



# An investigation of school counselors' role in building partnerships with linguistically diverse families

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## Abstract

School counselors play a critical role in creating a welcoming climate towards these students in the school environment. The purpose of this study is to learn about the perceptions of school counselors' partnerships with linguistically diverse families (LDF). In the study, qualitative research design was adopted to shed light on how to build partnerships that integrate the school and community. The data were collected from eight volunteer school counselors from the United States, using an open-ended online interview form which was developed by the researcher. The data were analyzed via thematic content analysis, one of the qualitative analysis methods. The results revealed that there were four distinct factors that tapped into shaping school counselors' perceptions in building partnerships with LDF. These factors were; a) school counselor related factors; b) school related factors; c) school counselor perception on issues about LDS related factors and d) school counselor perception on issues about LDF related factors.

**Keywords:** Qualitative research, school counselors, partnership, diverse families, linguistically diverse

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Introduce the problem

The number of linguistically diverse students (LDS) in the U.S. public school system has increased considerably (Araujo, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2019; Fix and Capps, 2005). It is estimated that prekindergarten through 12th grade public school enrollment will be 50.7 million in the fall of 2020 (NCES, 2020), including 23.4 million

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White and 14 million Hispanic students. In the fall of 2017, 10.1% public school students in the United States were English language learners (ELLs), totaling 5 million students (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). The number of LDS in America is projected to be 25% in 2026 (Garcia, 2002). These demographic changes will influence school and mental health experiences of LDS, requiring school counselors to be advocates and take a central role within their school system (Aydin, 2011).

This qualitative study is geared towards understanding perceptions of school counselors' school, family and community (SFC) partnerships with linguistically diverse families (LDF). As anticipated, school counselors' belief in justice and their social justice advocacy attitudes and behaviors are associated (Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011). Therefore, learning about the school counselors' perceptions on partnerships with LDF is necessary (Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004), and may help encourage (SFC) partnerships. Through "using data to close the gap among diverse student populations" (ASCA Position Statement, 2015, p. 24), the integration of research into counseling practice, counselor education, and counselor identity can be promoted. Therefore, the use of qualitative research methods in this area of research has potential for creating a welcoming emotional climate for diverse families to build partnerships that integrates the school and the community.

The generation of positive organizational culture within the school systems is partly attributable to emotions (Lord, Klimoski, & Kanfer, 2002; Sayers, & Smollan, 2009). It is important to note that the emotional brain responds to an event more quickly than the thinking brain; therefore, one's perceptions intrigue emotions, self and social awareness; and self and social management (Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009; George, 2000; Goleman, 2000; 2004; Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). Positive perceptions on the part of the school counselors can promote positive emotions between the school stakeholders that benefit LDS (Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011). Therefore, school counselors as leaders for organizational change hold the power to create an effective organizational culture with multicultural competencies (Guzman, Calfa, Kerne, & McCarthy, 2013). Through their effort, a welcoming all-inclusive atmosphere that instigates partnerships with LDF may be developed (Aydin, 2011; Dotson-Blake, Foster, & Gressard, 2009).

Qualitative studies on school counselors' perceptions in building partnerships with diverse families are generally lacking in the literature (Kao & Caldwell, 2017; Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004; Ordu, 2015). By conducting this qualitative study, I hope to expand on the literature through gaining insight on school counselors' perceptions in building SFC partnerships with LDF and ultimately help increase understanding of those from diverse backgrounds. *School and school counselor related factors* may encourage or hinder school counselors' involvement in partnerships. A study by Paredes (2010) surveyed 601 school counselors using the School Counselor Self-Efficacy with ELLs (SC-SELL) scale and reported that when working with LDS, a

large majority of those participants felt their professional development needs were not adequately met. Research shows that families can support students' learning across a wide array of activities. Jeynes (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 77 studies and found two main areas that appeared to significantly affect student learning: a) communication with the child, and b) conveying high expectations. Similarly, Hendersen and Mapp (2002) analyzed 51 studies in family involvement and their findings indicated that the most effective parental involvement includes families' strength, recognized class/cultural differences and addressing family needs. Googall and Vorhaus (2010) reviewed 1,200 international articles on parental engagement. They found the most effective practices to support learning, which were based on student learning outcomes, were home-literacy practices where parents helped or taught their child in the use of text.

Previous literature reveals that students' learning and attitudes toward school is significantly influenced by their families. Knowing that school counselors' hold a strategically fundamental position home and school, their perception and beliefs toward LDF can be crucial to enhance LDS' academic experiences in school. Previous literature has pinpointed the need to examine school counselors' perceptions in order to offer a broader understanding of the themes associated with school and school counselor related factors that could help school counselor involvement in SFC partnerships with LDF, narrowing LDS' achievement gap (Aydin, 2011; Bryan & Griffin, 2010; Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sánchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004). The numbers of LDF are increasing within the school system and school counselors play a critical role in the transformation of their school system to create a more welcoming emotional climate in school (Aydin, 2011; McCall-Perez, 2000; Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004; Paredes, 2010). As a catalyst for change within the school system, school counselors can create an effective SFC partnerships culture.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Method of the research*

A qualitative research method is used in this study. Data were collected in an online format using open-ended interview questions. Participants completed interview questions via WebSurveyor. Collected data was exported from WebSurveyor. Open-ended questions were used to attain as many details as possible as they allow informants to answer from their own reference points compared to pre-arranged (e.g., survey) questions. Emergent themes are discussed using a constructivist approach, assuming the purpose of the research is understanding. Content analysis utilized in data analysis.

### *2.2. Population-sampling*

Data collection was conducted with eight school counselors from the United States using open-ended interview questions. While the study was conducted there were nearly 108,000 school counselors across the United States. There were more than 28,000 ASCA members, consisting of school counselors, administrators and other school professionals. Among those members, 24,256 were school counselors, and only 11,779 of them owned valid e-mail and had permission to share their contact information (i.e., names and e-mails) with other ACSA members. Among 916 participants who completed the Aydin (2011) study with School Counselor Involvement in Partnerships Survey (SCIPS), 8 participants used the option to respond to the open-ended questions at the end of the survey regarding their perceptions on SFC partnerships with LDF. Those who volunteered to respond to these open-ended questions self-selected themselves for this study. The researcher respected the right of any individual withdrawing his or her participation. Table 1 outlines participant demographics.

