

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELING
FROM TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE: A CASE STUDY

by
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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A school counselor plays a crucial role in the life of any learner at any age. School – based counseling is a somewhat new service in Lebanon. It still needs to be addressed and shaped in order to maximize the benefit of those in need of this service. Not enough research has been done in Lebanon regarding the perceptions of teachers on school–based counseling, whose opinions is of great importance since school teachers are the ones in direct contact with both learner and counselor. This study aims at investigating the perceptions of school teachers on a school-based program in one private school located in Beirut. Three research questions are addressed in this study: (a) what are teachers' perceptions of the school–based program on students' behavior? (b) What are the weaknesses and strengths of the counseling program; and (c) what steps and procedures are needed for effective counseling program?

This is a case study following a mixed method approach aiming at investigating and understanding the perceptions of the participant teachers for improving school–based counseling program. A questionnaire was distributed among over 140 elementary, middle and high school teachers electronically. Sixty six (66) teachers responded to the questionnaire. In-depth individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 teachers, and 3 focus group discussions (FGDs) took place with teachers in the elementary, middle and secondary schools. Each group involved 10 teachers. Finally, semi–structured interviews were conducted with the two counselors at the school.

The collected quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and the qualitative collected data were interpreted. The main findings of this study was that teachers had mixed perceptions towards school counseling programs due to them being left 'in the dark' when it came to the service. The teachers had minimal knowledge about the service, how it is delivered, the students being referred to the counselor and the progress of each case if any. The elementary teachers were the main contributors to the strengths of the service in this study whereas the middle and high school teachers had opinions that are more negative.

In order to render the service a more effective one, the teachers made several suggestions mainly having a clear systematic school counseling core curriculum that would help reach tangible results evident to the teachers. Collaboration between the teachers and the counselors was one of the main findings. The teachers had several ideas for the counselors that would help the students, evoke their interests, and avoid having them get into trouble.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family – my husband Wissam, my one-of-a kind son Said, and my gorgeous daughter Celina. You three make me whole and my life complete. The strength I derive from you is limitless. There is nothing in the world that I want or need more than your presence in it.

I want to always make you proud. This is my life's ambition.

Thank you for your unconditional love and your continuous support.

I love you beyond words...

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background

School counselor's function has changed considerably since the 1960s in time it did not exist at all before the 20th century. It was the responsibility of the teacher to sit with his/her students, listen to their problems whether social, private and/or vocational support and help them sort them out (Bawers& Hatch, 2002; Schmidt, 1999).

In the 1940s and 1950s, Edmund Griffith Williamson produced a new form of school guidance emphasizing teaching skills (Kuhn, 2004). According to Quast (2003), today's school counselor has numerous duties like identifying objectives and purposes, evaluating students' desires, and guiding services within the schools' curriculum. School counselors are also leaders helping students whether individually or in groups (ASCA, 2012), assisting students adapt with any modifications in development.

Students at every stage have different types of problems. For example, elementary students are constantly trying to understand themselves, their peers, family members and/or school not certain of what they value. Thus, the school counselor's job here would be to direct students towards their self-image, value, assurance, and interactions with different family members and peers (Kuhn, 2004). In intermediate classes, on the other hand, children would be focusing on recognizing their own personalities. Their alliance would be to their friends rather than family. At this stage, the school counselor would edify students about their desired skills. It is the duty of the school counselor to improve the child's decision making skills and process towards their future with their support, guidance and professional help.

According to ASCA (2012), comprehensive school- based counseling programs can be best defined as programs implemented by certified/licensed educators who have the responsibility of enhancing success and improving the behaviors for all students equally.

During the last 40 years there have been numerous calls for the development of the school-based counseling services (Theodory, 1982), and the rapid social change in addition to the political instability in Lebanon has contributed to the rising need for the service within the Lebanese schools (Soitman, 1986). According to Khansa (2015), the service has specifically started gaining acceptance in Lebanon after the July 2006 war. Counseling services played a remarkable role in its aftermath. Still, the empirical research necessary to understand the needed process for developing the service in Lebanese schools is unfortunately very limited. Thus, studying the perceptions of school teachers towards school counselors in their schools is not only timely but also necessary.

Because school counselors deal not only with students but also with their parents, the administration and teachers, the definition of a school counselor's role is constantly redefined and modified through the expectation and modifications of the administrators, teachers and parents (Stone & Dahir, 2006). This is especially true in Lebanon since school-based counseling is considered a relatively new profession not yet formally embedded within the educational process. Hence, it is still characterized with ambiguity (Khansa, 2015). Therefore, gaining a clear understanding of the perceptions of those directly involved with school-based counselors inside the school is crucial in order to understand what school counselors have to offer and what recommendations can be made in order to render the service more effective. Teachers are the best and most effective assessors of school-based counselors since they are continuously collaborating with school counselors assessing students' outcomes, refer them to counseling, and evaluate the service (Beesley, 2005; Hamilton-Roberts, 2012).

Context of the Study

The school was situated at the heart of the capital Beirut. There were over 140 teachers currently employed at the school from different nationalities and years of experience. They taught different subjects from preschool until grade 12. There were 820 students from Kindergarten until grade 12. There were two counselors at the school. The first counselor worked with elementary students while the other worked with middle and high school students. Counselors worked with students who were being referred to counseling by teachers for mostly behavioral issues.

This school was chosen for this study for several reasons. First, the researcher worked there so it was easier for her to collect data. In addition, the school was founded 2002 so it was relatively new. Conducting such a study in a 'young' school would help it develop and improve its service according to the teachers who worked there and were dealing directly with the students. In addition, there were two counselors in the school (one for the elementary section and another for middle and high school), thus they were key informants on counseling process and cases. Furthermore, the school catered for students with disabilities and special educational needs thus the several teachers, who taught those students and had background knowledge, would provide information on children's social and emotional needs.

It is worth noting that the school offered special needs services such as occupational therapy, speech therapy and counseling. Moreover, there were several types of support available to the students in each division of the school according to need.

Aims and Research Questions

This study aimed at investigating (a) the perceptions of school teachers on a school-based program in one private school located in Beirut, (b) the attributes and barriers in the school counseling program;

and (c) teachers' suggestions of actionable steps and procedures to improving the school counseling program.

Three research questions were addressed in this study: (a) what are teachers' perceptions of the school-based program on students' behavior?(b) What are the strengths, weaknesses, and barriers to the school counseling program; and (c) what steps and procedures are needed for effective counseling program?

Rationale of the study

It is widely agreed that school counselors play an important role in catering for the child's developmental needs (Saad, 2012).In Lebanon, however, school-based counseling is still a developing field(Ayyash–Abdo, Alamuddin, &Mukallid, 2010), and unfortunately, the Lebanese educational system does not prepare students to face the different societal and psychological challenges since it is based on and reproduced from French and English – American systems (Marlow–Ferguson, 2002 as cited in Saad, 2012).

There is a gap in the national literature that this study aimed to fill through highlighting teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of the school-based counseling service, its effectiveness, impacts and barriers and the teachers' recommendations for improving the service. One study conducted by Khansa (2015) highlighted the perceptions of teachers toward school counselors but not the service itself and/or how it could be improved to serve the learners better.

Ayyash–Abdo et al. (2010)conducted a study on counseling, but also did not shed light on teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the service, its barriers, impacts and suggestions for improvement (Saad, 2012).Hamzeh's study (2008), on the other hand, was found to be examining the perceptions of teachers on the school-based counselors' role but again not the effectiveness of the service.

It merely highlighted the perceptions and misperceptions on the role of school counselors from different perspectives (Saad, 2012). Thus, there was a need for additional research studies to be conducted on the subject matter in order to enrich the Lebanese literature. In addition, since the country's culture shaped the issues and problems individuals may face, western studies could not explain or answer questions that might arise in Lebanon.

Several international studies had been conducted focusing on the teachers' perceptions regarding school based counseling. According to Hamilton–Roberts (2012), school–based counseling is not only helpful but also valuable impacting students' educational engagement, mental health and emotional well-being as well as students' behavior. The barriers, however, have been found to be “the need for more time from the service, shorter waiting lists and more early intervention” (p. 14). This current study intended to find if the results in Lebanon align with previous findings.

On the other hand, Sirotnik (1989) stated, “true reform must go where the action is” (p. 109). Thus, from this standpoint this research study, we would adopt the form of an action research study taking into consideration people's practical concerns within an educational context. This action research aimed to study the school's counseling program from the teachers' perspective in order to identify the effectiveness of the program, its weaknesses, and the teachers' recommendations in order to render the program more influential and effective.

Moreover, this study would be in the form of a case study conducted solely at the school where the researcher worked for a number of reasons. First, it would be more convenient for the researcher to collect data in one place/school, given that this was an action research project. Second, the selected school provided counseling services for a large number of students from K to 12. Third, the selected school was an example of a middle-class private school that adopted counseling program for children who suffered from different emotional and psychological problems. Finally, the school had an Integration and Support

department catering for students with special needs so there were numerous cases there and special workshops were always conducted in order to keep teachers updated with the most recent studies and practices. Therefore, the school served as a good model for this specific topic of the research study.

The results reached in this research could only be generalized to other private schools in Lebanon that had similar counseling programs that catered for children, and provided services for students with special educational needs.

Significance

This study intended to contribute to the school practice and research. The findings would benefit the school administration, counselors, teachers, students, and parents. In other words, this study intended to provide information, and actionable recommendations, based on the teachers' perspectives, to improve the school counseling services and program. It intended to shed light on areas that needed to be addressed and improved in the counseling services. In other words, it highlighted the teachers' actionable recommendations on how to develop the service in a way that could assist the students more effectively. It also created an awareness regarding the service's barriers. Finally, it served as an eye opener for administrators, particularly school principals, on how to design a school counseling program based on the teachers' views.

In terms of research, this study paved the way for new prospects for further research to be conducted along the same line. This action research study benefited further research in other Lebanese public or private schools. The methodology of the study could be adopted in several schools around the country to identify and resolve issues related to school counseling services for children. The number of studies done in Lebanon on this topic is very limited. Thus, the findings of this study would intrigue more researchers

to look deeper into teachers' perceptions on school-based counseling and to consider recommendations in order to improve the school services.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

This chapter presents studies on school counseling programs (SCP), school-based counseling that have been conducted in different parts of the world, teachers' perceptions of the service both nationally and internationally, its strengths and weaknesses, and what would be the suitable actionable steps to enhance it. In addition, I described the theoretical framework I base this study on namely the ASCE (2012), and finally introduced a concluding summary. This specific framework was chosen because it tackles the major components that make up a solid school counseling program i.e. the foundations of the program, the methods of delivering the program (through a number of direct and indirect services that aim to assist students individually in order to reach their personal goals), how the management should be handling and organizing the program, and finally and perhaps most importantly the presence of an accountability factor which would keep anyone working with this program alert.

According to the ASCA (2012) theoretical framework, all counselors should share the same vision and voice. Moreover, the ratio between the counselor and learners is to be 1:250. Another essential point is the importance of collaboration among parents, counselors and other educators, which was a very common theme in this study. Finally yet importantly, 80 % of the counselor's time should be dedicated to the students.

Introduction

School counselors provide school counseling programs in three critical areas: academic, personal/social, and career. Their services and programs assist learners solve emotional, social and/or

behavioral problems and help them in developing a clearer focus and a sense of direction. Effective school counseling programs are important to the school climate as a whole and are a crucial element in enhancing student achievement (ASCA, 2012). Moreover, the Institute of Medicine, and based on its research, has come to the conclusion that mental health and psychological services were essential for a big number of learners in order to achieve academically and also recommended that such services were to be considered mainstream, and not an option.

School-based counseling is an integral part in any school and an important element playing a crucial part in the development of young learners' overall lives. Extensive studies have been conducted internationally discussing the major developments that school-based counseling services have undergone throughout the years. The effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs have been examined and stressed until it has become an essential part of any good school. Hence, it is becoming more and more a necessity to examine and reexamine how this service will continue to support students who need it especially in Lebanese school since the Lebanese body of literature lacks any studies focusing on the effectiveness of the service in Lebanese schools.

School-based Counseling in Lebanon

The calls for developing school-based counseling in Lebanon have been there for the past 40 years (Ayyash-Abdo et. el, 2010). In the year 1996, the UNICEF 'joined forces' with the Guidance and Counseling Office in the Lebanese Ministry of Education in order to train 120 candidates to become school counselors (Ayyash-Abdo et. el, 2010). The Law 1030 was issued in Lebanon by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) stating that the counselors should be allocated in the Lebanese public schools so as to guide the learners develop their social skills, personalities, and choose a proper career that suits them individually (Hamzeh, 2008). Up until 2010, about 100 out of 619 Lebanese public schools had school counselors supervised by 20 school counseling coordinators (Ayyash-Abdo et. el,

2010). Though the public Law 1030 / 97 did not clearly state the roles of the Guidance Counselors, the training material offered by the MEHE to the school counselors incorporated the guidance counselors tasks adopted from the ASCA (Hamzeh, 2008).

Because of the Lebanese political instability along with the rapid social changes taking place in the Lebanese society, there is a pushing need for effective school-based counseling services (Soitman, 1986). Several researchers have discovered that Lebanese students experience a number of academic, social, emotional, and/or physical problems to which school teachers and/or staff, parents (in some cases) do not pay the needed attention to or are not adequately qualified to deal with (Bawers & Hatch, 2002) in time Lebanese educators are completely aware of their students' compelling need for guidance and counseling intervention. Still, however, the advancement of school- based counseling in Lebanon is still considerably slow and research done on this subject in Lebanon is very small in number and almost limited to the role of the school – based counselor(Ayyash–Abdo et al., 2010).

In an aim to provide a clearer understanding of the position of a Lebanese school – based counselor, Saad (2012) interviewed school counselors and school principals from both public and private Lebanese schools on their opinions about the responsibilities, the best characteristics, and the conditions that influence the performance of effective school-based counselors. The results showed a comparative agreement on the responsibilities and the ideal characteristics of a school-based counselor across the different schools and participants. However, the participating counselors revealed their concern regarding the misperceptions and underestimation of their roles, and the 'shaming' linked to counseling in Lebanon. Saad (2012) reached the conclusion that in order for the counselors to have a leading role at any school an effective support from the administration is highly needed, and setting the proper organizational arrangements is crucial at an early phase of the Lebanese counseling programs.

All the above-mentioned studies show that the Lebanese school-based counseling programs are still in their premature stage, which is reflected on the studies, which are limited to researching the role of the school counselor, or some counseling needs at the middle and high school levels. Studies on the school-based counseling needs of elementary students are not yet available in Lebanon, unfortunately.

International teachers' perceptions toward school-based counseling

The literature was extensively researched in order to determine teachers' perceptions towards the service. According to numerous international studies, teachers agreed on the importance of the school-based counseling programs. It was quite evident from the international studies that teachers were aware that school-based counseling is much needed in schools to address students' personal, social, emotional and educational problems (Erenie, 2014;Uzeoshi, 2002).

Teachers' perceptions towards school-based counseling are not too complicated and the findings in most studies align. The most frequently perceived impact to be on students' mental health and emotional well-being in addition to the fact that it is both a helpful and valuable service (Cooper, 2006, 2009; Hamilton-Roberts, 2012). Because of counseling, a troubled child is able to concentrate better in class, develop psychologically, socially and emotionally. Post counseling, a child is able to develop and sustain healthy relationships with friends based on mutual respect, empathy and interests. Whereas those who are emotionally, psychologically or mentally troubled and not provided with the proper counseling service become unable to focus on tasks, have temper tantrums and outbursts, become withdrawn aggressive and unresponsive to their surroundings (Alexander, 2002). Motivation to study, better school attendance, and ability to concentrate in class is another perception of school-based counseling (Cooper, 2006; WG, 2011).

One of the most identified salient improvements perceived in the literature because of school-based counseling was in relation to behavior (WG, 2011). Similarly, Cooper (2009) discovered that in

addition to improvements in emotional symptoms and in-class learning, school-based counseling was significantly associated with improvements in conduct problems, pro-social behavior, as well as peer/friendships problems.

In addition to improvements at the individual level, a handful of studies suggested that school-based counseling programs were perceived as a benefit to the school itself (Cooper, 2004; Fox & Butler, 2003; Loynd, 2002). A study conducted in China, on the other hand, concluded that around half of the teachers were satisfied with school – based counselors’ work, but others either had no contact with them or were dissatisfied with their work partly due to their lack of training and skills (Wang, Ni, Ding & Yi, 2015). Teachers’ dissatisfaction with the service, according to Wang, Ni, Ding and Yi (2015) is the result of counselors’ lack of training and/or needed skills to assist learners psychologically and lack of interaction between counselors and teachers, which was a major theme in the findings of this study based on interviews with the teachers and FGDs.

Strengths of School Counseling Programs in the International Literature

School – based counseling has been directly linked to academic achievement, emotional stability and increasing social interactions among learners. According to (Walker, 2015), SCP is a program that “helps students to make positive changes in one or more domains of their lives” (p. 276). In Prince Edward Island Department of Education (2005) handbook for counselors: “The primary goal of school counseling services is to enhance and promote students learning” (p.5).

Theoretically, school–based counseling programs have the ability to impact a number of factors of young people’s lives in addition to and/or as a result of helping to improve their mental health and emotional well-being. Impacts on mental health and emotional well-being are perceived as the most substantial, followed by improvements in engagement with learning and education, and being an adding

value to the school system. School-based counseling has an impact on learners' behavior when there are clear emotional causes (Hamilton- Roberts, 2012).

In addition, another mostly perceived strength of the counseling service is being mainly for the individual learner in other words it is a service independent from school, confidential, and carries beneficial personal outcomes such as enhanced and improved mental health (e.g. Cooper, 2006, 2009; Hamilton-Roberts, 2012). Both students and teachers have noted confidentiality associated with school-based counseling has been noted as a helpful attribute (Hamilton–Roberts, 2012).

The literature provides an additional strength of the small group counseling intervention techniques. Berger (2013) evaluated the impact of a small group counseling intervention designed for underachieving students. The results of her study demonstrated remarkable improvement for ninth- and tenth-grade underachieving learners in the areas of time management, organizational skills, and motivation.

Weaknesses of School – Based Counseling Programs in the International Literature

On the other hand, studies have also shown several weaknesses in the service. Perceived time limitations of school-based counseling programs, such as the availability and / or lack of counselor availability are a major weakness (Cooper, 2009; WG, 2011). However, the main barrier in the literature that faced the counselors themselves was rooted in the varying understanding teachers and administration regarding their practice, for example, inappropriate referrals, confidentiality, and unrealistic expectations (Hamilton–Roberts, 2012). This tension was also highlighted by school – based counselors in WG (2011) and which is to a certain extent reflective of Jenkins and Polat (2006) study, who propose that when implementing counseling services into school settings, there is a “potential for conflict between counselors and teachers over communicating sensitive client information” (p. 8). The counselors in the Hamilton–Robert’s study (2012) described the sensitive and confidential nature of their work as a type of

‘double bladed sword’, facilitating effective service delivery when it comes to the students; however, acts as a barrier and a cause for tension when working with teachers and / or other professionals in the school context. Jenkins and Polat (2006) also proposed this weakness namely the stress and tension between the counselor’s need to work confidentially on the other hand and the teacher’s need for updated information on the other. This tension was highlighted in Cooper (2009), as well, as an ‘unhelpful factor’ raised by teachers who felt that “counselors should communicate more openly and effectively with pastoral care staff, for instance, more feedback on how clients are doing” (p. 146). This point was further evident in the WG study (2011), with counselors perceiving appreciation level among teachers regarding the confidential nature of school-based counseling programs as a weakness in terms of service application and implementation.

