

The lived experience of non-teacher trained early career school counselors when consulting with
teachers

by

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B.S., University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2014
M.S., Kansas State University, 2016

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Special Education, Counseling, and Student Affairs
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2024

Abstract

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1) How do non-teacher-trained early career school counselors describe their experiences consulting with teachers?

Two subsidiary questions concerning challenges and values supported more specific inquiries:

2) What challenges do non-teacher-trained early career school counselors describe when consulting teachers?

3) What values do non-teacher-trained early career school counselors describe when consulting with teachers?

The sample included 10 non-teacher trained early career school counselors using data collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. I employed thematic analysis to identify themes in the collected data, revealing two areas and five key themes that related to the experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors. The two emergent areas were (a) the challenges of consultation and (b) the values of consultation. The themes are: feeling pressured to have all the answers; dealing with imposter syndrome; consultation as a critical factor in making all students feel seen; consultation as a mutual learning experience; and the power of relationships in

consultation. Findings suggested that non-teacher-trained early career school counselors need assistance managing feelings of pressure, especially the distress brought on by teacher consultation. Non-teacher-trained school counselors need help to increase their confidence when consulting with teachers in their early careers. Findings showed that a positive relationship between the non-teacher-trained early career school counselor and the teacher increased the efficacy of consultation. Recommendations are: (a) compare imposter syndrome across different professions to better understand its uniqueness or commonality and investigate how insecurity affects consultation outcomes or student support; (b) improve consultation between early career school counselors and teachers by exploring barriers to effective consultation as a way to ensure all students receive attention and support; (c) expand on the mutual learning experiences in consultation by including different school settings and address the distinct challenges that hinder professional growth during these interactions; and, (d) focus on how school counselors can manage or improve relationships with staff that start poorly, providing resources for navigating tense connections to enhance consultation efficacy.

Keywords: Early career school counselors, teacher consultation, imposter syndrome, counselor-teacher relationships, non-teacher-trained counselors

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Since the 1970s, consultation within schools has been an important component of student success (Reinke et al., 2008), with consultation needs greatly increasing, beginning with public education reform surges during the decade (Agran et al., 2020). Major reforms focused on providing free, public education to all children and requiring all students with disabilities to be educated in a classroom alongside their non-disabled peers (Agran et al., 2020). These reforms brought major challenges for teachers now expected to meet the needs of students with physical and mental disabilities outside their scope of training and experience, including the needs of students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and those with physical disabilities (Al Jaffal, 2022; Wilson et al., 2020). In Chapter 1, I discuss the importance of school counselor consultation with teachers and acknowledge the challenges that arise for non-teacher-trained early career school counselors. I present the problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions. Finally, I provide an overview of the theoretical framework that guides the study and a list of definitions that include important phrases and words integrated throughout.

Law revisions in the 1990s increased the integration of students with specialized needs into the mainstream school setting, further increasing the demand by teachers for consultation and collaboration to support the behavioral, social, and academic success of students (Kampwirth, 2006). In 2001, federal regulations began enforcing teacher evaluations based on student's academic success, especially concerning state assessment performance (Friend, 2014; Kampwirth, 2006). With the growing pressure on teachers to demonstrate competency, accompanied by the increasing number of needs within the classroom, the call by teachers for consultation and collaboration with other professionals to promote student success escalated (Brownell et al., 2018; Roach & Elliott, 2009). Changes in public education generated diversity

in the classroom, creating a need for culturally responsive teaching strategies, differentiated instruction, and positive behavioral support (Cartledge & Lo, 2006). General education teachers collaborated and consulted with professionals from various backgrounds, including special education teachers and school counselors, to establish inclusivity and to meet the wide array of student needs (Hernandez, 2013).

Consultation is a critical component of the public education system (Brigman et al., 2005; Erford, 2011). Collaboration among school counselors, teachers, and other stakeholders to meet the unique needs of students has become the expectation and addresses students' academic issues, in addition to their personal-social and postsecondary needs (Erford, 2011; Fonagy et al., 2009). School counselors also collaborate with administrators, teachers, school psychologists, social workers, behavior specialists, and families to empower children from all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds (Bryan & Henry, 2008). Consultation has become a vital part of enhancing student lives within the educational system by identifying and addressing disadvantaged students' needs, increasing chronically absent attendance rates, and decreasing negative behaviors within the student body (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Maeda & Inoue, 2021).

School counselor consultation is the alliance of professional school counselors with administrators, teachers, parents, students, and other helping professionals to promote the success of students through the seeking and/or providing of information to aid in students' personal/social, academic, and postsecondary development (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2019). School counselor consultation is a triadic helping relationship that involves a consultant, consultee(s), and client(s), with the consultant (expert) providing skills and knowledge to the consultee (stakeholder), who subsequently serves the client or group of clients (students; Brown et al., 2006). Since the early 2000s, school counselors have used consultation

as a collaborative process, shifting between the role of consultant and consultee, with school counselors sometimes serving as the specialist while other times seeking the assistance of a stakeholder to help meet a student's need (ASCA, 2019).

ASCA recognizes consultation as essential to a comprehensive school counseling program (2019). School counselor consultation improves student achievement, attendance, and discipline through direct service and indirect service, the first alluding to face-to-face interactions between school counselors and students and the latter referring to interactions between school counselors and school stakeholders, such as administrators, teachers, student support staff, and families to meet student needs—school counselors spend at least 80% of their time within these essential services (ASCA, 2019). Other researchers have recognized school counselor consultation with teachers as a regular and recurrent practice, further signifying the importance of consultation in schools and the profession of school counseling (Goodman-Scott, 2015; Perera-Diltz et al., 2011). School counselors collaborate with teachers to induce student achievement and identify and implement effective strategies to meet student needs (Sink & Lemich, 2018; Warren, 2013). Consultation with teachers allows school counselors to impact a greater number of students than individual or group counseling by maximizing school counseling services (including services focused on social-emotional understanding) indirectly through the teachers' subsequent interactions with students (Brigman et al., 2005; Dinkmeyer et al., 2016; Sink & Lemich, 2018; Stone & Dahir, 2016).

Researchers have shown that successful consultation between school counselors and teachers leads to improved outcomes, specifically regarding improved stress levels in teachers and students and an increase in teachers' positive emotions. (Cholewa et al., 2016; Ray, 2007; Warren, 2013; Warren & Gerler, 2013). Teachers can also act as helpers in school counselor

consultation when they identify student needs and make a subsequent referral to the counselor, providing the school counselor with a baseline concerning student issues and allowing both professionals to collaborate to formulate comprehensive solutions. The collaboration demonstrates how school counselor consultation with teachers benefits school counselors, teachers, and the students with whom both professionals serve (Beesely, 2004).

Only a few researchers have examined teachers' perceptions of school counselor consultation and found that teachers perceive school counselor consultation positively, perceiving that it has multiple benefits, including increased positive emotion and better relationships with students, colleagues, and even family and friends (Beesely, 2004; Bryant, 2016; Cholewa et al., 2016; Warren, 2013). Cholewa et al. (2016) uncovered three themes regarding teachers' perceptions and experiences with school counselor consultation. The first theme, teachers perceived that better consultation experiences occurred when they felt a connection with their school counselor, fostered a sense of trust and openness, allowing teachers to communicate their concerns and collaborate more effectively. Establishing a strong rapport helped create a supportive environment that was conducive to addressing student needs collaboratively. Cholewa et al.'s second theme, consultation experiences were enhanced when teachers perceived that their school counselor recognized the value of student relationships, established that teachers felt validated when counselors acknowledged the importance of the teacher-student bond, which in turn motivated teachers to invest further in their relationships with students. The recognition from counselors reinforced the significance of emotional and relational aspects of teaching, thereby improving the overall learning environment. Finally, the theme effective consultation experiences related to teachers' perceptions of the resourcefulness of the school counselor. Resourcefulness, as defined by Cholewa et al., involved the school

counselor's visibility, consistency, and ability to provide relevant information and support. Teachers appreciated it when counselors were readily accessible, demonstrated consistent follow-up, and offered practical solutions or resources that addressed specific classroom challenges. The perception of resourcefulness not only improved the consultation experience but also enhanced teachers' confidence in implementing strategies that benefited their students.

Professional school counselors also recognize consultation as one of their most essential services (Carlson & Kees, 2013; Cholewa et al., 2016; Perera-Diltz et al., 2011), perceiving their services to be more impactful when they can spend time in consultation with stakeholders (Dunn & Baker, 2002; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). School counselors perceive consultation with teachers as one of the most important aspects of their job for several reasons, including (a) school counselors must establish relationships with teachers, (b) build a positive school climate, and (c) provide well-rounded support services to students, especially when it relates to student advocacy work and impacting student with disabilities (Dunn & Baker, 2002; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). School counselors harbor perceptions about time spent in consultation, with many school counselors perceiving that they spend a significant amount of time in consultation while others call for more (Nelson et al., 2008; Perera-Diltz et al., 2011).

Despite school counselors perceiving consultation with teachers as beneficial, they perceive certain challenges in consultation, such as teachers' lack of awareness and understanding of the role of the school counselor, the importance of students' mental health, and its subsequent impact on classroom behaviors, along with feelings of overwhelm when they perceive that administrators and teachers often expect immediate student progress following consultation. Along with these challenges, school counselors perceive certain strategies as helpful in consultation with teachers, including informing the teacher about the role of the school

counselor, using relational skills like clear communication and assertiveness, and making themselves visible and available in the school setting. Some researchers have explored the experiences of beginning school counselors and identified themes concerning school counselors' early careers (Atli, 2020; Curry & Bickmore, 2012; Matthes, 1992; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). Key ideas emphasized by researchers include that early career school counselors feel stigmatized and misunderstood by teachers, feeling that teachers perceive them as lazy, unmotivated, and incompetent (Atli, 2020; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). School counselors also require more support and mentorship in their first few professional years to feel less isolated (Curry & Bickmore, 2012; Matthes, 1992; Sadana & Kumar, 2021).

Some literature exists on professional school counselors without a background in teacher training, identifying distinctions between the professional lives of school counselors with and without a background in teacher training, indicating that non-teacher-trained school counselors lack knowledge of school culture, experience feelings of apprehension, and experience increased difficulties assimilating than their teacher trained peers (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Gruenert, 2008; Littrell & Peterson, 2001; Peterson & Deuschle, 2006; Peterson et al., 2004; Wood & Rayle, 2006). Certain professional roles and responsibilities are also challenging for the non-teacher-trained school counselor, such as lesson planning, classroom management, school curriculum, and child and adolescent development related to student behaviors (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Peterson & Deuschle, 2006; Wood & Rayle, 2006). Understanding the experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers is essential for educators in identifying and implementing strategies that could enhance this vital collaboration and improve student and school outcomes.

Problem Statement

Non-teacher-trained early career school counselors face challenges in consulting with teachers, which impacts their ability to support student success. Challenges include managing stakeholder expectations, building strong connections with teachers, and navigating the diverse needs of students in the school environment. If not addressed, the consequence of the problem is that the effectiveness of consultation as a key component of school counseling will remain compromised, affecting the quality of support provided to students. Although several researchers have examined the impact of school counselor consultation with teachers (Brigman et al., 2005; Dinkmeyer et al., 2016; Sink & Lemich, 2018; Stone & Dahir, 2016; Warren, 2013), they have neglected the experiences of school counselors when consulting with teachers.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the consultation experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors in diverse school environments. I aimed to understand how counselors navigate the challenges of consulting with teachers, manage stakeholder expectations, and build strong collaborative relationships. Through an examination of their lived experiences, I sought to identify effective practices that can improve the consultation process, enhancing the support provided to students. The findings from this research will contribute to the broader understanding of school counseling practices and offer insights that can inform policy, training, and practice to better prepare school counselors for effective consultation roles. One primary research question guided the study:

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Theoretical Framework

Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT) helped frame and understand the lived experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors during their consultation with teachers. SCT emphasizes that people learn and obtain behaviors through observing others and use observations to form attitudes and beliefs (Bandura, 1977). Bandura's (1977) theory explains what motivates people and how people develop cognitions, social-emotional responses, behaviors, and self-regulation skills. SCT clarifies how humans adapt, learn, and become motivated. Triadic reciprocal causality purports personal factors, environment, and behaviors influence one another (Bandura, 1986). Personal factors include beliefs, goals, and expectations, whereas environmental factors include other people, physical settings, and resources. Behavior refers to individual actions, choices, and verbal statements; all three concepts impact each other. For example, when a supervisor gives their employee positive feedback (element of environment) on a job task, the employee may feel a higher sense of self-efficacy (personal factor) and increase their effort (behavior). Environmental factors such as giving employees extra time off to reach a work goal can also increase effort and hard work behaviors. In contrast, if a supervisor provides negative feedback to an employee or provides no incentive for hard work, the employee may have decreased self-efficacy and put less effort into their job. The

mutual influence of personal factors, environment, and behavior can help frame the reciprocal influence between non-teacher-trained early career school counselors and their school environment and how this impacts their consultation experience with teachers.