**Table 1.** Participants' gender, school level and school status

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Grup</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
Gender	Woman	5
	Man	3
School Level	Elementary	4
	Secondary	3
	Middle	1
School Status	Public	5
	Private	3

### *2.3. Recruitment, data collection tools and procedures*

Relevant literature was examined when preparing interview questions consistent with the contextual framework of the study, with the aim of increasing internal validity. Several experts in the field of school counseling were consulted and their opinions were taken into consideration as the latest forms of the questions were developed. Later, the appropriateness of the interview questions was discussed with two school counselors, with adjustments made based on feedback which included revising wordings of questions and rearranging categories / themes.

All participants received e-mails for recruitment, first reminder, clarification and a second reminder. Initially, school counselors received a recruitment e-mail that included an explanation regarding the purpose of the study, its voluntary nature, confidentiality, and a link to the study. The information sheet described the purpose of the study and a definition of SFC partnerships, LDS and LDF as participants begin. One week after the recruitment e-mail the researcher sent the first reminder e-mail and two weeks after the recruitment e-mail, participants received the second reminder. These two reminder e-

mails were very similar to the initial recruitment e-mail regarding content. The second and last reminder e-mails indicated that a) this would be the last e-mail; b) participants will not receive any more e-mails; and c) the study would conclude within a week.

E-mails were sent on the following order and dates: recruitment e-mail, February 22nd, 2011; first reminder e-mail, February 28th, 2011; clarification e-mail, March 2nd, 2011; second & final reminder e-mail, March 7th, 2011. Data collection was closed on March 14, 2011 and 916 participants completed the SCIPS. The clarification notice was sent in response to inquiries regarding participants' inclusion. Namely, an overwhelming number of school counselors who initially declined taking part in the study (i.e., due to not having any or limited number of LDS) necessitated this action. The clarification e-mail indicated that the number of LDS served in school is not an issue and thereby does not determine participants' inclusion. This e-mail indicated that all school counselors are eligible and encouraged to participate in this study, regardless of the number of LDS in a school. Data collection was subsequently completed over a three-week period. The University of Iowa Institutional Review Board approved this study. The researcher collected data through WebSurveyor, an online data collection method through The University of Iowa. Interview questions took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Data collection was conducted with eight school counselors using open-ended interview questions. Open-ended questions are used to attain as many details as possible (Paley, 2010; Strauss, & Corbin, 1998). Through e-mail recruitment and follow-up, online interviewing is becoming a commonly used method associated with collecting qualitative data (Fritz & Vandermause, 2017). However, some difficulties have been identified involving using e-mail or other online interviewing methods (James & Busher, 2006; Kazmer & Xie, 2008). In this study, qualitative data collection was deemed convenient and efficient compared to in person interviews. Via e-mail, in-depth online interviewing is considered to be a reliable data collection method (Creswell, 2007; Elmira, Schmied, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2011; Hamilton & Bowers, 2006; Hunter, Corcoran, Leeder, & Phelps, 2012; James & Busher, 2006; Kazmer & Xie, 2008; Meho, 2006; Wertz et al., 2011). Therefore, it may help move the methodological discussion toward actual data collection and management processes. It is considered that the quality of email interviews will improve the interviewing experience for both participant and researcher, therefore; it is improving the quality of data, which reflects on the research results (Fritz & Vandermause, 2017). E-mail interviews may take days, weeks or longer and may therefore be time consuming. Timing concerns between e-mails within a single conversation and the timing of going on board with a new interview is an important concern. It is difficult to judge how much time is needed to complete an entire interview. It is recommended that the researcher should consider planning the right number of email queries to recruit participants, planning time for the analysis and the

incorporation of emerging themes from the interview (Hamilton, Bowers, 2006; Hunter, Corcoran, Leeder, Phelps, 2013; James, & Busher, 2006).

When eliciting the data from the qualitative study, the same methodological suggestions proposed for in-person interviewing should also be utilized for data collection through online interviews, such as being conscious about asserting credibility and authenticity of voice (Creswell, 2007; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Sandelowski, 2000; Paley, 2010; James & Busher, 2006). A purposeful yet flexible plan which focused on releasing power and control to participants was developed. In order to empower participants, the researcher should be responsive to participants' timing and communication needs. In order to maintain trustworthiness, credibility, and thoroughness (Golafshani, 2003), the same discovery process used in in-person interviewing would be expected to follow with the participants. The sequence of questions was the same in each interview.

#### *2.4. Reliability and validity of data*

The research process was described in detail to ensure external validity of the study. In this study, the researcher takes the role of "participant as observer" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It is helpful for the researcher to participate in the experience to increase their understanding of the insider view (Patton, 2002). However, the degree of participation may be limited if the researcher appears to be different to the members' background, race, and ethnic identification (Rossman & Rallis). With this in mind, the researcher made a conscious effort during the course of this study to prevent any subjectivity and influence.

Data was transferred directly from WebSurveyor without any analysis to provide internal reliability. Beside the researcher, a colleague with experience on qualitative methodology coded the data, allowing comparison with that of the investigator and to increase internal validity of the research. The consistency of emerging findings was found to be 78% by using the  $[\text{Consensus} / (\text{Consensus} + \text{Dissensus}) \times 100]$  formula (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Additionally, the raw data and coded data were preserved by the researcher to enable access by third party researchers who wish to examine the data themselves. Nevertheless, in order to confirm external validity, the researcher withholds the interview documents, coding, and other relevant reports and analysis of the research process in case there is a need for confirmation examination. Moreover, the participants were informed with the confidentiality of the research data and those participants' identities were kept anonymous.

In a qualitative study, to ensure trustworthiness the researcher communicates how convincing, accurate and valid the findings are. Therefore, the transferability of the findings to another similar situation and setting are considered by the reader. Rossman

and Rallis (2003) state that there are several strategies those help enhance the credibility and rigor in a qualitative study. *Triangulation* refers to “multiple sources of data, multiple points in time, or a variety of methods used to build the picture that is being investigated” (p. 69). This helps ensure that the researcher has not studied only a tiny proportion of the complexity. Aydin (2011) *defined school, family, and community (SFC) partnerships* “as collaborative partnerships with school personnel, parents, families, community members and other community organizations to promote equity and access opportunities and rigorous educational experiences to address academic, personal/social and career development needs for all students both at home, in school and in the community” (p. 126). As a core construct, this *school, family, and community (SFC) partnerships* definition remains central.