The need for shorter waiting lists, more time from the service and more early intervention were other issues also raised in the literature. Teachers in other studies expressed their difficulty in measuring the impacts and results of the counselors work with the referred students (Hamilton – Roberts, 2012).

Teachers were also required to understand and support school- based counselors. The change that school-based counselors accomplish did not always match the school’s and teachers’ perceptions which in many times did not suit the teachers.

Lebanese Teachers’ Perceptions of the Service

As mentioned earlier, the presence of studies tackling the perceptions of school – based counseling is extremely thin and almost nonexistent. Two national studies concluded that school-based counseling programs are unfortunately considered secondary in Lebanon (Hamze, 2008; Saad, 2012).

According to Khansa (2015), teachers with long teaching experiences had negative perceptions about school-based counseling and barely understood the counselor’s role/task in the school whereas

other teachers who have not been teaching for such a long period of time were quite aware of the counselor's role and fully understood the importance of his/her presence in the school. It is worth noting that teachers admit that learners' social and/or behavioral problems can easily hinder their academic progress thus the need for effective counselors is crucial in any school. Hence, the need to educate teachers about the role of the school – based counselor and the major changes that those counselors can make on a learner's progress.

Hamzeh (2008) studied the perceptions of the role of the school counselor from the learners', teachers', counselors' and parents', and principals' perspectives in Beirut schools. Generally, there was an agreement on the groups' perceptions regarding the role of a counselor. However, each of the participating groups had varied perceptions of the degree of application and implementation of counseling tasks. In addition, there were a few misperceptions regarding the tasks that were not meant to be carried out by the school-based counselor. Although Hamzeh (2008) compared students' perceptions with different groups, the comparison was based solely on perception of the role of the counselor. Briefly, Hamzeh's (2008) study examined the responsibilities of the Lebanese counselors; it neither explored the perceptions of the teachers nor their strengths or the weaknesses of the service or how the service could be rendered more effective.

It is also worth mentioning that the majority of the studies conducted in Lebanon targeted, was limited to middle and high schools, and did not include elementary schools.

Strengths of School Counseling Programs in the Lebanese Literature

Saad (2012) reached several findings in her study. First, it is important for school – based counselors in Lebanon to address preventive and individual planning tasks that cater for the learners' needs. Furthermore, school counselors themselves felt the need to keep their principals updated regarding the cases/learners that had been referred to the service. The counselors expressed the importance of

keeping their superiors engaged in their (counselors) work thus giving them administrative support. In addition, the majority of the counselors interviewed in Saad's study (2012) had similar training based on a unified developmental preventative approach.

Participating teachers in Hamzeh's (2012) study all agreed on the importance of collaboration between school-based counselors and the rest of the educational staff. Proper professional communication and the whole staff working together as one team aiming towards a unified plan that would best influence the learner's performance and well-being is a necessity for any school counseling program (ASCA, 2008).

Weaknesses facing school-based counseling in Lebanese Literature

Currently, school-based counseling is still developing in the Lebanese schools, and the challenges that counselors face in both public and private schools are still ambiguous. Furthermore, there are no empirical studies to date on how the Lebanese school-based counselors can overcome the weaknesses in their field, and what could be the appropriate factors that would help them succeed on their jobs (Saad, 2012).

The lack of continuous training, the absence of clear policies, the lack of professional role statements, the lack of proper compensation for additional responsibilities, in addition to the lack of a solid counseling curriculum are all some of the challenges that still face Lebanese school based counselors (Ayyash–Abdo et al., 2010). On the other hand, it is worth noting that there is a notable shortage in Lebanese universities and colleges that offer programs and degrees in school counseling where only 3 out of 41 private universities, with an American oriented curriculums and very high tuition fees, offer MA degrees with an emphasis in School Guidance and Counseling. Nor the national Lebanese university or the main French speaking university offer school counseling as an area of specialization (Ayyash–Abdo et al., 2010).

Another problematic factor impeded in formally developing school-based counseling in Lebanon is using foreign assessment tools in Lebanon without considering the cross cultural validation and the tools' meaning in the Lebanese cultural context (Saigh, 1984). Ayyash-Abdo et al. (2010) conducted a study targeting school - based counselors who complained about being the only counselors in their schools; a ratio that has implications since these counselors were working with triple the number of students recommended per counselor. School counselors interviewed in also complained about being given duties that were not necessarily those of a school counselor.

School counselor's heavy workload was also recognized to be a crippling factor hindering counselors from meeting students' needs (Saad, 2012). Guarantee of confidentiality was another theme that emerged in Saad's study (2012). Learners expressed their concern and worry regarding matters they discussed with the counselors and who might know about these concerns.

Improving the effectiveness of school-based counseling

Improving the effectiveness of school-based counseling has been the focus of numerous studies. Several actionable steps have been proposed in the literature, which would render school – based counseling into a more effective service.

School-based counselors proposed in several studies (e.g.WG, 2011; Hamilton-Roberts, 2012) that a better promotion of school-based programs may act as a facilitator to help enhance the understanding and the awareness of the service. Contrastingly, the fundamental area for development identified by the participating teachers within the same studies was a desire and a need for more cooperation and partnership with the counselors. Due to this discrepancy, an important recommendation was that there should be more opportunities for relevant teachers and school staff to develop their understanding and knowledge of school-based counseling, specifically regarding working relationships

with counselors (i.e. confidentiality boundaries) and the purpose of school-based counseling as a service. Counselors suggested that greater promotion of the objectives and the practice principles of the service may act as a facilitator in preventing some of these tensions.

The need for the counselors to further cooperate with teachers in order to reach their objectives is perhaps the most prevailing theme in the majority of studies. School-based counselors continuously conducting in-service training workshops to have better educate both teachers and parents is one way to improve the service (Khansa, 2015; Walker, 2015). Moreover, increasing teachers' knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of school counselors suggested a more positive attitude toward the service (Cooper, Hough & Loynd, 2005; Joy, Hensson & Harris, 2011). The findings of Clark and Amatea (2004) study concluded that teachers' knowledge and expectations of the performance of the counselor impacted the counseling program as well since teachers' perceptions influenced students, parents and principals. The findings revealed that staff communication, teamwork and collaboration were highly valued in the counseling programs. Both teachers and counselors agreed on the need that they work collaboratively together for the best of their students. Students would only turn to counselors when they (students) view them (counselors) as a viable team crucial for the overall school program. Another theme emerged tackling the importance of educating teachers on the specific roles of the counselors, and how school-based counselors are able to enhance the overall academic performance of the learners.

It is also argued by Salina et al. (2013) that the more teachers and staff members were aware of their learners' cases, the more likely that they (staff) would feel better connected to them (learners). This would increase the chances of building relationships between the two and offering support as well. Data driven programs were also an important factor positively affecting learners' outcomes according to Salina et al. (2013).

Cholewa, Goodman–Scott, Thomas and Cook (2017) affirm the above-mentioned results in their qualitative study on teachers’ perceptions and experiences consulting with school counselors. The participants noted that a strong relationship between the school counselor and the teachers before consultation would increase teachers’ likelihood to consult with the counselor and refer students. Teamwork and collaboration between the teachers and the counselor is another major theme in this study in order to identify students’ problems and intervene properly and adequately.

According to Cain (2013), on the other hand, in order to develop an effective school – based counseling program, a clear professional identity is needed in addition to demonstrating how school counselors would contribute to the overall well–being of learners in their care. Gruman et al. (2013) on the other hand stressed the importance of school–based counselors spending less time on administrative tasks, allocating more time helping, and offering support to students. Fox and Butler (2007) also stressed the importance of allocating more time to the counseling Services. Fitch and Marshall (2004) discovered that having a systemic approach is more likely to reach better results with learners than by implementing a case–by– case approach.

A study conducted by Eremie (2014) presented six recommendations that would enhance school based counseling as a service which align with those mentioned above. Eremie’s recommendations are as follows: (a) Counseling units should be established in each school, and should be practical enough to meet the needs of every student, (b) School–based counselors should be qualified from accredited universities, with a minimum of bachelor in psychology or Guidance and counseling, (c) School counselors should focus solely on counseling referred students as their primary functions, (d) Counselors should hold regular meetings with parents, students and teachers, (e) Confidentiality as code of ethics should be strictly observed by the school counselors; and (f) Counselors should be free to refer students with serious emotional issues to the appropriate helping professionals.

Briefly, enhancing school-based counseling as a service in any school depended on a number of factors according to the international literature: First, and perhaps the most prevailing theme is having a solid foundation and collaboration among the different staff members and counselors; increasing teachers' knowledge about the service and keeping them aware of the different cases; having a clear professional identity and data driven programs; counselors spending less time on administrative work and more time counseling the learners in need of their service; having qualified counselors; confidentiality; and finally learners suffering from severe emotional problems being referred to the proper professionals. All of these recommendations concur with the findings of numerous other research studies (Cooper, 2006; Hamilton-Roberts, 2012). These specific themes have emerged in the findings of this study, which I will be discussing, in a later chapter.

A Concluding Summary

In conclusion, the international literature agrees on the importance of having school-based counseling programs in all schools. The literature also agrees on what strengthens the program, what weakens it and provides what would be the proper steps in order to enhance it and render it more effective.

Although internationally there is a considerable number of studies and theoretical frameworks focusing on the effectiveness of the school-based counseling programs, the Lebanese literature lacks, however, any research studies shedding light on the program's effectiveness, the perceptions of the teachers, its weakness, strengths, or what would be the proper steps in order to enhance the performance of the counselors and the delivery of the program.

Much of the research conducted about this field in Lebanon focuses on identifying the role and responsibilities of school-based counselors. However, it could be proclaimed that explorative research

focusing on the perceptions of those who are directly and indirectly linked with the school-based counseling is of equal importance in order to insert and fix school-based counseling services within the culture of schools a crucial factor, as claimed by Fox and Butler (2009). Therefore, this study advocates that further research ascertaining the different perspectives, not only from counselors and teachers, but also from parents and students, is an imperative step in further understanding the particular impacts of SCPs. It also helpful to investigate how this service could be improved especially in a country like Lebanon where it is a very much needed service without noticeable research being conducted regarding this issues.

Theoretical Framework: ASCA National Models a Framework for School Counseling Programs

According to the ASCA national model, school counselors are expected to plan and deliver comprehensive school counseling programs (SCP) in order to promote student achievement. Such programs should be “comprehensive in scope, preventive in design and also developmental in nature” (ASAC, p. 16, 2012).The ASCA National Model outlines the appropriate components of a comprehensive school counseling program. The model brings school counselors together with one vision and one voice hence creating unity and focus in order to enhance student achievement. Comprehensive school counseling programs promote and improve the learning process for all learners.

According to the ASCA model, effective school counseling programs work best when there is collaboration among parents, school counselors and other educators in order to create an environment that promotes students achievement. School counselors are to devote their time, energy and time both directly and indirectly towards serving the learners best. Moreover, in order to achieve the maximum effectiveness of the program, the ASCA recommends that the ratio between school counselors and students to be 1:250 and that school counselors are to spend 80%, and even more, of their time servicing the students. School

counselors are also expected to participate as members of the education body using leadership, advocacy and collaboration skills to promote a systematic change as needed.

The ASCA (2012) framework provided a program for every learner. SCPs do not address the lowest or highest performing individuals/students or even those going through a crisis. It is a model that reinforces the idea that school-based counselors are to help every student improve academically and navigate social and personal development. It is important to note that this framework standardizes SCPs. Even though flexibility is built in allowing school-based counselors to customize the programs in order to meet the individual students of every student, the ASCA model also successfully provides a framework that adopts the different components, which every SCP should exhibit.

The framework of a comprehensive school counseling program, according to ASCA, consists of four main components: foundation, delivery, management, and accountability.

Foundation

According to the model, counselors are expected to create comprehensive school counseling programs, which focus on the outcomes of the students, teach learner competencies and are provided through recognized professional competencies.

Program Focus

In order to establish program focus, school counselors identify personal beliefs that address how all students can benefit from the school counseling programs.

Building on these identified beliefs, the school-based counselors create a vision statement that defines what the student outcomes should look like in the future. In addition, school counselors would create a mission statement that sees eye to eye with their school's mission. The counselors are to develop goals for the program that clearly define how both the vision and mission will be measured in the future.

Student Competencies

Improving the learning process for all learners, the ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career- Readiness for Every Student guide the development of effective school counseling programs around three main domains: academic, career and social/emotional development.

Professional Competencies

The ASCA School Counselor Competencies outline and shape the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that ensure school based counselors are fully equipped to meet the strict demands of the profession. The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors identify the main principles of the ethical behaviors important to support and maintain the highest standards of leadership, integrity, and professionalism. They guide school-based counselors' decision-making and help in standardizing professional practice in order to protect both learners and counselors in the schools.

Management

According to the ASCA model, school based counselors are to integrate organizational tools and assessments that are concrete, clearly outlined and reflect the school's needs. Assessments and tools incorporate:

- **School counselor competency and SCP assessments** in order to self-evaluate areas of strength and development for individual skills activities programs.
- **Use-of-time assessment** in order to determine the amount of time spent toward the recommended 80% or more of the school counselor's time to both direct and indirect services with the students.
- **Annual agreements** developed with and approved by the administration at the beginning of the academic year addressing how the school counseling program is organized and what goals will be targeted and accomplished.

- **Advisory councils** made up of the learners and their parents, teachers / educators, the school counselors, the administrators and also other community members so as to review and make recommendations about school counseling program both activities and results.
- **Use of data** to evaluate the results of the school counseling program as well as to promote a systemic change within the system of each school so that every learner graduates at the university level and is career-ready.
- **Curriculum, small-group and closing-the-gap action plans**, which include developmental, prevention as well as intervention activities in addition to the services that measure the desired competencies for the learners and its impact on achievement, attendance and behavior.
- **Annual and weekly calendars**, which help keep students, their parents, teachers / educators and administrators well informed and to encourage active participation in the SCP.

Delivery

School counselors provide services to the school's body of students, parents, even school staff and the community in the following areas:

Direct Student Services

Direct services meaning in-person interactions between the school-based counselors and the learners, which include the following:

- **School counseling core curriculum:** This curriculum is made up of structured lessons plans to help learners reach the desired competencies and to provide all learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed and appropriate for their developmental level. The school - based counseling core curriculum is delivered throughout the school's overall curriculum and is presented systematically by the school counselors collaboratively with other professional teachers and educators in K-12 classrooms as well as group activities.

- **Individual student planning:** School counselors organize ongoing systemic activities designed to help learners in accomplishing personal goals and developing plans for the future.

Responsive services: “Responsive services are activities designed to meet students’ immediate needs and concerns” (p. 20). Responsive services may include counseling in crisis response or individual or small-group settings.

Indirect Student Services

Indirect services are brought forth on behalf of the learners because of the school counselors’ interactions with others, which include referrals for supplementary assistance, consultation and collaboration with teachers and educators, parents, and even community organizations.

Accountability

To indicate the effectiveness of school based programs in measurable terms, school counselors examine school and school counseling program data to decide how learners become different as an outcome of the SCP. School - based counselors use data to demonstrate the impact of the SCP on student attendance, achievement, and behavior and analyze SCP “assessments to guide future action and improve future results for all students” (p. 21). The performance of the school–based counselor is assessed on basic standards of practice expected of the counselors implementing a comprehensive school counseling program.

Concluding Summary

School counselors develop and deliver school counseling programs that support and promote student achievement as well. They also standardize how the effectiveness of the program is to be measured. As outlined in the ASCA National Model (2012), these programs are based on systematic and clearly planned program delivery, which involves all students and enhances the learning process. The school counseling program should be supported by appropriate resources and implemented by a credentialed school counselor. The ASCA National Model brings school counselors together under the

umbrella of a unified vision and voice, thus creating unity and focus toward supporting student development and improving student achievement. Finally, effective school-based counseling programs are a collaborative effort among the school counselor, families, teachers and any other educators and staff members in order to create an environment resulting in a positive impact on the student achievement.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology of this study including a description of the sample selection, an explanation of the used instruments, in addition to the procedures followed for both collecting and analyzing the data.

Research Design

This was a case study following a mixed method approach through which I tried to investigate and understand the perceptions and recommendations of the participating teachers for improving school-based counseling. Thus, this study focused on explaining the phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2003). The aim of this study was explanatory since no research had been found to be done on this topic in Lebanon. The qualitative part was based on interviews, focus group discussions, and one open-ended question in the questionnaire because this approach provided a deep understanding of teachers' perceptions and recommendations regarding the school-based counseling service rather than grasping at the surface level. In addition, I used a quantitative (questionnaire) research method to compare against the qualitatively collected data. Yin (2003) recommended utilizing several instruments for data collection and different methods for analyzing the data. Utilizing multiple approaches in research helped in capitalizing on the strengths of each approach thus avoiding weaknesses in using a single method (Spratt et al., 2004). Using multiple approaches in research is called triangulation. Triangulation is a crosschecking of

information through administering different data collection tools (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). A researcher gathers both quantitative and qualitative data, contrasts the results, and then applies them to check whether they validate each other or not. *“Good research practice obligates the researcher to triangulate, that is, to use multiple methods, data resources, to enhance validity of research findings”* (Mathison, 1988, p.1). Patton (2001) also supports using triangulation because *“Triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches”* (p.247). In this specific study, triangulation was achieved by using four qualitative and quantitative instruments/methods to compare common results in order to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of each of the findings.

It is worth noting that the bulk of this study adopted a qualitative research approach since this approach focused on individual’s understanding (Lee, 2006) which was the main aim of this study. Studying participants’ perceptions required detailed explanations of their opinions and views. Moreover, since such study was newly conducted in Lebanon, and because there were no clear studies done on this topic, a mixed method design could set the foundations for other studies to be conducted in Lebanon regarding this particular topic.

The importance of action research and case studies

Since the researcher was conducting this study in a single school, a case study was an adequate choice. Case studies were important for the following reasons. To begin with, case studies “focus on specifics and give an account of the instance in action” (Spratt, Walker, & Robinson, 2004, p. 31). Case studies were valued for their ability to supply the reader with “vicarious experience” – to provide a feeling of being ‘there’ (Spratt, et al., 2004, p.31).

A case study analyzes, illustrates, and interprets what makes situations or individuals distinctive. In case studies, and through interpretation and analysis, researchers collect data to describe events in particular situations or activities (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Yin, 2003). Data were collected from the participants' points of views in order to reach a better understanding of the whole context (Cohen et al., 2000). According to Yin (2003), case studies are suitable when researchers are trying to answer 'what' questions (the three research questions in this study are all 'what' questions).

This research aimed at investigating and understanding a particular topic, which was the effectiveness of school-based counseling as a service in a particular school. Thus, this study took the form of an action research tackling a real issue in practice. My ultimate goal was to develop an action plan based on teachers' recommendations in order to enhance the service at the school and because real reform is where action lies (Sirotnik, 1989), action research was the most appropriate form of research for this study.