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's competency assessment of a certain task (Bandura, 1997). There are four recognized sources of self-efficacy: (a) mastery experiences, (b) vicarious experiences, (c) social persuasion, and (d) physiological and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1997). Mastery experiences draw from judgments made on previous incidents with the specific task and are often the most powerful sources of self-efficacy. Successful direct experiences increase self-efficacy, while failed attempts lower self-efficacy. For example, if an employee feels positive about a previous incident where they addressed workplace conflict directly with their boss, they are likely to have more self-efficacy about addressing conflict with their boss in general. Another source of self-efficacy is vicarious experience, which develops through observing others performing a certain task (Bandura, 1997). Vicarious experiences teach people different strategies while shaping beliefs about how one might perform a task. For example, if an employee observes a coworker addressing workplace conflict with their boss and perceives it as going well, they might adopt the same conflict style and feel more confident about addressing conflict.

Other sources of self-efficacy include social persuasion and physiological and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1997). Social persuasion refers to evaluative messages heard about a specific task from others and can manifest in several ways, including specific performance feedback or a *pep talk* (Woolfolk, 2019). For example, an employee may feel an increase in self-efficacy if their supervisor expresses confidence in the employee efficiently completing a task. Physiological or emotional arousal is the last source of self-efficacy and refers to how people

feel positive or negative arousal during a specific task. For example, if an employee notices their heartbeat quicken as they consider addressing a workplace conflict with their boss, the employee may recognize may believe that signals their inability to address the conflict with their boss, indicating low self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can help explain how non-teacher-trained early career school counselors' beliefs about their capabilities influence their consultation behaviors and their interactions with teachers, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Definitions

For this study, I defined the following words and phrases that are important to understand:

American School Counselor Association: The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a professional organization that supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, career, and social/emotional development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society (ASCA, 2019).

Consultation: Consultation is the collaboration of individuals, both professional and non-professional, to empower and support students and to assist them in career, academic, and personal/social development (ASCA, 2019).

Early career school counselors: Early career school counselors are master's degree-level school counselors with three years of experience or less (Bledsoe et al., 2021).

Non-teacher-trained school counselors: In Kansas, non-teacher-trained school counselors are school counselors without a professional teaching license who must have additional field experiences over two semesters in schools (Kansas State University, 2023).

Professional school counselor: School counselors are certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling, making them uniquely qualified to address

all students' academic, career, and social/emotional development needs through the implementation of a school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success (ASCA, 2019).

School counselor consultation: School counselor consultation is an indirect service rendered by school counselors that may empower stakeholders within a school system to provide enhanced services to students (Perera-Diltz et al., 2011).

Summary

In Chapter 1, I introduced the research problem, presented a problem and purpose statement, and provided a theoretical framework by examining the experiences of non-tenon-teacher-trained career school counselors during their consultation with teachers. I also introduced the research question and defined terms for upcoming chapters. In Chapter 2, I discuss current literature relevant to the study.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

In Chapter 2, I discuss a literature review related to non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers. The review begins with a brief overview of the evolution of consultation in schools in the United States, which provides a framework for changes in the roles and responsibilities of 21st-century transformed consultation services. I then expand on school counselor consultation and present information on the process and relevance of school counselor consultation. An examination of school counselor consultation with teachers follows that section in which I discuss how school counselors consult with teachers to promote students' success, and an examination of the perceptions of school counselors and teachers regarding school counselor consultation follows that section. I then introduce literature on the impact of school counselor consultation and present a review of existing literature on early career and non-teacher-trained school counselors.

Review of the Literature

Consultation in Schools: History and Relevance

Among the first major reforms in the 1970s was the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHC) of 1975, which signified the requirement of public schools to provide free public education to all children, including those with mental and physical disabilities. With these shifts also came the principle of a least restrictive environment (LRE), part of a federal law requiring students with disabilities to be educated in a classroom alongside their non-disabled peers to the fullest extent possible (Agran et al., 2020). Statute-driven transitions brought forth major challenges for teachers now expected to meet the needs of students with physical and mental disabilities outside their scope of training and experience. Promoting the needs of

students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder is one such demand for general education teachers that has continued to increase since the birth of inclusive classrooms (Al Jaffal, 2022).

A revision of the EAHC included the addition of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 and subsequent amendments under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Amendments Act (IDEAA) of 1997, which further expanded the right for students with disabilities to be included in the general education classroom (Grigorenko et al., 2020). Alongside these changes came the birth of the *individual education plan* (IEP), a document for students with disabilities requiring teachers to track progress toward student goals (Friend, 2014). The increased integration of students with specialized needs into the mainstream school setting further pushed the demand by teachers for consultation and collaboration to support students' behavioral, social, and academic success (Kampwirth, 2006). Changes in public education arising from the EAHC, IDEA, and IDEAA expanded the variety of student needs in the classroom. School diversification necessitates various components, including culturally responsive teaching strategies, differentiated instruction, and positive behavioral supports (Cartledge & Lo, 2006). Teachers began collaborating with professionals from various backgrounds, including special education teachers and school counselors, to implement and incorporate these support services (Hernandez, 2013). Collaboration between general education teachers and professionals in support service roles establishes inclusivity in the classroom and meets many student needs.

By 2001, the need for consultation in schools became greater than ever. The passing of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002 brought new ways to evaluate teachers (Friend, 2014; Kampwirth, 2006). Regulations included the assessment of educator competency based on student's academic success, especially as it concerns performance on state assessments. Along

with NCLB-mandated changes in assessment, teachers pushed for more consultation with other school professionals, specifically those in support service roles, to help raise student assessment scores (Friend, 2014). The term *highly qualified teacher* was also established out of the NCLB, recognizing certain educators' qualifications. With some variation between states, qualifications include the following: (a) a bachelor's degree, (b) full state certification or licensure, and (c) proof of knowing each subject they teach (Brownell et al., 2018). With growing pressure on teachers to demonstrate competency and the increasing need within the classroom, teachers have called for collaboration with other professionals to promote student success (Roach & Elliott, 2009).

In the 2020s, consultation is a critical component of the public education system (Brigman et al., 2005; Erford, 2011). Collaboration among school counselors, teachers, and other stakeholders to meet the unique needs of students has become the expectation. Consultation addresses issues that transcend students' academic success. Stakeholders within the school, such as administrators, school counselors, special education teachers, and families, have also cooperated to address personal-social and postsecondary student quandaries (Erford, 2011). For example, teachers, parents, outside mental health professionals, and other school personnel come together to assist students in developing social skills and to implement appropriate interventions when problems of bullying, violence, and intolerance problems may arise (Fonagy et al., 2009). School counselors collaborate with administrators, teachers, psychologists, social workers, behavior specialists, and families to empower children from low-income households (Bryan & Henry, 2008). Researchers have shown that when stakeholders allocate time to meet and discuss student needs, they can identify appropriate interventions to promote the success of disadvantaged students (Bryan & Henry, 2008). Unification of professionals decreases negative

behaviors within the student body and the community (Bryan & Henry, 2008). When school counselors join forces with parents, attendance rates among chronically absent students vastly improve (Maeda & Inoue, 2021). Consultation has become vital to enhancing student lives within the educational system.

School Counselor Consultation

School counselor consultation is the alliance of professional school counselors with administrators, teachers, parents, students, and other helping professionals to promote students' success (ASCA, 2019). Consultation involves seeking and providing information to relevant stakeholders, such as administrators, teachers, support staff, and families, to aid in students' personal, social, academic, and postsecondary development. Broadly, consultation is the collaboration by school counselors, both within and outside the school setting, with administrators, teachers, parents, students, and other helping professionals (ASCA, 2019). School counselor consultation is a triadic relationship that involves (a) a consultant, (b) consultee(s), and (c) client(s) and occurs when the consultant (expert) provides skills and knowledge to the consultee (stakeholder), who subsequently serves the client or group of clients (students; Brown et al., 2006). Since the early 2000s, school counselors have transitioned to a collaborative form of consultation, viewing the consultee as a co-expert and sharing with them the responsibility and decision-making regarding the client (Dinkmeyer et al., 2016). School counselors and stakeholders shift between the role of consultant and consultee, with school counselors sometimes serving as the specialist while other times seeking the assistance of an administrator, teacher, family member, or other community-helping professional to help meet a student's need.

The ASCA recognizes consultation as a fundamental aspect of comprehensive school counseling programs and one of the three major roles of the professional school counselor (ASCA, 2019). Consultation is part of the ASCA National Model (2019), a framework for comprehensive school counseling programs consisting of four elements: (a) define, (b) manage, (c) deliver, and (d) assess. The *defined* component refers to the professional and student standards that school counselors use to construct school counseling programs that enhance student achievement (ASCA, 2019). The *management* component includes the elements of program focus and program planning with tools to develop effective school counseling programs to promote students' success. The *delivery* component recognizes the student-promoting activities that school counselors perform through their interactions with others. Lastly, the *assessment* component acknowledges how school counselors routinely examine the effectiveness of their program and their mindsets and behaviors (ASCA, 2019).

School counselor consultation occurs within the delivery portion of the model, consisting of two sub-areas: direct and indirect services. Direct services are face-to-face interactions between school counselors and students. In contrast, indirect services refer to interactions between school counselors and stakeholders, such as administrators, teachers, student support staff, and families, to meet student needs (ASCA, 2019). Both indirect and direct services improve student achievement, attendance, and discipline. Direct services include instruction, appraisal and advisement, counseling, and face-to-face (or virtual) interactions between school counselors and students. Indirect services include consultation, collaboration, and referrals and are applied to the interactions of school counselors with parents, teachers, community organizations, and other educators on behalf of the students (ASCA, 2019).

School Counselor Consultation With Teachers

School counselors consult with teachers to promote students' personal-social, academic, and postsecondary success in a comprehensive school counseling program (Sink & Lemich, 2018). Consultation induces student achievement through collaboration when school counselors join forces with teachers to identify and implement effective strategies to meet student needs (Warren, 2013). A structured and pervasive intervention and consultation with teachers allows school counselors to impact more students than individual or group counseling (Brigman et al., 2005). Teachers' subsequent interactions with students indirectly maximize school counseling services (Dinkmeyer et al., 2016; Stone & Dahir, 2016). In their consultation with teachers, school counselors harness their social-emotional understanding and specialized knowledge of behavior management, communication skills, and problem-solving to assist teachers in their interactions with students (Dinkmeyer et al., 2016; Sink & Lemich, 2018).

Teachers also act as helpers in school counselor consultation, promoting their students' success via school counselor consultation by identifying student needs within their classroom and the subsequent referral to the counselor (Beesely, 2004). Identifying student needs provides the school counselor baseline information about student issues and allows both professionals to collaborate to formulate comprehensive solutions (Beesely, 2004). Teacher consultation with school counselors benefits teachers, school counselors, and the students with whom both professionals serve. Researchers have recognized school counselor consultation with teachers as a regular and recurrent practice (Goodman-Scott, 2015; Perera-Diltz et al., 2011). Perera-Diltz et al. (2011) discovered that 79% of school counselors consulted with stakeholders, including parents, principals, and teachers, and 78.8% consulted with teachers *often* or *always*. Goodman-Scott (2015) averred that school counselors spent extensive time in consultation with teachers,

and school counselors identified their most frequent job activity as consulting with school staff about student behavior.