The literature emphasizes paying attention to the construction of e-mails, which is key to improve the elicitation of data (Fritz & Vandermause, 2017; Hamilton, & Bowers, 2006). It is important to note and respond to the participants’ timing, language, emoji and to use e-mail rules and subject as labeling to help with the quality. I learned that it is important to limit the number of e-mails sent. Transcripts should reflect all the details regarding participants’ perceptions to prove triangulation. Participant validation is known as “*member checks*.” Member checks are about taking emerging findings back to the participants for them to elaborate, correct, extend, or argue (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Therefore, unclear points are clarified and respondents’ meaning is transferred in the most accurate way. This procedure for providing reliability and validity is also known as participant confirmation. Upon completion of the interviews, data were returned to participants to check for the accuracy and relevance with their perceptions to conduct in-depth member checking technique. When using members check as a technique to ensure validation, as Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, and Walter (2016) argue, it is important to describe and evaluate data thoroughly (i.e., called as “Synthesized Member Checking”).

It is important for the researcher to be open to other potential issues that respondents may bring. Strauss and Corbin suggest that a strict data-gathering method could “mislead the analysis or foreclosure on discovery” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Since qualitative study expects a full description of the phenomenon, I provided as much detail as possible to communicate my attitude and intentions when clarification was needed by participants. Using a critical friend or in other words a “*peer de-briefer*” is another method of ensuring trustworthiness. In order to prove external validity, data was presented to the reader/critical friend by describing them carefully. A critical friend’s role is crucial to help the researcher modify design decisions, develop interview questions, help the researcher think critically throughout the process, and build a comprehensive explanation for the phenomenon of interest. I have met with an expert with knowledge and expertise on the topic and a colleague with a competency in conducting qualitative research to meet the criterion for conducting reliable research.

## 2.5. Analysis techniques

Using email recruitment and follow up, data was collected in an online format through WebSurveyor. Collected data was exported from WebSurveyor to a word document, while giving each interviewer a code (e.g., SC1, SC2). Using code for each interviewer allowed for keeping interviewee's responses separate, organizing the content for analysis and also keeping responses anonymous.

Data was collected through e-mail interview, with eight school counselors. Thematic analysis identified four distinct domains: a) School Counselor Related Factors; b) School Related Factors; c) School Counselor Perception on Issues about LDS Related Factors; and d) School Counselor Perception on Issues about LDF Related Factors. The data were analyzed in several stages using content analysis. First, interviewees responses were coded and related codes were combined under an identified category. Using a similar method, the main themes that the categories loaded under were created and interviewee's ideas, opinions, thoughts, and perceptions were extracted. Second, the researcher brought these codes together under designated categories. Third, the themes were extracted from these categories generated by the codes. Fourth, the data revealed from this process was presented to and discussed with a "critical friend" to ensure its clarity, meaning and external validity. Fifth, the findings were interpreted. Using content analysis, categories were identified and emerging themes from interviewees' responses were interpreted and discussed. As the researcher, I determined the category that has high importance for the interviewee which reflected in the frequency of its repetition. The frequency of the category repeated was reported in frequency.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study is to learn about the perceptions of school counselors' on partnerships with LDF. The main goal of this study is to gain greater understanding on the following questions:

1. How do school counselors perceive their *training and credentials* in relation to LDF on SFC partnerships?
2. What are the reasons for school counselors' perceptions related to *their role* with LDS and their families?
3. What are *the personal and school-related factors /obstacles* that encourage school counselors to be involved in SFC partnerships?



4. What *kinds of school-family-community partnerships* are you currently involved in? What role(s) do you play in these partnerships?

### 3.2. *Data Analysis: Emergent Themes*

These research questions were asked to the informants related to the purpose of the research conducted. Themes and categories that emerged from the research are presented in the table and discussed below:

The findings converged are grouped under four main themes. These factors include: a) school counselor related factors; b) school related factors; c) school counselor perception on issues about LDS related factors and d) school counselor perception on issues about LDF related factors. Two of the following factors i.e., school counselor perception on issues about LDS and school counselor perception on issues about LDF could be regarded as converging under school counselor related factors. Also, categories emerged related to factors help or hinder SFC partnership are presented in Table 3.

According to the results, school counselors' involvement with LDF in SFC partnerships reveals three dimensions: a) school-family partnerships; b) school-community collaboration; and c) overall involvement. The findings, which emerged from the data analyses indicate that school and school counselor factors may have an impact on involvement in SFC partnerships (e.g., if there is a language barrier, building functioning relationships with LDF may be more difficult). School counselors' perceptions of involvement in SFC partnerships specific to working with LDF may be influenced by a number of factors (see themes and categories presented in Table 2.), which lead the researcher make the following assertions about the study.

Assertion 1: Participants declared some level of discontent for not having a clarity regarding *the training hours on SFC partnerships* (“*I have no idea the number of hours I have spent in training for partnerships*”). However, years of school counseling experience (“*I find myself planning for my day in my head*”), school counselor' self-efficacy and school counselor' job satisfaction (*Every day, I come to work with a motivation to make someone's day*) emerged as categories related to factors promoting SFC partnership.

Assertion 2: Participants asserted fairly positive feelings about SFC partnerships with LDF and agree on promoting parental involvement. School counselors view school, family and community partnerships as if these settings are inseparable interlinking three spheres which contribute building school and community level capacity for LDF students' on school achievement. When school counselor are not involved in partnerships they either; a) are unsure or disagree if it is within the scope of their job responsibility to work LDF since ESL department primarily is more involved with LDS and LDF or; b) do not think the number of ELL students is large enough to require them to be involved.

