There are many factors that could affect the development of such skills, but the goal of this study is to determine specifically if age, years of experience, and leadership in professional organizations impact the development of self-perceived transformational leadership skills across school settings.

This research contributes to the professions of counselor education and school counseling through knowledge generation, professional application, and social change. Counselor educators and future school counselors should be aware of their development of transformational leadership skills, and the obstacles that impede the development of these skills.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational leadership is a relatively new way of looking at leadership, especially in relation to school counseling and comprehensive school counseling programs (Dollarhide, 2003; Dollarhide et al., 2008). A further review of the literature explores the assumptions behind transformational leadership, and how school counselors and counselor educators can best use these assumptions to promote such skills in school counselors. It is important to review the history of the school counseling profession and specifically what roles and responsibilities the school counselors have had over the past 100 years, because these roles and responsibilities dictate what type of leader a school counselor can be in the school system. Examining the duties of today's school counselors helps in understanding what is expected of them and how the ASCA's National Model (2012) tries to eliminate non-counseling duties. The ASCA National Model (2012) is a data-driven model to help serve students' emotional, personal/social, and career needs.

School counselors are in need of leadership skills to promote a comprehensive school counseling program – such as the ASCA National Model – within their local school settings. There are several leadership styles a school counselor could use to promote their school counseling programs. Thus, the specific leadership style that would benefit a school counselor the most was a substantial part of this literature search. This research found that the transformational leadership style encompasses skills that are often embodied by school counselors from the training they received in their graduate

programs. In addition, the ASCA National Model refers to Bolman and Deal (2008) and Dollarhide (2003) when referring to school counseling leadership, and these researchers refer specifically to transformational leadership in their publications.

A search was needed related to the specific factors under investigation in this study: age, years of experience, school setting, and prior leadership in professional organizations. The goal was to see if research had been done on whether any of these factors contributed to the development or refining of transformational leadership skills. Only one article (Kearney, 2008) was found that took the factors of age and years of experience into consideration. In this study, the researchers surveyed 285 team members and 21 team supervisors, and found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and team performance if the leader is older than the followers. However, this article was based on pharmaceutical sales. The limited research on these factors and school counselors' transformational leadership skills led to the development of this study.

Little to no research was found related to school setting. Next, a literature review of articles regarding leadership in professional organizations was conducted, and three articles were discovered. All three articles were qualitative in nature; two of them focused on counselors or counselor educators. These articles provided information regarding qualities and traits leaders in professional organizations considered important to be successful. But none addressed the relationship between being a leader in an organization and the counselors' self-perceived leadership abilities.

For all of the research, the University of South Carolina's article database and Academic Search Complete were used to review journal articles. Throughout the search the following terms were used: history of school counseling, school counselor

responsibilities, American School Counselor Association National Model, school counselor leadership, educational leadership, transformational leadership and leadership in professional organizations. At times these words were paired with each other and at one point transformational leadership was paired with age, years of experience, school setting, and leadership in professional organizations. The following sections outline the information found and the relevant literature to justify the research of how age, years of experience, educational setting, and leadership in professional organizations may affect the development of transformational leadership skills.

### **Leadership**

School counselors are leaders of their school counseling programs, and as such, they have the role of addressing issues of today's schools (Dollarhide, 2003). Leadership is often defined as the ability to lead and the capacity to be a leader (ASCA, 2012; Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2003), and has been addressed in a variety of disciplines (Dollarhide, 2003). Leadership takes long-term commitment and long-range view for the future (Dollarhide et al., 2008). The ASCA National Model (2012) stresses the importance of school counselors engaging in leadership and advocacy. In fact, leadership is what the ASCA National Model is all about (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2003). However, while many counselor education programs address the importance of leadership, few offer courses that require development of leadership skills.

**Transactional leadership.** In transactional leadership, relationships between leaders and followers are based on exchanges or bargains (Lievens, Van Geit, & Coetsier, 1997). For example, the follower may receive a conditional reward based on their performance, punishment or negative feedback for an undesired deed, and extra feedback

and advancements for good effort. Transactional leaders can be effective as they are well trained to clarify their expectations and goals, but in the long-term, they neglect the followers and at times lead them to feel unworthy (Lievens et al., 1997). Transactional leadership seems to be seen more often than not in large organizations (Seidman & McCauley, 2011).

School system leaders often fall into this category as they have high strategic goals to meet each year, such as graduation rate, test scores, and student/staff performance (Press, 2010; Seidman & McCauley, 2011). Transactional leaders focus highly on tactical goals. They strive to compact all work into measurable transactions. These intense transactional pressures tend to produce a narrowing of perspectives and skills (Seidman & McCauley, 2011). A prime example of this in the school setting is the “No Child Left Behind” act, which has spiraled into data-driven schools who care more about meeting numbers than the individual learning style of each student. Principals are almost forcing teachers to “dumb-down” material so that students can regurgitate the answers easily for benchmark tests and overall grades, all so that they meet state report-card criteria (Press, 2010). This type of leadership has a negative impact on teachers, students, and parents and while it helps to meet the measurable outcome for a short period of time (Seidman & McCauley, 2011).

**Transformational leadership.** Transformational leaders communicate a clear vision to all other team members and inspire others to put the good of the organization above themselves (MySkillsProfile, 2014). Transformational leaders motivate others to be creative and they take personal risks in order to achieve the collective vision of the organization.



Transformational leadership has been researched significantly over the past several years in disciplines other than school counseling (Weichun et al., 2012). Most results suggest transformational leadership produces an optimistic effect on follower attitudes and performance. Further, the positive effect on performance has been observed in both the leader's personal and organizational life (Weichun et al., 2012). Therefore, in order to be a leader who formulates an effective working environment, skills in transformational leadership will best help the school counselor who aims to make positive changes in his or her school. Weichun and colleagues (2012) suggest transformational leaders are more likely to have skills to empower their followers to possess strong identifications with their organizations. Thus, transformational leaders instill leadership in others and help them grow professionally.

Bolman and Deal's (2008) four contexts of transformational leadership are used to define leadership skills and abilities for this research: Structural Leadership, Human Resource Leadership, Political Leadership, and Symbolic Leadership. Structural Leadership takes into account the designing of organizational structures. For the school counselor, structural leadership could be creating and implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. Human Resource Leadership is the act of truly believing in and empowering students, parents, colleagues, and stakeholders. Political Leadership refers to connecting and working with existing power structures. Lastly, Symbolic Leadership refers to creating and communicating a vision of healthy students or a healthy school; inspiring students, parents and colleagues; and leading by example (Dollarhide et al., 2008).

Bolman and Deal (2008) posit that one does not have to incorporate all four contexts into their leadership style all at once, but can work to solidify one context before moving on to the other three. Leadership in school counseling programs involves continual attentiveness to and actions in each of the four leadership contexts (Dollarhide, 2003).

## **School Counseling**

**History of school counseling.** The profession of the school counselor can be traced back for approximately 100 years. The profession is fairly young but much change has happened in the past century (Coy, 1999). In 1889, Jessie B. Davis formed the first recorded guidance program in an English class in a Detroit high school. Around 20 years later, Frank Parsons, the “Father of Guidance,” began a vocational program, called “The Vocational Bureau,” for students leaving public schools (Coy, 1999; O’Brien, 2001). Parsons was an advocate for individualized career counseling; he matched individuals with careers based on understanding oneself, the environment, and the true reason behind picking a specific career (O’Brien, 2001). Like Davis and Parsons, guidance counselors in this time period focused on guiding students to vocational and career choices (Coy, 1999).

Following the Great Depression and after World War II, the guidance counselor also incorporated the assessment and measurement of personality traits and individual aptitude (Coy, 1999). Many men returned from the war having only worked in the service, and were unsure what jobs to choose for themselves. They needed vocational guidance and many counselors matched these veterans with new jobs by looking at their personality traits and individual aptitudes. Guidance counselors now noticed that

developmental needs and maturity played a role in vocational choices, personality traits and aptitude (Coy, 1999).

After the 1957 launching of Sputnik, the training of school guidance counselors focused mainly on preparing students to take more courses in math and science and to go to college (Coy, 1999). According to Kahnweiler (1979), many publications began to explore guidance counselor consultation. His review of literature between 1957 and 1978 explored the thinking of how a guidance counselor should act as a consultant within the school system to provide a better learning environment for students.

In the 1950's and 1960's, attention turned towards standards and certification through training programs (Coy, 1999). What is now known as the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) first started out as a small, organized body called the Association of College Educators and Supervisors (ACES). The goal of this organization was to upgrade existing guidance counselor preparation programs and examine existing counselor education curriculum. Examination findings would help in the development of new counselor training programs (Coy, 1999). In 2003, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) released The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs. This initiative from ASCA serves as a framework for designing, developing, implementing and evaluating data-driven school counseling programs.

**Development of the School Counselor.** School counselors go through a developmental process in graduate school to lead them in becoming confident, effective counselors (Stoltenberg, 1993). During this process, counselors are supervised by faculty in their graduate programs. The Integrated Developmental Model (IDM) of supervision is

based on earlier developmental models of supervision, human development theories, and recent research on clinical supervision (Stoltenberg, 1993). The IDM posits that individuals develop their identity as a counselor in developmental stages, including self and other awareness, motivation, and autonomy. These stages act as functions throughout three levels of development (Leach & Stoltenberg, 1997).

In Level 1 of development, the trainee is an individual who is new to the practice of counseling (Stoltenberg, 1993). Thus, training counselors are usually more focused on themselves than the client. This is due to the trainee being self-conscious of their skills and apprehensive about being evaluated by a supervisor. The focus of trainees is mainly on their own behavior, thoughts, and emotions (Stoltenberg, 2005). Leach (1993) says this “initial anxiety tends to result in the trainee’s focusing on his or her own fears and lack of knowledge and leaves little remaining attentional capacity to effectively attend” (p.134). Trainees are dependent on others throughout the counseling process. They are often highly motivated, but may not clearly foresee the challenges of counseling (Leach & Stoltenberg, 1997). They want to become effective counselors so that the uncomfortable feeling of anxiety can pass. Thus, the motivation is not due to deep understanding or self-knowledge, but more of a motivation to learn (Leach & Stoltenberg, 1997).