Researchers have shown that successful consultation between school counselors and teachers improves outcomes (Cholewa et al., 2016; Warren, 2013; Warren & Gerler, 2013). Ray (2007) examined the impact of counseling interventions on teacher-child relationship stress and found that school counselor consultation significantly lowered stress levels for students and teachers. Warren and Gerler (2013) offered that school counselor consultation positively impacted teachers' mental health, demonstrating a reduction in teachers' irrational beliefs and negative emotions after undergoing consistent consultation with school counselors. Warren (2013) explored the effects of ongoing school counselor consultation with teachers, showing that teachers experienced increased positive thought patterns and improved relationships with colleagues and family members when they actively participated in school counselor consultation. Cholewa et al. (2016) reported that teachers felt validated in their professional experiences when consulting with school counselors. School counselor consultation benefits teachers in multiple ways, and these teachers, in turn, benefit the students with whom they work.

Teachers' Consultation Perceptions

Only a few researchers have examined teachers' perceptions of school counselor consultation (Beesely, 2004; Bryant, 2016; Cholewa et al., 2016; Warren, 2013). Within this small body of research, I found that nearly 75% of teachers rated school counselor consultation as adequate to extremely adequate, while 50% deemed school counselor consultation as one of the strongest areas of their school counseling program (Beesely, 2004). Warren (2013) studied teachers who experienced personal and interpersonal improvements after participating in six school counselor-led group consultation sessions. Warren showed that participants perceived

positive emotion and cognition and improved relationships with family, colleagues, students, and friends after post-school counselor-led group consultation attendance increased. According to Cholewa et al. (2016), several prominent themes regarding teachers' perceptions and experiences with school counselor consultation have emerged. First, teachers emphasized the importance of school-counselor relationships. Teachers perceived that better consultation experiences occurred when they felt a connection with their school counselor. Teachers' consultation experiences were enhanced when they perceived that their school counselor recognized the value of student relationships. Cholewa et al. also found that effective consultation experiences related to teachers' perceptions of the resourcefulness of the school counselor (In this instance, Cholewa et al. defined resourcefulness as the school counselors' visibility, consistency, and capacity to provide services and education, along with relevant information and support.) Lastly, teachers' perceptions of the school counselors' specialization impact consultation experiences. Teachers perceived that school counselors were experts on social-emotional student issues and certain academic and behavioral concerns, and teachers sought opportunities to discuss these matters with school counselors in consultation.

School Counselors' Consultation Perceptions

Teachers find consultation with school counselors helpful and important in multiple ways. Professional school counselors have recognized consultation as one of their most essential services (Carlson & Kees, 2013; Cholewa et al., 2016; Perera-Diltz et al., 2011). Researchers have shown that school counselors perceived their services to be more impactful when they consulted with stakeholders (Dunn & Baker, 2002; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). Sadana and Kumar (2021) found several themes regarding school counselors' perceptions and their consultation work. First, school counselors perceived their collaboration with teachers and administrators as

one of the most important aspects of their job. Further, school counselors perceived their interactions with teachers and administrators as necessary to establish a positive school climate and provide well-rounded support services to students. In addition, school counselors perceived consultation with teachers and administrators to be particularly useful in student advocacy work. These findings highlight the importance of school counselors investing in relationships with stakeholders that allow for meaningful collaboration.

School counselors play a vital role in supporting students with disabilities through consultation with stakeholders, involving not only providing direct support to students but also equipping teachers, parents, and administrators with the tools and strategies they need to facilitate student success. Dunn and Baker (2002) examined school counselors' perceptions regarding their consultation work in a study assessing their perceived role when working with students with disabilities. The researchers determined that nearly 80% of school counselors describe their role as consultants, emphasizing the importance of collaboration in effectively addressing the diverse needs of students. Consulting role sharing expertise in behavior management, academic planning, and social-emotional learning, which helps create a supportive environment for students with disabilities. In the present study, the consultant role refers to the consultation experiences of school counselors with teachers, parents, administrators, and students, focusing particularly on how these interactions contribute to the academic, social, and emotional development of students with disabilities. Effective consultation requires school counselors to adapt their communication styles and strategies to meet the unique needs of each stakeholder, ensuring that all parties work together toward the common goal of student success (Dunn & Baker, 2002). School counselors can greatly impact students with disabilities by

consulting with stakeholders, as this collaboration ensures that students receive consistent support across all aspects of their educational experience (Maullasari, 2021; Reese, 2021).

Researchers have also explored how school counselors perceived their time spent in consultation (Nelson et al., 2008; Perera-Diltz et al., 2011). Perera-Diltz et al. (2011) investigated the differences in consultation practices across academic levels, reporting that 79% of school counselors report engaging in consultation. Out of those 79%, around 30% of school counselors *always* consulted with mental health professionals, while 40% reported consulting with this group *sometimes*. Perera-Diltz et al. (2011) recognized that over half of school counselor participants consulted with parents *often*, while another half reported consulting with principals *often*. One-third of school counselors *sometimes* consult with speech pathologists and school psychologists. In an examination of the roles of Texas high school counselors, Nelson et al. (2008) revealed statistically significant differences in the actual and preferred counseling activities of school counselors. The authors showed that school counselors preferred spending less time performing clerical duties and more time consulting with stakeholders such as teachers and administrators.

School counselors often face unique challenges when attempting to consult effectively within school environments, particularly due to varying stakeholder expectations and mental health stigmas. Sadana and Kumar (2021) investigated how school counselors perceived challenges in consultation in a qualitative study examining the perceptions of Indian school counselors consulting with teachers and administrators. One difficulty school counselors identified was the stigma surrounding counseling and mental health. Specifically, school counselors found consultation challenging when teachers lacked awareness and understanding of the role of school counselors, the importance of students' mental health, and its subsequent

impact on classroom behaviors. Handling the different expectations of stakeholders was another challenge in consultation perceived by school counselors. For example, school counselors felt overwhelmed when they perceived administrators and teachers often expected immediate student progress following consultation. Sadana and Kumar (2021) also explored school counselors' perceptions of helpful strategies in consultation. School counselors perceived their relationships as enhanced and that there was more receptivity in collaboration when they could provide psychoeducation to stakeholders about the school counselor's role. School counselors perceived relational skills, including clear communication and assertiveness, as helpful in consultation. Additionally, school counselors perceived that consultation with teachers and administrators was improved when they were visible and available. Specifically, school counselors recognized that teachers gained new perspectives about their role when they actively observed school counselors at work with students.

Impact of Consultation on Schools

Consultation in schools has demonstrated efficacy in multiple ways. Researchers have shown that consultation in educational settings promotes the success of students (Atkins et al., 2003, 2008; Maeda & Inoue, 2021). One study on how teachers in low-income urban schools used mental health consultation found that educators were likelier to provide evidence-based classroom practices for students with disabilities when they consulted with mental health professionals (Atkins et al., 2008). Schools partnered with community mental health agencies and consulted with mental health professionals, students from marginalized communities had better access to mental health support. Maeda and Inoue (2021) examined the attendance rates of a 13-year-old male student with significant school refusal behaviors, revealing a significant increase in school attendance rates once the school counselor began consulting with his parents

on a routine basis. Researchers have also demonstrated the impact of school counselor consultation on stakeholder relationships (Bryant, 2016; Mullis & Edwards, 2001; Perera-Diltz et al., 2011;). Bryant (2016) investigated the perceptions of consultation by school counselors, teachers, and mental health professionals, offering that stakeholders perceived consultation to enhance communication with other professionals with whom they worked. Specifically, stakeholders perceived that school counselor consultation promoted the sharing of pertinent resources among stakeholders. In similar research, Perera-Diltz et al. (2011) examined school counselor consultation as a communication facilitator between diverse school community members, establishing connections between individuals in disparate roles. Mullis and Edwards (2001) explored the benefits of school counselor consultation with parents, offering that school counselors maximize the impact of their services by sharing resources with the parents of their students. When school counselors collaborated with families, it created the likelihood of a ripple effect, an insurgence of positive change across the entire school environment.

School counselor consultation also positively impacts teachers (Molina et al., 2022; Warren, 2013). Molina et al. (2022) examined the effects of school counselor consultation on teachers' mindfulness, stress, and relationships. After participating in five weeks of school counselor-led consultation, teachers recognized improvements in their mindfulness dispositions, specifically concerning acting with awareness. Teachers who participated in school counselor consultation reported a decrease in stress as compared to teachers who did not participate in school counselor consultation. Teachers who participated in school counselor consultation found a greater decrease in conflict in their relationships with students than those who did not participate in school counselor consultation (Molina et al., 2022). Warren (2013) researched the positive impact of school counselor consultation and showed that teachers felt improved well-

being when they met with school counselors. Teachers who regularly consulted with school counselors felt increased well-being, specifically in their capacity to think more logically, realistically, and reasonably. In addition, teachers who participated in school counselor-led consultation perceived improvements in their relationships with colleagues and students. Teachers found school counselor consultation to enhance their perspectives about students and colleagues, thereby increasing the positivity and productivity of these interactions.

Early Career School Counselors

Few researchers have explored the experiences of beginning school counselors (Atli, 2020; Curry & Bickmore, 2012; Matthes, 1992; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). Within this limited body of research, several themes have arisen regarding school counselors' early careers. First, novice school counselors deal with feelings of stigmatization, especially from teachers they work with (Atli, 2020; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). Atli (2020) indicated that novice school counselors felt perceived as lazy and unmotivated by teachers within their schools. Sadana and Kumar (2021) implied that early-year school counselors feel misunderstood by their fellow teachers due to a lack of knowledge of their professional role and mental health in general. Early career school counselors perceived that teachers doubted their competency due to inexperience and age (Sadana & Kumar, 2021). School counselors require more support in their first few professional years (Curry & Bickmore, 2012; Matthes, 1992; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). Matthes (1992) suggested that novice school counselors experienced feelings of isolation and needed mentorship in their early careers. Curry and Bickmore (2012) revealed that novice school counselors needed to feel they mattered in their respective schools to be effective. In addition, Curry and Bickmore (2012) ascertained that school counselors positively interacted with students, administrators, and other school staff, specifically regarding collaboration experiences when they felt they mattered.

Beginning school counselors also identify the importance of relationships with school staff (Sadana & Kumar, 2021). Novice school counselors expressed discomfort and anxiety when interacting with some teachers (Sadana & Kumar, 2021). In contrast, school counselors with strong connections to their principals felt more safety, confidence, and support in their early careers (Sadana & Kumar, 2021). School counselors reported that the better the relationship with their administrator, the better they acclimated to social interactions with teachers and benefited from establishing positive connections in their early careers.

Non-Teacher Trained School Counselors

Some literature exists on professional school counselors without a background in teacher training (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Gruenert, 2008; Littrell & Peterson, 2001; Peterson & Deuschle, 2006; Peterson et al., 2004; Wood & Rayle, 2006). Researchers creating themes found in such work have identified distinctions between the professional lives of school counselors with and without a background in teacher training. Peterson et al. (2004) found that non-teacher-trained school counselors lacked knowledge of school culture. Specifically, non-teacher-trained school counselors experienced a learning curve on the general operation of the educational system, the demands felt by teachers, especially as it related to the presentation of academic material and the politics and barriers within the school culture. Peterson et al.'s results suggested that non-teacher-trained school counselors faced different challenges than their teacher-trained peers. Peterson and Deuschle (2006) supported previous findings (i.e., Peterson et al., 2004) that identified feelings of apprehension by non-teacher-trained school counselors surrounding certain elements of school culture. Non-teacher-trained school counselors often lacked awareness of the unspoken rules of school culture that would allow for easier assimilation (Gruenert, 2008). A lack of familiarity in school settings can induce feelings of apprehension, and findings from

research acknowledge the importance of prior work experience within schools (Peterson & Deuschle, 2006). Non-teacher-trained school counselors are encouraged to establish relationships with their administrators to learn implicit school culture factors.

Certain professional roles and responsibilities are challenging for the non-teacher-trained school counselor. Lesson planning and classroom management are among several areas where non-teacher-trained school counselors feel less experienced and less competent (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006). Peterson and Deuschle (2006) acknowledged that for many non-teacher-trained school counselors, presenting in front of an entire classroom may be overwhelming and frightening. Other researchers have indicated that non-teacher-trained school counselors lacked knowledge and understanding of school curriculum and child and adolescent developmental stages, especially concerning behaviors (Peterson & Deuschle, 2006; Wood & Rayle, 2006). Non-teacher-trained school counselors faced challenges that their teacher-trained peers did not.

