PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS, TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS OF THE NECESSITY OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

by

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To be honest, I never thought this day would come, the day where I would finally submit my thesis!

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This case study aimed at investigating and better understanding the perceptions of Lebanese school counselors, teachers and principals on whether teaching experience is necessary for school counselors to be competent in delivering the school counseling program (referring to guidance curriculum, responsive services, individual student planning and system support components).

The sample for this study represented three private schools in Lebanon; a total of 27 participants including respectively three teachers, counselors and principals from each school across elementary, middle and high school levels. All participants took part in a semi-structured interview and filled in a survey to determine to what extent previous teaching experience can affect various counseling activities and hence allow school counselors to be successful at their jobs.

Grounded theory was used in order to make meaning of the data collected from the interviews. Descriptive statistics were computed and presented in tables reflecting the data collected from the survey. There was a general agreement among participants that teaching experience was helpful but not necessary for school counselors. Participants believed that prior teaching for school counselors could help them with their jobs in several domains. Research findings from this current study will be presented to the universities in Lebanon that offer masters in school guidance and counseling as a baseline for feedback, reflections and modification if necessary within their programs.
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the context and statement of the problem as well as the purpose, research questions, rationale, and significance of the study.

Context of the Problem

School counseling has become an extremely diverse and all-encompassing domain. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) describes school counselors as “highly trained educators in pre K-12 settings who uphold ethical standards to design, implement, and manage comprehensive, developmental, results-based school counseling programs that promote and enhance student success” (ASCA, 2008, p.1 as cited in Moyer & Yu, 2012). This definition underscores the importance of the relationship between school counseling and education.

According to the ASCA (2005), once the program foundation is completed for school counseling, the focus then turns to the method of delivering the program. This delivery system is made out of four components: school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support.

The guidance curriculum component provides a vehicle to deliver content standards to every student in a systematic way (ASCA, 2005). The individual student planning component provides all students an opportunity to work closely with parents or guardians to systematically plan, monitor, and understand their academic growth and development (ASCA, 2005). The responsive service component responds to the direct, immediate concerns of students and includes, but is not limited to, individual and group counseling, crisis counseling, referrals and consultation
with parents or teachers (ASCA, 2005). The last component, system support, enables the school counseling program to be effective through a variety of support activities including professional development, consultation, collaboration and teaming (ASCA, 2005). The role or job of the school counselor is to implement all four components at school.

Thus, according to the ASCA (2006), school counselors must have the knowledge and skills to be able to function as a traditional school counselor and classroom instructor (as cited in Roberts, 2009).

Over the past 50 years, school counseling professionals have engaged in active dialogue regarding the professional training and identity of school counselors (Moyer & Yu, 2012). In fact, the issue of whether school counselors should have teaching experience has been debated since the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) provided for the education of the first "guidance counselors" in 1958 (Olson & Allen 1993, as cited in Desmond, West & Bubenzer, 2006).

At that time, the reason for requiring teaching experience was because teachers possessed knowledge about school procedures and policies. The role of school counselors however has changed with time. During the time of the NDEA, the term "guidance counselor" referred to professionals in the school who provided guidance around moral and vocational issues (Coy, 1999, as cited in Desmond, West & Bubenzer, 2006). More recently, ASCA has adopted the term "school counselor" to describe "the future professional school counselor rather than the historical vocational guidance counselor" (Bemak, 2000, p. 324, as cited in Desmond, West & Bubenzer, 2006).

The change in school counselors’ role reflects the current trend, where counselors working in schools provide more than simply guidance in career choice. According to ASCA (2003), school counselors have advanced training in both education and mental health issues (as
cited in Desmond, West & Bubenzer, 2006). Nowadays, the role of school counselors is to assume an educator role as much of what they do through classroom guidance, parent-teacher education and consultation.

In the United States, one important criterion many school districts consider when screening school counselor applicants is whether they possess prior teaching experience (Stein & DeBerard, 2010). Use of a teaching certification/experience hiring criterion may be guided at least in part by state licensing or certification statuses (Stein & DeBerard, 2010).

Until about 20 years ago, it was mandatory in most states that prior to entering the school counseling profession, a person needed previous teaching experience (Roberts, 2009). Though the proportion of states requiring teaching experience has decreased in recent years, many administrators and teachers still seem to prefer to hire school counselors with classroom teaching (Peterson, Goodman, Keller, & McCauley, 2004, as cited in Stein & DeBerard, 2010).

Research has shown that proponents of prior teaching experience argue that without classroom teaching experience, counselors may not be as competent in delivering classroom lessons (Bringman & Lee, 2008; Criswell, 2004). They also believe that experience is necessary for effective school counselors to fully understand the school system and the environment in which they work (Hobson, Fox, & Swikert, 2000; Smith, Crutchfield, & Culbreath, 2001, as cited in Moyer & Yu, 2012).

Proponents also argue that school counselors may not be fully accepted by teachers if they have not “walked the walk” and “talked the talk” (Burnham & Stansell, 2005; Hobson, Fox, & Swikert, 2000; Quarto, 1999, as cited in Moyer & Yu, 2012). Counselors with teaching experience will thus possess classroom management skills that help them deliver classroom lessons (Bringman, & Sang, 2008).
In contrast, opponents claim that prior teaching experience may deter otherwise highly qualified candidates from entering the field (Bringman & Lee, 2008; Hobson, Fox & Swikert, 2000, as cited in Moyer & Yu, 2012). Principals and administrators saw no significant difference in the competency level of school counselors with and without teaching experience (Olson & Allen, 1993).

As Smith (2001) proposes, prospective school counselors can receive teaching preparation through additional field experience, as often recommended by school counselor educators, instead of maintaining teaching experience in state certification requirements. Recent studies have revealed that counseling experience is better than having a teaching experience (Bringman & Sang, 2008; Moyer & Yu, 2012).

In conclusion, it is evident based on the review of the literature that there is a general confusion on whether teaching experience is necessary for school counselors to be competent in their job delivering the school guidance and counseling program. Moreover, search engines showed no data or research conducted on this topic in Lebanon.

**Research Problem**

The review of the literature reveals that issues raised in past debates persist regarding the issue that school counselors with no prior teaching experience are not competent enough and lack knowledge and experience in classroom skills and school policies and procedures. The debate is still ongoing as to whether teaching experience is necessary for school counselors to be competent in fulfilling all four components related to their job. Moreover, there was no research found in the Arab world regarding this specific issue.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate and better understand the perceptions of school counselors, teachers and principals with respect to the issue of whether teaching experience is necessary in order for school counselors to be competent in delivering the school counseling program (referring to the abovementioned four components). This study also collected data on specific counseling activities that might benefit from previous teaching experience.

Research Questions

This study explored the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of school counselors of the necessity of having teaching experience prior to being a school counselor?
2. What are the perceptions of teachers of the necessity for school counselors to have teaching experience prior to counseling?
3. What are the perceptions of principals of the necessity for school counselors to have teaching experience prior to counseling?
4. According to school principals, teachers and counselors, what specific counseling activities would benefit from previous teaching experience?

Rationale of the Study

The debate as to whether school counselors should have classroom teaching experience prior to obtaining school counselor certification has existed for many years in the United States (Moyer & Yu, 2012; Olson & Allen, 1993; Quarto, 1999; Smith, 2001).
Proponents argue that such an experience equips counselors with classroom management and teaching strategies that will help them deliver classroom lessons (Bringman & Sang, 2008). They also argue that counselors with teaching experience are at an advantage of understanding school policies and procedures (Quarto, 1999).

Although teaching experience may be of assistance for new school counselors, current research indicates experience as a school counselor to be more essential (Moyer & Yu, 2012). Rather than emphasizing the need for or lack of need to prior teaching experience, Moyer and Yu’s (2012) research accentuates the need for new school counselors entering the field to have received appropriate experiences in the role of a professional school counselor during their practicum and internships. Such a role includes delivering the four components of the ASCA model namely: guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services and system support.

In the last 40 years, several researches show (Bsat-Juma1994; Nassif, 1960; Saigh, 1994; Theodory, 1982) that there have been calls for the development of school counseling services in Lebanon (as cited in Ayyash-Abdo, Allamudin, & Mukallid, 2010). Nowadays, three universities in Lebanon offer a master’s degree with an emphasis in school guidance and counseling (Ayyash-Abdo, Allamudin, & Mukallid, 2010).

In the year 1997, Law 1030 was issued in Lebanon (Hamzeh, 2008). In accordance with the newly developed Lebanese curricula, this law stipulated the assignment of guidance counselors to public schools in order to guide the learner to develop his/her personality, and prepare him/her to mingle in society (Hamzeh, 2008). In addition to the previously mentioned, the law stated that guidance counselors would guide students towards choosing the kind of career that would pertain to their future goals and expectations (Hamzeh, 2008).
Previous studies have been conducted in Lebanon related to perceptions of the role of school counselors as well as role related stress and job satisfaction of Lebanese counselors (Hamzeh, 2008; Yassen, 2013).

No study has been conducted exploring teachers, counselors and principals’ perceptions on whether teaching experience is necessary for school counselors to be competent in delivering comprehensive school guidance and counseling program.

It is important to note that in the study conducted by Yassen (2013) regarding role related stress and job satisfaction, findings revealed that years of experience as a school counselor proved to have a significant and negative correlation with job related stress. This means that the more years of experience a counselor has the less stress a counselor faces at work. As for the counselors’ type of employment and teaching experience, there was no significant relation with role conflict, role ambiguity and role related stress.

Hence, this study aims to further investigate whether teaching experience helps 21st century counselors become more competent in delivering the guidance program. This current study will replicate previous research conducted in the United States about this topic but within the Lebanese context. Studies related to the teaching experience argument have focused on the perceptions of principals, state administrators (Dilley, Foster, & Bowers, 1973; Olson & Allen, 1993; Paisley & Hubbard, 1989, as cited in Smith, 2001), teachers (Quarto, 1999; Criswell 2004) and counselors (Smith, 2001; Roberts, 2009; Bringman and Sang, 2008; Moyer and Yu, 2012) regarding the effectiveness of school counselors with and without teaching experience.

The public law 1030/97 issued in Lebanon does not specify the role of a guidance counselor. However, a reference book compiling the training materials given to guidance counselors during training period was found to include the job tasks of a guidance counselor (Hamzeh, 2008). Those tasks were adopted from the ASCA and were translated into Arabic. Such
tasks included: Individual and Group Counseling, Consultations, Program Coordination; in addition to Parent meetings and classroom activities and supervision (Hamzeh, 2008). Such tasks are in alignment with ASCA standards. Also, based on the researcher’s experience with some Lebanese private schools, counselors are becoming more involved in all four components of the delivery system described by the ASCA.

**Significance**

As noted in the literature, no study has been done in Lebanon describing the perspective of counselors, principals, and teachers on whether teaching experience is necessary for school counselors to be fully competent in delivering the school counseling program.

Most counseling training programs focus mainly on counseling duties and skills and devote little emphasis to the teaching role that counselors are expected to fulfill.

As the literature shows, though the proportion of states requiring teaching experience has decreased in recent years, many administrators and teachers still prefer to hire school counselors with classroom teaching experience (Peterson, Goodman, Keller, & McCauley, 2004, as cited in Stein & DeBerard, 2010). This preference often appears to be based on the rationale that counselors with teaching licenses are likely to be more knowledgeable about the dynamics, structure and politics of schools than non teachers (Olson & Allen, 1993). It is important to note that such a presumption has several important implications for how school districts define requirements for their pool of prospective counselor job applicants. It has also a major impact on the nature of academic and work experience prerequisites that college and university counselor training programs will maintain for students (Stein & DeBerard, 2010).
To conclude, research findings from this current study could be useful for universities in Lebanon that offer masters in school guidance and counseling as a baseline for feedback, reflections and modification, if necessary, within their programs. The findings will also add to the existing literature related to the characteristics of competent school counselors in delivering the school counseling program.
Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will discuss the literature covering the issue of whether teaching experience is a necessary pre-requisite to becoming a competent school counselor. Specifically, the chapter will discuss the conceptual framework of a comprehensive school guidance and counseling program, school guidance and counseling in Lebanon as well as teaching experience and its relation to school counseling.