In Level 2 of counselor development, beginning counselors start to feel conflict regarding their autonomy. Level 2 supervisees have a strong desire to be less dependent on their supervisors (Stoltenberg, 1993). They may feel as though they are ready to operate independently and may get frustrated when they need assistance from their supervisor (Leach & Stoltenberg, 1997). However, they may begin to have a greater

understanding of counseling in general which may cause a shift from self-focus to client-focus (Leach & Stoltenberg, 1997).

Lastly, Level 3 counselors have high autonomy and high motivation due to previous identity development. They are able to distinguish their own cognition and feelings from their clients, but integrate the two when necessary (Leach & Stoltenberg, 1997). Level 3 counselors are able to process their own strengths and weaknesses and are aware of their areas of competencies. At this point in supervision, the supervisee is looking more for collegial sharing or experiences, and less for advice or extensive guidance from the supervisor (Stoltenberg, 1993).

The IDM theoretical framework for counselor development could be helpful in understanding the development counselors undergo in obtaining leadership skills. It may also provide insight for counselor educators and supervisors to understand how counseling students hone in on their leadership abilities, and to help foster transformational leadership skills.

### **Comprehensive School Counseling Programs**

School counseling has changed drastically over the past several decades. Therefore, ASCA created the National Model to clarify the new roles and responsibilities of school counselors and to alleviate the problems of ambiguity the profession has faced in the past (Payne, 2011). The ASCA National Model (2012) is a guide for all school counselors, no matter the setting or population. It is intended to be flexible enough to meet the academic, personal/social and career needs of all students, in all schools (Payne, 2011; Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2003). Walsh et al. (2007) described the ASCA National Model as programmatic, preventative, and collaborative to provide a consistent identity

and philosophy for school counselors. The National Model can create accountability for school counseling programs through data-driven changes, which provides more organization and time to meet the needs of students. This in turn creates data that validates the school counseling profession so that school counselors can continue to serve students.

The ASCA National Model (2012) focuses on four quadrants of school counseling programs: Foundation, Delivery, Management and Accountability. The Foundation component of the National Model emphasizes that school counselors design a comprehensive school counseling program that focuses on student outcomes and competencies, and is delivered via the competencies and standards of the profession. The Delivery component is the venue in which school counselors deliver their services: direct student services, school counseling curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and indirect student services. The Management components speak to the use of time and annual agreements that school counselors have with administration. Also, the school counselor can be a part of advisory councils and use data or small groups to close the achievement and/or opportunity gap (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). Lastly, the Accountability component refers to how the school counselor can show his or her effectiveness through measureable means and data (ASCA, 2012). As one can see, it takes a lot of time and effort to run a successful and effective comprehensive school counseling program according to the National Model. Therefore, the National Model (2012) encourages school counselors to work cooperatively with stakeholders to implement programs to meet students' needs, rather than working in isolation. Working with others will inevitably affect the overall wellbeing of the students' emotional,

personal/social and career needs (Janson et al., 2009). While working with other stakeholders, it may be of use to the school counselor to take on the role of a leader to help facilitate and implement programs needed to meet students' needs. This is where transformational leadership can get others involved and inspire them to make a difference.

**Role of the school counselor.** The changes made through ACES and CACREP in the 1960's have continued to evolve, and training for counselors has taken on new roles (Coy, 1999). School counselors are educated and trained to deal with a multitude of student problems, including social/emotional, academic and career issues (Coy, 1999). This renewed outlook on advocacy for the student has resulted in a shift to help protect students from developing issues that interfere with learning opportunities, rather than on prevention services that solely help students steer clear of problems and crisis. That is, instead of focusing primarily on prevention services, the school counselor now also focuses on being a developmental advocate for students by fostering social skills and competency in problem solving (Walsh, Barrett, & DePaul, 2007). School counselors are also trained to consult and collaborate with school stakeholders. School stakeholders often include district personnel, school administration and faculty, parents, and community members.

A qualitative study by Amatea and Clark (2005) found that administrators perceived the school counselor's role to fall into four categories: innovative school leader, collaborative case consultant, responsive direct service provider, and administrative team player. Another study suggested that school counselors can be involved as integral members of the school's leadership team and spend the majority of

their time meeting students' academic, career, and social/personal needs (Clemens et al., 2009).

**Role of the school counselor in different settings.** The ASCA National Model (2012) has developed a framework that is universal for all school counselors, yet flexible enough to meet the academic, personal/social, and career needs of all students (Payne, 2011; Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2003). The role of the school counselor will vary based on the setting in which they work (Coll & Freeman, 1997). An elementary and middle school counselor may have some role similarities, but there are vast differences in the day-to-day responsibilities each counselor will have. The same notion goes for elementary and high school counselors, and middle school and high school counselors.

Any school counselor who works within the National Model guidelines should be addressing areas of the framework through a variety of roles and responsibilities (Ponec & Brock, 2000). Many elementary school counselors work daily in classrooms performing classroom guidance. They collaborate with outside resources such as Boys and Girls Clubs, mental health centers, and community centers (Walsh et al., 2007). Elementary school counselors are also available to work with students in a group capacity by helping in the areas of friendship, bullying, anger-management, and social skills groups (Ponec & Brock, 2000; Walsh et al., 2007)

A middle school counselor does many of the same tasks as an elementary school counselor by conducting individual and group counseling, collaborating with outside resources, and providing classroom guidance. However, at this stage, other responsibilities slowly creep into the job roles of the school counselor like registration, scheduling, and testing (Holowiak-Urquhart & Taylor, 2005). These expectations come



from administration and district levels and highlight the need for implementation of a comprehensive guidance program (Holowiak-Urquhart, 2005; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012).

A high school counselor often has all of the same duties as an elementary or middle school counselor, but also the responsibility of preparing students for college, helping them apply for college entrance examinations, and assisting students in filling out college applications (ASCA, 2012; Woods & Domina, 2014). High school counselors are also given the task to help students who are not interested in going to college find other routes that will help them make the best of their lives through technical training or entering the military or workforce (ASCA, 2005; Woods & Domina, 2014).

### **Leadership and School Counseling**

**Leadership models in school counseling.** As discussed in Chapter One, currently there is not a specific leadership model related to school counseling. ASCA (2012) strongly encourages school counselors to adopt their framework to promote leadership skills in the school counselor within their school or school system. The notion that a school counselor should be a leader is taught to graduate level students. An article by Lockard, Laux, Ritchie, Piazza and Haefner (2014) asserts that counselor educators actually favor teaching leadership skills to students via an academic perspective, while students are more interested in acquiring these skills through applied learning.

Chi Sigma Iota Academy of Leaders for Excellence (1999) has developed a list of ten practices and principles for leadership excellence in counseling for counseling students. There are several organizations affiliated with the counseling and counselor

education profession who promote school counselor leadership within the school system, but none of these organizations have a set list of standards or leadership models.

**School counselors as leaders.** School administrators have purposeful goals to meet each year. A few ways to evaluate the whether or not the counselor has met their goals is through test scores, graduation rate, and the school report card. The individuals in leadership positions strive for operational excellence in the areas in which they can measure and they do so relentlessly (Seidman & McCauley, 2011). This type of leadership is transactional in nature because it can be measured through data. Researchers Siedman & McCauley (2011) assert that the school-wide leaders who answer to transactional methods of leadership get so caught up in pleasing the district and state level of expectations, they forget to incorporate other's ideas or involve other stakeholders in the decision process. Clemens, Milsom, and Cashwell (2009) posit that many school counselors already engage in leadership roles within their schools, but it is unclear whether their principals invited them into these roles or if they advocated for them on their own.

Both principals and counselors are seen as leaders in the school and exploration of the principal-school counselor dynamics have been explored (Dollarhide et al., 2008). Principals typically hire school counselors, establish their roles and responsibilities, and direct their on-the-job training (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012). Acquiring the trust and respect of the school administration is necessary before a school counselor can be granted opportunities to engage in leadership roles. These leadership roles could include examining school data to identify student needs, serving on a leadership team, or presenting at a faculty and staff workday (Clemens et al., 2009). Clemens and others

(2009) suggest that the relationship quality between the school counselor and principal is more vital than the leadership style of the administrator or counselor.

For today's school counselor, accountability in the profession is especially important to validate the job's roles and responsibilities (Pyne, 2011; Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2003). A large quantity of school counselors' roles is now that of highly paid clerical staff and administrators (Clemens et al., 2009; Dollarhide, 2003). Therefore, school counselors should add an accountability skills set to their repertoire for their school improvement leadership to be sustainable over time (Sink, 2009). Advocates for the profession must continuously examine and promote the effectiveness of their role in the school system and of their work (Sink, 2009). Becoming a leader within the school and getting other stakeholders involved will better help the school counselor promote their own program so that their duties do not get stretched in other directions. Counselors seem to have an advantage in this, according to Clemens and others (2009), as the school counselor can utilize the skills that are part of their training and expertise (i.e., active listening skills, fostering rapport). School counselors have been called natural leaders based on their unique role in the school system, training and skills (Janson et al., 2009). They can use their leadership abilities to gain trust, build relationships, and enhance communication (Dollarhide et al., 2008). Thus, school counselors can use their leadership abilities to "enhance the academic achievement of students, facilitate educational reform, and increase the effectiveness of their school counseling programs" (Janson et al., 2009, p. 100).

In a journal article by Janson, Stone and Clark (2009), it is suggested that school counselors distribute leadership among multiple leaders. These researchers report that

having several leaders share leadership roles will alleviate apprehension regarding leadership, and help new counselors understand how leadership occurs in a school setting and how it can be improved. These leaders can be other school administrators or other counselors. Janson and others (2009) suggest that if multiple leaders combine their leadership skill sets then they can collaboratively work towards building a community within their school through collective strengths and talents.