Summary

An outline of consultation in schools provided the foundation for this study. Examining the areas of school counselor consultation and school counselor consultation with teachers provided more information about the process and relevance of this research. Understanding the perceptions of school counselor consultation by school counselors and teachers increased my knowledge of the research topic on a deeper, more robust level. Exploring the impact of school counselor consultation demonstrated the widespread significance of the research topic. Additionally, reviewing the literature on early career and non-teacher-trained school counselors presented the need for further literature within this refined subject area. Chapter 3 continues the dissertation by presenting the methods employed to obtain the findings.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

In Chapter 3, I present information on the methodological decisions made in the research and discuss the methodological ideas and processes I used to structure my study. I also discuss the purpose of the study, the research design, procedures, and data collection. I include information on study reflexivity and trustworthiness and my data analysis procedures.

Research Purpose and Research Questions

Consultation is important in school counseling programs (ASCA, 2019). In this transcendental phenomenological study, I explored the perceptions of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors during consultation with teachers. One primary research question guided the study:

1) How do non-teacher-trained early career school counselors describe their experiences consulting with teachers?

Two subsidiary questions concerning challenges and values supported more specific inquiries:

2) What challenges do non-teacher-trained early career school counselors describe when consulting teachers?

3) What values do non-teacher-trained early career school counselors describe when consulting with teachers?

Reflexivity and Positionality

It is impossible for the researcher to completely sever ties with personal experience (Moustakas, 1994; Peshkin, 1988). While divorce from my subjectivities is impossible, I employed strategies to induce reflexivity, an essential element of qualitative research that upholds the integrity of the data (Bhattacharya, 2017). First, I directly state my values, beliefs,

and assumptions regarding the research topic. Then, I discuss how I used bracketing to ensure the highest credibility for the study.

I came to this study as a former non-teacher-trained school counselor. Although I am no longer a school counselor, I have 4 years of experience working within Kansas public schools. I am interested in the early interactions of non-teacher-trained counselors with their colleagues, especially teachers. My positionality influenced this work, especially due to my former profession. Further, I identify as a White, cisgender, heterosexual woman hailing from a middle-class background and acknowledged that these aspects of my identity provided me with a particular lens through which I interpreted the data and viewed the world. I employed a peer reviewer to identify and eliminate any existing partiality in the data and mitigate bias (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In addition, I used member checking so participants could verify the credibility of their interviews and the study findings (Bhattacharya, 2017).

As an elementary school counselor, I have worked with students, families, community members, and teachers. During my 4 years in that role, I experienced accomplishments and failures. I witnessed the great success of the children with whom I worked and watched as students continued to struggle after repeated interventions. Despite the exceptional challenges of the job, I never questioned my profession's value, meaning, and impact. With the same fervent mindset, I pursued my PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision to guide counselors. My first several years as a non-teacher-trained school counselor brought many moments of joy and extreme difficulty. In particular, I struggled to find my place among the rest of the school staff, often feeling like an outsider in my role, especially when surrounded by teachers. I often felt *surrounded* during moments of conversation with teachers about how to best promote students' success. Consulting with teachers often felt strange and unfamiliar during my early career, and I

battled doubt and insecurity despite having knowledge and training in consultation. I assumed I was not alone in experiencing many negative feelings while consulting with teachers in the early years of being a non-teacher-trained school counselor. I also assumed that non-teacher-trained early career school counselors deal with these emotions despite being instructed on how to navigate consultation with school staff members; due to these personal experiences, beliefs, values, and assumptions, I selected my research topic and area of interest. While I acknowledge that these factors touch the entirety of the study, I can maintain the utmost honesty of this work by stating them plainly.

Research Design

The qualitative method is optimal for investigators who wish to recognize and examine individual experiences and how these experiences influence how people make meaning of the world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research is useful when a problem requires deep exploration. Qualitative research honors the individuals involved in the study by emphasizing the importance of their experience (Creswell & Poth, 2024). The qualitative research method was chosen for this study, as I hoped to develop a robust and detailed understanding of the lived experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers. One type of commonly used qualitative research is phenomenology. Phenomenology can help to increase understanding of a certain phenomenon and can assist in developing new ways of perceiving experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017). The central function of phenomenological research is to discover the universal essence of a phenomenon through the exploration of individual experience. Phenomenology examines individual lived experiences of a phenomenon to find shared meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2024). To better understand the lived experience of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers, I used a

phenomenological research approach. Further, a phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study as I aimed to develop an increased awareness of the experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers in the hopes of discovering new ways of thinking about this phenomenon.

The phenomenological design has strong underpinnings in the work of mathematician Edmund Husserl (1970), further developed by Martin Heidegger (2008), Clark Moustakas (1994), and Max van Manen (2014). Despite differing views on the function and purpose of phenomenology, similarities can be found in the approach's philosophical assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2024). One common understanding is that phenomenology studies an individual's conscious lived experience (van Manen, 2014). Phenomenology investigates how we experience things and the subsequent meaning attached to things in our experience. Another shared aspect of the phenomenological approach is developing interpretations of the essences of experiences (Moustakas, 1994); this means the phenomenological researcher focuses on procuring a description that portrays the very nature of the experience (Sloan & Bowe, 2014).

Phenomenology assumes four different philosophical perspectives (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990). The first, *a return to the traditional tasks of philosophy*, describes the qualitative researchers' rejection of the empirical exploration of the world—this perspective directly opposed the insurgence of scientism in 19th-century philosophy. The rejection of pure empiricism harkens back to the understanding of philosophy the ancient Greeks developed, focusing on the search for wisdom rather than scientific data. The second philosophical perspective of phenomenology centers on *epoché*, a term alluding to the subjective nature of reality (Husserl, 1970). The perspective refers to a suspension of judgment, an urging to set aside assumptions or biases. Rich and deep exploration of a phenomenon requires an approach free of presuppositions

(Stewart & Mickunas, 1990). Third is the *intentionality of consciousness* or the concept that an object only exists through one's consciousness of the object (Husserl, 1970). The central theme of phenomenology recognizes that, as conscious beings, we are not simply affected by objects in our environment but *conscious* of them. The consciousness perspective acknowledges the inextricable link between the reality of an object and one's awareness of the object. The last philosophical assumption is *the refusal of the subject-object dichotomy* (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990), which organically follows the previous assumption and refers to the idea that every individual can discern the reality of an object only within the meaning of their experience. Another key theme within phenomenology is the belief that one cannot perceive the world outside of one's experience. Humans view the world through a filter built on their experiences to expand. People can only understand the world through their encounters.

Phenomenology has several different schools of thought. I employed transcendental phenomenology to explore the essence of the lived experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers. The key focus of transcendental phenomenology is on the participant's experiences rather than the researcher's interpretation (Moustakas, 1994). Transcendental phenomenology strives to approach the phenomenon of study with a fresh perspective as if the researcher were examining the phenomenon for the first time—it urges the researcher to set aside their own experience as much as possible to better focus on the participants' experiences. Therefore, transcendental phenomenology was appropriate to keep the focus on the experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers rather than on my experiences as a school counselor. The phenomenon investigated in this study was the individual's early career experience as a non-teacher-trained school counselor when consulting with teachers. I developed the research to promote awareness of the

participants' lived experiences, cognitions, and emotions about their early careers as non-teacher-trained school counselors when consulting with teachers and to gain new insights into this phenomenon.

Sampling

The population for this study was non-teacher-trained early career school counselors in Kansas. Early career school counselors are master's degree-level counselors with three years of experience or less (Bledsoe et al., 2021). In Kansas, non-teacher-trained school counselors are school counselors without a professional teaching license who must have additional field experiences over two semesters in schools (Kansas State University, 2023). I used convenience sampling to identify potential subjects to interview about their experiences consulting with teachers in their early careers as non-teacher-trained school counselors (Etikan, 2016). After obtaining permission from the Kansas State Board of Education, I emailed the organization's listserv for school counselors. I requested that those interested in participating contact me for more information and an informed consent form to review. I chose each participant based on their non-teacher-trained early career school counselor status. Subsequently, the study participants had a master's degree and 3 or fewer years of experience as a school counselor. Participants had no valid professional teaching license in Kansas (Bledsoe et al., 2021). I informed participants that there was no obligation to participate in the research. Further, participants could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Each participant could ask questions regarding the study at any time throughout the research process. Those interested in participating reviewed and signed the informed consent document (see Appendix A) and returned it to my personal, password-protected email. Those who returned the signed consent

form received a follow-up email to schedule an initial interview time, which included evenings and weekends, considering these are full-time working professionals.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study began immediately following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Data included interviews with participants. Interviews are used in qualitative research to better understand the individual's experience and how they make meaning of the world (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). I used interviews to better understand participants' lived experiences (Seidman, 2013). Each interview was conducted one-on-one with the participants. Before meeting with the participants, I reviewed the interview protocol, including primary interview questions and follow-up prompts. The following is the interview protocol, which aligns with Seidman's (2013) framework for phenomenological interviewing procedures.

Initially, I sought three individual interviews reasoning that the phenomenon of interest required three. However, once I carried out the first round of interviews it became clear that fewer interviews were sufficient. Of the ten participants, six individuals opted for two interviews (Group 1) and four individuals opted for one (Group 2). All the questions were asked to participants regardless of the number of interviews. For Group 1, the average length of the first interview was 35 minutes, 22 seconds; the second interview averaged 35 minutes, 41 seconds. For Group 2, the average length was 39 minutes, 5 seconds.

There were slight differences for the two groups of interviewees. Group 1 completed two interviews, and I aimed to build rapport, an essential first step in the qualitative interviewing process (Prior, 2018). Interview 1 was an informal conversation between the participants and me, wherein they were asked to share their thoughts and feelings about participating in the study and asked to present any questions or concerns (Bhattacharya, 2017). I also asked participants to

discuss their educational and work experiences before school counseling. Additionally, I used flexibility and allowed for the organic flow of conversation (Seidman, 2013). Establishing a personal connection with participants allowed me to obtain richer and more sound data (Guillemin & Heggen, 2009). In Interview 2, questions focused on the participant's life history and past experiences that led the participant to become a school counselor (Seidman, 2013). Additionally, I asked questions to gather concrete details on the present lived experiences of participants when consulting with teachers (Seidman, 2013). I made the following inquiries during this meeting:

1. Tell me about the early experiences that led to your decision to become a school counselor, starting with the earliest you can recall.
 - a. What experiences at school, work, in your neighborhood, and/or with family and friends led you to where you currently are in your career?
2. Walk me through a typical consultation with a teacher in as much detail as you can.
3. Tell me about a specific time when you specifically consulted with a teacher in as much detail as you can.
 - a. Most challenging?
 - b. Most fruitful?

I also asked follow-up questions that stemmed from previous prompts to gain further insight into participant experiences (Patton, 1999, 2015; Seidman, 2013). In addition, I made the following inquiries to complete the interview:

1. Thinking back to what you shared about the experiences that led you to become a school counselor, what does consultation with teachers mean to you?

2. Thinking back to what you shared about your current experiences consulting with teachers, what does consultation with teachers mean to you as a non-teacher-trained early career school counselor?

I encountered a technological issue with one of the participants in Group 1. After having completed the first interview, we still needed the second to finish the interview protocol. However, due to multiple internet connectivity problems she completed the questions for interview 2 in writing.

For the second group I completed the protocols for interviews one and two with the four participants. Nothing else was different about this group.