The following excerpts support this assertion:

*“Regarding our school administration I feel like they value counseling services.”*

*“In general, LDS often have a complex range of social and emotional needs.”*

*“Going through a series of changes in their family living arrangements LDS and their families may experience a number of issues.”*

*“It is important to remember that it could be challenging to talk about social, behavioral and friendship issues for some LDS.”*

*“In general, LDS often have a complex range of social and emotional needs. They may experience significant social issues and financial troubles.”*

*“School counselors have a central role in identifying the mental health needs of LDS and referring them to the essential services as needed.)*

*“When given the opportunity to have a voice, counselors feel respected and valued.”*

*“We as school counselors could provide assistance for direct interventions for LDS, such as teaching social and communication skills and also providing skills training on ways to manage stress effectively. Also, these students and their families may need guidance and support on issues of adjusting to a new culture and resources in the community.”*

SFC partnerships among all stakeholders could be realized by the proactive role of a school counselor. School, family and community interactions provide context to foster collaborative school climate. When school counselors receive principal support, it promotes influencing collaborative school climate within the school community.

In the next section, interviewees' responses will be shared similar to assertions. Understanding school counselors' perceptions related to *their role* with LDS and their families and the types of school counselor and school related factors that influence SFC partnership with LDF is the main aim of this study. In table 2, emerged themes and categories are presented which may help to understand the conceptual structure and other forces affect school counselors' role in SFC partnership with LDF.

**Table 2.** Perceptions of involvement on school, family and community partnerships

Themes	Categories	<i>f</i>
School Related Factors	collaborative school climate	3
	school district	2
	number of ELL students	5
	limited access to services for partnership	3
	number of multicultural counseling courses	2
	school counselors' professional development	3
	school counselors' trainings needs	5
	school population	4
	school climate	4
	time constraints	3
School Counselor Related Factors	accreditation	3
	counselor' job description	4
	counselors' job satisfaction	1
	counselor' race and ethnicity	3
	school counselor' gender	4
	counselor' self-efficacy	2
	counselors' professional development needs	4
	counselors' training on SFC partnership	3
	counselors' diversity training	3
	counselors' years of experience	3
counselors' caseload	4	
School Counselor Perception on Issues about LDS Related Factors	advocacy	3
	academic achievement	2
	academic challenges	1
	acculturation anxiety	3
	at risk for school failure	3
	attendance in underfunded schools	2
	behavioral expectations	2
	behavioral issues	2
	bullying/violence	2
	challenges to adjust to novel school practices	1
	depression, PTSD	1
	friendship issues	2
	language anxiety	1
	language competency	1
	learning difficulties	2
	learning styles	1
	limited English proficiency/ language issue	1
low income and/or poverty	2	
lower teacher expectations	1	
social and emotional needs	1	
School Counselor Perception on Issues about LDF Related Factors	communication issues	3
	counselor involvement	4
	community collaboration	5
	community engagement	2
	familial support / network system	2
	family culture	1
	family engagement in school /education	2
	family involvement	2
	family issues	2
	family relationship	3
	family strength	2
family structure	1	

language barrier	4
learning at home	1
parental support	2
parent teacher organizations	3
parental involvement at school	2
parenting and social skills training to improve helping children at home with homework	2
parents volunteering at school	4
parents' expectations	2
social and cultural differences	3
social and cultural issues	4
coming from a low social status due to ethnic/immigration background	3

**Table 3.** Categories related to factors promoting / preventing partnership

Themes	Categories related to factors promoting partnership f	Categories related to factors preventing partnership f
School and School Community	Number of ELL students Collaborative school climate	Communication issues Language barrier
School Counselor	School counselor' self-efficacy School counselor' job satisfaction Years of experience	Limited training hours
School Counselor Perception on issues about LDS related factors	Family involvement Academic achievement	Learning difficulties Friendship issues
School Counselor Perception on issues about LDF related factors	Community involvement Family expectation Family support Family strength Family structure	Family issues Limited English proficiency Social and cultural issues Family background

Categories emerged related to factors promoting / preventing partnership are presented in the table. It is important to note that some of the categories may load under two different themes. In the next section, the following excerpts from interviewee responses demonstrate participants' statements similar to assertions.

### 3.2.1. School Related Factors

Perceptions of involvement on SFC partnerships on school related factors presented below:

SC stated: *“We are a small rural district with an extremely small linguistically diverse population (assuming that this refers to families who speak another language other than English on a regular basis).”* (school district)

SC stated: *“School counselors have a central role in identifying the mental health needs of LDS and referring them to the essential services as needed. Before personal, social and mental health problems appear or get worse school counselors could make arrangements*

for LDS and their families to receive assistance for their mental health needs, community engagement and collaboration.” (community engagement and collaboration)

SC stated: “We as school counselors could provide assistance for direct interventions for LDS, such as teaching social and communication skills and also providing skills training on ways to manage stress effectively. Also, these students and their families may need guidance and support on issues of adjusting to a new culture and resources in the community.” (familial support / network system)

SC stated: “I filled mine out however I am not the person at my building that works with the ELL/ESL students. We have a great program here but it is not me that is involved.” (job description)

SC stated: “It is important to consider organizing a “newcomer orientation program” that is purposefully designed to assist LDS in adjusting to the school culture and also curricular expectations.” (school culture)

### 3.2.2. School Counselor Related Factors

Perceptions of involvement on SFC partnerships on school counselor related factors are presented below:

SC stated: “We only have 2 ELL students in our school, and only one or two others who speak fluent English although from foreign backgrounds. Many of my responses should have been “I don’t know” as our ELL teacher handles most of anything needed by her students.” (number of ELL students)

SC stated: “I completed answering the questions as possible. However, I found parts of it frustrating because it assumes I have or have had much involvement with LD students and LD families.” (counselor involvement)

SC stated: “Regarding our school administration I feel like they value counseling services. I feel respected and valued not being viewed as just people sitting up in their room. When they encounter problems, they reach and refer children to us which I like. Being approached like ‘Hey, we have got some superhero counseling staff at our school’ feels great.” (principal support, collaborative school climate, counselor’ self-efficacy)

SC stated: “The counselors feel less burned out and more fulfilled when they can devote more time with their students carrying out suitable duties with their job description.” (counselor’ caseload & job description)

SC stated: “My work day at school is always hectic. I am busy with testing, scheduling, and meetings and also making sure my students are on track for graduation. Unfortunately, these tasks often take priority over working with kids personally. It takes special effort to create time so that I could be spending more time with my students.