Whether as an individual or as a team leader, effective leaders encourage an organizational vision and attempt to produce an environment where all stakeholders want to contribute to the tasks at hand (Sink, 2009). Many times that task is the success and well-being of students (Janson et. al, 2009). A school counselor must have a strong commitment to re-organizing their programs around the competencies of students and often, when the counselor's time is devoted to the design and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program to serve all students, their effective leadership is evident (Dollarhide, 2003).

**Transformational leadership and the school counselor.** School counselors have been trained to increase the trust of others and enhance communication, qualities that are crucial for great leaders (Dollarhide et al., 2008). The skills that counselors embody, such as counseling, consulting, teaching, advocacy and research, link specifically to transformational leadership (Dollarhide, 2003). This is fundamental in school counseling programs because it takes a leader's unique set of skills to undertake ASCA's National Model (2012) and to abandon the administrative tasks that are often given to school counselors. Further, school counselors are trained in facilitating relationships with stakeholders, building trust and rapport, and enhancing

communication, which are all leadership activities that work towards the common goal of helping students become constant learners and fruitful citizens (Dollarhide et al., 2008).

The ASCA National Model (2012) is a guide for all school counselors, in all settings and populations, to use to meet the needs of students in a flexible and adaptable way. In order to use this model to its full potential, a school counselor will have to motivate stakeholders (i.e., other school counselors, administration, faculty, parents, community members, etc.) to move towards a comprehensive program that implements systemic change, advocacy, leadership and collaboration (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2003).

Transformational leadership is a model of leadership that incorporates the motivation and inspiration of others in order to work towards a cohesive goal. School counselors can use these unique skills and motivate followers to become leaders themselves, to work towards bettering not only the school counseling program to meet all needs of the students, but also to better the school as a whole.

### **Research Variables**

**Age and years of experience.** For this study, age and years of experiences will be two of the variables explored in regards to the development of transformational leadership skills. More specifically, I want to know if an older individual is more or less effective in providing transformational leadership than a younger individual, and whether the years of experience a person has helps build transformational leadership skills. After a comprehensive review of the literature, only a few key findings regarding age and years of experience were found. There is a large gap in the literature regarding age and years of experience in developing transformational leadership skills. The following is a summary of the literature found regarding age, years of experience and transformational leadership.

Kearney (2008) organized a study to look at leaders and followers of transformational leadership in a pharmaceutical sales setting. The findings in this study suggest that there is a positive correlation between age and leadership when the leader was older than the other team members but no correlation when the leader was around the same age of the team members. A study by Mason and McMahon (2009) looked at the leadership practices of school counselors through a Leadership Practices Inventory Self Instrument. Through this instrument, the researchers found that school counselors who graduated before 2003 self-reported higher on leadership practices because they were more likely to have had more formal training in developing leadership skills than previous counselors (Mason & McMahon, 2009).

In order to better understand new counselors' leadership development, Dollarhide and others (2008) followed five new counselors for one year to see if they effectively developed leadership skills. Three of the five considered themselves successful in developing appropriate leadership skills. The commonalities among the school counselors were Leadership Attitudes, Goals, External Conditions, Reactions to Resistance, and Biggest Challenges (Dollarhide et al., 2008). Interestingly, research conducted by Dollarhide (2003) did not convey the age of the new counselors, only that the counselors had no previous experience as school counselors.

**School setting.** As surprising as it may sound, I could not find an absolute definition of school setting in any research literature. In the research studies I read, it was assumed that the reader knew what school setting meant. For the purposes of this study, school setting refers to the grade level(s) that the counselor serves: elementary, grades K-5; middle, grades 6-8; and high, grades 9-12.

**Leadership in professional organizations.** Upon searching for relevant articles regarding current and/or prior leadership in professional organization, little research was found on national leadership positions of individuals in the counseling profession or in other helping professions, such as psychology, social work, or marriage and family therapy. Furthermore, no research studies were found that directly related school counselor self-perceived transformational leadership skills to leadership in a professional organization. In a study by Ross, Fitzpatrick and Click (2014), the researchers described the transformational leadership practices of nurse leaders in professional nursing associations. The researchers obtained 448 surveys using a Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) from nurse leaders; results indicated that respondents with more leadership training reported higher transformational leadership practices. Ross et al (2014) also found that the participants reported that they were enabling others to act and encouraging the heart which will help association members in reaching shared outcomes and goals.

A research study by Meany-Walden, Carnes-Holt, Barrio Minton, Pursewell, and Pronchenko-Jain (2013) explored the personal and professional profile of leaders in professional counseling associations. In addition, these researchers wanted to specifically know what experiences and factors were attributed to leadership development. The researchers used a large-scale mixed-method approach to have a better understanding of the aforementioned research questions. The findings of the study indicate that the qualities and skills of leaders may begin as innate qualities and skills the counselor had prior to becoming a counseling student. These skills progress and develop through mentoring, teaching, and experiences throughout the counselor's career (Meany-Walden,

Holt, Barrio Minton, Purswell & Pronchenko-Jain, 2013). The top three factors regarding the level of importance of promoting future leaders that the respondents reported were a desire to make a contribution, intrinsic motivation, and the enjoyment of challenges and learning.

In a phenomenological study by Gibson, Dollarhide, and McCallum (2010), the researchers interviewed six individuals who were past presidents or president-elects for the American Counseling Association between 2003-2006 to assess the participants' thoughts and beliefs about their self-perceived leadership and sense of professionalism. It was found that the participants were strongly influenced by their doctoral programs and faculty while learning to be counselor educators. The role models in these programs stressed the importance of service in the profession and demonstrated traits of leadership and professionalism, in addition to encouraging their students to become leaders in professional organizations (Gibson, Dollarhide & McCallum, 2010).

All three of the research articles found in regards to leadership in professional organizations provided vital information to this study concerning the skills and qualities that leaders in professional organizations find important. However, none of the studies specifically addressed if transformational leadership was the chosen method of leadership or if the respondents had high levels of self-perceived leadership abilities.

### **Summary**

Leadership in education is an extremely broad topic. Many school counselors have already learned many of the skills that are imperative to being successful as a leader. School counselors are part of the educational system, but their leadership is called for in a more specific way. They need to be seen as leaders in the school so that they can organize



their comprehensive school program, which in turn will benefit the development of students' emotional, personal/social, and career needs. Choosing the style of transformational leadership will take long-term commitment but will hopefully inspire others to improve the long-term effectiveness of the school counseling program.

Only a few journal articles have touched on transformational leadership in school counselors. Of the three that have the most influence on this research study, one is a literature review, one is qualitative in design, and the last one uses a completely different survey assessing leadership that is not strictly transformational. It is my hope that I can bring new knowledge to the table and help counselor educators and future school counselors on the development of transformational leadership skills.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

The American School Counseling Association encourages school counselors to become leaders within their schools (ASCA, 2012). This new focus on leadership stems from the push for implementation of the National Model delivery system for school counselors. To implement the National Model in school systems and create a comprehensive school counseling program, school counselors will need leadership skills to motivate others, promote and inspire change, and communicate their vision to others in the school system (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Dollarhide, 2003). One style of leadership that promotes this type of skill set is transformational leadership. Interestingly, many school counselors possess similar skills involved in this style of leadership. With further development, transformational leadership may be a style which school counselors can use to implement the National Model within their schools.

Little research has been done on transformational leadership in regards to the counseling profession. A review of previous studies shows that quantitative research with a valid and reliable instrument has not been done on the transformational leadership skills of school counselors, especially specifically how age, years of experience, school setting, and prior and/or current leadership positions of the counselor affect the development of those skills. This study collected data from school counselors to measure the transformational leadership skills of participants. The data analysis of the responses serves as a guide to understand if age, years of experience, school setting, and prior

and/or current leadership positions of the participants plays a part in the development of the skills. In this chapter, the research design and methodology of the study are discussed in depth so that the study can be replicated in the future. In addition, the School Counselor Transformational Leadership Inventory, based on the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) is presented, along with the concepts it measures and the meaning of the scores. Also, the data collection and data analysis for the study are discussed in order for the study to be replicated and reviewed for its own validity.

### **Hypotheses**

The purpose of this study is to measure the transformational leadership skills of school counselors who are members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). It takes into account age, years of experience, school setting, and prior and/or current leadership in professional organizations. The goal of this study is to understand school counselors' self-perceived transformational leadership skills as a young adult versus an older adult, and determine the effect, if any, of experience on the development of these skills. According to Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development, a young adult is defined as 19-40 years of age, and an older adult is 40-65 years of age (Erikson, 1950; 1959). I implemented correlational methodology to examine the degree of the relationship between these variables. A multiple regression analysis was performed to understand which variables contribute to higher self-perceived transformational leadership scores of school counselors. Next, I performed a two-way between-groups ANOVA to assess for differences in the mean scores on the dependent variable across groups (i.e., school setting and leadership in professional organizations). The research questions in this study assessed the relationship between self-perceived transformational

leadership scores, age, years of experience, school setting and leadership in professional organizations.

The research questions and hypotheses are as follows:

*Research Question 1:* What is the relationship between years of experience, the age of the school counselor, and self-perceived transformational leadership skills, as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014)?

*Hypothesis 1:* There will be a statistically significant positive correlation between years of experience, the age of the school counselor, and self-perceived transformational leadership skills. As the years of experience increase, the age of the school counselor and their self-perceived transformational leadership skills will increase.

*Hypothesis 2:* Age and years of experience will be unique predictor of counselors' self-perceived transformational leadership abilities by measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et. al., 2014). The relationship between the variables will be positive, in that as age and years of experience of the school counselor increase, SCTLI scores will increase.

*Research Question 2:* What differences, if any, exist among counselors at school settings (i.e., elementary, middle, high school), and those who have held leadership positions in professional organizations and those who have not on their self-perceived transformational leadership abilities as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014)?

*Hypothesis 3:* There will be a significant difference among counselors at different school settings (i.e., elementary, middle, high school) on their self-perceived

transformational leadership abilities as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014). High school counselors will have the highest self-perceived transformational leadership, followed by middle school counselors, then elementary school counselors.