Conceptual Framework of a Comprehensive School Guidance and Counseling Program

Content of Program

In order to facilitate the learning process for all students, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) suggested that school counseling programs specify developmentally appropriate standards and students competencies that are grouped into three domains of student development: academic, career and personal/social development (Criswell, 2004). The ASCA provides a guide to assist school counselors in identifying appropriate standards, indicators and competencies organized into the three developmental domains for all grade levels.

Iowa Comprehensive Counseling & Guidance Program (2001) as well as the Model Comprehensive Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools (2004) are two examples that reflect what structured programs are like. Both models base their programs on the 'national standards for school counseling programs' as specified by the ASCA. The two programs base their vision on collaboration among administrators, counselors, teachers, school psychologists, social workers, students and families.
A comprehensive guidance and counseling program is not based on isolated activities that are presented to students randomly. However, it is based on standards and benchmarks that pertain to each level of development (Iowa, 2001). Guidance is defined as the process of helping people make important choices that affect their lives (Iowa, 2001). The program explains that counseling is provided to students who are functioning well, therefore providing preventive strategies. Also, it presents activities and focused plans for those who are experiencing difficulties thus providing a proactive stance.

Hence, to promote desired student development, school counselors utilize a variety of resources, strategies and delivery methods (ASCA 2003, as cited in Criswell, 2004).

**Delivery System**

As E. Walsh, Barret and DePaul, (2007) clearly state, the delivery system of the ASCA Model describes the activities, interactions, and areas in which counselors work to deliver a school guidance and counseling program. Such a system is made out of four essential components namely: “guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services and system support” (ASCA 2005, as cited in E. Walsh, Barret & DePaul, 2007).

**School guidance curriculum.** This component consists of a written instructional program that is designed to facilitate the delivery of guidance lessons or activities consistent with the program’s statement of philosophy, goals, and student competencies (ASCA, 2005). The guidance curriculum provides a systematic way to deliver structured activities to enhance students’ skills, knowledge and attitudes in academic, personal/social, and career content areas (ASCA, 2005). School counselors deliver guidance instruction as well as teach or assist those who deliver guidance lessons. Methods of instruction may include classroom instruction, presentations to parents, small group discussions and assemblies.
Individual student planning. School counselors coordinate activities to assist students in developing, evaluating, and carrying out immediate goals as well as long-range plans (ASCA, 2005). Within this component, Gysbers and Henderson (2001) emphasized that school counselors work with students to help them learn about their values, abilities, interests and aptitudes in order to facilitate progress toward occupational, educational and personal goals. According to Criswell (2004), examples of topics that may be included in this component involve career decision-making, test score review, college selection, job shadowing, test-taking strategies, yearly course selection and social skills development.

Responsive services. Gysbers and Henderson (2001) reported that problems such as those relating to drugs, academic learning, personal identity issues and family and peer relationships continue to exist within the educational setting. The responsive services component of the school counseling program consists of interventions designed to meet the students’ immediate concerns and needs (ASCA, 2005).

System support. ASCA (2005) recognized system support as necessary to the maintenance and enhancement of the overall school counseling program. Some examples of system support activities include school counselors’ involvement in research and professional development, consultation and collaboration with staff, parents or guardians, serving on community or advisory councils as well as planning and managing the school counseling curriculum (ASCA, 2005).

Role of School Counselors in the School Guidance and Counseling Program

Similar to teaching standards, the American School Counseling Association has set up guidelines for school counselors. School counselors must first be student advocates, (Trusty & Brown, 2005, as cited in Roberts, 2009). They are also school leaders that must adhere to the
ASCA content area of academic, career, and personal/social development. As Roberts (2009) mentions, school counselors can be seen taking on roles that belonged once exclusively to classroom teachers, such as lesson plan development, classroom guidance, and behavior interventions.

It is currently expected that both counselors and teachers work together as a team to improve the opportunities for success for each student. Counselors also need to develop and maintain channels of open communication with teachers, school administrators, parents and students. Roberts (2009) suggests that the role of school counselors can vary from one school district to another; however there are shared responsibilities that most school counselors are familiar with and have experience in. In fact, the ASCA categorizes the role and functions of school counselors into three areas; counseling, consultation and coordination, (Burnham & Jackson, 2000, as cited in Roberts, 2009).

Based on the review of literature, counselors are described as professional advocates who are responsible for improving students' learning by developing comprehensive programs that achieve this purpose (Hamzeh, 2008). Counseling is provided individually or in small groups in order to help students to better solve their problems. Guidance on the other hand is provided to foster academic, career, as well as personal/social development for all students.

According to the Iowa (2001) and Texas (2004), guidance is a preplanned curriculum that is addressed and accomplished in collaboration with teachers and other school personnel. This collaboration continues when counselors consult with administrators, parents and other school specialists to provide coordination by establishing a liaison between school and other members of the school community.
School Guidance and Counseling in Lebanon

Development of School Counseling

In the past 40 years, several researches showed (Bsat-Juma, 1994; Nassif, 1960; Saigh, 1994; Theodory, 1982) that the need of school guidance and counseling in Lebanon started to emerge due to social change and political instability (as cited in Ayyash-Abdo, Allamudin, & Mukallid, 2010). Various researchers found that Lebanese students suffered from a wide range of academic, social, emotional and physical problems to which parents and school staff were neither sensitive nor qualified to intervene (Kazandjian, 1975; Nassif, 1960; Theodory, 1982 as cited in Ayyash-Abdo, Allamudin, & Mukallid, 2010).

Ayyash Abdo & al. (2010) also mentioned that school counseling in Lebanon was slow to develop. The majority of the developments made were in the area of career guidance; the Career Guidance Center at the American University of Beirut was established in 1985 due to the need of career guidance and counseling services in Lebanese schools.

Lebanon has faced several wars since the 1980s to the present time. Children had to hide in shelters, watch close family members die or get injured and go to school under dangerous conditions. Families were often separated during those conditions leading to sectarian fighting between children and tense school climates. As a result, consequent academic difficulties lead the Lebanese government to introduce law 1030 in 1997, requiring every public school to have a counselor in order to help students adapt to their social surroundings (Khansa, 2009). Only 70 out of the 1500 public schools had a guidance counselor (Hamzeh, 2008). Thus, with the help of the UNICEF, a number of school practitioners were selected and signed up in a preparation program to help shape what they called guidance counselors (Hamzeh, 2008). In the year 2002, 120 teachers
who had a minimum BA in psychology, sociology or philosophy were trained to use preventive developmental approach to school counseling (Khansa, 2009).

**Present State of School Guidance and Counseling**

According to Khansa (2009), resistance to school counseling in Lebanon and the stigma associated with it has been decreasing during recent years. As Ayash-Abdo, Alamuddin, and Mukallid (2010) suggest, a large discrepancy exists between the public and private school sectors in terms of school preparation, workload, qualifications and conditions of school counselors. This discrepancy has important implications for envisioning a unified policy and professional standards for the practice of school counseling in the Lebanese context.

As Yassen (2013) mentions, school counselors are present in approximately 100 public elementary and middle schools out of 619 public schools in Lebanon. Counselors working in public schools hold no degree in guidance and counseling but they are teachers with philosophy, psychology or sociology background who have undergone training workshops that focus on the preventive counseling approach (Yassen, 2013). As for the private sector, statistical figures are not available on the numbers and qualifications of school counselors in this sector (Yassen, 2013).

Hamzeh (2008) indicated in her study that stakeholders still disagree on which roles of school counselors are appropriate and which are inappropriate. It was found that parents, teachers, counselors, principals and students agreed on many of the counselor’s roles, but disagreed on many others as well (Hamzeh, 2008). According to Hamzeh, (2008) it was evident from the interviews conducted within the focus group (consisting of counselors) that they did carry many duties that were not relevant to their work such as scheduling classes, administrative work and replacing teachers.
A recent research study conducted by Yassen (2013) in the Greater Beirut area investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and role related stress with its components, which are role conflict and role ambiguity among school counselors. For counselors, the conflict arises when it comes to implementing what they have been trained for and following their role definition as set by professional organization and the reality of their work, which make them vulnerable to role ambiguity, role conflict and stress (Yassen, 2013).

Findings revealed that counselors who reported that their initial perception of the role of school counselor did match their actual job experience had low levels of stress, while the counselors who mentioned that their experience was different than what they have been taught did experience role stress (Yassen, 2013). Results also portrayed the existence of role conflict in the following areas: having just the right amount of work to do, having enough time to complete their work, having to do things that they believe should be done differently and working with two or more groups who operate quite differently (Yassen, 2013) As for role ambiguity, the area of concern was not feeling certain how they would be evaluated for a raise or promotion, (Yassen, 2013).

Ayash-Abdo, Alamuddin, and Mukallid (2010) presented in their article various suggestions for the development of school counseling one of which is having the Ministry of Education (MOE) establish a policy to incorporate school counseling into the educational systems at all levels. Such a program should be implemented in both private and public schools. It is also essential for the Ministry of Education to pass legislation stating clear cut goal directives and procedural outlines concerning the regulations, practices and licensing of guidance counselors (Ayash-Abdo, Alamuddin, & Mukallid, 2010). Furthermore, it is very important for Lebanese
universities to have fully fledged developed programs on guidance and counseling that are in alignment with the Lebanese Ministry of Education standards set for school counselors.

As Yassen (2013) suggested in her study, more effort should be done by counselor educators to prepare their students for the real counseling job that awaits them. Some counselors according to Yassen (2013) mentioned that their internship did not allow them to experience the ongoing challenging tasks that school counselors experience at their jobs; their contact was limited with parents, students and teachers during their training.

**Teaching Experience and School Counseling**

**Certification Requirements**

According to ASCA (2007), there are currently five states in the United States of America that require teaching experience as a prerequisite for school counseling certification (as cited in Moyer & Yu, 2012). These states include Alabama, Nebraska, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, and the District of Columbia. The above mentioned states typically call for two years of teaching experience before applicants can receive school counselor certification.

Other states such as Kansas, Louisiana, and North Dakota require school counselors to be eligible for teacher certification, but do not indicate actual teaching experience as a requirement (Moyer & Yu, 2012).

In contrast, several other states such as Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Tennessee, and Wisconsin provide alternative options for school counseling criteria. These include supervised internships and other related work experience (Moyer & Yu, 2012). Thus, teaching experience in many states still plays a primordial role in the certification of school counselors.
School Counselors’ Perceptions of the Necessity of Prior Teaching Experience

Is it true that school counselors with no prior teaching experience lack knowledge and experience in school culture and classroom skills such as lesson planning and classroom management? According to Roberts (2009), this question is a debated topic among school counselors. The literature indicates that most counselors reported that school counselors do not need prior teaching experience to be competent.

Researchers found that although counselor educators believed that teaching experience was not necessary, they also believed that the experience could be helpful namely allowing counselors to understand the school setting and giving them more credibility with teachers (Smith, 2001).

According to Smith (2001) counselor educators in states without the teaching requirement maintained that teaching experience is not needed and cited reasons such as students’ personal characteristics and skills as measures of competency and the lack of research evidence that supports the need for teaching experience prior to becoming a counselor. It was also mentioned that school counselors are taught to be competent in the school environment through fieldwork and coursework (Smith, 2001).

On the other hand, a smaller number of counselor educators who were employed in states with the requirement of having previous teaching experience tended to believe that teaching experience was beneficial (Smith, 2001). Reasons for their beliefs included employability, needed skills in classroom management and guidance, increased credibility with teachers, provision of career opportunities for school teachers, and increased understanding of problems that are unique to schools (Smith, 2001). As Martin (2002) mentioned, graduate-level preparation programs provide insufficient opportunities for field practice of skills and knowledge.
Peterson, Goodman, Keller and McCauley (2004) conducted a study on counselors during their internship experience and found that teachers and non teachers averaged a similar number of references to “challenges and difficulties” (p.5). The first common theme across both groups was “the school context requires significant adjustments for school counseling interns, regardless of teaching experience” (Peterson, Goodman, Keller & McCauley, 2004, p.5). There were also different themes that emerged between the two groups. Themes for non teachers included developing classroom skills, gaining respect and credibility and adjusting to the school culture, whereas the main theme for teacher counselors was the need to adjust to a different work environment, (Peterson, Goodman, Keller & McCauley, 2004).