Action research aimed at taking into consideration the practical concerns of individuals within an educational context (El-Sahib, 2012). Action research could be defined as inquiry conducted by educators in their own settings in order to improve their practice and enhance their students' learning (Burton & Bartlett, 2005; Fox, Martin & Green, 2007). It is research conducted by insiders to who are directly involved in the context. Efron and Ravid (2013) stated, "a growing number of practitioners have embraced action research and view it as viable model for modifying, changing, and improving the teaching- learning process" (p. 2). According to Efron and Ravid (2013), practitioners feel that this type of research i.e. action research helps them professionally, take more responsibility over their own practice, and become more self-evaluative. In other words, it provides educators with an influential strategy for becoming active partners in guiding and leading school improvement (Hopkins, 2008).

In this type of research, educators become researchers studying their own practices within the classrooms and schools. Their research questions arise from problems they face, certain events, or any other professional interests that the practitioners may find important. The educators in such cases carry out their investigations and inquiries systematically, critically, and reflectively using the strategies and tools they find appropriate for their practice. Being insiders intimately involved and familiar with the context, they are inherently engaged and subjective. Their findings and the knowledge gained through their inquiry have only one goal and that is to develop their practice and cultivate their professional growth by understanding their learners, resolving problems, and / or developing new skills. From this standpoint, changes in education take place in bottom-up process led by self – directed knowledge – generating practitioners (Efron & Ravid, 2013). Since the researcher was an educator at the school where the study was being conducted and because the researcher was trying to enhance the practice of school-based counseling, action research was the appropriate type of research for this study.

This study aimed at constructing a theory from the collected and analyzed data. In other words, based on the collected data, a theory was developed. Thus, the generated theory is grounded in nature. The approach of inquiry required in order to reach the grounded theory is inductive rather than deductive. For generating theory, a researcher has to begin with a study area - in this case: effectiveness of school based counseling- and then, collecting and analyzing data, which is the basis of the study. These three steps stand in a very close relationship to one another i.e. collecting the data, analyzing it and finally theory emerging based on the data (Khan, 2014).

Because they are drawn from collected data, grounded theories are capable of offering insight, enhancing understanding, and providing a significant guide to action which is the study's ultimate aim.

Population

The population of interest for this study consisted of all the elementary, middle school and high school teachers as well as two counselors working at that private school. They taught different subject-matters and different class levels because it was important for the researcher to detect different viewpoints. The accessible population consisted of over 140 teachers and 2 counselors all working at the same private school in Beirut.

Sample

In a second phase, a smaller sample of teachers was randomly selected for semi-structured interviews based on their availability. Six teachers (two teachers from each school level: elementary, middle and high school) were asked to participate in six in-depth face-to-face interviews during their free time. Three focus-group discussions (FGDs), one FGD from every school level were conducted with teachers of different years of experience. Each group consisted of 10 teachers. Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the school counselors discussing the program, its weaknesses and strengths. The questionnaire was electronically sent to 140 teachers, but only 66 responded.

The participants in this study were both males and females where the number of female participants was considerably higher than that of the males. The participants had working experiences ranging from one year to above thirteen years in the academic field, between 22, and above 50 years in age. The majority of the participants had already taken psychology classes; and the biggest amount of the participating individuals had an MA degree.

Table 3.1 provides details of the participating counselors and teachers, and Table 3.2 provides the demographic information of the participants

Table 3.1

Distribution of Participants by Research Method

	Questionnaire	Teachers' Interviews	Counselors' Interviews	FGDs
Participants	66	6	2	3

Table 3.2.

Participants' Demographic information

Demographic Information		Percentage
Years of Experience	1–3 Years	7.58%;
	4-7 Years	19.70%;
	8-12 Years	25.76%;
	13 Years and above	46.97%
Gender	Male	10.61%
	Female	89.39%
Age	22–25 Years	7.58%;
	26–29 Years	16.67%
	30 Years and Above	75.76%
Level of Education	BA	34.85%
	TD	24.24%
	MA	37.88%
Have taken a psychology course	Yes	68.18%;
	No	31.82%

Sampling procedure

Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) identify three types of sampling techniques. The purposive sample consists of those who have the needed information for the research study. The researcher's personal judgment was needed here in selecting the representative sample. Another sampling method was the convenience sample such as selecting teachers who were free and available.

The sampling method employed was the simple random sampling for the semi-structured interviews with teachers. Teachers were selected based on their availability (free periods). In this method, each individual in the population had an equal independent opportunity of being selected. This method is best when the sample is a large one (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). This method was chosen since the sample was quite large (over 140 teachers) and the researcher believed in giving equal chances to all participants and to rule out the existence of any bias.

Data collection procedures

This research study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to gain both depth and breadth of knowledge. The methodologies were in the form of subject teacher FGDs, teachers' in-depth interviews, counselors' in-depth interviews, and a questionnaire was distributed evenly among a sample of elementary, middle and secondary school teachers. The questionnaire was sent to the teachers electronically via their school email addresses, and the interviews were conducted upon their teachers' availability.

The questionnaire was distributed among all the elementary, middle and high school teachers (over 140 teachers). In-depth individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with six teachers. Two interviews were conducted in every school level. In addition, three focus-group discussions took

place; one FGD from every school level. Each group consisted of 8 to 10 subject teachers. Finally, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the counselors.

Data collection Tools

In order to collect data for this research study, I used three instruments. The tools were both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative tool was based on Cooper's questionnaire (2006). The qualitative tools, on the other hand, were three focus-group discussions with subject-matter teachers (one FGD from each school level) and six in-depth individual interviews with six teachers, two from each school level; in addition to two semi-structured interviews with the counselors.

Cooper's Questionnaire for Counseling Service Evaluation (2006)

The first section of the questionnaire [Appendix I] used Likert-type scales in order to collect quantitative information ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated that the situation being much worse and 5 being much better. There were three other categories in this section: (a) engagement with education and learning, (b) emotional well-being and mental health; and (c) behavior. The three categories showed relatively high reliability and validity. Internal consistency reliability estimates using Cronbach's Alpha were .89, .71 and .73 respectively.

To maintain confidentiality, the researcher sent the survey through the school's e-mail with links to Lime Survey. The emails of potential participants were secured by asking the school I.T. assistant to forward them to all the teachers after receiving the school principal's oral consent. The interested teachers took part in the study by pressing on the links for the online survey. Each participant was informed that by clicking on the link and filling out the survey, s/he was agreeing to participate in the study. I also made sure to mention that the results were analyzed independently and confidentiality was maintained. All the forms and surveys were on Lime Survey to further insure confidentiality and anonymity. Participation

was voluntary and the participants were free to withdraw at any point. By taking part in this research, there were no physical or emotional risks or pressures on participants. Only the researcher and the principal investigator were able to access the data in order to insure confidentiality. The survey was sent to 140 teachers, but only 66 responded to the questionnaire.

This quantitative instrument was chosen because it covered the areas that matters most for the study, which were engagement with learning and education, mental health and emotional wellbeing, and finally behavior. At the end of the questionnaire, an open-ended question was used in order to gather the teachers' suggestions on how to improve the service.

The items on the questionnaire specifically asked the teachers the following : (a) whether or not their students had attended counseling sessions with the school counselor, (b) if they had found the counseling sessions helpful to their referred students, (c) their opinion regarding the service's impact on the students' learning and their ability to overcome barriers that might hinder it; (d) whether or not the service had enhanced the students' behaviors; (e) whether or not there was a good communication between the teachers and the counselors, (f) what the teachers perceived as the 'added value' of the service, and (g) to state the ways in which they believed the service could be improved.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Three FGDs [Appendix II] also took place in the school according to the teachers' availability, one FGD from each school level. Each discussion included 10 teachers and lasted between 40 to 50 minutes. The participants had read, understood and signed the consent forms before starting discussions. Each discussion covered the themes addressed in the questionnaire and the interviews with the teachers. During the discussions, the teachers were asked if they considered sending problematic students to the school's counselor; if they believed the counselor was helping the referred students; if they believed the relationship between the teachers and the counselors could be enhanced and how; how, in their opinion,

the service could be improved; how they thought the school would be different without a counselor and if they had anything else to add about the service.

In the FGDs, I was the facilitator and the participating teachers' confidentiality was preserved. The discussions were recorded and later transcribed. The first FGS took place in the elementary school with the elementary teachers who were extremely cooperative and enthusiastic about having such a study conducted at their school on a service they had viewed valuable. During an in-service day and once a general meeting with the elementary heads of section had ended, I asked teachers to remain in the same room we were having the meeting (I made it specific that I needed ten teachers) in order to conduct the FGD, and they willingly stayed for the discussion.

The second FGD took place within the high school also during an in-service day, which was the easiest way to have the needed number of teachers all free and available in the same place. The high school teachers were as cooperative and enthusiastic as the elementary teachers. The final FGD was conducted with the middle school teachers. It was not easy for me to locate ten middle school teachers available at the same time, so I asked the help of the middle school head of section. She contacted ten of her available teachers during a recess for the meeting, and they gladly appeared for the discussion. The middle school teachers were also as cooperative as the previous ones.

Semi-Structured Interviews with Teachers

The interviews [Appendix III] reflected the questionnaire items eliciting qualitative responses that would amalgamate with the quantitative data. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Each interview lasted between 30 to 35 minutes. I explained the full purpose of the study to interviewed teachers and gave them some time to read and understand and later sign the consent forms. I believed that by speaking directly with the teachers who were the ones mostly involved with the students' behavior and

the ones responsible for referring the students to the counseling service at the school, I would most effectively portray both the weaknesses and strengths of the service in addition to their (the teachers') perceptions of the service. Ethical concerns along with issues of confidentiality and consent were a priority in this thesis.

The particular issues I wanted to discuss with the participating teachers were to guide my questions in both the interviews and discussions. The questions in both the interviews and discussions were parallel to the items found in the questionnaire as mentioned earlier. The six interviews with the teachers took place in the school in an empty quiet classroom during the teachers' free periods or recesses. Six teachers, two from each school level, were chosen according to availability thus giving equal chances to all. The interviews addressed the issues of how helpful the teachers believed the service was; whether or not they were satisfied with it; how they thought it could be improved; whether or not the service had an impact on the students' ability to learn and study, their behaviors, motivation, how the students felt about themselves, and what they believed the added value of the service in the school was, and if they had anything to add about it.

Semi-Structured Interviews with the counselors

The interviews with the counselors [Appendix IV] reflected the questionnaire items as well elicited qualitative responses that would amalgamate with the quantitative data. The interviews were also recorded, and I transcribed them later on. The counselors read, understood and signed the consent forms before starting the interviews. Ethical concerns along with issues of confidentiality and consent were a priority in this thesis. The interviews with the counselors took up between 30 and 35 minutes. By speaking directly with the counselors, the ones mainly involved with the program at the school, I was able to portray their opinions on the weaknesses and strengths of the service from their points of view. The

particular issues discussed with the counselors were parallel to the items found in the questionnaire as mentioned earlier.

Data analysis procedures

Descriptive statistical analysis was used to interpret data collected from the questionnaire. This helped explore patterns in teachers' perceptions, which was later compared with the qualitative findings. The qualitative data that was collected from the FGDs, in-depth interviews with the counselors and teachers, and the open-ended questionnaire responses were interpreted using content analysis, which helped identify the frequency of common themes in relation to the research questions (Cohen, Mannion, & Morrison, 2007) and enabled comparison with the quantitative results.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

This chapter presents data results about the effectiveness of school-based counseling answering the three research questions presented at the beginning of the study. To this end, this research focused on the teachers' perceptions about the service, the weaknesses and the strengths (according to both teachers and counselors) of the service, and finally the actionable steps and procedures needed in order to render it more effective as suggested by both teachers and counselors.

Teachers Perceptions of School-Based Program on Student's Behavior

The first theme/research question was answered using both quantitative and qualitative data. Diagnostic cutoff scores were established in order to analyze the quantitative data based on previous studies (Al-Hroub, 2009, 2010; Kebbi, & Al-Hroub, 2018). In accordance with the original questionnaire,

three different Likert scale response scales were used. (>2.5 mild, between 2.6 and 3.5 is moderate, and <3.5 is high).

The majority of the questionnaire items ranked moderate. The item that had the highest score was “how many students have attended one or more session(s) with the school’s counselor?” ($M = 3.71$). The rest of the items had very similar mean value. “How helpful or unhelpful do you think the counseling service has been?” ($M = 2.92$), “The service has enhanced the students’ behavior.” ($M = 3.15$), “What difference, overall, you think the counseling has made to the student’s motivation to study and learn?” ($M = 3.23$), “What difference, overall, you think the counseling has made to the student’s ability to concentrate?” ($M = 3.26$), “There is a good communication between the counselor in the school and the teachers.” ($M = 3.29$), “What difference, overall, you think the counseling has made to the student’s willingness to participate?” ($M = 3.38$), “The counseling service provided ‘added value’ to the school” ($M = 3.38$), “What difference, overall, you think the counseling has made to the student’s motivation to attend school?” ($M = 3.43$), “What difference, overall, you think the counseling has made to how understanding the students are of others?” ($M = 3.48$), “What difference, overall, you think the counseling has made to how the students feel about themselves?” ($M = 3.50$).

Table. 4.1

Responses on Questionnaire items

Questionnaire item	Cut-off point	Indicators
Helpfulness of the service	2.92	Moderate
Service enhancing behaviors	3.15	Moderate
Motivation to study	3.23	Moderate
Ability to concentrate	3.26	Moderate
Communication with teachers	3.29	Moderate
Enhancing willingness to participate	3.38	Moderate
Service as an added value	3.38	Moderate

Enhance students' motivation to attend school	3.43	Moderate
Students becoming understanding of others	3.48	Moderate
Enhance how students feel about themselves	3.50	Moderate
Number of students attending the service	3.71	High

The findings in the qualitative data brought up several themes directly linked to the research questions, as well. First, the counseling service in the school had varied perceptions from the interviewed teachers. The most common response from teachers was that everything was case dependent. The first question asked to the participants during the interviews and FGDs was: How helpful or unhelpful do you believe the service has been to your students? Explain. Every single interviewed teacher had the same response: *“it depends on the case”*, *“In some places I don’t see any improvement at all and others ... it depends case by case. It depends on the severity of the case”*. According to teacher 4, the counselor’s work depended on each individual case; this was the only unified point of view. The interviewed teachers had varied perceptions.

To some teachers, sending students to the counselor was a waste of time and did not solve any of their problems. Teacher 1 said, *“For some it is helpful and for some it isn’t”*. The service in school only worked with the mild cases. Same teacher added, *“Helpful for those who need counseling but some of them needed more than counseling.”* Teacher 4 complained, *“In some places I don’t see any improvement at all and others ... it depends case by case. It depends on the case of that student if it’s severe”*. According to teacher 4, the counselor is too soft for the cases they had at school.

Some teachers complained that the counselor’s work did not help them work in the classroom. While some teachers had neutral ideas about the service believing that the counselor’s work was neither good nor bad. ‘Something more was needed’ was the response of several participating teachers. Several interviewees declared that the teachers’ work with the students was more important, and added that

teachers could easily work as ‘advisors’ for the students. One teacher explained that she worked with the students based on her own experience as a mother. She said, *“I try to deal with the troubled students from my experience as a mother.”*

Teachers also admitted that because of the service, students were now more motivated to come to school. The service made the students feel special, according to one interviewed teacher, and thus becoming more productive putting additional effort in their classes hence affecting classroom management positively. Furthermore, many students started seeing the counselor on their own without being referred. Students have become less angry, more focused on their learning, and happier. They were taking fewer warnings, collaborating better with their friends, and thus making more friends, which was evident on campus. They were also talking less in class and thus concentrating better in class, doing their assignments on time, and making sure they had their books to school/they came ready to school. Students were now aware of their problems, sensitive to them and have solutions to them. They were calmer, had better social skills; they became better communicators. They were more comfortable with themselves. In other words, the progress was tangible and evident among students on the different levels (academic, behavioral, emotional, and social) because of the counselor’s way of speaking to the students. Even the parents appreciated the service according to the participating teachers. The teachers discussed several successful cases that the counselors had worked with. Teacher 2 confessed,

Students were more motivated to come to school. They were more comfortable with themselves. They became aware of their problems. Some did not know they had a problem and did not know that the problem was affecting them that much, so they saw that that problem was blocking their lives. They were able to pinpoint the problem.

Teacher 5 added, *“Once they undergo counseling they become more aware and more sensitive to their behavior. It’s more effective – they become more productive academically”*. The teachers brought up

more examples of how the counselor had helped students. For example, a crying student was once sent to the counselor who felt much better afterwards. Two fighting students saw the counselor and became friendlier towards one another. Another example was of a student with anger issues, another with self-confidence issues, and one with a culture shock all felt better after meeting with the counselor.

Weaknesses of the Counseling Program

The service's weaknesses also emerged during the interviews and discussions, which I will be listing. The recurrent answers from the participating teachers were the slow inconsistent progress witnessed on referred students if any. Students' grades were still the same even after seeing the counselor, for example. Timid students could not improve was another recurrent example. Teacher 1 complained, "*Mistakes are never accepted in our society*". The counselor according to that teacher did not always take criticism with an open mind.

Elementary teachers highlighted several gaps in the service that the life skills teacher filled, such as "*The life skills teacher is completing the counselor's work*", "*Life skills should be a bulk of counseling*", "*The life skills teacher along with the counselor's work are completing each other*", "*This year honestly I am finding that the counselor's gaps are being filled by the life skills teacher*", "*Although we are not sure whether or not there is coordination between the two*", "*The topics that the life skills teacher is addressing are the problems that we all face with the students*", "*She is doing what the counselor should do by the way*".

Teachers were usually briefed about the cases at the beginning of the year without updates. In addition, even if they were updated, it was by the head of section and not the counselor. According to a teacher in the high school FGD, "*When you go to the meeting you tell the counselor what is happening and that is it. She would not send after you anymore. You go. You discuss your case. She sits with the students and that is it. You would not know anything anymore*". Teachers in most cases did not even know

who was seeing the counselor so when there was progress, it would be unknown who to attribute it.

Teachers' knowledge about the service and students seeing the counselor was extremely limited.

According to teacher one, "The counselors should talk more to the teachers". Teacher 6 added, "*There has to be a follow up with the teacher; there has to be a cooperation which I do not see.*"

The counselor narrowed her communication with the homeroom teachers and excluded the subject teachers, according to several interviewees. Teachers expressed their need for weekly scheduled meetings with the counselor for updates about each case referred and techniques for the teachers on how to deal with troubled students. Most teachers admitted never meeting with the counselor.

Other teachers complained that many of their students who did meet the counselor and were given a behavior chart became too dependent on it. On the other hand, when teachers reported incidents according to the teacher who participated in the middle school FGD, in many cases, things were turned against them as if the teacher did not do her job properly and the students' problems were a result of the teachers' faults. Middle school FGDs: "*Do your (counselor) work. Do not tell me it is my fault. No, it is not my fault. If I hadn't known that something should have been dealt with, I wouldn't have highlighted it as a teacher*". Another middle school teacher added, "*A teacher reports something – the whole situation would be turned around against us – it would become the teachers' fault. And I've seen it more than once*".