*Hypothesis 4:* There will be a significant difference in self-perceived transformational leadership abilities between school counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations and those who have not. School counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations will score higher on the SCTLI than those who have not.

### **Instrumentation**

The proposed study primarily focused on age, years of experience, school setting, and leadership in professional organizations. In order to assess whether or not these factors have a relationship or statistically significant variance, it was necessary to find out how school counselors rate themselves on the School Counselor Transformational Leadership Inventory (Gibson et al., 2014).

**School Counselor Transformational Leadership Inventory (SCTLI).** The SCTLI is a survey that asks 15 questions related to transformational leadership. The SCTLI gives the participant a total score that will reflect the self-reported level of engagement in overall leadership performance. For all research questions, the participants' demographic information will be compared to the score received on the SCTLI and will be analyzed by a multiple regression model.

The SCTLI is based on the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ). The TLQ is intended for individuals in leadership and managerial positions

(MySkillsProfile, 2014). However, the items had to be revised to make the questionnaire relevant for school counselors. Therefore, the original TLQ and revised questions were sent to 3,200 participants in order to collect between 300 and 400 responses to assess for construct validity and internal consistency in the reliability. This process led to the creation of the School Counselor Transformational Leadership Inventory (SCTLI). After reliability and validity analyses, the inventory was revised and tested again through a confirmation process for validity and reliability through email addresses collected from ASCA Scene, a forum for members of the American School Counselor Association (2012).

The SCTLI measures aspects of an individual's leadership style specific to the counselor role by asking questions about their perceived behaviors, reactions, and attitudes in management and leadership situations. Groups of questions are related to eight different competencies that make the individual unique in their own leadership style and ability. The eight competencies are empathy, feedback, achievement, empowerment, communication, motivation, performance, and commitment.

The questions regarding empathy measure whether or not an individual's style and behavior demonstrate that they value others. It is believed that transformational leaders generate a higher level of commitment to treating followers fairly and valuing their view and opinions (Bolman and Deal, 2008). The competency of feedback is measured by the responses of the individual in regards to rewarding others fairly and regularly, as transformational leaders are compassionate, appreciative, and responsive to their people. Energizing one's people and team is important for the competency of

achievement. Transformational leaders who are competent in achievement communicate passion and encourage others to think about problems in new ways.

The competency of empowerment is measured by the individual's responses on how they make others feel empowered and able to take initiative. Transformational leaders encourage others to lead and trust that those people are doing the right thing. Communication of the transformational leader is measured on how the individual reports their vision of the future and their capability of being a good speaker with a strong sense of purpose. Transformational leaders are able to motivate others and this survey measures the person's ability to make others feel like they are a part of something that will make a difference to people's lives. Setting goals and reviewing the performance of others is a characteristic of a transformational leader. Lastly, the questionnaire looks at the quality of commitment of the leader in order to tackle poor performance, and admit to personal mistakes.

The SCTLI takes into account the eight competencies and gives the participant a total score (e.g., overall leadership score) to give an approximate indication of their overall leadership performance. The results summary of the SCTLI is based on a five-point scale linked to percentile scores. In order to receive these results, the participants must answer 15 questions on a Likert scale. The raw scores of the 15 questions are summed for the overall score of the transformational leadership competence the participant portrays.

**Psychometric properties of SCTLI.** The validity and reliability of the SCTLI went through extensive analysis. To test the construct validity of the scale, Gibson and colleagues (2014) used an exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis. Through

the process, a two-factor SCTLI was evaluated. The two-factor model produced loadings for factor 1 ranging from .60-.81, and factor 2 from .65-.82. Next, they examined the data for internal consistency by calculating Cronbach alphas. Strong internal consistency reliability (Cronbach alpha = .95) resulted for the 20 item SCTLI. The internal consistency for the two separate SCTLI factors resulted in a Cronbach alpha of (.94) for factor one (13 items; Transformational Leadership Skills) and a Cronbach alpha of (.90) for factor two (7 items; School Counseling Program Activities), which supported internal consistency for each factor.

To cross-validate the resulting factor structure from sample 1, Gibson and colleagues (2014) used a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Alternate models were proposed and compared to test hypothesized factor structure. A final model was achieved and a second sample of school counselors was tested for the CFA of the 20-item SCTLI. After analyzing the results of the CFA, it was determined that a one factor modified model fit indices suggested that a 15-item model was a better fit for the sample data (CFI=.83, RMSEA = .15).

When assessing the scale for internal consistency in the developing stages, the 15 item model of the SCTLI had a Cronbach alpha of (.94). To evaluate concurrent validity, the total score of the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ; MySkillsProfile, 2004) was compared to the total score of the SCTLI. A Pearson-product correlation indicated a moderate level of concurrent validity and a significant correlation ( $r=.68$ ,  $p<.01$ ). In this research study, the SCTLI had a Cronbach alpha of (.92) when assessed for internal consistency.



**Demographic Questionnaire.** The demographic questionnaire is a researcher-created questionnaire to provide information regarding the participants' backgrounds and perceptions of transformational leadership. Ten questions were asked of all eligible participants. In addition to age, years of experience and school setting, participants identified prior and/or current leadership positions and if they consider themselves leaders. The data analysis portion of the study took into account the answers of the demographic questionnaire.

### **Participants**

The population for this study comprised members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) networking site ASCA Scene. The collection of email addresses from ASCA Scene was chosen in hopes of researching school counselors who are familiar with the National Model (ASCA, 2012). The implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program is an indicator that the school counselor has leadership abilities, as they must advocate for the program and have others respect the work being done.

Collection of email addresses for participants from the ASCA Scene networking site were randomly selected via numbers produced from a number generator. A number generator assigned a number to over 30,000 ASCA Scene members. Email addresses were collected from 500 ASCA Scene members whose number was generated. ASCA Scene members who were assigned a number but do not have an email address listed in their profile received a private message requesting their email address in order to send an invitation to take the survey. As an incentive to participate, all participants were entered into a raffle for a Visa Gift Card. If the participants agreed to take the survey, they

accessed the survey from a link sent to their email. By agreeing to take the survey, the participants gave their permission to be included in the survey. The informed consent letter regarding this information and stated any additional risks before the participants began the survey. The selected participants were current school counselors or have had a job in school counseling in the past five years. It was a requirement for participants to enter their age, years of experience, and the school level in which they work on the survey.

In order for the results to be generalizable to the school counseling population and to address the variables being analyzed, *a priori* power analysis calculated how many responses were needed to detect the effect of the given sample size (Balkin & Sherperis, 2011). Using the computer software, G\*Power 3.1, to compute a power analysis, I found that the sample size for this research study should be at least 100 participants. It is essential that a power analysis be conducted as low statistical power can contribute to Type II error. In essence, a larger sample size leads to less chance of error and higher statistical power (Balkin & Sheperis, 2011).

## **Procedures**

In order to collect the required data for this study, I first had to get approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Upon approval, I created the SCTLTI on a survey response collection company such as SurveyMonkey. Then, I collected email addresses from the ASCA Scene networking site and formatted them on Microsoft Word to be compatible with my email provider. Next, I sent out an email with the link to the survey to the collected and formatted emails. I waited for the survey responses to come in for two weeks. Then, I send out a reminder email to the participants in hopes that they would

complete the survey if they had not already, and waited another two weeks in hopes that I would reach between 100 and 200 responses.

Post-stratification of the responses were conducted after the responses from the sample is taken (Barboza & Williams, 2005). It is impossible to account for the number of individuals who represent each of the variables beforehand. This technique is used when stratification cannot be employed beforehand because the specific variables that are being researched are unknown from the participants. The primary reason to use post-stratification is to reduce nonresponse bias in surveys (Barboza & Williams, 2005).

### **Data Analysis**

Table 3.1 is used to describe the independent and dependent variables included in this study.

Table 3.1

#### *Independent and Dependent Variables and Corresponding Instrumentation*

Variable	Type of Variable	Instrument
Self-Perceived Transformational Leadership	Dependent	SCTLI
Age	Independent	Demographic Survey
Years of Experience	Independent	Demographic Survey
School Setting	Independent	Demographic Survey
Leadership in Professional Organization	Independent	Demographic Survey

*Note.* **SCTLI** = School Counseling Transformational Leadership Inventory

After I collected the data and responses from the survey, I compared the demographic information from each survey to the responses. The data analysis and assumptions to answer each research question are as follows:

*Research Question 1:* The variables of age and years of experience in this study are continuous in nature, as the participants were required to fill in their age and years of experience rather than picking from a category. I used a hierarchical multiple regression analysis model because I had more than one factor (age and years of experience) in which I wanted to find an exact correlation to transformational leadership skills. A predictor variable is able to predict an outcome when the effects of another variable are controlled for (Pallant, 2013). In this case, years of experience was the predictor variable and age is the variable that was controlled for. In a hierarchical multiple regression analysis, I controlled for age by entering it into block 1 and entered years of experience in block 2. This data analysis was conducted through SPSS.

There are a number of assumptions regarding multiple regression analyses (Pallant, 2013). I used SPSS to test for sample size, multicollinearity, outliers, normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Sample size is important, as the issue at stake is generalizability. A small sample size is not generalizable to the population, which is vital in a quantitative study. Multicollinearity refers to a high correlation between independent variables ( $r=.9$  and above), so it was important to check for this problem before beginning the data analyses, as it does not contribute to a good regression model (Pallant, 2013). I also checked for outliers (very high or very low scores) in both my dependent and independent variables. If this problem were to arise, I would have deleted these outliers from the data set. Lastly, I checked for normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity on

residual scatterplots (Pallant, 2013). Normality means the residuals from the predicted dependent variable should be normally distributed and linearity means the residuals from the dependent variable should have a straight-line relationship. Homoscedasticity shows the variance of the residuals from the dependent variable and should be the same for all predicted scores (Pallant, 2013).