As mentioned by Peterson and Deuschle (2006), school counselors who weren’t teachers described a concern for adapting to the school and teacher culture (as cited in Roberts, 2009).

More recently, in another study conducted by Bringman, Nancy and Sang Min Lee (2008), findings have shown that although teaching experience is helpful, it is not necessary for school counselors to feel competent when conducting developmental lessons. The most important factor for self- perceived competence in developmental classroom lessons was the school counseling experience counselors had (Bringman, Nancy & Sang Min Lee, 2008).

According to Peterson and Deuschle (2006, as cited in Roberts, 2009), counselors who had previously been teachers “had been surprised when they encountered challenges related to altered professional roles, less automatic credibility, less structure, less sense of control, non-classroom group processes, specific school populations, and unfamiliar developmental levels, (p.268, as cited in Roberts, 2009). Thus, according to most school counselors, teaching experience is not essential in order for school counselors to be competent at their jobs.
Teachers’ Perceptions of the Necessity of Prior Teaching Experience

Teachers may be in a better position to evaluate the effectiveness of counseling interventions because it is likely to impact them (teachers) more directly. According to Quarto (1999), the fact that teachers have these types of experiences with school counselors may give them firsthand knowledge of the role of the school counselor.

Teachers have a sense that counselors who were previously in the classroom will be able to plan lessons and teach and monitor classroom behavior based on experience (Roberts, 2009). Counselors who don’t have confidence in working with large groups or classrooms of thirty or more students may encounter more behavior issues and challenges of classroom discipline than expected by educators.

In a study conducted by Quarto (1999), teachers were asked to indicate which counselor they preferred working with based on the counselor descriptions only. Ninety-three percent of the respondents indicated a preference for the school counselor with prior teaching experience (Quarto, 1999). Amongst teachers, there is a sense of credibility and expertise that comes with counselors that have “walked in their shoes” (Quarto, 1999). Similar results were found in a study conducted by Criswell (2004). Teachers perceived school counselors with prior teaching experience to be most effective in areas of general and specific counselor functions, followed by school counselors with prior mental health counseling experience and those with prior experience working in the insurance industry, respectively (Criswell, 2004).

Bugaile (2002) investigated parents’, teachers’ and students’ perceptions of specific and general effectiveness of elementary school counselors with and without teaching experience. Modifying Quarto’s (1999) instrument to include parents and students in addition to teachers, results across participants were
consistent in that each perceived elementary school counselor with teaching experience had more general functional effectiveness within the school context (Bugaile, 2002).

A study by Brooks (2003) revealed that teachers found several benefits of working with school counselors with prior teaching experience (as cited in Smith, 2009) Such benefits include; counselors’ ability to understand the demands placed on teachers and students, the ability to empathize with teachers, and an increased sense of credibility in the eyes of teachers towards school counselors with teaching experience (Brooks, 2003, as cited in Smith, 2009). Another study conducted by Criswell (2005) asked K-12 teachers whether they perceived counselors with teaching experience were more effective than counselors without teaching experience in five job domains. A statistically significant difference in perceived effectiveness favoring counselors with teaching experience was found.

Teachers generally feel connected to a counselor who has prior teaching experience as they trust someone who knows the day to day struggles that classroom teachers face (Roberts, 2009). Counselors with teaching experience know about classroom management, discipline, conferencing with parents and coping with school politics (Roberts, 2009). They do not have to learn these things as they experienced them as a former teacher.

The literature reviewed indicated that counselors who didn’t have teaching experience background experienced much more resistance from classroom teachers than did their counseling counterparts who had valuable teaching experience (Roberts, 2009). If a school counselor does not understand the teaching experience, if they’ve never had to deal with classroom behaviors or learn classroom management skills, it leaves them in a position to be viewed as ill-equipped to deal with students and collaborate with classroom teachers and school administrators.
Thus, teachers seem to believe that school counselors with previous classroom teaching experience are more competent.

**School Principals’ Perceptions of the Necessity of Prior Teaching Experience**

On the other hand, school principals seem to indicate that prior teaching experience does not affect school counselor performance.

A study of school principals examined the teaching experience issue in view of the emphasis on comprehensive developmental counseling programs (Olson & Allen, 1993). This specific study was an attempt to determine whether school counselors who had become certified through the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh Internship Program were considered to be effective as those with teaching experience (Olson & Allen, 1993). Findings portray that although some principals commented about the need for school counselors to have prior teaching experience, this need is not supported at the elementary or high school levels as no differences in the effectiveness of school counselor functions were present between the teacher and non-teacher groups at this level (Olson & Allen, 1993).

White and Parsons (1974) as well as Hoffman et al. (1992) also investigated principals’ perceptions regarding prior teaching experience for school counseling (as cited in Criswell, 2004). Findings concluded that there were no significant differences in the ratings by principals regarding perceived initial acceptance or continued acceptance of counselors with and without teaching experience by students, teachers, administrators, and others within the school system. There were also no significant differences found in the area of principals’ perceptions of counselors’ abilities to perform specific guidance duties.
There are however several studies citing that principals and superintendents perceive prior classroom teaching experience as essential to the effectiveness of school counselors (Beale, 1995; Beale & Bost, 1979; Brown & Peterson, 1968, as cited in Smith, 2009). Results of such studies show that counselors with teaching experience had an understandable advantage over counselors without, and because administrators specifically favored those with previous teaching experience within the same school system, it continued to be suitable to fill counseling positions with worthy teachers (Beale & Bost, 1979; Ingwell-Ziegemeier, 1998; Chata, 2005, as cited in Smith, 2009).

Although recent research studies conducted about the necessity of having teaching experience prior to becoming a counselor reflect that teaching experience is not necessary, however perceptions of its importance are still held by teachers, some school counselors and principals.

Hence, the necessity of teaching experience prior to becoming a school counselor is still a debatable issue that needs further investigation. As the literature has indicated, perceptions of teachers, counselors and principals differ on the importance of teaching experience for school counselors. No research has been conducted in Lebanon to investigate the perceptions of Lebanese teachers, principals and counselors on this issue.

The department of Education in one of the universities offering a Masters degree in school guidance and counseling requires students to have a teaching diploma or an equivalent professional certification, (American University of Beirut, 2013-2014). Another university requires the applicants to have taken or take 16 credits in undergraduate education courses or psychology courses, including statistics and research literacy (Haigazian, 2012-2014). Thus, relevant professional teaching experience is not a requirement for graduate studies in school guidance and counseling. Many of the components being taught are related to the ASCA standards for American school counselors. Also, based on the researcher’s
experience, various counselors in Lebanese schools are applying the delivery system model within their school context; guidance curriculum, responsive services, system support and individual planning.

Effects of Prior Teaching Experience on Counselors’ Knowledge and Skills

The review of the literature shows that prior teaching experience may add to a school counselors’ repertoire of skills and knowledge. According to Smith (2001), prior teaching experience helps counselors understand the school setting and gives them more credibility with teachers. Some counselors believe that teaching experience adds to the counselor’s classroom management skills, increases the credibility with teachers, and helps them understand problems that are unique to schools (Smith, 2001).

Teachers consider that counselors with previous teaching experience are able to plan lessons and teach and monitor classroom behavior based on experience (Roberts, 2009). They feel connected to a counselor who has prior teaching experience as they trust someone who has “walked in their shoes” and know the day to day struggles that classroom teachers face (Roberts, 2009). Teaching experience adds to the counselors’ repertoire of skills in terms of classroom management and conferencing with parents and coping with school politics (Roberts, 2009).

Summary

As the review of the literature indicates, the issue of whether teaching experience is necessary for school counselors is still debatable. It seems teachers prefer working with counselors having prior teaching experience, believing that such counselors are equipped with various classroom skills and would be already familiar with school policies and procedures.

On the other hand, the literature revealed that both counselors and principals do not view teaching experience as a necessity for school counselors to be competent at their job.
Hence, the debate over counselor educators’ views on teaching vs. non-teaching experience is best summed up in this sentence: “Both personal and political reasons influence the perceptions of counselor educators and the training practices they adopt and will continue to do so until uniformity in certification standards is achieved” (Smith, 2001, p. 5).
Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design namely case study. Qualitative research studies, unlike quantitative research, view reality as a social or individual construction. The purpose is to allow the researcher to understand subjective multiple meanings in a given situation by being both a participant and observer. Research in education often employs the case study approach “so that specific issues and problems of practice can be identified and explained” (Merriam, 1998, p.34, as cited in Miraglia, 2006).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted allowing the participants to share personal opinions, stories and experiences on whether they believe teaching experience is necessary for school counselors to be competent. This process refers to the emic perspective in which research obtains information through informal conversations with the case study participants (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2010). At the same time, the researcher maintained her own perspective as investigator of the phenomenon. This is called the etic perspective, helping the researcher gain conceptual and theoretical understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2010).

The participants in this study completed a survey in order to provide data on what specific counseling activities would highly benefit from previous teaching experience for school counselors. The survey distributed to participants was adapted from the Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Program and was taken from the intern’s professional field experience in school counseling handbook from the American University of Beirut. Thus, this study also has a quantitative component mainly
descriptive research involving collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current state of the subjects of the study (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2010).

This research study intended to explore and understand a particular phenomenon; whether teaching experience is necessary for school counselors to be competent in delivering the school guidance program, namely: school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services and system support.

**Participants**

The sample considered for this case study was composed of three private schools in Lebanon. The selection of cases in this study involved purposeful sampling, using the researcher’s judgment to select instances that were information-rich with respect to the phenomenon being studied. The participants consisted of three counselors, three teachers and three principals from each school, each participant representing the elementary, middle or high school level.

Table 1

*Total Number of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Counselors</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher chose schools that had a counselor at each of the elementary, middle and high school levels.
Information sheets that outlined the school guidance program were available during the interviews. Teachers were selected via random sampling respectively from each division: elementary, middle and high school. The researcher wrote down all the grade levels of the elementary school and then randomly selected one grade level. The same process was done for middle and high school. Once the grade level was selected, the researcher used the direct approach and went onsite, distributing consent forms for teachers of that particular grade level.

**Instruments**

All participants took part in a semi-structured interview in which the researcher asked specific questions, allowing participants to elaborate their responses regarding teaching experience and the school counselor’s job.

The interviews conducted allowed the researcher to ask probing questions in order to gain more depth and conceptual understanding regarding the phenomenon being investigated. Such interviews were recorded. The researcher took field notes during and after the interview. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher collected data on the participant’s job, division in which he/she works, years of experience and academic degrees. Then the researcher asked the four interview questions in the following sequence:

1. How would you define school guidance and counseling?
2. What is the role/job of the school counselor in a school? Can you provide me with a brief job description of the school counselor you abide by?
3. In your professional opinion, do you think that prior teaching experience is necessary for school counselors?
4. If yes/why elaborate on reasons, what does teaching experience add to a counselor’s portfolio of skills?
5. If no, why not?

Participants’ responses were recorded. At the end of the meeting with each participant, the researcher wrote field notes, describing according to her perception how the interview process went; was the participant confident or uncertain while answering the questions, did they seem to be knowledgeable and have a strong opinion about the research topic being studied or did they feel indifferent. Thus, the field notes taken by the researcher included the researcher’s reflections on the interview.

Participants were also asked to complete a survey in order to determine how previous teaching experience can affect various counseling activities and hence enhance school counselors’ chances to be successful at their jobs, (refer to Appendix B). This survey consisted of four components: curriculum, individual planning, responsive services and system support. Each component contained a list of activities that pertained to the school counselor within that particular category. The participants were asked to read each item and select on a five point rating scale the extent of agreement/disagreement with statements on whether they think prior teaching experience for school counselors can positively affect such activities and enhance counselors’ competency. This survey was adapted from the Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Program and taken from the intern’s professional field experience in school counseling handbook (2011) from the American University of Beirut.

Content validity of the instruments was determined by consulting three professional counselors in the field. The counselors were contacted by the researcher and asked to read and review the interview and survey items in order to ensure that the instruments used were valid in this study. Content validity was established by agreement among the counselors regarding whether each question measures the intended content and the interview as a whole samples adequately the content area. The same process was done with the survey. The modifications suggested by the three counselors were taken into consideration.
and applied on both instruments. Tables 2 and 3 provide the modifications suggested by the three counselors to the interview questions and survey items respectively.

Table 2

*Modifiers Suggested by Professionals in the Field for Interview Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals in the Field of Counseling</th>
<th>Modifications Suggested for Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselor 1</td>
<td>• Ask about interviewees’ degrees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ask participants how they would define school guidance and counseling in general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor 2</td>
<td>• Counselor suggested doing the following changes to this sentence, instead of writing the word “assimilate” replace with the word “understand”: “Counselors with no teaching experience should take more courses to help them assimilate the K-12 school environment”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor 3</td>
<td>• Ask counselors to provide you with the job description of the counselor they abide by.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Modifications Suggested by Professional in the Field for Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals in the Field of Counseling</th>
<th>Modifications Suggested for Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselor 1</td>
<td>“I suggest you add two more entries that are: student shadowing and teacher placement. Many staff members believe that a counselor's role is to shadow students with behavioral challenges so that the classroom teacher can have such form of help inside the classroom with such students. Other staff members also believe that a counselor should be viewed as any other teacher at school and should therefore do tasks that teachers are also responsible for such as placement hours in case of teacher absence or even playground duty”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor 2</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor 3</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, internal consistency reliability was performed with obtained data from survey questions. Internal consistency is usually measured with Cronbach's alpha, a reliability coefficient that is commonly used to quantify the extent to which an individual’s scores across different items on a test are consistent with each other, (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2010). According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2010), a measure is considered reliable for most research and practical purposes if its reliability coefficient is 0.8 or higher. Table 4 illustrates the internal consistency reliability of the survey items performed by SPSS (a software
package used for statistical analysis). Cronbach’s Alpha was 0.94 which means that the survey used is reliable.

Table 4

*Internal Consistency Reliability of Survey Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's Alpha</td>
<td>Number of Items</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Member checking was used in order to validate participants’ responses. Member checking refers to the process of having field participants review research procedures and statements in the research report for accuracy and completeness (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2010). In this respect, the researcher shared interview transcripts with all of the research participants.

**Procedures**

The researcher used a direct approach and handed out a letter to each headmaster in order to obtain permission for the school to participate in the study. All three schools contacted accepted to participate in this study. Once approved, the researcher distributed to principals and counselors of each school consent forms to participate in this study (copies of letters and forms are included in appendix). The principals and counselors who were interested in the study contacted the researcher (two days after the distribution
of form). As for teachers, randomization approach was used. The researcher wrote down all the grade levels of the elementary school and then randomly selected one grade level. The same process was done for middle and high school. Once the grade level was selected, the researcher used the direct approach and went onsite, distributing consent forms for teachers of that particular grade level. Teachers interested in taking part of the study contacted the researcher two days after the distribution of the form. The interviews were scheduled during the school day.

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher explained the purpose and significance of the research study conducted. Then, the interview questions were put to the participant. There was no time limit for the participant to answer the questions. However, the interview took an average of 30 minutes. The researcher listened carefully, asked probing questions and took part in the conversation. The interviews were recorded. Once all the questions were answered, the researcher distributed a survey for completion by the participant. The researcher made sure that all the items in the survey were clear and collected the survey after its completion by the participant. At the end of the meeting, the researcher thanked the participants and assured them that their answers to the interview questions would be e-mailed to them for member checking in order to validate their responses. Also, the researcher took field notes describing what participants said during the interview, reflecting and providing her own input on the interview and what the participants shared.

**Data Analysis**

Interpretational analysis was used in order to make meaning of the data collected from the interviews. Interpretational analysis is the process of closely studying and grouping elements in case study data in order to fully describe, explain, or evaluate the phenomenon being studied, (Gall, Gall & Borg,
The objective of this kind of analysis is to identify constructs, themes, and patterns that best make meaning of the data collected from a case study.

Grounded theory, a classic model of interpretational analysis was used for this case study analysis. By using grounded theory, researchers examined data inductively, rather than using the deductive approach of posing a theory or hypothesis in advance in order to explain what they are studying.

The grounded theory procedure involves recording the data, breaking the text into segments, defining specific categories to reflect each important conceptual or structural element that appears in the text and coding each segment for all the categories that apply to that segment (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). Once all data segments have been coded into categories, the researcher then refined such categories through constant comparison, an essential element of grounded theory. This process involves comparing instances of each code across segments in order to discover commonalities in the data reflecting the underlying meaning of, and relationships among the coding categories. A constant comparison of data to existing categories was used to see if data fit within existing categories.

The researcher also used Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package produced by QSR International. The software has been designed for qualitative researchers working with very rich text-based and/or multimedia information, where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required. The software has allowed the researcher to identify and report the emerging themes shared by participants during the interview process. It also allowed the researcher to generate tables, charts and models in order to represent participants’ responses to the interview questions.

Descriptive statistics were also computed and are presented in tables reflecting the data collected from the survey.
Chapter IV

RESULTS

This study intended to investigate and better understand the perceptions of school counselors, teachers and principals with respect to the issue of whether teaching experience is necessary in order for school counselors to be competent in delivering the school counseling program, namely: school guidance curriculum, responsive services, system support and individual student planning. This study also investigated whether prior teaching experience for school counselors had a positive impact on specific school counseling activities. Thus, the purpose of this study was explored through the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of school counselors of the necessity of having teaching experience prior to being a school counselor?

2. What are the perceptions of teachers of the necessity for school counselors to have teaching experience prior to counseling?

3. What are the perceptions of principals of the necessity for school counselors to have teaching experience prior to counseling?

4. According to school principals, teachers and counselors, what specific counseling activities would benefit from previous teaching experience?

Data were collected from three schools in Lebanon; the researcher will refer to them as schools 1, 2 and 3. The answers to the four research questions will be presented through common themes that were derived from the interviewees’ answers; the themes are supported with excerpts from the participants’ answers as well as charts, tables and models created by using Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software.
program. Descriptive statistics were used to illustrate the results of the survey and are presented in table form.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section provides the perceptions of teachers, counselors and principals regarding the job/role of school guidance counselors. The second section provides the perceptions of counselors, teachers and principals who believe that teaching experience is not necessary but very helpful, (in response to research questions 1, 2 and 3). The third section presents the views of teachers, counselors and principals on the domains that teaching experience can help the job of school counselors in several domains (in response to research question number 4). The fourth and final section represents the results of the survey completed by participants (in response to research question 4).

**Job/Role of School Counselors**

Counselors, teachers and principals interviewed for this study agree that the primary role of the school guidance counselor is to support children both socially and emotionally and help them solve their problems. The role of the school counselors as defined by the three participating schools in this study included the four components mentioned by the ASCA namely: school guidance curriculum, responsive services, individual planning and system support. Although counselors were aware of such tasks, not all of them have the time to implement all four components; all three schools focus mainly on students’ responsive services.

As most of the school counselors interviewed have mentioned, when there is a problem in the classroom or with specific students, they intervene in order to help solve the problem. As an elementary school counselor clearly stated:

*Counseling is when I see people one-on-one, counseling is when I intervene with families, counseling is when I do therapy, counseling is when I have an office and people come to see me.*
Another high school counselor mentioned:

*So I think the job mainly of the school counselor is to help students, to be there for them whenever needed, and to be there for the parents who have children with difficulties, with problems and also of course the teachers.*

A middle school principal said:

*Counselors provide additional support, social emotional support which does not always come from the teachers or cannot come from the teachers. With teachers it is academic support mostly.*

Although responsive services was the main component practiced by all school counselors interviewed, there were a few counselors who were implementing the guidance curriculum component as well. Counselors at the elementary level would enter classrooms and deliver lessons related to a certain character education trait or attend morning meetings with students and teachers in order to teach a specific character education trait.

Middle and high school counselors on the other hand developed what they call an advisory program to be delivered to all students by their teachers. The advisory sessions follow a specific curriculum that is related to the social/emotional/physical well-being of the students. It is a proactive program, equipping students with skills to become healthier human beings and good citizens. Examples of topics discussed during advisory sessions include; time management, setting goals and interpersonal relationships. A middle school counselor mentioned that she prepared all the activities for the students. She developed an advisory program that revolved around four main themes: social skills, personal skills, educational skills and health/hygiene skills. The middle school counselors at schools 2 and 3 also
prepared an advisory program with the cooperation of their respective middle school principals. The high school counselors at all three schools also planned advisory sessions for all students at the high school level, providing teachers with all the information they needed in order to deliver such lessons accurately.

As a high school counselor stated:

*I did a Power Point on time management with activities.* I am going to explain to the teachers, *they will be doing such activities and delivering the lessons in their classes because having 200 kids and delivering a presentation will not be as efficient as teaching it to a smaller group.*

A middle school counselor mentioned:

*I send the advisors step by step how they can implement the advisory activities.* Sometimes you have teachers who are qualified to deliver such activities while others need more guidance. For those who don’t know how to deliver such lessons, the steps that I send them is like a training for them in order to know how to deliver such activities.

The components of individual planning and system support were the least mentioned components by all participants. A middle school principal said that she would like to have her counselor do more of the system support component. A high school and middle school counselor mentioned inviting guest speakers to deliver workshops to students or parents regarding certain school guidance topics. One out of the three participating schools in this study thoroughly implemented the individual planning component at the middle school level. As the middle school counselor at that school clearly stated:

*As a school counselor, I work on the academic plans of students who are not doing well, students who are at risk of failing. I work with them on academic improvement plans and follow up with*
them. And also the teacher of the student would be involved in one way or another to see the progress.

Hence, all participants interviewed believed that the role of school counselors is essential and highly needed for the social/emotional well-being of students.

**Prior Teaching Experience for School Counselors**

This section provides the perceptions of counselors, teachers and principals who believe that teaching experience is not necessary but very helpful, (in response to research questions 1, 2 and 3). 23 out of the 27 (85%) participants interviewed believed that prior teaching experience for school counselors is not necessary for counselors to be competent at their jobs. However, they do believe that teaching experience is very helpful for school counselors who have had such experiences prior to becoming counselors. The researcher will report on every category separately (perceptions of counselors, teachers and principals respectively) and identify important secondary information that was revealed.

Chart 1 shows that twenty three out of twenty seven participants (85%) mentioned that prior teaching experience is not necessary but helpful. The chart also presents the percentage of coverage per participant (how many times each participant has referred to this particular theme during the interview process).
Perceptions of Counselors

Eight out of the nine counselors interviewed believed that having teaching experience is very helpful but not necessary for school counselors to be competent at their jobs. However, other aspects related to

Note. HT2 = high school teacher at school 2; MP = middle school principal at school 2; HP2 = high school principal at school 2; HC2 = high school counselor at school 2; HC3= high school counselor at school 3; MC2 = middle school counselor at school 2; MT3= middle school teacher at school 3; ET1= elementary teacher at school 1; MT2 = middle school teacher at school 2; HC1 = high school counselor at school 1; MT1= middle school teacher at school 1; EC3 = elementary school counselor at school 3; ET2 = elementary school teacher at school 2; MC1 = middle school teacher at school 1; HT1 = high school teacher at school 1; MC3 = middle school counselor at school 3; MP3 = middle school principal at school 3; MC1 = middle school counselor at school 1; EP3 = elementary school principal at school 3; EC3 = elementary school counselor at school 3; EP1= elementary school principal at school 1; EP2= elementary school principal at school 2; HP3 = High school principal at school 3
teaching like importance of classroom observation skills and collaboration with other teachers were found to be necessary. One counselor believed that teaching experience should be a requirement. Some counselors described teaching experience as a privilege, a big “plus” for their jobs. As a middle school counselor mentioned:

_I wouldn’t say teaching experience is necessary, I would say it is a Plus. One wouldn’t know unless you experience it yourself. Maybe if I didn’t teach before I would have been competent as a counselor, but teaching experience really helped me. Teaching is not a prerequisite, it is a privilege. It helps the counselor see the situation from all perspectives. It helps the counselor see the whole image._

Several school counselors who had prior teaching experience before becoming counselors believed that they wouldn’t have valued the importance of teaching experience if they hadn’t taught prior to becoming counselors. As a middle school counselor clearly stated:

_According to my experience I say yes with confidence. If I haven’t taught before I would have told you that it has nothing to do with it. I taught and I am still teaching. I start understanding the student more and the teachers more. As a counselor, I am still living the feeling of being a teacher; you view the problems that students face within the classroom context. Living this experience is very important._

A high school counselor said:

_Honestly if you would have asked me whether teaching experience is helpful before I graduated from college I would have told you that it is not important to teach. But now, because I have_
taught for several years prior to being a school counselor, I can tell you that teaching experience is important.

A middle school counselor also mentioned:

*Prior teaching experience helps a lot. I had almost 12 years of teaching experience (I taught different grade levels and subjects). Having teaching experience is an extra.*

**Classroom observations.** Some counselors mentioned that although teaching experience is not necessary, however, school counselors should be able to do classroom observations. According to participants, classroom observations help school counselors in one major domain; observing and understanding the dynamics of a classroom. As an elementary counselor clearly mentioned:

*Classroom observation for school counselors, in my opinion is a necessity.*

A high school counselor said:

*Classroom observations for school counselors are necessary in my opinion to be close to students, to know about academics, performances, learning difficulties. It is also very important to be close to teachers. We shouldn’t be seen by teachers as only being allied to students.*

**Collaboration.** Many counselors have mentioned the importance of collaborating with all school members to assure the well-being of students. They believe that this collaboration is necessary in order to help the counselors fulfill their jobs successfully. As an elementary school counselor clearly stated:

*Now, what makes the job easier, or what helps us fulfill our vision is to collaborate together. I think what is more important and what should be a must is the collaboration*
that takes place, how much is the counselor part of the students’ daily life, part of the classroom’s daily life, how much is the counselor involved in grade level meetings, involved in the morning meetings.

This same counselor also mentioned at the end of the interview that counseling experience and teaching experience for school counselors was comparable: they were two means that would allow counselors to arrive at the same results, namely being competent school counselors.

Hence, most school counselors interviewed believed that teaching experience is helpful but not necessary in order for school counselors to be competent at their jobs. However, several counselors have mentioned the necessity and importance for school counselors to observe classrooms and collaborate with all school members in order to guarantee the well-being of all students.

Perceptions of Teachers

Out of the nine teachers interviewed, seven strongly believed that teaching experience is helpful but not necessary for school counselors. From the remaining two teachers, one believed that teaching experience was neither beneficial nor essential whereas the other teacher believed that prior teaching experience for school counselors should be a requirement. According to a high school teacher, one year of teaching experience should be enough for teachers prior to becoming school counselors. She believed that the counselor would be able to understand the class atmosphere, the students’ reactions when they are tired, when they are lazy, when they are happy, when they are excited or hyper. But she clearly stated that she doesn’t believe this year of teaching experience is essential.

A middle school teacher also mentioned:
Personally yes, I think it will be very helpful for counselors to have prior teaching experience. I extend my same belief to an administrator being a teacher before becoming an administrator simply because you cannot just give theories, hypothesize about things without you really going through the experience yourself.

**Character of counselors.** Several teachers mentioned that the character of the counselors is very important and will determine whether they will be competent at their jobs, regardless of teaching experience. The counselor’s profile, set of attributes that he/she possesses will highly affect his/her work with students, teachers, parents and administrators. As a high school teacher said:

*It depends on the character of the counselor. For example, our high school counselor is new to us but she’s been very active, being in and out of classes, talking to teachers, talking to students, reporting incidents. I don’t know whether she had taught before.*

Thus, most school teachers interviewed believed that teaching experience is helpful but not necessary for school counselors. Many teachers have mentioned the importance of the character of a school counselor and how this specific trait is very important and will determine whether a counselor will be competent at his/her job.

**Principals’ Perceptions**

From the nine principals interviewed, eight strongly believed that teaching experience for school counselors was helpful but not necessary. One principal believed that teaching experience should be a prerequisite. An elementary principal thought that once a counselor is in the school environment and was trained as a teacher it definitely wouldn’t hurt. She also added:
If the counselor enters a classroom, he/she can talk to kids; he/she can learn it as part of her job as well. It is a skill to be able to enter and teach a group of kids. It is a skill that one can develop.

A high school principal didn’t believe that teaching experience for school counselors should be an absolute requirement. The middle school principal at that same school also believed that teaching experience is not a must but could be helpful to counselors. He also added:

I worked with counselors who have never taught before and they do great, they are well trained and work well with kids. However, I think it is highly helpful to have teaching experience for their jobs. Having that said, there are fabulous counselors out there who have never taught, there are counselors that have teaching experience but I don’t think that they are strong counselors.

**Classroom observations and field training.** Many principals mentioned in their responses the importance and necessity for school counselors to have stepped into classrooms in order to perform classroom observations and understand the dynamics that occur in a classroom. A middle school principal mentioned that she wouldn’t hire a school counselor who has never set foot in a classroom or worked in a school before. According to her, this doesn’t mean that the counselor has to have prior teaching experience. But the school counselor must have observed classes and know what a classroom looks like and how students function in class. Several principals also talked about including teaching experiences for school counselors during their field training experience. An elementary principal said:

It wouldn’t be detrimental if part of the counseling course was to have the person do some student teaching in the classroom, present some sessions in the classroom because it is a skill. You need to work on it. But I wouldn’t say that it needs to be like a heavy focus.
Another elementary principal mentioned:

*But I think the bigger issue is whether counselors have had some experience during their training around classroom management, around working with kids at different developmental levels and understanding what kids at different stages of development need and plan lessons. So I am not sure that the teaching experience itself is as important as the training and field work. I think that field work should include actual teachings in classrooms and organizing lessons and classroom management. It is not necessary to have it, what is most important is to have field work experience.*

**Character of Counselors.** A high school principal believed that what really matters is the school counselor’s character in order for him/her to be competent at his/her job. There is a specific profile that is needed for a person to perform competently at this job. The high school principal also mentioned that once you list the profile, having these attributes are far more important than whether a person has a teaching experience or not. He also added:

*Many people enter the classroom and tell you they have twenty years of experience, but in reality what they have is one year of experience repeated nineteen additional years. You have traits in this profile such as compassion, intelligence, knowing how to solve problems (conflict resolution). It depends on the character of the person, not teaching experience. You need to have emotional intelligence to be a good counselor.*

All school principals interviewed believed that teaching experience is helpful but not necessary in order for school counselors to be competent at their jobs. Several principals have mentioned the necessity and importance for school counselors to observe classrooms and receive extra training in teaching during
their field work. One principal also mentioned the importance of a counselor’s character and how this specific trait will help him/her succeed at his/her job.

Hence, more than half of all the participants (23 out of 27) interviewed believed that teaching experience is helpful but not necessary for school counselors to be competent at their jobs. However, they highlighted some dimensions that they believed would be useful for counselors like classroom observations, extra training in teaching during counselors’ field work and counselors’ characters as being very important elements that determined whether school counselors will be competent at their jobs or not.

**Advantages of Teaching Experience for School Counselors**

Out of the 27 participants interviewed, 25 (93%) believed that teaching experience can help the job of school counselors in several domains. Chart 2 portrays all the participants who believed that teaching experience can add to a school counselor’s repertoire of knowledge and skills. The chart also presents the percentage of coverage per participant (how many times each participant has referred to this particular theme during the interview process).
Teaching Experience can Help the Job of a School Counselor in Several Domains (1)

Chart 2

Note. HT2 = high school teacher at school 2; MP2 = middle school principal at school 2; MT3 = middle school teacher at school 3; HC1 = high school counselor at school 1; HC2 = high school counselor at school 2; HT1 = high school teacher at school 1; EP1= elementary principal at school 1; MT2 = middle school teacher at school 2; HT3: high school teacher at school 3; MC2 = middle school counselor at school 2; ET1 = elementary school teacher at school 1; EC2 = elementary school counselor at school 2; HP2:= high school principal at school 2; MC3 = middle school counselor at school 3; MT1 = middle school teacher at school 1; HC3 = high school counselor at school 3; MC1 = middle school counselor at school 1; MP1= middle school principal at school 1; ET2 = elementary teacher at school 2; HP1= high school principal at school 1; MP3 = middle school principal at school 3; EP3 = elementary school principal at school 3; EP2= elementary school principal at school 2; EC1= elementary school counselor at school 1; EC3 = elementary school counselor at school 3
Model 1 presents all the domains mentioned by participants that can help a school counselor at his/her job:

Model 1

*Teaching Experience can Help the Job of a School Counselor in Several Domains (2)*
Table 5 represents how many times each participant referred to a specific domain during the interview process:

Table 5

_Counselors’, Teachers’ and Principals’ Responses to Domains_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>C M RL 0</th>
<th>See things from different perspectives</th>
<th>C 0 0 1 2</th>
<th>Empathy 0 0</th>
<th>P L 1 0</th>
<th>Trust 1 0</th>
<th>DL 0 0</th>
<th>Dynamic ST 1 1</th>
<th>CE 1 1</th>
<th>OS 4 1</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Teachers     |          |                                        |           |             |         |         |        |                |      |         |        |                |
| E            | 1        | 0                                      | 1         | 0           | 0       | 0       | 0      | 0              | 0    | 0       | 0      | 3               |
| M            | 0        | 1                                      | 1         | 0           | 0       | 0       | 0      | 0              | 0    | 0       | 1      | 3               |
| H            | 0        | 0                                      | 0         | 0           | 0       | 1       | 0      | 2              | 0    | 1       | 1      | 4               |
| Total        | 1        | 1                                      | 1         | 0           | 0       | 0       | 1      | 2              | 0    | 2       | 2      | 10              |

| Principals   |          |                                        |           |             |         |         |        |                |      |         |        |                |
| E            | 2        | 0                                      | 0         | 1           | 1       | 0       | 2      | 0              | 1    | 0       | 1      | 8               |
| M            | 1        | 0                                      | 1         | 1           | 1       | 1       | 0      | 0              | 2    | 2       | 3      | 12              |
| H            | 0        | 1                                      | 0         | 0           | 0       | 0       | 0      | 0              | 0    | 1       | 0      | 2               |
| Total        | 3        | 1                                      | 0         | 2           | 1       | 2       | 1      | 2              | 3    | 3       | 4      | 22              |

| Total        | 7        | 5                                      | 3         | 2           | 12      | 4       | 1      | 6              | 3    | 6       | 4      | 10              |

Note. E = elementary school; M = middle school; H = high school; CM = classroom management; RL = realistic tips; C = credibility; PL = plan lessons; DL = developmental levels of students; Dynamic ST = dynamic student teacher; CE = classroom environment; OS = organization of the school; WC= whole child; T= total

According to table 5, the most popular domains mentioned by participants were: classroom management (total of 7 participants), whole child (total of 10 participants) and empathy (total of 12 participants). There were other domains that weren’t as popular but suggested by participants namely:
realistic tips (5 participants), developmental levels of students (6 participants) and classroom environment (6 participants).

Based on participants’ responses, the researcher was able to group all the suggested domains into three main headings, namely: enhancing school counselors’ understanding of students is section will present the three groups separately.

Enhancing School Counselors’ Understanding of Students

Counselors See Things from Different Perspectives. Three out of 27 (11%) participants mentioned that prior teaching experience can allow school counselors to see things from different perspectives. As a middle school counselor suggested:

Although the counselor’s job is to advocate for the students, but still you can be more objective in helping solve the situation, you could see it from different perspectives and try to find mid-way between the student and teachers.

Another middle school counselor mentioned that counselors with prior teaching experience get the perspectives of everybody. The counselor will learn to listen to everyone’s perspectives and reasoning, looking objectively at the situation and not taking sides. Another middle school counselor suggested that teaching experience allows the counselor to have a global image of the situation, looking at things from different perspectives.

Few participants believed that prior teaching experience can allow school counselors to become better at seeing things from different perspectives.
Understand different developmental levels of students. Six participants (22%) have mentioned that teaching experience can help counselors understand the various developmental levels of students.

An elementary principal suggested:

*Counseling/communication goes hand in hand. If you understand what grade one people are all about, then you will be able to speak with them. Knowing what their social life is like, what their learning is like. You talk to Grade 5 in a different way for example than Grade One.*

A high school teacher mentioned that prior teaching experience will help counselors know the mentality of the students, how to deal with them, and how to be patient with them. The teacher also added that school counselors would have faced student problems at different grade levels and would know what to expect from students at a particular grade level.

A middle school teacher also added:

*Prior teaching experience will help counselors understand how the kids think especially at different ages.*

Hence, some participants do believe that prior teaching experience can help school counselors better understand the different developmental levels of students.

Understand student-teacher dynamics and classroom environment. There were nine out of 27 participants (33%) in this study who believed that prior teaching experience for school counselors can help them understand student-teacher dynamics and classroom environment.

As an elementary counselor suggested:
That dynamic of teacher student relationship is very particular and unique and it is an added value for a counselor to go through it.

Participants also mentioned that teaching experience for school counselors can bring a sense of understanding to what the classroom teacher is dealing with and the realities of a classroom. They also mentioned that understanding such dynamics will help school counselors understand how the relationship between students and teachers can impact students learning. A high school teacher also added:

There are just so many things you see in a kid in class that if you hadn’t had that experience I don’t know if you can counsel them.

A middle school counselor also mentioned:

The thing that helped me the most from my prior teaching experience was when a student comes and shares with me a problem with a teacher, I would understand directly what is happening in the classroom because I know the dynamics of the classroom. Then I listen to what the teachers has to say and would have a global idea of what is happening. I am not saying that if a counselor didn’t teach before they would not reach the same conclusions and solutions that I come up with but I may understand it faster.

Many participants believed that prior teaching experience for school counselors will allow them to understand the dynamics between students and teachers, as well at the classroom environment.

**Understand organization of the school.** Four out of 27 participants (15%) said that prior teaching experience can help counselors understand the organization of the school. As a high school counselor suggested:
Prior teaching experience for school counselors can help them understand the organization in terms of school and how it works and who to collaborate with about what. It is so very different from private practice or clinical psychology.

Thus, understanding the organization of the school was not a popular domain suggested by participants.

Understand the whole child. In this study, 10 out 27 participants (37%) mentioned that prior teaching experience can help school counselors at their job by understanding the whole child.

As an elementary principal said:

You will get to know the students more, you will get to know how they think. Having taught will allow the counselor to know more about students’ backgrounds, the way they behave in class all day long, their academic abilities.

An elementary counselor believed that teaching experience can allow counselors to see the whole child, not only one part of the child. She added that it will allow counselors to see the child in a “learning environment” and see the child as one among others, in a large group.

A high school counselor said:

Having prior teaching experience will allow you to learn what students like, what they don’t like, what they expect, what bothers them, these things that probably even if you read about them it is different.

Another high school counselor mentioned:
If the counselor has worked in the classroom, it will help him/her know what a kid usually does in class; what is expected from him in class, what are their time constraints, their work constraints, things like that. You are going to see some pieces of him that you may not see if you haven’t been a teacher before. I would worry about a counselor who doesn’t have this sense of wholeness of the kid. That experience in the classroom helps them realize what this poor kid has to deal with. There has got to be some kind of interaction with kids in classroom situations, that allows the counselor to get a broader view of students in general and maybe a student specifically.

A middle school principal believed that if counselors had teaching skills, they can relate to what the students are going through. Another middle school principal shared similar ideas but also added:

*It is important for counselors to see how students work in groups, how they coordinate with each other, how they interact, how they participate in class activities. It will give you a better understanding of the child.*

A middle school counselor said:

*Prior teaching experience helps the counselor see the whole image. When a student comes to you complaining about a teacher picking on him for example, they tell you what happened and as a counselor you would know, having been there in the classroom as a teacher, working with a big group of students and delivering content.*

According to many participants, prior teaching experience for school counselors will allow them to be more competent at understanding the whole child and cater to all students’ needs.
Improving Relations with Teachers

Credibility and building trust with counselors who have teaching experience. The elementary and middle school principals (7% of the respondents) mentioned that prior teaching experience for school counselors can add to the credibility of counselors. According to one elementary principal, if the role of the counselor is to go in and give some classroom instruction, some prior teaching experience can bring credibility to the counselors as they enter a classroom.

A middle school principal’s response was similar. He noted:

If the counselor has been in the “teachers’ shoes”, this will help develop a certain amount of credibility among teachers closely working with the counselors.

The middle school principal also believed that prior teaching experience for school counselors can help build a relationship of trust among teachers and counselors.

Thus, credibility of counselors who have prior teaching experience as well as building trust with teachers was not a popular domain.

Empathize with teachers. Twelve out of 27 participants (44%) in total mentioned that prior teaching experience can help school counselors empathize with teachers. As an elementary teacher mentioned:

You will understand when a teacher will say this student can’t sit still for example. I have tried several techniques with that particular student but it is not working. You will understand when a student comes to you and tells you that a teacher won’t listen to me.
Two elementary counselors as well as one teacher believed that if a counselor has a teaching background, then maybe he/she will be more alert to certain aspects of teaching and certain problems a teacher could face in class. They will be able to have more realistic expectations of teachers.

A high school counselor suggested:

*Prior teaching experience for counselors will help them understand where teachers are coming from and trying to bridge that gap between teacher and student, teacher and parent, teacher and administrator (all of that). So there’s that empathy, that understanding. I have worked with people who have not taught and I find that often they can be in conflict, and then things become departmentalized “this is your job as a teacher and this is your job as a counselor”; things become isolated.*

Thus, a large number of participants believed that counselors who have taught would be able to easily empathize with teachers.

**Developing Practical Skills in the Classroom**

**Classroom management.** The numbers of participants (including counselors, teachers and principals) who have mentioned classroom management as an important domain are seven out of 27 (26%). As an elementary teacher said:

*It helps the counselor manage the group and understand the management that is involved in classrooms.*

An elementary counselor also mentioned that she uses the same techniques that teachers use in class and this helps her manage the classroom. This specific counselor has never taught before but learned some classroom management strategies based on her classroom observations. The elementary principal at
that same school highlighted the importance of classroom management skills for school counselors. She believes that this is an essential domain; counselors who have had prior teaching experience would have hopefully mastered those classroom management skills. A high school counselor mentioned that her prior teaching experience has helped her a lot in managing classrooms. She has learned how to deal with students.

A middle school counselor also said regarding this particular domain:

*Presenting to the students every day when I was a teacher helped me a lot. You have an audience of 16 students, not one-on-one meetings. I don’t feel I would be able to deliver workshops efficiently if I wasn’t trained to do so with my students.*

Thus, classroom management was mentioned by several participants as an essential domain; counselors with teaching experience will be at an advantage, having a repertoire of classroom strategies.

**Providing more tangible realistic tips for teachers.** The numbers of participants (including counselors, teachers and principals) who have mentioned that counselors can provide more tangible realistic tips for teachers are five out of 27, (19%). According to an elementary counselor:

*Having prior teaching experience helps counselors identify the limitations of the teachers; they would know more about the limitations of the program itself, what cannot be done in a classroom. Being a teacher, you see things differently than not being a teacher and just starting as a counselor. You need to understand the limitations of how things happen in a classroom. There are limitations; there are things that we need to be aware of. The teacher at the end of the day she has 20 kids not only one or two kids who need more attention. She has a certain curriculum, she has to*
follow a certain pace so if you already have this in mind when you are altering things you take
them into consideration while if you were not a classroom teacher you would not see this.

A high school principal emphasized the importance of living with a child on a daily basis. He also added:

The counselor cannot start to make theories about how long a student needs to work every evening if
he/she does not know what the child is going through on a daily basis. Prior teaching experience can
help the counselor live with a child on a daily basis.

A middle school counselor said that she can give more tangible, hands on ideas to solve problems
related to classroom management because she was a teacher before and knows that applying theories in
the classroom is not always possible. A middle school teacher added that teaching experience for school
counselors will help the counselors know what to expect from students. She also said:

I cannot go and provide teachers with theories on how to work with students if I have never been
into a classroom.

Hence, several participants believed that prior teaching experience can help counselors provide
teachers with tangible tips that they will be able to use in their classrooms.

Plan lessons (character education and advisory sessions). Four out of 27 participants (15%)
suggested that having prior teaching experience for counselors will help them plan lessons for students
regarding character education or advisory sessions for middle and high school students.
As a high school teacher said:

_The timing of teaching is so important and also how to relate to kids and talk to them about things that may not be comfortable to you. So, I do the lessons, it helps me to have prior teaching experience, and then that helps the teachers and that in turn helps the kids._

A middle school counselor mentioned:

_It so happened that I taught all levels, and therefore it gives me a general idea of the level of maturity of the students. You would experience students’ maturity levels rather than simply reading about it in a book (theories)._  

Prior teaching experience, according to most participants does not allow the counselor to become more competent at planning lessons for character education or advisory sessions.

According to the participants of this study, prior teaching experience for school counselors can positively affect several domains within the counselor’s job, namely: classroom management, providing realistic tips for teachers, seeing things from different perspectives, building a sense of credibility, empathizing with teachers, planning lessons, understanding the whole child and the different developmental levels of students, understanding student-teacher dynamics and the classroom environment as well as the organization of a school. The most popular domains were empathizing with teachers (44%), understanding the whole child (37%) and understanding the student-teacher dynamics and classroom environment (33%).
Survey Descriptive Statistics

This section presents the results of the one-page survey completed by all participants.

Table 6

*Frequency of Counselors/Teachers’ and Principals’ perceptions/Item*

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<th>Participants</th>
<th>SA/A</th>
<th>D/SD</th>
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<td>Counselors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
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<td>Principals</td>
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**Frequency of Counselors/Teachers’ and Principals’ perceptions/Item (continued)**

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Frequency of Counselors/Teachers’ and Principals’ perceptions/Item (continued)

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Frequency of Counselors/Teachers’ and Principals’ perceptions/Item (continued)

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Note. SA/A = strongly agree/agree; U = undecided; D/SD: disagree/ strongly disagree
The survey results portray whether prior teaching experience for school counselors can positively affect the activities performed by counselors at their jobs. Under the curriculum component, classroom teaching and group guidance had one of the highest means in the survey (4.5). Under the individual planning component, individual advisement and educational planning had the highest means for this specific component (4.1 and 4.4 respectively).

In the responsive services component, the highest means were for classroom observations, consultation staff and group counseling (4.6, 4 and 4.2 respectively). As for system support component, program development had the highest mean of 4.1.

Hence, the results in general show that most of the participants’ answers were between the “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” categories.

The lowest means/item were for career plan/portfolio under individual planning component (3.5), crisis intervention and letters of recommendation under responsive services (3.4 each).
Chapter V

DISCUSSION

In this final chapter, the main findings of this research study will be discussed in light of previous research. In addition, the limitations, implications for practice and recommendations for future research will be presented.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the perceptions of counselors, teachers and principals on whether they believed prior teaching experience is necessary for school counselors to be competent at their jobs. Several major themes were derived from the findings of the interviews and survey.

Firstly, the results of this study showed that participants agreed that the main role of school counselors is to cater for students’ social and emotional development. The counselors seemed to be spending most of their hours at work under the responsive services component. However, in all three schools they were starting to implement the other three components (guidance curriculum, individual planning and system support).

Although school counselors interviewed for this study were beginning to follow all four components suggested by the ASCA, these schools do not yet have a fully developed counseling program. According to Hamzeh (2008), many of the counselors in her study (from both public and private schools in Lebanon), were not following a structured developmental program at their schools.

The researcher believes that one main reason for this finding is that the MOE in Lebanon has not yet established a policy to integrate school counseling into the educational system at all levels, (Ayyash-Abdo, Allamudin, & Mukallid, 2010). As Ayyash-Abdo, Allamudin, and Mukallid (2010) suggested, more effort is required by the MOE to clarify the role and purpose of school counseling; the effort should be focused on a framework that includes a preventive, developmental and remedial function.
Another major finding in this study was that according to school counselors, teachers and principals, teaching experience for school counselors was perceived as not being necessary but very helpful. According to the existing literature, researchers found that although counselors believed that teaching experience was not necessary, they also believed that teaching experience could be helpful, namely in allowing counselors to understand the school setting and giving them more credibility with teachers (Smith, 2001). More recently, in a study conducted by Bringman, Nancy and Sang Min Lee (2008), findings have shown that although teaching experience was helpful, it was not necessary for school counselors to feel competent when conducting developmental lessons.

Previous studies also showed that school principals believed that prior teaching experience was not necessary for school counselors, but could be advantageous (Olson & Allen, 1993; Criswell, 2004). It is worth noting that the existing literature has showed that teachers believe teaching experience to be necessary for school counselors. In this study, however, teachers believed that prior teaching experience for counselors was not a necessity but an advantage.

As Criswell (1994) mentioned in her study, teachers perceived school counselors with prior teaching experience to be most effective in areas of general and specific counselor functions. According to previous studies, teachers believed that if a school counselor does not understand the teaching experience, if they’ve never had to deal with classroom behaviors or learn classroom management skills, it leaves them in a position to be viewed as ill-equipped to deal with students and collaborate with classroom teachers and school administrators (Quarto, 1999; Roberts, 2009; Smith, 2009).

Out of the nine teachers interviewed in this study, seven believed that teaching experience was helpful but not necessary. One cause for this finding could be that teachers do not often have counselors come in their classrooms to deliver lessons according to a school guidance program. The main role of
school counselors interviewed was under the responsive services component. Counselors spend more time in the intervention process than in the proactive process.

Participants in this study suggested alternatives to prior teaching experience, namely: classroom observations, gaining teaching experience through counselors’ field work training, collaboration between counselors and teachers as well as the character and attributes of the counselor.

According to Smith (2001), counselors in U.S states without the teaching requirement maintained that teaching experience is not needed and cited reasons such as counselors’ personal characteristics and skills as measures of competency. This relates to what some participants mentioned regarding the importance of the character of school counselors. Previous research also indicated that school counselors are taught to be competent in the school environment through fieldwork and coursework (Smith, 2001).

Previous research studies also mentioned the importance of counseling experience versus teaching experience. As Brigman, Nancy and Sang Min Lee (2008) mentioned, the most important factor for self-perceived competence in developmental classroom lessons was the school counseling experience counselors had. Interestingly, for most participants in this study, the main alternative to prior teaching experience for counselors was classroom observation. Only one counselor in this study mentioned counseling experience as an alternative to teaching experience.

According to the results of this study, the percentage of coverage for the helpfulness of teaching experience rather than its necessity is very high for participants at School 2. One plausible reason could be that counselors at this school seemed to be pro-actively involved with students in the classroom. The elementary counselor enters classes and delivers character education lessons, mainly during morning meetings. Also, middle and high school counselors are highly involved in the planning of the advisory program and they are also advisors to a group of students, delivering advisory sessions like other teachers.
This could have affected participants’ perceptions of the role of the school counselors at their school and thus they were able to elaborate more on the importance of prior teaching experience for school counselors, even though they deemed it not necessary for competence.

Another major theme that was derived from the interviews and survey results was that teaching experience can positively affect the job of school counselors in several domains, namely: classroom management, providing realistic tips for teachers, seeing things from different perspectives, building a sense of credibility, empathizing with teachers, planning lessons, understanding the whole child and different developmental levels of students, understanding student-teacher dynamics and the classroom environment as well as the organization of the school. The researcher categorized these domains into three groups, namely: enhancing school counselors’ understanding of students, improving relations with teachers and developing practical skills in the classroom.

Counselors and principals in this study mentioned the majority of domains during the interview process, (a total of 31 domain instances for counselors and 22 domain instances for principals). The total number of domains instances mentioned by teachers on the other hand was just 10. One possible reason for such a low number could be that counselors do not often visit classrooms to teach character education classes, resulting in low teacher awareness of the potential advantages of teaching experience for counselors (there was no developed school guidance and counseling program in any of the three schools interviewed).

Survey results also showed that prior teaching experience could positively affect various school counselors’ activities. The items with the highest means were: classroom observations (4.6), classroom teaching (4.5), group guidance (4.5), education planning (4.4), group counseling (4.2), individual advisement and program development (4.1 each) and consultation staff (4). According to the survey
results, it was evident that counselors, teachers and principals believed that prior teaching experience would benefit counselors entering the classroom and delivering lessons and group guidance.

As suggested in the domains mentioned by participants during the interviews, prior teaching experience could equip school counselors with classroom management skills and this would help counselors work competently with a large number of students in classrooms.

It was also mentioned by participants that prior teaching experience could allow school counselors to proficiently plan character education or advisory sessions for students. According to participants, counselors who have taught would find it easier to plan and deliver lessons to a large number of students. Several counselors mentioned that having taught before allowed them to be equipped with various classroom management techniques and gave them confidence to deliver a lesson in front of a large group of students. This strongly relates to the program development item in the survey that was highly rated by participants, with a mean of 4. Having prior teaching experience would allow the counselor for example to develop the counseling program more competently and confidently. According to previous research, teachers considered that counselors with previous teaching experience were able to plan lessons and teach and monitor classroom behavior based on experience (Roberts, 2009).

Under the individual planning component of the survey, educational planning and individual advisement were highly rated items by participants, meaning that prior teaching experience for a school counselor would positively affect the job of such a counselor in these two activities. This could be related to the fact that counselors with teaching experience have worked with students in a classroom setting and know what to expect from students at different developmental levels. In fact, during the interview process for this study, participants suggested “understanding students’ different developmental levels” as one of the domains that would be improved by prior teaching experience.
Under the responsive services component, the highest means per item were consultation/staff (4), group counseling (4.2) and classroom observation (4.6). One plausible reason for the high mean under the consultation/staff item could be that counselors who have taught would be able to empathize with teachers, can provide realistic tips, and are trusted by their co-workers, mainly teachers. Also, teachers would view counselors as credible. Counselors’ relationships with teachers would be stronger since they would have been in “teachers’ shoes” and know what to expect from both students and teachers. This would allow them to provide teachers with valuable, realistic feedback that would be helpful to both students and teachers. Thus, teachers would seek counselors more often for consultation and advice.

According to Roberts (2009) teachers feel connected to a counselor who has prior teaching experience as they trust someone who has “walked in their shoes” and know the day to day struggles that classroom teachers face.

One probable reason for the high mean under the group counseling item could be that if students are having problems in the classroom with their teachers, counselors with prior teaching experience would be able to see things from different perspectives and understand the dynamic between student and teacher. As for classroom observations, it could be that counselors with prior teaching experience are able to easily notice and understand students’ behaviors in a classroom setting while doing classroom observations.

Thus, findings from the participants’ interview responses and survey results are highly related: prior teaching experience for school counselors was perceived to positively affect a majority of domains and activities performed by school counselors.

Findings from this study are in alignment with previous research related to the topic being studied. The review of the literature showed that prior teaching experience may add to a school counselor’s repertoire of skills and knowledge. According to Smith (2001), prior teaching experience helped
counselors understand the school setting and gave them more credibility with teachers. Some counselors believed that teaching experience added to the counselor’s classroom management skills, increased the credibility with teachers, and helped them understand problems that were unique to schools (Smith, 2001). Teaching experience added to the counselors’ repertoire of skills in terms of classroom management, conferencing with parents and coping with school politics (Roberts, 2009).

While conducting the interviews, the researcher noted that counselors with and without teaching experience believed that prior teaching experience is considered to be a bonus but not necessary. Only one counselor believed that teaching experience was necessary. The rest believed that not having prior teaching experience does not imply that the school counselor will not be competent at his/her job. However, teaching experience can be very helpful and add to a school counselor’s repertoire of knowledge and skills.

In a country where the counseling profession is relatively a new one, it is essential for the MOE to have a unified view of the counseling profession and the counseling program that is to be followed by public and private schools. Training student counselors is essential in order for them to be competent at their jobs. The MOE and graduate schools should take into consideration the results of this study. It is evident that teaching experience should not be a requirement for school counselors. However, counselors need to be equipped with several teaching skills that will allow them to be competent at their jobs. This could be obtained with extra field hours experience, working with teachers within a classroom context, observing students in class as well as taking extra courses in classroom management and lesson planning.

**Limitations**

There are several limitations to this study:
1. It was restricted to private schools: results may not be generalized to public elementary, middle and high schools.

2. Central tendency bias concerned with the Likert scale items of the survey: this phenomenon occurs when participants avoid using extreme response categories of the Likert scale items and lean to selecting middle responses, unless they already hold a strong opinion about the specific questions asked (Gall et al., 2005). Since the Likert scale items in our survey are constructed on a five-level scale, there is a higher chance for central tendency bias to occur.

3. This study does not address the actual practice of school counselors: participants in this study were asked to provide their perceptions and thoughts about the particular issue being studied.

4. This study lacks inter-observer agreement in order to validate the analysis of the data.

5. The sample for this study is small yet sufficient for this case study research.

**Implications for Practice**

Research findings from this current study can be used by universities in Lebanon that offer masters in school guidance and counseling as a baseline for feedback, reflections and modification, if necessary, within their programs. The results of this study clearly suggest that teaching experience for school counselors is not necessary but very helpful. According to counselors, teachers and principals who took part in this study, prior teaching experience for school counselors can help the counselors’ work in several domains. Examples of such domains include classroom management, planning character education or advisory sessions, understanding the dynamics of a classroom and how a school functions.

Universities in Lebanon could perhaps use such information in order to enrich their school guidance and counseling graduate programs; they may add more hours of field work where counselors
would enter and observe classrooms or perhaps add courses related to classroom management and lesson planning.

The findings from this study also add to the existing literature related to the characteristics of competent school counselors in delivering a school counseling program.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This current research study was aimed at understanding the perceptions of Lebanese school counselors, teachers and principals regarding the necessity of having teaching experience prior to becoming a school counselor.

Future research on the performance of practicing school counselors relating to their teaching experience should include objective measures of competence such as student outcome data resulting from school counselor interventions. Further research can be conducted with a larger sample in different areas and schools across Lebanon to obtain more generalizable results.
APPENDIX I
INTERVIEW

Before interview begins, the researcher will collect information on:

- Job of interviewee (whether he/she is a principal, counselor or teacher)
- Division in which he/she works in (elementary, middle or high school)
- Years of experience (should mention other jobs they had if any)
- Degrees of Interviewee

Interview Questions

1. How would you define school guidance and counseling?

2. What is the role/job of the school counselor in a school? Can you provide me with a brief job description of the school counselor you abide by?

3. In your professional opinion, do you think that prior teaching experience is necessary for school counselors?

4. If yes, why elaborate on reasons, what does teaching experience add to a counselor’s portfolio/repertoire of skills?

5. If not, why not?

The researcher will keep in mind the following themes that were extracted from the literature review in order to guide her probe and lead the interview:

- Counselors with teaching experience have better understanding of what goes on in classrooms.
• Teaching experience gives counselors confidence and allows them to connect with other educational professionals.

• Teachers trust counselors with teaching experience.

• Counselors with teaching experience know classroom management, discipline, conferencing with parents and school politics.

• Counselors with no teaching experience may not have enough student contact, need to learn strategies that are developmentally appropriate.

• Counselors with no teaching experience may be more open to learning the ways of the school through eyes of a school counselor.

• Counselors with no teaching experience should take more courses to help them understand the K-2 school environment (through mentoring).