*However, everything falls on a plate and somehow you manage to do what you need to do.”* (time constraints)

SC stated: *“Over the years, I can say that I have gained a lot of experience. For those novice counselors who worry that they do not have enough experience, I would say, ‘Don't worry about it. You will get there and learn what you need to learn.’ As I first started my job as a school counselor, I was so worried I was going to mess things. Sometimes, I find myself planning for my day in my head in the car as I drive, since I know what to look for with my eyes closed.”* (counselors' years of experience)

SC stated: *“Feeling that I have built positive relationships with children who come from diverse family backgrounds whether they have presenting issues or not makes me get the most fulfillment from my job as a school counselor.”* (school counselor' self-efficacy)

SC stated: *“Every day, I come to work with a motivation to make someone's day. When I have that drive, at the end of the day I feel content and just an intrinsic sense of ‘Today, I made a difference and touched someone's life.’ I need to remember that the little things I do. I know that what I do at work is not always noticeable but I know it is vital for those students whom I work with.”* (school counselor' job satisfaction)

Regarding training and accreditation some participants responded as

SC stated: *“I completed answering questions for you, but I have to say I am not sure how I was supposed to answer the accreditation? but it is completed.”* (Accreditation)

SC stated: *“I would love to help you but I don't know how to answer your questions on training. Kinds of training or the numbers of credit hours of courses I have taken in my 30 years - I can't begin to guess. Sorry I can't be of help.”* (counselors' training on SFC partnership)

SC stated: *“I tried to take the time to do this, but I have no idea the number of hours I have spent in training for partnerships.”* (counselors' training on SFC partnership)

### *3.2.3. School Counselor Perception on Issues about LDF Related Factors*

School counselors' perceptions of involvement on school, family and community partnerships on issues about LDF related factors are presented below:

SC stated: *“In general, LDS often have a complex range of social and emotional needs. They may experience significant social issues and financial troubles. These students may be confused and or feeling overwhelmed by all of the ups and downs in their lives. Language issues could limit their ability to identify and articulate their emotions and distress.”* (limited English proficiency, language issue)

SC stated: *“Going through a series of changes in their family living arrangements LDS and their families may experience a number of issues. These issues may include their*

*family support and network system, family strength, family structure.”* (family support and network system, family strength, family structure)

SC stated: *“As a result of relying on exhausted confused parents’, family engagement may be limited.”* (family engagement in school /education)

SC stated: *“LDS need support to figure things out within the school system without parental support. On the other hand, their families may feel uncomfortable and depend on the children about how their school functions”* (parental support, school climate)

SC stated: *“After being separated, LDS may have been brought to the United States to unite with their family members. Adjusting to the community and their school system may be overwhelming not to mention that they may also be readjusting to their new family structure and family relationships.”* (family issues, family structure and family relationships).

SC stated: *“Despite the extreme hardship and challenges that they encounter LDS and their families show extraordinary strength and resilience.”* (family strength)

SC stated: *“It's not difficult to have a good relationship with a normal and succeeding child, but the relationships that require you to spend time and effort can be challenging. However, I find them most rewarding.”* (advocacy, job satisfaction, self-efficacy)

SC stated: *“When given the opportunity to have a voice, counselors feel respected and valued.”* (principal support, collaborative school climate)

SC stated: *“It is not necessary for students to convey their appreciation or does she need any recognition for what she does”* (job description, job satisfaction)

SC stated: *“I get that satisfaction because I'm not looking for recognition. I'm looking for just the assurance that day that I didn't harm and that my heart and mind were intent in helping.”* (advocacy, job description, job satisfaction, self-efficacy).

#### *3.2.4. School Counselor Perception on Issues about LDS Related Factors*

School counselors’ perceptions of involvement on school, family and community partnerships on issues about LDS related factors are presented below:

SC stated: *“In general, LDS often have complex range of social and emotional needs. They may experience significant social issues and financial troubles. These students may be confused about understanding their emotional experience, feeling overwhelmed by all of the ups and downs in their lives. Language issues could limit their ability to identify and articulate their emotions and distress.”* (limited English proficiency)

SC stated: *“It is important to remember that it could be challenging to talk about social, behavioral and friendship issues for some LDS. Academic challenges may present due to language and acculturation anxiety. Coming from a low social status due to*

*ethnic/immigration background may feel intimidated and uncomfortable to reach out and communicate feelings when feeling depressed and anxious. Therefore, they LDS often suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), bullying and violence, acculturation issues, language anxiety, depression, behavioral and family issues.*" (Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), bullying and violence, acculturation issues, language anxiety, depression, behavioral and family issues).

SC stated: *"Despite challenges regarding my time and caseload, working to earn somebody's trust is not easy and some days at work are really overwhelming. Yet, seeing these challenging children coming out successfully and thriving beyond numerous challenges (at work, in school and the community) is most rewarding. It is one of the most gratifying experiences to have a child do well whom you have fought with over and over. It is those instances that matter. And these students are going to know you as someone who believed in them and will remember you throughout their lives"* (time constraints, advocacy, job description, job satisfaction, self-efficacy and counselor caseload).

SC stated: *"Our student population excluding white students is equal to 5.16%. Of that 5.16%, only three students are in our ELL program. We are a very rural community with limited access to services. We have very few partnerships for any of our students due to the limited number of service agencies in our area. If you have specific questions you'd like to ask me or can direct me on how to best answer given my very limited perspective, I'd be happy to help you out."* (limited English proficiency, school district, school population)

#### **4. Discussions**

1. How do school counselors perceive their *training and credentials* in relation to LDF on SFC partnerships?
2. What are the reasons for school counselors' perceptions related to *their role* with LDS and their families?
3. What are *the personal and school-related factors /obstacles* that encourage school counselors to be involved in SFC partnerships?
4. What *kinds of school-family-community partnerships* are you currently involved in? What role(s) do you play in these partnerships?

Research findings are discussed in relation to emergent themes with categories leading to the formation of these themes. It is important to note that some of the categories may load onto more than one theme (i.e., number of ELL students enrolled in a school could be included under the themes of school related factors, and also school counselor perception on issues about LDS and LDF related factors).