Teachers did not have the authority to refer students to the counselor; only the head of section could do so. According to a high school teacher, "*We don't have the right to but Mrs. Blell (the head of section) knows most of the information we only get the briefing.*"

Some teachers complained that they had lost their students' trust when the counselor disclosed the name of the reporting teachers to the referred student and that the learners did not trust the counselor to start: "*I once had a student who used to be physically abused by his parents. I told him that we should*

report it. He refused. He wanted to talk to me and not anyone else. If the child trusted her, he would have talked to her”, said a middle school teacher in a FGD. Another teacher added,

“Sometimes the way of reporting affects your relationship with the students. For example, one of the students tells me something that I hear about from different sources, I automatically report. I feel that the way the counselor handles our reporting should be done in a smarter manner so that we don’t lose the students’ trust.”

There were times when a teacher referred students and the counselor denied the existence of any problems. A middle school teacher explained, *“So basically eventually it’s the teacher’s fault – that is what she’s trying to say”*.

Several teachers complained that they were never given tips on how to deal with students admitted many teachers in the study, and even when given tips, the tips were not enough. There was no academic progress during or after counseling as well as reported by many interviewed teachers. Many students took advantage of the service in order to get help during the government exams one teacher confessed was a major sub-theme in the high school FGD.

“Do you want me to be honest? I believe that many students are taking advantage of the service – of becoming worse / here and in other schools, many students are very keen and smart that they can fool around this process / from my observation as a coordinator and teacher, when I see the students after school, many of them are taking advantage of this process and we should – school, administration and parents – from what I know, parents are also helping their children with this to go around irresponsible (not to be held responsible)”.

One head of section helped teachers gain control by shouting at the students and threatening them: *“Most students are afraid of the HOS”*, *“Most problems are dealt with at the HOS office”*; and *“Most students are ‘scared’ of her.”*

Many cases needed more time than others. The counselor alone was not enough according to many participants. There were many gaps in the service and outside help was much needed. Several teachers confessed that they did not feel they had the right person. In bullying cases, the bullied was the one who was targeted and the bully was neglected. Finally, some teachers expressed their concern that the students' interests were never targeted and their personalities were seldom worked on. To the majority of the participating teachers, the service was unclear and too secretive which excluded them as teachers - an integral part of the students' progress. Teachers also expressed the need for more tangible tips about how to deal with the students especially that teachers complained that most problems were not clear to them. In addition, teachers added that they believed the counselor did not have enough time for all the cases and that more than one counselor was needed (elementary department). One teacher suggested that hard copies detailing the cases should be available through the counselor in order for the teacher to keep a record of the referred learners.

Most parents, according to the participants, were in denial or did not care about the service. In addition, parents only cared about their children's grades. Moreover, in the worst cases, counseling was considered as a taboo by the parents.

Strengths of the Counseling Program

Another important theme that had also emerged and that answered one of the research questions was the strength of the service. First, students were able to vent in a safe environment with someone outside the classroom who had a special way of listening to them and knew what she was doing. When the student was at the counselor's office, the whole attention would be on that particular student and the counselor's time would be allocated to that student exclusively. Teacher 1 explained,

“At least the kid would feel better through venting – the child would surely benefit in some way certainly – those who have problems who need someone to listen to him/her – the counselor has

her ways of listening to the children and having them speak out and she has time for them – supposedly when she takes them out in a session she would be focused on them so she will certainly benefit them even if the behavior in class would not improve”.

It made students with problems feel equal to their classmates according to another participant. It was a good service for both students and parents equally who did not necessarily know how to deal with their kids. It is worth noting that the counseling service did not stand alone at the school, it was supported by the character education program, community service, and the science department that were constantly conducting awareness sessions for the learners according to both counselor and teachers.

According to counselor one, *“The school is not working on counseling alone – there’s counseling, character education, community service who do awareness for the students. Sometimes the science department works on raising awareness sessions.”*

Strengths of the Counseling Program from the Counselors’ Perspectives

Counselors recalled numerous success stories with learners referred to the school counselors. Students improved academically, their disruptive behaviors changed, and became less disturbing to the class and more attentive to the teacher. Counselor 1 said, *“I do have a lot of students who have progressed academically because the behavior problems that were dealt with and was helped”.*

The counselors revealed having received feedback from parents, teachers and heads of sections, both written and orally, acknowledging the positive impacts the service has made on the referred students. Counselor 1 said, *“Yes definitely but it is not just us we ask the teachers, we ask the parents, the heads of sections. So we see improvements based on the feedback from the heads of sections, the teachers and the parents and the students themselves when we see the change. I have paper work showing students progressing”.*

Steps and Procedures Needed for Effective Counseling Program

Finally, regarding the service improvement, a number of subthemes emerged. To begin, one teacher complained that the whole culture should be more accepting of the service and not viewed as a taboo. The teacher explained that many people have misconceptions about counseling. Schools should promote the importance of counseling, as students are embarrassed of visiting the counselor's office.

According to teacher5, "*We need to work on the misconception that if someone is meeting with the counselor then there is something wrong with him. We should change the image first*". Also importantly, teachers expressed their need for more counselors in the school. Teacher 1 explained the need for more than two school counselors to help students. Most Teachers in the elementary, middle and secondary schools agreed that the students need more than two school counselors.

Another recurrent suggestion was having the counselors visit the classrooms more often and observe the learners. According to the participants, counselors should spend time with the students, gain their trust, and be present among them especially during recesses. Teachers suggested that the counselors should work more on the students' personalities. They also suggested that counselors invest more in games and activities that would excite the learners and improve their behaviors. Students' readiness for counseling is to be targeted as well.

In addition to making sure the teachers were aware of the students' problems in order to be able to assist the students and be able to deal with them, it was even suggested that teachers be able to provide the counseling service in their classes before having to report students.

It was also revealed that the counselors themselves gave some problematic students excuses for their undesired behaviors. The participants believed that the school's counselors should attend workshops and other professional development sessions to help them (counselors) tackle students' leadership skills and empower them whenever needed. Teacher 4 suggested, "*I honestly do not know what the qualifications of a counselor should*

be. I think the counselor needs professional Development. I don't think our counselor has been attending workshops or anything else. I don't think she is."

In addition to the counselors being available at all times when needed by the teachers. Thus, it was also suggested that a counselor should also counsel and not teach (one of the two counselors teaches psychology in high school). Teacher 3 complained, "*Perhaps that the counselor's time to be more organized because students sometimes leave the class to go to the counselor which affects the child's academics*".

On the other hand, it was advised by the participants that the counselors attend classes for observation and share tips with the teachers based on their observations. Also, and based on these observations, the counselors would then conduct meetings and workshops/assemblies for both teachers and students. A middle school teacher suggested,

I sometimes go to the counselor myself and tell her that I (teacher) have noticed things about certain students. Her answer would be that she hasn't heard anything about that student. Ok I have noticed something - she needs to observe. Why doesn't she believe what I tell her and investigate? Come and observe.

Role-playing was one of the suggestions put forth by the teachers for the counselors to touch upon issues with students. Another recurrent suggestion was having the counselors conduct preventive awareness sessions and group activities for students and teachers tackling issues that might arise or that were recurrent in previous years. Teachers ought to be given tips on common issues in order to prevent them ahead of time. Students, on the other hand, are to be encouraged to seek counseling and not regard it as a taboo. Thus, one teacher came up with the suggestion that the whole approach to counseling in the high school should be altered. A more enthusiastic and younger counselor is needed according to one of the participating teachers that can relate and understand the high school students. One teacher suggested providing sessions to students on different mental health topics.

Most teachers explained that there is a crucial need for a counseling plan with a clear objective for students. This plan should include teachers, and a flexible plan for the referred cases. They also added that the counseling plan should be a mandatory educational service for those who needed it, grouping students with similar problems together for group counseling which is thought to be helpful for the students who would then not feel alone, and give students more time thus organizing the counselor's work more appropriately.

Teacher 2 suggested, *“Regular meetings with teachers so they can get a weekly or a monthly follow up about what is happening with their kids for them to work parallel with the counselors. They can agree on an objective and work parallel for this month and this every month”*. Teacher 6 also observed,

“There has to be a constant follow up. There has to be a follow up with the teacher. There has to be a clear plan on how to work with the student and to be aware of what the counselor is working with the student and there has to be a cooperation which I do not see”.

Finally, parental involvement was another much repeated subtheme, their help, acceptance of the service, and following tips from the counselors themselves.

Procedures needed for Effective Counseling Program from the Counselors' Perspectives

The counselors, however, expressed the need for having more collaborative teachers who would refer students with problems earlier so as not to have issues accumulating. Early intervention is necessary if the service was to move forward. Teacher 2 complained,

“Sometimes the teachers do not raise issues directly – they wait until it accumulates. Sometimes teachers interfere in things that we prefer they would refer them to the counselor. Sometimes the teachers are tired.”

The issue of parents being not cooperative was also very much stressed by the interviewed counselors. According to them, the service would become much more effective if the parents became more helpful. One counselor admitted,

“The biggest barrier we are having now is the parents so I don’t know if there would be a more strict rule to force the parents to follow up with us and help us and maybe follow the tips given because we have parents and cases that the parents were the biggest cases and not the child himself/ herself.”

Another counselor said,

“Sometimes the parents do not help. At the end of the day, this is a service and you cannot force anyone sometimes the parents are worried about the grades and that would be why they would work with the school”.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Introduction

This study explores the effectiveness of school – based counseling in a private school in Beirut from the teachers’ perceptions. The study also investigated the service’s strengths, weaknesses and the actionable procedures in order to enhance it.

The chapter has several purposes. First, it aims at discussing the obtained results, drawing conclusions based on the participants’ perspectives and connected to the literature, and finally providing implications for policy, practice, and research. The discussion part consists of four main parts namely the teachers’ perspectives, strengths of the service, its weaknesses, and factors to enhance it. Whereas the conclusion section will present the inferences reached from the fieldwork and then implications for the practitioners, policy–makers, and recommendations for further research.

Teachers Perceptions of School-Based Program on Students' Behavior

The first theme in this study was answered using both quantitative and qualitative data. According to the quantitative results collected from the questionnaire marked a moderate response from the teachers who had answered the items on the survey. In other words, according to the participating teachers, school-based counseling did not improve the behavior of the referred students remarkably. The results obtained from the questionnaire showed that the item on the service being helpful ranked lowest among the rest of the items on the questionnaire, whereas the item tackling the number of students being referred to the service ranked highest i.e. there is a considerable number of referred students. The rest of the items, however, were very close namely: service enhancing the behavior of students, motivating students to study, enhancing their ability to concentrate, enhancing willingness to participate in class, developing students' motivation to attend school, helping students become understanding of others, enhancing students' the communication between teachers and counselors, improving how students feel about themselves, whether or not teachers viewed counseling as an added value to the school and finally how often teachers and counselors communicate regarding cases. These same points were found to be positively influenced by school-based counseling programs in studies by Alexander (2002), Cooper (2006, 2009), Hamilton – Roberts (2012), Walker (2015) and WG (2011).

The findings in the qualitative data brought up several sub - themes directly linked to the first research question, as well. First, the counseling service in the school had varied perceptions from the interviewed teachers. The most common response from teachers was that everything was case dependent. The counselor's work depended on each individual case; this was the only unified point of view. This specific perception was not found in any of the studies reviewed in the second chapter of this paper i.e. Literature Review, which makes it an addition to the existing literature.

Several negative perceptions were elicited from the interviews and FGDs with the participating teachers. To some teachers sending students to the counselor was a waste of time and did not solve any of their problems. The service in school only worked with the mild cases according to others. Some teachers complained that the counselor's work did not help them work in the classroom. While some teachers had neutral ideas about the service believing that the counselor's work was neither good nor bad. Many teachers complained that the service was not enough and 'something more' was needed. Several interviewees declared that the teachers' work with the students was more important, and added that they (teachers) could easily work as 'advisors' for the students. One teacher in the last FGD added that she worked with the students based on her own experience as a mother and did not rely on the counselor. No mentioned negative perceptions appeared in the internationally reviewed studies. Nationally conducted studies, however, did reach these conclusions (Hamze, 2008; Saad, 2012; Khansa, 2015).

On the other hand, elementary teachers admitted that because of the service, students were now more motivated to come to school. The service had made the students feel special, and thus they became more productive putting additional effort in their classes that affected classroom management positively. They were also talking less in class and thus concentrating better, doing their assignments on time, and making sure they had their books to school / they came ready to school. Furthermore, many students started seeing the counselor on their own without being referred. Students became less angry, more focused on their learning, and happier. They were taking fewer warnings, collaborating better with their friends, and thus making more friends, which was evident on campus. Students were now aware of their problems, sensitive to them and have solutions to them. They were calmer, had better social skills; they became better communicators. They were more comfortable with themselves. In other words, the progress was tangible and evident among students on the different levels (academic, behavioral, emotional, and social) because of the counselor's way of speaking to the students. Even the parents appreciated the service

according to the participating teachers. The teachers discussed several successful cases that the counselors had worked with. All this aligns with several studies conducted on the topic such as Alexander (2002), Uzeoshi (2002), Cooper (2006, 2009), Hamilton – Roberts (2012), and Eremie (2014).

Weaknesses of the Counseling Program

The service's weaknesses also emerged during the interviews and discussions, which I will be listing. The most recurrent answers from the participating teachers were the slow inconsistent progress witnessed on referred students if any, students' grades were still the same even after seeing the counselor, and timid students could not improve was another recurrent example which contradict with the existing literature.

In this study, according to the participating teachers, students were not given ample counseling time, which aligns with findings from Cooper (2009), and WG (2011) and that more than one counselor is needed. The counselor according to one teacher in this study did not always take criticism with an open mind a sub-theme that was not present in the literature.

The elementary teachers emphasized several gaps in the life skills services. Such subtheme did not appear in the literature, in other words, a different teacher filling in the gaps of the counselor's tasks. Teachers were usually briefed about the cases at the beginning of the year without updates. In addition, even if they were updated, it was by the head of section and not the counselor. Teachers expressed their need for weekly scheduled meetings with the counselor for updates about each case referred and techniques for the teachers on how to deal with troubled students. Most teachers admitted never meeting with the counselor.

Several other subthemes emerged in this study, which did not exist in the reviewed literature. First, a few teachers complained that many of their students who were given a behavior chart by the counselor became too dependent on it (the students). Furthermore, many teachers reported that things

were turned against them (teachers) when they reported incidents to the counselor as if the teacher was not doing her/his job properly and the students' problems were a result of the teachers' faults. On the other hand, teachers did not have the authority to refer students to the counselor; only the head of section could do so. There were times when a teacher referred students and the counselor denied the existence of any problems. Teachers in most cases did not even know who was seeing the counselor so when there was progress, it would be unknown who to attribute it.

Teachers' knowledge about the service and students seeing the counselor was extremely limited. The counselor narrowed her communication with the homeroom teachers and excluded the subject teachers, according to several interviewees. To add more, some teachers complained that they had lost their students' trust when the counselor disclosed the name of the reporting teachers to the referred student and that the learners did not trust the counselor to start. Moreover, several teachers complained that they were never given tangible effective tips on how to deal with students admitted many teachers in the study, and even when given tips, the tips were not enough especially that most cases were not clear to the teachers. Many students, on the other hand, took advantage of the service in order to get help during the government exams one teacher confessed was a major sub-theme in the high school FGD. In addition, one head of section helped teachers gain control by shouting at the students and threatening them.

In addition to the above, many cases needed more time than others. The counselor alone was not enough according to many participants. There were many gaps in the service and outside help was much needed. Several teachers confessed that they did not feel they had the right person. In bullying cases, for example, the bullied was the one who was targeted and the bully was neglected. One teacher expressed the need for hard copies detailing the cases should be available through the counselor in order for the teacher to keep a record of the referred learners. Finally, some teachers expressed their concern that the students' interests and personalities were never targeted. To the majority of the participating teachers, the

service was unclear and too secretive which excluded them as teachers - an integral part of the students' progress which caused tension between teachers and counselors a point highlighted in several reviewed studies (Jenkins & Polat, 2006; Cooper, 2009; and WG, 2011).

Most parents, according to the participants, were in denial or did not care about the service and only cared about their children's grades. In addition, in the worst cases, counseling was considered as a taboo by the parents as concluded by Saad (2012). It was also revealed that the counselors themselves gave some problematic students excuses for their undesired behaviors - a point that was not found in any of the reviewed research neither locally nor internationally.

Strengths of School-based Counseling Programs

According to the interviewed teachers in both individual interviews and FGDs i.e. qualitative instruments, the service has a few strengths. First, students were able to vent in a safe environment with someone outside the classroom who had a special way of listening to them and knew what she was doing. When the student was at the counselor's office, the whole attention would be on that particular student and the counselor's time would be allocated to that student exclusively. It made students with problems feel equal to their classmates according to another participant. These particular subthemes did not appear in any of the reviewed literature.

It was a good service for both students and parents equally who did not necessarily know how to deal with their kids. It is worth noting that the counseling service did not stand alone at the school, it was supported by the character education program (e.g., Tannir & Al-Hroub, 2012), community service, and the science department, which were constantly conducting awareness sessions for the learners according to both counselor and teachers.

Strengths of the Counseling Program from the Counselors' Perspectives

Qualitatively data was collected in order to pinpoint the strengths of the service from the view points of the two interviewed counselors. Counselors admitted that there have been numerous success stories with learners referred to the school counselors. Students improved academically, their disruptive behaviors changed, and they were talking less in class and paying more attention to the teacher. These findings align with those of Uzeoshi, (2002), Cooper (2006, 2009), Hamilton – Roberts (2012), and Eremie (2014).

The counselors revealed having received feedback from parents, teachers and heads of sections, both written and orally, acknowledging the positive impacts the service has made on the referred students.

Steps and Procedures needed for Effective Counseling Program

Finally, regarding the service improvement, a number of subthemes emerged collected from the three instruments namely semi – structured interview, FGDs, and the questionnaire since the later had a qualitative item at the end. To begin, one teacher complained that the whole culture should be more accepting of the service and not viewed as a taboo. As Saad (2012) suggested in her study that the stigma linked with the service should be seriously addressed if a more effective service is the goal of any school. Schools should promote the importance of counseling as students are embarrassed of visiting the counselor's office.

Also importantly, teachers expressed their need for more counselors in the school. A similar result reached in Ayyash-Abdo et al.'s study (2010) concerning the ratio between the number of counselors and students within schools. Another recurrent suggestion was having the counselors visit the classrooms more often and observe the learners. According to the participants, counselors should spend time with the students, gain their trust, and be present among them especially during recesses and in the hallways. Teachers suggested that the counselors should work more on the students' personalities. They also suggested that counselors invest more in games and activities (as described in ASCA, 2012) that would

excite the learners and improve their behaviors. Students' readiness for counseling is to be targeted as well.

Collaboration between the teachers and counselors was also an important step that could enhance the overall performance of the service. Teachers should be aware of the students' problems in order to be able to help them and deal with them. It was even suggested that teachers be able to provide the counseling service in their classes before having to report students. Similar factors were detected in studies by Clark and Amatea (2004), Hamilton – Roberts (2012), Khansa (2015), and Walker (2015).

The participants believed that the school's counselors should attend workshops and other professional development sessions to help counselors tackle students' leadership skills and empower them whenever needed. This factor was not suggested in the reviewed literature. Counselors were also requested to be available at all times when needed by both teachers and students. Thus, it was also suggested that a counselor should focus on counseling exclusively.