Qualitative researchers should seek to create an interview environment that will promote the authenticity and comfort of the participant (Bhattacharya, 2017). I offered to conduct interviews at a location convenient to the participant, allowing the opportunity to meet via Zoom if that was most comfortable for the participant. I used the interview protocol, although I made allowances for the organic flow of dialogue between myself and the participant (Seidman, 2013). I also used probing through follow-up questioning to better understand participant experiences (Patton, 1999, 2015; Seidman, 2013). I recorded the interviews via Zoom on my laptop. Recordings were stored on my password-protected personal laptop within my individual Zoom account to ensure participant confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used for participants to prevent the disclosure of personally identifiable information. I kept recordings until study completion; after that, I deleted the data.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data using thematic analysis, which guides the researcher in the construction of common meaning from the data that has been collected (Joffe, 2012). Thematic

analysis is especially useful in phenomenological studies as it leads the researcher to important themes about a phenomenon that can later be used to develop detailed descriptions (Daly et al., 1997). The following section explains how I developed and reported major themes from the collected interview data. Phase 1 of thematic analysis required me to familiarize myself with the data. I submitted all interview recordings for Groups 1 and 2 to Descript, which converts audio and video files into transcripts. Then, I reviewed the initial transcripts, made a first review of the data, and took notes along the way. In this beginning stage, note-taking was broad and exploratory, and I did open coding to begin describing content (Joffe, 2012). Open coding is frequently used at the beginning of data analysis to generate new insights into the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Open coding involves separating parts of the data into distinct pieces and developing *codes* to identify them.

Phase 2 of thematic analysis is when I began to officially construct codes. In this stage, I conducted another review of the data and wrote down codes for parts of the data that stood out to me, helping to organize my data into meaningful groups (Joffe, 2012). Once I developed an initial round of codes, I collated all sections of my interview transcripts with the appropriate codes. Instead of conducting this process virtually, I used a pen and paper during this stage, as it helped minimize distractions and let me better focus on the words of the participants. Phase 3 of the thematic analysis moved beyond coding and focused on developing themes (Joffe, 2012). Developing themes marked the beginning of my active and intentional search for meaningful connections in the data. I reviewed established codes to recognize themes in data and explored the codes to recognize connections between codes and assist in the overall organization of codes. I used sticky notes to map out the various codes and themes, help visualize the data, and switch around the material as needed.

In Phase 4 of the thematic analysis, I reviewed and refined the themes developed in the previous stage (Joffe, 2012). Peer reviewing also occurred during this phase to determine if gaps, inaccuracies, or misrepresentations existed within the themes. I conducted several reviews of the codes and themes developed earlier to ensure that themes were logical and relevant to the phenomenon under study after the refinement of themes. I named and described them. In Phase 4, I used themes and significant statements to build textural and structural descriptions; the first describes what the participant experienced, and the latter describes how the setting or context influenced how a participant experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2024). I provided details on the particulars of the individual's experience alongside information that illuminates their voice, feelings, actions, and meaning (Ponterotto, 2006). These descriptions allowed me to move beyond a surface-level description to showcase my data thickly and richly, a key distinction of qualitative studies. Phase 5 of the analysis occurred when I produced the report. I presented the findings so that the reader could assess the quality of the study, and I included a description of themes and direct quotes to support my findings. The final product also includes a composite description and a passage highlighting the participants' common experiences, which allowed me to present the essence of the experience to the reader, a focal point for phenomenological studies (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in research and academic writing is essential for ensuring the credibility and reliability of findings (Stahl & King, 2020). The researcher must establish a solid foundation of rigor through transparency, consistency, and thoroughness. Researchers strive to ensure that their work is unbiased, replicable, and ethical. Trustworthiness also depends on maintaining a clear, honest dialogue with the audience, allowing readers to assess the validity of the research

process and conclusions. Trustworthiness builds confidence in the knowledge produced and fosters meaningful contributions to the academic community. The components of trustworthiness I followed were (a) bracketing, (b) credibility, (c) transferability, (d) dependability, and (e) confirmability.

Bracketing

Bracketing is one way I developed the general trustworthiness of the study; this was a vital part of the research process, and I employed bracketing throughout the study by documenting personal feelings and thoughts in my journal as they appear (Drew, 2004). Although this strategy did not wholly remove me from the research, it allowed me to set aside my beliefs to better focus on the participants' experience (Creswell & Poth, 2024). I could see the phenomenon of interest from a fresh perspective through bracketing, as if for the first time (Moustakas, 1994). The following section provides detailed information on how I further enhanced the study's trustworthiness. I employed standards best suited for naturalistic research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My approach involved the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure trustworthiness.

Credibility

Credibility is essential to qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2024). Member checking helps qualitative researchers develop and maintain credibility (Bhattacharya, 2017). Member checks took place when participants reviewed and confirmed the transcription of their interviews. Upon completion of the first review of transcriptions, participants were given an additional opportunity to respond to transcriptions and could request any changes to the data.

Transferability

Transferability is the capacity to transfer qualitative research findings to other settings with other individuals (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I established transferability in the study by reporting thick and rich descriptions. I provided detailed information on the participants, the site, and the methods and procedures used for data collection. I thoroughly described the context and assumptions of the research. With the presentation of the information mentioned above, the reader can assess the generalizability of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability

Dependability is the consistency of qualitative research findings over time (Moon et al., 2016). I established dependability by keeping an audit trail in my researchers' journal (Williams, 2018). Journaling was used throughout the data collection stage to explicitly document each step involved in the research process. My journal helped me to report my thoughts and emotions throughout the study (Ortlipp, 2008).

Confirmability

Confirmability supports research neutrality and upholds the inter-subjectivity of the data, referring to the level at which the study findings can be confirmed by another researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I employed a peer reviewer to check the study during the research process to ensure its confirmability. The peer reviewer assessed my study findings to identify areas where I may have failed to recognize the participants' perspectives (Given, 2008). Further, the peer reviewer oversaw and critiqued the data reported during each phase of the thematic analysis process. Obtaining feedback from another expert through peer review helped maintain the high confirmability of the research (Kelly et al., 2014).

Conclusion

In Chapter 3, I examined the methodological deliberations involved in the study. I began with general information on qualitative research methods, including the phenomenological approach and its suitability to the present research. I then discussed the methodological structures guiding the design and research procedures while including information on selecting and gaining access to the participants. Chapter 4 details how I enhanced the study's reflexivity and trustworthiness before describing how I analyzed data to develop findings.

Chapter 4- Findings

Chapter 4 presents the findings for the experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers. When consulting with teachers, I employed a phenomenological approach by interviewing non-teacher-trained early career school counselors. By examining their experiences, I examined their journey comprehensively. Chapter 4 includes the data gathered from interviews with 10 participants and the researcher's journals.

Research Questions and Themes

In this transcendental phenomenological study, I explored the perceptions of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors during consultation with teachers. Consultation is important in school counseling programs (ASCA, 2019). One primary research question guided the study:

1) How do non-teacher-trained early career school counselors describe their experiences consulting with teachers?

Two subsidiary questions concerning challenges and values supported more specific inquiries:

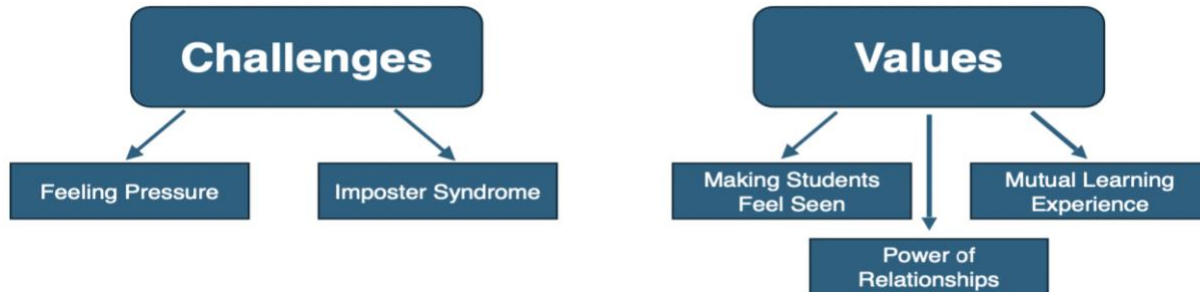
2) What challenges do non-teacher-trained early career school counselors describe when consulting teachers?

3) What values do non-teacher-trained early career school counselors describe when consulting with teachers?

The two sub questions organize the findings for this study: Themes 1 and 2 address Sub Question 1 (*challenges*), and Themes 3, 4, and 5 address Sub Question 2 (*values*; Figure 1).

Figure 1

Sub Question and Theme Arrangement



Note. Diagram shows the two groups of themes. Challenges consist of Feeling Pressure (Theme 1) and Imposter Syndrome (Theme 2). Values consist of Making Students Feel Seen (Theme 3), Mutual Learning Experience (Theme 4), and Power of Relationships (Theme 5).

Challenges of Consultation

Two themes address Research Sub-Question 1: Theme 1: Feeling pressured to have all the answers; and, Theme 2: Dealing with imposter syndrome during consultation with teachers.

Theme 1: Feeling Pressured to Have All the Answers

Theme 1, feeling pressured to have all the answers, explores the challenges faced by non-teacher-trained school counselors when consulting with teachers, specifically those experiences during which they feel pressured to fix their problems. Theme 1 describes the experiences of stress, anxiety, and feeling overwhelmed when non-teacher-trained early career school counselors consult with teachers and feel obligated to find solutions to teacher inquiries. The findings emphasize the demands felt by non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers and explore how certain factors in consultation exacerbate these feelings

of distress. Participant 1 shared a particularly intimidating encounter they had with a teacher when posed with an unusual student concern:

A teacher came to me with a very odd problem with a fifth-grade student. And I looked at her, and I said, I need to go talk to our admin because this is new, and she goes, Come on. It's Year 2. You don't know how to handle this?" And I said, "No, I don't." So, being able to have that camaraderie and have teachers understand that I was not a teacher, I need you to give me some grace. Sometimes, I need a minute to just figure that out. So, it's so hard, especially in your first couple of years, to be like, I don't know.

Participant 1 highlighted the demand they felt from the teacher not only to have the solution but also to resolve the issue swiftly. They also draw particular attention to the challenge of admitting to teachers in consultation that they do not have the answers and the subsequent feelings of anxiety that emerge from leaving consultation issues unanswered. Participant 2 shared similar feelings of pressure when consulting with a teacher, saying:

People come to the counselor and they're like, "you must be knowledgeable of everything x, y, and z" and I'm like, "I'm still new. So, I'm just gonna do my best". And I'm going to listen and I'm going to make you feel validated, but I'm probably not going to have all the answers.

Participant 2 also described feeling pressured when consulting with teachers. However, this pressure was felt more internally than Participant 1, who felt forced by the teacher to come up with on-the-spot solutions. In addition, this participant spoke to the feelings of stress, anxiety, and overwhelm that is induced when teachers in consultation assume counselors are omniscient; they stated:

When I first started this job, I was immediately in that mindset of: I need to help as much as possible. I need to fix what the teachers are asking me to do. I put myself in a lot of positions where I truly didn't know how to help, but I would be like, "Yeah, I can help."

Participant 2 explained how feelings of pressure even spurred her to become involved in consultation situations outside of her scope of experience and expertise. Like the experiences of Participants 1 and 2, Participant 7 emphasized the struggle in telling teachers that they do not have the answers in consultation. However, they spoke about their awkward experience revolving around the topic of classroom management, saying:

They were like, "Well, you were supposed to be coming to coach my classroom management. And if you have any ideas, you can come in and look at my room and tell me what I should be doing differently". I also had to become okay with saying, "I don't know the answer."

Participant 8 also described feelings of helplessness and incompetency when dealing with these novel matters, stating:

I'm always trying my best. But still, at times, feel inadequate. I don't know, just feeling lost like I don't know how to help you. I have not been a classroom teacher. I do not know how to help you.

Participant 8 emphasized the specific feelings of stress, anxiety, and being overwhelmed that occurred in consultation experiences dealing with classroom issues. Participant 8 indicated that a lack of experience in the classroom greatly exacerbates these feelings of distress during consultation. Participant 10 described similar struggles of inadequacy around consultation experiences with teachers, saying, "I think sometimes it's hard though because they look to you to have the answers. And sometimes I'm like, 'let me get back to you on that.'"

Like the experiences reported earlier, Participant 10 highlighted the feelings of stress, anxiety, and being overwhelmed brought on by the presumption of teachers that counselors have infinite awareness and ability to solve all student issues. Further, Participant 10 emphasized the distress of having to tell teachers in consultation that they do not have immediate solutions to their problems. The findings suggest that non-teacher-trained early career school counselors experience challenges when consulting with teachers. These challenges relate to feeling pressured by teachers and themselves to solve problems beyond their scope of training and expertise. Participant 1 shared a particularly distressing experience consulting with a teacher, during which they felt overwhelmed and humiliated. Participants 7 and 8 described feelings of insecurity and stress when consulting specifically about issues within the classroom.