Responding to perceptions regarding *training and credentials*, school counselors appeared to have difficulty answering questions about their training hours and



credentials in relation to LDF on SFC partnerships (i.e., if they have received any diversity training on partnership at all), which makes it harder for them to elaborate their perceptions of involvement.

Previous studies demonstrate that school counselor training in partnership is an important variable in SFC partnership (Bryan & Griffin, 2010; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2006, 2007; Clark & Amatea, 2004; Hiatt-Michael, 2006). School counselors' faulty assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes; lack of or limited training in multicultural counseling; and other communication barriers between home and school (e.g., language and culture) is an issue in establishing SFC partnerships when working with LDF. While school counselors are called to respond to the needs of LDS and their families; they often do not have the support or the required training (Aydin 2011; Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004). In order for school counselors to better prepare to utilize SFC partnerships with LDF in counselor education programs, theoretical and practical training which focuses on utilizing the collaboration process with LDF (Bryan, 2003) may need to be integrated. When participants in this study were asked whether they have received any training in SFC partnerships specific to working with LDS and LDF, many participants stated that they either did not receive any training or that they could not recall whether or not they had received training as stated in Assertion 1.

The findings draw attention to the need for SFC partnership training specific to working with LDS and LDF. Likewise, ethnicity and the number of multicultural counseling courses taken were correlated with some school counselor multicultural self-efficacy related factors (Aydin, 2011). Previous research revealed that school counselors' self-efficacy is associated with their involvement in SFC partnerships (Bryan & Griffin, 2010) as stated in Assertion 1. If school counselors felt confident in their ability to build partnerships, they were more likely to be involved in SFC partnerships (Bryan, 2003; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy's 2007). Holcomb-McCoy et al. (2008) stated that as individuals believe in their self-efficacy in a specific setting, they would have a greater level of satisfaction in that setting. In a qualitative study Schwallie-Giddis et al. (2004) examined the challenges and professional development needs of school counselors with linguistically diverse students and their families. The study consisted of an intervention of seven professional training sessions over a nine month period with 35 school counselors. Findings indicated two areas to be the most challenging in school counselors' work with LDS and LDF: (a) counseling LDF and (b) understanding cultural differences in their work with students. Participants voiced a need for professional development programs that incorporate learning the dynamics of LDF, understanding and relating to specific cultures, learning how to communicate appropriately with the LDF and learning culture-based counseling strategies. Amatea and Clark (2005) stated that counselor education programs can offer better training "(a) to view themselves as having a unique

skill set needed by the school as a whole, (b) to deliver those skills, and (c) to function as a member of a team of school leaders” (p. 25).

What are the reasons for school counselors’ perceptions related to their *role* with LDS and their families? Role perceptions refer to one’s own perceptions about others’ expectations (i.e., concerning his / her role together with his / her view regarding his / her role) (Katz & Kahn, 1966). While a complex interaction of external and internal factors shape school counselors’ professional identity (Brott & Myers, 1999), school counselors’ perceptions about their professional identity were believed to impact their involvement in SFC partnerships. Bryan and Holcomb-McCoy’s (2007) study examined which school and school counselor factors predicted school counselor involvement in partnerships. Factor analysis revealed that school counselors’ involvement in partnerships related to one school related factor (i.e., collaborative school climate), and a number of school counselor related factors (i.e., role perceptions, attitudes about partnerships, and self-confidence in their ability to build partnerships; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Another study revealed that school counselor involvement in partnerships were related to a collaborative school climate, administrator expectations, school counselor role perceptions, self-efficacy about partnerships, time restraints, and partnership training (Bryan & Griffin, 2010).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand perceptions of school counselors’ involvement in SFC partnerships with LDF on behalf of their children in schools. Furthermore, *school and school counselor related factors* may encourage or hinder school counselors’ involvement in SFC partnerships. When working with LDF on behalf of LDS to cultivate SFC partnerships, these unique factors may encourage or hinder school counselor involvement. In order to reach LDF, school counselor may experience various challenges due *training in partnerships* (Bryan & Griffin, 2010; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2006, 2007; Clark & Amatea, 2004; Hiatt-Michael, 2006); *collaborative school climate* (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Janson, Militello, & Kosine, 2008; Littrell, Peterson, & Sunde, 2001); *self-efficacy about partnerships* (Bodenhorn, Wolfe, & Airen, 2010; Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines, & Johnston, 2008; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002); *attitudes about partnerships* (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Mitchell & Bryan, 2007); *role perceptions about partnership* (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004, 2007); *attitudes about school* (Loukas, Suzuki, & Horton, 2006; Hernández & Seem, 2004); and *barriers to partnerships* (Bryan & Griffin, 2010; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004, 2007; Finkelstein, 2009; Sanders & Harvey, 2002; Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007). However, collaborative school climate, principal support, some home and neighborhood characteristics may encourage or hinder SFC partnerships with LDF. SFC partnerships have complex multidimensional aspects, as underlined in this study.

The emerging results indicate school and school counselor factors have an impact on involvement in SFC partnerships. Nevertheless, there are non-school related factors that

take place after school, which influence the form, direction and extent of involvement in SFC partnerships. When addressing achievement gaps among LDF children, understanding how these factors contribute to or hinder student learning is critical. Yaffe (2010) conducted a study through the University of Pittsburgh and findings indicated that 57% of achievement is related to non-school factors (Yaffe, 2010). Evidently, there are complex combinations of factors that contribute to school failure (i.e., may be school and/ non-school related factors) (Downey, von Hippel, & Hughes, 2008).

Downey, von Hippel, and Hughes, (2008) state that schools with a higher disadvantaged students' population were inclined to have lower achievement scores because of the role of non-school related factors (e.g., acculturation anxiety, language competency, family culture) (Albeg, 2013; Castro-Olivo, 2017; Downey, von Hippel, & Hughes, 2008; Hakuta, Bialystok and Wiley, 2003). Aydin (2011) study revealed that the number of LDS attendants in school was correlated to their Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) status. Furthermore, LDS are more likely to attend schools with limited financial resources, investment and also community support for involvement (Wilde, 2010). *Obviously, non-school related factors contribute to the manifold interaction of family, community and school counselor on involvement in SFC partnerships (i.e., influenced by school counselor perception on issues about LDF on behalf of LDS), altogether influencing student achievement.* School personnel, parents, families, community members and community organizations together create distinctive dynamics. These dynamics successively form school personnel's degree of involvement in SFC partnerships with LDF. As Aydin (2011) and Bryan and Griffins (2010) explain in their study that non-school factors' role in influencing involvement require calling attention to the complexity of involvement in SFC partnerships with LDF. Wampold asserts that general factors account for 70% of variance, while unexplained effects account for 22% in psychotherapy outcome, indicating that counselor training should focus on employing common factors (e.g., establishing a strong partnership coalition) to assist desired results, (e.g., family involvement; Wampold, 2001).