On the other hand, it was advised by the participants that the counselors attend classes for observation and share tips with the teachers based on their observations. Also, and based on these observations, the counselors would then conduct meetings and workshops / assemblies for both teachers and students.

Role-playing was one of the suggestions put forth by the teachers for the counselors in order to touch upon issues with students. Another recurrent suggestion was having the counselors conduct preventive awareness sessions and group activities for students and teachers tackling issues that might arise or that were recurrent in previous years. Teachers ought to be given tips on common issues in order to prevent them ahead of time. Students, on the other hand, are to be encouraged to seek counseling and not regard it as a taboo. Thus, one teacher came up with the suggestion that the whole approach to counseling in the high school should be altered. A more enthusiastic and younger counselor is needed

according to one of the participating teachers that can relate and understand the high school students. One teacher suggested providing sessions to students on different mental health topics.

Most teachers insisted on having a counseling plan with a clear objective for students that included teachers, the importance of updating both teachers and students regularly about the referred cases, making the service mandatory for those who needed it, grouping students with similar problems together for group counseling which is thought to be helpful for the students who would then not feel alone as suggested by Berger (2013), and give students more time thus organizing the counselor's work more appropriately.

Finally, parental involvement was another much repeated subtheme, their help, acceptance of the service, and following tips from the counselors themselves.

Procedures needed for Effective Counseling Program from the Counselors' Perspectives

The counselors, however, expressed the need for having more collaborative teachers who would refer students with problems earlier so as not to have issues accumulating. Early intervention is necessary if the service was to move forward a factor that was highlighted in Hamilton – Robert's study (2012). The issue of parents being not cooperative was also very much stressed by the interviewed counselors. According to them, the service would become much more effective if the parents became more helpful. This stigma of seeing a counselors or seeking psychological help was present in Saad's paper (2012).

The Results in the Light of the ASCA framework

The ASCA theoretical framework was chosen as a foundation for this study because it encompasses the main criteria of school counseling programs and describes the most important factors that make up an effective program. The ASCA model focuses on having one vision and voice for all counselors to begin. Moreover, and according to the model, it is crucial for school – based counselors to plan and deliver a clear and valid program a suggestion that appeared during interviewing the

participating teachers in this study who complained about not knowing anything about the program and not being aware of how it is delivered and implemented. Another extremely important notion that, again almost all the interviewed teachers discussed in this study, is the importance of having a collaborative relationship between the counselors and the rest of the teachers dealing with the referred children. Moreover, the participating teachers also mentioned that more time is needed from the counselor – the ASCA (2012) proposed that the counselor should be spending at least 80% of his/her time counseling children. The ratio suggested by the ASCA between the counselor and the students was 1:250 that is reasonable in the elementary school (there are roughly 240 students in the elementary section); however, the middle and high school sections have around 460 students and one counselor only.

Briefly, in accordance to the ASCA(2012), and based on teachers responses, the school in this study needed a clear unified plan that was delivered to all referred students especially that every single interviewee complained that not much could be said about the effectiveness of the service in their school since it was all case dependent. Some students benefited from the service while others did not, and those who did benefit did so in different degrees. Teachers had no knowledge whatsoever about the program, its plans or the methods of delivery. Equally important and equally complained about, criticized and protested against was the lack of cooperation between the counselors and the teachers dealing with the troubled students on daily basis. Finally, regarding the counselor's time spent with students, which was recommended to be 80% by the model, the elementary teachers complained that their counselor in their section taught psychology to high school students and did not seem to have enough time to deal with all the suffering children since there was a big number of cases although the teachers admitted that their counselor did try to spend time with and around the children by joining them during recess and keeping a close eye on new comers at the beginning of the academic year. Middle and high school teachers complained that one counselor was surely not enough for both sections. In the high school section, it was the dean of students and head of section that mostly dealt with cases and rarely the counselor. Teachers

expressed the need to see the counselor more present by observing and visiting classes, going to their playground during recess to ‘mingle’ with the students.

Components of an effective SCP according to the ASCA

This is a model programmed to address the problems of every student regardless of his / her academic achievement and behavior. It intends to improve the academic performance and behaviors of any student. It is standardized in such a way that encompasses all SCPs and at the same time flexible enough for counselors to adapt changes in order to meet the individual needs of the students regardless of context. According to the ASCA (2012), the four main components that qualify a school counseling program are foundation, delivery, management, and accountability. These four components will be compared against the findings of the study.

Foundation

Under foundation lies three other sections, based on the ASCA model, which are Program Focus, Student Competencies, and Professional Competencies. In order to establish the former, school counselors are expected to identify personal beliefs addressing how all students can benefit from the program. Based on these beliefs, the school-based counselor would create a vision and mission statement that was parallel to the school’s mission. Then, goals would be developed for the program clearly defining how both the vision and mission would be measured. A very recurrent complaint from the participants was that the inexistence of a clear plan for the program, let alone a vision and a mission, and the lack of clear methods that would enable them to measure the effect of the service on their students. Unfortunately, the school in this study lacked a program focus. Under School Competencies, school counselors should be guiding the development of the SCP in three main domains namely academic, career and social/emotional development. Sadly, in this school the distinction among the three was not evident and not clearly defined. The final part is the professional competencies. These competencies guide the counselors’

decision-making and standardize the practice in order for both students and counselors be protected.

Regrettably, this criterion was also not evident throughout the collection of data.

In brief, the program in the school where this study was conducted lacked a clear foundation for its school counseling program. Neither a program focus nor student or professional competencies were shown in any of the collected data. Thus, there is a pushing need for the school to start developing a solid foundation for its program if they aim to have an effective one.

Delivery

Delivery of the program according to the ASCA (2012) model is done in two ways: direct student services and indirect student services. As the name indicates, the direct method is carried out through a one - on - one manner including a counseling core curriculum, individual student planning and responsive services. The program's core curriculum is intended to be delivered throughout the school's curriculum and presented via collaboration between the school counselors and other teachers and educators in the classrooms and in-group activities. In individual planning, school – based counselors develop systematic activities for the students that would help them in their personal goals and in setting plans. In responsive services, counselors become available to counsel during crises for both individuals and small groups. Indirect student services, however, are provided on behalf of the learners resulting from the counselor's interactions with others including referrals and collaboration with parents, teachers and any other educators.

From the three FGDs and six semi– constructed interviews with the teachers, not one participant was able to put a finger on the delivery method the program at the school adopted. On the contrary, several teachers demanded that a clear curriculum be developed that would try to address issues before they actually happened, conduct activities with the students in order to attract them and speak to their individual interests – not to mention the urgent need to include the teachers and involve them in the program.

Management

Based on the ASCA (2012) model, school counselors are expected to incorporate organizational tools and assessments that are tangible clearly delineated and reflect the school's needs. These assessments and tools include: (a) school counselor competency and program assessments which help self-evaluate areas of strength and development for the individual skills and activity programs, (b) use of time assessment which would help in determining the time allocated by the counselors towards the recommended 80%, (c) annual agreements conducted at the beginning of the academic year with the administration in order to plan the program and set its goals for the year ahead, (d) advisory councils including the students, teachers, other educators, parents, community members, and administration in order to review the program and make recommendations about its activities and results, (e) use of data which help in evaluating the program's results and make systematic changes within the system that would benefit the program and ultimately the referred students, (f) curriculum, small-group and closing-the-gap action plans that include prevention, intervention and developmental activities in addition to the methods that would measure the required and needed learners' competencies; and (g) annual and weekly calendars that would keep everyone involved directly and indirectly in the program well informed and encouraged to become an active participant in the program if was not already.

The overwhelming majority of the participating teachers pleaded for the most common tools and assessments discussed above. The annual agreements, the action plans and weekly meetings were the main points of discussions of the conducted interviews. Teachers complained about being kept in the dark when it came to knowing anything about the program, who was being referred, how each case was being dealt with, seldom being asked for their opinions and/ or input. The interviewees did not mention the assessments for the counselor's competency, use-of-time, advisory as a council, and using data in order to enhance the service; I assume they were not aware of them.

Accountability

The performance of a school counselor is evaluated based on the application of the standards expected from a school counselor implementing a comprehensive SCP. Having a basic criterion on holding a school counselor accountable for his / her performance is of high importance, and the fact that the teachers in this study did not mention that notion seemed to me alarming. For school teachers not to be aware that a school – based counselor can be held accountable if did not implement the program properly did not serve the school, students, teachers or parents well. I believe that it is a cultural issue in Lebanon that accountability is not always taken into consideration and not all people in leadership positions are held responsible whenever their programs fail to reach the expected results.

Summary

The ASCA (2012) provides a comprehensive approach to school – based counseling. It describes in details the healthy basics that school counseling programs should be based on. It also proposes the needed components for the programs to be effective: the foundations of an effective program, methods of delivery, how it is to be managed, and finally making sure school – based counselors be held accountable for their performance and the results they are expected to reach.

Conclusions

A comprehensive SCP is a crucial part of any school's academic mission. SCPs should be driven by data collected from students and based on academic-al standards in order for social/emotional developments and academic-al enhancement to take place (ASCA, 2012). The data collected from the participating teachers in this study have shed light on several important issues about the school's school counseling program. The highlight and most striking piece of data collected from almost all the instruments was the teachers' extremely limited knowledge about the service. Teachers did not have the authority to refer students to the counselor without the approval of their superiors, they did not know who was seeing the counselor, were not given any information about their students seeing the counselor.

Teachers in this school were kept in the dark whereas a bulk of literature stressed on the importance of collaboration between the counselors and the teachers. I assume that almost every item on the survey (except for the number of students being referred) ranked moderate was because of the teachers' utter and complete ignorance about the service in their school. Even those who did notice improvements on their students (academic or socio-emotional) did not know who to attribute this improvement to since they were not aware of who was seeing the counselor and what went on during counseling.

Not one interviewed teacher was able to give clear opinion about the service and each one confessed that the progress, if any, depended on each individual case thus I reached the conclusion that the SCP at that school did not have a clear systematic approach of delivering the service as recommended by the ASCA(2012). The lack and almost non-existing collaboration between the teachers and the counselor was another highlight in this study, which frustrated the teachers. Wang, Ni, Ding and Yi (2015) discovered that the negative perceptions teachers had about SCP in their study were due to the lack of interaction between the teachers and counselors.

Hence, it is of high importance that the school works on the following major points in order to enhance the effectiveness of their counseling program: (a) have a systematic and clear founded curriculum of the program that is clear and available to every teacher at the school in order to be aware of the process their students go through when undergoing counseling, (b) improve the professional relationship and the collaboration between the counselors and the teachers (through weekly meetings, at least) who are in direct contact with the troubled students on daily basis and thus their input and help are much needed to reach the desired results in a shorter period of time; (c) the teachers opinions and suggestions are also to be taken into consideration if a more effective service is the aim; and (d)the service should be promoted and the stigma linked to it addressed.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on the data collected in this study, it seemed that our SCPs still needed to be addressed and worked on. It is of high importance that a systematic curriculum with clear objectives on how each case would be dealt with, and most importantly for the teachers to be aware of. The teachers suggested a number of techniques that could benefit the program and ultimately the students undergoing counseling like role playing, spending more time with and around the students, conducting preventive sessions and games that would both interest the students and break the ice for them when it came to the seeing a counselor. I believe listening to the teachers and considering their opinions would enhance the performance of the program considerably.

The counselors expressed their need for more collaborative teachers and parents. I believe that the issue of parents would be addressed when the service and the program became better promoted and the misconceptions linked to them were clarified.

Study Limitations

This study had a number of limitations inherent within the design of the study. First, the study was conducted in only one school using the action research case study approach. However, action research was frequently done in one school to resolve issues related to the services in the same school. Second, the study was not concerned with *generalizability* of the findings. Action research, in this study, was trying to understand teachers' views to improve the counseling services in their own school. Furthermore, although the questionnaire was electronically sent to 140 teachers, only 66 responded and took the time to answer the items. Finally, the researcher was a teacher at the same school. Though this facilitated the process for interviews, surveys and focus group discussions, it might have played a subjective role in reporting the findings. However, a teacher-as-researcher model was widely used approach in action research. The researcher used a member-check to validate the findings and limit any unintended bias in the research

find.

Proposed Policy for School Guidance and Counseling

Background

This proposal is based on the perceptions of teachers' collected for the attached study. School Counseling programs are relatively a new service in the Lebanese schools and not much research has been conducted about the service in Lebanese schools especially on the perceptions of those dealing both directly and indirectly with the service and the counselors. This policy draws upon the framework of the American School Counseling Association (2012).

Definition of School-based Counseling

The concluded definition that will be adopted for this proposed policy is the following:

According to Walker (2015), school-based counseling is a program that helps “students to make positive changes in one or more domains in their lives” (p. 276). In Prince Edward Island Department of Education (2005) handbook for counselors: “The primary goal of school counseling services is to enhance and promote students learning” (p.5).

The above definition was found to be the most reflective of the study's findings. The participating teachers all agreed that the main aim of school counseling programs is improving different aspects of the students' lives: academically (PEIDE, 2005), behaviorally, socially, and mentally (Walker, 2015).

Guidelines for an Effective School Counseling Programs

An effective SCP is:

- Comprehensive in scope, preventive in design, developmental in nature, and focuses on personal/social, academic, career, and global development

- Designed in a manner that every assures the benefit of every learner
- Conducted and delivered in collaboration with administrators, teachers, parents, and any other professional academic personnel, as concluded from the findings of this study, which deals with the learners ensuring that the needs of the students are met.
- Delivered by a certified counselor with a minimum BA degree in psychology or counseling (an MA is preferable)

Rational and Aims

The overall goal of SCPs is to help develop and enhance the whole student. Developing a comprehensive and effective policy for school counseling programs in Lebanon is a key factor for the development of the school through enhancing the students' social-emotional well-being, behaviors, self-esteem etc. . . , which would ultimately lead to better academic performance and a healthy school culture and environment. The aims of developing and adopting a comprehensive effective school counseling program at any school are the following:

- enhance student achievement by promoting and improving the learning process for all learners.
- enhance the learners emotional and mental well-being in addition to the social relationships.
- promote the spread awareness about the importance of the service through having good relationships with the parents and the community.
- work on the students' personalities.
- collaborate with the teachers and other educational personnel at the school in order to reach the above.

Components

Based on the ASCA (2012), the components for a comprehensive school counseling program are: foundation, management, delivery, and accountability.

Foundation

According to the model, counselors are expected to create comprehensive school counseling programs, which focus on the outcomes of the students, teach learner competencies and are provided through recognized professional competencies.

Program Focus

In order to establish program focus, school counselors identify personal beliefs that address how all students can benefit from the school counseling programs.

Building on these identified beliefs, the school-based counselors create a vision statement that defines what the student outcomes should look like in the future. In addition, school counselors would create a mission statement that sees eye to eye with their school's mission. The counselors are to develop goals for the program that clearly define how both the vision and mission will be measured in the future.

Student Competencies

Improving the learning process for all learners, the ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career- Readiness for Every Student guide the development of effective school counseling programs around three main domains: academic, career and social/emotional development.

Professional Competencies

The ASCA School Counselor Competencies outline and shape the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that ensure school based counselors are fully equipped to meet the strict demands of the profession. The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors identify the main principles of the ethical behaviors

important to support and maintain the highest standards of leadership, integrity, and professionalism. They guide school-based counselors' decision-making and help in standardizing professional practice in order to protect both learners and counselors in the schools.

Management

According to the ASCA model, school based counselors are to integrate organizational tools and assessments that are concrete, clearly outlined and reflect the school's needs. Assessments and tools incorporate:

- **School counselor competency and SCP assessments** in order to self-evaluate areas of strength and development for individual skills activities programs.
- **Use-of-time assessment** in order to determine the amount of time spent toward the recommended 80% or more of the school counselor's time to both direct and indirect services with the students.
- **Annual agreements** developed with and approved by the administration at the beginning of the academic year addressing how the school counseling program is organized and what goals will be targeted and accomplished.
- **Advisory councils** made up of the learners and their parents, teachers/educators, the school counselors, the administrators and also other community members so as to review and make recommendations about school counseling program both activities and results.
- **Use of data** to evaluate the results of the school counseling program as well as to promote a systemic change within the system of each school so that every learner graduates at the university level and is career-ready.
- **Curriculum, small-group and closing-the-gap action plans**, which include developmental, prevention as well as intervention activities in addition to the services that measure the desired competencies for the learners and its impact on achievement, attendance and behavior.

- **Annual and weekly calendars**, which help keep students, their parents, teachers/educators and administrators well informed and also to encourage active participation in the SCP.

Delivery

School counselors provide services to the school's body of students, parents, even school staff and the community in the following areas:

Direct Student Services

Direct services meaning in-person interactions between the school-based counselors and the learners, which include the following:

- **School counseling core curriculum:** This curriculum is made up of structured lessons plans to help learners reach the desired competencies and to provide all learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed and appropriate for their developmental level. The school - based counseling core curriculum is delivered throughout the school's overall curriculum and is presented systematically by the school counselors collaboratively with other professional teachers and educators in K-12 classrooms as well as group activities.
- **Individual student planning:** School counselors organize ongoing systemic activities designed to help learners in accomplishing personal goals and developing plans for the future.

Responsive services: "Responsive services are activities designed to meet students' immediate needs and concerns" (p. 20). Responsive services may include counseling in crisis response or individual or small-group settings.

Indirect Student Services

Indirect services are brought forth on behalf of the learners because of the school counselors' interactions with others, which include referrals for supplementary assistance, consultation and collaboration with teachers and educators, parents, and even community organizations.

Accountability

To indicate the effectiveness of school based programs in measurable terms, school counselors examine school and school counseling program data to decide how learners become different as an outcome of the SCP. School-based counselors use data to demonstrate the impact of the SCP on student attendance, achievement, and behavior and analyze SCP “assessments to guide future action and improve future results for all students” (p. 21). The performance of the school-based counselor is assessed on basic standards of practice expected of the counselors implementing a comprehensive school counseling program.

Based on the findings of the study, the school counselor is required to:

1. Dedicate at least 80% of his / her time for counseling services.
2. Spread awareness about the service and promote the importance of the program and the service among teachers, students, parents, and community through conducting awareness sessions, workshops, and regular meetings in order to provide the needed clarifications and information that would increase the trust in the service. This awareness will stress the objectives and process of counseling in addition to the types of services that can be provided to counselees.
3. Attend workshops and other professional development sessions on a regular basis.
4. Be acquainted about the program and their service.
5. Make improvement tangible (better grades, better social relationships, higher self- esteem etc...) and clear based on short- and long-term objectives.
6. Have a clear accessible curriculum in order to not have progress be case dependent.
7. Refer severe cases to clinical psychologists outside school certified by reputable programs and universities such as AUB, USJ, LAU, and others.
8. When progress is slow with any case, clarify to both parents and teachers the reasons for that.

9. Observe any case put forth by the teachers and not jump to any quick conclusions (for example, teacher is not doing her job well) before fully investigating the case.