• Counseling experience is more important than teaching experience.
APPENDIX II

SURVEY

Please tick the appropriate box

Principal ☐
Teacher ☐
Counselor ☐

Years of experience as principal/teacher/counselor: _________

If you had a previous job, please mention along with years of
experience: ____________________________________________

Directions:

The components provided in this questionnaire reflect the counseling activities performed by school counselors within the school context. Please read each item and choose the extent of agreement/disagreement you think prior teaching experience for school counselors can positively affect such activities and enhance counselors’ competency by putting (✓) under the corresponding blank.

The responses stand for:

(SD) Strongly Disagree
(D) Disagree
(U) Undecided
(A) Agree
(SA) Strongly Agree
Adapted from the Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Program

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<td>4. Referrals</td>
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<td>5. Crisis intervention</td>
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<td>6. Pre-referral/Team</td>
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<td>meetings</td>
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<td>7. Classroom observations</td>
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<td>8. Letters of recommendation</td>
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<td>9. Peer mediation</td>
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<td>10. Student shadowing</td>
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<td>4. Parent programs</td>
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APPENDIX III

IRB FORMS (LETTER TO HEADMASTER, CONSENT FORMS COUNSELORS, PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS)
Study Title: Perceptions of School Counselors, Teachers and Principals of the Necessity of Teaching Experience for School Counselors

Principal Investigator: Dr. Karma El Hassan

Co-Investigator: Maya Dayya

Dear Headmaster,

We would like to invite you to participate in our study that will be conducted in schools under Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human rights regulation. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions that you may have.

• **Project Description**

The purpose of this study is to investigate and better understand the perceptions of school counselors, teachers and principals with respect to the issue of whether teaching experience is necessary in order for school counselors to be competent in delivering the school counseling program (referring to guidance curriculum, responsive services, system support and individual planning). This study will also allow the researcher to collect data on what specific counseling activities would highly benefit from previous teaching experience.

• This study will be conducted in three private schools located in Beirut. The participants will consist of three counselors and three teachers from each school representing various levels: elementary, middle and high school. In addition, the elementary, middle and high school principals from the three schools will take part in this study. Therefore, the total number of participants in this study will be twenty-seven. Since this is a case study, the sample size is acceptable in order to conduct this research.
In this study, participants will take part in a semi-structured interview where the Co-Investigator will be asking specific questions, allowing participants to elaborate their responses regarding teaching experience and the school counselor’s job. Participants will also be asked to fill in a survey in order to determine how previous teaching experience can affect various counseling activities and hence allow school counselors to be successful in their jobs. The interview and filling the survey will take place in school and will depend on the available hours teachers, principals and counselors have. There will be no time limit, participants can take their time answering the interview and filling in the survey. However, the estimated time ranges from 30-40 minutes.

This research is being conducted for the purpose of a Master’s thesis study.

Risks and Benefits
The participation of principals, teachers and counselors in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk beyond the risks of daily life. The benefits of this study include sending the findings of this research to universities in Lebanon that offer masters in school guidance and counseling as a baseline for feedback, reflections and modification if necessary within their programs. The findings will also add to the existing literature related to the characteristics of school counselors to be competent in delivering the school counseling program.

Confidentiality
The information gathered from participants will be kept confidential. To secure the confidentiality of their responses, their names will never be attached to their answers. The interview will be taped so as to make sure that the Co-Investigator remembers accurately all the information provided. The tapes will be kept in a locked drawer with the Principal Investigator during the process of the study and then all data will be destroyed responsibly after the required retention period (three years).

Subject Rights
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your refusal to participate will not affect your school’s relationship with AUB in any possible way. Your decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be entitled at AUB. You may discontinue participation at any time without any penalty.

Contact Information
• If you are interested in taking part of this study, please contact Maya Dayya at 03- 965 731 or by email: mid02@mail.aub.edu or maya286@gmail.com or contact Dr. Karma El- Hassan at 01-350000 ext.3131 or by email: kelhasan@aub.edu.lb. If you feel that your questions have not been answered, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human rights at 01-374 374, ext: 5445 or by email: irb@aub.edu.lb.

• Sincerely,

Karma El Hassan,

Associate Professor, Department of Education & Director, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA)

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

American University of Beirut

Maya Dayya

Graduate Student, Department of Education

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

American University of Beirut

I have read and understood the above information. I voluntarily agree for the principals, teachers and counselors of this school to participate in this study.

____________________            ______________________            ______________________
Name of Headmaster                     Signature of Headmaster                        Date & Time
We are asking you to participate in a research study. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions you may have.

**A. Project Description**
1. In this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview about your opinions on whether you think teaching experience is necessary for school counselors to be competent in delivering the school guidance and counseling program. You will also be asked to complete a survey in order to determine how previous teaching experience can affect various counseling activities and hence allow school counselors to be successful in their jobs.
2. There will be no time limit for the interview and filling out the survey, participants can take their time. However the estimate time to complete this study is approximately 30-40 minutes.
3. Data and information from this study will be shared with the Principal Investigator of this study.

**B. Risks and Benefits**
Your participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk to you beyond the risks of daily life. You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be entitled at AUB.

There are no particular benefits to you personally from participating in the research study. The findings of this research however will be presented to universities in Lebanon that offer masters in school guidance and counseling as a baseline for feedback, reflections and modification if necessary within their programs. The findings will also add to the existing literature related to the characteristics of school counselors to be competent in delivering the school counseling program.

**C. Confidentiality**
Your name will not be attached to your answers so that your confidentiality can be maintained. Your privacy will be ensured in that all data resulting from this study will be analyzed, written, and published in aggregate form.

D. Contact Information
In case of any questions, you may contact Dr. Karma El-Hassan at 01-350000 ext.3131 or by email: kelhasan@aub.edu.lb or Maya Dayya at 03- 965 731 or by email: mid02@mail.aub.edu or maya286@gmail.com. If you feel that your questions have not been answered, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human rights at 01-374 374, ext: 5445 or by email: irb@aub.edu.lb.

E. Subject Rights
Your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate does not involve any penalty. Your refusal to participate will not affect the participant’s relationship with AUB in any possible way. You may skip any question on the surveys that you do not wish to answer; you may skip answering any question during the interview just by saying “skip”. A copy of this consent document is available to you for your records if you so choose.

F. Permission to Tape the Interview
I would like to tape record this interview so as to make sure that I remember accurately all the information you provide. I will keep these tapes in a locked file drawer in the Principal Investigator’s office and then all data will be destroyed responsibly after the required retention period (three years). They will only be used by me and the Principal Investigator. You may still participate in the interview if you do not want to be taped. The researcher would hence be taking notes during the interview rather than recording participants’ voices.

Sincerely,

Maya Dayya

Graduate Student, Department of Education

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

American University of Beirut

I have read and understood the above information. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

____________________             ____________________                ____________________
Name of Participant                   Signature of Participant                  Date & Time
**AUB**

**Department of Education**

**Consent Form Principals**

**Study Title:** Perceptions of School Counselors, Teachers and Principals of the Necessity of Teaching Experience for School Counselors

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Karma El Hassan

**Co-Investigator:** Maya Dayya

We are asking you to participate in a research study. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions you may have.

**G. Project Description**

4. In this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview about your opinions on whether you think teaching experience is necessary for school counselors to be competent in delivering the school guidance and counseling program. You will also be asked to complete a survey in order to determine how previous teaching experience can affect various counseling activities and hence allow school counselors to be successful in their jobs.

5. There will be no time limit for the interview and filling out the survey, participants can take their time. However the estimate time to complete this study is approximately 30-40 minutes.

6. Data and information from this study will be shared with the Principal Investigator of this study.

**H. Risks and Benefits**

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk to you beyond the risks of daily life. You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be entitled at AUB.

There are no particular benefits to you personally from participating in the research study. The findings of this research however will be presented to universities in Lebanon that offer masters in school guidance and counseling as a baseline for feedback, reflections and modification if necessary within their programs. The findings will also add to the existing literature related to the characteristics of school counselors to be competent in delivering the school counseling program.

**I. Confidentiality**
Your name will not be attached to your answers so that your confidentiality can be maintained. Your privacy will be ensured in that all data resulting from this study will be analyzed, written, and published in aggregate form.

J. Contact Information
In case of any questions, you may contact Dr. Karma El-Hassan at 01-350000 ext.3131 or by email: kelhasan@aub.edu.lb or Maya Dayya at 03- 965 731 or by email: mid02@mail.aub.edu or maya286@gmail.com. If you feel that your questions have not been answered, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human rights at 01-374 374, ext: 5445 or by email: irb@aub.edu.lb.

K. Subject Rights
Your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate does not involve any penalty. Your refusal to participate will not affect the participant’s relationship with AUB in any possible way. You may skip any question on the surveys that you do not wish to answer; you may skip answering any question during the interview just by saying “skip”. A copy of this consent document is available to you for your records if you so choose.

L. Permission to Tape the Interview
I would like to tape record this interview so as to make sure that I remember accurately all the information you provide. I will keep these tapes in a locked file drawer in the Principal Investigator’s office and then all data will be destroyed responsibly after the required retention period (three years). They will only be used by me and the Principal Investigator. You may still participate in the interview if you do not want to be taped. The researcher would hence be taking notes during the interview rather than recording participants’ voices.

Sincerely,

Maya Dayya

Graduate Student, Department of Education

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

American University of Beirut

I have read and understood the above information. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

__________________________  ___________________________  ____________________
Name of Participant           Signature of Participant           Date & Time
**Study Title:** Perceptions of School Counselors, Teachers and Principals of the Necessity of Teaching Experience for School Counselors

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Karma El Hassan

**Co-Investigator:** Maya Dayya

We are asking you to participate in a research study. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions you may have.

**M. Project Description**

7. In this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview about your opinions on whether you think teaching experience is necessary for school counselors to be competent in delivering the school guidance and counseling program. You will also be asked to complete a survey in order to determine how previous teaching experience can affect various counseling activities and hence allow school counselors to be successful in their jobs.

8. There will be no time limit for the interview and filling out the survey, participants can take their time. However the estimate time to complete this study is approximately 30-40 minutes.

9. Data and information from this study will be shared with the Principal Investigator of this study.

**N. Risks and Benefits**

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk to you beyond the risks of daily life. You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be entitled at AUB.

There are no particular benefits to you personally from participating in the research study. The findings of this research however will be presented to universities in Lebanon that offer masters in school guidance and counseling as a baseline for feedback, reflections and modification if necessary within their programs. The findings will also add to the existing literature related to the characteristics of school counselors to be competent in delivering the school counseling program.

**O. Confidentiality**

Your name will not be attached to your answers so that your confidentiality can be maintained. Your privacy will be ensured in that all data resulting from this study will be analyzed, written, and published in aggregate form.
P. Contact Information
In case of any questions, you may contact Dr. Karma El-Hassan at 01-350000 ext.3131 or by email: kelhasan@aub.edu.lb or Maya Dayya at 03- 965 731 or by email: mid02@mail.aub.edu or maya286@gmail.com. If you feel that your questions have not been answered, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human rights at 01-374 374, ext: 5445 or by email: irb@aub.edu.lb.

Q. Subject Rights
Your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate does not involve any penalty. Your refusal to participate will not affect the participant’s relationship with AUB in any possible way. You may skip any question on the surveys that you do not wish to answer; you may skip answering any question during the interview just by saying “skip”. A copy of this consent document is available to you for your records if you so choose.

R. Permission to Tape the Interview
I would like to tape record this interview so as to make sure that I remember accurately all the information you provide. I will keep these tapes in a locked file drawer in the Principal Investigator’s office and then all data will be destroyed responsibly after the required retention period (three years). They will only be used by me and the Principal Investigator. You may still participate in the interview if you do not want to be taped. The researcher would hence be taking notes during the interview rather than recording participants’ voices.

Sincerely,

Maya Dayya

Graduate Student, Department of Education

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

American University of Beirut

I have read and understood the above information. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

____________________  ______________________  ______________________
Name of Participant   Signature of Participant  Date & Time
REFERENCES


Bugaile, M. D. (2002). Perceptions of the effectiveness of elementary school counselors who have teaching experience or who do not have teaching experience as viewed by parents, students, and teachers. (Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA, 2002). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 63*(02A), 506.


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