Establishing effective relations to promote involvement with LDF may be even more challenging, when there is a language barrier (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & McLaughlin, 2008). Communication may be a barrier for a majority of monolingual school counselors. Counselor education programs and professional organizations need to emphasize training bilingual school counselors. As asserted in Assertion 1, some school counselors stated that ESL programs respond to these LDF and students' needs. As known, there are cultural differences in communication styles and communication styles involve unique dynamics that each culture offers in interpersonal interactions and relationships (Paredes, 2010). Regarding school and non-school related factors it is important to examine all of the categories to understand their role and impact on involvement with LDF in establishing SFC partnerships. A comprehensive understanding of untapped non-school factors' effect

on involvement related to cultural, family and community factors (e.g., family immigration status, work schedule) is crucial (Albeg, 2013; Fazel, Reed, Panter-Brick, & Stein, 2012; Warfa, Bhui, Craig, Curtis, Mohamud, & Stansfeld, 2005). Some of the issues that school counselors face with LDS may include academic challenges, family issues, behavioral issues, language anxiety, acculturation anxiety, bullying/violence, and depression (Albeg, 2013; Castro-Olivo, 2017; Kim, Hsin ve Snow, 2018; Fazel, Reed, Panter-Brick, & Stein, 2012), which create mental health concerns for LDS in school (Higgen, & Mösko, 2020).

When school counselors possess positive perceptions, they promote positive emotions between the school stakeholders that benefits LDS (Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011). As a result, school counselors play critical role in generating positive emotions between stakeholders, which assist in utilizing connections for partnership within the multicultural school community (Bettters-Bubon, & Schultz, 2017; Epstein, & Van Voorhis, 2010; Evans, Zambrano, Cook, Moyer, & Duffey, 2011; O'Donnell, & Kirkner, 2014). While ASCA National Model offers a general framework for school counseling programs, it is not sufficient without the integration of multicultural competencies to meet the needs to diverse students (ASCA, 2005, 2012; 2019; Ratts & Greenleaf, 2018; Young & Dollarhide, 2018), as it is imperative for school counselors to provide culturally responsive counseling (Dahir & Stone, 2012; Hutchins, Greenfeld, Epstein, Sanders, & Galindo, 2012; Grothaus, 2012).

Qualitative research provides a rich volume of data. However, the lack of the generalizability of the research findings is one of its limitations (Patton, 2002). The issue of generalizability is often discussed regarding representativeness. Sampling bias may result in describing the phenomenon or theory development that is reduced to represent the complex experience of informants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Thus, findings may be tentative and conditional. Timing of reminder e-mails may interfere with important life events (e.g., traumatic event), which may need to be taken into account. Also, participants may vary in their language and technology skill use (Egan, Chenoweth, & McAuliffe, 2006). Therefore, in a qualitative study it is expected that the accumulation of knowledge will construct a greater understanding of the phenomenon, rather than extracting specific information to identify as the basis for a certain decision or act (Creswell, 2007).

Data is important in any research and making the use of sampling procedures is very critical. By using the data emerged from study, the researcher proposes a new understanding of a conceptual framework explored (Bernard, 2002). As a counselor who is a member of a professional organization, the researcher recruited participants through their contact information (i.e., ASCA members' e-mail lists) accessible to any members of that organization. This procedure would classify the sampling method to be a convenient sampling due to participants' accessibility to the researcher (i.e., however still required

obtaining permissions from the organization to recruit these participants). Prior to participants self-selecting themselves by choosing to respond to the interview questions they were purposefully chosen to receive information and an invitation due to their participant qualities (i.e., ASCA professional membership). Based on the aim of the research, I, the researcher attempted to select participants who may provide useful information because of their training and experience (Bernard, 2002). Hence, the purposive sampling technique is also called “judgment sampling.” Therefore, purposive sampling is a highly subjective process as Roller & Lavrakas (2015) stated, since the researcher decides the qualifying criteria used to include each participant for the study. Due to nonrandom selection of subjects, both convenience sampling and purposive sampling have common limitations, which point out that the researcher is biased in choosing the participants (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). This criterion is considered when selecting ASCA members as the population of this study.

In qualitative research, what determines sufficient sample size is a matter of judgement and experience (Sandelowski, 1995). Making decisions regarding how to choose a suitable sample size in qualitative research is a matter for conceptual debate, causing uncertainty (Vasileiou, Barnett, & Thorpe, 2018). The researcher evaluates the quality of data collected, the research method and purposeful sampling strategy employed, and the research product intended. According to Sandelowski, a way to measure sufficient sample size in qualitative study should be decided based on this principle: large enough to allow the uncovering of a new understanding of the phenomenon being explored, but small enough to study ‘deep, case-oriented analysis’ (Sandelowski, 1995, p. 183).

Results indicate that, school counselors’ role with LDF in building SFC partnerships reveal three dimensions: a) school-family partnerships; b) school-community collaboration; and c) overall involvement. Advocating for a systemic approach Epstein’s overlapping spheres of influence model (1987, 1992, 1996, and 2001) is particularly applicable for building SFC partnerships. This model also allows for a holistic analysis of factors that help or hinder school and family partnerships. School stakeholders play significant role in cultivating family involvement at the organizational level. When school counselors describe their role as “working to earn somebody's trust”, they are at the center of these settings (i.e., school, family and community) are inseparable interlinking three spheres as stated in Assertion 2. Training programs can foster systemic thinking in relation to school counselors’ roles as part of a larger system, which is reciprocally structured with interpersonal and inter-institutional level as it is in the Epstein’s overlapping spheres of influence model (Epstein, 1987, 1992, 1996, and 2001).