*Research Question 2:* This research question has two categorical research variables and one continuous dependent variable (SCTLI score). The educational setting is a categorical variable. Prior and/or current leadership experience in a professional organization is also a categorical variable. A two-way between-groups ANOVA design compared the school setting and prior and/or current leadership experience of the school counselor to their self-perceived transformational leadership skills and tested for significant differences in the mean score of the dependent variable and composite dependent variable (Pallant, 2013).

The ANOVA assessed whether there are significant differences in the mean score on the dependent variable (Pallant, 2013). The assumptions I tested for in an ANOVA are level of measurement, normal distribution and homogeneity of variance. Level of measurement assumes that the dependent variable is measured at the interval level by using a continuous scale. In this research study, the dependent variable (SCTLI score) was on a continuous scale. It is imperative to use continuous measures of the dependent variable whenever possible to give a wider range of possible techniques to analyze the data (Pallant, 2013). Normal distribution refers to making sure the populations from which the samples are taken are normally distributed. In this research study, the responses were stratified to create equal groups. I used Histograms to check for the

distribution of scores. It is also assumed that the samples are taken from populations of equal variances. Again, the responses were stratified to create equal groups. However, I used a Levene's test of equality of variances to test for a non-significant outcome (Pallant, 2013).

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study has little to no risk in participation as the survey asked for little identifying information. In addition, the time to take the survey was around 20 minutes, so the participants did not have to use a lot of time to complete their answers. The email sent out to participants highlighted this information so that the participant knew their identity would not be asked for nor disclosed. Each participant will have the right to review the results and outcomes of the study.

### **Limitations**

This study seeks to better understand whether or not age, years of experience, school setting, and leadership in professional organizations have a relationship to the development of self-perceived transformational leadership skills in school counselors. However, this study did not take into account geographic region, gender, or training, or how these factors play a part in the development of leadership skills. The lack of information on these variables could confound the results of this study. In addition, it was difficult to ensure that the participants would represent enough diversity in age, years of experience, school setting and leadership in professional organizations. It is assumed that the school counselors who participated in this study are familiar with the ASCA National Model and wish to implement its standards into their school counseling program. It is

also assumed that the participants in this study answered the questions to the survey honestly and truthfully.

## **Summary**

With the push for school counselors to implement comprehensive school counseling programs in all schools, leadership abilities are a focus in the ASCA standards and for many school counselors. Transformational leadership corresponds extremely well with the skills that many school counselors already embody. However, transformational leadership is a fairly new style of leadership that is being used in many disciplines. Until now, previous literature has rarely touched on the topic of transformational leadership in the counseling profession, and the studies that have been done did not use a valid instrument for data collection and analysis. This research study is one of the first studies to use a valid instrument and to compare the age, years of experience, and educational setting of school counselors to the development of transformational leadership skills.

The school counselors asked to participate in this study are all current members of ASCA who are school counselors or have been a school counselor in the past five years. The participants filled out a brief, 20-minute survey to assess their leadership skills and abilities from their own perspective. Each participant was assigned a single score for their engagement in transformational leadership: 1-16 never or rarely, 17-32 once in a while, 33-48 fairly often, 49-64 frequently and 65-80 always or almost always. This study used continuous variables (age, years of experience of the school counselor) to compare their transformational leadership skills score with a multiple regression analysis. In addition, a categorical variable (educational setting of the school counselor) compared transformational leadership skills using a two-way between-groups ANOVA.

Chapter Four of this dissertation outlines the results from the data analysis derived from the survey responses. Chapter Five discusses the limitations and assumptions of this study and suggestions for further research.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

The current study examined the transformational leadership skills of school counselors who are members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). The study takes into account age, years of experience, school setting, and prior and/or current leadership in professional organizations. By identifying the relationship and differences between self-perceived transformational leadership skills and age, years of experience, school setting and prior and/or current leadership of school counselors, new information can be added to the literature to inform counselor educators of the variables that could impact the development of transformational leadership skills.

The data analyses of the responses serves as a guide to understand if age, years of experience, school setting, and prior and/or current leadership positions of the participants plays a part in the development of transformational leadership skills. Data analyses occurred using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22 to test each hypothesis.

#### **Sample Analysis**

Participant selection occurred using the ASCA Scene database through random sampling. A number generator identified five hundred random numbers in which I used to make the selections of ASCA Scene members to invite to participate in the study. Collection of ASCA Scene members email addresses took place in order to send out the invitation to participate in the survey via Survey Monkey. After several weeks, a low

response rate led to the collection of an additional five hundred email addresses of random ASCA Scene members. Data analyses assessed the initial results for missing data. Of the 142 participants, 102 answered all required questions and met the eligibility requirements. Data that was missing from the survey responses led to removal of those participants' responses. The data was Missing Not at Random, as there was not a pattern of the missing data (Peugh & Enders, 2004; Sterner, 2009). Many participants who began the SCTL, filled out the demographic portion only, and did not actually fill out the questionnaire. This resulted in a response rate of 14.2%. The usable response rate from the 102 participants who completed the entire survey was 10.2%.

Participants of the current study were ASCA members who reside in the United States. In order to be an ASCA Scene member, individuals must be current members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and create an account at the ASCA Scene website. The analyses included data from 102 participants. Of the 102 participants, the average age was 44 years old and the average years of experience was 14. In regards to gender, 89% of the participants identified as female and 11% identified as male. When asked for cultural self-identification, 85% of the respondents reported that they were Caucasian/White, 7% identified themselves as African American, 6% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino and 2% identified as Asian.

Those involved in the study were asked to report the school setting in which they worked. Participants who worked in a high school setting comprised 30% of the sample, those who worked in a middle school setting made up 23% of the sample, those who worked in an elementary school were 34% of the sample, and those who selected the option "other" were 13% of the sample. Participants who selected "other" as their school

setting identified workplaces such as K-8, K-12, Adult Education and District Level. Additionally, participants were asked if they held a leadership position in a professional counseling organization. Of the participants, 40% responded they had held or currently hold a leadership position and 60% responded they have not held a leadership position in a professional counseling organization. Participants responded on their interest level in learning more about their leadership style; 41% rated themselves as having a high interest, 52% moderate interest, and 5% not much interest. Additionally, participants rated themselves on whether or not they saw themselves as a leader; 47% highly saw themselves as a leader, 45% moderately saw themselves as a leader, and 8% did not see themselves as a leader. Information featured in Table 4.1 represents individuals who have held a leadership position in a professional counseling organization by school setting.

*Table 4.1: Frequencies of Participants by Who Has Held a Leadership Position*

		Have they held a leadership position?		Total
		Yes	No	
The school setting of the individual	High	19	12	31
	Middle	6	17	23
	Elementary	12	23	35
	Other	4	9	13
Total		41	61	102

*Note.* The data is arranged by school setting

Based on the responses listed above, 61% of high school counselors, 19% of middle school counselors, 34% of elementary school counselors and 31% of “other” respondents have held a leadership position in a professional organization.

### **Research Hypotheses and Analysis**

Following, results of analyses are presented by research questions and hypothesis. The research questions posed were as follows:

1. What is the relationship between years of experience, the age of the school counselor, and self-perceived transformational leadership skills, as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014)?

***IH<sub>a</sub>***: There will be a statistically significant positive correlation between years of experience, the age of the school counselor, and self-perceived transformational leadership skills. As the years of experience increase, the age of the school counselor and their self-perceived transformational leadership skills will increase.

***IH<sub>b</sub>***: Age and years of experience will be unique predictor of counselors’ self-perceived transformational leadership abilities by measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et. al., 2014). The relationship between the variables will be positive, in that as age and years of experience of the school counselor increase, SCTLI scores will increase.

2. What differences, if any, exist among counselors at school settings (i.e., elementary, middle, high school), and those who have held leadership positions in professional organizations and those who have not on their self-perceived transformational leadership abilities as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014)?

**2H<sub>a</sub>:** There will be a significant difference among counselors at different school settings (i.e., elementary, middle, high school) on their self-perceived transformational leadership abilities as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014). High school counselors will have the highest self-perceived transformational leadership, followed by middle school counselors, then elementary school counselors.

**2H<sub>b</sub>:** There will be a significant difference in self-perceived transformational leadership abilities between school counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations and those who have not. School counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations will score higher on the SCTLI than those who have not.

#### *Research Question One*

Employing a hierarchical regression analysis model determined if there was a statistically significant positive correlation between years of experience, the age of the school counselor, and self-perceived transformational leadership skills. The following hypothesis was formulated:

**1H<sub>a</sub>:** There will be a statistically significant positive correlation between years of experience, the age of the school counselor, and self-perceived transformational leadership skills. As the years of experience increase, the age of the school counselor and their self-perceived transformational leadership skills will increase.

**1H<sub>b</sub>:** Age and years of experience will be unique predictors of counselors' self-perceived transformational leadership abilities as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014). The relationship between the variables will be positive, in that as age and years of experience of the school counselor increase, SCTLI scores will increase.

Regression models determine if a relationship exists between variables, therefore, enhancing the prediction of outcomes. Regression models also predict whether a dependent variable can be predicted by independent variables. The independent variables for this research question are age and years of experience, and the dependent variable is the total SCTLI score. For this study, the regression model is able to help us understand if the self-perceived transformational leadership scores of the school counselor can be predicted by age and/or years of experience. There are a number of assumptions regarding multiple regression analyses (Pallant, 2013). I used SPSS to test for normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. In order to test for these assumptions, scatter plots and normal probability plots were used, while the residuals of those plots evaluated for outliers.

I checked for normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity on residual scatterplots (Pallant, 2013). Normality means the residuals from the predicted dependent variable should be normally distributed and linearity means the residuals from the dependent variable should have a straight-line relationship. To test for the linearity, scatterplot images were observed to analyze each data point as it fell into a straight line. The normality and linearity assumptions were not violated in this data set. Homoscedasticity shows the variance of the residuals from the dependent variable and was the same for all predicted scores (Pallant, 2013).