Theme 2: Dealing With Imposter Syndrome During Consultation With Teachers

Theme 2, dealing with imposter syndrome during consultation with teachers, is centered around imposter syndrome experienced by non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers. Theme 2 describes the insecurity, apprehension, and incompetency that non-teacher-trained early career school counselors experience when consulting with teachers and highlights feeling fraudulent as a non-teacher-trained early career school counselor in consultation with teachers. Further, despite their numerous qualifications, participants described doubting their professional abilities when consulting with teachers. Participant 1 described these feelings by remarking:

Sometimes, when a teacher comes to me and asks me for help, a lot of the time, I'm like, I'm not qualified for this. I don't know. I haven't worked with students in a classroom setting. You're going to need to give me a minute. That is my initial reaction of ah, this is new.

Participant 1 acknowledged the rapid feelings of incompetency that arise when consulting with a teacher regarding a novel situation, even momentarily questioning her competency as a professional. Participant 2 described similar feelings of insecurity, apprehension, and incompetency about the leadership aspect of her profession, indicating that these feelings generated large amounts of internal fear at the start of her career, saying, “I used to be so scared of not necessarily being the one in charge but having an important role in the school. And I used to be so scared of being the one telling people things.” Participant 3 echoed feelings of insecurity and even indicated that sometimes it would n impact her ability to consult with teachers at all, remarking:

Because it was my first year, I had fewer consultations. So many teachers knew the students way more than I and just knew more about the situation or the family than I. Also I was just kind of timid in my first year.

Participant 3 highlighted the crippling apprehension that exists when consulting with teachers due to feeling unqualified and inferior, especially regarding student information and awareness. They elaborated by saying that this perceived lack of student knowledge would often discourage them from consulting with teachers at all. Along with a perceived lack of student knowledge, age also induced insecurity and apprehension in experiences consulting with teachers. Participant 5 relayed a particularly uncomfortable interaction she had with a teacher regarding her youthful appearance:

The teacher looked me up and down and asked, “how old are you?” And I was like, 23, I forget what she asked, but she was, like, do you have any experience? And I was, like, I’ve been a para, a sub, and I have a master’s degree. You don’t know me, I went to school for this.

Participant 5 emphasized the obligation to justify their professional qualifications during a consultation experience with a teacher due to their age and juvenile looks. Participant 8 discussed similar feelings of insecurity when consulting with a teacher experiencing emotional distress, recognizing the pressure to prove their professional competency during a consultation with teachers due to their younger age, remarking:

Sometimes, we must use our counseling skills with adults. To help them be able to regulate and understand that there are steps that we must go through. That's also kind of challenging with my age. Especially when I started, I was 22, and people knew that I was 22. I think that it was very [good], what do you know?

Participant 9 discussed her experience combatting feelings of incompetency from imposter syndrome when consulting with teachers. They described giving themselves a pep talk of sorts to build up feelings of worthiness before engaging in consultation experiences with teachers, remarking:

I am competent at my job. I'm just not selling it like I'm competent at my job. It's okay that I have a psychology degree, and it's okay that I wasn't a teacher before that. And I can still relate and figure things out.

Comparably, when consulting with teachers, Participant 10 experienced similar distressing emotions about her non-teaching background. They also highlight the perceived demand to showcase their professional worth during consultation with teachers due to a difference in backgrounds, offering:

It felt like I had to prove even more that I knew my stuff because I didn't have that background, or I didn't come from that experience. And so that was my initial feeling towards the consultation process and working with teachers.

The findings suggest that non-teacher-trained early career school counselors feel unworthy and unqualified when consulting with teachers. These issues do not relate to feelings of insecurity, apprehension, and incompetence in the non-teacher-trained early career school counselor. For Participants 5 and 8, their age and comments made to them by teachers about their age and/or lack of experience influenced their feelings. Participants 9 and 10 experienced feelings of insecurity, apprehension, and incompetency mostly due to differences in their backgrounds. Furthermore, Participant 3 implied that these feelings had deterred her from consulting with teachers at one point early in her career.

Values of Consultation

Three themes address Research Sub Question 2: Theme 3: Consultation as a critical factor in making all students feel seen; Theme 4: Consultation as a mutual learning experience; and, Theme 5: The power of relationships in consultation.

Theme 3. Consultation as a Critical Factor in Making All Students Feel Seen

Consultation as a critical factor in making all students feel seen, focuses on the capacity of non-teacher trained early career school counselor consultation with teachers to increase student visibility and awareness. Several participants employ stories from their personal lives to highlight the importance of collaborating with teachers to notice and care for every student. When teachers and counselors join forces to meet student needs, it increases the number of positive people in the students' lives. Many participants spoke to the power of being "that one adult" in the student's life, the one who takes note of their well-being and prevents them from "slipping through the cracks."

Participant 1 discussed how consultations present opportunities to reach children who may be struggling less noticeably; they stated:

I guess just trying to keep an eye out for those kids who are internalizers because I feel a lot of the times, we only see the externalizers because they're the ones throwing the fit in the classroom, and they need that help. I'm trying to find a way for teachers to be able to let me know who they think are internalizers so that I can help with that too.

Participant 1 highlighted the potential that consultation with teachers can prevent students from dealing with issues independently. Further, they desire to work alongside teachers to ensure hearing all student voices, even those dealing with issues quietly. Participant 4 expressed a similar hope for consultation in that it would promote more loving, stable, and supportive adults in the lives of every student:

I see that there's a lot of potential because kids in general can use extra supportive adults on their side. I saw kids that didn't have the support that they needed, whether it's parents are working too much or parents are just not emotionally present. There's a lot of room to do some good and fill in some gaps, they may not have that person in their life and their family, but that doesn't mean that they can't have that person in the school outside of their family. We can be such a protective factor against a slew of things.

Participant 4 also stressed the power that consultation with teachers can have on the lives of all students, acknowledged the lack of positive adult relationships in student lives, and discussed how consultation can be employed to build nurturing connections between students and adults at school. Further, they spoke of the benefit of students having a network of caring adults in their lives, serving as a buffer against many issues.

Participant 7 had a similar notion: "I know these kids need stable, loving adults, and I know that I can be that stable, loving adult for them. And we have a really good staff of adults who see it the same way." Like Participant 4, Participant 7 recognized the need for more

supportive adults in student lives and expressed confidence in their staff's ability to develop these relationships through collaboration during consultation. Participant 3 recalled a painful personal experience from her childhood during which a teacher expressed concern for her well-being. She used this to showcase the powerful impact that can happen when adults in the school are aware of what is going on with their students inside and outside of the classroom. Further, this participant acknowledged how consultation with teachers can help her better recognize student needs now; they stated:

I remember a teacher asking me about bruises on me in the second grade. And so now, being the adult, I'm realizing that she consulted with someone in that building, whether it was over lunch or whatever. There were so many kids, so I'm sure she consulted with somebody.

Participant 6 also lightly touched on an experience of her own to highlight the importance of consultation as it involves teaming up with other adults in the school to become better aware of student needs, explaining:

I want to be that person for you that I wanted when I was your age because I didn't get that person. I just want to be that person for them. To understand why a student may be behaving or acting out the way they are, I think we need to have that conversation. In my past, that was not happening, but we try to do that as much as possible. We have a kindergarten student whose parent died a year ago. That explains a lot about his behaviors. We might need to know that and talk with the teachers about what is going on.

Participant 6 emphasized the value of consulting with teachers to better understand needs and build a support system for all students, especially those struggling with issues inside and outside their homes. They shared a specific example from their experience highlighting the

power of consultation regarding a student's misbehaviors and recent death in the family.

Participant 8 also acknowledged the invaluable influence that one teacher had on her childhood well-being, stating:

She cared about you. Not that all teachers would do that, but she made me feel like I was the only student in that room. And she took the time to pull me aside and really work through problems that I had.

Participant 8 uses a personal example from her past to highlight the positive impact of consultation, which allows adults in the school to join forces to better understand student issues and help them with their unique problems. Participant 9 shared a similar sentiment about how she hopes to show up in her students' lives, remarking:

I don't have children of my own, so my students are my kids, and I think about them a lot. And with some of them, I have created some wonderful relationships. I hope that they reflect back and think that someone cared about them at the end of the day.

Participant 9 reflects sentimentally on the relationships that she has made with her students, expressing a hope that it will have a lasting impact. Further, she implied that consultation with teachers generates more adults in the school who understand and support students. Participant 10 summed up the power that consultation must change student lives by also alluding to her personal experience and beliefs about teachers:

I've always valued the role of the teacher and what they can do in the classroom. And that value really does shape how I think about the consultation process because I do believe in the work of the teacher and how a consistent adult can change a student's life, just like that had worked for me.

Like Participant 9, Participant 10 recognized how consultation with teachers can change student lives. Her high regard for teachers and her positive experience have shaped her opinion of consultation with teachers and changed how she approaches the process. The findings suggest students' awareness increases when non-teacher-trained early career school counselors consult with teachers. Participants 1, 4, 7, and 9 expressed hope that consultation with teachers would prevent students from going unnoticed or uncared for. Further, Participant 4 recognized increased student awareness as a protective factor in children facing many unknown challenges. Participants 3, 6, 8, and 10 also acknowledged the power of consultation in student lives by alluding to their experiences.

Theme 4: Consultation as a Mutual Learning Experience

Consultation as a mutual learning experience, stresses the learning benefits of a non-teacher-trained early career school counselor when consulting with teachers. The data suggested that professionals can use consultation experiences to obtain expert knowledge of the other, useable as a powerful tool for positive change. There is a reciprocal benefit that transpires when non-teacher-trained early career school counselors consult with teachers. The consultation process was perceived as an opportunity for non-teacher-trained early career school counselors and teachers to exchange invaluable information as experts in their field, learning from one another. Participant 3 desired more consultation to learn more about the role of the teacher, saying:

You tell me that teaching is a science, like the concept of differentiation that they're supposed to write into all their lesson plans. I don't know any of that; I put together lessons for my daughter for homeschooling, but when you do that for church, that is not the science of teaching. But I know it's a thing, and I respect it. When we don't have that

knowledge as counselors, we're open to learning more, but those opportunities to get into the classroom or to go and use that planning time to get to know a teacher better, even on a personal level, you just don't have those as much.

Participant 3 acknowledged her lack of understanding of the complexity of teaching and suggested that counselors use consultation to learn about the different aspects of the profession. However, she recognized the difficulty in finding time to consult with teachers to connect and collaborate. Participant 8 spoke about a specific instance where she consulted with teachers to develop stronger counseling lessons for first graders at her school:

I did go to them one time when they were on their lunch break and I was like, I'm thinking about this for a lesson coming from a non-education background, can 1st graders do word searches? And they're like, no. And I'm like, okay, awesome. But just not knowing exactly. I just don't know what first graders can do. And obviously, that's going to come with time.

Participant 8 emphasized how she used consultation with teachers as non-teacher-trained early career school counselors to better understand how to create age-appropriate lessons for her students. Participant 6 also discussed viewing consultation with teachers as a chance to increase her awareness of the school culture as a non-teacher-trained early career school counselor. Despite feeling embarrassed about her lack of knowledge, she described consultation with teachers as necessary to increase her understanding of educational terms and processes. She remarked:

It [consultation] helps me gain an understanding of what's going. I don't have a teaching background. I don't know a lot of the verbiage, the lingo that goes on. So sometimes I had to sit down with a teacher and be like, you need to tell me what this means because I

do not understand. So, I need that. This is probably going to sound really stupid, but I need you to tell me what this means.

Participant 4 also spoke about consultation as an opportunity to learn about the school environment and the students. As a non-teacher-trained early career school counselor, she recognized consultation as one way to learn more about working with students at particular ages and developmental stages; she stated:

I see this as a learning opportunity. I don't have the same experiences or see the same interactions the students have. Teachers can help us understand the students better. I had never worked in a high school before this, so I am learning so much about working with teenagers too. Teachers are an amazing resource if we can all work together.