Students

10. Educate themselves of how students' leadership skills can be addressed and how their strengths can be further empowered.
11. Conduct regular sessions/workshops on different mental health issues for both students and teachers.
12. Conduct weekly counseling sessions/assemblies for all classes which could help in preventing certain recurrent issues like bullying.
13. Conduct awareness and preventive sessions/workshops/group activities regarding any issue that might arise in the future based on observations and previous experience.
14. Spend more time with the students, possibly during recess time, talk to them, listen to them, observe their behaviors, gain their trust etc...
15. Address students' personalities and interests not just solve problems.
16. Conduct games and activities that could help students gain more trust in the program and the counselor in order to be able to open up and resort to the counselor when facing any problem. This way the students themselves would turn to the counselors for help without waiting for administrative referral.
17. Make sure students are ready for counseling (through explaining what counseling is and how it is done) and know what to expect when visiting the counselor's office.
18. Be consistent with their follow-up with the students.
19. Group students with similar problems and have group sessions.
20. Maintain confidentiality with the students' affairs.

21. Make the service mandatory for those who evidently need it regardless of parental opposition.

Parents

22. Make sure parents are more involved, through regular meetings and updates, after they are made aware of the program's importance and helpfulness by having regular conferences between the parents and the counselors.
23. Provide parents with tangible tips on how to deal with their children.
24. Conduct regular awareness sessions for parents on mental health, behavioral issues, recurrent problems that children of different ages might face.

Teachers

25. Visit classes regularly in order to observe the behaviors of any referred students.
26. Include the teachers in the counseling planning and collaborate with them.
27. Have a clear plan and objective for each referred case and make sure the teacher is aware of each case and working in parallel with the counselor in order to reach positive results.
28. Give teachers tangible and effective tips and provide them with suggestions that could help in handling troubled students.
29. Make sure teachers are aware of their students' cases and are regularly updated on the progress of each case. They should also be given tips on how to deal with these students since they are the ones spending the most time with the students.
30. Provide teachers with instant techniques and tips that could help in preventing recurrent issues.
31. Make sure teachers are completely aware of who is being referred and when is seeing the counselor.

Mechanisms for Referral/Process

Students may be referred to the school counselor by their parents, teachers, and administrators by completing a counseling referral form. Self – referral should also be an option and encouraged.

How and why would a student be referred to the school counselor?

- ✓ Student's grades dropping.
- ✓ New (or old) students having difficulty adapt, make friends, academically struggling.
- ✓ Student showing lack of self–confidence.
- ✓ Bullying others/getting bullied.
- ✓ When a teacher feels the need that any of her students should see the counselor for any reason.

Mechanisms for Collaboration and Public Relation

According to ASCA (2012) SCP work best and are most effective when there is solid collaboration among school counselors, parents and other educators, which would help in creating an environment that promotes students' achievement. Based on the findings of this study and the recurrent theme, the promotion of solid collaboration between the teachers and the counselors is key.

Training

School counselors should attend professional development sessions/workshops on regular basis and update the teachers or keep them well informed about whatever new methodology and/or information they acquire.

Action Plan for Implementation and Evaluation

- Counselors assess and understand the needs of the individual learners.
- Counselors are to help the students act and think differently through.
- Developing an action plan that best assist every student based on a core curriculum for the service.
- Counselors provide the needed individual support.
- Counselors decide based on the student's development whether additional professional support is needed.
- The students' parents/guardians and teachers are to be updated step by step on the development of each case.

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Appendix I

Cooper's Questionnaire for Counseling Service Evaluation (2006)

Please circle the information about yourself and statements the most accurately reflects the way you see yourself:

- Years of experience: 1 to 3 years 4 to 7 years 8 to 12 13 and above
- Male / female
- Elementary teacher Middle school teacher Secondary school teacher
- Age 22 to 25 26 to 29 30 and above
- Level of education: BA TDMA PhD
- Have you taken any courses in counseling and / or psychology? Yes No

1- As far as you are aware, over this school year, roughly how many students have attended one or more session(s) with the school's counselor?

None One Two to Five Six to Ten More than that

2- Based on any changes that you have witnessed in these students, overall, how helpful or unhelpful do you think the counseling service has been? (1 is extremely unhelpful and 5 is extremely helpful)

1 2 3 4 5

3- What difference, overall, you think the counseling has made to the following areas of your pupils' lives?

Motivation to attend school

1(much less motivated) 2 3 (no difference) 4 5(much more motivated)

Ability to concentrate in class

1(much less able) 2 3 (no difference) 4 5(much more able)

Motivation to study and learn

1(much less motivated) 2 3 (no difference) 4 5(much more motivated)

Willingness to participate in class

1(much less willing) 2 3 (no difference) 4 5(much more willing)

How they feel about themselves

1(much worse) 2 3 (no difference) 4 5(much better)

How understanding they are of others

1(much less understanding) 2 3 (no difference) 4 5(much more understanding)

4- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The counseling service in our school has enhanced students' behavior.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
---	-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

There is good communication between the counselor in our school and the teachers.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
---	-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

The counseling service has provided 'added value' to the school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	Strongly agree
--	-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

5- Are there any ways in which you feel that we could improve the counseling service in our school?

Appendix II

Focus Group Discussions

Date and location: _____

School level: _____

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to join this focus group discussion on the effectiveness of school-based counseling. I understand how valuable your time is. Your presence is highly appreciated.

My name is Ghada Merhi Bleik, a graduate student of School Guidance and Counseling at the American University of Beirut (AUB). We would like to understand how effective school-based counseling is in our school from your perspectives. I would like to hear from you what you think the weaknesses and strengths are, and what you would suggest to improve the service.

This study is valuable to our school and will not only help the service but also the students being referred to the school counselor by enhancing it.

Please note that there is no right or wrong answers. I simply want to know your opinions and points of view on the subject matter, so please do not hesitate to speak your mind especially that you will remain anonymous in the study and your name will not be shared. Rest assured that anything you say will be helpful to the study, so kindly do not hold anything back.

It would be highly appreciated if we could make sure to listen to each other and not interrupt. There will be ample time for all of you to speak.

Our session will last about an hour to an hour and a half.

I. Referring students to Counseling

- 1- When you come across a child with problems that you are not able to handle in the classroom, would you consider sending the child to the counselor?
 - a. How often do you send students to the counselor?
 - b. Approximately how many students a year?
 - c. Is the counselor usually your first choice for referring for students with problems?

II. Students' engagement with learning, their mental health and emotional well-being

- 1- Do you think the counselor is helping the referred students in the following areas: engagement with education, emotional wellbeing and mental health, and behavior?
 - a. What are some of the changes that you have seen in referred children? Can you give some examples?
 - b. Are the students taking more responsibility over their learning?
 - c. Have their grades improved?

- d. Do they feel better about themselves? How can you tell? (relationship with peers, for example)
- e. When students with behavior problems are referred to the counselor, do they improve as they receive counseling sessions? Would their names still be repeatedly seen on the break / responsibility charts?

III. Suggestions for Improvement

- 1- Do you think the integration between the teachers and the counselors can be enhanced? How?
- 2- How, in your opinion, would the school be different without a counselor? (How has the presence of a counselor in your school changed it (the school?))
- 3- How do you think we can improve the service?
- 4- What can be changed that would make the service more effective and more helpful for the students that need it?
- 5- What else can you say about the service?

Appendix III

Teachers' Interviews

I. Effectiveness of the Service

1. How helpful or unhelpful do you believe the service has been to your students? Explain.
2. What are some of the changes that you have witnessed in referred children?
3. Are satisfied with the service at the school? Why or why not?
4. What is the added value, in your opinion, of having a counselor in the school, if any?

II. Students' engagement with learning, their mental health and emotional well –being

5. Do you think the service has an impact on your students' ability to learn and study? How? What changes have you seen in the referred children?
6. How can you describe the changes in students'?
 - a) motivation to attend school,
 - b) ability to concentrate in class,
 - c) motivation to study and learn, and
 - d) willingness to participate in class?
7. Do you think the service has helped the students feel better about themselves? What made you see that?
8. Has the service improved the students' behavior? How?

III. Improving the Service

9. In your opinion, what are the main ways that can help improve the service?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add about the service?

Appendix IV

Counselors' Interviews

I. Effectiveness of the Service

1. How helpful or unhelpful do you believe your service has been to the student? Explain.
2. Have you witnessed any changes in the referred students? Explain.
3. Do you think your presence is adding value to the school? Why?

II. Students' engagement with learning, their mental health and emotional well –being

4. Have you ever been informed (by the teachers) of the referred students' increase in ability to learn and study?
5. What have you heard (from the teachers) about the referred students'
 - a) motivation to attend school,
 - b) ability to concentrate in class,
 - c) motivation to study and learn, and
 - d) willingness to participate in class?
6. How do you think the service has helped the students feel better about themselves?
7. Have you received any feedback about the service improving the students' behavior? How?

III. Improving the Service

8. In your opinion, what are the main ways that can help improve the service?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add about the service?

Appendix V

American University of Beirut

Department of Education

School Director Permission Letter

Study Title: The Effectiveness of School – Based Counseling from Teachers’ Perceptions: A Case Study

Researchers: Dr. Anies Al-Hroub and Mrs. Ghada Merhi Bleik

Dear Principal,

We are requesting your approval to participate in a research study under the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human rights and regulations. We are asking permission to distribute one questionnaire to the teachers and conduct in-depth semi – structured interviews with the teachers and counselors; in addition to, conducting FDGs with teachers in the school’s conference room. Participation is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions you may have. We will contact the school principals and counselors in person, using the direct approach.

Kindly note the following notes:

- This is not an official message from AUB or the school.
- Data collected will be monitored and may be audited by the IRB while assuring confidentiality.
- The recruitment strategy implemented in this study is in a prominent manner.
- The approximate number of participants to be recruited to 170.
- Please mention below if you agree for your teachers and counselors to participate in the study.

1. Project Description

This research is being conducted with the goal of completing a Masters’ thesis in Educational Psychology and possibly presentation at academic conferences.

The purpose of this study is threefold: (a) to explore teachers’ and counselors’ perceptions of the school-based program on students’ behavior, (b) to identify the weaknesses, strengths and barriers of the counseling program; and (c) to suggest action plan for effective counseling program in the target school.

Three research questions are addressed in this study: (a) what are teachers’ perceptions of the school-based program on students’ behavior? (b) What are the strengths, weaknesses, and barriers to the school counseling program; and (c) what steps and procedures are needed for effective counseling program?

If the principal consent is obtained, a questionnaire will be electronically sent out to the teachers through the school's I.T. school assistant to ensure confidentiality, and later conduct focus group discussions with teachers and semi-structured interviews with teachers and counselors.

In case any of the participants refused to be tape-recorded, their responses would be jotted down on a piece of paper.

2. 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 are entitled. Discontinuing participation will in no way affect your relationship with AUB. In addition, refusal to participate in the study will involve no penalties of any kind or affect the counselor's relationship with AUB or the school.

The school receives no direct benefits from participating in this research.

3. Confidentiality

If you agree for your counselor to participate, all information will be kept confidential. To secure the confidentiality of your counselor's responses, their names and other identifying information will never be attached to their answers. Data provided by the counselor will not be shared by any other counselor or the school principal. All codes and data are kept in a locked drawer in a locker room or in a password protected computer that is kept secure. Data access is limited to the Principal Investigator and researchers working directly on this project. All data will be destroyed responsibly after the termination of the study. Your counselor's privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. Their names or other identifying information will not be used in our reports or published papers.

Recruitment procedure

The co-investigator will use the direct approach to contact the school principal. A permission letter will be given personally by the co-investigator to the principal informing them about the study and its purpose and whether s/he would like his/her counselors and teachers to participate in the study. Participation is completely voluntary. After two days, the principal will be contacted to find out if he is interested to participate or not. If the school principal agrees to participate, the co-investigator will personally send an invitation to participate in the research to the counselors whose emails will be obtained from the school's website. If the counselors agree to take part, a meeting will be organized with them to explain the research and give them the consent forms and instrument. They will have 2 days to decide whether to participate or not. Participation is voluntary, and anyone can withdraw from the study at any point.

Teachers will be sent an email through the school's email address with the link to the survey. The email will explain the nature and purpose of the study. The email will also explain that participation is voluntary and by opening the link and answering the items on the survey, they will be agreeing to take part in the study. Teachers can participate in one aspect of the study and not necessarily the other i.e. they can choose to take the survey but not sit for an interview, for example.

D. Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the research you may contact Dr. Anies Al-Hroub at 01-350000 3060/3064 or by email: aa111@aub.edu.lb or Mrs. Ghada Merhi Bleik at 70-139770 or by email: gzm00@mail.aub.edu. If I feel that my questions have not been answered, I can contact the Institutional Review Board for human rights at 01-374374, ext: 5445 or by email: irb@aub.edu.lb.

E. Participant rights

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to leave the study at any time without penalty. Your decision not to participate does not influence your relationship with AUB. A copy of this consent will be given to you.

F. Signing the Consent From

If you agree to grant us approval to administer the research at your school, please sign below:

Principal's name: _____

Consent of the principal: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Co-Investigator's Signature: _____

If you agree to grant us approval to distribute the questionnaires to the teachers and conduct the interviews and FGDs, please sign below:

Principal's name: _____

Consent of the principal: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Co-Investigator's Signature: _____

Principal Investigator: Dr. Anies Al-Hroub
Address: American University of Beirut
Department of Education
Associate Professor
Educational Psychology & Special Education
Phone (00961-350000-3060)
Email: aa111@aub.edu.lb

Co-Investigator: Mrs. Ghada Merhi Bleik
Address: American University of Beirut
Department of Education
Beirut, Lebanon
Phone: 70139770
Email: gzm00@mail.aub.edu

Appendix VI

American University of Beirut

Department of Education

School Director Permission Letter

Study Title: The Effectiveness of School – Based Counseling from Teachers’ Perceptions: A Case Study

Researchers: Dr. Anies Al-Hroub and Mrs. Ghada Merhi Bleik

Dear Principal,

We are requesting your approval to participate in a research study under the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human rights and regulations. We are asking permission to distribute one questionnaire to the teachers and conduct in-depth semi – structured interviews with the teachers and counselors; in addition to, conducting FDGs with teachers in the school’s conference room. Participation is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions you may have. We will contact the school principals and counselors in person, using the direct approach.

Kindly note the following notes:

- This is not an official message from AUB or the school.
- Data collected will be monitored and may be audited by the IRB while assuring confidentiality.
- The recruitment strategy implemented in this study is in a prominent manner.
- The approximate number of participants to be recruited to 170.
- Please mention below if you agree for your teachers and counselors to participate in the study.

4. Project Description

This research is being conducted with the goal of completing a Masters’ thesis in Educational Psychology and possibly presentation at academic conferences.

The purpose of this study is threefold: (a) to explore teachers’ and counselors’ perceptions of the school-based program on students’ behavior, (b) to identify the weaknesses, strengths and barriers of the counseling program; and (c) to suggest action plan for effective counseling program in the target school.

Three research questions are addressed in this study: (a) what are teachers’ perceptions of the school-based program on students’ behavior? (b) What are the strengths, weaknesses, and barriers to the school counseling program; and (c) what steps and procedures are needed for effective counseling program?

If the principal consent is obtained, a questionnaire will be electronically sent out to the teachers through the school's I.T. school assistant to ensure confidentiality, and later conduct focus group discussions with teachers and semi-structured interviews with teachers and counselors.

In case any of the participants refused to be tape-recorded, their responses would be jotted down on a piece of paper.

5. 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 are entitled. Discontinuing participation will in no way affect your relationship with AUB. In addition, refusal to participate in the study will involve no penalties of any kind or affect the counselor's relationship with AUB or the school.

The school receives no direct benefits from participating in this research.

6. Confidentiality

If you agree for your counselor to participate, all information will be kept confidential. To secure the confidentiality of your counselor's responses, their names and other identifying information will never be attached to their answers. Data provided by the counselor will not be shared by any other counselor or the school principal. All codes and data are kept in a locked drawer in a locker room or in a password protected computer that is kept secure. Data access is limited to the Principal Investigator and researchers working directly on this project. All data will be destroyed responsibly after the termination of the study. Your counselor's privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. Their names or other identifying information will not be used in our reports or published papers.

Recruitment procedure

The co-investigator will use the direct approach to contact the school principal. A permission letter will be given personally by the co-investigator to the principal informing them about the study and its purpose and whether s/he would like his/her counselors and teachers to participate in the study. Participation is completely voluntary. After two days, the principal will be contacted to find out if he is interested to participate or not. If the school principal agrees to participate, the co-investigator will personally send an invitation to participate in the research to the counselors whose emails will be obtained from the school's website. If the counselors agree to take part, a meeting will be organized with them to explain the research and give them the consent forms and instrument. They will have 2 days to decide whether to participate or not. Participation is voluntary, and anyone can withdraw from the study at any point.

Teachers will be sent an email through the school's email address with the link to the survey. The email will explain the nature and purpose of the study. The email will also explain that participation is voluntary and by opening the link and answering the items on the survey, they will be agreeing to take part in the study. Teachers can participate in one aspect of the study and not necessarily the other i.e. they can choose to take the survey but not sit for an interview, for example.

G. Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the research you may contact Dr. Anies Al-Hroub at 01-350000 3060/3064 or by email: aa111@aub.edu.lb or Mrs. Ghada Merhi Bleik at 70-139770 or by email: gzm00@mail.aub.edu. If I feel that my questions have not been answered, I can contact the Institutional Review Board for human rights at 01-374374, ext: 5445 or by email: irb@aub.edu.lb.

H. Participant rights

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to leave the study at any time without penalty. Your decision not to participate does not influence your relationship with AUB. A copy of this consent will be given to you.

I. Signing the Consent From

If you agree to grant us approval to administer the research at your school, please sign below:

Principal's name: _____

Consent of the principal: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Co-Investigator's Signature: _____

If you agree to grant us approval to distribute the questionnaires to the teachers and conduct the interviews and FGDs, please sign below:

Principal's name: _____

Consent of the principal: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Co-Investigator's Signature: _____

Principal Investigator: Dr. Anies Al-Hroub
Address: American University of Beirut
Department of Education
Associate Professor
Educational Psychology & Special Education
Phone (00961-350000-3060)
Email: aa111@aub.edu.lb

Co-Investigator: Mrs. Ghada Merhi Bleik
Address: American University of Beirut
Department of Education
Beirut, Lebanon
Phone: 70139770
Email: gzm00@mail.aub.edu

Appendix VII
American University of Beirut
Department of Education
Counselor Consent From
Direct Approaching

Study Title:The Effectiveness of School – Based Counseling from Teachers’ Perceptions: A Case Study

Researchers: Dr. AniesAl-Hroub and Mrs. Ghada Merhi Bleik

Dear Counselor,

We are requesting your approval to participate in a research study under the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human rights regulations. Participation is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions you may have. You will be asked to answer a few questions during a semi - structured interview that should last between 45 to 60 minutes.

In case the participant refused to be tape-recorded, her responses would be jotted down on a piece of paper.

Kindly note the following notes:

- This is not an official message from AUB or the school.
- Data collected will be monitored and may be audited by the IRB while assuring confidentiality.
- The recruitment strategy implemented in this study is in a prominent manner.
- The approximate number of participants to be recruited to 170.

A. Project Description

This research is being conducted with the goal of completing a Masters’ thesis in Educational Psychology and possibly presentation at academic conferences.

The purpose of this study is threefold: (a) to explore teachers’ and counselors’ perceptions of the school-based program on students’ behavior, (b) to identify the weaknesses, strengths and barriers of the counseling program; and (c) to suggest action plan for effective counseling program in the target school.