Multicollinearity refers to a high correlation between independent variables ( $r = .9$  and above), so it was important to check for this problem before beginning the data analyses, as it does not contribute to a good regression model (Pallant, 2013). I also

checked for outliers (very high or very low scores) in both my dependent and independent variables.

**Hypothesis One.** The following tables provide the results from the regression analysis. As shown in Table 4.2, Pearson correlation was calculated, showing no significance between age and SCTLI scores but a significant negative correlation between years of experience and the SCTLI scores, meaning when the years of experience increases, the SCTLI scores decreases.

*Table 4.2: Pearson Correlations for SCTLI, Age, and Years of Experience*

	Age in Years	Years of Experience
Total SCTLI Score	.080	-.231*
Age in years	1	.217
Years of Experience		1

*Note.* \* Denotes a significance at alpha  $p < .05$

*Table 4.3: Predicting Relationship between Age and Years of Experience*

Model		<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>
1				
	Age	.081	.80	.803
2				
	Age	.138	.137	1.376
	Years of Experience	-.324	-.261	-2.629 <sup>a</sup>

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> Indicates statistical significance at the .05 level

Table 4.3 lists the predictive variable, years of experience, to be significant at the .05 level ( $p = .010$ ) and lists the Beta value of years of experience as the statistically significant predictor with a unique contribution to dependent variable. Therefore, for every one year of experience, there is a -.261 drop in the SCTLI score.

**Hypothesis Two.** I utilized the hierarchical regression model to analyze the data and produce the model summary. Table 4.4 shows the model summary. For model 1, the  $r$  value represents the simple correlation ( $r = .080$ ) indicating no significance in age and the total SCTLI score. The  $r$  square value indicates the level of variation of the dependent variable that can be described by the model ( $r^2 = .006$ ). In addition, the effect size was measured using the  $r^2$  value, calculated at .006. This indicates age is not a factor in determining the development of self-perceived transformational leadership skills. After years of experience were added to the second block, the model as a whole explains .071 of the variance. To find out how much of the overall variance is explained by years of experience after age was removed, I looked at the R square change for model 2 (.065). This means that years of experience accounts for an additional 6.5% of the variance, when age is controlled for and also indicates a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988).

*Table 4.4 Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	.080 <sup>a</sup>	.006	-.004	11.351	.006
2	.267 <sup>b</sup>	.071	.052	11.030	.065

- Predictors: (Constant), What is your age in years?
- Predictors: (Constant), What is your age in years? How many years have you been a professional school counselor?
- Dependent Variable: Total SCTLI Score



The ANOVA table illustrates how accurately the independent variable predicts the dependent variable. The original hypothesis proposed there is a significant relationship in age, years of experience, and the self-perceived transformational leadership skills as measured by the SCTLTI. Table 4.5 describes the results of the predictive variable age and its influence on the dependent variable, the total SCTLTI score in model 1. For model 1, age was not significant  $F(1, 101) = .644, p = .424$ , indicating that age is not a predictor of a person's self-perceived transformational leadership skills. However, in model 2 describes the results of the predictive variables of age and how many years of experience the counselor reported. Table 2.5 indicates that model 2 (the model as a whole) is significant  $F(2, 101) = 3.798, p = .026$ . Therefore, for research question one, age is not a significant factor in the self-perceived leadership skills of a school counselor, but years of experience is a significant factor; as years of experience increases, self-perceived leadership abilities decrease.

*Table 4.5 ANOVA Table*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	83.009	1	83.009	.644	.424 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	12885.511	100	128.855		
	Total	12968.520	101			
2	Regression	924.082	2	462.041	3.798	.026 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	12044.437	99	121.661		
	Total	12968.520	101			

- a. Dependent Variable: Total SCTLTI Score  
b. Predictors: (Constant), What is your age in years?  
c. Predictors: (Constant), What is your age in years? How many years have you been a professional school counselor?

### *Research Question Two*

In order to determine if there are significant differences among school counselors at school settings and prior and/or current leadership in a professional organization on their self-perceived transformational leadership skills (as measured by the SCTLI), I utilized a two-way between groups Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The following hypotheses were formulated:

**2H<sub>a</sub>:** There will be a significant difference among counselors at school settings (i.e., elementary, middle, high school) on their self-perceived transformational leadership abilities as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014). High school counselors will have the highest self-perceived transformational leadership ability, followed by middle school counselors, then elementary school counselors.

**2H<sub>b</sub>:** There will be a significant difference between school counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations and those who have not on their self-perceived transformational leadership abilities. School counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations will score higher on the SCTLI than those who have not.

To test the Normality assumption, Shapiro Wilk was calculated in which the  $p$  value is above .05 for both school setting ( $p = .465$ ) and leadership experience (no,  $p = .763$ ; yes,  $p = .936$ ), indicating that the data is normally distributed. To further analyze the assumption of Normality, I examined the normality plots and observed that the pattern was in a straight line, which further validates a normal distribution.

To test for Homogeneity of Variance, I reviewed Levene's test of Equality of Error Variances. The value of significance for the Levene's test was set at .05. The

significance level was  $p = .838$ , determining that the Homogeneity assumption was not violated.

I used an ANOVA to determine if there are significant differences between school settings and self-perceived transformational leadership abilities of school counselors. The main effect for the counselor’s school setting on self-perceived transformational leadership abilities did not produce statistically significant results; [ $F(1, 102) = 1.753$ ,  $p = .161$ ]. Therefore, school counselors’ setting alone does not indicate that he and/or she has a higher level of self-perceived transformational leadership abilities. The effect size was measured using the partial eta squared value. The variable ‘school setting’ was calculated at .053, indicating a small effect size (Cohen, 1988).

*Table 4.6: Differences between school settings and leadership experience on self-perceived leadership abilities*

	df	F	p	$\eta^2$
School Setting	3	1.753	.161	.053
Leadership Experience	1	6.992	.010	.069
School Setting*Leadership Experience	3	.026	.994	.001

*Note.* R Squared = .112 (Adjusted R Squared = .046); alpha significance level = .05

I used a two-way between-groups ANOVA to determine if there are significant differences between leadership experience and self-perceived transformational leadership abilities of school counselors. As shown in Table 4.6, the main effect for the counselor's leadership experience on self-perceived transformational leadership abilities yielded statistically significant results with a  $p$  value of .010 ( $F(1, 102) = 6.99, p = .010$ ). The effect size was measured using the partial eta squared value. The variable for 'leadership experience' was calculated at .069, suggesting a medium effect size.

The interaction between school setting and leadership experience was calculated at  $p = .994$  and indicating the results were not significant. The effect size between 'school setting' and 'leadership experience' was calculated at .001.

## **Summary**

Two research questions and four hypotheses were created to understand the relationship of age and years of experience, and the differences in school setting and leadership experience among school counselors in regards to their self-perceived transformational leadership abilities. Data was collected via survey from 102 participants who are American School Counselor Association members across the nation. To analyze the data, Pearson correlations, a hierarchical regression model, and a two-way between-groups ANOVA were utilized. Two of the four hypotheses were supported from the results of the data analyses. The hierarchical regression model indicated there was a significant negative relationship between years of experience and transformational leadership, meaning as the years of experience increase, the leadership score decreases. In addition, the ANOVA indicated there was a significant difference in counselors who had leadership experience in a professional organization and those who had not. Chapter

Five will provide in a length an explanation of the results of this study and how it relates to information in current literature. Future considerations and implications will also be addressed.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

The following chapter will discuss the findings of the three hypotheses presented from the results of Chapter Four. Additionally, the limitations of the study will be examined, followed by the implications for future research and practice. Lastly, future considerations will be discussed.

#### **Overview**

The current study addressed the relationship between age, years of experience, and the self-perceived transformational leadership skills of school counselors as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et. al., 2014). Additionally, the current study examined the differences in school counselors SCTLI score across settings and in regards to leadership experience. A Hierarchical Regression Analysis and Pearson's Correlation determined the relationships between the dependent variable (SCTLI score) and independent variables (age, years of experience). An ANOVA was utilized to illustrate differences between counselor SCTLI scores in relation to school setting and leadership experience.

When reviewing the results of research question one, the hypothesis one was not supported, but hypothesis two was supported. The following statement represents research question one and its hypotheses:

1. What is the relationship between years of experience, the age of the school counselor, and self-perceived transformational leadership skills, as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014)?

**1H<sub>a</sub>:** There will be a statistically significant positive correlation between years of experience, the age of the school counselor, and self-perceived transformational leadership skills. As the years of experience increase, the age of the school counselor and their self-perceived transformational leadership skills will increase.

**1H<sub>b</sub>:** Age and years of experience will be unique predictor of counselors' self-perceived transformational leadership abilities by measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et. al., 2014). The relationship between the variables will be positive, in that as age and years of experience of the school counselor increase, SCTLI scores will increase.

A hierarchical regression analysis model determined if there was statistically significant positive correlation between the age of the school counselor, years of experience, and self-perceived leadership skills as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014). The results of the Pearson Correlation indicated that there is no statistically significant relationship between the age of the school counselor and SCTLI score. However, there was a significant negative correlation between the years of experience and SCTLI score, meaning as the years of experience increase, the self-perceived leadership abilities decrease. In addition, the effect size was calculated at .065, which indicates the strength of the relationship. According to Cohen's table (1988), any value at .06 would indicate a medium effect size. This value also indicates the amount of variance that the dependent variable (SCTLI score) is influenced by the independent variable (years of experience), which in this case, is 6.5%. It is important to remember that with a

medium effect size, there could be other factors that influence the transformational leadership score. With respect to the regression coefficient, the slope of the line is statistically significant; for every one year of experience, there is a -.231 drop in the SCTLI score.

When assessing the results of research question two, hypothesis one was not supported, but hypothesis two was supported. The following statement represents research question two and its hypotheses:

2. What differences, if any, exist among counselors at school settings (i.e., elementary, middle, high school), and those who have held leadership positions in professional organizations and those who have not on their self-perceived transformational leadership abilities as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014)?

**2H<sub>a</sub>:** There will be a significant difference among counselors at school settings (i.e., elementary, middle, high school) on their self-perceived transformational leadership abilities as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et al., 2014). High school counselors will have the highest self-perceived transformational leadership ability, followed by middle school counselors, then elementary school counselors.

**2H<sub>b</sub>:** There will be a significant difference in self-perceived transformational leadership abilities between school counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations and those who have not. School counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations will score higher on the SCTLI than those who have not.



The results of hypothesis one are not statistically significant. The ANOVA determined whether or not there was a significant difference among counselors at school settings (i.e., elementary, middle, high school) on the counselors SCTLI score. The variables did not share statistical significance.

For hypothesis two, an ANOVA determined if there was a significant difference among school counselor who have held or currently hold leadership positions in professional organizations and those who have not. The main effect for the school counselors leadership experience on self-perceived transformational leadership abilities as measured by the SCTLI indicated the results are significant with a p value of .010 ( $F(1, 102) = 6.99, p=.010$ ). Meaning, those counselors who have had leadership experience reported a higher level of self-perceived leadership abilities on the SCTLI. Additionally, the effect size was calculated at .069, indicating a medium effect size. This value also interprets variability; meaning 6.9% of the variability of a school counselor's self-perceived transformational leadership ability is influenced by leadership experience.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

#### *Research Question One*

The hypotheses related to research question one regarding the relationship and predictive variables between years of experience, age of the school counselor, and self-perceived transformational leadership skills as measured by the SCTLI (Gibson et. al, 2014) were supported. No significance between age and SCTLI scores was found but a significant negative correlation between years of experience and the SCTLI scores was found. It is apparent that as years of experience increase, age will also increase so when the variables are combined, there is also significance. The negative correlation indicates

that as years of experience increase, the self-perceived transformational leadership skills of the school counselor decrease. The strength of the relationship is average but the variance of the relationship between age, years of experience and self-perceived transformational leadership identifies a contribution to the literature.

There is a large gap in the literature regarding age and years of experience in developing transformational leadership skills. From this particular sample, the age of the school counselor was not an indication of self-perceived transformational leadership skills. CACREP and ASCA began implementing new standards for counselors in the early 2000's; therefore, it could indicate that new counselors graduating from counselor education programs have refined their leadership abilities before joining the workforce. It is safe to say after looking at the data from this research study, that new counselors with 5-10 years of experience could range in age from their late-twenties to early-fifties. From this information, one could deduce that counselor education programs are producing school counselors who are skilled leaders, no matter their age. What is concerning, however, is that school counselors' self-perceived transformational leadership abilities seem to decrease after having many years of experience. This could indicate that these individuals graduated from counseling programs before CACREP and ASCA began implementing new standards for school counselors in the early 2000's and were unable to become skilled in their leadership abilities. However, the negative correlation between years of experience and self-perceived transformational leadership abilities could also imply that school counselors may become comfortable in their positions and may not have the motivation to refine their transformational leadership abilities. One study by Schubert (1988) found after observing municipal counseling meetings, that members who

were active leaders became less active as they got older and passive leaders became more passive. Another study by Giri and Santra (2010) examined 300 employees of Indian businesses concluded that more experienced leaders make the most use of laissez-faire leadership (i.e., no leadership style, only acts when forced). Therefore, it may be that school counselors with many years of experience have leadership abilities, but they may make use of other styles of leadership other than transformational leadership.

### *Research Question Two*

The hypothesis related to research question two regarding what differences exist between school counselors at school settings (i.e., elementary, middle, high school) on their self-perceived transformational abilities was not supported. An ANOVA was used to understand the interaction between school settings and self-perceived transformational leadership abilities. This study reveals that no matter the school setting of the school counselor, leadership abilities can flourish. This is interesting given the understanding that any school counselor who works within the ASCA National Model (2012) standards should be addressing areas of the framework through a variety of roles and responsibilities (Ponec & Brock, 2000). The National Model framework is universal for all school counselors, yet flexible enough to meet the academic, personal/social, and career needs of all students (Payne, 2011; Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2003). The data from this research study indicates that there are no differences between school counselors at school settings (elementary, middle or high) and school counselors self-perceived leadership abilities are not affected by the setting in which they work.

The hypothesis related to research question two regarding if there are differences among school counselors who have held leadership positions in professional

organizations and those who have not on their self-perceived transformational leadership skills was supported. An ANOVA was used to understand the interaction between holding a leadership position and transformational leadership abilities. The main effect yielded statistically significant results and also indicated that 6.9% of the change in transformational abilities is directly influenced by holding leadership positions in professional organizations. However, this medium level of variance indicates that there could be other factors that also influence a school counselor's SCTLI score. Specifically, when school setting and leadership experience in a professional organization are combined, as evidenced by the ANOVA that yielded a value of .994, we can interpret that these two variables together do not influence self-perceived leadership scores.

The results of this study imply that school counselors who are involved and active in leadership roles in professional organizations rate themselves higher on the SCTLI and have higher self-perceived transformational leadership abilities. One could assume that the experience of holding a leadership position in a professional organization directly influences the school counselor's self-perceived transformational leadership abilities and the results of this study support that notion. Previous literature indicates that the qualities and skills of leaders may begin as innate qualities and skills the counselor had prior to becoming a counseling student (Meany-Walden et. al, 2013). These skills progress and develop through mentoring, teaching, and experiences throughout the counselor's career (Meany-Walden et. al, 2013). It was also found in another study that the counseling students were strongly influenced by faculty. The role models in these programs stressed the importance of service in the profession and demonstrated traits of leadership and professionalism, in addition to encouraging their students to become leaders in

professional organizations (Gibson et. al, 2010). Thus, mentoring is takes an important role in regards to developing transformational leadership abilities. These other factors could have a contribution to an individual's SCTLI score and could make a difference in self-perceived transformational leadership abilities.

### **Limitations**

It is important to discuss the limitations regarding any research study as the limitations can alter the outcome and deduction drawn from the data. Validity of the sample is an area of concern that must first be addressed. Conclusion validity verifies if the dependent and independent variable have a relationship and also determines the effect size (strength of the relationship). Although both hypotheses one and three were both supported, a medium effect size was indicated by the results of both research questions. A medium effect size is clearly better than a small effect size as the strength of the relationship is stronger; however, it is important to consider other factors that could have an influence on SCTLI scores. However, the information that can be gathered from this study in regards to the counseling profession is significant in that counselor educators can now have additional conversations concerning ways to help counselors steadily improve upon their transformational leadership skills over the years and ways to stress the importance of possessing leadership experience in professional organizations.

Threats to External Validity must also be assessed to be confident the study can be generalized to the population. The researcher can make conclusions about the population from the sample drawn by examining External Validity. The researcher could have difficulty generalizing the results if External Validity is threatened. For this study, I chose random selection to target my participants. Random selection in this study should

not threaten External Validity as the sample was chosen from a database that included participants from various backgrounds, ethnicities, age groups, and regions. Thus, making the sample representative of the population. However, it is important to point out a disadvantage of using random sampling when providing consent to participate in the survey. When the subjects have an option to either participate or not participate in the survey, then the researcher should keep in mind that there could be a difference in subjects who eagerly participate in a study and those who do not (Trochim, 2006). Although demographic information was asked of the participants, this study does not directly take into account geographic region, gender, ethnicity or training. All of these variables could confound the results. Furthermore, it is important to identify differences such as gender and ethnicity within the sample that affect its ability to represent the population.

Diversity within the sample should be addressed. Although random sampling from the ASCA Scene database was used to include subjects from various regions, ethnicities, and backgrounds, 85% of the participants identified themselves as Caucasian/White, which means only 15% of the sample was drawn from the minority population. In addition, 89% of the sample identified themselves as female. The over-representation of white females makes it more difficult to draw conclusions about the self-perceived leadership across ethnicity and gender. However, the intent of this study was not to look at gender or ethnicity. Age of the participants was a factor in this study in which all ages should be represented. According to Erickson's Stages of Psychosocial Development, a young adult is categorized as someone between the ages of 19-40 and an older adult between the ages of 40-65 (Erickson, 1950; 1959). For this study, 40% of the

participants are categorized as young adults and 60% are older adults. This fairly even split between the age groups improves the probability that the results are representative of the population.

As in any study, there are threats to internal validity that must be accounted for (e.g., history, maturation instrumentation, mortality, regression and testing), however, this study did not involve pre-post design as a result of an implementation of a specific program. Therefore, for this study, history and maturation should be addressed. History can affect Internal Validity when a historical event occurs and maturation can occur from several events over a life span (Trochim, 2006). This study takes into account Erickson's Stages of Psychosocial Development to define age where a young adult is 19-40 years of age and an older adult is 40-65 years of age. It is important to note that ASCA changed its standards and implemented the National Model in the early 2000's. This is a historical event that could have an impact on the training that counselors with more years of experience had to undertake while completing their studies. This information could have an impact on why counselors who have more years of experience report lower levels of self-perceived transformational leadership. One could also deduce that several events over one's life span could lead to a lower level of self-perceived transformational leadership skills. Simple explanations such as working with unsupportive administrators or not continuing ones education through professional organizations and workshops could impact the counselor through maturation, thus affecting the Internal Validity of this study.

## **Implications & Significance for Social Change**

The purpose of this study was to measure the self-perceived transformational leadership skills of school counselors across the United States. This study took into account age, years of experience, school setting (i.e., elementary, middle or high school) and leadership in professional organizations. Previous research has been conducted over the years on transformational leadership across disciplines (Dollarhide, 2003; Dollarhide et al., 2008; Sagnak, 2010; Seidman & McCauley, 2011; Weichun et al., 2012) on how to evolve into a transformational leader. In order for counselor educators to better help counselors in training find their professional identity and become leaders in their schools (Lewis & Borunda, 2006), it is helpful to know whether or not age and the years of experience of their students will have an overall impact on the development of self-perceived transformational leadership skills. Counselor education students can better develop transformational leadership skills if they know potential obstacles, and are prepared to actively gain more knowledge and skills in becoming a transformational leader.

Now, counselor educators can ascertain that age does not have a direct role in the development of self-perceived transformational leadership skills, and they can focus on *why* counselors with more years of experience report a lower level of self-perceived transformational leadership skills. These same counselor educators can speak with their students about the importance of serving in leadership positions in professional organizations to foster growth in transformational leadership skills. The information gathered from this study can aid counselor educators in eliminating a difference in transformational leadership across school settings and incorporate discussions into the



curriculum to help counseling students gain a better understanding of the obstacles that could impede their leadership development that they could face as a school counselor.

Bish, Kenny and Nay (2013) suggested specific strategies to foster early involvement in leadership such as networking within professional organizations to promote professional development, continuing to actively research leadership, serving on committees and advisory boards, collaborating with leaders within the organization and profession, and leading decision making processes. Meany-Walden and colleagues (2013) found counselors reported professional development and long-term investment or involvement in leadership that began prior to enrollment in their counselor education program to be the two biggest factors in leadership development. These researchers also suggest integrating leadership awareness into courses, trainings, workshops, and professional association meetings. Counselor educators can implement activities in the coursework across the counseling curriculum to help nurture transformational leadership development such as case studies, actively research and writing about transformational leadership, and mentoring others. Having discussions about obstacles and barriers that a school counselor may face and establishing a plan of action would be beneficial for student counselors. Counselor educators could use these strategies to foster transformational leadership growth in counseling students. Becoming active in Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) and local chapters of the American School Counseling Association by serving on committees and advisory boards would help students make connections to leaders in the profession. This would help the student network and learn from the leaders in the profession.

The knowledge obtained from the current study provides implications and future considerations about further research that can be implemented with school counselors and their transformational leadership skill development. In addition to future research, the awareness of potential factors that have an impact on the development of transformational leadership skills can provide counselor educators with ideas for outreach and professional development for current school counselors and important topics of discussion for counseling students.

### **Future Considerations**

As mentioned previously, future considerations for this research will be assessed. Professional development and outreach for current school counselors would be beneficial in order to provide a “refresher” on leadership skill development. Counselor educators are gatekeepers into the counseling profession and this duty should extend beyond the beginning point of a new counselor’s career. Counselor educators have opportunities through professional organization conferences to present information about transformational leadership to counselors. They can use presentations as an advantage to discuss the barriers and obstacles that could impede transformational leadership skill development and ways in which counselors can *increase* their transformational leadership skills over time. Another way to disseminate strategies to obtain transformational leadership skills would be to host workshops at the local universities for school counselors in the area. This is specifically important as local school counselors directly interact with counseling students as their practicum and internship supervisors. Counselor educators have the responsibility to make sure counseling students are paired with competent supervisors who have up-to-date knowledge and leadership abilities. The

suggestions for presentations and workshops for school counselors is important because counselor educators can then reach the school counselors across all settings who have had many years of experience in addition to new school counselors. At conferences, the counselor educators would be reaching members instead of just leaders of the organization. However, this information is just a starting point in the area of transformational leadership and the counseling profession.

The current study acts as a beginning point in which we can better understand the factors that potentially have an impact of the development of transformational leadership skills. We now know that there is not a difference in age on the level of self-perceived leadership development, but school counselors who have many years of experience report a lower level of self-perceived transformational leadership abilities. This information could be paired with qualitative data, such as interviews, to determine the trends, such as cultural changes and/or differences between newer and older school counselors, which could make a difference in the leadership skill development. It would also be beneficial to understand whether or not burnout over time contributes to a lower level of self-perceived transformational leadership abilities of school counselors with more years of experience. The current study also provides information that school setting does not make a difference on self-perceived transformational leadership skill development, and but when paired with professional organization leadership experience, we see still do not see a statistical significance. Again, qualitative data could help us better understand if there are any trends that are not apparent through quantitative data in transformational leadership skills across settings and among those counselors who have held leadership positions in professional organizations. For example, would age and/or years of

experience have an impact on whether or not a school counselor has held a leadership position (i.e., have younger and newer counselors held leadership positions?). This information combined with information collected regarding school counselors level of interest in learning more about their own leadership style and how they rate themselves as a leader could give insight on transformational leadership experience development.

Demographics from subjects can be used to obtain information regarding gender, ethnicity, region, socioeconomic status and training in regards to SCTLTI scores. In addition, questions regarding mentoring and advocacy experience would provide insight on SCTLTI scores. Mentoring and advocacy are two experiences that relate to transformational leadership that could impact developing leadership abilities. A correlational study would provide awareness on whether or not these experiences have a relationship or can predict SCTLTI scores. Understanding patterns from these factors in regards to self-perceived transformational leadership skills allows researchers to promote transformational leadership in a way that fosters skill development among all groups. For example, although results of this study suggest age does not make a difference in the development of self-perceived transformational leadership scores, there are other factors that could have an influence. Moreover, privilege in areas such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status could have an impact on developing leadership skills. Persons of privilege could develop leadership skills easier than those who grew up without privilege; or on the other hand, individuals without as much privilege may find themselves developing leadership skills easier than those with privilege as they have had to work hard their entire lives. Future research in these areas would make a great contribution to the understanding of leadership development. Quantitative studies gender, ethnicity

and/or socioeconomic status would help counselor educators understand relationships and predictor variables on school counselors' SCTLTI scores. Qualitative studies would give counselor educators insight on the trends from specific backgrounds in regards to transformational leadership. With this information, counselor educators can teach counseling students to be aware of their backgrounds and use that knowledge to expand upon skills they already have or develop new skills in regards to leadership. New discussions can take place in the classroom setting to help students reflect upon instances - past, present or future - that may impede their leadership skills. The information from this current study is just an initial point at which counselor educators can delve into possible developmental growth for students. It is my hope, as a rising counselor educator, that perceptions of transformational leadership among all groups be studied in order to reach students from various backgrounds and improving transformational leadership abilities among all students.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **STUDY INFORMATION FORM**

Before you begin, please review this page. It contains information on your rights as a participant. By clicking the "Yes" button below, you state that you are over 18 years of age and wish to participate in research conducted by Christina Lowe, Ph. D Candidate, in the Department of Educational Studies at The University of South Carolina.

The purpose of the School Counseling Transformational Leadership Inventory (Gibson, Dollarhide, Conley & Lowe, 2014) is to understand the development of school counselors' leadership skills. The long-term goal of the study is to contribute to a stronger knowledge base regarding how to train and supervise future leaders in school counseling.

If you choose to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a survey about various leadership activities in school counseling. It will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. All information collected in this study is confidential. The information you provide will also be grouped with information other people also provide for reporting purposes. Your email address will be collected at the end of the survey if you wish to be entered into a raffle for a \$50 Visa Gift Card for participating. This information will be stored in a separate location from the data collected.

Data will be stored on a private computer owned by the researcher and will be password protected. Due to the public nature of the Internet, the possibility of someone intercepting your data is possible but highly unlikely. If you do not exit or close your Internet browser when you have completed your survey, it is possible that another person using your computer at a later time could view your responses. Therefore, it is very important that you exit your browser after you have submitted your survey.

The benefits to participation include contributing to research on an understudied topic.

As a participant: I understand that the questions may ask for me to reflect on my personal experiences and opinions and may be sensitive in nature which may result in some discomfort. I understand that I do not have to answer any question I feel uncomfortable with and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions about participating in this research, please contact me at [lowecm@email.sc.edu](mailto:lowecm@email.sc.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office, The University of South Carolina at <http://www.orc.research.sc.edu/> or 803-777-7095.

**APPENDIX B**

**DEMOGRAPHIC FORM**

Please complete the Demographic information below.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

1. Gender: How do you identify yourself (check all that apply)?

Female     Male     Transgender     Intersex     Gender queer

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Cultural Self-identification (check all that apply):

African American  
 Asian American or Pacific Islander  
 Caucasian  
 Hispanic, Latina/Latino  
 Native American  
 International (what is your home country?) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What state do you reside in? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your age in years? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many years have you been a professional school counselor? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What school are you working in currently?

Elementary  
 Middle School  
 High School  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Rate your level of interest in learning about your leadership style:

High     Moderate     Not much     None

8. Rate the extent to which you *currently see yourself as a leader*:



\_\_\_ High    \_\_\_ Moderate    \_\_\_ Not much    \_\_\_ None

9. Have you had leadership experience in a professional counseling organization?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No

10. If yes was your experience \_\_\_\_\_ Previous    \_\_\_\_\_ Current

**APPENDIX C**

**SCHOOL COUNSELING  
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP INVENTORY  
Gibson, Dollarhide, Conley, & Lowe (2014)**

<p><b>Consider each statement and click on the appropriate box to indicate how far each statement applies to you.</b></p> <p><b>Do not spend too long on each question and try to avoid the middle answer. Your first reaction will usually be the best response. If you need to change an answer, just click on one of the other boxes.</b></p>	<p><b>1-Never 2-Once in a While 3-Fairly Often 4-Frequently 5-Always or Almost Always</b></p>				
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. I have built linkages with important decision-makers in the district.					
2. I have talked about my vision and values about my school counseling program.					
3. I have worked with administration to secure resources for the counseling program.					
4. I have empowered parents and colleagues to act to improve the program and the school.					
5. I have initiated change in regards to my school counseling program.					
6. I have used persuasion with decision-makers to accomplish school counseling goals.					
7. I have generated a collective sense of mission in accomplishing the school counseling goals.					
8. I have implemented a successful school counseling program.					

9. I have maintained a vision of what my program can be and have communicated that vision to others.					
10. I have evaluated the school counseling program.					
11. I have let others know that I value their input in the school counseling program.					
12. I have approached parent groups to secure their support for goals for the program.					
13. I have approached administration or school board members to secure their support for goals for the program.					
14. I have asked important stakeholders (i.e., students, parents, faculty staff, and administrators) to evaluate the school counseling program.					
15. I have convinced others that my ideas for the program have merit.					
<b>Total Column</b>					