While years of research point to the important role of families in student achievement, it is still a struggle to find effective and meaningful ways to engage families, as it was in this study. Human-centered design (i.e., also called design thinking) presents a new

capacity to close the gap between research and practice. Utilizing “observation, optimism, collaboration, and experimentation”, this approach may provide direction for educators to discover innovative and improved methods to encourage and sustain family engagement in LDS’s learning experience (Lopez, 2016). A human-centered approach to family engagement is discussed by Harvard Family Research Project, which focuses on ways to embrace empathy and putting each party in the other’s place. Therefore, Epstein’s The Overlapping Spheres of Influence Model is designed from a social and organizational viewpoint, accentuating the collaborative and complementary nature of school, family, and community partnerships, promoting positive exchange and involvement among stakeholders (Epstein, 1987, 1996). It is inspired by the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986).

## 5. Conclusion and Future Directions

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the perceptions of school counselors’ on SFC partnerships with LDF. Since school counselors’ belief in justice and their social justice advocacy attitudes and behaviors are associated (Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011), learning about their perceptions of involvement with LDF may offer greater understanding to encourage SFC partnerships (Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004). Having central role in providing culturally responsive school counseling programs, school counselors nurture collaborative school climate within the school system. School counselors’ statements similar to “to work with a motivation to make someone’s day” and “working to earn somebody's trust” highlight their role in holding the power to create an effective organizational culture with multicultural competencies (Guzman, Calfa, Kerne, & McCarthy, 2013). Through their effort, a welcoming all-inclusive atmosphere that instigates partnership with LDF may be created (Aydin, 2011; Dotson-Blake, Foster, & Gressard, 2009). As stated in Assertion 3, SFC partnerships among all stakeholders could be realized by the proactive role of school counselors. When they have the drive and motivation to work with LDS and LDF they foster family involvement that foster collaborative school climate.

As stated in Assertion 2 if school counselors are unsure or do not feel that working with LDS and LDF is within the scope of their job responsibility (i.e., since ESL department primarily is more involved or they do not have large enough number of ELL students requiring them to be involved) may create challenges. LDS need more support compared to other students because they lack the support needed to help them navigate the school system (McCall-Perez, 2000) due to language barriers and challenges to academic preparation in their native language (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004), knowing that *attitudes about the families* are important in SFC partnerships (Chavkin & Williams, 1987; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Epstein, 1991; Lott & Rogers, 2005; Schwallie-Giddis et al. 2004). When school counselors possess a

belief in a just world, they promote positive emotions between the school stakeholders that benefit LDS (Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011), cultivating trust.

This research makes a valuable contribution to the questions explored. Unlike other methods and strategies to increase the quality in a qualitative research (e.g., (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017; Roller & Lavrakas, 2015), it embraces a call to action, especially building upon the previous work, where there is a limited number of qualitative studies on the topic. Expanding earlier research by Aydin (2011), Aydin, Bryan and Duys (2012) and the parental participation provisions of Title I as regards to school's investment in every student to build national capacity for partnerships with respect to school counselors' roles is significant. The findings that emerged demonstrate the importance of school counselor training in partnerships, the role of principal support and the need for bilingual school staff to encourage involvement with LDF and remove barriers in creating partnerships.

There is a need for more qualitative study in school counselor involvement with LDF in SFC partnerships. Qualitative inquiry provides the detailed and rich data, which can help create creating a welcoming emotional climate in school for LDF to build SFC partnerships that integrates the school and the surrounding community (Dollarhide, Gibson, & Saginak, 2008; Gross, Haines, Hill, Francis, Blue-Banning, & Turnbull, 2015). Regarding discussions related to leadership observed in schools, "school counselors must take an active approach in attaining the leadership status" (Wingfield, Reese, & West-Olatunji, 2010, p. 123). Likewise, using leadership, advocacy, collaboration and communications strategies with school stakeholders to promote SFC partnerships with LDF (e.g., teaming with school stakeholders and creating social capital), improving students' educational experience and responding to their mental health needs may be possible. Utilizing interpersonal skills and developing relationships with stakeholders to 'form bonds' within their school and community may create future leadership opportunities (Wingfield, Reese, & West-Olatunji, 2010, p. 119).

There is a need for more qualitative research (e.g., case studies, program assessments), concentrating on school counselor involvement with LDF on SFC partnerships. How counseling training influence parental involvement with LDF and their students should be examined using mixed methods (see also Aydin, 2011; Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sánchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004). Using structural equation model, school counselor's role perception on building partnership with LDF could be examined with the mediator role of school and community related factors influence on parental involvement. School counselors' responses to open-ended questions facilitated understanding of participants' perceptions more thoroughly regarding those factors that contribute or hinder SFC partnerships with LDF. Using qualitative data analysis method such as qualitative content analyses allowed "sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (Patton,

2002, p.453). This process summarized data into the themes, which emerged for interpretation. The researcher reported the patterns / themes related to school and school counselor-related factors that help or hinder school counselor involvement in SFC partnerships with LDF.

The factors which contribute to overall student achievement should be explored in order to understand their unique contribution. Interviewing parents, family and community members on their perception of school and school counselors' role in building partnership would provide comprehensive understanding of the topic. Online interviewing may also be facilitated to reach broader understanding. For example, having an effective school counselor may have an influential role in defining school and school counselor related factors. Being an effective counselor is both related with school and school counselor related factors; as a school related factor, it is related with his or her job description and as a school counselor related factor, it is related with his or her professional development. Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Program (CACREP, 2016) standards influence most counseling training programs. The essential role of a school counselor in a changing society includes a practical approach to understanding relevant research methods and professional standards (DeVoss & Andrews, 2006; Sink, 2009; Studer, 2015). As stated in Assertion 1 Participants declared some level of discontent for not having a clarity regarding their training hours on SFC partnerships; however, years of school counseling experience, school counselor' self-efficacy and school counselor' job satisfaction emerged as categories related to factors promoting SFC partnership with LDF. Training programs can foster systemic thinking in relation to school counselors' roles as part of a larger system, which is reciprocally structured with interpersonal and inter-institutional level as it is in the Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence model (1987, 1992, 1996, 2001).

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