Three research questions are addressed in this study: (a) what are teachers’ perceptions of the school-based program on students’ behavior? (b) What are the strengths, weaknesses, and barriers to the school counseling program; and (c) what steps and procedures are needed for effective counseling program?

The interview will cover three main themes namely: (a) effectiveness of the service, (b) students’ engagement with learning, their mental health, and emotional well-being, and (c) student behavior.

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 are entitled.

Discontinuing participation will in no way affect your relationship with AUB. In addition, refusal to participate in the study will involve no penalties of any kind or affect the counselor's relationship with AUB or the school.

The school receives no direct benefits from participating in this research. This will help in adding to the research-based information about school-based counseling in the target school.

C. Confidentiality

If you agree to participate, all information will be kept confidential. To secure the confidentiality of your responses, your name and other identifying information will never be attached to your answers. Data provided by the counselor will not be shared by any other school staff or the school principal. All codes and data are kept in a locked drawer in a locker room or in a password protected computer that is kept secure. Data access is limited to the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator working directly on this project. All data will be destroyed responsibly directly after finishing the research. Your privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. Your name or other identifying information will not be used in our reports or published papers.

Recruitment procedure

The co-investigator will use the direct approach to contact the school principal. A permission letter will be given personally by the co-investigator to the principal informing them about the study and its purpose and whether s/he would like his/her counselors and teachers to participate in the study. Participation is completely voluntary. After two days, the principal will be contacted to find out if he is interested to participate or not. If the school principal agrees to participate, the co-investigator will personally send an invitation to participate in the research to the counselors whose emails will be obtained from the school's website. If the counselors agree to take part, a meeting will be organized with them to explain the research and give them the consent forms and instrument. They will have 2 days to decide whether to participate or not. Participation is voluntary, and anyone can withdraw from the study at any point.

Teachers will be sent an email through the school's email address with the link to the survey. The email will explain the nature and purpose of the study. The email will also explain that participation is voluntary and by opening the link and answering the items on the survey, they will be agreeing to take part in the study. Teachers can participate in one aspect of the study and not necessarily the other i.e. they can choose to take the survey but not sit for an interview, for example.

C. Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the research you may contact Dr. Anies Al-Hroub at 01-350000 3060 or by email: aa111@aub.edu.lb, the Acting PI, Dr. Rima Karami Akkary at ra10@aub.edu.lb, or Mrs. Ghada Merhi Bleik at 70-139770 or by email: gzm00@mail.aub.edu. If you feel that your questions have not been answered, you can contact the Institutional Review Board for human rights at 01-374374, ext: 5445 or by email: irb@aub.edu.lb.

D. Participant rights

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to leave the study at any time without penalty. Your decision not to participate does not influence your relationship with AUB. A copy of this consent will be given to you.

Signing the Consent Form

I have read and understood the above information. I agree to participate in the research study:

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Time: _____

Co-Investigator's Signature: _____

Principal Investigator: Dr. Anies Al-Hroub
Address: American University of Beirut
Department of Education
Associate Professor, Educational Psychology & Special Education
Phone (00961-350000-3060), Email: aa111@aub.edu.lb

Co-Investigator: Mrs. Ghada Merhi Bleik
Address: American University of Beirut
Department of Education
Beirut, Lebanon
Phone: 70139770,
Email: gzm00@mail.aub.edu



Appendix VIII
American University of Beirut
Institutional Review Board

Application to Conduct Research involving Human Participants/Subjects

Social and Behavioral Sciences IRB Review

(SBS Form B –Non-Nutrition Studies)

(For proposals submitted for expedited or full committee review only)

To ensure a timely and effective review by the IRB, a full description of the planned research must be submitted with the application to conduct research involving human participants/subjects. The research protocol described in the Application provides the reader with background information of the problem under study, including the study rationale, a detailed plan for recruiting and conducting the research involving human research participants/subjects, and a discussion of the potential importance of the research. The IRB must determine that the risks to participants/subjects are minimized consistent with sound research design, that risks are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits, selection of participants/subjects is equitable, non coercive, and transparent taking into consideration the purpose of the research and the setting in which the research will be conducted, that informed consent will be obtained from the participants/subjects or their legally authorized representatives, that the participants'/subjects' privacy is respected, that confidentiality of the collected data is protected, that adequate monitoring will be performed to ensure the safety of participants/subjects, and that vulnerable populations will receive additional protections.

1. Project Identifiers:

1A. Project title:

The Effectiveness of School – Based Counseling from Teachers' Perceptions: A Case - Study.

1B. Type of Review

1B.1. Application for Exemption from IRB Review and Oversight

Certain categories of research are Exempt from IRB review and oversight ([45 CFR 46.101\(b\)](#)). If you believe your research qualifies for Exempt Status, do not use this form; please complete the

1B.2. Requested Review

Expedited

Full Committee

1B.3. Application for Expedited Review

If you are requesting expedited review, please indicate the criterion (ia) under which your research project falls:

Clinical studies of drugs and medical devices only when condition (a) or (b) is met.

(a) Research on drugs for which an investigational new drug application (21 CFR Part 312) is not required. (Note: Research on marketed drugs that significantly increases the risks or decreases the acceptability of the risks associated with the use of the product is not eligible for expedited review.)

(b) Research on medical devices for which (i) an investigational device exemption application (21 CFR Part 812) is not required; or (ii) the medical device is cleared/approved for marketing and the medical device is being used in accordance with its cleared/approved labeling.

Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick or venipuncture. For adults, normally not > 450 ml during an 8 week period, and not than twice a week. For children and those < 50 kg, not more than 50 ml or 3 ml/kg whichever is less during an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week.

Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by noninvasive means, e.g.: non-disfiguring hair and nail clipping, excreta and external secretion, placenta at delivery, amniotic fluid obtained at the time of rupture of the membrane prior to or during labor; mucosal and skin cells collected by buccal scraping or swab, skin swab or mouth washings, etc.

Collection of data through noninvasive means (not involving general anesthesia or sedation)

routinely employed in clinical practice **excluding x-rays and microwaves**, e.g.: ECG, EEG, MRI, ultrasound, echocardiography, electrocardiography, electroencephalography, ultrasound, Doppler blood flow, thermography, body composition assessment, moderate exercise by healthy volunteers, muscular strength testing, weighing testing, sensory acuity.

Research involving materials already collected (data documents, records and pathological or diagnostic specimens) or will be collected solely for non-research purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis).

Collection of data from voice, video, digital or image recordings made for research purposes.

Research on individual or groups characteristics or behavior such as perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices and social behavior, test development where the investigator does not manipulate that subject's behavior and no stress to the subject may occur, or research using survey, interview, oral history, or quality assurance methodologies. (some research in this category can be exempt)

1C. Project Period:**Proposed Start Date of Study:**

December 2018

Proposed Project Duration, including recruitment, collection and analysis of data:

End of Spring 2019

1D. Key Personnel

1D.1 Principal Investigator	Name: Dr. Anies Al-Hroub
Department	Education
Degree	PhD
Title	Associate Professor
Office Phone number	3060
Pager number	
Email address	aa111@aub.edu.lb
CITI course completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Date of certification: 05 / 11 / 2017

PI is the researcher leading the study and is responsible for the conduct of the research team.

1D.2.1 Co-Investigator at AUB (key research team member, engaged in design, recruitment, consent process, data collection, and/or data analysis)	Name: Ghada Merhi Bleik
Department	Education
Degree	MA
Affiliation: <input type="checkbox"/> AUB Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> AUB Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student <input type="checkbox"/> Undergrad Student	

[] Visiting Scholar [] Non AUB collaborator (jump to section 1 D.4)	
Title	Graduate
Office Phone number	70-139770
Pager number	
Email address	gzm00@mail.aub.edu
CITI course completed [X] Yes [] No	Date of certification: 15/2/2017

If Student, is this his/her research project/thesis? [X]Yes []No

Copy same table for additional co-investigators.

1D.3.1 Support staff/ Research staff (personnel implementing more basic duties)	Name:
Department	
Degree	
Affiliation: <input type="checkbox"/> AUB Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> AUB Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student <input type="checkbox"/> Undergrad Student <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting Scholar [] Non AUB collaborator (jump to section 1 D.4)	
Title	
Role in Study	
Office Phone number	
Pager number	
Email address	
CITI course completed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes [] No	Date of certification: / /

Copy same table for more Support/Research staff members

1D.4 Collaborators and IRB involvement at other institutions				
Name	Affiliation	e-mail address	Role in study	Documented Outside IRB approval
				<input type="checkbox"/> Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Will follow <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
				<input type="checkbox"/> Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Will follow <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
				<input type="checkbox"/> Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Will follow <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
				<input type="checkbox"/> Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Will follow <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

N/A: Not applicable

1E. Is the proposed research a collaborative project involving investigators at other institutions?
 Yes No

Provide information on how participants'/subjects' data, samples, and research information among the various collaborators will be handled. Provide copies of IRB reviews, approvals and consent forms from the various collaborating institutions if available. If not, specify the timeline for obtaining and submitting this information. Contact the Office of Grants and Contracts for assistance in preparing a Nondisclosure Agreement (NDA). An NDA is also required if you are hiring a commercial organization to recruit participants or collect data.

--

2. **Research Site:** Describe all the AUB and non AUB research sites for this research project. For non AUB sites, specify whether the site has an IRB, whether the site has given you permission to conduct your research, and whether its corresponding IRB has given you an approval as well.

Site	Location	Non AUB IRB Approval
One Private School	Beirut	<input type="checkbox"/> Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Will follow <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

N/A: Not applicable

3. Funding

3A. Is this research submitted for funding? Yes No

If No, go to Section 4.

3B. Funding Resources and Status: (you may check more than one if applicable)

Type of funding	Funding status
AUB funding : <input type="checkbox"/> URB <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: -----	<input type="checkbox"/> Funded <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research (LNCSR)	<input type="checkbox"/> Funded <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Commercial Sponsorship Specify: -----	<input type="checkbox"/> Funded <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
US Federal funding <input type="checkbox"/> NIH <input type="checkbox"/> NSF <input type="checkbox"/> USAID <input type="checkbox"/> DOD <input type="checkbox"/> Other US funding: specify: -----	<input type="checkbox"/> Funded <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Funding from Other Sources <input type="checkbox"/> Non Federal US Funding: specify: ----- - <input type="checkbox"/> Other funding: specify:----- ---	<input type="checkbox"/> Funded <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

N/A: Not applicable

3C. Proposal:

A **complete copy** of the proposal including all relevant/related documents (advertisements, flyers, consent document(s), research instruments) in English language is required prior to IRB review

Attached Will follow Is already in the IRB office

4. Summary of Proposed Research Procedures

4A. Abstract (Provide an abstract of the study not exceeding 500 words written in language understood by LAY PEOPLE. This abstract which is different from that provided in the scientific proposal should include:

1. **Body of Knowledge/Scientific context**
2. **Hypothesis/aims/research question**
3. **Participant/subject recruitment and selection**, including initial approach and inclusion/exclusion criteria
4. **Research design**, data collection, experiment, quasi experiment, descriptive or correlational study, survey, ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, other qualitative method.
5. **Ethical considerations, risks, benefits, and risk/benefit ratio, privacy and confidentiality issues**
6. Discuss any aspects of the study that need **special consideration** due to their sensitivity, any issues that require flexible interpretation by the IRB, justify any intended departures from standard research practices, e.g. use of deception in recruitment or consent process.
7. Are any of the research instruments or material **copyrighted**? Yes No
8. If yes, does the PI have **permission** to use this instrument/material? Attached In Process

Effectiveness of School-Based Counseling from Teachers' Perceptions: A case study

A school counselor plays a crucial role in the life of any learner at any age. School – based counseling is a somewhat new service in Lebanon. It still needs to be addressed and shaped in order to maximize the benefit of those in need of this service. Not enough research has been done in Lebanon regarding the perceptions of teachers on school–based counseling, whose opinions is of great importance since school teachers are the ones in direct contact with both learner and counselor. This study aims at investigating the perceptions of school teachers on a school-based program in one private school located in Beirut. The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' and counselors' perceptions of the school–based program on students' behavior, identify the weaknesses and strengths of the counseling program, and suggest action plan for effective counseling program.

Three research questions are addressed in this study: (1) what are teachers' perceptions of the school–based program on students' behavior? (2) What are the weaknesses and strengths of the counseling program; and (3) what steps and procedures are needed for effective counseling program?

This is a case study following a mixed method approach aiming at investigating and understanding the perceptions of the participant teachers for improving school–based counseling program. A questionnaire will be distributed among over 140 elementary, middle and high school teachers electronically. In-depth individual semi-structured interviews will be conducted with six teachers, and three focus group discussions (FGDs) will take place with teachers in the elementary, middle and secondary schools. Each group will range between 8 and 10 teachers. Finally, semi – structured interviews will be conducted with the two counselors at the schools.

4B. Describe the involvement of research participants/subjects in this study and determine the duration and frequency of the research activities. Enclose a soft good copy in English **and** any other applicable language, of the proposed survey, interview questions, tests....If you are planning to conduct a pilot study before recruitment, please specify. **NB a pilot study cannot be performed prior to IRB approval.**

The teachers selected for this study will be in a private English speaking school located in Beirut. The participants are around 140 teachers from various grade levels (Elementary, Middle and High levels) and two English-speaking counselors working at the same school. The teachers will receive 1 survey via Lime Survey, in addition to semi – structured in depth interviews with 2 teachers from each school level, and 3 FGDs one in each school level. Each FGD will consist of 8 to 10 teachers. Finally, there will be two semi- structured interviews with the two counselors working at the school. The survey should take about 10 to 15 minutes; whereas, the interviews will take up between 60 to 90 minutes. The school’s principal, counselors’, and teachers’ consents will be obtained.

Attached to this form are the proposed study, the principal’s and counselors’ consent forms, and the four instruments in English. **Only English will be used since the primary language of instruction in the school is English.**No pilot study will be done.

4C. Does the proposed research involve deception/withholding information that would normally be provided to research participants? If yes, describe the specific nature of the deception/withholding information that would normally be provided to research participants. An explanation of why deception/withholding information is necessary is needed including any alternative research strategy that has been considered to accomplish the objectives of the research.

No. The proposed research does not involve any deception/withholding of any information that would normally be provided to research participants.

5. Informed Consent

5A. Attach a copy of the proposed Consent Form that will be used to document the voluntary participation of subjects. If you are requesting waiver of written Informed Consent Form, attach a script of the oral consent you propose to use. The Consent process, whether written or oral, must include the basic elements of informed consent (45 CFR 46.116)

Please ensure that the participant/subject is given a copy of the informed consent as stated in the “Consent Form” or provide the explanation above about why documentation of informed consent is not appropriate. If the consent process is oral, the participant should be given a copy of the script including the contact information for the Investigator/IRB office at AUB, or provide an explanation why this presents some risk to the participant/subject.

Written consent forms will be used to document the voluntary participation of the subjects in the study. The consent forms will be sent as hard copies to the school principal, teachers and counselors. After approval, the school administrative assistant will send the soft copies of the invitation to participate in the research to the teachers as well as the first instrument i.e. the survey via Lime Survey. By answering the questions in the survey, the teachers will be agreeing to taking part in the study. Teachers will be asked to provide their contact information for the research team to get in touch with then to set a suitable time / date and place in order to conduct the interviews / FGDs.

The principal and the two counselors that will be filling out the consent forms as hard copies will have 48 hours to agree or disagree on participating.

5B. Specify all languages to be used in seeking and maintaining informed consent :

Arabic English French Other: specify

Every application must have an English consent form in addition to an Arabic consent form if the latter is to be used. All consent forms must represent an accurate translation of the original consent form.

5C. The standard IRB-approved practice is that the research study will obtain documentation of voluntary participation with a written and signed informed consent from all participants/subjects (attached under 5A above). Are you requesting a waiver of written informed consent?

Yes No

If Yes, justify this waiver request.

N/A

5D. If deception is used as part of the research methodology, explain why deception is necessary in the research and the possible risk related to it, address how deception is handled in the informed consent process, and describe the participant debriefing procedure that will be used to explain why deception was necessary in the research. Provide a full description of debriefing procedure,

including when debriefing will occur, who will do the debriefing, etc. A script of debriefing explanation should be attached.

N/A

5E. Are you requesting a waiver of informed consent? Yes No
If Yes, explain WHY

N/A

5F. Are you requesting an omission of any requirements (e.g. non-disclosure of information to participant/subject)? Yes No
If Yes, justify the need for waiver or non-disclosure.

N/A

5G. Will others (such as next-of-kin, legal guardians,...) be asked to act on behalf of adult participant/subject for giving consent to participate in the research? Yes No
If Yes, provide a justification for that.

N/A

5H. Describe the process in which an informed consent will be sought.

Around 140 teachers and 2 counselors will be asked to participate in this study. All of them working at the same English – speaking private school in Beirut. First, the co-investigator will use the direct approach to contact the school principal whose contact information is publically available. On the specified day, the researcher will explain the purpose of the study, the ethical procedures and the IRB regulations. The researcher will present the principal with the School Principal consent form. The researcher will give the principal 2 days to make his/her decision on whether he/she would like to participate in the study. If permission is obtained from school principal regarding the participation of the counselors and teachers, the survey will be sent online to the teachers, and the two counselors will be approached to sign the hard copies consent forms and agree on a date and time to conduct the interview.

Concerning the teachers, they will be sent an email with a link to the survey via Lime Survey. The email will explain that by opening the link to the survey and answering the questions, they will be agreeing on taking part in the study. The questionnaire will be sent through the I.T department. The researcher will not know the email addresses of the participants and will not have any contact with them.

5I. Will there be any waiting period between informing the prospective participant/subject about the study and obtaining his/her consent form? Explain

The participation in the study is completely voluntary, so it is important to have a waiting period between the prospective participants and the obtaining their consent forms. 2 days will be given as a waiting period.

5J. How will the PI/research team arrange for illiterate or visually impaired persons to obtain information if available in the consent form?

N/A

5K. Would the person obtaining consent form inadvertently create actual or perceived appearance of coercion or undue influence on the participant/subject? (e.g. participant's/subject's professor, employer/supervisor, school principal or nurse,...) Yes No

If yes, explain the relationship between the participant/subject and the person obtaining the consent. Describe the steps to be taken to minimize any possible real or perceived coercion or undue influence

5L. Assent form

i. Are you using a child assent form? Yes No
If Yes, kindly attach

ii. If Yes, is parental permission obtained? Yes No
If Yes, kindly attach

6. Study Population and Recruitment

6A. Information on the Study Population

Check which of the following categories applies to your study:

- Randomized Controlled Trial Discourse Analysis
- Quasi Experimental Study Grounded Theory
- Observational or **Correlational Study** Ethnography
- Survey Phenomenology
- Descriptive/Exploratory
- Other: specify _____

6B. Human Participants/Subjects

6B.1 Are you using Secondary Data only? Yes No

Research on secondary data involves analyzing data which have been already collected from participants/subjects and no new data collection will take place during this study.

6B.2 Does your research involve the sharing of data collected from human participants/subjects with collaborators? Yes No

If **YES**, have you signed a Nondisclosure Agreement (NDA)? Attached In process

6B.3 Expected number of recruited participants/subjects:

The expected number of recruited participants is 2 counselors and about 140 teachers. The participants are mostly females all of which working at the same school in Beirut.