Participant 7 had a similar outlook on consultation and spoke to the rich collaboration that can come from two different school professionals coming together to meet student needs. Additionally, she suggests that consultation is more impactful when there is a willingness to share different perspectives and brainstorm solutions to help meet students' diverse needs. Further, she recognized the relief that can come from addressing needs as a team rather than trying to fix issues alone.

I think it's also an opportunity for me to learn from them. These are also professionals in their domain, and they were teacher-trained, and they have a wealth of knowledge that I don't. I'm an expert in this area and they are the expert in this area. I think that it's being able to take that feedback. And to work together to find something that you know is going to work for that kid and that it's okay to say I have never done this before, or we do need to look for some different answers and know that it doesn't have to just be on you.

Participant 10 used similar words like “expert” and “collaboration” to highlight the power of consultation with teachers, indicating that consultation can also induce feelings of mutual respect:

I feel like in some ways it has become a benefit, because as much I hope to share with the teacher, I’m also receiving information and learning things from them. It feels like instead viewed as an expert it gets to be more of a level playing field and we get to work in collaboration.

Non-teacher-trained early career school counselors experience a consultation with teachers as an opportunity to exchange meaningful information. Participant 3, 6, and 4 expressed a desire to use consultation to increase their knowledge of school culture and procedures. Participant 8 shared when she consulted with teachers to create an age-appropriate counseling lesson. Further, Participants 7 and 10 discussed the interchange of knowledge experienced in consultation when non-teacher-trained early career school counselors and teachers share their expertise.

Theme 5: The Power of Relationships in Consultation

The power of relationships in consultation, focuses on the influence of relationships on the experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors consultation with teachers. The data suggests that connections between these professionals make for more efficient consultation. Connection is important when non-teacher-trained early career school counselors consult with teachers, and consultation experiences are enhanced when a relationship exists between the non-teacher-trained early career school counselor and teacher.

Participant 3 spoke about the challenge of forging relationships with teachers at her large, spread-out school and how this affected her consultation experience, saying, “Just not knowing

who the people are, that's very interesting to consult with a stranger. I'm literally just finding out your name and putting it together." However, in the same conversation, Participant 3 shared a special experience she had with a teacher whom she already had a relationship with, reporting:

We had forged a connection, and so she felt comfortable, and she was like, I just need to bounce an idea off you about this student. She should have gone or could have gone to the student's alpha counselor, but she reached out to me. I felt like that was a really positive consultation, if nothing else, because it strengthened my relationship with the teacher rather than feeling negative for once after these things. We had a really good conversation, and no matter which way it went, we felt good about ourselves at the end.

Participant 3 indicated that because a connection had already arisen, the teacher felt more apt to consult with her than with the other counselors. She also acknowledged that the consultation experience was effective not only because it induced positive feelings between the two professionals but also because it strengthened their relationship. Participant 4 shared a similar fruitful experience with a teacher with whom she had a relationship involving a student concern. She also suggested that an existing positive relationship made her more likely to consult with the teacher. Further, she remarked that their consultation experience included an honest conversation about how to help a struggling student and implied that mutual respect for the other developed from this experience; she explained:

I reached out to a teacher I have had positive experiences with and discussed frankly with her what the challenges were, but this was a student that had always been brushed off as a troublemaker and no one has invested in him. It was a thoughtful and open conversation. The teacher appreciated the honest information and asked thoughtful questions about how to help the student.

When talking about her consultation experience with teachers, Participant 5 expressed a desire to develop stronger relationships with the teachers at her school. She recognized the benefits that occur in consultation (and in general) when one has strong connections with teachers, using her co-counselor as an example, saying:

The other counselor has been there for eight years, and then it's me, which is fine. That means literally nothing. But at the same time, I feel there's a lot I could still learn from him, such as how he consults with teachers and the relationships he has. I have room to grow. There are some things I want to do a little bit differently. It won't hurt to have a more positive connection with some of these people, especially as I'm thinking about being a role model for the kids.

Participant 8 indicated that she is much more likely to consult with teachers with whom she has a positive relationship and that they are more likely to reach out to her. She spoke on the clear distinction between consultation experiences with teachers she connects with and those she does not. Further, she described the consultation experiences of the first group as frequent, organic, and positive, saying:

The teachers who feel more comfortable with me are the ones who reach out for that support. Or the classrooms where I know that I'm going to be welcome if I just step into the room. Unfortunately, there are rooms in my building where I step in, and it's not the friendliest place for me to be. But there can be classrooms where I go into with a teacher I'm close with, a teacher who really likes me. I can go in there. And join whatever they're doing. I can sit down and do math with them. There are those who reach out more than others.

Participant 8 also recalled an important consultation experience with a teacher regarding a student with high needs, mentioning that the experience brought her and the teacher closer together. Further, she identified the positive correlation between her connection with the teacher and her presence in the classroom, saying:

I got really close with that teacher. We were close in age. It was her first year. It was my first year. So, I was supportive in her classroom just because I got along with her, but I was also supportive in that classroom because I was in there a lot because of this one kiddo.

Participant 9 spoke about the importance of connection in a larger sense when recalling her experience with consultation. She addressed the value of uniting with other professionals, not only to identify solutions to problems inside the school but also to feel a sense of belonging among colleagues; she stated:

I don't have to solve the problems on my own. We're not meant to live life individually. We're meant to live life in a community, and that goes the same for me at work. We spend a lot of time at work every single week, so it's better if we can get along and find solutions together than work against each other. So, I think you see the fruits of your labor from those experiences.

Participant 10 summed up the idea that consultation with teachers is enhanced when there is an existing relationship and highlighted the increased confidence that she has felt in those experiences, remarking that "The more I've built a relationship with the teacher, the easier it is to do the consultation process. I feel more confident suggesting things and talking with them through the process of what's going on." Theme 5 suggests that the consultation process strengthens when a relationship exists between a non-teacher-trained school counselor and a

teacher. Participants 3 and 4 shared specific examples of consulting with teachers with whom they have a connection, while Participant 8 implied that she consults more with teachers with whom she already has a positive relationship. Participant 9 further emphasized the positive impact that strong relationships can have on consultation and in the community at large, while Participant 10 discussed the ease with which she consults with teachers whom she knows.

Chapter 4 Summary

The five themes from this study present the essence of the lived experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers. The findings highlighted commonalities in how non-teacher-trained early career counselors consult with teachers. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the five themes.

Chapter 5- Discussion and Recommendations

In this phenomenological analysis exploration, I investigated the lived experiences of 10 non-teacher-trained early career school counselors to understand their lived experiences when consulting with teachers. I used the qualitative research method to examine these experiences. The findings showcased what non-teacher-trained early career school counselors faced when consulting teachers. The data analysis unearthed two areas and five key themes that relate to the experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors.

Themes and Discussion

The two emergent areas were *the challenges of consultation* and *the values of consultation*. The five themes explored in this report address several aspects of the experiences faced by non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers. The themes are (a) Theme 1: Feeling pressured to have all the answers; (b) Theme 2: Dealing with imposter syndrome; (c) Theme 3: Consultation as a critical factor in making all students feel seen; (d) Theme 4: Consultation as a mutual learning experience; and (e) Theme 5: The power of relationships in consultation.

Theme 1: Feeling Pressured to Have All the Answers

School counselors often feel anxious and apprehensive about consulting with teachers in their early career and/or when they do not have teacher training (Peterson & Deuschle, 2006), a sentiment echoed by participants. The literature review outlines these stressors (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Gruenert, 2008; Peterson & Deuschle, 2006; Peterson et al., 2004; Wood & Rayle, 2006), showcasing the intricacy of participant experiences. A major challenge for non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers is the intense pressure to solve the myriad of problems brought forth during consultation. School counselors feel

especially challenged when stakeholders have specific expectations about consultation. A perceived expectation of immediate student progress following consultation with teachers burdens school counselors (Sadana & Kumar, 2021). Triadic reciprocal causality is one idea within SCT that purports personal factors, environment, and behaviors influence one another (Bandura, 1986). Urgency is implied and expected from teachers to solve the problem(s) quickly. These sentiments echoed throughout participant content. For example, many teachers felt progress should be made soon after consultation. These expectations caused participants to feel distressed and obligated to find quick solutions to complex student problems.

Participants' emphasis on the lack of knowledge and experience in schools also induced feelings of distress during consultation with teachers. A lack of familiarity in school settings can induce feelings of apprehension, and findings from research acknowledge the importance of prior work experience within schools (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Gruenert, 2008; Peterson & Deuschle, 2006). School counselors perceive consultation as difficult when teachers lack awareness and understanding about the school counselor's role and the impact of student mental health on their classroom behaviors (Sadana & Kumar, 2021); this aligns with participant voices. Findings of this study emphasized feelings of pressure during the consultation, particularly when teachers expected swift and effective assistance with classroom behaviors. Not only did participants recognize that many of these problems were outside of the skill set, but they also emphasized the stress that they felt to solve these issues rapidly. Pressures felt by school counselors to find solutions to problems in the classroom (and outside of their area of expertise) is an idea supported by extant literature (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Gruenert, 2008). Lower self-efficacy is related to lower motivation and persistence in the task, which could affect the efficacy of consultation between professionals (Bandura, 1997). The idea of pressure is particularly

pertinent when understanding non-teacher-trained early career school counselors consulting with teachers (Bandura, 1997). A finding not recognized in the extant literature is that feelings of pressure from consultation push school counselors to get involved in student issues outside of their training and experience. Participants described feeling obligated to interact with students on issues they were unprepared to face.

Theme 2: Dealing With Imposter Syndrome During Consultation With Teachers

Self-efficacy is another term from SCT that supports understanding the experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors during consultation with teachers (Bandura, 1997). Imposter syndrome, otherwise described as insecurity, apprehension, and incompetence (Clance & Imes, 1978) that non-teacher-trained early career school counselors experience when consulting with teachers is a topic broached in literature. The participants' emphasis on feeling fraudulent in their role and unqualified in their profession while consulting with teachers is supported by previous research concerning the experiences felt by non-teacher trained and early career school counselors in their consultations with teachers. Providing support on classroom management and lesson planning are among several areas where non-teacher-trained school counselors feel less competent (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006). Mastery experiences draw from judgments made on previous incidents with the specific task, considered in terms of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors' experience with teacher consultation (Bandura, 1997). Additionally, non-teacher-trained school counselors experience a deficit in understanding the school curriculum and child and adolescent development (Peterson & Deuschle, 2006; Wood & Rayle, 2006).

Age and lack of experience were key parts of Theme 2 participant content on imposter syndrome among non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with

teachers. These factors resonate with existing research, indicating that early career school counselors perceive that teachers doubt their competency due to inexperience and age (Sadana & Kumar, 2021). Sadana and Kumar (2021) suggested that early-year school counselors felt misunderstood by their fellow teachers. New school counselors perceived misunderstanding as stemming from a lack of understanding about their professional role as master's level practitioners who promote the academic, career, and social-emotional success of students rather than the professional role of a teacher, which typically centers on academics alone. Further, beginning school counselors believe that many teachers have little understanding of mental health in general, unaware of the myriad of issues that students face that could contribute to their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in the classroom. For instance, while teachers receive training to primarily promote students' academic success, school counselors are now trained to address the whole student, including their social and emotional development and postsecondary and academic needs (Stone & Dahir, 2016). If a teacher provides positive feedback during consultation, this could influence the counselor to feel calmer and more confident about consultation with teachers and possibly influence them to consult with teachers more, maybe strengthening their relationship and possibly even the outcome of the consultation. In contrast, if a teacher provides negative feedback to the school counselor, they are more likely to feel more pressure and insecurity, potentially affecting the relationship between professionals and decreasing the likelihood of an effective consultation experience or the occurrence of future consultations, and possibly, the reduction of imposter syndrome (LaPalme et al., 2022). The study findings provide a rich description of insights that build a foundation to better understand participant experiences. The content related to feelings of imposter syndrome by non-teacher-

trained early career school counselors during a consultation with teachers is apparent throughout the literature.

Theme 3: Consultation as a Critical Factor in Making All Students Feel Seen

Participant voices recognized the outstanding capacity of consultation to make all students feel noticed and cared for. The powerful positive impact of consultation on students is evident in existing literature. Educators are more likely to provide evidence-based classroom practices for students with disabilities when they consult with mental health professionals (Atkins et al., 2008). Additionally, when schools consult with mental health professionals, students from marginalized communities have better access to mental health support (Atkins et al., 2003). Study findings highlighted the power that consultation with teachers must prevent students from “slipping through the cracks.”

One major benefit of consultation is the increased awareness of and enhanced action towards student support when school professionals come together on behalf of the students—an idea supported by previous research showcasing the many advantages that consultation provides students. For instance, school counselor consultation promotes higher student attendance rates (Maeda & Inoue, 2021). Consultation increases consideration of student needs, allowing professionals a greater opportunity to identify and address student concerns. The emphasis on consultation with teachers as a tool to increase the number of positive adults in student lives is an important finding of this study. Although extant research supports the idea that consultation increases awareness of student issues, this study found that consultation with teachers helps students expand their adult support system by adding to the number of caring adults in their lives. Participant content supported this finding by sharing their experiences that consultation

among counselors and teachers broadens and strengthens the number of positive adults supporting the student.

Theme 4: Consultation as a Mutual Learning Experience

Theme 4 emphasized the benefits counselors can gain during consultation with teachers. Theme 4 emphasized participants' consultation experience as valuable opportunities to interact with and better understand teachers. This finding aligns with previous research where consultation is perceived to enhance communication between school professionals (Bryant, 2016; Perera-Diltz et al., 2011). School counselor consultations help enhance communication compared to consultations with other school professionals (Bryant, 2016). Participants emphasized the importance of consultation in learning skills and knowledge from other professionals. Participants frequently spoke about the benefit of using consultation to learn more about the academic side of working with teachers from teachers while exchanging social-emotional knowledge with the teachers to help students. Other sources of self-efficacy include social persuasion and physiological and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1997). These sentiments resonate with previous research highlighting how teachers benefit school counselors in consultation through the identification of student needs in the classroom (Beesely, 2004) and school counselors' expert use of social-emotional understanding, behavior management, communication skills, and problem-solving to help teachers during the consultation (Dinkmeyer et al., 2016; Stone & Dahir, 2016).

Study findings expand the current literature by supporting the idea that non-teacher-trained early career school counselors develop positive connections with teachers during consultation. Participants highlighted how consultation provides chances to learn more about the teacher personally and induces feelings of mutual respect and understanding. In contrast, study

findings diverge from similar research (Perera-Diltz et al., 2011) by suggesting that school counselor consultation can also create challenges in communication with teachers rather than enhancing it.

Theme 5: The Power of Relationships in Consultation

Participant voices echoed the value of relationships during their consultation with teachers. Participants frequently remarked on how familiarity and positive connection with the other greatly influence the efficacy of consultation. Research supports the notion that professional relationships matter in consultation. Early career school counselors who feel like they matter in their schools are more likely to have positive collaboration experiences with school staff and have also identified the importance of having relationships with their colleagues regarding working together on behalf of students (Curry & Bickmore, 2012; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). Participants also discussed how having consultation experiences with teachers led to an overall strengthening of their relationship. Existing literature supports the idea that consultation helps school professionals develop connections. Consultation in schools builds relationships between those in different roles and helps to establish a stronger sense of community throughout the school (Perera-Diltz et al., 2011); if school counselors recollect positive consultation experiences, they likely have a higher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) of consultation with teachers and vice versa. One important finding is the significance of the connection between non-teacher-trained early career school counselors and teachers in consultation at large schools with segregated staff. Participants working at big, spread-out schools remarked on the strangeness of consulting with teachers they had never met and how this can impact their overall consultation experience.

Limitations

One major limitation of the study was the preexisting relationship that the researcher had with several of the participants. Although I sent the recruitment email to the entire Kansas State Board's listserv of school counselors, four of the 10 participants had known the researcher before the study, which may have presented a bias in that those with a connection to the researcher may have felt pressured to respond to the research questions in a particular way.

An additional study limitation was that all research participants were female, which may have impacted the generalizability of findings, as the participants did not reflect a wide representation of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors. Further, nine out of 10 participants identified as White, which also limited the generalizability of the findings to the community of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors.

In two cases that were technology issues that limited the quality of the data. For example, one participant's faulty internet connection and unexpected technical issues affected the flow of conversation during interview moments. Her screen continuously froze during the interview, causing her to exit and rejoin the Zoom session several times, interrupting the natural flow of our exchange and forcing us to recap and review where we had previously left off the conversation. Another participant frequently lost audio, prompting us to interview over email. Technology issues presented limitations as I could not collect key observations during our interview or ask pertinent questions in real time.

Implications for Practice, Policy, and Research

These findings suggest educators can benefit from recognizing non-teacher-trained early career school counselors' pressures when consulting with teachers. Findings highlight the distress non-teacher-trained early career school counselors faced during a consultation with teachers

when they felt obligated to solve problems swiftly and outside their expertise. The idea that non-teacher-trained and early career school counselors experience distress when interacting with teachers is supported by current literature (Peterson & Deuschle, 2006; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). Non-teacher trained early career school counselors experience specific challenges during a consultation with teachers and may require assistance managing their distress. Graduate programs could help school counselors in training learn and implement coping skills to use personally and professionally when feelings of distress arise. To expand, helping school counselors recognize the importance of self-care through better work-life balance or teaching them mindfulness strategies to alleviate stress are several ways that graduate programs could promote the well-being of school counselors during this stressful time in their careers. Additionally, connecting school counselors with support systems is another way to potentially help lessen distress, whether through building connections with other school counselors in the same district or within professional organizations to help induce feelings of solidarity and support. School counselors connecting with others in school counseling could help professionals feel less alone in their early careers. Graduate program leaders could also emphasize the benefit of seeking mental health services for school counselors, especially as they deal with challenges related to starting a new profession. Counselor educators might also consider developing a course centered around managing distress as a school counselor. This could provide an ample opportunity to teach future counselors some of the strategies listed above, in addition to other techniques to navigate the stressors of the profession.

Findings suggest that non-teacher-trained early career school counselors doubt their competency during a consultation with teachers. Participant voices emphasized feelings of insecurity and apprehension. Researchers have supported the idea that non-teacher-trained and

early career school counselors felt unqualified during teacher interactions (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). This is important as it emphasizes another challenge faced by non-teacher-trained early career school counselors during consultation with teachers. This also suggests the need for help increasing the confidence among non-teacher-trained school counselors during their early career, especially when consulting with teachers. While some school counseling graduate programs feature a course on child and adolescent development, they might consider integrating more course material focused on skills related to classroom management, lesson planning, and school curriculum, particular areas of insecurity for this group of professionals (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Peterson & Deuschle, 2006; Wood & Rayle, 2006). Specific teaching of these topics could help build confidence and competency in non-teacher-trained early career counselors during their consultation with teachers. Furthermore, counselor educators could expand upon understanding of the school system and diverse and complimentary roles of educators within the building to better prepare counselors for these types of issues. Additionally, administrators could provide support by offering professional development opportunities to educate school staff on the school counseling role and its subsequent supports.

Findings suggest a positive relationship between non-teacher trained early career school counselors and teachers impacts consultation experiences. Participant voices recognized the significance of knowing and connecting with their consulting teacher. Key statements from this theme suggest that non-teacher-trained school counselors consult with teachers they know and think of positively. Existent literature supports the idea that non-teacher-trained and early career school counselors are more likely to have fruitful professional interactions with those with whom they have a relationship (Curry & Bickmore, 2012; Sadana & Kumar, 2021). Positive relationships can increase the efficacy of school counselor and teacher consultation.

Furthermore, there is value in non-teacher-trained early career school counseling consultation with teachers despite the challenges. Graduate programs could focus on building relationships with school staff and teach future school counselors strategies to build strong and positive connections with teachers to enhance their consultation experiences. Specific strategies could include (a) visibility: being where teachers are (e.g., cafeteria, playgrounds, entrance/dismissal areas); (b) participation on school leadership teams to discuss school and community needs; (c) showing appreciation and thankfulness for teachers; (d) collaboration on classroom lessons and activities; and (e) facilitation of new staff meetings to establish connections with new staff and to increase presence in the school.

Future researchers should study imposter syndrome in other profession; this might enrich the context and show how unique or common this is among other fields. In addition, future researchers should study imposter syndrome in teacher-trained school counselors; this might provide insight on how much of an impact teaching experience has on imposter syndrome in school counselors. Further, future researchers should study imposter syndrome in male school counselors, as this may provide understanding of how gender influences imposter syndrome for school counselors. Moreover, future researchers should study school counselor imposter syndrome across elementary and secondary grade levels; this might build understanding of how different grade level environments affect imposter syndrome for school counselors. Future researchers could also explore how these feelings of insecurity affect the consultation outcomes or student support.

Findings suggest that non-teacher-trained early career school counselor consultation with teachers can increase student awareness and visibility among adults in the school. Participant voices highlighted the power of consultation to ensure no student goes unnoticed. Extant

literature also supports the idea that school counselor consultation with teachers can increase attention to student needs (Atkins et al., 2003, 2008; Maeda & Inoue, 2021). Exploring potential barriers to effective consultation could add depth and practical implications for improvement regarding consultation as a critical factor in making all students feel seen.

Findings suggest that non-teacher-trained early career school counselor consultation with teachers creates learning and growth opportunities between professionals. Participant experiences showcase professional knowledge enhancement during consultation with teachers. Extant literature resonates with this finding, suggesting that school counselors and teachers learn pertinent skills during the consultation (Beesely, 2004; Dinkmeyer et al., 2016; Stone & Dahir, 2016). Consultation is a mutual learning experience, so future researchers could expand the range of examples to include different age groups or school settings to broaden the universality of the findings. Further, researchers could discuss the distinct challenges hindering this mutual learning to make the analysis more comprehensive.

Non-teacher trained early career school counselor and teacher relationships are important for the success of consultation. Relationships could be enhanced by addressing how to manage or improve relationships that begin poorly or are challenging in general; this could be beneficial in providing school counselors with specific resources to use when navigating tense connections with school staff, especially as it applies to the efficacy of consultation experiences.

Conclusion

Chapter 5 identified multiple limitations in the study and provided implications and recommendations for future practice and research. Through this phenomenological exploration, I sought to better understand and gain awareness of the experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers. In this study, I engaged in valuable

discussions with non-teacher-trained early career school counselors to gain insight into their journey consulting with teachers. Through direct conversations with 10 non-teacher-trained early career school counselors, I emphasized significant issues they faced when consulting teachers. By reporting their accounts, I added to a richer understanding of the lived experiences of non-teacher-trained early career school counselors when consulting with teachers. Through this qualitative examination, I provided valuable findings to an area lacking research, presenting valuable insights into how these experiences affect their consultation with teachers. Because school counselor consultation with teachers leads to improved outcomes and non-teacher-trained early career school counselors face distinctive struggles in their interactions with teachers, the study findings are significant to school counseling as they provide insight and understanding to an area with little research. Data from this study could help school leaders find new ways to enhance school counselor consultation with teachers, subsequently creating a powerful ripple effect of positive change for students, teachers, and the school system.

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Appendix A – Informed Consent

CONSENTING TO THIS STUDY AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF PROPOSED STUDY:

PROJECT APPROVAL DATE/ EXPIRATION DATE:

LENGTH OF STUDY:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Craig McGill and Dr. Jessica Lane

CO-INVESTIGATOR: SOPHIA LENO

CONTACT DETAILS FOR PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS: sleno@ksu.edu

IRB CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION:

PROJECT SPONSOR: N/A

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of early career school counselors in their consultation with teachers.

PROCEDURES TO BE USED: Data will be collected through three semi-structured interviews.

BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES COLLECTED: N/A

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT: N/A

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED: THERE ARE NO FORESEEABLE RISKS OR DISCOMORTS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROPOSED STUDY. AT ANY POINT PARTICIPANTS CAN EXIT THE STUDY WITHOUT PENALTY.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: THERE IS NO DIRECT BENEFIT TO PARTICIAPTE IN THIS PROPOSED STUDY.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: No personal identifiable information will be used in the study. Data collected during the study will be stored in a private, password protected file. Upon the completion of the study, data will be destroyed.

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS? No.

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant).

PARTICIPANT NAME:

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE:

DATE:

WITNESS TO SIGNATURE:

(PROJECT STAFF) DATE