First Year: Total ----- Number and Location _____, _____

Number and Location _____, _____

Whole study (complete only if the study will continue more than one year):

Total ----- Number and Location _____, _____

6B.4 Performance site (AUB, Others, specify)	# Males	# Females	Total

6B.5 Age range of recruited participants/subjects: **above 21 years**

6B.6 Describe the participant/subject population

Participants

This study uses random sampling including school teachers and two counselors who work in the same school in Beirut.

Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria of participants will be included in this study as follows:

Schools

- One school in Beirut area.
- Main language of instruction is English.

Counselors

- Two counselors working at the same school.
- Main language is English.

Teachers

- Main language is English.
- Working at that same school.

Exclusion Criteria:

Participants will be excluded from this study as follows:

- Teachers who do not wish to take part in the study.

The expected number of teacher participants is 140 and 2 counselors. They are expected to be females since very few if any counselors are males.

6B.8 Vulnerable/protected populations

i. Targeted populations include:

Children/minors

Pregnant/lactating women

0-less than 8 years

8-less than 18 years

Neonates

Inpatients

Institutionalized people

Outpatients

Adults (Counselors and teachers)

Terminally ill participants/subjects

Cognitively impaired

Military members

Prisoners

Comatose/Traumatized

Employees

Elderly

including subordinates

more than or equal to 65-less than 74 years

more than or equal 75 years

Students

Student participant/subject pool

N.B. If it is proposed to use a student public pool, please explain any inducement that will be given to encourage students to enroll in the study, including any grade points that will be awarded for participation. If the latter applies describe how students who choose not to participate can earn equal extra credit involving less than (preferred) but no more than equivalent time and effort. Please note that it is not acceptable to assign students additional written work as an alternative to participating in research studies, unless the proposed arrangements has prior IRB approval.

N/A

Specific ethnic group, specify: -----

Low income/disadvantaged group

Other, specify: -----

None of the above populations will be targeted (jump to 6D)

- ii. Describe why it is necessary to include these vulnerable/protected participants/subjects in the study.

N/A

- iii. What additional safeguards have you included in your protocol to protect the rights and welfare of the vulnerable population?

N/A

6C. Recruitment

6C.1 Recruitment procedure

- i. Describe the recruitment procedure, the location/setting and the time frame (e.g provide script for personal or phone contact)

The co-investigator will use the direct approach to contact the school principal. A permission letter will be given personally by the co-investigator to the principal informing them about the study and its purpose and whether s/he would like his/her counselors and teachers to participate in the study. Participation is completely voluntary. After two days, the principal will be contacted to find out if he is interested to participate or not. If the school principal agrees to participate, the co-investigator will personally send an invitation to participate in the research to the counselors whose emails will be obtained from the school's website. If the counselors agree to take part, a meeting will be organized with them to explain the research and give them the consent forms and instrument. They will have 2 days to decide whether to participate or not. Participation is voluntary, and anyone can withdraw from the study at any point.

Teachers will be sent an email through the school's email address with the link to the survey. The email will explain the nature and purpose of the study. The email will also explain that participation is voluntary and by opening the link and answering the items on the survey, they

will be agreeing to take part in the study. Teachers can participate in one aspect of the study and not necessarily the other i.e. they can choose to take the survey but not sit for an interview, for example.

- ii. Explain who will be approaching the human participants/subjects to participate in the study, and what measures have been taken to protect individual's privacy

The co-investigator will approach the principal to take their permission for the participation of the school. Once the principal approves of counselors' and teachers' participation in the study, the researcher will send the teachers the email with the link to the survey via the school's I.T department, and the counselors will be approached with the hard copies of the consent forms to sign and decide on a date and time to conduct the interviews. In order to secure the confidentiality of the participants, their names, and other identifying information will not be attached to the discussions. Moreover, all codes and data will be kept in a password protected computer that is kept secure. The researcher will de-identify the questionnaires to maintain the confidentiality in the computer with a secured password. Data access will be limited only to the co-investigator and the principal investigator of the study. All data will be destroyed directly after the study is done. The privacy of the participants will be maintained in all the published data resulting in this study. Any name or other identifying information of the participants will not be used in any of the reports or published papers.

All the questionnaires will be on lime survey so that the participations could remain anonymous.

- iii. Will you use advertisements, posters, or other recruitment tools to solicit participants/subjects?
Yes No

If **YES**, choose the applicable category from below and provide a copy (ies) of the recruitment materials:

Letter Flyers Mass E-mail Internet Posters

Newspaper Departmental Bulletin Boards Telephone

AUB Publications (specify): -----

Snowball Sampling

Other, describe

Please note that no advertisements can be used prior to IRB approval of the specific recruitment tool.

Please note that mass email means contacting all members of a population of interest. For example, with IRB approval a mass email can be sent to all AUB students. However a targeted email aimed at recruiting research students cannot be sent to a sub-group of students, such as those in a department, a faculty, or those who are enrolled in or who have completed a specified course or courses.

Please note snowball sampling may not be acceptable to the IRB unless third parties are recruited by contacting the investigator rather than by being contacted by the investigator.

6D. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

6D.1 List the specific criteria for inclusion and exclusion criteria of participants/subjects

Participants

This study approaches all the teachers and the only two counselors working at the school.

Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria of participants will be included in this study as follows:

Schools

- One school in Beirut area.
- Main language of instruction is English.

Teachers

- Elementary, middle school and high school teachers working at that school.

Counselors

- Two counselors working at the school.
- Main language is English.

Exclusion Criteria:

Exclusion criteria of participants will be excluded from this study as follows:

- Anyone who does not wish to take part in the study.

6D.2 Justify the exclusion of any group based on age, sex, ethnicity, and social or economic

6E. Describe the instances (if any) that might result in PI termination of participant's/subject's participation

There will be no instances where the PI will terminate the participant's participation.

7. Compensation or Costs to Participants/Subjects

7A. There are very limited circumstances under which study participants/subjects may need reimbursement for unavoidable costs associated with taking part in a study. Such costs may include but are not limited to the cost of public transport to a study setting; the cost of refreshments if involvement in a study involves more than two hours and less than four hours; the reasonable costs of a meal if the study requires more than a half day.

N/A

7B. Describe what compensation will be used (if any) for human participants/subjects before/during/after participation, whether it is reimbursement, offering services without charge, course credit, lottery, cash, gifts, etc... Will there be any pro-rated payment for partial participation?

Explain the remuneration plan in details specifying the amount of money, nature, number and value of gifts, course credit and percentage of the final grade, date of lottery drawing, how will winner participants/subjects be notified (by whom and when),...

All these should be explicitly mentioned in the consent form. Any recruitment incentive should be nominal or commensurate with the time/effort required of the subject; justification for an incentive is required.

N/A

7C. For research with more than minimal risk, describe any medical treatment, insurance and/or compensation available to the participant/subject if he/she is injured as a result of participating in the study.

N/A

8. Confidentiality of Data and Records

8A. Check if following is used in data collection:

Audiotapes/Digital Voice Videotapes Still photos Other

imaging

8B. Are any of these recordings of vulnerable population: Yes No

If yes, will parental/legally authorized representative permission be obtained? Yes No

8C. Audio/Visual: Please explain whether the recording will be shared, who will transcribe them and where. Who will have access to these recordings? When and by whom will the recording be destroyed?

The recordings will only be shared by the two researchers and will be only for transcription. One the co-researcher transcribes them, the recordings will be deleted.

8D. Are you going to record any direct identifiers, names, addresses, telephone number, etc...?

If yes, explain why it is necessary, and specify what coding system you will use to protect the privacy of the participants/subjects.

N/A

8E. Will you be retaining any link between identifiers and study code numbers after data collection?

If yes, explain why it is necessary and state how long you will keep this link

N/A

8F. How, where, and how long will the data be stored? Will any passwords, codes or locks be used?

The questionnaires will be sent out throughout Lime Survey in ensure confidentiality, and the consent forms will be stored with the co-investigator in a private room. Everything will be destroyed directly after the study is finished.

8G. How are you going to analyze the data?

Descriptive statistical analysis will be used to interpret data collected from the questionnaire. This will help explore patterns in teachers' perceptions which will later be compared with the qualitative findings. The qualitative data that will be collected from the FGDs, in-depth interviews with the counselors and teachers, and the open-ended questionnaire responses will be interpreted using content analysis which will help identify the frequency of common codes in relation to the research questions and will also enable comparison with the quantitative results

8H. How are you going to destroy the data?

Directly after the study is finished, all the papers related to the study will be shredded and destroyed. All information on the computer will be deleted including emails.

8I. In what form will the research results be disseminated (project report, thesis, conference presentation, journal article, feedback to community members or research population,...)

The research is being conducted for the purpose of a Master's thesis study.

8J. Describe your plan for reporting adverse events to the IRB.

If any adverse events occur, the IRB office will be contacted immediately.

8K. Describe your Data Safety Monitoring Plan

Only the principal investigator and the co-investigator working directly on this study will have access to the data. Hard copies will be shredded and all information on the computer will be deleted as soon as the research is over.

9. Risks and Benefits

9A. Risks:

9A.1 Does the research involve any of the following possible risks / harm (check all that applies):

Use of private records (medical/ employment/ educational)

Use of deceptive technique

Social isolation (stigmatization, psychological stress...)

Legal/ criminal risk (e.g. research on illicit behavior)

- Possible invasion of participant's (subject's)/ family privacy
- Social or economic risk
- Any sort of probing for personal or sensitive information from surveys or
- Other risks, specify: _____

9A.2 Describe the frequency and magnitude (minimal risk, greater than minimal risk) of the risks.

“Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests).

Participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk beyond the risks of daily life. Participants have the right to withdraw their consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Discontinuing participation in the study will in no way affect the participants' relationship with AUB. Moreover, their decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which they are entitled.

9A.3 Are there other methods to carry out/conduct the research that might minimize these risks? Describe and justify not using them.

No, there are no other methods to conduct to minimize risk.

9A.4 Describe and explain the steps that are taken to minimize the anticipated risks (if more than minimal risk) and harms of the human participants/subjects

N/A

9B. Benefits

9B.1 Describe the anticipated benefits to the participant/subject. If no direct benefits are expected – state so and include in the consent form. (Monetary compensation is not considered a benefit)

There are no direct benefits to participants. However, participants will be taking part in a research done for the first time in Lebanon. This will help in adding to the research-based information about school – based counseling in Lebanon.

9B.2 Describe any anticipated benefits to the group or class to which the participants/subjects belong.

There are no direct benefits to participants. However, their participation will benefit the purpose of the study.

9B.3 Describe benefits to society or to the relevant body of knowledge as a whole.

This study will provide an action plan with actionable recommendations and suggestions from the teachers in order to improve the program in schools in Lebanon.

9B.4 Assess the relative weights of the study’s risks and benefits. Where appropriate, discuss provisions for ensuring appropriate professional intervention in the event of adverse effects to the participant/subject, (e.g. referral to appropriate mental health resource/clinic in stress induction studies). Discuss why the risks to participants/subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits to participants/subjects and in relation to the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to be gained.

Participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk beyond the risks of daily life. Participants have the right to withdraw their consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Their discontinuation will in no way affect the participants’ relationship with AUB. Moreover, their decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which they are entitled. At the same time, there are no direct benefits to counselors. However, their participation helps researchers improve school – based counseling in Lebanon.

10. Conflict of Interest: Indicate below if any investigator, any member of the research study, and/ or any member of their immediate families, has any kind of personal/ financial interest in the design, conduct or reporting of research project. (You may check more than one if applicable).

Please check what is applicable .You may check more than one.

<p><input type="checkbox"/> The researcher and/or family member is participating in a research topic sponsored by a business which the researcher and/or family member has a financial interest or is related to an investigator/family business which could benefit from the outcome of the study</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Has been disclosed to AUB</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has not been disclosed to AUB</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The researcher and/or family member is participating as a participant/ subject in a research topic developed by that researcher</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Has been disclosed to AUB</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has not been disclosed to AUB</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The researcher and/or family member serves on the Board of directors of a business from which the member receives sponsored research support through a gift/grant/contract administered by AUB</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Has been disclosed to AUB</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has not been disclosed to AUB</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The researcher and/or family member receives material benefits from the business that funds his/her research</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Has been disclosed to AUB</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has not been disclosed to AUB</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The researcher and/or family member has intellectual property such as patent, copyrights, licensing,....</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Has been disclosed to AUB</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has not been disclosed to AUB</p>

<input type="checkbox"/> Other conflict of interest, please specify: <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Has been disclosed to AUB <input type="checkbox"/> Has not been disclosed to AUB
<input type="checkbox"/> No conflict of interest	

Please fill in the AUB COI form (Appendix I) and if conflict of interest is present, please attach a conflict management plan. For further information, check out [AUB’s policy on Conflict of Interest](#).

11. Bibliography and References: List up to five relevant publications that, in your opinion, would be helpful to the IRB in reviewing this study.

Ayyash – Abdo, H., Alamuddin, R., & Mukallid, S. (2010). School counseling in Lebanon: Past, present and future. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 88*, 13 – 17.

Hamilton–Roberts, A. (2012). Teacher and counselor perceptions of a school- based counseling service in South Wales. *British Journal of Guidance & Counseling, 40*(5), 465–483.

Hamzeh, M. (2008). The role of a counselor as perceived by principals, teachers, students, parents, and counselors. Unpublished Master’s thesis. American university of Beirut, Lebanon.

Saad, M. (2012). *School principals' and counselors' perspectives of the ideal profile, facilitators, and obstacles of the professional school counselor: A case study of the public and private schools in Lebanon*. Unpublished Master's thesis. American University of Beirut, Lebanon.

Saigh, P. (1984). School psychology in Lebanon. *Journal of School Psychology*, 33, 233–238.

Principal Investigator's Assurance Statement

1. I certify that the information provided in this application is complete and accurate.
2. I understand that as principal investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the study, the ethical performance of the project, the protection of the rights, safety and welfare of the human participants/subjects, and strict adherence to the study protocol and any conditions or modifications stipulated by the AUB Institutional Review Board.
3. I will submit modifications of the protocol and/or the informed consent form and/or any other documents to the IRB for approval prior to applying those changes in the study.
4. I agree to abide by the policies and procedures of the AUB IRB regarding the protection of human subjects including, but not limited to:
 - Ensuring that all personnel involved in the study have completed the human subjects training online course offered by CITI. If the first language of personnel is other than what is available for training on CITI website, it is the PI responsibility to provide the personnel with efficient training.
 - Ensuring that the study will be conducted by qualified personnel who are knowledgeable about AUB regulations and policies governing this research
 - Obtaining informed consent from participants/subjects or their legally appointed representatives or guardians, written in a language that is understandable to them and approved by the IRB, unless the IRB has specifically approved a waiver of a signed written consent form. All subjects are provided with a copy of the signed form/oral script unless the IRB has specifically approved a waiver of providing this information to the subject.
 - Meeting recognized standards for safety when utilizing certain equipments, facilities, and procedures related to this research
 - Not initiating any change or modification in the approved research and/or consent documents without prior IRB approval, except when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the participating subjects. In this case, I will be reporting to the IRB this modification within **two** business days to enable the IRB to decide that the modification is done to preserve the participants'/ subjects' welfare and safety.
 - Reporting adverse events or other unexpected problems and risks involving human subjects to the IRB promptly
 - Promptly complying with IRB decision to stop or discontinue the research, including the analysis of data already collected unless specifically approved by the IRB.
 - Complying with the continuing review requirements of the IRB. Specifically, obtaining approval for continuing with the study before the initial approved period of the study expires. I understand that if I fail to apply for continuing IRB review and approval within the approval period, IRB-approval of the

study will automatically terminate and all activity must cease, including analysis of previously collected data, until IRB approval is granted.

- Maintaining accurate and complete research records including all informed consent documents, for at least 3 years from the completion of the research project.
- Fully informing the IRB of all locations in which participants/subjects will be recruited for this study, and being responsible for obtaining and maintaining IRB approvals and letters of cooperation from non-AUB sites.
- Facilitating site visits and audits for evaluating and monitoring the research activities by certain authorized bodies.
- If I am unavailable, on sabbatical or other type of leave, I will submit for IRB approval the arrangements for conducting the study, including the appointment of a temporary PI at AUB in my absence.

Anies Al-Hroub _____

Principal Investigator's Signature

Date

Department Chair's Name and Signature

Date

If PI is Chair, signature of the Dean of the Chair's faculty is required

If PI is Dean, signature of the Provost is required

**Appendix I. FORM FOR DISCLOSURE OF ACTIVITIES WHICH MAY INVOLVE
CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

I, Anies Al-Hroub, have read and understood the “University Policy on Duality of Interest” of November 19, 1993, as revised on March 19, 2004, and in accordance with this policy I state the following:

1. I attach a list of all my affiliations with any person (including any officer or employee of the University), firm, organization, or corporation with which I have reason to believe the University does business.

Not applicable

List attached

2. I attach a list of my consulting arrangements, whether or not I believe that they may involve potential conflict of interest.

Not applicable

List attached

3. I shall amend these two lists promptly (items 1 and 2) whenever my affiliations or duties change

4. If I become aware that any member of my family (parents, brothers, sisters, children, spouse, and/or in-laws) is engaged in business with the University, I shall disclose my relationship with the person(s) concerned and nature of his business.

5. I understand that I am not to participate in any decision or vote on an issue in which I may have conflicts of interest because of affiliations listed in items 1, 2, and 4.

I submit this information to the President of the University

Signature: Anies Al-Hroub_____

Position: Associate Professor_____

Faculty/Department: _Education_____

Date: _____

A new declaration shall be submitted not less frequently than as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Management and Academic Staff | Annually in January |
| 2. Non-Academic Staff in Grades 1-12 | At Any Change of Status |

In addition, individuals are expected to amend their declarations from time to time as their affiliations or duties change.

Failure to declare a conflict of interest may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment

Appendix IX

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT RELEASE WAIVER

ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT AND RELEASE

To be completed by all persons before undertaking the performance activities.

I, the undersigned, _Ghada Merhi Bleik_,

Graduate Student at the American University of Beirut (AUB),

do hereby declare and agree to the following:

By completing and submitting this form, I hereby exonerate the American University of Beirut (AUB) and its representatives from any and all liability and damages of whatsoever nature direct or indirect that may arise to me, my heirs, or my property as a result of my activities with the Education Department **off** AUB Campus, and further, I shall hold harmless AUB, its trustees, officers, agents, employees, faculty, students, staff, and employees, from and against all losses, expenses, claims, demands and legal actions of every kind and character for death, personal injury, property damage or any other liability arising out of, or in any way connected with AUB, including AUB-related activities held **outside** AUB property.

I assume all liability for any accident that may occur while performing activities **off** AUB facilities and shall be responsible for any damage that I may incur.

I am aware that AUB recommends personal liability insurance covering personal injury, death, medical expenses in relation to this activity.

This Release Waiver shall be governed by Lebanese law and any dispute arising in relation to this Release Waiver shall be exclusively settled by the Beirut courts.

I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing declaration and release and know the contents thereof, and that I sign the same as my own free act and deed.

In witness whereof, I have signed this document this __8th_____ day of _December_ 2018.

Date: December 8th, 2018

Name: Ghada Merhi Bleik Signature: Ghada Bleik

Witnessed by:

Date:

Name:

Signature: