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An Investigation into Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of School Counsellors in Saudi Arabia Girls' Schools

By

Nawal G. Al-Ghamdi

Ph.D Thesis

Durham University

School of Education

April 2010

Acknowledgements

All praise, glory, honour, power and thanks are due to almighty Allah for his guidance and divine direction through my life, providing me with health, lighting my path towards my goal every day and removing obstacles along the way. His providence helped me to complete this thesis.

I would like first of all to express my immense appreciation, sincere thanks and profound gratitude to my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Barbara Riddick. She has always been most generous with her time and attention. Her assistance, encouragement, patience, and insightful counselling during all phases of preparing and writing this work improved the quality of this thesis immeasurably. Through her valuable critique, feedback and discussion I have learned many things. Many thanks as well my previous supervisor Dr. Kathryn Hunt for her help and assistance when I start my PhD. I would also like to think Mr. Faroq Aleem at King Abdul Aziz University for his help with the statistical work in the study.

I also extend my acknowledgement to all those who took part in this study, especially the school principals, counsellors and teachers in Saudi Arabia who completed questionnaires and were interviewed during the field work. My particular appreciation is extended to people who contributed their knowledge and time in reviewing and translating the instruments for the study. There are many other friends and colleagues who have contributed in various ways to this study, with unflagging support, in the ups and downs of writing this thesis. I appreciate every assistance, no matter how small, and I am very thankful for it.

Sincere thanks and appreciation go to my father, mother, brothers and sisters for their warm encouragement and good wishes. I wish to thank my children, Abdulaziz, Lana and Abdulmalik, who have brought so much joy and happiness to my life. Finally, a most special debt of gratitude is owed to my husband, Dr. Fahad Al-Abbasi, for his boundless support and encouragement during my study and particularly during the completion of my thesis. No words can describe my thanks to him. It is because of his love, patience and encouragement that this thesis has been completed, and it is to him that I most sincerely and lovingly dedicate this work.

Abstract

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has moved into a new era characterised by frequent and rapid change. As a result, the nation has to cope with these changes by updating requirements in all fields. Many factors in Saudi society have led to a need for psychological and counselling services in educational institutions. Nevertheless, school counsellors in Saudi Arabia face many obstacles that confront their performance. Since the service was established in 1981, concerns remain that the role of school counsellors is unclear, professional training is insufficient, and facilities and cooperation from other staff are inadequate. The aim of this study was to determine the perceptions of principals, teachers and counsellors concerning the actual and ideal role of intermediate girls school counsellors in Saudi Arabia. The study further aimed to identify the problems that face intermediate school counsellors and factors that impede them in offering a good service.

Information was collected from a questionnaire survey conducted in 209 public intermediate schools for girls in Jeddah city in Saudi Arabia. Responses were received from 180 counsellors, 126 principals and 237 teachers. The questionnaire data were complemented by semi-structured interviews with 10 counsellors, 8 principals and 12 teachers. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programme. Descriptive statistics involving, paired t-tests, t-tests, one way ANOVAs and Least Significant Differences Method (LSD) tests were used for the analysis.

The findings point to a growing awareness of the importance of the guidance and counselling programme in meeting the needs of students. Despite this, there were numerous differences among counsellors, principals and teachers regarding the role of the counsellor which suggest role conflict and ambiguity surrounding the counsellor's role. Additionally, significant discrepancies were identified between perceptions of the ideal and actual counsellor's role. Many functions were seen as being performed less frequently than their perceived importance would warrant, indicating a substantial gap between expectations and the reality of the service. Counsellors cited many difficulties that constrained their work, including lack of clarity in the counsellor's role and excessive administrative and clerical duties, deficiencies in professional training, and poor levels of parental support and cooperation.

Finally, after drawing the conclusions of the study, suggestions and recommendations are offered for improving the quality of counselling services in Saudi schools. Interviewees, for example, highlighted a requirement for improved training for counsellors and explicit professional standards, the importance of counsellors being properly qualified, the need for lower counsellor-student ratios, and increased awareness among all those concerned, especially, parents. Some of them raised the need for a theoretical framework for counselling based on the Saudi culture, rather than simply emulating Western theory and practice.

Abbreviations

ANOVA	A One-way analysis of variance
ASCA	American School Counsellor Association
B.G	Between Groups
BACP	British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
DDGE	District Directorate of Girls' Education
DGEJ	Directorate General of Education in Jeddah
DGEJD	Directorate General of Education of Jeddah District
GAGC	General Administration for Guidance and Counselling
GDGC	General Directorate of Guidance and Counselling
GPGE	General Presidency of Girls' Education
KFU	King Faisal University
LSD	Least Square Difference
MS	Mean Square
PhD	Philosophy Degree
S. D	Standard Deviation
Sig	Significant
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UK	United Kingdom
US	United State of America
W.G	Within Groups

Definitions of Terms

Actual Role	What the counsellor is actually doing
Ideal Role	What the counsellor should be doing
Imam	A religious instructor who teach children in a mosque.
Kuttab	A system of religious schools in Saudi Arabia. Classes are held by imams in mosques or at home.
The Qur'an	The holy book of the Muslim religion

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Overview:

Over the last few years Saudi Arabia has witnessed rapid and comprehensive changes in many aspects of life: economically, socially and educationally. Changes in social values and norms in Saudi Arabia are increasing the degree of anxiety and frustration among young people who are looking for self-identity (Almangour 1985). Naturally, therefore, young adults in Saudi Arabia seem to be caught between new and traditional ideas, beliefs and values. The generation gap between young and old continues to grow wider and deeper. Many of the young find themselves inadequately prepared for the problems they face and are often unable to resolve them. Life has become more complex, and it seems difficult for family members to cope with these changes without professional help (Saeed 1990; Alreshoud 1996).

Consequently, the government of Saudi Arabia has realised the importance of providing services for the welfare of its citizens, and counselling services have been included in the fields of health (through psychiatric hospitals and units) and education (through a school counselling programme) (General Administration for Guidance and Counselling-GAGC, 1997). As for the latter, student counselling has acquired considerable importance in the Saudi educational system because of the belief that it has an essential role in helping to achieve the main aim of schools by facilitating the learning process. Initially, in 1981, the Ministry of Education established the General Directorate of Guidance and Counselling. Since that time, guidance and counselling has become formalised and recognised as a profession, and counsellors have been appointed to deal

with psychological, social, educational, vocational problems and deliver protective counselling (Ministry of Education, 1999).

Despite this effort, counselling services have been slow to develop. The lack of professional counsellors and training programmes, little support and co-operation from principals and teachers, and generally negative attitudes towards psychological services may all have contributed to this. As Howell et al (2007) pointed out, the lack of ongoing professional development for school counsellors would be the most pervasive threat to the future of the profession.

The reason for the presents author's interest in this topic is that an increasing number of problems among students in Saudi schools have become more evident over recent years. It has been claimed that young people in these schools are at high risk with regard to mental health problems. Loneliness appears a particular problem (Zakar 1993; Ibrahim and Ibrahim 1993), resulting in part from young people feeling alienated from traditional ways of living. Al-Bahadel (2004) refers to a survey of 500 female students at high school and university in Riyadh which found that 383 of them (aged 16-25) claimed to suffer from shyness. Of these 75% attributed their shyness to the style of upbringing in the family – for example, too strict punishment, being scolded loudly, being criticised in front of strangers and generally being discouraged from having an opinion. In this situation, school counselling could play a more active role in the educational system in Saudi Arabia, especially in girl's schools, and from the early stages but particularly in the intermediate stage.

Perceptions of and attitudes toward the role of student counsellors in Saudi Arabia have been investigated by a number of previous studies over the last 20 years, from the

first published survey conducted by Al-Ahmady (1983), to the most recent survey conducted by Al-Rebdi (2004). All of these studies reported confusion and lack of information regarding the nature of counselling and the activities of student counsellors. With the exception of Al-Rebdi's study in 2004, the other studies are now out of date. Even more no study has been conducted to investigate the views of counsellors, principals and teachers, their perceptions of the importance of the counsellor's functions in meeting students' needs or their perceptions of the performance of the guidance and counselling services in Saudi girls' schools.

Therefore, it is significant to the future development of school counselling in Saudi Arabia to re-examine the current perceptions and knowledge of the role of student counsellors in Saudi Arabia, both as they are perceived by others and by counsellors themselves. The importance of the study lies in the need to improve the role played by student counsellors in Saudi schools. This study hopes to assist with this, especially in girls schools in Jeddah Province.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

Adolescence is a complex psychosocial stage that involves numerous changes in an individual's life (Tatar 2001), and which is critical in the formation of lasting attitudes, aspirations, and viewpoints (Hodson 1985). Girls, in particular, face many developmental transitions and challenges during the adolescence period. They need internal resources to cope successfully with life's demands (Choate 2007).

One resource available to adolescents as they progress through these stages of development is their school counsellor. School counsellors help students resolve

emotional, social or behavioural problems and develop a clear focus or sense of direction (Coogan and DeLucia-Waack 2007). Sears and Coy (1991) stated that school counsellors were being asked to assume a greater role in the lives of students and their families. They further stated that school counsellors must choose carefully how they spend their time and energy.

Nonetheless, in practice, there are inconsistencies between the actual functions performed and the ideal functions. "Counsellors are too often the ones who assist principals in the performance of their administrative duties" (Coogan and DeLucia-Waack 2007). More broadly, teachers, principals, and administrative staff members may not possess favourable perceptions of the school counselling profession, and these perceptions may be evident in the assignment of non-counsellor-related duties; (Moracco, Butcke et al. 1984; Parr 1991). Thus, school counsellors are frequently assigned tasks that are important but not necessarily related to the overall education programmes they serve (Howell et al., 2008), and which often are incompatible with their own professional expectations or training (Constantine, 2006). As Hardy (2008) pointed out, school counsellors' current activities result from conflicting roles and a system that does not utilize school counsellors' skills. On the whole, a review of the literature indicates that the roles and functions of counsellors as perceived by administrators, teachers, parents and students tend to vary. In other words, views of the role of the school counsellor vary widely. As a result, inconsistent perceptions by those involved in counselling may create confusion and uncertainly about the school counsellor's role (Schmidt, 1999).

Even among school counsellors themselves, it seems that there has been a continuous gap in their perceptions of their ideal and actual functions in schools in

addition to confusion by students, staff, administrators, and community members about the school counsellor's role (Hutchinson et al., 1986; Coogan and Delucia-Waack, 2007). To put it simply, school counsellors themselves have contributed to role confusion by failing to define their role to fit within the mission of the school and community. Because of this, school administrators, parents, teachers, and others may make their agendas the counsellor's main concern (Campbell and Dahir, 2001). School counsellors have also contributed to the confusion by settling for ambiguous job descriptions and duties. In other words, non-counselling, administrative tasks performed by counsellors in their schools create confusion regarding their actual role and functions (Partin, 1993; Gysbers and Henderson, 1994; Burnham and Jackson, 2000).

From the above, the major problem is that roles are not clearly defined by the profession, and hence confusion exists between practitioners and supervisors (O'Dell et al., 1996). However, this lack of professional identity has led to misunderstandings of concerning school counselling activities as an integral part of the educational environment (Lambie and Williamson, 2004) and students may therefore show reluctance to utilize counselling programmes within the school (Ragsdale, 1987; Sears, 1993; Murray, 1995; Coogan and Delucia-Waack, 2007).

Accordingly, school counselling programmes have been viewed as supporting programmes instead of being integral components of the learning organization (Lambie and Williamson, 2004). Furthermore, school counsellors may not be visible in leadership roles in school settings, which can contribute to perceptions of diminished credibility and worth (Drury, 1984; Constantine, 2005). Therefore, it is not surprising that role conflict and role ambiguity are two specific occupational stressors that school counsellors

experience with regard to the multiple roles they assume within schools (Butler and Constantine, 2005).

School counsellors are still struggling with role definition (Sears, 2002). It has been argued that the ongoing debate over role definition is probably the most significant challenge facing school counsellors (Paisley and Mcmahon, 2001). This is consistent with the situation in various parts of the world, including in Saudi Arabia where the development of guidance and counselling has progressed at a slow pace. As a result, the Saudi counselling profession now faces a number of problems relating to the Ministry of Education, school staff, parents and counsellors themselves.

One major problem is the lack of a clear definition of the role and function of the school counsellor. This role is unclear not only to students, parents, teachers and administrators, but also to counsellors themselves (Al-Ahmady, 1993; Al-Ghamdi, 1999). Due to these problems, counsellors have found themselves performing some activities not related to their role, such as administrative tasks and clerical duties. Other obstacles to the growth and development of counselling in Saudi Arabia are: an unsupportive climate, the ambiguous working relationship between the counsellor and teachers; the lack of understanding of the relationship between the counsellor and the school principals. There is also a lack of time for counselling tasks because of heavy involvement in administrative tasks (Al-shinawi,1990 and Al-zahrani,1990), and many students are assigned to one counsellor, which means an overload in duties (Al-shinawi, 1990).

What is more, there are shortages in professional counsellors, and training courses are deficient and inadequate in various respects. Consequently, counselling duties are often taken on by teachers with no training or experience in the field (Al-Ghamdi, 1999).

As Brown and Trusty (2005) concluded, rather than strengthening the professional identity of counsellors whose training and skills can make a difference for all students, reform may lead to the unintended consequence of seeing other professionals take the place counsellors have fought for decades to establish. However, "history shows that unless the role of the school counsellor is clearly established, the whims of the times can threaten the very existence of the counsellor position" (Webber and Mascari, 2007).

Another problem is the lack of qualified supervisors. Most counsellors find themselves supervised by those who have little or no training in counselling services. Supervision activities generally focus on meetings, planning, and bureaucratic and administrative functions. This is usually conducted twice a year. Put together, these problems might explain why principals assign counsellors non-counselling duties. In this respect, Anderson (2002) cautioned that "it is haphazard and irresponsible to leave accountability and evaluation solely in the hands of those who do not understand the counsellor's role in student achievement and do not have the expertise to determine when/how the counsellor's goals are accomplished".

Generally speaking, the problems outlined above have had a negative impact on the development of guidance and counselling services in Saudi Arabian schools. In other words, when schools fail to clearly define the counsellor's role, school administrators, teachers, and parents may often view the counsellor's role from their own perspectives (Burnham and Jackson, 2000; Mclean, 2006), and may believe that their agendas ought to be the school counselling programme's priority (Mclean, 2006).

On the other hand, if school counsellors in Saudi Arabia are to provide better services for students, their role must be clearly defined. Counsellors must choose

carefully where they spend their time and energy. Counsellors need to continue to be advocates for the profession and to attempt to modify perceptions of school counsellors (Coogan and Delucia-Waack, 2007). It is also necessary for those involved in counselling to have a clear view of what counsellors should and should not do. Then, as the role and functions of the school counsellors become clearer, they should be able to respond better to the needs of their students.

1.3 Purpose and Importance of the Study:

It is common for school administrators, teachers, families, and other groups to hold different views about the role of a professional school counsellor (Culbreth et al., 2005). To put it simply, a number of studies have examined the role and functions of the school counsellor and concluded that this role is perceived by those involved as being somewhat varied. Therefore, when trying to identify the role of a school counsellor, it is important to examine the perceptions held by those they serve: students, teachers, parents and administrators (Shertzer and Stone, 1976).

In particular in Saudi Arabia, however, most of the existing studies have been conducted only on boys' schools and at the secondary stage. Consequently, the current study is important in that previous studies have not investigated the role and functions of counsellors and their performance within girls' schools, and particularly in intermediate schools (with pupils aged between 12-15 years).

Thus, it is important to direct attention to counselling in girls' schools, since this area has not received the attention it deserves. Areas addressed in this study include the perceptions of principals, teachers and counsellors themselves regarding the performance

of intermediate school counsellors. It is hoped that the research will make a significant contribution to an understanding of the problems faced by student counsellors in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the findings could help principals and teachers to better understand the role and functions of counsellors and to better utilise the counselling services. Furthermore, educational institutions can use this information to determine what role and functions practising counsellors view as important. Moreover, it could also assist universities in planning training programmes for school counsellors**.** An instrument that measured the clarity or ambiguity of the counsellor's role would enable universities and schools to work collaboratively to close gaps between theory and practice regarding how counselling work is viewed. In addition, the current study is important because it gives a more general picture and information about the role and functions of school counsellors in Saudi Arabia. Finally, the participants in the study were themselves expected to provide useful suggestions for developing and improving counselling programmes and directing students, and the findings will be submitted to the Ministry of Education for their consideration.

In this thesis particular emphasis is given to investigating the role of intermediate school counsellors in girls' schools in Saudi Arabia as perceived by principals, teachers and counsellors themselves. To fulfil this purpose, the aims of the study are as follows:

To investigate differences in the perceptions of counsellors, principles and teacher concerning the role of the intermediate school counsellor.

To determine the differences between what counsellors believe their role should ideally be and how they actually perform it in their schools.

To determine whether there are differences in counsellors' views regarding their role. Such differences might be between those who have received training and those who have not, and between those with teaching experience and those without. Also, differences might be related to the counsellor's age, school size, area of specialisation, and experience.

To determine whether there are differences in the views of principals and teachers according to their age, school size and experience in relation to the role of the school counsellor.

To identify the major difficulties faced by counsellors during their work.

To make recommendations for the further development of guidance and counselling programmes in Saudi Arabia's schools.

To achieve the objectives of this study, an attempt is made to gather information pertaining to the following questions:

- What are the ideal and actual role of intermediate school counsellor as perceived by counsellors themselves?
- Are there any differences between the ideal and actual role of intermediate school counsellors, according to their own perceptions ?
- Do counsellors' perceptions of their own role vary according to their age, their training programmes, years of experience, teaching experience, area of specialisation and the number of students in their schools?
- What are the ideal and actual role of the intermediate school counsellor as perceived by principals?

- Are there any differences between the ideal and actual role of the intermediate school counsellor, according to principals?
- Do principals' perceptions of the counsellor's ideal and actual role vary according to their age, years of experience and the number of students in their schools?
- What are the ideal and actual role of the intermediate school counsellor as perceived by teachers?
- Are there any differences between the ideal and actual role of the intermediate school counsellor, according to teachers?
- Do teachers' perceptions of the counsellor's ideal and actual role vary according to their age, years of experience and the number of students in their schools?
- Are there any differences among counsellors, principals and teachers in their perceptions of the actual role of the intermediate school counsellor?
- Are there any differences among counsellors, principals and teachers in their perceptions of the ideal role of the intermediate school counsellor?
- What are the major difficulties experienced by school counsellors?

Chapter Two: Guidance and Counselling Services in the Context of Saudi Arabia

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Chapter Two

Guidance and Counselling Services in the Context of Saudi Arabia

2.1 Introduction:

In Saudi Arabia, counsellors are to be found at all levels of education, from primary schools to universities. However, to understand the position of guidance and counselling in Saudi schools, it is necessary to review the historical development and organisation of the educational system in the country. The first section of this chapter describes the education system in general, from its early history onwards with particular emphasis on the education of girls. Also it describes the agencies involved in girls' education and the different educational levels in Saudi Arabia. The second section focuses on school guidance and counselling services in the kingdom.

2.2 A History of Education in Saudi Arabia:

Before discussing the role of counselling in the Saudi educational sphere, it is helpful to provide an appropriate background for the study through reviewing the historical development and organisation of the education system in Saudi Arabia.

An important starting point is to realise that it is impossible to study education in any Islamic nation without considering the close relationship between religion and education, because the two are inseparable. Saudi educational authorities place strong emphasis on Islamic studies and the Arabic language (Al-Shawan, 1985) . Because of the importance of Islam in Saudi Arabia, educational policy, objectives, and curricula, and teaching methods at all stages and in all types of education are derived from Islamic

values and concepts. Thus, the primary purpose of Saudi education is to prepare the students to believe in God, to understand Islam in a correct and comprehensive manner, to familiarise them with the values, teachings and ideals of Islam, to equip them with various skills and knowledge, to develop their ability to develop society economically, socially and culturally, and to prepare the individual to become a useful member in the building of his community (Ministry of Education, 1995).

Historically, education in Saudi Arabia had a solely religious function. It usually took place in or near mosques and in study circles called *Kuttab*. Clerics or *imams* taught lessons. In, the *Kuttab* students studied religion, Arabic and basic arithmetic (Oliver, 1987). The Khuttabs included both boys and girls until a certain age, however, boys usually continued learning there up to about the age of 12, whereas the girls were confined to education at home (Al-Dayil, 1999).

Nowadays in Saudi Arabia there are various types of schools. In this respect, Khaleefa (1995) mentioned that there are two types of education in the country, one being modern or Western and the other traditional or religious. Each type of education has a different philosophical background, and they have different structures, curricula, goals and other features. However, the establishment of the Directorate of Education under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior marked the beginning of the formal education system, and the first Board of Education in 1926 laid the foundations of the system with its elementary, intermediate, secondary and higher stages (Oliver, 1987).

The Ministry of Education was established in 1953, replacing the Directorate of Education and marking a major shift both in the Saudi educational system and the direction of the country's development (Ministry of Education, 1986). With the

establishment of the Ministry more schools were opened, and public education started to spread throughout the country. Since that time, the government of Saudi, through the Ministry of Education, has worked hard to develop education programmes. “It has achieved much in improving and expanding education during a short period of time” (Al-Khatabi, 1986).

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the education of boys and girls at the elementary, intermediate and secondary stages as well as teacher training, special education and adult education. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education establishes schools, provides facilities, textbooks and instructional materials, and meets the needs of school administrators and teachers regarding salaries, pensions and promotion (Ministry of Education, 1986).

It should be noted that, in accordance with Islamic tradition, education in Saudi Arabia is strictly segregated, with separate schools for boys and girls, staffed by teachers and counsellors of the same gender. Moreover, the education of boys and girls has been administered separately, by different governmental agencies, until very recently. A further division exists between general education (primary, intermediate and secondary) and higher education which comes under a different authority.

2.3 The Introduction of Girls’ Education in Saudi Arabia:

Unfortunately, there was a delay in introducing education for girls. This can be attributed to resistance by both religious scholars (Ulama) and some parents to the introduction of formal education for girls. These people appeared to be afraid that the provision of a modern system of education for girls might lead to an undesirable

departure from traditional values, for example that a girl's modesty and virtue might be compromised. As Isa (1982: 37) noted, before 1960 nobody appeared to care about the education of women and there were no schools to educate them. Thus, before 1960, there was no formal public education for women in Saudi Arabia, as women were excluded from acquiring formal education. However, families who could afford the private education of their daughters did so by using tutors at home. "There were, however, a few private schools" (Al-Rawaf and Simmons, 1991).

A few conscientious, enterprising citizens took the matter of girls' education into their own hands and opened private schools for girls before the 1960s. These schools were small and set up in private homes. The girls were taught the Quran, the Arabic language and rudimentary mathematics. The first of these schools in Madina was established in 1928 and was called 'Tahdeeb Al-Akhlaq' meaning the 'Polishing of Ethics' school. Six more private schools were established in Madina in the 1930s and also in other cities in the Hijaz, but their widespread impact on girls' education was insignificant (Hafiz, 1987).

The 1950s brought an increase in popular demand for public education for girls in Saudi Arabia. A group of young, middle class, educated Saudi men launched an appeal urging the government to establish schools for girls. They expressed their social dissatisfaction through newspapers and articles and stated their need for educationally compatible wives. These young men, who had been educated abroad in higher institutions and whose number reached 600 in 1951, complained about the ignorance of Saudi women, and their lack of modern education. (Al-Munajjedd, 1997).

In 1960, the need for girls' education was acknowledged by the government, and public elementary schools for girls were established. These were run by an entirely separate authority from that of the schools for boys. Since then, continuous support from the government for the education of girls and women has resulted in the opening of women's colleges, extending to university graduate education.

Consequently, it would appear that the origins of the system for girls are more recent than that for boys. However, resistance was eventually overcome and schools for girls were introduced, subject to these being supervised by religious scholars. Since then, education for girls has rapidly increased. The rate of expansion in all stages of the education system for girls has been rapid, in terms of both student enrolment and in the number of schools. Today, there are almost as many girls as boys attending school. Girls account for about 47% of all students in general education (Ministry of Planning, 1995).

As mentioned above, the educational policy of Saudi Arabia is determined by the separation of the sexes at all levels of education, with the exception of kindergarten and nursery and some private elementary schools in the first and second grades. Subsequently, because of the need for separation, there are detached school buildings, staff, and completely separate institutions.

As boys and girls are educated separately, according to Presley (1984: 119), the Ministry of Education set out the aims of girls' education, to be implemented by the Presidency. The aim is to bring girls up in a sound Islamic way, so that they can fulfil their role in life as successful housewives, ideal wives and good mothers and to prepare them for other activities that are considered in Saudi culture to suit their nature, such as teaching, nursing and the medical profession. The careers which women are encouraged

to pursue are clearly defined. However, according to economic and social changes in Saudi Arabia, other subjects are now open to women in the business, scientific and technical fields.

2.4 Agencies of Education in Saudi Arabia:

Education in Saudi Arabia has been controlled by four main sectors institutions administered mainly by the government. These are:

- The Ministry of Education
- The General Presidency of Girls' Education .
- The Ministry of Higher Education
- The General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training.

2.5 The General Presidency for Girls' Education:

This organization was established in 1960 to be responsible for girls' education at all levels, including women's colleges which numbered seventy six in 2000. The fundamental responsibility of this organization is to provide general education for female students from kindergarten to secondary school and up to college level. It is also responsible for the training of female teachers. Elementary education began in 1961 and at intermediate and secondary levels in 1963 (Al-Hugail, 1998).

The General Presidency of Girls' Education (GPGE) controls the complete range of schooling for female students. It is divided into two main departments: the Directorate General for General Education, which is responsible for directing schools and programmes at the elementary, intermediate and secondary levels; and the Directorate

General of Girls' Colleges, which monitors the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. It also manages specialized training institutes and technical schools that are dedicated to nursing, teacher training, tailoring and adult education (Al-Baker, 1994).

Recently the General Presidency for Girls' Education merged into the Ministry of Education, after King Fahd bin Abdulaziz issued a Royal Decree in 2002 directing that the General Presidency for Girls' Education be fully incorporated into the Ministry of Education, which traditionally dealt only with the schooling of boys. So, as a consequence, boys' and girls' education are now run under one agency, and both study the same curriculum with slight differences according to gender. The significance of this merger is to raise the performance of both boys' and girls' education through the integration and coordination of experience and effort. The intention is to promote cooperation and collaboration in the attainment of goals by creating one system. In addition, from an economic perspective, the policy in expected to be cost-effective as it will concentrate on one aim, which is the quality of education (Al-Zarah, 2008).

2.6 Types and Stages of Education:

The educational system in Saudi Arabia falls into two divisions by type of education:

- General education.
- Higher education.

2.6.1 General Education:

General education in Saudi Arabia consists of four stages:

- Kindergarten stage: entrance age is 4 or 5 and attendance is for 1 or 2 years.
- Elementary stage: entrance age is 6 and attendance is for 6 years.
- Intermediate stage: entrance age is 12 and attendance is for 3 years.
- Secondary stage: entrance age is 16 and attendance is for 3 years.

2.6.1.1 Kindergarten Stage:

This is the preparatory stage for entrance into the elementary stage. It is an optional stage and attendance is not a condition for admission to elementary school. It is for pre-school children aged four to five years.

2.6.1.2 Elementary Stage:

To enrol in elementary school a child must be six years old. This stage embraces a six-year programme which the children learn general concepts appropriate to their ages. Most of the elementary curriculum focuses on religious and Arabic subjects. The other subjects included are arithmetic, general science, social studies, art and physical education. Students must pass all subjects by the end of each academic year in order to go on to the intermediate stage.

2.6.1.3 Intermediate Stage:

This is the third stage in the general education ladder. The intermediate school consists of three grades serving students between the age of twelve and fifteen. There are

no prerequisites for the intermediate stage except the completion of the elementary stage. The subjects taught in this stage are Islam, Arabic, geography, history, English, mathematics and general science. Students must pass a completion examination by the end of this stage in order to go on to the secondary stage. The objectives of the intermediate stage are as follows:

- Strengthening the students' bodies, minds and souls according to the Islamic creed.
- Providing the students with knowledge and skills that suit their age and stage of development.
- Promoting students' scientific thinking.
- Preparing students for the next stage of life (Ministry of Education, 1995).

2.6.1.4 Secondary Stage:

This is the final stage on the general education ladder in Saudi Arabia. Students normally start this stage at the age of sixteen and end it at the age of eighteen. Study in this stage takes three years to complete. The first year is devoted to general education; in the second and third years students specialise in either the arts or the sciences. On completion of the third year, students sit for the General Secondary Examination held by the Ministry of Education, and successful students take the 'certification of General Secondary Education' and candidates qualify for higher education. The goals of the secondary stage include informing students about Islamic knowledge and providing them with effective thinking skills and information about themselves and their society.

2.6.2 Higher Education:

The Ministry of Higher Education was founded in 1975, to implement Saudi higher education policy. Higher education before that was managed by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is responsible for the supervision, co-ordination and evaluation of higher education programmes and their linkage with the National Development programmes in different fields, to provide the various sectors with the necessary technical and administrative manpower. It also supervises scholarships, international academic relations and educational offices abroad (Ministry of Education, 1986).

Higher education in Saudi Arabia began in 1957, with only one institution. This institution became the present King Saudi University. However, Saudi Arabia now has eight major universities and many colleges. The purpose of higher education in Saudi Arabia is to develop the country and to serve the needs of society. The following are the universities in Saudi Arabia:

1. King Saudi University, founded in 1957.
2. Islamic University in Medina, founded in 1961.
3. King Abdul Aziz University, founded in 1967.
4. Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, founded in 1974.
5. King Faisal University, founded in 1975.
6. King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, founded in 1975.
7. Umm Al-Qura University, founded in 1979.
8. King Khalid University, founded in 1996.

9. The Al-Kassem, Al-Tyif, Jayzan, Najran, Tybah, Hayel, Al-Jof, Tabook and Al-Baha Universities have been established since 2002.

2.7 Counselling and Guidance Services in Saudi Arabia:

Society in Saudi Arabia has developed very rapidly within only a few years, so that the country now stands shoulder to shoulder with most of the developed nations. This is not only true in economic terms but to a large extent in cultural and social terms. While there are many reasons for these changes, one of the major factors is technological progress. The advance of science and technology means easier communication and more frequent contact with other nations and cultures. Technology has become available at home and telecommunications have led to exposure to foreign customs. The resulting cultural and social exchanges have led both to adaptations to traditional ways and conflict within what had traditionally been a homogenous and harmonious society (Khafagi, 1989).

The impact of economic and social change is particularly evident in the change in family structures and relationships. There is a move away from the extended family of the past towards the nuclear family (Ibn Mani, 1989), particularly as a result of increased education and job opportunities. For example, fathers have found that new sources of income have become readily available to them, and as a consequence they have disregarded their traditional role as supervisors of their families. Instead, they have committed themselves to their work and have pursued financial fortune. On the other hand, women are allowed to continue with their education and new opportunities for work have become available for them outside the house; mothers have turned to work at

the expense of some of their traditional daily duties, especially those towards their children (Musieqer, 1985).

At the same time, the family in Saudi Arabia has also been put under stress through these changes, which has led to a weakening of social relationships. This has resulted in absentee parents, so that there has been a threat to the family's role in the bringing up of children. All of this means that there has arisen in recent years a greater necessity for counsellors to keep the balance between these modern social changes and the basis of society.

2.8 Counselling and Guidance Services in the Education Setting:

The beginning of the development of a formal school guidance and counselling programme in Saudi Arabia started in 1961, when the Administration of Education and Social Activities was established by the Ministry of Education. It started employing university graduates as 'educational social workers' in schools. Their role was limited to the organising and implementing of various educational and social activities such as parent-teacher conferences, athletic clubs, arranging trips (Minisitry of Education, 1982).

In 1961, the Administration of Education and Social Activities was established with an emphasis on helping students to develop study skills and to resolve their academic and personal concerns. Hence, the role of school social workers was extended to involve duties in line with what might be considered the norm for educational guidance and counselling services in western countries (Saleh, 1987). As a result, each education region started to appoint professionals who had bachelor degrees in the field of sociology

and social work. Their task was to provide pupils with informal counselling or to give advice on certain matters relating to students problems and needs.

From the above it is clear that counselling services were affected by internal structural changes and re-organisations carried out by the Ministry of Education, which were designed to enable them to provide more effective services. However, formal school counselling in the Saudi educational system only started in 1981, when the Ministry of Education transformed the Social Educational Administration into the Administration of Student Counselling and Guidance. Later in the same year, the Ministry of Education established the General Administration of Guidance and Counselling (GAGC) (Ministry of Education, 1999), to provide professional counselling services in school settings. The responsibilities of this administration are as follows:

- To plan, prepare and develop the programmes and services of guidance and counselling.
- To provide professional staff capable to achieve such services for all the students at the various stages of education.
- To provide students with the appropriate care appropriate to their ages and their psychological, educational and social needs.
- To assist students to develop their capabilities, potentialities and talents.
- To attain a high standard of mental health in such a way as reflects the targets and goals sought by the educational guidance in general (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.2).

Thus, during the previous period from 1954 to 1981, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia had become aware that, in order to facilitate their academic achievement,

students should be given more care, guidance and action to solve their personal problems. Undoubtedly, the development of education and associated services, as well as social change, created high demand for counsellors and counselling supervisors.

2.9 The Objectives of Guidance and Counselling in Saudi Arabia:

The Ministry of Education (1999) defined the term counselling as an organised and planned activity that aims at helping students to understand themselves and recognise their personal capabilities in order to give them the chance to develop their potential and to solve their problems in a way compatible with the teachings of Islam, in order to solve their problems by themselves to accomplish social, psychological, personal, vocational and educational adjustment.

The above definition draws attention to the fact that the nature of counselling in schools is closely related to the kind of educational system each country has (Patterson, 1971). However, it is important to note that, in Saudi Arabia, Islam plays an important role in the life, beliefs and values of the people. For that reason, Islamic values must be incorporated in counselling for it to be more fruitful for individuals and groups (Khaleefa, 1995). According to the Ministry of Education (1998), the objectives of guidance and counselling in schools are as follows:

- To guide and counsel students socially, psychologically, morally, educationally and vocationally in a manner compatible with Islamic teaching, in order to enable them to live a quiet, satisfying life and become effective citizens in their society.
- To look at the problems that could face students during their academic career

whether personal, social or educational, and to work to elaborate appropriate solutions to these problems, to enable them to progress better in their studies and offering them positive psychological health.

- To help students to adjust to the school atmosphere and be inducted into the school system, in order to best benefit from the educational programmes that are available and guide them to the best means to improve their study habits.
- To help students to invest in their interests, talents, and aptitudes in order to guide them for their personal benefit as well as for the benefit of society in general. This involves carrying out research and studies to address the interests, talents, and aptitudes of both underachievers and those with high achievement.
- To help students to select studies and careers which are appropriate to their interests, abilities, competences and aptitudes and consistent with societal needs. It also involves providing students with information on the variety of educational and vocational opportunities that are available to them, to be able to choose their future career by themselves and to take into consideration parental involvement in this kind of decision.
- To strengthen the relationship and co-operation between school and home, so that each complements the other in offering an encouraging atmosphere for students to continue their study.
- To participate in research and studies dealing with educational problems, such as dropout, absenteeism, truancy, decreased rates of progression in schools and poor study habits.

- To encourage the awareness of the school community - students, teachers and head teachers - and society in general about the objectives of guidance and counselling (General Directorate of Guidance and Counselling-GDGC, 1999: 3-4).

It should be clear that these general aims can be seen as similar to the general goals of education in Saudi Arabia. No specific objectives are established which should be directly met by the counsellor. Indeed, the goals of the guidance and counselling programme are characterised by their general nature, and, on the whole, context is not taken into consideration. The goals are perhaps idealistic, in that they approach the counselling process without considering the counsellor's ability to realise these aims (Al-Bahadel, 2004).

2.9.1 Counselling in Boys' Schools:

According to Al-Twail and Al-Mulhem (1989), educational counselling and guidance in Saudi schools for boys used to be provided through the individual efforts of head teachers or individual teachers. Their task was to provide pupils with informal counselling or to give advice on certain matters relating to their problems and needs.

For example, guidance and counselling programmes were initiated in part as a result of concerns about student drop-out. Another motivating factor was the problematic effects of educational expansion, such as overcrowding in schools, with attendant difficulties of adaptation for pupils (Al-Zahrani, 1990).

In order to cope with the immediate demand for school counsellors in all schools and to meet its long term plan to provide a comprehensive and professionally trained

counselling service in schools, the GAGC allowed unqualified personnel to perform this role and, particularly, to allow teachers from within the existing teaching force to perform counselling tasks. Provided that they had relevant experience, their teaching load being reduced accordingly to 12 classes per week, until enough trained professional counsellors could be provided. After one year, these teachers were to be evaluated and depending on their performance as counsellors, they would either be appointed as full time counsellors or return to being full time teachers (Al-Twail and Al-Mulhem, 1989).

Subsequently, the number of counsellors grew rapidly. For example, in 1996, there were about 150 counselling supervisors in the Saudi education sectors, 1359 school counsellors and 552 teachers who were also appointed to work as counsellors in public schools for boys (Ministry of Education, 1996b). By 2002-2003 the number of counsellors in Saudi Arabia had increased rapidly to about 4000, of whom 3946 held diplomas in various subjects such as social work (General Administration for Guidance and Counselling-GAGC, 2002).

2.9.2 Counselling in Girls' Schools:

With the rapid rise in girls' education, there was a clear need and demand for an institution to provide counselling programmes in order to deal with girls' needs. Nevertheless, even though the General Presidency for Girls' Education (GPGE) had a General Directorate for Education, Guidance and Supervision, designated counsellor did not exist in all girls schools, the role often being carried out by the so-called 'social supervisor'. In this respect, the status of counselling and guidance services in girls

schools can be likened to that pertaining in boys schools before 1981 (Al-Misfer, 2001; General Administration for Guidance and Counselling-GAGC, 2002).

However, due to the immediate need for professionals to monitor and guide the counselling services in girls' schools, as Al-Bahadel (2004) stated, the General Administration for Guidance and Counselling embarked on the following strategy:

- In 1973, the GPGE issued a directive letter to set up social educational programmes in primary schools. It also issued a work plan for social education workers in intermediate and secondary schools and in colleges.
- Then, in 1974, the GPGE tried to improve existing programmes to develop social and educational care in schools.
- In 1976, the GPGE issued a follow-up plan to supervise the achievement of the social and educational programmes in schools under social supervisors.
- In 1978, the GPGE started to apply the social supervisor system in the intermediate and secondary schools and colleges. Accordingly, the GPGE provided supervisors who were specialists in the social field in the education guidance agencies in each District Directorate of Girls' Education (DDGE).
- After that, in 1980, the GPGE circulated the social supervision plan to all primary, intermediate and secondary schools and colleges.
- Then the GPGE changed the name "social supervision" to "social education".
- After that, in 1988, the GPGE issued a guidebook which explained the functions of the workers in the social education field.

- To improve the services which were provided to students, the GPGE approved the project of guiding and counselling students and started to apply students records in 1991.
- 1992 saw a big step forward for guidance and counselling programmes for students; for the time being social workers were responsible for this job until the GPGE started replacing them with student counsellors.
- In 1994, the GPGE issued an updated plan for social education and student counselling.
- In 1996, the Ministry of Civil Service (the government agency for careers) announced the recognition of female counsellors in schools. Subsequently, the GPGE established jobs for female counsellors in schools.
- Then in 1998, the GPGE established the General Administration of Guidance Counselling (GAGC).
- 1999 was the real start for student guidance and counselling when the GAGC started fulfilling its functions of guiding and advising student in their life in general and in their religious and study needs.

In fact, GPGE was influenced predominantly by the perception that counselling and guidance and social education were complementary and should be linked; and by the constraints of the time schedule for the plan (General Presidency for Girls' Education-GPGE, 1995; Al-Misfer, 2001). As a result, in 1995, GPGE announced a plan to combine the activities of social education and student counselling, the rationale being that both roles have a common purpose, which is ensuring the conduct of all school activities in accordance with Islamic principles. The plan expressed the intention that counselling

service in girls' schools should be developmental, preventive and therapeutic, albeit provided within the social educational provisions. The plan covered the following services:

- Counselling services should include case studies, and the provision of therapeutic and individual and group educational counselling.
- Psychological services should include discovering cases that require specialised services. This was intended to respond to individual students' needs for support and guidance with disciplinary, emotional or behavioural difficulties to improve their psychological health.
- Gaining knowledge of the variety of educational and vocational choices available. This kind of service aimed to make students aware of the world of work in order to choose careers appropriate to their desires, ability and aptitudes and consistent with societal needs.
- Strengthening the relationship and co-operation between home and school, so that each complements the other.
- Health services.
- Research services, to investigate research educational problems like absenteeism, truancy, poor study habits, dropout and decreased rates of progression in school.
- The provision of in-service training for all personnel involved in student counselling.
- Liaison with community agencies and the provision of information about psychological clinics and health and social centres to help develop school-community-student relations to facilitate the school function. Counsellors can

fulfil a liaison function with teachers and parents, helping to translate what teachers are saying to the parents. In turn they can translate to teachers the concerns of the parents (Al-Bahadel, 2004).

2.9.3 Counselling in Higher Education:

As the demand for counsellors continued to grow, a request was sent by the Ministry of Education to universities and colleges of education in Saudi Arabia to open and offer guidance and counselling courses. For example the Ministry arranged for Umm Al-Qura University in Makkah to provide a fast track one-semester training programme. Later, the training was extended to one full year for a post-graduate diploma degree (Al-Bahadel, 2004). There are presently seventeen universities in Saudi Arabia, each of which has various specialist colleges and some have branches throughout the country. Of these, King Saud University and Imam Mohammad Bin Saud Islamic University in Riyadh and Umm Al-Qura University in Makkah supply the country with counsellors, particularly, those trained at diploma and Masters levels (El-Sendiony et al., 1987). However, King Saud University in Riyadh was the first in the country to establish counselling services. A designated unit called The Counselling Services Unit, located in the Department of Psychology in the College of Education is up-to-date and well-equipped with special rooms for counselling interviews. These facilities enable students to be trained in counselling techniques, and to practise them under the supervision of the department's staff (Al-Bahadel, 2004).

Currently, four universities - Al-Imam Mohammed ibn Saudi Islamic University, King Saud University, Umm Al-Qura University and King Faisal University (KFU) -

run diplomas in guidance and counselling programmes, which involve modules such as 'Problems in Development' and 'Psychology of Abnormal Children' (Al-Sayed, 2002). Three universities - Al-Imam Mohammed ibn Saudi Islamic University, King Saud University and Umm Al-Qura University - offer a two-year MA programme in guidance and counselling. Approximately 300 trainees have attended these programmes. In addition, 164 staff who deliver guidance and counselling services in schools have attended evening courses to obtain Masters degrees (Ministry of Education, 1996a).

As a result of its recognition of the importance of professional development and continued training, the Ministry of Education asked the universities mentioned above to open a one year programme in guidance and counselling for counsellors who have spent more than five years in their work as counsellors. Thus, the most well-established counselling work in higher education exists in universities. The primary aim is to provide services that "facilitate, enhance and encourage development" (Saleh, 1987: 286). Added to this, professional counsellors hold regular meetings with other counsellors from around the country to exchange their ideas and experiences (El-Sendiony et al., 1987).

2.10 The Role of the School Counsellor in Saudi Schools:

An important starting point is to realise that the role and function of the school counsellor in Saudi Arabia is largely based on the American guidance and counselling model, which combines the three aspects of counselling, namely educational counselling, vocational counselling and personal counselling. In fact, school counsellors generally are employed in positions that entail working in a variety of professional roles with students and within school systems (Paisley and Mcmahon, 2001; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994;

Constantine, 2005). However, the Ministry of Education (1999) stated that the role and functions of the school counsellor were as follows:

- Preparation of the annual general plan for student guidance and counselling programmes in accordance with the rules laid down for this purpose.
- Education of the school community in the objectives of student guidance and counselling, its plans, programmes and services.
- The provision of the resources necessary for guidance and counselling.
- The formation of guidance and counselling committees in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry.
- The implementation of student guidance and counselling programmes together with its developmental, preventive and remedial services, which incorporate the following:
- Assisting the student to exploit his/her capabilities and talent to the maximum extent.
- Encouraging the development of positive characteristics and the enforcement of these in accordance with Islamic teaching.
- Harnessing the students' learning motives and ambitions.
- Following up student progress and achievements.
- Selecting outstanding students, recognising their efforts and encouraging them to work towards further achievement.
- To benefit from all the opportunities that can help in the formation and development of positive attitudes towards vocational, technical, scientific and administrative jobs.

- To identify talented students and those with special needs.
- To help new entrants to adapt to the school environment and develop positive attitudes.
- To discover students with disabilities and other limitations as early as possible.
- To disseminate the principles of preventive awareness in the health, educational, psychological and social fields.
- To foster the relationship between the home and school in all aspects.
- To identify and classify the needs of the students in accordance with their level of development and maturity.
- To investigate the health, psychological, social and learning status of students before the beginning of each academic year in order to identify individuals or groups in need of preventive services.
- To design programmes and remedial plans for behavioural and learning problems among individual students and groups.
- To develop the individual learning skills and experiences of the student counsellor by emphasising the empirical aspects in the field of education in general and student guidance and counselling in particular.
- To build a profitable and professional relationship with the teaching staff, the students and guardians based on confidence and mutual respect.
- To conduct research and studies in the filed in collaboration with supervisors and counsellors at other schools.
- To prepare final results reports based on the plans laid down for student

guidance and counselling.

The outcomes of these activities are reported to the General Administration for Guidance and Counselling at the end of every year, showing what improvement have been made in the services offered. The functions of the GAGC are expressed in a bulletin called "Definitions Bulletin about Guidance and Counselling in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia". According to the Bulletin, these functions are as follows:

- To plan, prepare and develop the framework for guidance and counselling programmes.
- To estimate the required number of counsellors needed at the general directorate and in specific directorates and districts in accordance with the approved organisational structure.
- To propose, organise and implement guidance and counselling services and programmes.
- To follow up and evaluate such programmes in the light of the general plan.

However, alongside the above-mentioned responsibilities, counsellors are involved in various roles, teaching activities, and non-counselling duties, for example, administration, discipline, and a large quantity of paperwork required from them by the Ministry of Education in order to deliver the service. Additionally, counsellors are required to complete several types of records, including comprehensive records for each student as well as a record of all counselling services performed. There are records for daily actions such as problems facing students, absentees, truancy, individual cases, high

achievers, and underachievers. It could be argued that this volume of clerical work might reinforce misperceptions of counselling services. In fact, school counselors are frequently assigned tasks that are important but not necessarily related to the overall education programmes they serve.

From the above, it is clear that the counselling profession in Saudi Arabia now faces a number of problems. These relate to the Ministry of Education, school staff, parents and counsellors themselves. One major problem is the lack of a clear definition of the role and functions of the school counsellor. This role is unclear not only to students, parents, teachers and administrators, but also to counsellors themselves (Al-Ahmady, 1993; Al-Ghamdi, 1999).

2.11 Training Programmes for Counsellors in Saudi Arabia:

Training can undoubtedly enhance the role played by counsellors, provide them with the skills and knowledge required for school counselling, and result in a healthier learning environment. In particular, training programmes for counsellors in Saudi Arabia can be divided into two types, pre-service and in-service. With regard to pre-service training, only a Masters degree in guidance and counselling is offered by Saudi universities. Usually, a few students apply for these degrees before they start working as school counsellors. Previous studies of school counselling in Saudi Arabia indicate that only small numbers of counsellors have gained Masters degrees in guidance and counselling (Al-Ahmady, 1993; Al-Ghamdi, 1999; Al-Rebdi, 2000).

Regarding in-service training, the Ministry of Education gives only a few counsellors each year the opportunity to attend a one-year diploma programme in

guidance and counselling. It is worth mentioning here that the interest in training at the beginning of the programme has not continued. The preparation programmes have stopped and academic studies are restricted to certain criteria. With this withdrawal, the problem of preparing and training counsellors remains one of the major obstacles facing counselling services in Saudi Arabia (Al-Ghamdi, 1999). This is a serious problem especially because the majority are unqualified counsellors who need professional and career development training.

Such problems reflect a deficiency on the part of the Ministry of Education in providing training courses for counsellors to be qualified in counselling. But since the Ministry of Education appoints unqualified counsellors, it should provide them with the necessary training. Nonetheless, although the Ministry of Education provides short training courses, these remain inadequate and incapable of meeting the growing demands and needs (Al-Rebdi, 2000). In other words, the concept of full-time counsellors in schools exists in Saudi Arabia, but the Ministry of Education appoints teachers who have experience in teaching to work as counsellors without a relevant background or training. Thus, because of the lack of professional counsellors and the lack of training programmes and counselling competencies, counselling services are often provided by teachers who are not adequately prepared to fulfil the role given to them. This causes frustration and confusion for many of them (Al-Ghamdi, 1999).

As a result, such teachers who are working in counselling positions may not be considered as approachable by pupils, due to their involvement in teaching duties and discipline. Also, given Egan's (1994) warning that an untrained counsellor could be viewed as unsafe, appointing teachers to counselling positions without training and

sufficient knowledge of guidance and counselling skills and services could be seen as dangerous. Also, the conflict between the counsellors' loyalty to their former roles as teachers and their new roles as counsellors should also be taken in consideration as a source of stress and dissatisfaction among Saudi school counsellors.

Regular group supervision can assist school counsellors in making connections with other professionals and managing the isolation that they experience in their primary work setting (Peterson and Deuschle, 2006; Thomas, 2005). Nevertheless, in Saudi Arabia, most school counsellors find themselves supervised primarily by those who have little or no training in counselling, in many cases supervisors trained in non-counselling area. Few have an extensive background in counselling that would enable them to provide direction and supervision for school counselling programme (Al-Rebdi, 2004). Supervisory activities generally focus on meeting, planning, paper work and administrative functions. This is done through one or two visits to school a year. The lack of supervision could be one of the main reason that principals assign counsellors non-counselling duties (Al-Ghamdi, 1999).

2.12 Summary:

This chapter has provided background information needed to familiarise the reader with the history of the education system in Saudi Arabia, with special emphasis on the guidance and counselling service. The first section of the chapter briefly discussed the development of education in the Kingdom, and how it has been deeply influenced by the Islamic religion. It has been shown that boys and girls' education developed and are administrated separately. A primary concern in all educational activity is the socialisation

of children and adolescents in to Islamic values, equipping them to play their expected role in the community. The second section sheds light on the history and nature of school counselling in the country with special emphasis on the problems faced by the counsellor and the profession. Yet, although guidance and counselling in Saudi Arabia still seems to be in a period of uncertainty and confusion, it has nevertheless been given an important role by the Ministry of Education (Al-Ghamdi, 1999).

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Chapter Three

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction:

In order to provide a theoretical foundation for this study, this chapter concentrates on the concept of school counselling and the role of the school counsellor. This informed the construction of the research instruments and the interpretation of the findings. The main themes emerging from this literature review are discussed here, as a conceptual introduction to the empirical work reported in later chapters. The chapter divided in to three main sections. The first section presents a general definition of counselling, and in the second, the main Western theoretical orientations are discussed. The third section gives a brief historical review of the development of school counselling services in the United States and the United Kingdom, and the discussion is then extended to investigate the role of the school counsellor, the different and often conflicting perceptions of counsellors, principals, teachers of that role. The articles and studies surveyed point to the conclusion that confusion and ambiguity still surround the counsellor's role. This paves the way for an examination of the problem of role conflict and ambiguity within the context of role theory.

3.2 Definitions of School Counselling:

There are various definitions of counselling and many different approaches. As Herbert (1998) pointed out, various authorities interpret counselling in different ways. These differences result not only from differences in points of view among researchers in this field, but also from historical changes in more general perceptions of this activity.

Therefore, it is difficult to give a comprehensive definition of counselling as it has been given many different definitions by scholars (King, 1999).

The term counselling, however, is used to describe a range of activities (WAG, 2008). Counselling is a generic term (Pattison et al., 2007), therefore, it is useful at the outset of this study to describe the difference between formal counselling and the use of counselling skills. Formal counselling is undertaken by a professional counsellor acting in his or her specialist role and in accordance with a recognized code of ethics that requires confidentiality, accountability, supervision and continuing professional development (WAG, 2008).

Counselling skills, however, are used by many people who work with children and young people in a specific role such as teachers, school nurses, youth workers and social workers (Pattison et al., 2007). These skills include listening in a non-judgmental way, being empathic and helping people to feel valued and understood. The role and responsibilities of the individual professional will determine the boundaries of their working practice (WAG, 2008).

Some western scholars have focused on the relationship between the counsellor and the client; some have concentrated on what happens in the process of counselling; while others define counselling according to its functions and aims. For example, Jones (1984) suggested that counselling: "is an enabling process, designed to help an individual come to terms with his life and grow to greater maturity through learning to take responsibility and to make decisions for himself" (p.29). By assigning the role of 'learning' to the counselee, this definition implies that the counsellor is a teacher or instructor. It also implies that the counselee plays a passive role as opposed to the active

role of the instructor, and that changes in behaviour come from outside the individual; a view that behaviourists would find plausible. Furthermore, the above definition focuses on the actual process of counselling, which can take place in various settings and contexts and may be conducted by different people, professional or otherwise. For example, a student might receive counselling, as defined above, from parents, friends and teachers, as well as others who may not see themselves as being in a counselling role.

Conversely, Burk and Stefflre (1979) stated that counselling is a professional relationship between a trained counsellor and the client. Shertzer and Stone (1974) further observed that an experienced counsellor is much more effective than an inexperienced one. They conceded that good counselling, like good teaching, is a highly intricate activity that is dependent upon the counsellor, the client, the setting, the topic, and the conditions under which counselling is offered. However, not all practitioners adhere to this opinion. There is a wide range of people, in different professional fields, who claim to practise counselling, adopting the term for such occupations as financial counsellor, beauty counsellors and tourist counsellors. For example, Burnard (1989) claimed that all health professionals are counsellors, and stated that:

Anyone who works in one of the health professions, and comes into contact with people who are distressed in any way, whether psychologically, physically, spiritually or practically, offers counselling help.

This is a rather confusing statement, as it seems to suggest that counselling is a form of help, and defines the process of counselling as when one person helps another clarify their life situation and to decide upon further lines of action. Bumard presents counselling as a natural activity and suggests that help can be offered by anyone, whether

a professional counsellor or non professional helper, and it can be offered to an individual in either a voluntary or an involuntary way, to families or groups, or within the wider community. Helping, however, is a broad term, and may consist of many activities, only some of which may involve counselling (Brammer, 1993; Sanders, 1994).

There are, however, both practical and theoretical objections to this generous view. According to Hornby et al (2003), the British Association of Counselling and psychotherapy (BACP) (1991) defined counselling as "The skilled and principled use of a relationship to facilitate self-knowledge, emotional acceptance and growth. The overall aim is to provide an opportunity to work towards living more satisfyingly and resourcefully". The BACP also referred to the functions of counselling such as helping students to understand themselves and mature. This point of view was supported by Williams (1973), who defined counselling as "A process of sharing not only behaviour but experience, the creation of a relationship of such trust and confidence that the defensive walls we erect around ourselves are dismantled stone by stone".

Similarly, Mclaughlin (1999) highlighted four elements of counselling: First, it refers to a relationship in which one person aims to help another, or an event such as making a transition. Second, there are certain identifiable skills that can promote this process. These skills include listening, empathising, challenging, and facilitating action. Third, there is a belief that self-awareness is helpful and that its development is part of the process. Fourth, it is a process of learning which incorporate thinking, feeling and action.

Rogers (1982) further concluded that guidance and counselling depend on a helping relationship created by a person who is psychologically mature to facilitate the

growth of others who need assistance in various respects. He made the point that the counsellor will need some special qualities if he is to be effective. In line with this, Bor et al (2002) stated that school counselling is an interaction in a therapeutic setting, focusing primarily on a conversation about relationships, beliefs and behaviour (including feelings), through which the child's perceived problem is elucidated and framed or reframed in a fitting or useful way, and in which new meaning emerges (p. 15).

Thus, many psychologists view counselling principally in terms of a relationship between the client and the counsellor. O'Connor (1995) noted that counselling should be concerned with establishing a relationship in an interview in order to attain specific results. Confirming this, Cowie and Sharp (1996) reiterated that counselling is "an activity in which a trained professional engages in a particular relationship with a person who is experiencing personal or emotional difficulties". More specifically, Burk and Stefflre (1979) maintained that counselling is:

A professional relationship between a trained counsellor and client. This relationship is usually person-to-person, although it may sometimes involve more than two people. It is designed to help clients to understand and clarify the views of their 'life space', and to learn to reach their self determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices, and through the resolution of problems of an emotional or interpersonal nature.

Such definitions see counselling primarily as a relationship between counsellor and client. It is clear, moreover, that counselling emphasises the inherent potential for growth and self-actualisation in every individual. The core of the counselling process is the relationship. In other words, counselling emphasises the importance of a good relationship, which should develop so that the client feels free to explore his feelings, or

whatever he perceives as his problems. The counsellor provides an understanding, accepting and non-judgemental climate, and a relationship is created which enables the client to deal with the world around him. It seems clear that childhood and adolescence can be very stressful times and, like adults, young people sometimes need to talk to an understanding, independent person who will not judge them (Hampshire County Council, 2006). Thus, counsellors are trained to listen without judging and to help people sort out their thoughts and feelings about whatever is causing them concern.

Further definition states that counselling takes places when a counsellor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing, or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life or loss of a sense of direction and purpose. This is always at the request of the client, as no one can properly be 'sent' for counselling (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy 2004). Thus, a person enters freely into counselling activities which offer an opportunity to identify troubling or perplexing issues. The BACP identifies the aim of these counselling activities to "provide an opportunity for the client to work towards living in a way he or she experiences as more satisfying and resourcefu1" (BACP, 1998).

This definition does not speak definitively about resolving clients' problems; rather it concerns achieving personal growth and development (Sian et al., 1982). This is a valuable outcome of exploring their personal issues, according to Williams (1994). The task of counselling is not solely based on the cognitive aspects of presenting problems, but also on the individual's motivation and self-image, and has to do with their behaviour as an independent person who is aware of their social and personal responsibilities (Williams, 1994).

However, children and young people may not initiate therapy; they may be referred or encouraged to attend counselling by teachers, carers or other adults. Within the youth justice system, while it is not compulsory, there may be an expectation that young people attend counselling (Blaikie, 2000; Dorset County Council, 2004). For this reason, there are some difficulties in applying the above BACP definition to the field of counselling children and young people.

Some specialists have concentrated on the aims of counselling. Cowie and Pecherk (1994) indicated that counselling is a process that aims at facilitating the growth of the students and making them satisfied with their lives. This definition illustrates counselling through its function, which is helping the students to feel emotionally comfortable. Williams (1973) defined counselling through its aims, describing it as a process of preparing students for the future and going out into the world. According to him, the role of counselling is not limited to inside the school but also extends to include the whole life of the student.

More generally, the goal of counselling is summed up in Ivey's et al's statement that, "In a broad sense, most helping theories seem to accept the idea that effective daily living and positive relationships with others are the goals of helping" (Ivey et al., 1987). In order for this goal to be realised, Corey (1996) specified that:

The central function of counselling is to help clients recognise their own strengths, discover what is preventing them from using their strengths, and clarify what kind of person they want to be. Counselling is a process by which clients are invited to look honestly at their behaviour and lifestyle, and make certain decisions about the ways in which they want to modify the quality of their life. In this sense, counselling can be seen

as a process which increases awareness and control of the environment among students. It also enables them to obtain some kind of control over their actions and experiences. It can also be regarded as a dynamic relationship that involves a professionally trained counsellor and an individual, or individuals who need assistance to understand themselves (Myrick and Wittmer, 1972).

Attention here is paid to the basic aspects of the relationship, but such a definition also makes it clear that counselling is not an impromptu action but a planned activity (Abo-Eeta, 1988). The creation of a contract with the client necessitates that there are boundaries to this activity and that, within these boundaries, standards of professional practice such as confidentiality apply (Russell et al., 1992).

According to Pearce (1989), the type of assistance offered should differ with respect to the skills of the counsellor, and he maintains that an effective counsellor should indeed possess specific skills. Carl Rogers (1982) proposed that the counsellor should have genuine concern, respect and acceptance, and empathy for the client. Thus, the counsellor needs the ability to enter into another's world and to understand his/her experiences without prejudice. These skills may be found in many types of helping relationships. However, the differences between the various types of help and counselling may lie in the extent to which helpers use these skills effectively and ethically (Pearce, 1989).

In other cases, the term 'counselling' is used to describe a range of activities which may include careers advice, the 'lending of a listening ear' and, more formally, support for children and young people through the work of a professional and qualified counsellor (Northern Ireland Government, 2002).

From the above definitions it is clear that, in the West, counselling is usually viewed as non-directive, so that the client arrives at his or her own solutions, whereas guidance may involve the giving of direct advice. According to MCguinness (1998), counselling is one of the basic services of guidance. It is interesting to note that guidance and counselling are two sides of the same coin. The goal in both cases is to give an opportunity for an individual to see a variety of available options, and thereafter assist the person in making a wise choice.

Mcguiness (1998) defined guidance as a direct interaction between a counsellor and client, the purpose of which is to make clients aware of their abilities and to use the environmental resources available that allow them to help themselves. However, guidance is heavily rooted in educational and developmental psychology. According to Russell et al (1992), it differs from other methods of helping as it utilises a variety of helping styles, for example professional assessment, advocacy, information and suggestion. In guidance, the professional is seen as an expert in his/her area. Thus, guidance is a series of consultations that aim at helping the individual explore a concern. It provides the client with appropriate information, which should lead to an awareness of the available opportunities, and to the making of reasonable decisions and informed choices (Russell et al., 1992). Sian et al (1982) also attempted to distinguish between guidance and counselling by confirming that guidance may include giving advice and indicating possible courses of action, whereas counselling is more intimately concerned with areas of personal growth and development and with helping the individual to find their own way forward.

Nevertheless, giving advice is often camouflaged as counselling, but counselling

is not concerned with advice-giving, and counsellors are not advisers, although "counselling still carries its traditional meaning of advice-giving and many dictionaries still define it in this way" (Feltham, 1995). Also, the terms guidance and counselling are often used interchangeably or synonymously by outsiders, although not by the profession, and this contributes to ambiguity and confusion about what counselling is.

For example, Al-Bahadel (2004) has indicated that, in the Saudi school setting, various titles that exist such as 'counsellor', 'school counsellor', 'student counsellor', 'guidance counsellor', and even 'psychologist' and 'psychotherapist'. All of these are used interchangeably without reflecting any distinctions in roles and functions. This lack of distinction between terms is apparent in counsellors' training or preparation, and in professional practice in Saudi Arabia. This may be what Hughes (1989) identified as contradictory philosophies and methods. To understand this point, the Saudi Ministry of Education (1982) has defined guidance and counselling for students in Saudi Arabian secondary schools as:

"A process by which students are assisted to know themselves, to understand their personalities, to use their experiences, to determine their problems, to develop their abilities and to solve the problems students face, all in keeping with Islamic teaching, which will help them to reach their aims, and be adjusted personally, socially, familially, educationally, and vocationally, so that students will be able to contribute toward the general aims of the educational process".

In fact, this definition is similar to the Western definitions of counselling, since in Saudi Arabia the field is essentially based upon Western theories but combined with the principles of the Islamic religion. In contrast to the emphasis on counselling as a process,

Gaafar (1998, p.14) emphasised that counselling involves more than this when he says that: "Counselling essentially depends on the relationship between the counsellor and the client (student) and this relationship is likely to be warm, comprehensive and full of trust and confidence between the two parties".

3.3 Major Theoretical Orientations in Counselling:

There are a number of theoretical orientations in counselling which give rise to a variety of styles and approaches to counselling practice. Pointing to the proliferation of counselling approaches, Cowie and Pecherek (1994) estimated that more than four hundred approaches had appeared by the mid 1990s, they further add that all of these approaches claimed to have the right answers for the client's problems. In this section, only the major counselling approaches are briefly examined.

3.3.1 Psychoanalytic Theory:

The school of psychoanalysis emphasises human behaviour as being determined by irrational forces, unconscious motivations, biological and instinctual drives and certain psychosexual events occurring during the early years of life (Taylor, 1980; Nelson-Jones, 1982; and Corey, 1996). The aim of counselling is to bring these unconscious drives to the fore (Jacobs, 1988) by such means as transference, dream-analysis and free association (Jacobs, 1988; Corey, 1996).

More broadly, counsellors working in the psychodynamic tradition encourage clients to bring repressed or difficult feelings into conscious awareness in order for such feelings to be understood and problems solved in collaboration between the client and the

counsellor (Cowie and Pecherek, 1994). The task of the counsellor is to facilitate the client's insight and understanding through linking past and present, interpreting some of the client's communication as metaphor, and interpreting transference in terms of past and present relationships (Wheeler and Mcleod, 1995). The psychodynamic counsellor stresses the necessity of unconditional regard, meaning the ability to accept others, whatever they say or do, without pre-conditions (Jacobs, 1999). Furthermore, psychodynamic therapy is seen as an educative process which can be engaged in for illumination (Mearns and Thorne, 2000).

However, psychodynamic approaches are in fact extremely diverse, and those which acknowledge and seek to work with the 'real' relationship find considerable resonance with person-centred therapy (Mearns and Thorne, 2000). On the other hand, these approaches are time consuming, and are not considered suitable for all clients. A large number of counsellors describe themselves as psychodynamic, implying not necessarily an adherence to Freudian principles, but rather a focus on the client's acceptance of the past and working to understand how it has shaped the present.

3.3.2 The Behavioural Approach:

The behavioural approach to therapy evolved in the early 1950s, and claimed to offer a viable alternative to the psychoanalytic techniques that were dominate at the time (Corey, 2001). By the 1970s, and despite harsh resistance and criticism, behavioural therapy emerged as a major force in psychology, emphasising that all behaviours, including maladaptive behaviour, are learned. Counselling then focuses on learning new adaptive patterns in systematic and structured way (Corey, 1996).

Behaviour therapists have sought to subject their techniques to empirical scrutiny throughout the years. As a result, the approach is currently marked by a diversity of views and procedures and the movement is no longer homogeneous (Corey, 2001). Yet, despite diversity, some assumptions that characterise behaviour therapy may represent unity within this heterogeneity. Spiegler and Guevermont (cited in Corey, 2001) listed seven of those assumptions:

1. *Behaviour therapy is based on the principles and procedures* of *the scientific method.*
2. *Behaviour therapy deals with the client's current problems and the factors influencing them, as opposed to historical determinants.*
3. *In behaviour therapy, clients are expected to be active by engaging in specific actions to deal with their problems.*
4. *Behaviour therapy is generally carried out in the client's natural environment, as much as possible.*
5. *Behaviour therapy emphasises a self-control approach.*
6. *Behavioural procedures are tailored to fit the unique needs of each client.*
7. *The practice of behaviour therapy is based on a collaborative partnership between therapist and client* (Corey, 2001, pp. 260-261).

However, the behaviourist approach has been criticised for its lack of attention to feeling and emotions, and for focusing on symptoms at the expense of underlying causes (Corey,1996).

3.3.3 Cognitive Theory:

Cognitive theory is concerned with so-called “automatic” thoughts, which may be positive or negative. Frequent negative thoughts lead to unhappiness. Therefore, therapy aims to get clients to examine and develop new ways of thinking (Beck, 1970). In other words, the basic assumption of the cognitive approach is that our behaviour is shaped by our thinking and beliefs. As such, in order for change to happen, individuals should be assisted in modifying the cognitive maps they are using (Proctor, 1993), which is a process that requires thinking, judging, analysing deciding and acting (Corey, 2001). This approach has been widely recognised after initially being applied to individuals to treat depression (Dattilio and Freeman, 1992). It was later expanded to treat groups and families (Teichman, 1992).

As is the case with behavioural counselling, cognitive approaches to counselling are diverse, though they still share certain characteristics. First, they emphasise the importance of the collaborative relationship between the counsellor and the counsellee. Second, they all consider distress as largely a function of cognitive processes. Third, they agree that change in cognition is a precondition for change in behaviour (Corey, 2001).

Harris and Pattison (2004) have stated that, on the whole, cognitive behavioural therapies are effective with a variety of behavioural problems. The basis of the cognitive behavioural approach is that children can be helped to change their behaviour by increasing their emotional and social skills. This approach is one of the most widely-researched therapies for children and young people (Bee, 2000).

3.3.4 Person-centred Approach:

A fourth major orientation is the person-centred approach, which derives from humanistic psychology. It is popular in counselling practice today, especially in the UK (Lehain, 1994; Williams and Irving, 1996) and in the USA (Milner, 1980). This approach was originated by Carl Rogers (1962), and the core of his therapy was the client/therapist relationship. His idea was that clients had within themselves the capacity to deal with their own personal problems.

To put it simply, the person-centred approach is based on a permissive and non-directive relationship between counsellor and client which fosters the opportunity for self-understanding, leading to positive self-initiated action to solve any problems. The client is seen as the best expert on him or herself; the counsellor's role is facilitative, rather than didactic (Mearns and Thorne, 1999). As Mearns and Thorne (2000) pointed out, person-centred therapy is not principally an 'educative' process, though learning will result. They further stated that "it is not an appropriate process for people who are merely wishing to have an educative experience. It is concerned with the "process of becoming" Allport cited in Nelson-Jones (1982), taking the view that humans are potentially self-directing.

However, Rogers did define three conditions for effective counselling. These were empathy, genuineness (or congruence) and unconditional positive regard (or respect) (Byrne and Worth Gavin, 1996). Rogers' concern, therefore, is with the quality of the client/counsellor relationship, which should be one of mutual trust and respect, in order to provide a secure climate for self-actualisation. In Rogers' judgement, the outcome of the counselling process is determined by the quality of the client-counsellor

relationship .

It is widely believed that Roger's work is useful when helping children to tell their stories (Geldar and Geldar, 2000). Interestingly, Morrison (2005) emphasised that listening and storytelling, as key elements of restorative processes, are important to empowerment. Storytelling is fundamental for healthy social relationships. To feel connected and respected we need to tell our own stories and have others listen. Having others listen to one's story is a function of power in our culture. Indeed, listening to someone's story is a way of empowering them, of validating their intrinsic worth as a human being. Thus, listening and encouraging the client to talk is a frequently mentioned counselling strategy (Morrison, 2005). In other words, counselling is a way of helping people through talking and listening (Hampshire County Council, 2006)

On the other hand, while supporting the value of person-centred counselling, Wheeler and Mcleod (1995) warned against its use, arguing that the lack of a theory of human growth and development underpin the practice, and that there may be a subsequent disregard for assessment. They further claimed that not everyone can engage in a therapeutic relationship, and it can be very difficult for a person-centred counsellor to choose to not accept someone for counselling. In general, an ability to apply techniques and interventions in the absences of a genuine relationship with the client would be seen as misguided and unhelpful from a person-centred perspective.

To answer the question of which is the most ideal and reliable counselling approach, it is important to note that no single theory appears to forward an adequate explanation of human behaviour and personality in such a way as to completely exclusively underpin all counselling practice, given the diversity of clients' needs. More

broadly, the consensus view at present appears to be that exclusive reliance on any single approach is a mistake.

The consensus now seems to be that there is no single best theory, approach or technique for counselling. In fact, the use of terms in the literature such as the eclectic or mixed approach amounts to a tacit admission that there is no single theory that always works. Thus, a trend towards the selection of appropriate techniques has occurred in some areas (Dryden and Norcross, 1989; Corey, 1996). Nevertheless, most counsellors in the West are trained in one orientation and work within that to address a variety of concerns (Dryden and Norcross, 1989; Corey, 1996). In addition, the models which have been developed in the West can be seen as generally very individualistic in focus.

3.4 Historical Review of the Development of School Counselling:

3.4.1 Counselling in the United State of America (USA):

School counselling began just over a century ago, initially shaped by people like Jesse B. Davis, Frank Parsons, and the social reformers of the Progressive Education Movement who sought to change negative social conditions associated with the massive changes to society brought on by the Industrial Revolution (Gysbers and Henderson, 2001). Their work focused on vocational guidance, or "the transition from school to work, emphasizing an appropriate client-occupational match" (Lambie and Williamson, 2004; Dekruyf, 2008). As a result of the work of Davis and Parsons, educators began to realise the importance of vocational guidance. In 1911, the first training programme in vocational guidance and counselling was established at Harvard University (Aubrey, 1977). With vocation as the main focus for school counsellors' responsibilities, the

National Vocational Guidance Association was formed in 1913 and became the preeminent organization until 1952 when the American Personnel and Guidance Association was instituted (Hardy, 2008).

In the 1920s and 1930s changes began to take place in the theory and practice of guidance. As a result of these changes, the concept of guidance evolved from vocational to educational guidance. Educational guidance was viewed as set of activities that would address not only occupational concerns but also the personal and educational aspects of individuals (Gysbers, 2001). As such, more attention was given to the educational and psychological problems of the individual (Baker, 1996; Schmidt, 1999).

These two divergent views of educational guidance began a segmenting of the profession, still evidenced in the many and sometimes conflicting roles fulfilled by professional school counsellors today (Dekruyf, 2008). However, overtime, counselling became more popular rather than guidance. (Lang et al, 1994).

For example, in 1942, Carl Rogers set out a new counselling theory in his publication *Counselling and Psychotherapy*. According to Aubrey (1977), Roger's theory had a great impact on the field of guidance and counselling. Schmidt (1999) points out that "Carl Rogers probably had more influence on the counselling profession and the development of counselling approaches than any other individual" (p. 11). Rogers gave new direction to the profession by emphasising the counselling relationship and climate (Gibson and Mitchell, 1986; Baker, 1996; Schmidt, 1999). During the late nineteen-forties and fifties, his approach prospered, eventually challenging the original vocational guidance premise as the basic function of school counselling (Aubrey, 1977).

As the field of guidance and counselling expanded in scope and purpose in the

early 1950s, there was a need for a professional organisation to unify the diverse concerns of counsellors. Consequently, the American School Counsellor Association (ASCA) was established as an independent organisation in 1952 (Bauman et al., 2003). In this respect, Rockwell and Rothney (1961) suggested that school counsellors became more united as a defining statement of policy for school counselling and guidelines for its implementation was published by the ASCA.

By definition, the ASCA was the national organisation representing the school counselling profession. It focused on providing professional development, enhancing school counselling programmes and researching effective school counselling practices. It also emphasised its commitment to all school counsellors and students (American School Counsellor Association, 2004). However, during the 1960s, the number of counsellor education programmes multiplied amid greater concern over counsellors' experience and educational background. Moreover, counsellors themselves began to see their role as a more all-encompassing.

According to Schmidt (1999), the number of school counsellors increased from 12,000 to 27,180, between 1958 and 1963, the number of state guidance consultants increased from 99 to 257, and more than 400 counselling institutes were funded with more than 13,000 counsellors trained (Schmidt, 1999).

By the 1970s, "it was increasingly apparent that it was time to consider an organizational structure that could focus on the career, personal/social, and academic development of students" (Gysbers and Henderson, 2001). Thus, due to changes in the social and economic environment and influenced by several key contributors, more comprehensive developmental programmes focussing on the academic, career

and personal/social development of students began to emerge (Gysbers, 2001; Gysbers and Henderson, 2006). For instant, Dinkmeyer and Caldwell (1970) called for comprehensive programmes "based on the understanding of human development" (p. 53).

With a changed perspective of school counselling to a developmental model, school counsellors began receiving more training in psychological and personal/social topics related to students across age levels. The Educational Act for All Handicapped Children (1975) expanded the school counsellors' role into special education (Lambie and Williamson, 2004; Hardy, 2008). Furthermore, attention was paid to the developmental guidance approach, which included services for all school students, not just for those with difficulties in meeting societal and academic demands (Baker, 1996, Baker, 2001). According to Schmidt (1999):

"during the 1980s, the need for school counsellors to develop a clear identity and describe their role and functions at the various levels of school practice became paramount" (p. 21).

Therefore, it is not surprising that the 1980s continued to be a time of great confusion about the role and function of school counsellors (Murray, 1995). As school counselling expanded, it became obvious that administrators, teachers, parents, students and even some counsellors were still confused about the contribution of school counselling programmes and the role of school counsellors. In addition, relationships among teachers, administrators and counsellors tended to be strained and often complicated by misperceptions (Murray et al., 1987).

In fact, several studies conducted during this period indicated that various groups, such as counsellors, principals, teachers, students and parents, often viewed the school counsellor's role differently (Helms and Ibrahim, 1985; Hutchinson et al., 1986; Olson and Dilley, 1988; Remley and Albright, 1998). As a result, counsellors became identified with non-counselling activities such as clerical work, scheduling, testing and discipline (Border and Drury, 1992).

Attempts to define the role and functions of the school counsellor continued throughout the 1990s. For instant, several authors, such as Baker (1996); Paisley and Borders (1995); Sink and Macdonald (1998), began to argue that traditional models of school counselling were antiquated and ineffective, and that comprehensive developmental models were better suited to meeting the development needs of students. Luckach (1998) made the following comparison between the traditional school counselling models and the comprehensive developmental models:

The developmental approach is planned, preventative, and proactive. It contrasts with the traditional guidance approach, which addresses the needs of only a few students and is reactive, crisis oriented, unplanned and focused upon information, scheduling, records and non-counselling functions. The developmental programme focuses on activities which help students acquire understanding and skills to pass successfully through developmental stages of life (p.99).

According to Gysbers (2001), the work of putting comprehensive guidance and counselling programmes into practice started in the 1970s and continued in the 1990s. As a result of this work, many US states have developed comprehensive school counselling programme models with varying degrees of focus and scope (Herr, 2001). Sink and

Macdonald (1998) reported that nearly half of the states had shifted from a traditional model to a comprehensive developmental model.

Due to the immediate need for comprehensive school counselling programmes, the American School Counsellor Association (ASCA) adopted the National Standards for School Counselling Programs in 1997 (Herr, 2001). A school counselling programme in alignment with the National Standards is "comprehensive in scope, preventative in design, and developmental in nature" (ASCA, 2003, p. 13). It is also an "integral part of the total educational program" with an intentionally designed delivery system that is "implemented by a state-credentialed school counsellor [and] conducted in collaboration" with all stakeholders. It "monitors student progress, [is] driven by data, seeks improvement, [and] shares successes" (ASCA, 2003; Dekruyf, 2008).

The National Standards and the National Model were designed to "aid school counsellors in their roles as counsellors, consultants, collaborators, leaders, and advocates in becoming accountable for the success of all students" (Pérusse et al., 2001). They were also designed to answer the question, 'How have students benefited because of what school counsellors do?' (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004; Dekruyf, 2008).

Thus, by the close of the twentieth century, comprehensive developmental programmes were being increasingly implemented in schools (Gysbers, 2001). In such a programme, school counsellors are required to address the needs of students comprehensively through the implementation of a developmental school counselling programme. They are required to help all students through four primary interventions: counselling, large group guidance, consultation and coordination. Counsellors also focus their skills, time, and energies on direct services to students, staff, and families. In

addition, they consult and collaborate with teachers, administrators and families to assist students to be successful academically, vocationally, and personally (ASCA, 1999).

On the whole, the programme's focus is on the three domains of student development, namely academic development, career development, and personal/social development. Each of those three domains comprises three standards designed to promote and enhance student learning (Schmidt and Ciechalski, 2001).

Nevertheless, according to the American Counselling Association (2004), the roles of public school counsellors remain unclear in many school districts. Their tasks, expectations, and demands vary from state to state, district to district, and school to school. Typically, school counsellors are merely told what to do by administrators (House and Hayes, 2002). Paisley and Mahon (2001) argued that the ongoing debate over the definition of the role of public school counsellors is probably the most significant challenge facing them.

3.4.2 Counselling in the United Kingdom:

In other parts of the world such as Britain, counselling in schools started in the early 1900s. In fact, school counselling in the United Kingdom dates as far back as to 1913, when London County Council appointed a psychologist to examine backward children and advise their parents and teachers on methods of treatment (Milner, 1974). Later, influenced by the American school counselling model based on the client-centred approach proposed by Rogers, Newsom (1963) produced a report recommending that counsellors should be appointed to look into the needs of low achieving children. Thus, it was not until the 1960s that school counselling began to emerge as a discipline in its own

right (Bor et al., 2002). However, as a result of the Newsom Report, counselling courses were set up for experienced teachers, and hundreds of counsellors were employed by local education authorities throughout the country (Bor et al., 2002).

Despite this effort, cuts in education funding at the hands of the Conservative government in the 1980s resulted in reductions in the numbers of existing counsellors (Mclaughlin, 1999). Therefore, it is not surprising that, following the introduction of local management of schools in 1987, only fifty counsellors were left in the schools of England and Wales (Robinson, 1996). However, in the light of limited funds, the 1980s witnessed a shift of emphasis in counselling, and it was felt that counselling should be integrated into teaching practice, so that teachers themselves should take responsibility for pastoral care (Mclaughlin, 1999; Bor et al., 2002).

In fact, confronted with pervasive and traumatic social problems such as the collapse of the extended family and the increase in rates of violence, the need for school counselling did not pass unnoticed among local education authorities. As Best et al (1996) clarified, counselling practice in Britain is deeply rooted in the so-called 'pastoral' tradition that began to influence British schools in the early nineteenth century. This British concept requires further clarification.

Best and his colleagues pointed to the confusion that surrounds the term 'pastoral'. According to them, some use the term to refer " to the non-instructional aspects of the roles of teachers and others in schools" (Best et al., 1996, p. 7). In this sense, guidance and counselling are aspects of pastoral care. Another view held that pastoral care is one aspect of guidance and counselling. A third view was that the concepts differ in that the teacher provides pastoral care and the counsellor counsels and

guides. However, according to the Department of Education and Science (1989, p. 3, cited in (Best, 1995) "pastoral care is concerned with promoting pupils' personal and social development and fostering positive attitudes".

To provide teachers with the necessary counselling skills, a sizeable number of studies in the field of pastoral care began to appear (for example, Hamblin, 1984; Raymond, 1985; Watkins, 1994; and Marland, 1989). In general, these studies focused on good student-teacher relationships (Mclaughlin, 1999), and emphasised the importance of assisting children to improve their lives and study skills and guiding them to make their own decisions (Hamblin, 1984; Raymond, 1985).

Thus, counselling and guidance in British schools changed focus. Lang et al (1994) reported that counselling and guidance had entered a new era with a focus on comprehensive, developmental counselling and guidance programmes organized systematically around person-centred outcomes programmes that have both preventive and responsive components (p.55).

However, since the 1980s, and despite heavy work-loads, growing social problems and immense psychological pressure, teachers in the United Kingdom still continue to play a major role in counselling their students. To add to their problems, they have recently come under pressure to fulfil all of the criteria of the over-demanding National Curriculum. As a result, teachers now find it difficult to take on a pastoral role, and some schools are beginning to feel the need to employ specialist counsellors to meet the educational, psychological and emotional needs of students (Bor et al., 2002).

On the other hand, some still argue that "teachers have to manage complicated and demanding situations, channelling the personal, emotional and social pressures

amongst 30 or so youngsters" (Black and William, 1998, p. 1; cited in Mclaughlin, 1999, p. 21).

However, recently there is a growing interest in counselling in schools across the UK, driven by an increasing awareness of the role that schools can play in helping to promote emotional health for children and young people and by addressing mental health issues, including psychological and behavioural problems. This is particularly important in terms of the heavy pressure that other, valuable, children's services are under and the long waiting lists often found in social services, educational psychology, special education and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (Pattison et al., 2007).

The Children.s Commissioner in the Clywch Inquiry recommended that the Welsh Assembly Government devises a national strategy for the provision of an independent counselling service for children and young people in education, along with training and support for teachers in their pastoral role (Clywch Report, 2004). The Welsh Assembly Government's goal is to have counselling provision available to all school pupils giving them confidence that their needs will be heard and addressed. This will need to complement the range of approaches already available in schools that help to support the health, emotional and social needs of pupils and lead to a healthy school culture. It is widely accepted that schools which promote the health and well-being of pupils are also more likely to create an effective learning environment.

The strategy is primarily concerned with developing formal counselling i.e. that undertaken by a professional counsellor acting in his or her specialist role rather than the use of wider counselling skills used by many people who work with children and young people (WAG, 2008).

3.5 The Role of the School Counsellor:

To extend the discussion on the historical development of school counselling, a multitude of opinions as to what the counsellor's role involves are presented in this section. However, due to practical considerations dictated by the nature of the present survey, special emphasis will be placed on the counsellor's role according the American viewpoint. This approach is justified in that school counselling in Saudi Arabia is strongly influenced by the American school of thought.

As mentioned above, counselling in its modern form emerged and developed in an American environment, and the early school counselling and guidance programme emphasised occupational information. However, due to changes in the social and economic environment, there was a call for school counsellors to work with all students and address a variety of personal, social, career, and academic developmental needs. As a result, by the late 1970s, changing conditions and student needs prompted the (American School Counselor Association (1977) to define the counsellor's role and propose the following duties and responsibilities:

a) Towards students: to assist them to develop their educational, social career and personal strength; to help them develop healthy habits, values and positive attitudes; to encourage them to understand themselves and their abilities and participate in school activities; to evaluate their academic progress; to assist them adjust to school and increase personal satisfaction.

b) Towards parents: to provide them with information about school programmes; to keep them informed about the achievement of their children; to inform them about guidance and counselling programmes; and encourage them to

participate in school activities.

c) Towards school staff: to provide information, materials and consultation to assist teachers to understand their students; to coordinate school programmes; to use modern technology and techniques to distribute educational and career information; to assist in pupil related research; and to act as a consultant to teachers and administrators.

d) Towards the community: to have accurate information about community programmes and services.

e) Towards the profession: to maintain an awareness of contemporary trends in the field; to contribute and participate in professional associations and activities; and to maintain contact with professionals in the field.

f) Towards oneself: to maintain a strict commitment to the concept and practice of confidentiality; to be informed on current theories, practise and developments; and to be professional individuals and minimise time spent on administrative duties.

Overall, the role of the school counsellor is changing. School counsellors today assume many different responsibilities and tasks based on the particular needs of students and school districts (Mclean, 2006). The school counselling profession has evolved from an early focus on career development (Aubrey, 1991) into "today's comprehensive, developmental, and collaborative school counselling programs" (Paisley and Mcmahon, 2001, p. 106; Dekruyf, 2008).

Thus, in the past twenty years, school counsellors have moved from providing services to individual students to providing a comprehensive programme that delivers

services to all students (Gysbers and Henderson, 2006; Whiston and Aricak, 2008). By definition, a comprehensive developmental programme leads to structured group activities for all students, de-emphasises administrative and clerical tasks, requires accountability, and is proactive rather than exclusively reactive (Dekruyf, 2008).

A specific developmental school guidance and counselling model begun to gain popularity in the United States in the 1990s. According to proponents of this model, represented by Gysber et al (1992); Myrick (1993); Reynolds (1993), and Sears (1993), the focus should be on the student's personal, social, educational and career needs, and counsellors are required to move to a skill based counselling programme. The guiding principles for designing such a programme were suggested by Myrick (1993). These include that it should have a flexible, organised and planned curriculum that meets the needs of all students, should be integrated in to the educational process, involve all school staff including those who provide counselling services, and should help students to learn in an effective way. Coy (1991) assigned the following responsibilities to counsellors operating within a comprehensive counselling framework:

- designing the content of the programme,
- counselling students both individually and in groups,
- providing guidance on issues dealing with prevention and remediation,
- consulting with parents, teachers, educators and community agencies,
- coordinating efforts and collaborating in the delivery of the programme.

This movement toward comprehensive developmental guidance programmes resulted in ASCA publishing The National Standards for School Counselling Programs

(Campbell and Dahir, 1997). These standards enumerate the competencies that students should acquire as a result of a comprehensive developmental guidance programme provided by trained school counsellors (Whiston and Aricak, 2008). Hannaford (1987) noted that three elements should be considered when designing a counselling programme: coordination that requires effective administrative and management skills; counselling that emphasises the academic, career and personal and social needs of the students; and consultation and coordination with parents and institutions linked to the profession.

In line with this, Bemak (2000) encouraged counsellors to facilitate cooperation within school through working with administrators, sharing and collecting data, and developing prevention and intervention counselling programmes. He also urged them to liaise with professional and community agencies, collaborate with families and encourage parental involvement.

Some writers point to a symbiotic relationship between counselling and education. According to Patterson (1974), "education and counselling have the same goal" (p.8). Hooper and Lang (1988) remarked that counselling and the curriculum are inseparable. Mclaughlin (1993) mentioned that effective school counselling has three elements: an educative function whereby attention is focused on the social development of the student within the school context; a reflective function which explores the possible impact of the school practices and societal conditions on the personal and mental health of the student, and a welfare function which is concerned with planning for and reacting to issues that affect the student's welfare.

Stone and Dahir (2006) asserted that:

"*The purpose of the counselling program in a school setting is to impart specific skills*

and facilitate learning opportunities in a proactive and preventive manner to help all students achieve school success through academic, career, and personal social development experiences" (p. 16). Similarly, Baker (1996) viewed counselling as a programme of essential services and activities that complement the school's instructional programme that requires counsellors to: assist students to become able learners, support parents in supervising children, assist teachers to provide effective instruction, and provide services that would enable children to learn and develop their skills.

It is important to note that the activities of school counsellors also extend to fostering competencies in students such as social skills groups, friendship groups. This emphasis on encouraging student competencies is consistent with the recommendation that counsellors act as developmental advocates (Galassi and Akos, 2004; Walsh et al., 2007). Sink (2002) urges counsellors to concentrate on:

1. Developing and updating the skills needed to serve all students.
2. Exploring innovations in educational and counselling theory and practice.
3. Advocating for themselves and their programmes.
4. Implementing well-designed comprehensive programmes.
5. Collaborating with one another, other school personnel, and with community agencies and programmes.
6. Measuring student and programme accomplishments and needs.
7. Creating a sense of community in their schools.
8. Demonstrating a high degree of professionalism.

However, to ensure success, Neukrug (1993) suggested taking certain measures when developing the comprehensive developmental school counselling programme.

These include obtaining support from teachers, administrators and the community, and establishing a committee that includes counsellors, teachers, parents and community agencies to assist and assess the development of the programme as well as selecting strategies that suit students' age, grade level, and individual differences.

In the light of this discussion the school counsellor's role, duties and responsibilities can be grouped under six headings: counselling; consultation and referrals; developmental, educational and career guidance; assessment; programme management and development; and professional and personal development.

3.5.1 Counselling:

As Webber and Mascari (2007) stated, "Not to be confused with advising, or guidance or therapy, counselling is the most significant component of the school counselling program, and the one by which the counsellor's professional identity often is established". Thus, counselling is often regarded as the cornerstone in the counsellor's profession (Gibson et al., 1983). However, in order to engage in effective counselling, counsellors should be committed to helping children and able to establish a relationship based on trust and respect (Pecherek, 1997). In other words, the counselling relationship is formed based upon trust and caring. Leadership through counselling and guidance fosters "enduring values, and honest, open communication" (Stephenson, 2004; Merrill-Washington, 2007). Bor et al (2002) mentioned that a strong and effective student-counsellor relationship can be established through the application of empathy, genuineness and unconditional

positive regard, which requires unconditional caring, accepting students as they are, and accepting their right to have feelings.

In most cases, counselling can be used for the purposes of either prevention or intervention. Preventative counselling is based on proactive planning, such as designing a programme to teach coping skills to children in order to help them resist pressure to engage in substance abuse (Baker, 1996). Intervention or crisis and remedial counselling aims at the remediation of existing concerns (Schmidt, 1984). For example, counselling here is mainly concerned with the problems of the student, including those pertaining to bullying, social exclusion, racism, family crises, scholastic underachievement, abuse, and substance misuse (Bor et al., 2002). Within this context, counselling facilitates student's personal, and social growth, especially at the stage of adolescence (Remley and Albright, 1988), and helps children to work independently (Corey, 1996).

More specifically, counselling can take one of two forms: individual counselling and group counselling. The former type is useful and important in that it encourages students to disclose information about themselves in private (Dryden and Palmer, 1997). Individual counselling is also an important vehicle to facilitate interaction, especially with middle grade students (Schmidt, 1999), and it enables the counsellor to elicit information and identify problems (Bor et al., 2002).

Group counselling encourages interaction among students (Bleck, 1982), and enables them to handle their emotions (Kahn, 1988). Davis (2006) and Steen et al (2007) noted that group counselling is an effective means to provide services to elementary, middle school, and high school students on a range of topics. Thompson (2002) observed that small group counselling has been found to be efficacious for changing "attitudes,

perspectives, values, and behaviours". According to a study conducted by Myrick and Dixon (1985), 62% of students who participated in group counselling sessions showed positive behavioural changes and 86% gained better understanding of themselves.

Many factors contribute to the effectiveness of group counselling. For example, in groups children can experience universality of the knowledge that others have similar challenges (Greenberg, 2003). More broadly, it provides an opportunity for students to develop insights about themselves and others, and it offers a safe setting in which to address developmental, situational, and academic issues (Newsome and Gladding, 2003; Steen et al., 2007). Therefore, students not only receive support from others, but have the opportunity to be helpful to others, which may increase self-esteem (Yalom, 1995; Steen et al., 2007). It can thus be argued that group counselling should be an integral component of the school counselling programme" (Thompson, 2002; Steen et al., 2007). However, while the literature is replete with recommendations for group guidance and counselling programs in schools (for example, Akos, 2000; Cantrell, 1986; Daigneault, 2000; Sommers-Flanagan et al, 2000; Samide and Stockton, 2002; Sommers-Flanagan et al, 2000), there is unfortunately, scant information about the extent to which this modality is actually used by school counsellors (Steen et al., 2007).

3.5.2 Consultation and Referrals:

Consultation is an integral activity for school counsellors working in comprehensive developmental programmes. It can be both a preventative measure (Jackson and White, 2000) and an efficient use of a school counsellor's time (Brigman et al., 2005; Parsons and Kahn, 2005; Clemens, 2007). They can use

consultative techniques to provide both responsive services and system support (American School Counsellor Association, 2005). For example, a school counsellor can respond to a teacher's request for consultation regarding a student concern, and through that interaction the teacher might gain skills, knowledge, or insight that can help him or her to be better prepared to respond to or prevent a similar situation in the future (Parsons and Kahn, 2005; Clemens, 2007). Consultation here refers to the school counsellor's collaboration with teachers, parents and administrators to improve their interaction with students (Border and Drury, 1992). Research shows that consultation with parents and teachers has led to improvements in the academic achievement, motivation, attention level and attitudes on the part of students (Conoley, 1981). It also shows that teachers who consulted with counsellors were able to create a more productive learning environment (Borders and Drury, 1992).

The consulting process passes through three stages: exploring and clarifying the problem, setting goals, and implementing action strategies to achieve the solution (Borders and Drury, 1992). In order for this to become a reality, school counsellors would need more extensive training in consultation, with a strong emphasis on the collaborative process (Bemak, 2002; Mclean, 2006).

In addition, for positive results, counsellors should maintain a relationship of trust with those consulted and should possess sufficient knowledge about them (Gibson and Mitchell, 1986). As a rule, this requires a specialised counsellor with training in developmental theory, human behaviour and interaction skills (Sheldon and Morgan, 1984; Myrick, 1987)

Related to consultation is referral, which refers to coordination between the counsellor, teachers and community agencies through consultation (Herbert, 1985 ;Adams et al., 2007). Coordination makes it possible for the counsellor to refer the student to the right people or organisation (Cole, 1981). Within schools, teachers are the primary agents who refers students to school counsellors (Carlson, 1990; Adams et al., 2007). In order to both develop and implement a comprehensive school counselling programme, it is important for counsellors to understand how and why teachers refer students for services (Adams et al., 2007). Hence, consulting with teachers is one way that school counsellors can efficiently respond to referrals while also providing system support (Clemens, 2007). Conversely, little is known about the frequency with which teachers refer students or the actual reasons that such referrals are made. In addition, assumptions that teachers make about students' problems and unrealistic expectations that teachers have for counsellors to 'fix' the child (Jackson and White, 2000) may hinder rather than advance comprehensive school counselling programmes (Adams et al., 2007).

3.5.3 Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance:

Myrick (1987) stated that developmental based programmes ensure that all students are served. Sheldon and Morgan (1984) have shown that students can benefit from developmental programmes and adopt more positive attitudes, especially when parents are consulted, involved and informed. Borders and Drury (1992) further suggested that developmental programmes designed to help students cope with the developmental tasks should be based on theories that describe the sequential and

hierarchical stages of functioning in the various developmental domains. Such programmes are both proactive and preventive and aimed at enabling students to acquire knowledge skills and self awareness.

Within this context, Sears and Coy (1991) listed the skills one expects to be addressed in a developmental counselling programme. Personal-social skills include gaining self-awareness, improving self esteem and the ability to handle problems and deal with difficult situations, whereas educational skills involve acquiring study and test-taking skills, seeking educational information, setting educational goals and making appropriate choices. A wide array of research supports the indirect relationship between academic achievement and counsellors' efforts to facilitate students' personal-social development as well as positive learning environments (Sink and Spencer, 2007). However, whereas activities in the career and academic domains have clearer and more proximal connections to achievement outcomes, activities targeting the personal-social domain also have causal linkages to achievement outcomes (Trusty et al., 2008).

Nevertheless, research suggests that, when students envision a positive view of their future selves and articulate plans toward those ends, they tend to be academically more motivated and show increased task persistence and academic performance (Leondari et al., 1998; Wood and Kaszubowski, 2008). Hoyt (1988) further mentioned that success of career counselling has a positive effect on student development, and it helps individuals acquire and utilise the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to make work meaningful and productive (Schmidt, 1999). For this reason, career development continues to be an integral component of school counselling programmes (American School Counsellor Association, 2003; Wood and Kaszubowski, 2008 ;Wood and Moore,

2008). In this connection, we are reminded that school counselling has its roots in vocational guidance (Baker, 1996).

In general, it is obvious that developmental programmes emphasising communication skills and career guidance lead to positive results. On the other hand, Foster et al (2005) found that, while students' educational needs were being met, activities focusing on the career and personal/social development domains were not being performed as frequently by counsellors.

3.5.4 Assessment:

Assessment is a primary function in the counselling process. It is critical to the success of any counselling programme (Schmidt, 1984), and is also the means by which counsellors obtain data that would enable them to plan effective guidance and counselling activities (Gibson and Mitchell, 1986), determine what goals are to be addressed, and decide what changes are to be made (Hartman, 1988). It also allows counsellors to decide whether they can work with a certain individual, whether the services they provide meet the needs of students for referral (Williams and Irving, 1998), and determine the perceptions of teachers, students and parents about the counselling programme (Schmidt, 1984). Assessment is also used to collect information that can be utilised in the counselling process, and can enable counsellors to identify talented children and children with special needs (Baker, 1996).

Nevertheless, Whiston (2002), Whiston and Aricak, (2008) argued that more research concerning the effects of school counselling programs is needed, but she contended that a major impediment to conducting both research and evaluation studies in

school counselling is the lack of sound outcome assessments. Thus, school counsellors are expected to demonstrate how their work positively benefits student achievement and development (Gysbers, 2004; Foster et al., 2005; Webb et al., 2005).

Fazio-Griffith and Curry (2008) illustrating to others why having a school counselling program is critical to student success. More broadly, school counsellors and school counselling programs must answer the question, " How are students different as a result of the school counselling program? " (Curry and Lambie, 2007). As Hardy (2008) and Kuranz (2003) have stated, no longer can school counsellors merely be satisfied with feeling good at the end of the day, but they must also be able to articulate how their work, the programme's work, is connected to student success.

For this, school counsellors require research-based tools to effectively assess changes in student behaviour and the accomplishment of counselling and programme outcomes (Lapan et al., 1997a; Thompson et al., 2003; Studer et al., 2006; Sink and Spencer, 2007). In order for the results to be valid and reliable, counsellors should be aware of assessment strategies and principles (Baker, 1996), and consider the biases that might affect results (Hartman, 1988; Whiston and Aricak, 2008). In this respect, Rogers (1983) mentioned five steps in conducting a programme evaluation:

1. Defining primary sources.
2. Identifying relevant information.
3. Deciding the amount of information to be collected, summarised, organised and analysed.
4. Selecting appropriate methods and procedures to obtain and analyse data.
5. Interpreting data and comparing results.

Calsyn and Prost (1983) further suggested various ways to collect data for evaluation, including teacher ratings, programme content, activities, learning materials and self-reporting. Hartman (1988) added observation and the results of standardised or locally made written texts, noting that better evaluation and assessment outcomes would be also assisted by training in learning theory and test interpretation.

3.5.5 Programme Management and Development:

The school counsellor is one of few professionals in a school who are trained to initiate, create, and manage comprehensive programmes or services that enhance the "whole child" (Cobia and Henderson, 2003; Wood and Moore, 2008). Thus, managing the procedures and activities of the programmes becomes the responsibility of the counsellor. This involves determining programme objectives, planning activities to achieve them, allocating materials and resources and providing leadership (Myrick, 1993). Managing a counselling programme also includes devising public relations programmes for staff and the community, orienting them to the programme through presentations and the local media (Sears and Coy, 1991). Mclaughlin (1993) further mentioned other elements and issues involved in managing a school counselling programme, such as the provision of private spaces for the work, allocation of time on the basis of need, and staffing and training.

From the above, it is clear that the effective management of any school counselling programme is critical to its success. In addition, counselling programmes may not be effective unless they are managed and coordinated by counsellors

themselves. Nonetheless, in a recent study, school counsellors surveyed on the perceptions of school counselling standards indicated a low professional interest towards programme development, implementation and evaluation (Holcomb-Mccoy et al., 2002; Hardy, 2008). By contrast, in the ideal situation, school counsellors would run programmes that are comprehensive in scope, preventative in design, developmental in nature, integral to the total educational programme, conducted in collaboration with stakeholders, monitor student progress, and are driven by data and continually evaluated and improved (American School Counsellor Association, 2003; Rayle and Adams, 2007).

Overall, it can be concluded that school counselling programme need to shift from a 'menu of services' to being well-planned, comprehensive and developmental programmes capable of demonstrating efficacy (Baker and Gerler, 2004).

3.5.6 Professional and Personal Development:

Wilkins (1997) drew a distinction between professional development and personal development. To him, the former refers to professional skills and knowledge, and the latter "embraces everything else which facilitates being a counsellor".

Elaborating on personal development, Johns (1996) stated that it entails identifying value patterns, relationships, educational history, emotional state, abilities and limitations, as well as knowledge of needs.

On the other hand, Wilkins (1997) mentioned that professional development has two components: the updating of existing knowledge and acquiring new ideas and competencies. However, although Johns (1996) argued that personal development and

professional development complement each other; more attention is often given to the latter type of development in the literature. This is probably because the outcome of counselling programmes is dependent on the counsellor's professional level, which explains why professionalism has become a need and an ethical necessity, not just an option (Connor, 1994).

In other words, the depth and breadth of tasks assigned to school counsellors make it particularly important for members of the profession to engage in professional development in order to keep themselves appraised of current standards and practices in their field (Howell et al., 2008). Gibson and Mitchell (1986) pointed to the importance of evaluating the professional needs of school counsellors individually and regularly, insisting that professional development is mainly the responsibility of the counsellors themselves. In their opinion, participating in meetings and engaging in research can broaden the counsellor's knowledge. Therefore, all school counsellors, and especially novices and the less effective, need to update their skills in order to perform better in their professional role (Peace, 1995), and the outdating of others (Splete and Grisdale, 1992; Howell et al., 2008; Dahir et al., 2009).

Sears and Granello (2002) were of the view that counsellors must take part in two types of continuing education: specific skills development, for example of technical and diagnostic skills, and clinical supervision. Paisley and Mcmahon (2001) added the development of cultural competence. At least five professional development themes can be identified in the professional development literature. The first is a broad category that includes the continued updating of overall skills within one's area of learned expertise (Carone et al., 1998). The second them encompasses, but is not limited to, the supervision

of counselling skills, and the third embraces both counselling and guidance components within the work context (Kaplan et al., 1992). The fourth area considers both the individual counsellor's and the school constituents' needs (Stickel, 1999); and the fifth involves a planned system of continual feedback, growth-engendering evaluations, and mechanisms for change (Stickel and Trimmer, 1994; Rhyne-Winkler and Wooten, 1996; Splete and Grisdale, 1992; Waidley and Pappas, 1992; Howell et al., 2008).

Obviously, if any role in education requires professional development in order to maintain effectiveness, it is that of a school counsellor (Howell et al., 2008). Nevertheless, unfortunately, House and Sears (2002) suggested that school counsellors do not involve themselves in advocating systemic change because they lack strong personal/professional scope (Hardy, 2008).

3.5.7 Interim Summary:

It seems that school counsellors are involved in many activities, which demand clear definition and understanding from counsellors and other in schools. The literature suggests that there are six roles of the school counsellor. They are: counselling; development, educational and carer guidance; consulting and referral; assessment; programme management and development; and professional and personal development Thus. from the review of literature, professional school counselling can be seen as an integral part of the school system.

3.6 Perceptions of the Role of the School Counsellor:

Debate over the most appropriate role for school counsellors continues

(Brown and Trusty, 2005; Sink, 2005; Thompson, 1992; Adams et al., 2007). In the literature to date, some studies have asked various groups what they believed counsellors should ideally do, and other studies have attempted to identify the actual role of the counsellor and what they were doing in practice. Also, some studies have investigated the perception of one group only, whereas others have compared the perceptions of more than one group. Unfortunately, the present review of literature indicates that the role of school counsellors as perceived by these different groups tend to vary. For example, Remley and Albright (1998) examined the differences in the perceptions of the role of the school counsellor as seen by students, teachers, administrators, and parents, and found that differences do exist among the groups. Similarly, Wiggins et al (1990) argued that counselling expectations set for counsellors by teachers, students, administrators, and parents are different. In this respect, Schmidt (1999) stated that inconsistent perceptions by those involved in counselling may create confusion and uncertainly about the school counsellor's role.

By contrast, a collaborative approach in which school counsellors work with teachers, and administrators in order to implement a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate counselling and guidance curriculum, is considered integral to comprehensive school counselling programmes (Bemak, 2000; Sink and Macdonald, 1998; Gysbers, 2001). Therefore, it can be concluded that, in order to establish an effective and comprehensive school counselling programme, the discrepancies in understanding the roles of school counsellors, both within the profession and across disciplines, must be clarified (Rayle and Adams, 2007). However, when trying to identify the role of a school counsellor, it is important to examine the perceptions held by those they serve: students,

teachers, parents and administrators (Shertzer and Stone, 1976), as discussed below.

3.6.1 Principals' Perceptions:

Research has shown that the support of school principals for counsellors'roles is essential to the development, application, maintenance and success of counselling programmers (Rayle and Adams, 2007). More broadly, principals are undeniably school leaders (Henderson, 1999), and in most schools they have the power both to initiate and to stop change, determining the definition and direction of the school's counseling program (Amatea and Clark, 2005; Dollarhide et al., 2007).

Fortunately, school counsellors and counsellor educators are aware of the strong influence the principal exerts on a school's counselling programme and also of the need to make graduating school counsellors aware of their future supervisors' views of the counsellor's role (Fitch et al., 2001). On the other hand, research suggests that ignoring the influence of a principal can negatively impact the implementation and maintenance of counselling programmes (Ponec and Brock, 2000).

Matthes (1992) found that, due to the isolation of the counsellor "without the support of a colleague with similar preparation and perspective" (p. 248), principals became the primary referent group. In the context of this administrative referent group, it is easy to see why "principals frequently assign school counsellors non-counselling duties (such as discipline and keeping attendance records) that detract from a comprehensive program of counselling services in school settings" (Barret and Schmidt, 1986; Dollarhide et al., 2007). It also is evident that principals directives, rather than professional job descriptions, determine the roles and functions that school counsellors

actually fulfil in schools. And because of their tendency to assign inappropriate roles and functions to counsellors, principals have been identified as a possible challenge or barrier to transforming the roles and functions of counsellors (House and Martin, 1998; Chata and Loesch, 2007).

For the most part, principals apparently continue to hold widely differing views regarding a counsellors role in the school (Burnham and Jackson, 2000; Chata and Loesch, 2007), and many principals seem to hold views of the proper role for school counsellors that are different from those described in the standards of the counselling profession (Murray, 1995).

The ideal role of counsellors as seen by principals was investigated by Bonebrake and Borgers (1984), who asked 169 principals to rank fifteen functions they thought counsellors should perform. Principals ranked the following functions: individual counselling, student assessment, teacher consultant, evaluation of guidance, parent consultant, career education, classroom guidance, group counselling, referral services, scheduling research, supervision of lunchroom, functioning as principal, discipline, and teaching non-guidance classes. Similarly, Orhungur (1985) examined the perceptions of 33 principals concerning the role of the school counsellor. The results showed that principals believed that discipline and administrative tasks were part of the school counsellor's functions. Also, principals thought that individual counselling, career or occupational counselling, group counselling, and consultation were important functions for counsellors. In addition, Remley and Albright (1998) interviewed eleven principals. Four reported that counsellors were primarily concerned with administrative tasks; three thought that counsellors should perform counselling and administrative

duties; and the other four principals said that counsellors would be more effective if they were able to perform counselling functions, such as individual and group counselling with students and consultation with parents and teachers. In examining the roles of school counsellors, another study involving middle school counsellors suggested that principals tended to view counsellors as administrators (Remley & Albright, 1998).

More recently, Perusse et al (2004) found that more than 80% of participating principals identified the following activities as appropriate for school counsellors even though they were not endorsed as appropriate by ASCA: (a) registration and scheduling of all new students; (b) administering cognitive, aptitude, and achievement tests; and (c) maintaining student records. Perusse et al. concluded that most school principals continue to believe that appropriate tasks for school counsellors include many roles and functions not recommended by the ASCA, most of which are essentially clerical tasks.

Amatea and Clark (2005) then studied 26 administrators' perceptions of the school counsellor role. They reported that 8 of the administrators believed that the counsellor's primary role should be that of providing direct services to students through individual or classroom guidance. These administrators expected the school counsellor to offer a separate set of services that complemented the work of other staff (Amatea and Clark, 2005). Finally, 6 out of the 26 respondents identified school counsellors as members of the administrative team (Amatea & Clark, 2005). Common activities included non-guidance tasks such as scheduling and testing (Hardy, 2008).

3.6.2 Counsellors' Perceptions:

Myrick (2003) and Leuwerke et al (2007) argued that counsellors must have a clear understanding of their roles and use this knowledge to inform others of their role in the school. They further stated that role understanding, "clarifies expectations, opens doors for creative innovations, and improves the chances counsellors will be seen as part of the team of educators in the school". Remley and Albright (1998) also stated that counsellors should communicate their role to teachers, students, and parents as well as administrators.

Conversely, school counsellors themselves unfortunately indicate that the work activities they are expected to perform (such as programme coordination, consultation, test administration, etc.) are not consistent with their counselling training, which focused primarily on individual counselling skills (Burnham and Jackson, 2000; Mustaine and Pappalardo, 1996; Rayle and Adams, 2007). According to Olson and Dilley (1988) considerable evidence exists to support counsellors' claims that they cannot satisfy all of the demands placed on them. It has also been maintained that confusion among counsellors over which area to focus on can affect their stress levels. In this respect, Wiggins and Moody (1987) reported that the majority of school counsellors they questioned were ready to accept duties not related to their job, such as administrative tasks. Also, Wilgus and Shilly (1988) stated that, although counsellors were mainly engaged in counselling and consulting, they were still performing other unrelated duties. Similar results were obtained by Glenn (1988) who reported that counsellors were involved in educational and administrative activities. Carter (1993) surveyed 200 school counsellors in eight

American states to examine their perceptions regarding their actual and ideal roles. The findings showed that counsellors felt they should be performing more counselling and consulting functions and fewer administrative and clerical tasks.

Research in to the responsibilities of school counsellor has also focused on how school counsellors spend their time in particular activities (Scarborough, 2005). The results show that there remains a discrepancy between what is advocated as best practice and what is actually performed in schools (Hardy, 2008). For example, Ibrahim, et al (1983) assessed the role of school counsellors in Connecticut. A questionnaire based on the American School Counsellor Association (ASCA, 1977) role statement of school counsellors was administered to 133 counsellors who were asked to rate the importance of 37 counsellor functions. Respondents stated that the most important functions were: counselling, parent help, and public relations. Research and staff consulting were seen by participants as functions of marginal importance. Hutchinson et al (1986) investigated the differences reported by counsellors between the actual role they were playing and the role they envisaged for themselves and concluded that too much attention was paid to career guidance and that assessment was neglected.

Morse and Russell (1988) found that consulting consumed most of the counsellors' time, whereas they thought that priority should go to counselling. In another study, Nickles (1992) investigated differences in perceptions between counselling trainees and practitioners. Those training for the job thought that attention should be focused on student attendance and teaching programmes. On the other hand, practising counsellors gave priority to counselling and teacher support. In another study conducted by Partin (1993), the findings showed that counsellors

would prefer to spend more time on individual counselling, group counselling, and professional development. They also indicated that they spent too much time on administrative tasks and clerical activities which they thought took up an average of 17.27% of their time. These findings are consistent with those of a study by Gysbers and Henderson (1994), which reported that school counsellors were involved in many tasks unrelated to counselling functions, such as registering and scheduling students, assisting with duties in the principal's office, substitute teaching, lunchroom duty and supervising study halls.

The findings of a study, by Fairchild and Seeley (1994), showed that counsellors' time was divided as follows: 30.9% on system support (professional development, staff/community, staff consultation, research and development, community outreach, in-service, curriculum development and supervision); 29.1 % on responsive services (individual personal counselling, group counselling, crisis counselling, referral, and consultation); 27.9% on individual planning (individual appraisal, group appraisal, advisement, placement/follow-up, educational counselling, career counselling, registration/orientation, scholarships, team meetings, and consultation); 8.4% on non-guidance/administrative (bus/lunch/playground duty, administrative meetings, substitute teaching, clerical, and travel); and 3.7% on the guidance curriculum (classroom activities, group activities, and parent education).

Roberts and Borders (1994) further reported that the counsellors spent 31.6% of their time on individual or group counselling. They also spent 15.4% of their time on classroom guidance, 12.5% on consultation, and 11.2% on administrative duties. In line with this, Burnham and Jackson (2000) studied the role of professional school

counsellors comparing actual and prescribed tasks. They concluded that too often school counsellors were involved in non-counselling related activities including multiple clerical tasks, test coordination, attendance records, record keeping, and bus duties (Hardy, 2008).

Miller and Cannell (1988) surveyed 419 school counsellors to determine what functions they thought were important in their counselling programmes. Also, the study explored how counsellors at different school levels perceived these functions. The results showed that:

1) Elementary school counsellors ranked counselling and consultation, coordination, professional development, career assistance, organization, educational planning, assessment, and discipline as the most important functions.
2) For middle school counsellors, the most important functions were counselling and consultation, coordination, career assistance, professional development, organization, educational planning, assessment, and discipline.
3) Secondary school counsellors ranked highest counselling and consultation, career assistance, coordination, professional development, educational planning, organisation, assessment, and discipline.

Coll and Freeman (1997) further surveyed 1,510 school counsellors regarding their actual roles. They reported that elementary school counsellors were performing duties such as substitute teaching, administrative tasks, and supervising lunch rooms and

playgrounds. The researchers concluded that elementary school counsellors had more responsibilities than middle and secondary school counsellors.

More recently, Rayle and Adams (2007) conducted research to explore the current realities of comprehensive school counselling programmes and non-guidance activities school counsellors were actually performing. They focused on differential patterns among elementary, middle and high school counsellors' daily work activities. (Rayle & Adams, 2007, p. 14).

Regarding current work activities, the results indicated significant differences between elementary, middle and high school counsellors' actual daily work activities. More elementary school counsellors than middle or secondary school counsellors reported implementing a comprehensive school counselling program based on the National Model (Rayle & Adams, 2007). Overall, the findings showed that 48.5% of school counsellors reported participation in comprehensive school counselling activities (Hardy, 2008).

Similarly, Rayle and Adams (2007) reported that middle school counsellors were spending more time in direct services (counselling, collaboration, or consultation) to all stakeholders in and around the school environment when compared with elementary and high school counsellors.

3.6.3 Teachers' Perceptions:

Research has demonstrated the value of closer teacher-counsellor partnerships as the two groups collaborate to foster children's educational development and achievement (e.g., Griggs, 1990; Otwell and Mullis, 1997; Paisley and Hayes, 2003;

Stringer et al., 2003; Amatea et al., 2004; Beesley, 2004; Margolis et al., 2004; Whiston and Aricak, 2008). It goes without saying that the majority of a child's school day is spent with teachers more than any other professionals in the school setting, placing the primary responsibility for student learning on them (Clark and Amatea, 2004). Therefore, teachers and counsellors must work to begin to provide information regarding their attitudes towards collaborative teaching, planning and facilitation in order to work together to best produce a nurturing educational environment. School counsellors have the knowledge and skills to facilitate this type of collaboration with teachers (Littrell and Peterson, 2001; Fazio-Griffith and Curry, 2008).

By contrast, unfortunately, researchers suggests that teachers may refer students for the wrong reasons (Persi, 1997), that they may refer without understanding what counselling is about (Carlson, 1990), or that they may have unrealistic expectations about counselling (Jackson and White, 2000). It is clear that not all teachers understand counselling (Adams et al., 2007). Furthermore, it has been found that teacher referrals for students' individual counselling are frequently guided by the belief that the school counsellor's role is to solve students' current behaviour problems rather than to prevent future problems (Clemens, 2007). Consequently, and not surprisingly, assumptions that teachers make about student problems and unrealistic expectations that they have that counsellors can fix the child (Jackson and White, 2000) may hinder rather than advance comprehensive school counselling programmes (Adams et al., 2007).

In the ideal situation, however, counsellors in schools should be seen as part of a social system, dependent on support from teachers and sharing information to benefit pupils. Among the factors that make this possible, Jones (1970) discussed the importance of the clarity of roles of both teachers and counsellors. The counsellor's role, she said, is to serve the interests of their clients, not to be another means of enforcing conformity, but at the same time to complement rather than replace the pastoral role of the teacher. Thus, greater understanding of the school counsellor's role among teachers will enhance the teacher's ability to effectively evaluate the role of the school counsellor (Valine et al., 1982). On the other hand, it is important for teachers, parents, administrators and school counsellor educators to understand school counsellors' perceptions of their role (Mclean, 2006; Sink, 2008).

The importance of the counsellor's role in relation to school level was studied by Wittmer and Loesch (1975), who reported that 51% of school teachers they surveyed believed that counsellors should be teaching classes, but only 6% of elementary school teachers held this belief. Also, 46% of secondary teachers thought that counsellors should be directly involved in disciplining students, whereas only 6% of elementary teachers agreed. Moreover, 24% of secondary teachers reported that counsellors spent too much time on testing, while only 2% of elementary teachers reported that their counsellors were involved in testing duty.

Changes in the teachers' perceptions of the counsellor's role were monitored by Valine et al (1982), who administered a questionnaire to 103 teachers in 1972 and to 100 more teachers in 1980. A comparison of the results showed that teachers' expectation of the counsellor's role had become more positive and more definitive.

In 1972 fifteen percent of the teachers surveyed viewed the counsellor as responsible for school discipline, whereas only four percent of the 1980 sample held this view. In 1980 seventy-nine percent of the teachers surveyed thought of the counsellor first as the person with whom to discuss the emotional concerns of a student, while only forty-six percent in 1972 sample thought this. Additionally, fifty-one percent of the teachers in 1980 indicated that they understood the counsellor's role, while only thirty-eight percent did in the 1972 sample. Views of teachers related to the role of counsellors were surveyed, for example, by Orhungur (1985) whose respondents believed that counsellors should provide the following functions: individual counselling, career/occupational counselling, group counselling, consultation, clerical and administrative tasks, and lunchrooms and study hall duties. Moreover, a study conducted by Wilgus and Shilly (1988) examined teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor's actual and ideal role. The results showed that counsellors were involved in duties such as:

- individual counselling,
- (lunch duty, administrative duties, substitute teaching,
- staff consultation,
- guidance and counselling meetings, and
- parent contact.

On the other hand, teachers ranked the ideal roles of counsellors as follows:

- individual counselling,
- group counselling,
- parent contact,

- staff consultation, and classroom programmes.

Remley and Albright (1998) interviewed eleven teachers, who thought that counsellors were concentrating on administrative tasks at the expense of counselling duties. The counsellor's actual role as perceived by 569 teachers was investigated by Cole et al (1980). 94.4% of the teachers reported that they perceived their counsellors as being involved in personal work with students, 61.2% thought that their counsellors were engaged in vocational counselling, and 41.7% mentioned that counsellors were responsible for administrative duties and maintaining discipline. Suggestions reported by teachers who responded to the survey indicated that, in order to improve their services, counsellors should do more in relation to family contacts, and group counselling. Ginter et al (1990) investigated the perceptions of 313 elementary school teachers in Louisiana. The researchers reported that teachers viewed counsellors as fulfilling the consultant and helper role. Also they indicated that teachers had a clear understanding of the counsellor's role. In addition, Gibson (1990) found that 51% of teachers regarded the counsellor as a part of school administration. Huffman and Others (1993) examined the perceptions of teachers regarding the counsellor's role. The findings indicated that the teachers saw counsellors as an alternative to administrative staff due to the clerical duties thrust upon them.

3.6.4 Studies of Perceptions of School Counselling in Saudi Arabia:

The previous section looked at research on perceptions of school counselling in the United States and the United Kingdom. Very little research has been conducted in this field in Saudi Arab, and this is the focus of attention in this section.

One of the earliest studies to examine the perceptions of school counsellors who served in Saudi schools was conducted by Al-Ahmady (1983) in Riyadh, the capital city of the country. The purpose of the study was to investigate the actual and ideal role of secondary school counsellors as perceived by principals, vice-principals, teachers, and counsellors themselves. A questionnaire consisting of 25 items regarding the functions of the secondary school counsellor in Saudi Arabia was used. The sample of the study comprised one hundred and eighty eight teachers, four principals, four vice-principals, and four counsellors. From response rate of 45%, ninety respondents were males.

The findings of the study showed that the participants ranked the following five functions as the most important in the actual role of school counsellors: 1) to help new students to better know the school and what is expected of them; 2) to help students with social problems; 3) to help students select and adjust their programmes to fulfil their individual needs, 4) to attend teachers' meetings; and 5) to act as the person students see before going to the vice-principal when in trouble. By contrast, respondents ranked the least important actual roles as follows: 1) follow-up studies on students who have graduated, 2) giving tests and interpreting test results to students and parents; 3) conducting standardised testing; and 4) providing teachers with information about behaviour modification, classroom discipline and helpful hints.

Al-Ahmady's study has two shortcomings. First, the number of school counsellors examined in the study was only four, which was quite small. Second, all four groups of respondents were analysed as one, which suggests that the results were influenced by the dominant group of teachers. As such, the results of the study might be unreliable, and

their suitability for making generalisations about school counselling in the Kingdom could be questioned.

A second study was conducted by Al-Trairy and Al-Saeigh (1990), entitled 'An Assessment of Counselling Programmes in Riyadh'. The study found that the student counsellors did most of the expected tasks, but that there was a lack of some academic, social and ethical services or programmes. Some student counsellors were not well qualified and there was also a lack of practical training, which resulted in shortcomings in the implementation of the counselling programmes.

Another study was done by Al-Zahrani (1990), was limited to Altaif Province in Saudi Arabia. The study considered the role of the student counsellor both in theory and application. It showed that the student counsellors were successful in carrying out most of the educational, preventive, ethical and religious services for students, but vocational counselling and services were less satisfactory. The study concluded that this was because the counsellors could not identify the real abilities of the students, since so many of them were unskilled and untrained in this area. Al-Zahrani also pointed out that, although the role of the counsellor included establishing a positive relationship between the school and parents, that relationship was still generally ineffective. This was because some parents did not really understand the role of the counsellor.

One other study, by Bar and Khan (1992), compared the ideal and the actual role of counselling and guidance programmes in a number of Saudi cities surveyed from the point of view of the students. The results revealed that educational services received most attention from student counsellors, followed by preventive services, and then the social and psychological programmes. The vocational services came last. The study also found

that, generally, there were difference between the ideal role of student counsellors as determined by the Ministry of Education and the actual implementation and performance of that role inside schools.

The Department of Guidance and Counselling in the General Educational Administration in the Western Province in Saudi Arabia (1996) designed a study to assess the actual role of school counsellors in Jeddah. A questionnaire consisting of 100 statements was administrated to 40 male school counsellors. The findings of the study showed that 67% of counsellors indicated that the primary function they performed was administrative and clerical duties, such as preparing files, writing reports, and registering new students. 63% reported that the second function they performed was attending meetings in school, such as with teachers and parents. Moreover, the counsellors indicated that they faced various difficulties, including lack of parental interest in student achievement (reported by 90%), negative attitudes of teachers (87.5%), and the lack of a relationship between home and school (82.5%).

A more recent study conducted by Al-Ghamdi (1999) investigated the perceptions of counsellors, teachers, principals, and students concerning the practice and importance of the role of secondary school counsellors in Saudi Arabia. The study took place in five cities: Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Dhahran, and Khubar. All of the respondents were male. Both quantitative and qualitative methods for collecting data were used, and a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were implemented. A questionnaire consisting of 42 items regarding the functions of the secondary school counsellor in Saudi Arabia was administered to 117 counsellors, 316 teachers, 112 principals, and 451

students; and individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with 9 principals, 14 teachers, and 12 counsellors.

The findings of the study showed that there were many discrepancies between counsellors, principals, teachers, and students in their perceptions of the importance and performance of the counsellor's role. One of the most significant differences concerned the number of the counsellor's functions. Moreover, counsellors saw their time as being taken up by educational activities but they believed that counselling activities were more important. Principals and teachers held the opposite view and thought that educational activities should have priority, with activities related to counselling being of secondary importance. Students gave importance to both counselling and educational functions.

Al-Ghamdi concluded that, although great support has been lent to guidance and counselling services in schools, the service remains unsatisfactory and it fails to meet the needs of students. Furthermore, the role of school counsellor in Saudi Arabia remains unclear and the counsellor's efforts appear to be concentrated on functions not related to the profession, namely administrative tasks and clerical duties. Supporting these findings, Al-Danish (2003) found a lack of training; furthermore, some of the counsellors were non-specialists in the field of counselling and all suffered from the increases in the numbers of students.

The most recent study was carried out by Al-Rebdi (2004), entitled 'The Role of the School Counsellor as Perceived by Counsellors, Principals and Teachers in Saudi Arabia'. The study took place in Al-Qasim province and it was concerned with counselling and guidance in boy's intermediate schools. The study found that the most important function of the student counsellor was providing educational counselling for

students. The author indicated that educational counselling helps students to understand their abilities and skills and, at the same time, enables students to achieve maximum benefit from their time at school. However, the results indicated that student counsellors do not always carry out some of the expected tasks, for example not providing enough individual counselling due to the large number of students compared to the number of counsellors. Furthermore, some teachers do not co-operate enough with counsellors, because they do not understand the role of the counsellor. Also, for the same reason, some parents do not help the counsellors to achieve their tasks.

With the exception of Al-Ghamdi (1999) and Al-Rebdi's (2004) studies, all the previous studies used quantitative based research methods. Consequently, the present study adopts qualitative methods, since this seems more appropriate for such work. The approach used will depend on questionnaires and interviews to fulfil the aims of the research. A full justification of this choice of methodology is given in chapter four.

In this thesis particular emphasis is given to investigating the role of intermediate school counsellors in girls' schools in Saudi Arabia as perceived by principals, teachers and counsellors themselves. The study is concerned with the role of the student counsellor in schools in Jeddah Province in Saudi Arabia and is restricted to intermediate schools only. By concentrating on one particular educational level, it is intended to focus more clearly on specific problems.

Furthermore, this study investigates perceptions concerning a wider range of counselling tasks in girls schools that have not received the attention they deserve in previous studies. In addition, it assesses the importance of these functions and offer recommendations as to how to improve them. These issues will be addressed from the

point of view of principals and teachers, and not just the counsellors themselves. With the exception of Al-Rebdi's study in 2004, the other studies mentioned above are now out of date in certain respects, and this research considers the current situation and compare it with existing studies to determined what, if any, changes have been made.

3.6.5 Interim Summary:

The literature shows that although some awareness exists in terms of role definition of school counsellors, confusion and inaccurate perceptions of school counsellor's role continue, particularly, among administrators, teachers, parents and counsellors themselves. It seems that the gap between perceived role importance and actual role performance is so wide that it presents problems to the counsellor. In other words, school personnel to some extent view the counsellor's roles in relation to their role. For example, although some studies here revealed a little awareness of counsellors role among principals, the fact still remains that the role of school counsellors are greatly influenced and often determined by principals; many expect counsellors to be active in administrative duties. Furthermore, although counsellors seem to be aware of their professional roles and wiling to spend most of their time on them, they are engaged in activities that are not related to their profession. Moreover, in some studies teachers perceive the counsellor's role as a means of resolving discipline problems and administration rather than a concern for students' need. In more recent studies, however, teachers have a clearer understanding of the counsellor's role and counselling is recognised by them as playing an important role in schools.

3.7 Role Conflict and Ambiguity:

The literature documents longstanding and continuing role conflict and ambiguity among school counsellors and among counsellor educators (Baker and Gerler, 2004; Whiston, 2002; Borders, 2002; Akos and Galassi, 2004; Lambie and Williamson, 2004; Anderson and Perryman, 2006; Tejada, 2006). With reference to school counselling in particular, it can be stated that throughout the long history of the service, one can hardly find an article on counselling that does not make reference to the definition of the counsellor's role. Some writers have described the predicament and its sources and effects, and others have proposed solutions.

However, confusion and lack of clarity regarding the role and function of counsellors in schools have been highly visible and problematic in the educational field for many years. School counselling roles are often problematic in definition, interpretation, and implementation. This role ambiguity has been present since the early days of the guidance movement, and remains an issue today (Hoyt, 1993; Schmidt, 1999).

A review by Murray (1995) concluded that the role of the counsellor reflects a history of unclear definition and confusion. Others writers and researchers confirm the lack of clarity and report that recognition of counselling as a profession is hampered by role confusion (Poidevant, 1991), role conflict (Coll and Rice, 1993; Coll & Friedman, 1997; Gysbers, 2001), and by the inability of the profession to maintain a consistent role (Coll and Friedman, 1997).

In the one hand, role conflict may arise when two or more simultaneous and incompatible expectations exist in such a way that compliance with a given role

compromises fulfilling other roles (Thompson and Powers, 1983; Drury, 1984). Sutherland and Cooper (1988) stated that when the individual receives conflicting demands and messages from different parties, role conflict arises. They also identified two other sources of role conflict: when tasks are not perceived as part of the job, and/or when the professional engages in a task that conflicts with his/her values or beliefs. Van Sell et al (1981) further found that role over-load, often assigning the individual more work than can he/she do, also results in role conflict. On the other hand, Sales (1970) found that role under-load may also be a source of role conflict in that the individual is not given a chance to demonstrate his/her skills, abilities and potentials. In this connection, Wolfensberger (1998) stated that people wish to see themselves in recognisable roles so that they know how and where they fit in.

In some cases, however, the views of professional school counsellors about their own roles and functions generally show dissatisfaction in regard to the manner in which their professional skills and abilities are used by their school principals (Chata and Loesch, 2007). More broadly, school counsellors who are assigned clerical duties, teacher substitution, or other non-counsellor-related tasks might not feel that the external expectations of their educational settings are consistent with their own professional expectations or training (Constantine, 2005).

In fact, both principals and school counsellors share a common interest in supporting student achievement. Methods of doing this vary based on different perspectives, causing a conflict of role understanding and task definition for school administrators (Hardy, 2008). The lack of agreement can then be a source of conflict between counsellors and school administrators (Kaplan, 1995).

Although administrators have expanded their knowledge of school counselling programmes, some continue to base their knowledge on their own experience with counsellors when they were in school (Coy, 1999). Shoffner and Williamson (2000) stated that various professionals in schools, including counsellors and principals, are trained separately and have few opportunities to learn about one another's roles, responsibilities, and perspectives. Principals often come from a teaching background and understand the teacher's perspective. They receive minimal training regarding the roles and perspectives of other school personnel, including counsellors, whose role they often do not understand (Studer and Allton, 1996).

As a result, school principals and school counsellors often do not agree on the counsellor's roles and responsibilities (Lampe, 1985). In the opinion of Sears & Granello (2002), school counsellors have failed to assert themselves and clearly explain their roles to others. Interestingly, Schmidt (1999) believed that, because counsellors are 'people pleasers' who want everything to run smoothly, many have taken on extra duties because they have not had the ability to say no.

Role ambiguity, is the second type of stress associated with roles identified by researchers. This exists when: (a) an individual lacks information about his or her role; (b) there is lack of clarity about objectives with the role; or (c) there is lack of understanding about peer expectations of the scope and responsibility of the role (Lambie and Williamson, 2004; Hardy, 2008). In other words, role ambiguity can result when school counsellors are unclear about the roles and functions that are professionally and institutionally expected (Moracco et al., 1984; Constantine, 2006).

It is possible, therefore, that changes in practices have created role ambiguity, allowing the definition of school counsellors' tasks to be established by constituents and stakeholders rather than by the professional school counsellors themselves (Hardy, 2008).

However, some writers have pointed to sources and causes of confusion in the counselling service itself. For example, it may appear that the challenges of role definition have at least three sources. One is the longstanding ambiguity between the school counsellors' role as educators and their role as mental health counsellors (Gysbers, 2001). The second source of problems is role expansion (Lambie & Williamson, 2004), and the third is conflict "between what is advocated and the actual duties most professional school counsellors are performing" (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). This is understandable, given the history of the school counselling profession which has moved from vocational guidance to educational guidance, then to guidance counselling and finally to being labelled as "school counselling" (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). The seemingly neat progression of these labels might mislead. In reality, there has been since the 1920s what Whiston (2002) called a "chasm between vocational education and a clinical or mental health approach to guidance, and school counsellors today are still pulled in these two directions". On one side of the discussion, school counsellors are viewed primarily as educators who also provide mental health counselling (Tejada, 2006); on the other side they are viewed as mental health counsellors who work in educational settings (Anderson and Perryman, 2006).

In defining the role of school counsellors as educators and/or mental health providers, a 'both/and' view may be more suitable than 'either/or' (Paisley and

McMahon, 2001; Akos and Galassi, 2004; Anderson and Perryman, 2006; Tejada, 2006). This very diversification, however, may contribute to a second source of role conflict and ambiguity for school counsellors; namely, role expansion. Concisely put, "school counsellors' roles expanded with every decade" (Lambie and Williamson, 2004, p. 126). It is often stated by practising school counsellors that there is simply not enough time to accomplish everything they are asked to do (Sink and Yillik-Downer, 2001; Falconer, 2006; Morgan, 2006). The third source of role conflict for school counsellors stems from incongruities between theory (and the training one receives), and practice (the actual work done by school counsellors) (Brott and Myers, 1999; Sink and Yillik-Downer, 2001; Lambie and Williamson, 2004)

What is more, Sears and Granello (2002) believed that some of the role confusion results from the use of the term 'guidance' to describe guidance counsellors and guidance programmes. In addition, they stated that this inconsistency and the continued failure to come to an agreement on terminology concerning who school counsellors are and what they do has only confused principals, teachers, and parents.

Ancheta (1983) identified three sources of the confusion: poor or inadequate training received by counsellors; the organisational impact on their role; and different perceptions held by administrations, society and students. To begin with, the counsellor's role is set within the school organisational structure consisting of students, teachers and administrators. To these, one might add parents and ancillary services. Whiston (2002) believed that various groups interpret the purpose of counselling and guidance in various ways. Wiggins et al (1990) noted that "*administrators, parents, teachers and students often have separate sets of expectations for counsellors, and confusion often results when*

one attempts to compare these to the programme offered" (p. 213). It seems that because these groups have different demands, priorities and expectations, it is very likely that not all those expectations are clearly communicated, understood, appreciated or complied with, which would naturally result in role conflict and role ambiguity. Geysers (2001) argued that:

There have been and continue to be a wide variety of purposes advanced for school counselling… these multiple purposes could result in unfulfilled expectations, role conflict for counsellors as they try to respond to different demands, and fragmentation among the specialty" (p. 97).

Even counsellors themselves, have differing views about their role and how to best use their time and skills (see, for example, Bonebrake and Borgers, 1984; Helms and Ibrahim, 1985; Hutchinson et al., 1986; Wiggins et al., 1990; Cole, 1991; Huffman and Others, 1993; Snyder and Daly, 1993; Remley and Albright, 1998; Perusse et al., 2004). In general, therefore, the causes of the problem are the lack of role definition and different role perceptions among administrators, teachers, students and parents (Ponec and Brock, 2000). In other words, inconsistent perceptions by counsellors and those they serve appear to be the main source of uncertainty and confusion (Schmidt, 1999).

Littrell and Peterson (2001) distinguished between the counsellor's role and his/her identity. For them, in contrast to limiting and socially defined roles, the counsellor's identity is guided by his/her vision, values and beliefs which influence his/her choices and the choices others make. Possessing the identity of the school counsellor suggests the ability to clarify how that counsellor functions in relation to others in the organisational structure. This could mean confronting the school's

beliefs about the desired visions, capabilities and behaviours of the counsellor. In other words, when school counsellors question the beliefs and values behind school policies or structures, they become an integral part of educational reform in schools (House and Sears, 2002; Hardy, 2008).

Conversely, Baker (1996) argued that counsellors have let others define their role and accepted that they should be viewed as support personnel who provide ancillary services. For example, some school counsellors have accepted unclear job descriptions that mirror teachers' responsibilities instead of those of school counsellors (Mclean, 2006). Sears and Granello (2002) stated that school counsellors have settled for ambiguous job descriptions and accepted evaluations that are related to teaching duties and not counselling duties. Thus, school counsellors have not taken control of defining their role and have allowed administrators to continue to define tasks at the local school district level. Sears and Coy (1991) stated that, "School counsellors appear to be reluctant or unable to convince principals that they should perform the duties for which they have been trained" (Sears and Coy, 1991, p. 3; Hardy, 2008).

A number of studies, however, have attempted to gauge the impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on school counsellors. For example, Van Sell et al (1981) found that role overload and role ambiguity were correlated with anxiety, depression, lower levels of organisational commitment and a sense of futility. Thompson (1982) sampled 487 counsellors in the state of Arizona and found that role conflict and ambiguity were responsible for job dissatisfaction and stress.

In another study conducted on 410 counsellors, Thompson and Powers (1983) arrived at conclusions identical to those of Thompson, adding that role overload, conflict and ambiguity heightened levels of tension and resulted in a tendency to quit the job. Kottkamp and Travios (1986) studied the effects of role overload, conflict and ambiguity and identified stress, emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction. Similarly, Sutherland and Cooper (1988) mentioned that stress arising from unclear roles demotivates individuals and leads to job dissatisfaction, depression, and lower self-confidence.

Additionally, Ross et al (1989) noted that individuals employed in occupations providing services to others, such as school counsellors, are at risk of experiencing job-related stress and potential burnout when faced with multiple professional role and organizational stressors. The relationship between role conflict and ambiguity with job satisfaction was also investigated by Herman (1996) who found that:

a) Role conflict was experienced by counsellors when they worked with two or more groups.
b) The more respondents were aware of their duties and responsibilities, the lower levels of stress and role ambiguity and conflict they experienced.
c) As role conflict decreased, levels of motivation and satisfaction with the job increased. Thus, such sources of role strain have been found to be negatively related to job satisfaction in school counsellors (Thompson and Powers, 1983, Constantine, 2005).

As one might expect, prolonged periods of stress, in turn, can produce burnout, leading to deterioration in the quality of the service provided (Maslach et al., 2001; Lambie, 2007). Similarly, Bacharach et al (1990) stated that role conflict and ambiguity

were responsible for inadequate levels of performance and achievement at school. Worse, Michaeis et al (1987) found a strong relationship with tension, job dissatisfaction, and tendency to leave the job. Accordingly, the potential consequences of burnout are very serious for professional school counsellor, students, peers, parents/guardians, and the school system as a whole (Maslach et al., 1996; Lambie, 2007).

Other writers have made attempts to resolve the problem of role confusion problem and have proposed solutions. For instance, Hunh and Zimpfer (1984) suggested that role definition is the responsibility of the counsellors and their trainers. Kendrick et al (1994) pointed to the increasing psychological and mental health problems amongst students and argued that counsellors should be fully trained mental health professionals capable of independently managing any counselling task that may present itself within the student population. This is in line with the views of the American School Counsellor Association President (O' Bryant, 1990), who noted that "our discipline is at a critical juncture. We are professional counsellors".

However, it should be noted that the counselling is very demanding and that counsellors are often assigned more duties and responsibilities than they can do in the time available. Pointing to the excessive duties counsellors are expected to perform, Paisley and Mcmahon (2001) note that "Even with the most ideal counsellor-to-student ratio, fulfilling all those expectations would be incredibly difficult". Interestingly, Moracco et al (1984) found that counsellors suffer from role overload and occupational stress and suggested that they, the counsellors, should be offered counselling. Within this context, Coll and Freeman (1997) presented evidence that school counsellors experience role conflict, overload and incongruency, and suggest that all roles related to

administration, discipline, lunchroom duty, advising, scheduling and substitute teaching should be reduced or eliminated.

Boy and Pine (1980) were of the view that school principals should be involved in defining the job duties of the counsellor. In contrast to this, Shertzer and Stone (1968) argued that, if principals were to be involved, counsellors would be placed in the position of administrative assistants. However, Ross and Herrington (2006) cautioned that unless counsellors and principals understand that a concerted effort is required to protect the integrity of guidance counselling services, students in schools will continue to be underserved. In the light of this, Chata and Loesch (2007) concluded that it is crucial for principals and school counsellors to negotiate, cooperate, and understand their respective roles to maximize the learning processes of all students in their schools.

As Kaplan (1995) argued, counsellors can strengthen their role and effectiveness by understanding their principals' points of view. Similarly, Corey (1996) suggests that counsellors should know their role and explain it to administrators. More broadly, school counsellors need to become proactive professional advocates, clarifying and promoting the school counselling services they provide. This often means making others aware of what school counsellors do, and how the school counselling programme impacts the lives of students (Curry and Lambie, 2007). Apart from this, to eliminate the ambiguity of role definition, school counsellors need to provide process data describing their practice and its effectiveness (Hardy, 2008). Lambie and Williamson (2004) suggested that we shift away from school counsellors being perceived as guidance counsellors to being

school counselling professionals with clearly defined roles and tasks. This requires a conscious effort by the entire profession.

School administrators, likewise, must be prepared to adjust their expectations to eliminate the non-school counselling activities that school counsellors are expected to perform, in order to provide opportunities for them to implement a comprehensive school counselling programme (Rayle and Adams, 2007).

Leuwerke et al (2007) reminded us that without clear enunciation of the appropriate roles and responsibilities of school counsellors, practitioners, and the profession will continue to face role overload, job creep, and lack of respect within the school. As Wolfensberger (1998, p. 39) claimed:

It is largely via their roles that people define and situate themselves in the world. for instance, all, or at least most of one's relational behaviour is profoundly shaped by the roles one holds. As well, it is largely via roles that people define and situate others in the world.

If we agree with Wolfensberger's opening statement of this discussion, we must surely accept the notion that school counsellors are victims of a role definition crisis: neither themselves nor others have succeeded at defining that role, and they still do not know where and how to situate themselves or where they will be situated.

Counsellors to this day remain victims of this role definition crisis with all the stress, conflict and ambiguity it entails. It is also possible to argue that conflicting or ambiguous demands and expectations are also responsible for the role confusion and definition crisis. As a result, for nearly as long as it has been a profession, school counselling has been plagued by a lack of a clear or consistent definition of the

counsellors roles and responsibilities (Murray, 1995; Coll and Freeman, 1997; Gysbers, 2001; Whiston, 2002; Myrick, 2003; Leuwerke et al., 2007).

3.8 Conclusion:

In this chapter, counselling has been defined and distinguished from other helping activities such as guidance and advice. It has been seen that there are major differences between them and an awareness of these differences is important. The central characteristics of counselling appear to be a relationship involving a process in which an individual, with the help of particular core conditions, is helped to achieve self-understanding and development of his/her potential as a human being (Al-Bahadel, 2004). Unfortunately although we know that warmth, understanding, acceptance, support, etc. are basic to the development of the counselling relationship, in Saudi Arabia, neither counsellors' training nor the counselling context allow them to deliver the core condition. Counsellors, in Saudi Arabia, have been not given sufficient consideration to the concept of relationship. In other words, the counsellors involvement in different roles such as teaching, administration or discipline will effect their relationship with their clients. A counsellor can not protect and enhance her/his relationship with a client while at the same time involved in discipline. It is difficult to establish a counselling relationship or confidentiality under circumstances in which the counsellors play a disciplinary role (Al-Ghamdi, 1999).

It has also discussed briefly the most widely applied counselling approach. However, such approaches, which are essentially individualistic and non-directive, may not translate easily to Saudi society. This is because, in Islam, counselling cannot be value-free and non-directive. Every behaviour is clearly classified as to its acceptability

or otherwise, and it is, therefore, the role and duty of the counsellor to direct the client towards shunning 'forbidden' behaviour and to orient him/her towards behaviours which are favoured by Allah (Al-Bahadel, 2004).

What is more, this chapter has looked at the development of guidance and counselling in the United states and United kingdom. It seems that in the US, the 1950s witnessed major development in theory, practice and professional organisation, though in the last two decades, school counsellors have experienced frustration and pressure arising from the confusion regarding their role and function. In Britain, the 1960 was the decade of growth and development of guidance and counselling, but the 1970 witnessed the dominance of the pastoral care system in schools (Al-Ghamdi, 1999).

This chapter has also described the types of guidance and counselling services offered in school. It can be seen that the school counsellors is involved in many activities. It is doubtful, however, that counsellors could cover all of the duties, and this could lead to confusion among counsellors and school personal. The role confusion problem is also manifested in the divergent views of counsellors, teachers, principals and other stakeholders as seen in studies on role perception. Many writers have pointed to the devastating effects of role confusion and the stress, depression, low productivity and lack of motivation it breeds.

Other writers have concentrated on the causes of the problem and blamed counsellors, themselves, for their inability to formulate their role and communicate it to the others. In general, role overload, lack of training, different expectations from different groups and the changing political, social, economic and psychological conditions have also been considered as other possible causes (Al-Rebdi, 2004). Several arguments have

been presented against counsellors; involvement in discipline because such involvement would negatively affect the counsellor-student relationship. However, the literature suggests a need for a clear agreed definition of the school counsellor's role. It also suggests that school counsellors must take an active role in defining their professional duties and functions. Several authors took issue with counsellors being solely responsible for defining their role (Al-Ghamdi, 1999).

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Chapter Four

Methodology

4.1 Research Design:

4.1.1 Nature of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of the intermediate school counsellor in Saudi girls' school. This is an area about which little or nothing is currently known in the Saudi context. As one might expect, since the concern is with the present status of the issue and with current and future needs, a historical approach would not serve the study's purpose, especially as there is insufficient historical data to illuminate the current situation. Nor would an experimental approach be appropriate. There is, as yet, insufficient knowledge about girls' counselling in Saudi Arabia to provide a theoretical basis for devising an experimental design; and an experimental intervention might reveal subjects' behaviours, but would not provide insight into attitudes and concerns that required in this study. Therefore, it was decided that a descriptive approach would be appropriate, concerned with "the assessment of attitudes, opinions, demographic information and conditions" (Gay, 1992). Accordingly, the present work is an exploratory study designed to identify perceptions of the role of school counsellors in Saudi girl's school. Then in the light of these perceptions, the study assesses existing problems with the overall aim of making recommendations for improvements. Best (1981) defined descriptive research as follows:

A descriptive study describes and interprets what is. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing. It is primarily concerned with the present,

although it often considers past events and influences as they relate to current conditions (p. 93).

More specifically, however, in order to collect relevant data from the sample proposed, it was decided to use a descriptive survey approach. The survey technique is one of the most frequently employed methods of descriptive research (Ary et al., 1985; Burns, 2000). Indeed, a variety of educational problems can be explored using survey research (Borg and Gall, 1989). The primary purpose of surveys is to provide data relating to a large number of cases at a particular time in order to gain a clear picture of the present state of affairs in relation to the problem under study. They do not seek to obtain detailed information about individuals, but to provide data concerning a particular population or problem. Cohen et al (2000) commented on survey research as follows:

Surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships that exist between specific events (p.169).

On the other hand, it was recognised that the survey is not without its disadvantages. Note was taken of Verma and Mallick (1999, p .81) warning that:

There are limitations the researchers' role is often a minor one since, in many cases, they do not come into contact with the people who provide the data. Another weakness is that, if the problem is politically or socially sensitive, some respondents may not wish to divulge their true feelings.

Nevertheless the advantages of surveys appear to outweigh the disadvantages. At the same time, recognizing the disadvantages may reveal the kinds of problem to which special care and attention should be given. However, one strategy adopted to overcome

the disadvantages, as referred to by Verma and Mallick (1999), is to use a mixed methodology, as indicated below.

4.1.2 Mixed Method:

One way of classifying research design is to divide it into quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Quantitative methodologies place great emphasis upon the generalisability of findings. This requires the extensive use of measurement and statistical techniques, whereas in qualitative methodologies the goal is to gain insight into specific aspects of the study group, or the results of an intervention (Mason, 1996). As Hunt (2007) indicated, qualitative and quantitative research methods have different strengths, weaknesses. In other words, each research method has its own strengths and weaknesses and is appropriate for acquiring particular data. However, sometimes several instruments must be employed to obtain the information required to solve a problem (Patton, 1990).

Crompton and Jones (1988), cited in Bryman (1988) claimed that qualitative and quantitative methods are associated in the sense that their outcomes can be complementary, with each method supporting the other. Therefore, it is thought that, by combining them, researchers can gain fruitful and more reliable outcomes (Bryman, 1988). More broadly, the aim of a mixed method design is to summarize positive aspects of two approaches and to produce highly accurate data (Hunt, 2007; Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007). Creswell and Tashakkori (2007) defined mixed-method designs as "those that combine qualitative and quantitative research in viewpoints, data collection, analysis, and inferences" Obviously, mixed methods

studies can yield unique findings, but only with thoughtful design and careful implementation will the analysis be arguably stronger than in a single-method study (O'Cathain et al., 2007)

After all, in order to genuinely integrate methods and produce convincing results (Bryman, 2004), researchers must have a solid foundation in different methodological traditions and be conscientious about planning, implementing, and evaluating the research design (Creswell, 2003; Johnson et al., 2007; O'Cathain et al., 2007; Sosulski and Lawrence, 2008). It is important to recognise here that quantitative approaches may be best suited to answering certain kinds of questions, qualitative approaches are better suited to answering others (Dodds et al., 1995). So, mixed methods studies are often suggested as a way to disentangle intricate relationships and more fully understand complex social phenomena (Mertens, 2003; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003; Sosulski and Lawrence, 2008).

As a consequence, it was decided to use a combination of methods to tap the strengths of each of data source, and thereby help to improve the validity and reliability of the findings. The next issue to be considered was whether to apply a qualitative or quantitative methods or both. A brief description of the two approaches is therefore in order.

4.1.3 Quantitative Research:

The quantitative approach is concerned with counting and measuring features of social life (Blaikie, 2000). Thus, quantitative research aims to gather information that can be quantified. The data may then be easily compared and analysed statistically. This

approach, however, is underpinned by the positivist view, which implies that "there was a reality there to be found if enough information in reply to precisely asked questions could be collected" (Beauchamp, 2001). Quantitative researchers adopt the role of being outsiders, trying to choose a suitable role for themselves in order to have limited contact with their subjects.

The quantitative approach was considered useful in this study for obtaining data in a standardised form about respondents' demographic profiles and their opinions on the role of intermediate girls' school counsellors in Saudi Arabia. This data was then analysed to obtain indications of the frequency of particular opinions, and of possible relationships between variables; for example, whether respondents' views varied according to their age or experience.

However, it was considered that a solely quantitative approach would not adequately serve the research purposes. According to Agnew and Pyke (1994), "if the purpose of the research is to describe or understand rather than predict and control, qualitative methods may be most appropriate". Therefore, it is appropriate to give a brief description of this type of method, as it was also used in this study.

4.1.4 Qualitative Research:

Qualitative research is subjectivist in approach and concentrates on the acquisition of data relating to experiences, feelings and judgments. It is based on the assumption that, to gain an insight into social events, it is necessary to have knowledge of the perspectives, cultures and views of those involved. Thus, qualitative researchers are more concerned

with understanding individual perceptions of the world, seeking insights rather than conducting statistical analysis (Bell, 1999).

As a result, qualitative data tend to be in the form of words rather than numbers (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and can be richer in meaning than quantified data (Babbie, 2001). As Lythcott and Duschl (1990); and Patton (1990) pointed out, qualitative methods using diverse data sources could provide better information and richer data about the participants' views, opinions and ideas concerning the problem to be examined, as they bring the researcher directly in to contact with and close to the people, situations and phenomena under study.

Accordingly, the study reported in this thesis is fundamentally complex, aiming to elicit respondents' attitudes regarding the issues being studied. This research is grounded in the "behaviours, language, definitions, attitudes, and feelings of those studied" (Denzin, 1989, p . 71, cited in Kristin, 2002). This was considered appropriate in this study, where so little prior knowledge existed of these issues in the Saudi context. Thus, for this study, a combination of a quantitative and qualitative approaches was employed. Questionnaires were used to acquire relevant quantitative data, and semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect relevant qualitative data, as explained below.

4.1 Methods of Data Collection:

4.2.1 Questionnaire:

A questionnaire is a self-report instrument consisting of a number of written questions that a respondent reads and answers (Wolf, 1997; Al-Assaf, 2000). The aim of this technique is to explore a range of factors such as personal attitudes, opinions, and

views about a variety of issues, objects and situations (Ary et al., 1972). Moreover, a questionnaire can be a reliable method of data collection because it involves a large sample enabling a considerable amount of information to be obtained. A further advantage is that it can be implemented in a shorter period of time than other methods of data collection. Also, all respondents should receive standardised instructions so that the appearance or the conduct of the investigator does not influence the result (Ary et al., 1985). Fortunately, it is familiar and widely used research method in Saudi Arabia. For example, The Department of Guidance and Counselling in the General Educational Administration (1996) used this method to review the actual practice of social workers.

On the other hand, questionnaires may involve disadvantages. For example, respondents may reply inaccurately to questions due to confusion or forgetfulness. Moreover, they may not be interested in some issues involved or know how to answer appropriately. In addition, there is no chance of prompting respondents to explain an answer further (Bryman, 2001). However, despite this difficulties, these problems can be overcome. For instance, response rate could be maximized by care in the distribution, collection and follow-up of questionnaires, while the lack of opportunity for clarification and elaboration, and the difficulty of capturing complexity, could be overcome by the use of a complementary method of data collection, such as interviews. The rationale for using this method is explained next.

4.2.2 Interviews:

The interview technique is often considered an important tool in qualitative research, because it can be used to examine a wide range of social issues. By providing

access to what is 'inside a person's head', the interview makes it possible to measure what a person likes or dislikes, values and prefers, and what a person thinks (their attitudes and beliefs). In particular, however, it is clear that interviewing professional counsellors and educational psychologists is a flexible way to obtain useful information (Cohen and Manion, 1989).

As Cohen and Manion (1994) mentioned, interviewing is face to face interactive communication between the interviewer and the interviewee. The aim of the former is to gain access to the latte's thoughts and impressions. Thus, through the interactive process, participants are encouraged to express their own particular worldviews, feelings, attitudes and interpretations of their experience. In this way the interview can provide a richer and deeper understanding of a particular theme or topic. Moreover, interviews can be used to test hypotheses or explore new directions. Consequently, the interview can provide researchers with data of high quality that cannot be obtained by other research methods.

4.2.3 Types of Interview:

There are a number of interview techniques which can be employed. However, the choice of which of these techniques to adopt in research is determined by what kind of information, hypotheses and objectives are involved. The various types of interviews have similar aims, but there are differences in the way that the interviewer and interviewee are involved within the interactive process (Bell, 1993). There are broadly three types of interview as described below:

4.2.3.1 Structured interview:

These are sometimes face-to-face questionnaires offering the opportunity for answers to be clarified. The interviewer is seen as operating in a more structured, formal way with respondents, and the specific aims have to be prepared in advance in the form of a set of well structured questions. In this way the interviewer can control the kind of information considered valuable through assessing responses. This also allows a more systematic, uniform format to the research questions (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

4.2.3.2 Unstructured interview:

The unstructured or open ended interview, where the interviewee takes more control, is often based on a more friendly, less formal relationship between the interviewer and respondent. In this sort of interviewing, however, there are no strict rules to follow or fixed questions to ask (Cohen and Manion, 1994). More broadly, the advantages of unstructured interviews are that they permit the full exploration of ideas and beliefs, thus giving a more valid account of social life. They are more flexible and allow the interviewer to pursue interesting points. Disadvantages include problems of reliability, replication and time costs, and the respondent may be too much in control (Crane, 2005)

4.2.3.3 Semi-structured interview:

An intermediate method between structured and unstructured interviews is the semi-structured interview. Here the interviewer has a set of questions prepared and keeps control of the discussion, but allows the interviewee some scope to expand on and

explore ideas within certain boundaries. This method is widely used by researchers for many reasons. For example, subjects are often given more time to express themselves and are encouraged to talk more frankly and openly. The researcher can take notes, offer explanations, or change the questions if the interviewee cannot fully grasp why some questions are being asked (Bell, 1993). Interestingly, the semi-structured interview is recommended by such writers as Gall et al (1996) for its ability to provide a desirable combination of objectivity and depth, and to permit the gathering of valuable data that may not have been obtainable by any other approach.

With semi-structured interviewing the interviewer asks major questions the same way each time, but is free to alter their sequence and to probe for more information. The interviewer can thus adapt the research instrument to the level of comprehension and articulacy of the respondent, and handle the fact that in responding to a question, people often also provide answers to questions that were going to be asked later (Fielding, 2001, p. 124). In this sense, the semi-structured interview offers a balanced approach that allows respondents to express themselves at some length, while providing enough structure to prevent time being wasted on irrelevant details.

The many specific advantages to this method contributed to the decision to use it in this study. These include the following :

- Prompting: if respondents are having difficulty in responding they may have things explained and find it easier to answer (Bryman, 2001).
- Probing: respondents may be probed to elaborate on answers and provide more detail (Bryman, 2001). In the same way, complex questions and issues can be discussed and clarified. The interviewer can probe areas suggested by the

respondent's answers, picking-up information that had either not occurred to the interviewer or of which the interviewer had no prior knowledge.

- Positive rapport is established between interviewer and interviewee. This is a very simple, efficient and practical way of getting data about things that can't be easily observed, such as feelings and emotions.
- It is possible to ask a large number of open-ended questions to acquire qualitative data, because the respondent does not have to write lengthy answers to such questions (Bryman, 2001).
- High validity may be ensured as people are able to talk about something in detail and depth. The meanings behind an action may be revealed, as the interviewees are able to speak for themselves with little direction from the interviewer.
- Pre-judgement is less of an issue: the problem of the researcher predetermining what will or will not be discussed in the interview is resolved. With few 'pre-set' questions involved, the interviewer is not 'pre-judging' what is and is not important information.
- It is easy to record interviews, for example via video/audio tape.

On the other hand, semi-structured interviews in particular have a number of disadvantages and difficulties that may arise. These difficulties could include the following:

- They are expensive to administer, when a sample is geographically widespread (Bryman, 2001). In fact, skilled (and hence more expensive) researchers typically spend long periods in the field rather than delegating field research. However, this

disadvantage was overcome by limiting the number of interviews, and conducting interviews in the same places in which questionnaires had already been distributed.

- As with unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews can be time consuming, particularly if there are many open-ended questions. For example, with a sample of one thousand respondents it would be very time-consuming to conduct individual interviews. Therefore, only a small number of interviews were feasible.
- In some cases, it is likely that in discussing a sensitive issue, the interviewee will be hostile or embarrassed by the line of questioning. In order to minimise this, asking generalised questions is recommended, as well as probing.
- Analysis and presentation of interview data can be more difficult than the tabulation of figures from questionnaire data which may be presented with minimal interpretation (Cohen and Manion, 1994).
- Interpretation is based much more upon intuition and creative, lateral thinking, and so it is particularly useful if data takes the form of words, images, sounds and other kinds of text. In practice, this means that data must be read through carefully in trying to identify any patterns or themes that hold it all together, and then these themes can be used to code the data in a meaningful way.

Despite its difficulties, the semi-structured interview was selected for this study to investigate the perceptions of principals, teachers and counsellors regarding the role and functions of school counsellors and their performance in intermediate girls' schools in the

kingdom. This approach was used because it was thought that the specific information required for the research could be more effectively collected using this type of interview. It was considered to be most appropriate because it is flexible and allows for digression and the exploration of ideas, and is easier to manage.

In view of the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires and interviews, the use of both allowed the research to benefit from the strengths of each source and to some extent overcome their limitations. By means of the questionnaire, a large volume of standardised, comparable data from large numbers of respondents could be collected, while a comparatively small number of interviews increased the depth and richness of the study, affording a more complete picture regarding the issues investigated.

4.3 Location and Target Population:

The research population includes all the people, events, or objects that have one or more characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying, whereas a sample is a smaller group or subset of the population under investigation. Therefore, in order to decide on a sample, the researcher should define the population of the study from which the sample is to be selected. Of course, when a researcher wishes to generalise the findings of the study, a sampling procedure must be selected. In other words, the primary purpose of selecting the sample is to collect information regarding the population, and then to generalise the results to that population. Thus, the sample must be representative of the population so that it becomes possible to generalise the findings (Ary et al., 1985; Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2000; Bryman, 2001). By definition, however, generalisability or transferability means that the

results of the research and analysis apply to a wider group of people, social situations and settings than just the ones investigated in the original study (Taylor et al., 2005).

As noted by Collins et al (2007), sampling designs play a pivotal role in determining the type of generalizations that are justifiable. In particular, whereas large and random samples tend to allow statistical generalization, small and purposive samples tend to facilitate analytical generalizations and case-to-case transfers. Therefore, the choice of sampling design is a vital step in the mixed-method research process.

However, it is important to note that, because quantitative and qualitative research approaches are combined in mixed methods research, this means that making appropriate generalizations becomes even more complex (Collins et al., 2007). Nevertheless, the challenge of integration can be reduced by utilizing sampling designs that help researchers to make meta-inferences (where both sets of inferences are combined into a coherent whole) (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) and that adequately represent the quantitative and qualitative findings and allow the appropriate emphasis to be placed (Collins et al., 2007). Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) identified 24 sampling schemes that qualitative and quantitative researchers have available for use. All of these sampling schemes fall into one of two classes: random or probabilistic sampling, or non-random sampling or nonprobabilistic sampling (Collins et al., 2007). As Blaxter et al (2003) further explained, the use of probability and non-probability sampling depends on whether or not the probability of selection of each respondent is known. Bryman (2004) makes a broad distinction between probability sampling, in which each unit of the population has a known chance of being selected, and non-probability

sampling, in which some units of the population have a greater chance of being selected than others.

Judd et al (1991) argued that probability sampling "is the only approach that makes possible representative sampling plans" (p.133). On the other hand, in non-probability sampling, the possibility of members of the whole population being selected is unknown to the researcher. Consequently non-probability sampling is unrepresentative of the entire population, so that the findings cannot be generalised to it (Sanders and Pinhey, 1983). Accordingly, the literature warns of the dangers of possible bias in sampling if each individual in the target population does not have the same chance of being selected. Bias from that source could produce misleading or distorted findings (Nisbet and Entwistle, 1974; Verma and Beard, 1981). Alternatively, when a probability sampling technique is used, the findings can be generalised to the whole population, because when drawn accurately it represents that population (Bouma and Atkinson, 1995; Cohen et al., 2000; and May, 2001).

From the above considerations, it was decided to use probability sampling, since it was desired that the subjects studied would be representative of a particular definable population. This included teacher's groups at intermediate girls' schools in Saudi Arabia, from whom the results could be generalise to the population as a whole. A probability sample is considered to decrease the degree of sampling error. Thus, the findings can be considered to be the product of pure chance, reflecting the characteristics of the population from which the sample was chosen, rather than simply those of the sample. The probability sample helps control for researcher biases, which could make the sample unrepresentative of the target population (Miller and Cannell, 1988; Gilbert, 1996;

(Leedy, 1997; and Silverman, 1997). Another advantage of the probability sample is that it enables the researcher to state numerically the degree of confidence which exists when making inferences about the larger population (Labovitz and Hagedorn, 1991).

Various techniques can be used for probability sampling, including simple random, stratified random, systematic and multi-stage cluster sampling (Bryman, 2004). In this study, however, a simple random sampling technique was used to select two teachers from each school that had a counsellor.

With regard to the size of the sample, there is no fixed number of subjects that should be included. A number of scholars have pointed to difficulties in determining the ideal sample size for the purposes of social research (Moser and Kalton, 1972; Hoinville and Jowell, 1983). Nevertheless, however, many believe that a large sample is more representative than a smaller one. For example, Borg and Gall (1983, p. 257) stated that:

The general rule is to use the largest sample possible. The rule is a good one because, although we generally study only samples, we are really interested in learning about the population from which they are drawn.

Sample size is also closely connected with statistical hypothesis testing. Hoinville and Jowell (1983) stated that: "The larger the sample, the smaller the amount of the sampling error to be expected and the narrower the confidence interval". However, the number of people sampled will also depend on the research strategy. In quantitative research, a relatively large sample will help in generalizing findings; whereas in qualitative research, more rich and detailed information may be sought from a smaller sample of cases (Bryman, 2004). Thus, the size of sample depends on the nature of the population and the purpose of the study (Best, 1981). Additionally, considerations of

time, money, administrative support and resources may affect and limit the size of the sample (Cohen et al., 2000).

However, more important than size is the representativeness of the sample. Oppenheim (1998) echoed many other researchers in emphasising that "the accuracy of the sample is more important than its size". The sample is likely to be accurate if taken from a place representative of the general population. The researcher must examine and choose suitable subjects in a suitable environment representative of the general population.

In defining the research population for the present study, it was decided to focus on Jeddah province for sampling. The main reasons for this decision were that although only a few studies have investigated the role of the school counsellor in Saudi Arabia, most of these have been conducted in boys' secondary schools within specific cities, such as Riyadh, Damamm and Al-Qasim. However, as the educational system in Saudi Arabia is unified and centrally controlled by the Ministry of Education, changes and developments will most likely be the same in other provinces as well. Thus, as part of the education system, school counselling programmes are the same in all schools across the country (see Chapter Two for more details).

4.4 Approval Process for the Main Study:

In accordance with the regulations of the education authorities in Saudi Arabia any type of research in schools where a large sample is involved requires permission from the Ministry of Education or the relevant educational authority. Therefore, before leaving the UK, the researcher obtained an official letter of permission from the General

Directorate of Education in Jeddah through the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London. A letter was issued by Dr.Barbara Riddick to support the researcher's request for permission to conduct the research work. The Saudi Cultural Bureau in London issued a letter to the General Directorate of Education in Jeddah province seeking permission for the researcher to visit girls' intermediate schools in order to administer the questionnaires and conduct interviews. On the August 2007, the researcher received a letter authorising her to conduct the field work. Therefore, the pilot study and then the main fieldwork was carried out between September 2007 and January 2008.

4.5 Research Instruments:

4.5.1 The Quantitative Research: the questionnaire survey:

4.5.1.1 Questionnaire Sample:

As a sampling frame, a list of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the 219 public intermediate schools was obtained from the General Directorate of Education in Jeddah province. The schools were then contacted to find out which had counsellors. Ten of the schools (4.6%) had no counsellors at all (GDEJ, 2007-2008 academic year), and were excluded from the study. Consequently, questionnaires were administered to 209 counsellors and 209 principals. In the case of teachers, a simple random sampling technique was used to select two teachers from each school that had a counsellor. As a result, questionnaires were administered to 418 teachers in 209 schools.

4.5.1.2 Construction of the Questionnaire:

The purpose of the questionnaire survey in this study was to investigate the role of school counsellors in intermediate girls' schools in Saudi Arabia as perceived by principals, teachers and counsellors.

It was hoped that the results of this questionnaires survey could highlight the potential problems faced by counsellors during their work and the need to take these problems into consideration. Most important of all, if school counsellors in Saudi Arabia are to provide better services for students, their role must be clearly defined. It is also necessary for those involved in counselling to have a clear view of what counsellors should and should not do.

The research pursued in this study has not been explored in detail by researchers in Saudi Arabia. This posed a challenge, particularly in developing a viable and effective questionnaire. However, after conducting a review of the literature on school guidance and counselling, it was decided to use a modified version of a questionnaire utilised by Al-Ghamdi (1999) to explore perceptions of the role of the secondary school counsellor in Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire consisted of 42 statements grouped into six categories: individual and group counselling (9 items), developmental, educational and career guidance (8 items), consulting (10 items), evaluation and assessment (5 items), programme management and development (6 items), and personal and professional development (4 items). Four groups participated in Al-Ghamdi's study (1999); namely, counsellors, principals, teachers and students. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. In Section One, participants were asked to provide general background information. In Section Two, they were asked to rank each function of the counsellor on a

four-point scale (from 1, very unimportant, to 4, very important). In Section Three, participants were asked to rank each function again, but in regard to how often the counsellor performed it. The ranking for this section was based on a five-point scale (always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never).

After reviewing Al-Ghamdi's (1999) questionnaire, it would appear that the items of the questionnaire were expressed in the form of statements, rather than questions. The author mentioned that the research topic was very wide and if the enquiry were put in question form, it would generate a vast amount of material, perhaps irrelevant, which would have weakened the findings. Therefore, the questionnaire only consisted of statements designed to obtain the specific information required.

Therefore, in order to utilise Al-Ghamdi's (1999) instrument in this study, three items were eliminated and two were modified subsequent to the validation of the questionnaire.

The three eliminated items were as follows:

1. Number 5 *"Assist students in making appropriate choices of school subjects"*.
2. Number 9 *"Provide vocational counselling to students"*.
3. Number 20 *"Provide students with information about careers"*.

The two items which were amended were:

1. Number 25 *"Provide students with information about educational opportunities after secondary school"*. The word *"secondary"* in this item was changed to *"intermediate"*.

2. Number 39 “Work on students’ comprehensive records”. This item was amended to “Perform administrative tasks and clerical duties (paperwork, record keeping, scheduling...)”.

Added to each copy of the final draft of the questionnaire was a covering letter explaining briefly the objective and purpose of the study and inviting the respondents to participate in the research. Finally, the letter emphasised that all responses would be confidential and would be used only for the purposes of the present research.

4.5.1.3 Translation of the Questionnaire:

Al-Ghamdi’s (1999) questionnaire was developed in the English language and then translated into Arabic so as to be applied in Saudi Arabia. In order to be sure about Al-Ghamdi’s translation, both English and Arabic versions were given to three Arabic PhD students at the Newcastle University, to review the accuracy and clarity of translation. A meeting was then held to discuss their comments. Subsequently, minor changes were made before the group judged that the translation of the items was clear and understandable.

The researcher then translated the amended items from English into Arabic, and the results were given to one of the English teachers in Saudi Arabia to check the translation. At the same time, the Arabic version was given to one of the Arabic teacher in Saudi Arabia to check the language and grammar. The other English teacher completed back translation in order to check it with the original version. After the necessary

amendments had been made, the final Arabic versions were considered valid and copies were printed for use in the pilot study.

4.5.1.4 Piloting the Questionnaire:

Writers on research methodology strongly assert the importance of piloting and refining research instruments. For example, Seliger and Shoamy (1989) emphasised the importance of examining the quality of the procedures before they are administered in the actual research, while it is still possible to make any necessary changes or revisions. According to Hoinville and Jowell (1978), "pilot work is extremely useful in refining the wording, ordering, layout, filtering, and so on of questionnaires" (p.51). In line with these recommendations, Youngman (1994) significantly calls piloting "an integral part of any research."

Thus, before starting to distribute the study questionnaire to the target sample of the main study, it was necessary to make sure that it was suitable for use. As Oppenheim (1992) pointed out, questions adopted from other research need to be piloted to ensure that they meet the purposes of the research with the current respondents. He added that this is particularly true "with surveys of school children and with questions that have been translated from other languages".

Similarly, Al-Assaf, (1995, 2000) indicated that pilot surveys and pre-tests are standard practice and widely used in research surveys and play a very important part in research work as a whole. A pilot study is needed to ascertain how long it takes recipients to complete the questionnaire, to ensure that all items and instructions are clear

and to enable the researcher to delete any items which do not yield usable data (Bell, 1999).

To achieve these objectives, a pilot study was undertaken before the main data collection in order to find out if there were any difficulties in understanding the questionnaire items. For this purpose negotiations to arrange the pilot study were begun during the period when waiting for formal authorization for the main field work.

In practice, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 intermediate schools for the pilot sample. A school counsellor, principal and two teachers from each school involved participated in the pilot study (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Pilot Study Sample

Sample	Number of Cases	Percentage
Counsellors	10	30%
Principals	10	30%
Teachers	20	40%
Total	40	100%

Once the sample was selected, the General Directorate of Education in Jeddah City sent a letter to each school explaining the purpose of the research. Subsequently, the researcher telephoned the principal or the counsellor in each school to arrange an appointment for the visit. The researcher visited each school with four copies of the questionnaire which were to be administrated to a counsellor, a principal and 2 teachers there. The questionnaire included a covering letter outlining the purpose of the study and

who was to answer the items. Three days were given for completion of the questionnaires. The researcher then visited each school again to collect the completed questionnaires. In total, forty questionnaires were collected.

The results of the pilot study showed that the time which the pilot respondents needed to complete the questionnaire ranged from 25-40 minutes. In general, all participants reported that the questionnaire was clear regarding the instructions and statements and that they served their stated objectives. No changes were made, finally, I prepared and retyped the questionnaire for administration to the sample population for the main study.

4.5.1.5 Distribution and Collection of Questionnaires:

The questionnaires were distributed in girls' schools between 20th September 2007 and 15th January 2008, in a similar manner to that adopted in the pilot study, through personal visits to some of these schools, with a letter of introduction to each school principal. The questionnaires were delivered in person by the researcher, who visited each school with four copies administered to a counsellor, a principal, and 2 teachers there. In addition, the questionnaires were in different colours to facilitate identification. The colours were pink for counsellors, light green for principals, and yellow for teachers.

These visits took place during the middle of the Saudi school week (on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday). Gottfredson (1985) asserted that this policy meant that respondents would be more ready to cooperate and respond with the researcher in the middle of the week. The participants were given one full week to complete the

questionnaires. Then the researcher visited each school again to collect them. Some participants took more than one week, so, in such cases, the researcher revisited the school later to collect the completed questionnaires. In the end, 561 questionnaires were collected for the main study, with a response rate of 67.1%. Eighteen copies were not appropriately filled in and were therefore excluded. For example, some respondents filled in only the first page; some always chose the same option from one to five. Consequently, those incomplete questionnaires were left out. Thus, 543 responses were used for the analysis (see table 4.2).

Table 4.2 of Questionnaire Respondents

Sample	No. Distributed	No. Returned	Response Rate	No. Invalid	No. Valid
Counsellors	209	186	88.99%	6	180
Principals	209	129	61.72%	3	126
Teachers	418	246	58.85%	9	237
Total	836	561	67.1%	18	543

4.5.1.6 Procedures of Questionnaire Data Analysis:

The data collected in response to the questionnaire were coded and recorded by the researcher on a computer file. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme was used to analyse it. This programme was utilised because it is a good general tool for handling, comparing and setting out information (Al-thohian and Hassan, 2002). As Healey (1996:1) put it clearly:

Without a good understanding of the principles of statistical analysis, the

researcher will be unable to make sense of the data. Without the appropriate application of statistical techniques, the data will remain mute and useless.

From the above, it is essential to consult and know the opinion of statistical specialists regarding the analysis of the data who is in this case prof. Ameen Rezeq and Mr. Faroq Aleem at King A Abdul-Aziz University. After their consultation, the suitable statistical instrument for this study was determined.

In quantitative research, the most objective and carefully collected numerical information does not and cannot speak to itself. Thus, the appropriate statistical technique for collecting, presenting and analysing data must be used effectively. However, the following statistical analysis techniques were used:

- Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire.
- Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation were used to describe and compare the distribution of the groups' responses.
- Paired t-tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences between each group's perceptions of the actual and ideal role of counsellor.
- A One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine statistically significant differences in the perceptions among the groups regarding the actual and ideal role of the school counsellor in relation to each of the six categories.
- When applying ANOVA, if a significant difference between means exists, i.e. the p-value "Sig." is less than the level of significance "0.05", a least square difference (LSD) Post-hoc test was used to identify which groups differed.

The following assumption was considered before applying any statistical analysis techniques:

- All data are approximately normal.
- Homogeneity between data.
- Independence between the replies of counsellors, principals, and teachers.

4.5.1.7 Validity of the Questionnaire:

In order to ensure that the questionnaire was constructed properly and was suitable for the purposes and objectives of the study, a validity check was carried out. According to Bell (1999), validity "tells us whether an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe". Different types of validity are recognised in academic research, each of which is concerned with a different aspect of the measurement situation. However, the most commonly used measured are face validity, content validity, concurrent validity, predictive validity and construct validity (Borg and Gall, 1989; Oppenheim, 1992; Sarantakos, 1998; Cohen et al., 2000).

In the present study, face and content validity were used to determine the validity of the instrument, as these are routinely utilised by experts in the field of school counselling. Face validity is frequently confused with content validity, but they are not the same. In this respect, Borg and Gall (1989) emphasised that face validity," refers to the evaluator's appraisal of what the content of the test measures". While content validity is established by a thorough and systematic evaluation of the test by a qualified judge and experts, and considers both subtle and obvious aspects of relevance, face validity is less rigorous. It refers not to what the test actually measures, but to what it appears

superficially to measure (Anastasi, 1982).

An initial assessment of the content and face validity of the questionnaire had been formed before the pilot stage, through discussions with some Arab colleagues. Besides this, during the pilot study, in order to achieve face validity, the questionnaire was submitted to three counselling supervisors in the General Directorate of Education in Jeddah province and four counsellors. They were asked to indicate whether the questionnaire appeared appropriate for its purpose. Moreover, to establish content validity, they were also asked to determine whether the items belonged to their categories or not. They answered by ticking one of the following five options: not relevant, weakly relevant, moderately relevant, relevant, and strongly relevant.

In addition, one supervisor and two counsellors were interviewed in order to obtain more views and suggestions about the content of the questionnaire. They agreed that three items should be eliminated. Item number 5, *"Assist students in making appropriate choices of school subjects",* should be removed because students do not have these options in the intermediate school system; item number 9 *"Provide vocational counselling to students"* and item number 20 *"Provide students with information about careers"* should be removed because careers and vocational counselling are mainly conducted with secondary school students in the Saudi counselling programme. Furthermore, all the referees agreed that two items should be modified as follows: in item number 25, *"Provide students with information about educational opportunities after secondary school",* the word *"secondary"* in this item should be changed to *"intermediate";* and item number 39 *"Work on students' comprehensive records"* should be amended to *"Perform administrative tasks and clerical duties (paperwork, record*

keeping, scheduling…)". This modification was made because all referees emphasised that working on students' comprehensive records, is just one of the clerical duties that the counsellors carry out.

As a result, the three items were removed and two modified subsequent to the validation of the questionnaire. Finally, all the referees indicated that the rest of the questionnaire items appeared to be suitable and relevant to the purpose of the study.

4.5.1.8 Reliability of the Questionnaire:

Determination of the reliability of the questionnaire was a matter to be considered in doing the study. Reliability is based on the idea that if it were possible to administer the same instrument to the same sample on another occasion, there should be a good level of correspondence between the two sets of scores (Cohen et al., 2000). In other words, the reliability of a measure is the degree to which a test will give similar results each time it is used, even by other researchers (De Vaus, 2002). If similar results were obtained each time, the accuracy of the instrument would be indicated and the results could be seen as reliable.

However, a verity of statistical methods exists to measure the reliability of an instrument. For example, it can be estimated by using two main measures, external and internal reliability (Oppenheim, 1992). External reliability refers to the stability of a test over time. The most obvious way to obtain external reliability is to use the test-retest technique. This procedure requires the test to be administered to the same sample on two different occasions and the scores to be correlated. However, the, main problem in this type of reliability is the memory effect. If the time between the first test and retest is

short, respondents may recall their responses to many of the items of the test. Conversely, if the period of time is too long, differential learning may affect the reliability (Borg and Gall, 1989).

Internal reliability refers to multiple indicator measures in the form of correlation coefficients. A test will be internally reliable if the items in it correlate highly with each other (Oppenheim, 1992). Internal reliability, however, can be estimated by using two main methods, the split-half and Cronbach's alpha techniques, both which of them require only one administration of the test. Particularly, the Cronbach's alpha technique is derived from the correlations of each item with each other item in the test. This technique is reported to be the most appropriate and frequently used to compute the reliability of items mainly with multiple-choice tests (Borg and Gall, 1989).

In this study, however, internal consistency was the method used for checking the reliability. This method indicate the consistency of items of the questionnaire. However, the most important reason was that if Saudis agreed to fill in questionnaire or be interviewed they would not agree to do the same thing twice in a short period. As a result, in the present study, the Cronbach's alpha technique was used to obtain the reliability of the questionnaire. This method was also chosen due to the limited time available during the field work. The six categories of the questionnaire were scored in relation to both the actual and ideal role of the school counsellor. To calculate the reliability of the questionnaire the SPSS programme was used. On the whole, the results of the reliability analysis show that the instrument used is reliable. Excluding the "Evaluation and Assessment" category, the extents to which the items in the questionnaire are related to each other are good, and the correlation between them is high as well.

4.5.2 The Qualitative Rresearch: Interviews

4.5.2.1 Sample of Interviews:

The interview sample was drawn from the questionnaire respondents who indicated their agreement to be interviewed by filling in the box on the bottom of the third section of the questionnaire. However, it was decided to select counsellors who had longer and deeper experience in guidance and counselling, psychology, or sociology or had undergone a longer training course (for more than one year) and might therefore be more knowledgeable regarding the issues investigated, and would be able to offer more valid and useful information concerning school counselling. In fact, the acceptability of purposive sampling in qualitative research has been asserted by several writers. For example, many authors link sampling schemes with the paradigm. In particular, they associate random sampling schemes with quantitative research designs and purposive schemes with qualitative research designs (Collins et al., 2007).

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) state that "the subject selection process for qualitative interviewing is not random sampling, but is purposeful in choosing subjects who may expand theory". Similarly, to Miles and Huberman (1994), "qualitative samples tend to be purposive rather than random". Because of these considerations, purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample of counsellors. As a result, interviews were conducted with 10 counsellors whose experience in counselling ranged from nine to thirteen years. Besides this, it was decided to include the principal of the school of each counsellor that was interviewed.

In practice, however, two principals did not participate, as they were not available at school at the time of the researcher's visits, and the other was only prepared to be

interviewed by telephone. Since it had been decided only to conduct face-to-face interviews (see sections 4.5.2.5) she was thanked but her offer was politely declined.

Consequently, eight principals were interviewed. The teachers to be interviewed were chosen by the principals who participated in the study. Those teachers had experience with counsellors and the counselling programme in the school and were willing to participate in the study. Twelve teachers were interviewed.

Thus, the interview sample consisted of 10 counsellors, 12 teachers and 8 principals. Although this sample would be considered small for most quantitative designs, it was deemed appropriate for this qualitative design. However, as noted by Sandelowski (1995), a general rule is that the sample size in qualitative research should not be so small that it is difficult to obtain data or theoretical saturation or informational redundancy. At the same time, the sample should not be so large that it is difficult to undertake a deep, case-oriented analysis (Collins et al., 2007).

Bogdan and Biklen (1992), with Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that it is acceptable to conduct qualitative research with only a single subject. Gall et al (1996) indicated that interviewing can be an effective technique, and can be used to obtain views when the sample size is small (see table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Interview Sample of the Main Study (n=30)

Sample	Number of Cases
Counsellors	10
Principals	8
Teachers	12
Total	30

4.5.2.2 Development of the Interview Schedule:

In this study open-ended questions were selected because the specific information required for this study could be more effectively collected using this type of question, allowing respondents to answer in their own terms, often at length. More flexibility for interpretation is allowed, and this type of question is often used in qualitative research.

Although qualitative research can be quite open-ended, it is always a good idea to be clear about what we want to find out and why. Designing questions is one of the tasks that may sound straightforward but is actually quite difficult to do well. In designing semi-structured interviews questions it is important to:

- Avoid ambiguous terms, such as 'often' or 'regularly', which people can interpret differently.
- Avoid leading questions, which suggest an appropriate or desirable way of answering.
- Avoid jargon (technical terms that people may not understand).
- Avoid long questions.
- Avoid double-barrelled questions (ones that ask about two things).
- Avoid questions that are too general (Bryman, 2004).

In particular, however, to achieve the objectives of the study, three semi-structured interview schedules were developed, one each for the intermediate school counsellors, principals and teachers. The interview questions were open-ended and were based on the available literature in the field of school counselling. The counsellors' interview schedule contained eight questions concerning their perceptions of their own role and functions, difficulties that they faced and how they were overcome, school staff

and parents' support of counsellors, and suggestions for improving guidance and counselling services. The principals' and teachers' interview schedules contained five questions concerning their perceptions regarding the counsellor's role and functions, their interaction with counsellors, and suggestions for improving guidance and counselling services.

The development of the interview schedule for this study involved several steps:

- A comprehensive review of the literature was performed to gain some knowledge of the construction of an interview schedule relevant to the study as well as issues related to guidance and counselling, including the services in Saudi Arabia.
- The present researcher's experience working as a counsellor in schools in Jeddah helped in selecting, and organising the interview questions.
- Advice was provided by experienced researchers and by a professional in interview construction regarding the organisation and wording of the interview questions.
- Some help was also provided by a research consultant in the Directorate General of Education of Jeddah District (DGEJD).

4.5.2.3 Translation of Interview Schedule Questions:

Since the participants' first language was Arabic, the interview schedules questions had to be translated into that language. The translations of both English and Arabic versions were given to three Arabic PhD students at Newcastle University to check their accuracy and clarity. After receiving their comments and suggestions, a meeting was conducted in which the group judged that the translation of the interview schedule questions was clear and understandable.

4.5.2.4 Piloting the Interviews:

Before the main interviews took place, a pilot study was undertaken. This was conducted so as to determine if there were any difficulties in understanding the interview questions. This was very important because, as Arber (1998) mentioned, piloting interviews provides invaluable insights for altering question wording, adding questions, omitting or changing questions, and altering the order of questions.

For this purpose, a random sample of two intermediate schools in Jeddah were selected, with a view to interviewing the counsellor, the principal and one teacher in each school, to be sure about the consistency and accuracy of the interview questions. Their views about the interview questions were favourable and no changes were considered necessary. Finally, the Arabic copy was typed in Arabic in Microsoft Word to be used when administering the interviews.

4.5.2.5 Conduct of Interviews:

Once the sample of interviewees had been selected, the researcher telephoned the principal or the counsellor in each school to arrange an appropriate date and time for the interviews to take place. The researcher visited the school and conducted face-to-face interviews separately with each interviewee during the period December 2007 to January 2008.

All interviews were conducted in the schools in the counsellors' rooms, staff rooms, or principals' offices, each one taking approximately 50-60 minutes. Fortunately, the interviews took place in a friendly atmosphere, as rapport had been built during the process of explaining about the study and arranging appointments. Nevertheless, despite

extensive efforts made to arrange appropriate conditions for the interviews, the process did not always go smoothly. For example, some interviews were interrupted by students knocking on the door of the office.

Many researchers, such as Gall et al (1996), Vulliamy et al (1990), Bell (1993), and Verma and Mallick (1999) agree that using a tape-recorder would save time and avoid stopping the interviewees in order to complete written notes. This would also be useful to check the wording of any statement quoted later, and would enable recordings to be listened to several times in order to obtain a full understanding of the ideas given. Tape-recording can also be useful in analysing the interview content and ensuring the reliability of the analysis by asking someone else to analyse the transcript.

Unhappily, I found that all except two of the interviewees preferred not to be recorded. This is a cultural characteristic of Saudi Arabian society, that people usually do not express themselves openly in front of others, especially about sensitive subjects. Therefore, to ensure that the interview went smoothly and the interviewees remained happy, there was no choice but to record the answers by hand instead of tape-recording them.

In practice, however, a very flexible approach was adopted during the interviews, and the order of questions was varied according to the specific exchanges with the interviewees. The strategy used was to follow the interest of the interviewee herself in order to collect as many ideas and responses as possible. Follow-up questions such as 'could you tell me more about ….?' Or 'why do you think that?' were used to elicit more detailed responses. At the end of the interview, I read back all the notes for the interviewee's approval of their accuracy.

4.5.2.6 Analysing the Interview Data:

In fact, qualitative analysis is less abstract than statistical analysis and closer to the raw data. Therefore, qualitative data are usually analysed by arranging them in the form of text written in words and phrases with few or even no numbers. However, the translation of the data from Arabic to English was a problem, since each language has its own structure and idioms. To overcome this problem, after the interviews had been translated into English by the present researcher, a specialist in the English Language (one of her colleagues at Newcastle University), was asked to perform back-translations from English to Arabic, in order to confirm that each version of the translation matched the meaning and semantics of the original interview as closely as possible. This option was more costly and time consuming, but provided evidence that an accurate and fair translation of the data had been achieved.

After completing and translating the interviews, answers relevant to each question asked in the transcripts of each interviewee were highlighted. Sometimes comments were found relevant to one question included in answers another question, so the interviewees' responses were rearranged, trying to match comments made by each interviewee against the questions asked and drawing out the main ideas that emerged within and between the interviewees (highlighting agreements, similarities and differences among these ideas and viewpoints).

4.5.2.7 Validity of the Interview Data:

Validity in qualitative research is defined as the extent to which the data is plausible, credible and trustworthy; and thus can be defended when challenged (Maxwell,

1992). As Bell (1999) pointed out, validity is a complex concept. It tells us whether an item describes or measures what is supposed to describe or measure.

Therefore, the interview schedules were given to three experts in the field of school counselling in the Direct General of Education of Jeddah District (DGEJD) to obtain their views and suggestions as referees on the objectives and appropriateness of the questions. A meeting was conducted with the referees to discuss their comments and suggestions. Subsequently, minor changes were made before they indicated that the interview schedule questions appeared to be suitable and relevant to the purpose of the study.

4.5.2.8 Ethical Considerations:

Without doubt, a code of ethical practice makes researchers aware of their obligations to their subjects and also to those problem areas where there is a general consensus about what is acceptable and what is not (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

Because of this, particularly care was taken to consider ethical issues at every stage of this study. The key issues here were informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw.

In practice, to get the consent of the respondents, the purpose of the study was explained to them at the very beginning. This was achieved over the telephone, before distributing the questionnaires. Also, with respect to the interview, the informants were given a consent form attached appended to the questionnaire. Informants who were willing to be interviewed were asked to sign this form to show their agreement to participate in the interview. Furthermore, their full agreement was obtained to use their

answers in my research.

Care was also taken that confidentiality was respected. For example, participants were assured that their names would not be revealed, giving them protection against the possibility of being exposed to situations which might affect their jobs. Therefore, participants are not referred to by name. With regard to the questionnaire, I did not ask the respondents to write down their names or their school's names. I gave a code number for each questionnaire that was distributed. Moreover, the interviews were conducted individually, in private, in order to avoid any embarrassment that could occur regarding the issues being studied. This procedure certainly reduced the element of mistrust and encouraged the respondents to co-operate with me.

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Chapter five

Analysis of the Questionnaire Findings

5.1 Introduction:

This is the first of two chapters presenting the findings concerning perceptions of principals, teachers and counsellors themselves regarding the role of intermediate school counsellors in Saudi Arabian girls' schools, to determine if there were any differences between the respondents' perceptions of the actual and ideal role of intermediate school counsellors and possible difficulties and obstacles faced by counsellors during their work.

More specifically, this chapter presents the analysis of questionnaire data from the fieldwork using the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS) programme, while chapter six describes the interview findings. Within chapter seven findings from the two sets of quantitative and qualitative data are brought together and discussed further.

5.1.1 Organization of this Chapter:

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first describes the questionnaire response rate. The second section presents the demographic information given by participants. Counsellors were asked about their age, years of experience in both teaching and counselling in schools, and the size of the schools that they worked at, in addition to their qualifications and major subjects and if they had attended any training programmes. For principals the demographic information considered was their age, years of experience in managing schools, and the size of the schools that they managed. For teachers the demographic information sought was their age, years of experience in teaching in

schools, and the size of the schools that they taught in. It should be noted that some of the participants declined or forgot to provide some of the demographic information. The third section, discusses the perceptions of principals, teachers and counsellors themselves regarding the role of the intermediate school counsellor. In the fourth section, the reliability of participants' answers is analyzed using the Cronbach's Alpha statistic (Cronbach, 1951), while the fifth section conducts an analysis of variance comparing the perceptions of principals, teachers and counsellors regarding the actual and ideal role of counsellors. The Least Significance Difference Method (LSD) test was used to determine the location and significance of the variance measured. The sixth section reviews differences among the perceptions of the three groups regarding the actual and ideal role of the intermediate school counsellor.

5.1.2 Questionnaire Response Rate:

The response rates for the questionnaire samples are as follows. For the main study, 543 questionnaires were collected. As shown in Table 5.1, the sample for the study consisted of 180 counsellors, 126 principals and 237 teachers. Teachers made up 43.65%, counsellors 33.15% and principals 23.20%.

Table 5.1 Questionnaire Responses (n = 543)

Sample	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Counsellors	180	33.15%
Principals	126	23.20%
Teachers	237	43.65%
Total	543	100%

5.2 Demographic Information:

This section gives a detailed description of the demographic information provided by the sample participants. Note that the number of participants that declined, or most likely forgot, to mention their demographic information will not be included.

5.2.1 Counsellors' Sample:

In this subsection, analysis of the demographical data provided by the counsellors produced the following profile of the sample related to their ages, qualifications, areas of specialization, years of experience, training and school size.

5.2.1.1 Counsellors' Age:

In the questionnaire, age was divided into five age groups: 23-28 years, 29-34 years, 35-40 years, 41-46 and 47 years and above. Table 5.2, shows that the largest group of counsellors, 27.2%, fell within the range 35-40 years, followed by those who belonged to the age group 23-28 (23.9%), and then those aged between 41-46 (20% of counsellors). It was also found that a small percentage of the sample, 6.7% were older than 47 years. Therefore, 87.8% of the counsellors were aged between 23 and 46 years, given that 5.6% of respondents declined to mention their age. Figure 5.1, represents the counsellors' ages graphically, excluding those whose age was not provided.

Table 5.2 Frequency Distribution of the Age of the Counsellors (n = 180)

Age	Frequency	Percentage
23 – 28	43	23.9
29 – 34	30	16.7
35 – 40	49	27.2
41 – 46	36	20.0
47 and above	12	6.7
Declined to mention	10	5.6
Total	180	100.0

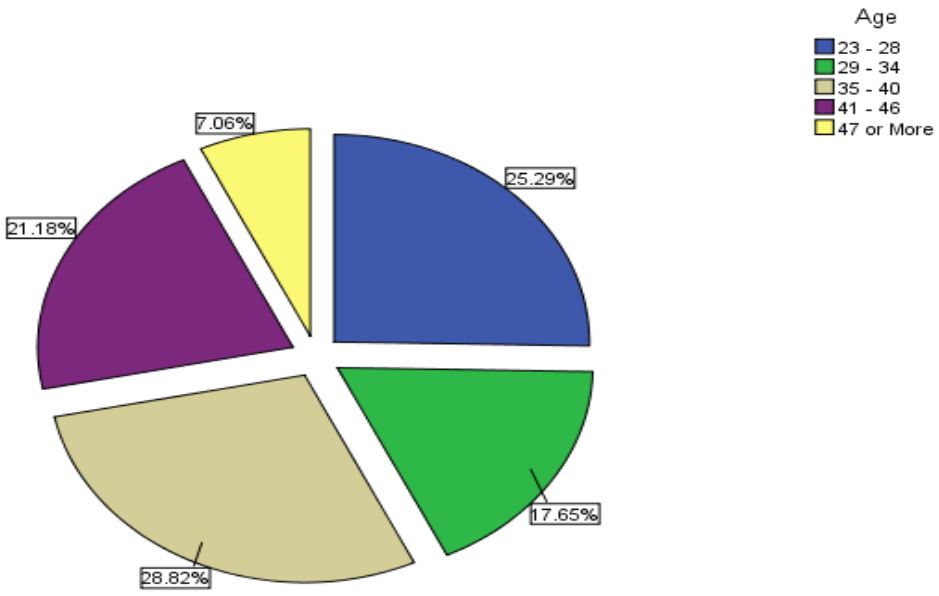

Figure 5.1: Counsellor's Ages (*n* = 170)

5.2.1.2 Counsellors' Qualifications:

The Saudi Ministry of Education requires anyone who occupies a position in the counselling service to have at least a bachelors degree. Therefore, it is not surprising that

in this study a high percentage of the counsellors (96.1%) had bachelors degrees. In spite of the fact that, according to the literature, a postgraduate qualification would facilitate and enhance counselling performance (see chapter two for more detail) it was found that only one of the counsellors, as shown in Table 5.3, had a postgraduate qualification. About 3.3% of counsellors did not mention their qualifications. However, based on the information from the overall sample, and since the Ministry of Education required a bachelor degree from those who occupy a position in the counselling service, it was concluded that those who declined or forgot to mention their qualifications were most likely to have bachelors degrees.

Table 5.3 The Frequency Distribution of the Qualifications of Counsellors (n = 180)

Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelors	173	96.1
Masters	1	0.6
PhD	--	--
Declined to mention	6	3.3
Total	180	100.0

5.2.1.3 Counsellors' Field of Study:

Generally, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia appoints as counsellors in intermediate schools people who have degrees in Psychology, Sociology or Social Work. Respondents were asked whether they specialised in these fields of study or others.

Table 5.4 below shows that only 5.6% of counsellors indicated that they had qualifications in social work, and slightly more (8.3%) had studied psychology, whereas nearly half of respondents (48.3%) had qualifications in the field of sociology. However, 34.4% of the counsellors had qualifications in fields other than psychology, sociology or

social work. It must be noted that 3.3% of the counsellors' did not specify their field of study. Figure 5.2 graphically shows the data on counsellors' fields of study.

Table 5.4 Frequency Distribution of Counsellors' Field of Study (n = 180)

Major	Frequency	Percentage
Psychology	15	8.3
Sociology	87	48.3
Social Work	10	5.6
Others	62	34.4
Declined to mention	6	3.3
Total	180	100.0

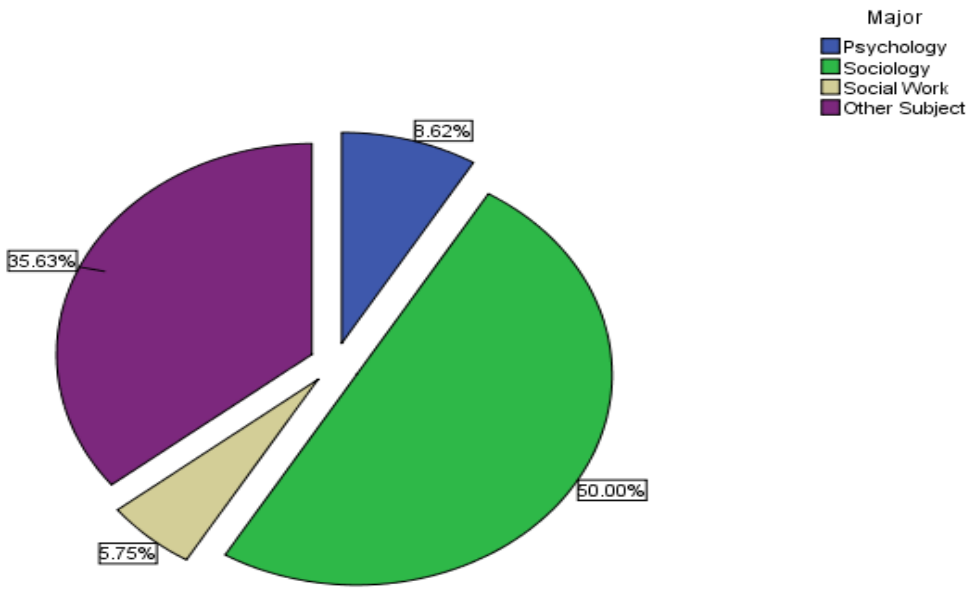

Figure 5.2: Counsellors' Field of Study (n = 174)

5.2.1.4 Counsellors' Experience:

The counsellors' were asked about two type of experience, in teaching and of counselling. It should be noted that it is not necessary for counsellors to have had teaching experience.

A) Counsellors' Experience in Teaching:

The data presented in Table 5.5 shows that 26.1% of the counsellors reported that they had no experience in teaching, while 17.8% said that they had one to five years of experience. A further 16.7% of counsellor had sixteen and above years of teaching experience. It was also found that the same number of the counsellors (16.1%) had between six to ten years, and between eleven to fifteen years of teaching experience. However, about 7.2% did not mention their teaching experience.

Table 5.5 The Frequency Distribution of the Counsellors' Years of Teaching Experience (n = 180)

Years of Experience in Teaching	Frequency	Percentage
None	47	26.1
1 – 5	32	17.8
6 – 10	29	16.1
11 – 15	29	16.1
16 and above	30	16.7
Declined to mention	13	7.2
Total	180	100.0

B) Counsellors' Experience in Counselling:

As shown in Table 5.6, 33.3% of counsellors had one to three years experience in counselling, and 21.7% had thirteen years and above experience in their current job. 17.2% of counsellors had four to six years experience in counselling, and 11.7% had seven to nine years experience. Only 2.8% had ten to twelve years of counselling experience. However, 13.3% declined or forgot to mention their experience in counselling. Figure 5.3 shows data concerning the counsellors' experience graphically, again omitting the missing values.

Table 5.6 Frequency Distribution of Counsellors' Years of Counselling Experience (n = 180)

Years of Experience in Current Job	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 3	60	33.3
4 – 6	31	17.2
7 – 9	21	11.7
10 – 12	5	2.8
13 and above	39	21.7
Declined to mention	24	13.3
Total	180	100.0

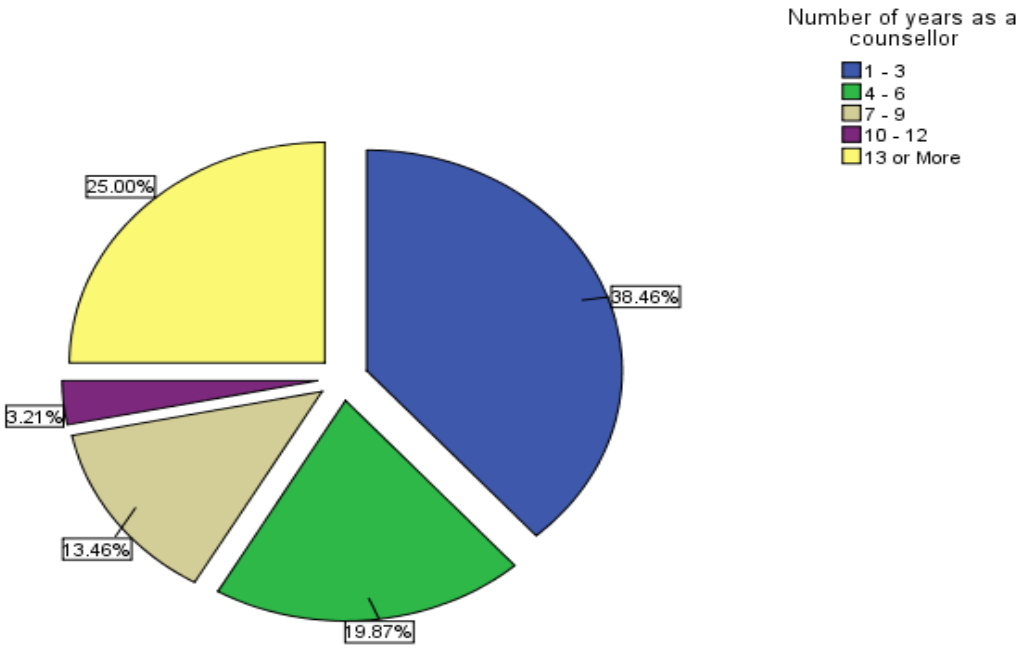

Figure 5.3: Counsellors' Years of Experience (*n* = 156)

5.2.1.5 Counsellors' Training:

Respondents were asked if they had attended counselling training courses in addition to their initial academic qualifications. As can be seen from Table 5.7, 67.78% of counsellors indicated they had some form of counselling training. On the other hand,

about 32.22% of counsellors indicated they had not received any training programme at all.

Table 5.7 Frequency Distribution of Counsellors' Training (*n* = 180)

Training	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	122	67.78
No	58	32.22
Total	180	100.0

Respondents were then asked about the duration of any training programmes that they had attended. According to Table 5.8, out of the 122 counsellors who had some training, 73.77% indicated that they had attended training courses of less than one month, usually those held in their schools or at the Directorate of Education.

About 9.84% of the counsellors had attended training programmes lasting between a month to three months, followed by 7.38% of respondents who had training lasting for four months or more. 9.02% declined to mention the length of their training programme. However, although, the majority of counsellors (73.77%) had received basic counselling training, the fact that this was of less than one month raises serious concerns about the adequacy of training (see chapter two for more detail).

Table 5.8 Frequency Distribution of Duration of Training Programmes Attended by Counsellors (n = 122)

Training Programme Lengths	Frequency	Percentage
Less than one month	90	73.77
1 – 3 months	12	9.84
4 – 6 months	2	1.64
7 – 9 months	1	0.82
10 months and above	6	4.92
Declined to mention	11	9.02
Total	122	100.0

5.2.1.6 School Size (Counsellors):

The data presented in Table 5.9 show that 28.9 % of counsellors worked at schools with 151-300 students. 20.6% of the counsellors belonged to the schools with 301-450 students, and 16.1% were from schools that had between 451-600 students. A further 15% of the sample belonged to schools with 1-150 students, and counsellors from schools that had 601 students and above, represented 12.2% of the total. However, 7.2% of the counsellors did not mention their school size. Figure 5.4 represents the schools sizes of the counsellors after omitting the missing values.

Table 5.9 Frequency Distribution of Counsellors' Schools Size (n = 180)

Number of Students	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 150	27	15.0
151 – 300	52	28.9
301 – 450	37	20.6
451 – 600	29	16.1
601 and above	22	12.2
Declined to mention	13	7.2
Total	180	100.0

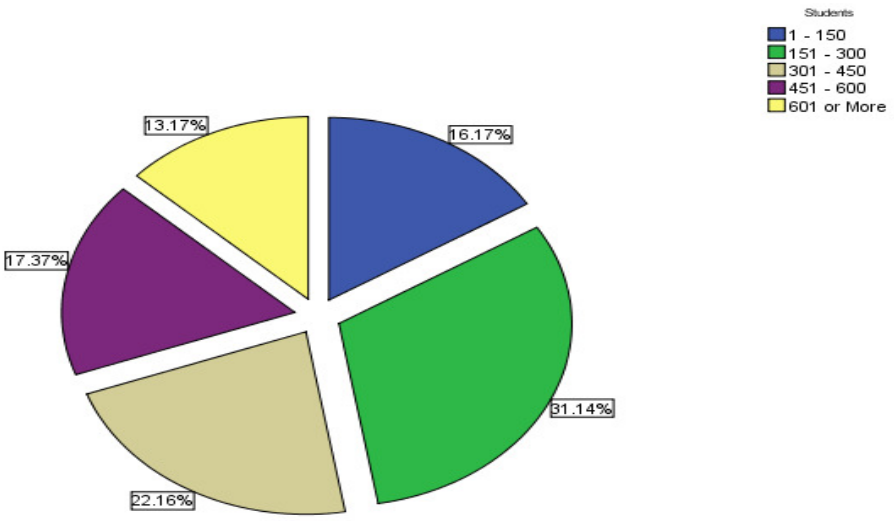

Figure 5.4: School Sizes of Counsellors (*n* = 167)

5.2.2 Principals' and Teachers' Samples:

In this subsection the principals' and teachers' background details, including age, years of experience in managing and teaching respectively, and school size, are presented. The ages of both principals and teachers were again divided into the five age groups.

5.2.2.1 Principals' Age:

34.9% principals belonged to the age group 41-46 years, followed by 27.8% who were aged 47 and above. 17.5% of the principals were in the age group 35-40, whereas only 6.3 % were aged 23-28 and 5.6 % between 29-34. Table 5.10 show the frequency distribution of the principals' ages. Figure 5.5 represents the frequency distribution of principals' age after omitting the missing values.

Table 5.10 Frequency Distribution of Age Distribution of the Principals (n = 126)

Age	Frequency	Percentage
23 – 28	8	6.3
29 – 34	7	5.6
35 – 40	22	17.5
41 – 46	44	34.9
47 and above	35	27.8
Declined to Mention	10	7.9
Total	126	100.0

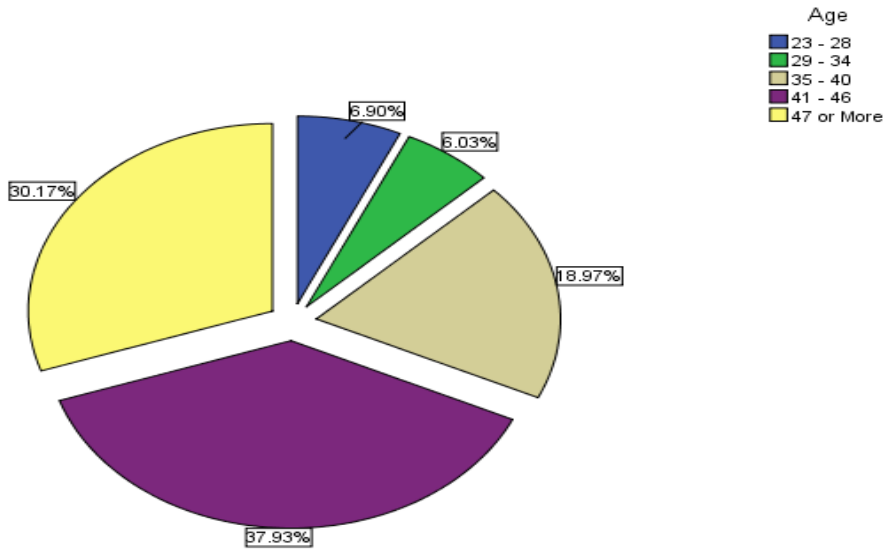

Figure 5.5: Principals' Age Groups (*n* = 116)

5.2.2.2 Principals' Experience:

Table 5.11 shows that 28.6% of the principals had 21 or more years of experience in running schools, followed by 19% each who had 1-5 and 6-10 years of experience. 15.1% had 11-15 years of experience, and only 11.1%, had 16-20 years of experience. It should be noted that 7.1% of the principals did not mention their length of experience. Figure 5.6 shows the frequency distribution of the principals' experience after omitting the missing values.

Table 5.11 Principals' Years of Experience As Principals (n = 126)

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5	24	19.0
6 – 10	24	19.0
11 – 15	19	15.1
16 – 20	14	11.1
21 and above	36	28.6
Declined to mention	9	7.1
Total	126	100.0

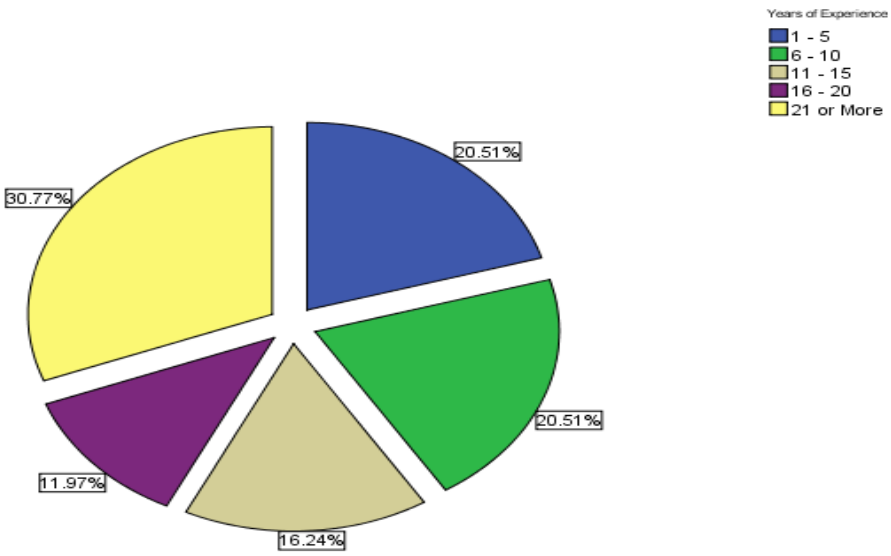

Figure 5.6: Principals Experience Groups (n = 117)

5.2.2.3 School Size (Principals):

The greater proportion of the principals' sample (57.2%) worked at medium size schools with 151-450 students, followed by 24.6%, who ran schools with 451 or more students. Fewer (15.1%) came from schools of relatively small size. Table 5.12 shows the frequency distribution of the principals' school sizes after omitting the missing values. Figure 5.7 represents the data after excluding the cases where this information was not provided.

Table 5.12 Frequency Distribution of Principals' Schools Size (n = 126)

Number of Students	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 150	19	15.1
151 – 300	33	26.2
301 – 450	39	31.0
451 – 600	17	13.5
601 and above	14	11.1
Declined to mention	4	3.2
Total	126	100.0

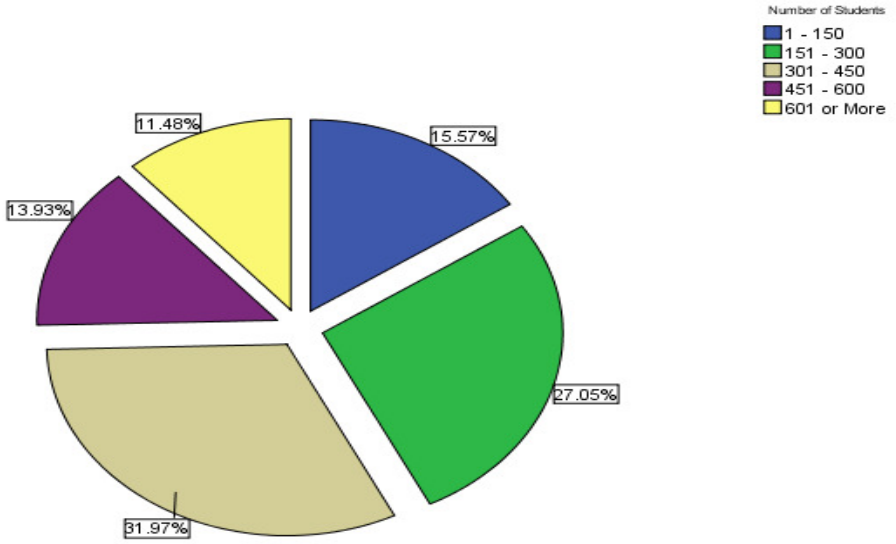

Figure 5.7: School Size (Principals) (*n* = 122)

5.2.2.4 Teachers' Age:

About 32.5% of teachers in the sample were aged between 35-40 years, followed by 27.4% belonging to the age group 29-34. 18.1% were in the age group 23-28, 11.0% of them were aged 41-46, and only 3.8% were aged 47 or over. However, 7.2% of the teachers did not mention their ages, as shown in Table 5.13, which presents the frequency distribution of teachers' age groups. Figure 5.8 shows the frequency distribution of the teachers' ages after omitting the missing values.

Table 5.13 Frequency Distribution of Age Distribution of the Teachers (n = 237)

Age	Frequency	Percentage
23 – 28	43	18.1
29 – 34	65	27.4
35 – 40	77	32.5
41 – 46	26	11.0
47 and above	9	3.8
Declined to mention	17	7.2
Total	237	100.0

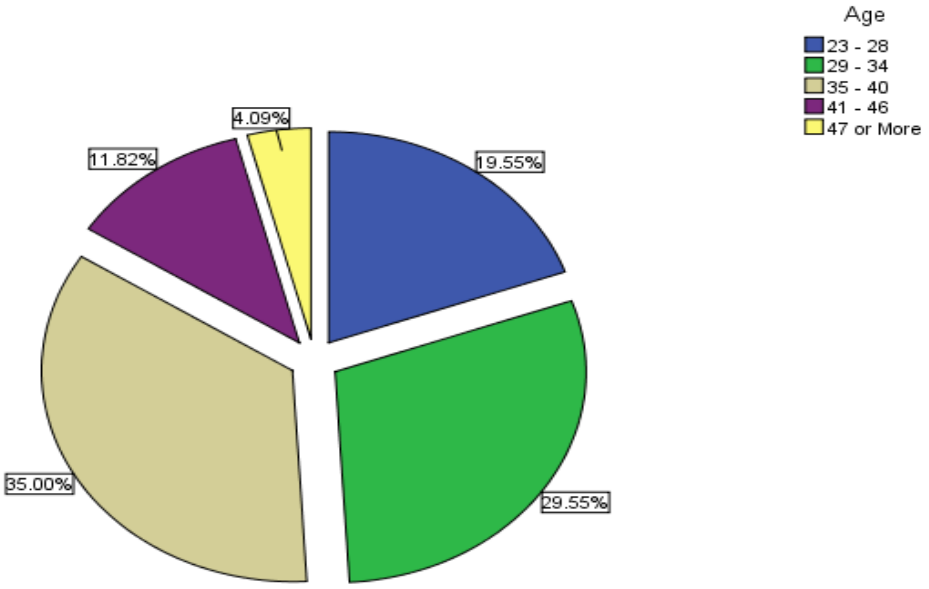

Figure 5.8: Teachers' Age Groups (*n* = 220)

5.2.2.5 Teachers' Experience:

Table 5.14 shows that 31.2% of the teachers had 11-15 years experience in teaching, followed by 21.1% who had 1-5 years of experience. 19.8% of teachers had 16-20 years of experience and 16.9% had 6-10 years of experience. However, only 7.6 % of the sample had 21 or more years of experience. It should be noted that 3.4% of the

teachers declined or forgot to mention how many years of experience they had in teaching. Figure 5.9 shows the frequency distribution of the groups of teaching experience after omitting the missing values.

Table 5.14 Teachers' Years of Experience As Teachers (n = 237)

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5	50	21.1
6 – 10	40	16.9
11 – 15	74	31.2
16 – 20	47	19.8
21 and above	18	7.6
Declined to mention	8	3.4
Total	237	100.0

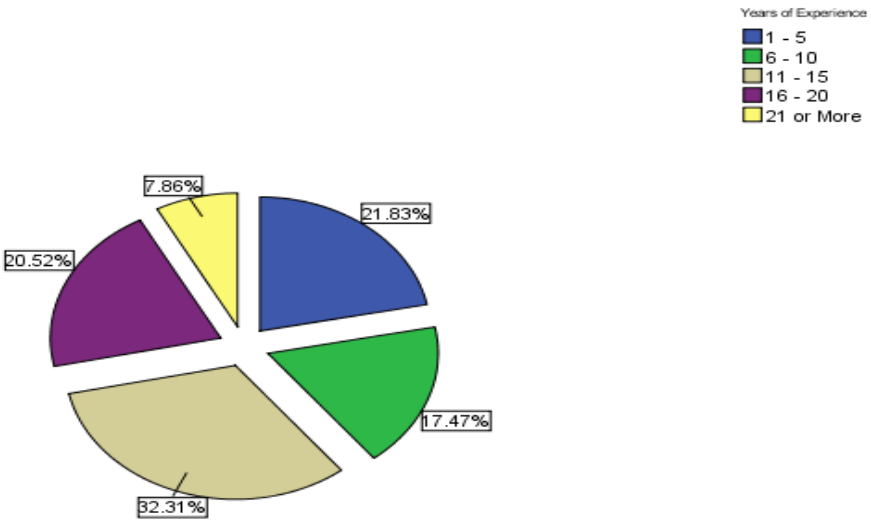

Figure 5.9: Teachers' Experience Groups (n = 229)

5.2.2.6 School Size (Teachers):

As seen in Table 5.15, 26.6% of teachers belonged to schools that had more than 451 students, and 25.7% of the sample came from schools that had 301-450 students,

while 24.9% of them had 151-300 students. Only 15.6% of the schools had less than 151 students. Figure 5.10 shows the frequency distribution of the groups of different number of students after omitting the missing values.

Table 5.15 Frequency Distribution of Teachers' Schools Size (n = 237)

Number of Students	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 150	37	15.6
151 – 300	59	24.9
301 – 450	61	25.7
451 – 600	31	13.1
601 and above	32	13.5
Declined to mention	17	7.2
Total	237	100.0

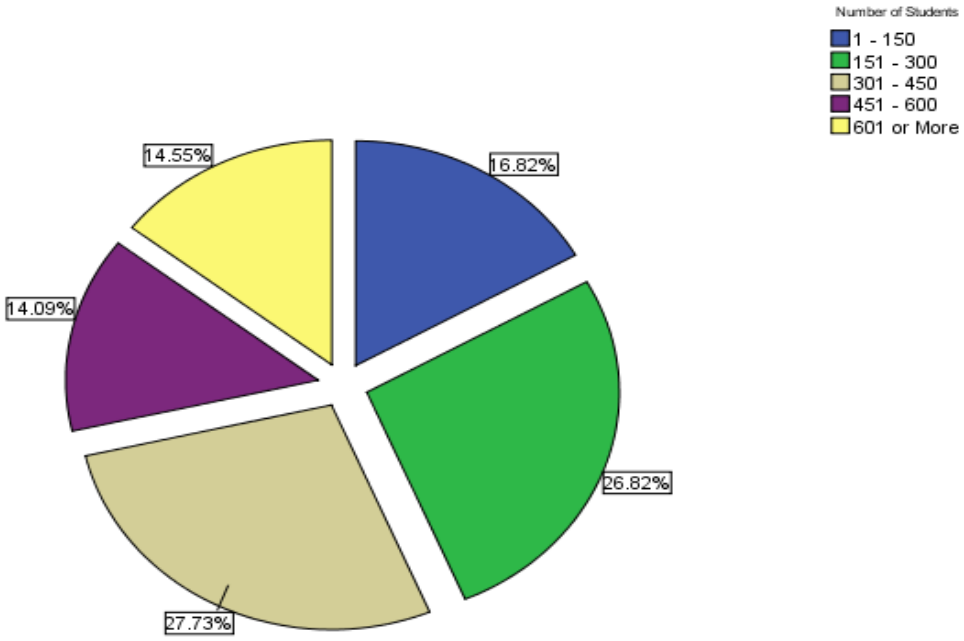

Figure 5.10 : School Sizes of Teachers (*n* = 220)

5.3 Descriptive Statistics of Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the School Counsellor:

This section presents descriptive statistics of the perceptions of counsellors, principals and teachers regarding the actual and ideal role of the school counsellor in relation to each area of that role. As mentioned before, the questionnaire consisted of 39 items grouped into six categories: counselling; developmental, educational and career guidance; consulting; evaluation and assessment; programme management and development; and personal and professional development. Respondents were asked to rank each function of counselling on a five-point scale (from 5, very important, to 1, very unimportant). At the same time, participants were asked to rank each function again, but in regard to how often the counsellors performed it. The ranking for this section was also based on a five-point scale (always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never).

5.3.1 Perceptions of Counsellors:

In this subsection, the descriptive statistics of the perceptions of the counsellors themselves regarding their actual and ideal roles in relation to the functions of counselling are presented.

5.3.1.1 Counselling:

Analysis of the counsellors' responses showed that they perceived all counselling tasks in their actual role as often or always performed. However, the results indicate that counselling on educational and academic issues were the activities reported as being most frequently performed. Around 88% of the sample mentioned that helping students with

problems of academic achievement, meeting with them to discuss academic concerns and helping students adjust to the school environment were parts of their roles that they most often or always performed.

Conversely, counsellors perceived themselves as less frequently counselling on personal issues. For example, counsellors viewed the tasks of assisting students to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests, assisting students in making appropriate decisions, addressing the developmental needs of students and assisting them to cope with and resolve their problems as not performed as much other counselling activities.

On the other hand, examination of the counsellors' perceptions of their ideal role (see Table 5.16) indicates that the highest priority would be given to helping students with problems of academic achievement and assisting them to cope with and resolve their problems, as 97% of counsellors perceived these functions as an important or very important. At the same time, counsellors seemed to accord priority to the tasks of counselling parents on their children's problems, and they attached slightly less importance to the task of assisting students in making appropriate decisions. In general, however, counsellors' perceptions of their role performance were lower than their perceptions of the importance placed on those functions. In other words, all tasks are given a lower rating in terms of what is actually carried out than would be ideal.

Table 5.16 Counsellors Ranking of their Actual and Ideal Roles in Relation to Tasks in the Counselling Category (n = 180)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Address the developmental needs of students.	1	1	18	34	46	0	0	5	22	73
Help students with problems of academic achievement	1	1	9	21	68	0	0	3	13	84
Assist students in making appropriate decisions	2	8	14	36	40	0	0	8	28	64
Meet with students to discuss academic concerns	0	2	10	19	69	0	0	5	22	73
Assist students to cope with and resolve their problems	1	3	12	22	62	0	0	6	16	78
Assist students to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests.	1	4	15	29	51	0	0	6	27	67
Help students adjust to the school environment	0	1	11	27	61	0	0	6	21	73
Counsel parents on their children's problems.	1	2	12	26	59	0	0	5	18	77

N = Never, R = Rarely, S = Sometimes, O = Often, A = Always. VU = Very Unimportant, U = Unimportant, MI = Moderately Important, I = Important, VI = Very Important.

5.3.1.2 Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance:

Regarding the actual role of the counsellor in the developmental, educational and career guidance area, the majority (81%) indicated that working with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems was a task they always performed. In contrast, the task of collating information and providing workshops for students to help them develop academic skills was perceived by only 38% of counsellors as an activity they often or always performed. In other words, it receives the least attention in practice. The results also show that counsellors were actually involved in the two activities, though not at an acceptable level, of collating information and providing workshops to help

students develop social skills and provide students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school. On the other hand, the majority of respondents (97%) believed that a very important task in their ideal role was to work with students to prevent psychological and behavioural problems. In general Table 5.17 reveals that the majority of the counsellors perceived all developmental, educational and career guidance tasks as important or very important. However, lees priority was given to the tasks of collating information and providing workshop for students to help them develop academic and social skills. Nevertheless, none of the tasks in the ideal role was rated as unimportant or very unimportant.

Table 5.17 Counsellors' Ranking of their Actual and Ideal Role in Relation to the Tasks in the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Category (*n* = 180).

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Collate information and provide workshop for students to help them develop academic skills.	2	15	36	28	19	0	0	14	46	40
Conduct special educational programmes to deal with specific problems (truancy, smoking…).	2	5	26	32	35	0	0	9	37	54
Work with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems.	1	4	14	37	44	0	0	3	23	74
Collate information and provide workshops for students to help them develop social skills.	5	15	29	33	18	0	0	12	46	42
Provide students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school.	6	8	29	27	30	0	0	14	40	46
Conduct special programmes for gifted and talented students.	3	4	23	31	39	0	0	12	27	61

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.1.3 Consulting:

Table 5.18 shows that consulting with parents, teachers and principals about the needs or concerns of students were tasks which counsellors saw themselves as frequently performing. 80% mentioned that consulting with principals and teachers about the development of guidance and counselling goals and activities was a part of their role that they always performed in practice. However, the tasks of referring students with special needs to appropriate agencies and following up referred students was perceived as performed lees compared with other functions in this area.

On the other hand, in the ideal situation counsellors saw all consulting tasks as important or very important parts of their duties. Nonetheless, the most important tasks in their ideal role were consulting with parents and teachers about the needs or concerns of students. Nearly 95% of counsellors stated that such tasks were important or very important. In contrast, less importance was given to the task of following up students referred to other agencies. Nonetheless, the rest of the activities in this area were highly ranked.

Table 5.18 Counsellors' Ranking of their Actual and Ideal Role in Relation to the Tasks in the Consulting Category (n = 180)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Establish and maintain a "Guidance and Counselling Committee" in school.	1	5	19	29	46	0	0	10	36	54
Assist teachers in recognizing individual differences between students.	1	2	19	32	46	0	0	5	29	66
Consult with parents about the needs or concerns of students.	1	2	19	29	49	0	0	5	28	67
Refer students with special needs to appropriate agencies.	13	12	22	23	30	1	1	8	29	61
Consult with principal and teachers about the development of guidance and counselling goals and activities	3	5	12	25	55	1	0	7	24	68
Consult with principals about the needs or concerns of students	1	4	15	25	55	0	0	7	28	65
Follow up students referred to other agencies.	14	13	21	27	25	1	3	12	42	42
Consult with teachers about the needs or concerns of students	1	3	15	32	49	0	1	6	24	69
Consult with teachers about students' motivation and students' behaviour	2	1	22	32	43	0	1	11	34	54
Provide teachers with information about students' needs and concurrent issues	1	1	24	34	40	0	0	8	34	58

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.1.4 Evaluation and Assessment:

As shown in Table 5.19, using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics was only infrequently carried out by the counsellors according to their ratings (16%). By contrast, a great majority of counsellors reported that they were

heavily involved in monitoring the achievement levels of students and performing administrative tasks and clerical duties.

Regarding the ideal role of counsellors in this area, responses indicated the high level of importance attached to the tasks of monitoring the achievement levels of students, followed by working to discover gifted and talented students and identifying students with special educational and personal needs. Although the task of performing administrative tasks and clerical duties was rated highly, it was not rated as highly as the other items in this category. However, the lowest level of importance was attached to the task of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics, as only 46% of counsellors viewed this task as important or very important.

Table 5.19 Counsellors' Rank of their Actual and Ideal Role in Relation to the Tasks in the Evaluation and Assessment Category (n = 180)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Monitor the achievement level of students.	1	2	4	22	71	0	0	3	19	78
Use inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.	25	36	23	14	2	1	12	41	32	14
Identify students with special educational and personal needs	3	3	12	21	61	0	1	8	21	70
Work to discover gifted and talented students.	1	2	9	25	63	0	0	7	21	72
Perform administrative tasks and clerical duties (paperwork, records, scheduling…).	1	2	6	21	70	1	7	19	25	48

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.1.5 Programme Management and Development:

Regarding programme management and development activities, Table 5.20 shows that establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with school staff and planning activities to achieve the objectives of guidance and counselling were two areas which

counsellors saw themselves carrying out frequently. However the task of developing objectives for the guidance and counselling programme was accorded the lowest frequency rating in this area, as only 56% of the counsellors said they often or always performed this task.

On the other hand, all counsellors' activities in this area were perceived to be important or very important. The highest rating was given to the task of establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with school staff, a task which 96% of counsellors perceived as important or very important. A high ranking was given to other tasks as either important or very important.

Table 5.20 Counsellors' Ranking of their Actual and Ideal Role in Relation to the Tasks in the Programme Management and Development Category (n = 180)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Keep students informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	1	7	26	33	33	0	2	13	36	49
Develop objectives for the guidance and counselling programme.	1	10	33	36	20	0	1	10	39	50
Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with school staff	0	3	8	21	68	0	0	4	18	78
Plan activities to achieve the objective of the guidance and counselling	2	2	9	30	57	0	1	7	28	64
Keep parents informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	2	4	17	40	37	0	1	14	38	47
Inform principal and teachers about the guidance and counselling programme.	2	2	17	27	52	0	0	7	32	61

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.1.6 Personal and Professional Development:

On the actual role of counsellors in relation to personal and professional development, Table 5.21 shows that counsellors were involved in these two activities, though not at an acceptable level in engaging in personal and professional development and evaluating the effectiveness of the counselling programmes. The results also show that the tasks of conducting research related both to students' problems and needs, and related to their own profession were accorded the lowest frequency rating in this area. Nearly 46% said they rarely or never performed this task.

On the other hand, it does appear that the majority of counsellors perceived the four items in the personal and professional development category as being either important or very important. A high priority was given to the task of engaging in continuous personal and professional development. Almost all counsellors perceived this task as important or very important, whereas in contrast, less importance was given to the task of conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme.

Table 5.21 Counsellors' Ranking of their Actual and Ideal Role in Relation to the Tasks in the Personal and Professional Development Category (n= 180)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Engage in continuous personal and professional development.	1	8	18	35	38	0	0	6	31	63
Conduct research related to students' needs and problems.	12	27	35	19	7	0	2	25	42	31
Conduct research related to the guidance and counselling programme.	18	28	34	11	9	2	3	35	36	24
Evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme.	2	6	25	43	24	0	0	15	46	39

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.1.7 Interim Summary:

Meeting with students to discuss academic concerns, working on students' comprehensive records and establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with school staff were the tasks in which counsellors saw themselves as involved more than other activities. Whereas counsellors perceived less involvement in counselling functions related to personal issues and referral functions, suggested a comparative ineffectiveness of the counselling programmes in these major areas. What is more, lack of involvement was perceived in personal and professional development tasks, especially in conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme. This was also true in the evaluation and assessment functions; particularly in using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.

On the other hand, counsellors attached a high level of importance to functions related to students' educational and personal issues, shown particularly in their priorities in counselling and guidance and evaluation and assessment. This suggests that the counsellors would prefer to be involved significantly more in these functions. Their perceptions further show the desire for co-operative relationships with school staff and parents, and to counsel parents on their children's problems. In general, all 39 tasks described in the questionnaire were supported by a majority of the counsellors, except for the task of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics which only 46% of counsellors perceived as important or very important.

5.3.2 Perceptions of Principals:

This subsection presents the descriptive statistics of the perceptions of principals regarding the actual and ideal roles of school counsellors. The results are presented according to each area of the counsellor's role, as in the previous sections.

5.3.2.1 Counselling:

As can be seen from Table 5.22, a high priority was given to the task of helping students with problems of academic achievement, as 99% of principals thought that such a task was important or very important. 98% of principals mentioned that counselling parents on their children's problems was another major activity in the ideal role they perceived for the counsellor. On the contrary, less importance was given to the tasks of assisting students in making appropriate decisions and, surprisingly, meeting with students to discuss academic concerns. However, the rest of the activities in this area were highly ranked.

In terms of the actual roles of counsellors, helping students with problems of academic achievement was the activity reported as being most frequently performed, 89% of principals perceived this task to be always or often done. However, although all items here were perceived by the vast majority of the principals to be either always or often performed, the activities of assisting students in making appropriate decisions and assisting students to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests were regarded as the least performed activities in the principals' perceptions of the counsellor's actual role.

Table 5.22 Principals' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Tasks in the Counselling Category (n = 126)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Address the developmental needs of students.	0	1	20	45	34	0	0	4	20	76
Help students with problems of academic achievement	0	1	10	36	53	0	0	1	17	82
Assist students in making appropriate decisions	2	2	34	42	20	0	0	6	44	50
Meet with students to discuss academic concerns	0	6	12	40	42	0	0	6	38	56
Assist students to cope with and resolve their problems	0	4	12	44	40	0	0	4	25	71
Assist students to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests.	2	8	25	40	25	0	0	4	38	58
Help students adjust to the school environment	0	1	16	36	47	0	0	5	20	75
Counsel parents on their children's problems.	0	4	19	32	45	0	0	2	28	70

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.2.2 Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance:

As seen in Table 5.23, huge differences exist in the principals' perceptions of the counsellor's actual and ideal roles in relation to developmental, educational and career guidance functions. However, in terms of the ideal roles, the tasks that received the highest rankings and were perceived as important or very important were those related to working with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems, conducting special programmes for gifted and talented students. conducting special educational programmes to deal with specific problems such as truancy, smoking, and collating information and providing workshop for students to help them develop academic skills.

On the other hand, providing students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school and collating information and provide workshops for students to help them develop social skills were the tasks which received the lowest rankings.

Moving to the perceptions of the performance of developmental, educational and career guidance activities, most principals believed that most guidance activities were a part of counsellors' activities in their schools. Conducting special programmes for gifted and talented students appeared to be the most frequently performed activity, as a majority (84%) of principals said counsellors often or always did this.

Table 5.23 Principals' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor in Relation to the Tasks in the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Category (n=126)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Collate information and provide workshop for students to help them develop academic skills.	5	20	41	23	11	0	1	8	46	45
Conduct special educational programmes to deal with specific problems (truancy, smoking…)	3	15	31	30	21	0	0	7	43	50
Work with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems.	0	1	20	40	37	0	0	3	24	73
Collate information and provide workshop for students to help them develop social skills.	7	15	37	30	11	0	0	13	43	44
Provide students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school.	8	16	28	27	21	0	1	13	37	39
Conduct special programmes for gifted and talented students.	0	4	12	44	40	0	1	5	35	59

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.2.3 Consulting:

As regards consulting, all counsellors' activities in this area were perceived to be important or very important. The highest rating was given to the tasks of consulting teachers about students' motivation and behaviour, providing teachers with information about students needs and current issues, and assisting teachers to recognize individual differences between students. High rankings were given to other tasks as either important or very important. However, the task of following up students referred to other agencies

was perceived as least important. In other words, in their opinion, this activity deserved the least attention from counsellors (see Table 5.24).

Table 5.24 Principals' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor in Relation to the Tasks in the Consulting Category (n = 126)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Establish and maintain a "Guidance and Counselling Committee" in school.	2	1	14	27	56	0	0	9	25	66
Assist teachers to recognize individual differences between students.	1	4	22	37	46	0	0	3	33	64
Consult parents about the needs or concerns of students	0	6	18	40	36	0	0	6	32	62
Refer students with special needs to appropriate agencies	11	14	22	25	28	1	0	7	30	62
Consult principal and teachers about the development of guidance and counselling goals and activities	2	6	16	33	43	0	0	6	31	63
Consult principals about the needs or concerns of students	1	3	20	33	43	0	0	4	31	65
Follow up students referred to other agencies.	13	10	30	25	22	0	2	10	48	40
Consult teachers about the needs or concerns of students.	2	6	22	32	38	0	0	4	36	60
Consult teachers about students' motivation and behaviour	2	6	22	37	33	0	0	2	32	66
Provide teachers with information about students needs and current issues.	2	4	24	37	33	0	0	3	37	60

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

Regarding the actual role performance of these functions, establishing and maintaining a 'guidance and counselling committee' in school and assisting teachers to recognize individual differences between students appeared to be the most frequently

performed activities, as the majority (83%) of principals said that counsellors always or often did these tasks. Principals generally felt that counsellors had a lot of consultation with themselves and with parents, especially about the needs or concerns of students, and in consulting them and teachers about the development of guidance and counselling goals and activities. On the other hand, principals viewed the tasks of referring students with special needs to appropriate agencies and following up students referred to other agencies as not performed as much as other consultative activities.

5.3.2.4 Evaluation and Assessment:

In terms of their counsellors' actual role, a great majority of principals perceived that their counsellors were heavily involved in monitoring the achievement levels of students and performing administrative tasks and clerical duties. 91% of principals viewed these tasks as often or always performed. Identifying students with special educational and personal needs and working to discover gifted and talented students were activities perceived by principals to be part of the counsellors' activities in their schools. However, the lowest levels of practice (15%) were considered to be for the task of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.

As can be seen from Table 5.25, principals placed monitoring the achievement levels of students and working to discover gifted and talented students as the highest priority (97%). High rankings were also given to other tasks as either important or very important. However, the task of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs was perceived as least important (54%).

Table 5.25 Principals' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor in Relation to the Tasks in the Evaluation and Assessment Category (n = 126)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Monitor the achievement level of students.	0	2	7	33	58	0	1	2	20	77
Use inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.	29	31	25	10	5	0	6	40	28	26
Identify students with special educational and personal needs.	0	6	16	30	48	0	0	7	22	71
Work to discover gifted and talented students.	0	6	22	32	40	0	0	3	30	67
Perform administrative tasks and clerical duties (paperwork, records, scheduling…).	1	4	4	24	67	1	3	18	28	50

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.2.5 Programme Management and Development:

The results in Table 5.26 reveal that all counsellors' activities in this area were perceived to be important or very important. Planning activities to achieve the objectives of guidance and counselling (97%), and informing the principal and teachers about the guidance and counselling programme (96%), were considered by almost all principals to be either important or very important. Surprisingly, principals tended to perceive the task of keeping parents informed of the guidance and counselling programme as a less important task than others in this category (89%). However, the rest of activities in this area were highly ranked

On the other hand, when it came to practice, the results indicate that most principals believed that most of the programme management and development activities were a part of counsellors' activities in their schools. Principals regarded planning

activities to achieve the objectives of the guidance and counselling as being practiced more frequently than other functions in this category. In contrast, developing objectives for the guidance and counselling programme was a task which principals saw their counsellors as less involved with compared with other functions in this area (54%).

Table 5.26 Principals' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor in Relation to the Tasks in the Programme Management and Development Category (n = 126)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Keep students informed of the guidance and counselling programme	2	8	22	44	24	0	0	7	44	49
Develop objectives for the guidance and counselling programme.	5	9	33	29	25	0	0	9	33	58
Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with school staff.	0	2	15	28	55	0	0	5	25	70
Plan activities to achieve the objectives of the guidance and counselling.	2	2	8	40	48	0	0	3	25	72
Keep parents informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	4	7	26	37	26	0	1	10	40	49
Inform principal and teachers about the guidance and counselling programme.	1	4	19	38	38	0	0	4	40	56

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.2.6 Personal and Professional Development:

It is apparent from Table 5.27 that principals attached great importance to all items in the personal and professional development scale. The task of engaging in continuous personal and professional development ranked as their first priority (94%). By

contrast, conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme was the task which received the lowest ranking.

On the other hand, conducting research related both to students' needs and problems and to guidance and counselling programme tasks were perceived by nearly two-thirds of principals as tasks that were never or rarely performed. Whereas, engaging in personal and professional development was seen by the majority (70%) of principals as one that counsellors often or always performed.

Table 5.27 Principals' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor in Relation to the Tasks in the Personal and Professional Development Category (n = 126)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Engage in continuous personal and professional development.	0	5	25	35	35	0	0	6	32	62
Conduct research related to students' needs and problems.	11	26	31	25	7	0	1	17	41	41
Conduct research related to the guidance and counselling programme.	16	24	28	27	5	0	1	17	51	31
Evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme.	5	2	31	42	20	0	0	10	43	47

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.2.7 Interim Summary:

Principals were supportive of counsellors' activities, and most tasks were perceived as important or very important. They attached a high level of importance to the functions related to academic, psychological and behavioural issues, as shown particularly in their priorities in the counselling, development, educational and carer guidance and consulting categories. However, the most important functions mentioned by principals were helping students with problems of academic achievement and monitoring their achievement levels.

In contrast, they attached lees importance to functions connected with using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics, providing students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school and conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme. Principals also accorded lower importance to counsellors interacting with outside agencies, than with themselves, teachers and parents.

On the other hand, principals believed that counsellors in their schools carried out a wide range of activities. They perceived that counsellors had the greatest amounts of involvement in activities related to educational issues, administrative tasks and clerical duties. Principals in this study saw counsellors less involved in using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics, conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme and students' needs and problems, and collating information and provide workshops for students to help them develop academic and social skills.

5.3.3 Perceptions of Teachers:

This subsection presents the descriptive statistics of the perceptions of teachers regarding the actual and ideal roles of counsellors in relation to the counselling functions.

5.3.3.1 Counselling:

Regarding the actual role of the counsellor, Table 5.28 shows that large number of teachers perceived the activities concerned with counselling about educational issues, such as helping students with problems of academic achievement, meeting with them to discuss academic concerns, and helping them adjust to the school environment, as the functions most frequently performed in their schools. In addition, the task of counselling parents on their children's problems was perceived by 76% of teachers as one that their counsellors' often or always performed. Although other activities were seen to be performed, teachers saw assisting students both to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests and in making appropriate decisions as the functions in the counselling category that were least performed by counsellors.

In terms of the counsellors' ideal role, teachers perceived all the duties in this category as either important or very important. However, the highest priority (97%) was given to the duties of helping students with problems of academic achievement and counselling parents on their children's problems. Assisting students in making appropriate decisions was the function which received the lowest ranking in this area.

Table 5.28 Teachers' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor in Relation to the Tasks in the Counselling Category (n = 237)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Address the developmental needs of students.	1	4	24	44	27	1	0	3	32	64
Help students with problems of academic achievement	1	4	17	31	47	0	0	3	23	74
Assist students in making appropriate decisions	5	11	32	35	17	0	3	15	46	36
Meet with students to discuss academic concerns	4	3	17	33	43	0	1	8	34	57
Assist students to cope with and resolve their problems	2	4	20	37	37	0	1	5	34	60
Assist students to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests.	4	12	28	33	23	1	0	10	40	49
Help students adjust to the school environment	1	6	16	41	35	0	1	10	34	55
Counsel parents on their children's problems.	4	5	15	35	41	0	0	3	29	68

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.3.2 Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance:

Analysis of teachers' responses to this category showed that the great majority (96%) saw the task of working with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems as the most important function of the ideal role of the counsellor, although conducting special programmes for gifted and talented students and dealing with specific problems were also viewed to be important or very important. Conversely, providing students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school was seen by teachers as the least important duty of the counsellor in the developmental, educational and career guidance area.

Regarding performance in this category, teachers perceived counsellors as most involved in the task of working with students to prevent psychological and behavioural problems. In contrast, teachers perceived collating information and providing workshops for students to help them develop academic or social skills as duties that counsellors never or rarely performed (see Table 5.29)

Table 5.29 Teachers' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor in Relation to the Tasks in the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Category (n=237)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Collate information and provide workshop for students to help them develop academic skills.	12	24	25	24	15	0	3	12	45	40
Conduct special educational programmes to deal with specific problems (truancy, smoking…).	8	14	27	27	24	0	1	10	37	52
Work with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems.	1	12	21	38	28	0	0	4	31	65
Collate information and provide workshops for students to help them develop social skills.	14	22	28	25	11	0	3	15	46	36
Provide students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school.	14	22	22	29	13	0	0	19	40	41
Conduct special programmes for gifted and talented students.	6	12	25	33	24	0	0	10	35	55

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.3.3 Consulting:

As seen in Table 5.30, 94% of teachers thought that consulting with teachers and parents about the needs or concerns of students were the activities counsellors should be ideally concerned with. In general, it would seem that teachers were more supportive of tasks related to consultation with teachers. For example, 92% perceived the tasks of assisting teachers in recognizing individual differences between students, and providing them with information about students' needs and concerns as important or very important. However, following up students referred to other agencies was seen by teachers as the least important activity.

Regarding the actual role of counsellors in this area, around 70% of teachers indicated that their counsellors often or always consulted with principals about the needs of concerns of students, and established and maintained a guidance and counselling committee in school. Similarly, around 66% of respondents reported that consulting with parents and teachers about the needs or concerns of students was part of counsellors' activities in their schools. However, referring students with special needs to appropriate agencies and following up students referred to other agencies were perceived as the least performed duties.

Table 5.30 Teachers' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor in Relation to the Tasks in the Consulting Category (n= 237)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Establish and maintain a "Guidance and Counselling Committee" in school.	2	8	20	30	40	0	2	8	39	51
Assist teachers in recognizing individual differences between students.	1	11	26	33	29	0	1	7	33	59
Consult with parents about the needs or concerns of students.	3	6	24	33	34	0	0	6	32	62
Refer students with special needs to appropriate agencies.	14	16	25	25	20	0	1	9	36	54
Consult with principal and teachers about the development of guidance and counselling goals and activities	3	10	26	30	31	0	1	9	43	47
Consult with principals about the needs or concerns of students	1	8	20	33	38	0	1	7	30	53
Follow up students referred to other agencies.	17	18	22	27	16	1	5	15	44	35
Consult with teachers about the needs or concerns of students	4	7	23	36	30	0	0	5	33	62
Consult with teachers about students' motivation and students' behaviour	5	8	25	33	29	0	1	9	41	49
Provide teachers with information about students' needs and concurrent issues	5	7	28	32	28	0	1	7	34	58

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.3.4 Evaluation and Assessment:

The majority of teachers (95%) thought that working to discover gifted and talented students was a major activity in the ideal role they perceived for the counsellor.

Other tasks in this category were also highly ranked. For example, the duties of identifying students with special educational and personal needs and monitoring the achievement level of students were also perceived by 93% of teachers as activities that should be important or very important. However, the results indicate that the lowest level of importance was attached to the tasks of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.

Regarding the actual role of counsellors, the majority of teachers (86%) mentioned that their counsellors often or always performed administrative tasks and clerical duties such as paperwork, record keeping and scheduling. Whereas only 21% of teachers mentioned that their counsellors used inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics. In other words, they perceived this latter function as least performed. Details are given in Table 5.31.

Table 5.31 Teachers' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor in Relation to the Tasks in the Evaluation and Assessment Category (n= 237)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Monitor the achievement level of students.	1	3	17	33	46	0	0	7	31	62
Use inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.	26	26	27	16	5	1	11	39	40	19
Identify students with special educational and personal needs	3	5	14	30	48	0	0	7	25	68
Work to discover gifted and talented students.	3	3	22	32	40	0	0	5	33	62
Perform administrative tasks and clerical duties (paperwork, records, scheduling…).	2	2	10	16	70	4	4	15	32	45

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.3.5 Programme Management and Development:

Regarding the actual role of counsellors in relation to the programme management and development category, teachers saw establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with school staff as the duty counsellors most frequently performed. 76% of them indicated that such tasks were often or always performed. Although other activities were also seen to be performed, keeping students informed of the guidance and counselling programme, and developing objectives for the programme were seen as the least frequently performed tasks.

On the other hand, when we examine the teachers' perception of the counsellor's ideal role, it can be noticed that the majority (95%) accorded priority to the task of establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with school staff. While other tasks in this category were also highly ranked, the results indicate, surprisingly, that the lowest level of importance was attached to the task of developing objectives for the guidance and counselling programme (see Table 5.32).

Table 5.32 Teachers' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor in Relation to the Tasks in the Programme Management and Development Category (n= 237)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Keep students informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	6	16	26	27	25	0	3	15	43	39
Develop objectives for the guidance and counselling programme.	4	16	33	31	16	0	1	15	44	40
Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with school staff	1	6	17	27	49	0	1	4	27	68
Plan activities to achieve the objective of the guidance and counselling	6	6	21	27	40	0	1	14	40	45
Keep parents informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	5	8	25	35	27	0	1	10	49	40
Inform principal and teachers about the guidance and counselling programme.	3	6	22	32	37	0	1	10	45	44

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important.

5.3.3.6 Personal and Professional Development:

As shown in Table 5.33, all activities in the personal and professional development area were seen by the majority of teachers as either important or very important in terms of the ideal roles of the counsellors. Nonetheless, the activity of engaging in continuous personal and professional development received the highest rating.

Looking at the performance of counsellors, it appears that the majority of the teachers perceived most of the personal and professional development tasks as never or rarely implemented, except in the case of engaging in continuous personal and

professional development, which 64% of teachers perceived this task as often or always performed.

Table 5.33 Teachers' Ranking of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor in Relation to the Tasks in the Personal and Professional Development Category (n=237)

Statements	Actual Role					Ideal Role				
	N %	R %	S %	O %	A %	VU %	U %	MI %	I %	VI %
Engage in continuous personal and professional development.	0	10	26	34	30	0	0	7	41	52
Conduct research related to students' needs and problems.	15	18	33	22	12	1	2	19	46	32
Conduct research related to the guidance and counselling programme.	17	26	29	19	9	1	4	25	47	23
Evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme.	5	10	38	32	15	0	2	20	29	49

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, O= Often, A= Always. VU= Very Unimportant, U= Unimportant, MI= Moderately Important, I= Important, VI= Very Important

5.3.3.7 Interim Summary:

Teachers believed that counsellors were involved in almost all of the professional activities, but, despite this, they perceived that performance did not match the high levels of ideal importance. The findings of this study, however, suggest that teachers essentially conceptualise the counsellors as performing administrative tasks and clerical duties such as paperwork, record keeping and scheduling, along with activities related to educational issues such as helping students with problems of academic achievement and monitoring their achievement levels. The lowest levels of involvement were considered to be for the tasks of conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme, and using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.

Teachers perceived most counsellors' functions to be very important or important, and they indicated strong support for counsellor's functions related to maintaining relationships and consulting with themselves and parents about the needs or concerns of students, identifying students with special educational and personal needs and working with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems. Notably, they attached a high level of importance to functions related to academic concerns at school, such as helping students with problems of academic achievement.

The lowest levels of importance were attached to the tasks of conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme, using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics and following up students referred to other agencies.

5.4 Reliability Analysis of Responses:

This section analyses the reliability of participants' answers by measuring their consistency. Cronbach's alpha statistic was used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire responses. Measured between 0-1, the consistency of the answers is high when Cronbach's alpha tends to "1", and low when tending to "0".

The questionnaire consisted of 39 items grouped into six categories: counselling (8 items), developmental, educational and career guidance (6 items), consulting (10 items), evaluation and assessment (5 items), programme management and development (6 items), and personal and professional development (4 items).

The consistency measures for each category were considered for counsellors, principals, and teachers separately. The six categories of the questionnaire were scored in

relation to both the actual and ideal role of the school counsellor. To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, the SPSS programme was used to calculate the statistics, given in Table 5.34.

Table 5.34 Consistency of Responses

Category	Cronbach's Alpha					
	Counsellors		Principals		Teachers	
	A. R.	I. R.	A. R.	I. R.	A. R.	I. R.
Counselling	0.906	0.826	0.891	0.806	0.885	0.728
Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance	0.823	0.755	0.824	0.740	0.833	0.689
Consulting	0.862	0.772	0.870	0.826	0.863	0.735
Evaluation and Assessment	0.639	0.530	0.600	0.514	0.713	0.558
Programme Management and Development	0.824	0.763	0.835	0.783	0.828	0.752
Personal and Professional Development	0.684	0.559	0.718	0.602	0.746	0.643
Overall	0.961	0.933	0.962	0.944	0.964	0.924

A.R. = Actual Role, I.R. = Ideal Role.

Clearly, most of the answers from the participants regarding all categories, excluding the "Evaluation and Assessment" category, may be considered to have moderate to high reliability.

5.5 Investigating the Differences in the Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the School Counsellor:

While the responses from the counsellors, principals and teachers were interesting, it is also worth considering whether particular subsamples of these groups

varied in their perceptions concerning the role of intermediate school counsellors in Saudi schools.

5.5.1 Counsellors' Sample:

In this subsection, the paired sample t-test was used to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences among counsellors' perceptions regarding their actual and ideal role in relation to each category, and then according to their ages, teaching experience, counselling experience, training, and number of students in schools. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was used to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences among counsellors' perceptions regarding their actual and ideal role in relation to each category and according to their demographic position. Apart from this, the Least Squares Difference (LSD) test, as mentioned before, was used to determine which groups differed significantly. It should be remarked that data for those counsellors who did not provide demographic information were excluded from the analysis and are considered as missing data.

5.5.1.1 Differences Between Counsellors' Perceptions of Actual and Ideal Role:

In order to answer the research question concerning whether there were any differences in the counsellors' perceptions of the actual and ideal roles of the intermediate school counsellor, the paired sample t-test was applied. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

As can be seen in Table 5.35, there were statistically significant differences between counsellors' perceptions of the actual and ideal role in relation to all six

categories. In the same way, the means of all categories were higher for the ideal role. The standard deviations for all categories in the ideal role were smaller than those for the actual role, which indicates that there was homogeneity in their perceptions of the ideal role.

Table 5.35 Comparison of Counsellors' Perceptions in Relation to their Actual and Ideal Role (n= 180).

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Counselling	4.365	0.661	4.6799	0.384	0.000*
Developmental, educational and career guidance	3.781	0.759	4.415	0.448	0.000*
Consulting	4.033	0.691	4.505	0.390	0.000*
Evaluation and assessment	4.059	0.567	4.312	0.459	0.000*
Programme management and development	4.126	0.668	4.472	0.461	0.000*
Personal and professional development	3.326	0.752	4.156	0.499	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

A) Counselling:

Table 5.36 presents the results of the paired t-test comparing the counsellors' responses concerning the counselling functions. Counsellors perceived their level of performance of all these functions as significantly lower than the ideal importance placed on them.

Table 5.36 Comparison of Counsellors' Perceptions on the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Counselling Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Address the developmental needs of students.	4.34	0.81	4.64	0.62	0.000*
Help students with problems of academic achievement	4.54	0.72	4.75	0.53	0.000*
Assist students in making appropriate decisions	4.18	0.90	4.61	0.61	0.000*
Meet with students to discuss academic concerns	4.65	0.62	4.71	0.58	0.006*
Assist students to cope with and resolve their problems	4.52	0.72	4.75	0.60	0.000*
Assist students to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests.	4.39	0.78	4.62	0.62	0.000*
Help students adjust to the school environment	4.57	0.64	4.69	0.59	0.000*
Counsel parents on their children's problems.	4.52	0.73	4.74	0.57	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

B) Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance:

The results in table 5.37 show that there are significant differences between counsellors' perceptions of the actual and ideal role of the functions in the developmental, educational and career guidance category. As the results of the paired t-test shows, their perceptions of the performance of all functions were lower than their perceptions of their ideal levels.

Table 5.37 Comparison of Counsellors' Perceptions on the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Collate information and provide workshop for students to help them develop academic skills.	3.50	0.99	4.26	0.67	0.000*
Conduct special educational programmes to deal with specific problems (truancy, smoking…).	4.02	0.92	4.48	0.63	0.000*
Work with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems.	4.34	0.77	4.70	0.53	0.000*
Collate information and provide workshops for students to help them develop social skills.	3.50	1.06	4.29	0.70	0.000*
Provide students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school.	3.80	1.09	4.37	0.68	0.000*
Conduct special programmes for gifted and talented students.	4.08	0.98	4.48	0.73	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

C) Consulting:

The paired t-test revealed that the counsellors' perceptions of their actual consulting functions and the ideal importance of these functions differed significantly. Their perceptions of their role performance were lower than the ideal importance they ascribed to the consulting functions (see Table 3.38).

Table 3.38 Comparison of Counsellors' Perceptions on the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Consulting Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Establish and maintain a "Guidance and Counselling Committee" in school.	4.14	0.95	4.36	0.73	0.000*
Assist teachers in recognizing individual differences between students.	4.24	0.77	4.59	0.63	0.000*
Consult with parents about the needs or concerns of students.	4.36	0.77	4.64	0.58	0.000*
Refer students with special needs to appropriate agencies.	3.42	1.31	4.48	0.78	0.000*
Consult with principal and teachers about the development of guidance and counseling goals and activities	4.31	0.94	4.60	0.69	0.000*
Consult with principals about the needs or concerns of students	4.34	0.87	4.57	0.63	0.000*
Follow up students referred to other agencies.	3.48	1.29	4.22	0.83	0.000*
Consult with teachers about the needs or concerns of students	4.32	0.82	4.61	0.65	0.000*
Consult with teachers about students' motivation and students' behaviour	4.21	0.81	4.45	0.72	0.000*
Provide teachers with information about students' needs and concurrent issues	4.13	0.84	4.50	0.67	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

D) Evaluation and Assessment:

Table 5.39 summarises the counsellors' perceptions of the actual performance and ideal importance of the functions in the evaluation and assessment category. The results show that counsellors perceived their performance as lower than the importance they placed on these activities, except for the task of performing administrative tasks and

clerical duties. This task was perceived to be performed more than the ideal importance placed on it.

Table 5.39 Comparison of Counsellors' Perceptions on the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Evaluation and Assessment Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Monitor the achievement level of students.	4.71	0.58	4.74	0.53	0.009*
Use inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.	2.30	1.06	3.48	0.92	0.000*
Identify students with special educational and personal needs	4.37	0.96	4.58	0.69	0.000*
Work to discover gifted and talented students.	4.51	0.70	4.62	0.65	0.005*
Perform administrative tasks and clerical duties (paperwork, records, scheduling…).	4.63	0.66	4.10	1.08	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

E) Programme Management and Development:

The paired t-test showed that there were significant differences between counsellors' perceptions of their actual and ideal roles concerning all tasks involving programme management and development. Their perceptions of the performance for all these tasks were lower than their perceptions of their ideal importance (see Table 5.40).

Table 5.40 Comparison of Counsellors' Perceptions on the Actual Performance and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Programme Management and Development Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Keep students informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	3.98	0.96	4.34	0.77	0.000*
Develop objectives for the guidance and counselling programme.	3.75	0.97	4.44	0.68	0.000*
Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with school staff	4.66	0.65	4.75	0.50	0.000*
Plan activities to achieve the objective of the guidance and counselling	4.45	0.74	4.53	0.71	0.004*
Keep parents informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	4.16	0.85	4.34	0.72	0.000*
Inform principal and teachers about the guidance and counselling programme.	4.30	0.83	4.48	0.70	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

F) Personal and Professional Development:

Table 5.41 concerning the counsellors' perceptions of their actual performance and the ideal importance of the four functions of personal and professional development. The paired t-tests showed that there were significant differences between the actual and ideal roles of the counsellors of all these functions. Counsellors perceived their performance levels as lower than the importance placed on these functions.

Table 5.41 Comparison of Counsellors' Perceptions on the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Personal and Professional Development Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Engage in continuous personal and professional development.	4.11	0.89	4.61	0.58	0.000*
Conduct research related to students' needs and problems.	2.85	1.03	4.11	0.80	0.000*
Conduct research related to the guidance and counselling programme.	2.67	1.15	3.80	0.88	0.000*
Evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme.	3.95	0.84	4.31	0.69	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

G) Interim Summary:

Although counsellors reported a considerable involvement in most activities listed in the questionnaire, significant differences were found between the perceptions of their ideal importance and actual performance by counsellors in all six categories. Their perceptions of the performance of their functions tended to be lower than their perceptions of the importance of those functions, except for the task of performing administrative tasks and clerical duties, which counsellors perceived as performed more than the ideal importance placed on this function would justify.

5.5.1.2 Differences in Counsellors' Perceptions Based on Their Age:

Table 5.42 compares the results of counsellors' perceptions of their actual performance and ideal role in relation to each category according to their ages, using the analysis of variance F- test (ANOVA), at the level of significance of 0.05.

Table 5.42 Differences by Age in the Perceptions of Counsellors Regarding their Actual Performance and Ideal Role in Relation to Each Category (n = 170)

Categories	Actual Role				Ideal Role			
	MS		F Value	Sig	MS		F Value	Sig
	B G	W G			B G	W G		
Counselling	2.680	0.384	6.983	0.000*	0.100	0.139	0.718	0.581
Developmental, educational and career guidance	3.200	0.519	6.162	0.000*	0.222	0.184	1.207	0.310
Consulting	3.911	0.402	9.7034	0.000*	0.156	0.145	1.097	0.369
Evaluation and assessment	1.450	0.293	4.956	0.001*	0.096	0.193	0.498	0.737
Programme management and development	2.652	0.384	6.912	0.000*	0.257	0.210	1.223	0.303
Personal and professional development	2.699	0.508	5.315	0.000*	0.304	0.234	1.300	0.272

B G= Between Groups. W G= Within Groups. *The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

The results of the ANOVA reveal that there were no statistically significant differences by age, at the 0.05 level, in counsellors' perception of their ideal role in all categories. This suggests that age dose not affect perceptions of the counsellor's ideal role.

However, there were significant statistical differences in all categories by age with regard to their actual role. Consequently, the LSD test was performed, and yielded the results as shown in Tables 5.43 to 5.48.

Table 5.43 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to Counselling Category, by Age

Mean	Age	23 – 28	29 – 34	35 – 40	41 – 46	47 and above
4.183	23 – 28			0.002*	0.048*	0.009*
4.442	29 – 34					0.000*
4.594	35 – 40	0.002*				0.000*
4.462	41 – 46	0.048*				0.000*
3.646	47 and above	0.009*	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As shown in Table 5.43, there were differences among counsellors' perceptions by age with regard to their actual role in relation to counselling category. Fore example, there were differences between perceptions of counsellors who are aged 47 and above (mean 3.646) and all other groups. Also, there were differences between the age groups 23-28 and both 35-40 and 41-46, respectively. Middle aged counsellors 35-40 performed counselling activities more often than the younger and older groups.

Table 5.44 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Category, by Age

Mean	Age	23 – 28	29 – 34	35 – 40	41 – 46	47 and above
3.5543	23 – 28			0.000*		
3.794	29 – 34					0.006*
4.1054	35 – 40	0.000*				0.000*
3.815	41 – 46					0.004*
3.111	47 and above		0.006*	0.000*	0.004*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

It can be seen in Table 5.44 that there were differences among counsellors' perceptions by age with regard to their actual role in relation to developmental, educational and career guidance category, there were differences between the age group

23-28 and 35-40, and between the group 47 and above and all other groups except those aged 23-28. Again, middle aged counsellors 35-40 reported being engaged in these tasks more often than did the other groups.

Table 5.45 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Consulting Category, by Age

Mean	Age	23 – 28	29 – 34	35 – 40	41 – 46	47 and above
3.737	23 – 28		0.007*	0.000*	0.004*	0.024*
4.150	29 – 34	0.007*				0.000*
4.3163	35 – 40	0.000*				0.000*
4.150	41 – 46	0.004*				0.000*
3.267	47 and above	0.024*	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The LSD test results show that there were significant differences among counsellors' perceptions by age with regard to their actual role in relation to consulting category. There were, for example, differences in perceptions of counsellors between the age group 23-28 years and all other groups. Similarly, there was a significant difference between the age group 47 years and above and all other groups. In general, counsellors in the middle ages group 35-40 performed consulting tasks more often than the younger and older groups did. (see Table 5.45 for more detail).

Table 5.46 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Evaluation and Assessment Category, by Age

Mean	Age	23 – 28	29 – 34	35 – 40	41 – 46	47 and above
3.8884	23 – 28			0.001*		
4.0667	29 – 34					0.020*
4.2735	35 – 40	0.001*				0.000*
4.1167	41 – 46					0.008*
3.633	47 and above		0.020*	0.000*	0.008*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

For the evaluation and assessment category, Table 5.46 shows that there were differences among counsellors' perceptions by age with regard to their actual role. There were differences between the age groups 23-28 and 35-40, and also between the group 47 and above and all other groups except those aged 23-28. It appeared that middle aged counsellors 35-40 group were involved in evaluation and assessment functions more often.

Table 5.47 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Programme Management and Development Category, by Age

Mean	Age	23 – 28	29 – 34	35 – 40	41 – 46	47 and above
3.845	23 – 28			0.000*	0.001*	
4.128	29 – 34					0.013*
4.3605	35 – 40	0.000*				0.000*
4.3056	41 – 46	0.001*				0.001*
3.597	47 and above		0.013*	0.000*	0.001*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

From Table 5.47 it can be noticed that there were significant differences among counsellors' perceptions by age with regard to their actual role in relation to the programme management and development category. There were differences in perceptions of counsellors who belong to the age group 23-28 and the groups 35-40 and 41-46. Also, there were differences between the age group 46 and above and all other groups except those aged 23-28. Clearly, counsellors belonging to the group 35-40 appear to be involved in theses activities more than their colleagues are.

Table 5.48 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Personal and Professional Development Category, by Age

Mean	Age	23 – 28	29 – 34	35 – 40	41 – 46	47 and above
3.047	23 – 28			0.000*	0.014*	
3.217	29 – 34			0.012*		
3.638	35 – 40	0.000*	0.012*			0.003*
3.444	41 – 46	0.014*				0.034*
2.938	47 and above			0.003*	0.034*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.48 shows significant differences among counsellors' perceptions by age with regard to their actual role in relation to the personal and professional development category. There were difference existed between the perceptions of counsellors who belong to those aged 23-28 and the groups 35-40 and 41-46, as well as between the groups 29-34 and 35-40. The group 47 and above also differed from the groups aged between 35-46. Middle aged counsellors 35-40 performed these activities more often than the other groups.

5.5.1.3 Differences in Counsellors' Perceptions Based on Their School Size:

As shown in Table 5.49, there were no significant differences in counsellors' perceptions regarding their ideal role in relation to each category according to the number of students in their schools. On the other hand, the only significant difference with regard to their actual role was found in the personal and professional development category.

Table 5.49 Differences by School Size in the Perceptions of Counsellors Regarding their Actual and Ideal Role in Relation to Each Category (n = 167)

Categories	Actual Role				Ideal Role			
	MS		F Value	Sig	MS		F Value	Sig
	B.G	W.G			B.G	W.G		
Counselling	0.489	0.434	1.128	0.345	0.121	0.141	0.859	0.490
Developmental, educational and career guidance	1.045	0.570	1.836	0.124	0.447	0.185	2.414	0.051
Consulting	0.639	0.486	1.315	0.267	0.160	0.151	1.060	0.378
Evaluation and assessment	0.174	0.326	0.535	0.710	0.209	0.182	1.147	0.336
Programme management and development	0.332	0.446	0.744	0.563	0.191	0.207	0.923	0.452
Personal and professional development	1.733	0.530	3.272	0.013*	0.526	0.235	2.239	0.067

B.G= Between Groups. W.G= Within Groups. * The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

The LSD test was then performed, and yielded the following results as seen in Table 5.50.

Table 5.50 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Personal and Professional Development Category, by School Size

Mean	School Capacity	1 – 150	151 – 300	301 - 450	451 – 600	600 and Above
3.047	1 – 150			0.011*	0.015*	
3.217	151 – 300					
3.638	301 – 450	0.011*				0.009*
3.444	450 – 600	0.015*				0.012*
2.938	600 and Above			0.009*	0.012*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Clearly, there were significant differences among counsellors' perceptions according to the number of students in their schools with regard to their actual role in relation to the personal and professional development category. There is a differences between the perceptions of those counsellors who work at schools with 1-150 students and those with 301-450 and 451-600 students. Also, there are differences between the perceptions of those counsellors who work at schools with 600 students and those with 301-450 and 451-600 students (see Table 5.50). It appeared that counsellors who belong to schools with a large students population are less involved in personal and professional development activities than other groups are.

5.5.1.4 Differences in Counsellors' Perceptions Based on Their Area of Specialization:

The data analysis revealed that there were no significant differences according to areas of specialization among counsellors' perceptions regarding their ideal role in all categories, as shown in Table 5.51. By contrast, there were significant differences by areas of specialization among counsellors' perceptions regarding their actual role in developmental, educational and career guidance, consulting, and personal and professional development.

Table 5.51 Differences by Areas of Specialization in the Perceptions of Counsellors Regarding their Actual and Ideal Role in Relation to Each Category (n = 174)

Categories	Actual Role				Ideal Role			
	MS		F Value	Sig	MS		F Value	Sig
	B.G	W.G			B.G	W.G		
Counselling	0.918	0.427	2.150	0.096	0.075	0.140	0.539	0.656
Developmental, educational and career guidance	1.782	0.557	3.198	0.025*	0.443	0.189	2.340	0.075
Consulting	1.406	0.464	3.033	0.031*	0.175	0.146	1.197	0.312
Evaluation and assessment	0.623	0.305	2.043	0.110	0.283	0.203	1.390	0.248
Programme management and development	0.935	0.42	2.190	0.091	0.485	0.193	2.505	0.061
Personal and professional development	1.805	0.545	3.313	0.021*	0.126	0.244	0.519	0.670

B.G= Between Groups. W.G= Within Groups. * The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

The LSD test was performed, and yielded the following results as seen in Tables 5.52 to 5.54.

Table 5.52 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Category, by Areas of Specialization

Mean	Major	Psychology	Sociology	Social Work	Others
3.7889	Psychology			0.047*	
3.7931	Sociology			0.016*	
4.4000	Social Work	0.047*	0.016*		0.003*
3.6237	Others			0.003*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

There were significant differences by areas of specialization among counsellors' perceptions regarding their actual role in developmental, educational and career guidance category. Clearly, the counsellors with a social work specialization differed in their perceptions from those counsellors with the other specializations. They perceived that

they more often performed all developmental, educational and career guidance tasks, than did other groups (see Table 5.52).

Table 5.53 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Consulting Category, by Areas of Specialization

Mean	Major	Psychology	Sociology	Social Work	Others
4.2000	Psychology				
3.9874	Sociology			0.009*	
4.5900	Social Work		0.009*		0.006*
3.9403	Others			0.006*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Again, there were significant differences in consulting category by areas of specialization among counsellors' perceptions regarding their actual role. The counsellors with a social work specialization differed in their perceptions from those counsellors who majored in sociology, psychology and other subject specializations. The counsellors with a social work specialization perceived that they performed theses tasks more often than did the other groups. Other than that, there were no significant differences (see Table 5.53).

Table 5.54 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Personal and Professional Development Category, by Areas of Specialization

Mean	Major	Psychology	Sociology	Social Work	Others
3.1167	Psychology			0.005*	
3.3305	Sociology			0.010*	
3.9750	Social Work	0.005*	0.010*		0.003*
3.2298	Others			0.003*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Once again, there were significant differences by areas of specialization among counsellors' perceptions regarding their actual role in personal and professional development area. Clearly, the counsellors with a social work specialization were differed

in their perceptions from those counsellors with the remaining specializations. They believed that they were more involved in this tasks, compared with other groups. Other than that, there were no significant differences (see Table 5.54).

5.5.1.5 Differences in Counsellors' Perceptions Based on Their Years of Teaching Experience:

It is clear from Table 5.55 that there were no significant differences by years of teaching experience among counsellors' perceptions with regard to their ideal role in relation to each category. Conversely, the analysis of variance revealed that there were significant differences according to length of experience in their perceptions of their actual role in relation to the counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance and consulting categories.

Table 5.55 Differences by Years of Teaching Experience in the Perceptions of Counsellors Regarding their Actual and Ideal Role in Relation to Each Category (n=167)

Categories	Actual Role				Ideal Role			
	MS		F Value	Sig	MS		F Value	Sig
	B.G	W.G			B.G	W.G		
Counselling	1.238	0.431	2.873	0.025*	0.091	0.141	0.645	0.631
Developmental, educational and career guidance	1.934	0.562	3.444	0.010*	0.382	0.191	1.999	0.097
Consulting	1.371	0.475	2.889	0.024*	0.245	0.144	1.705	0.151
Evaluation and assessment	0.551	0.319	1.725	0.147	0.103	0.207	0.498	0.737
Programme management and development	0.719	0.459	1.566	0.186	0.248	0.216	1.147	0.336
Personal and professional development	0.613	0.574	1.069	0.374	0.245	0.241	1.016	0.401

B.G= Between Groups. W.G= Within Groups. * The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

In the follow-up LSD test for counsellors' actual role in relation to the counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance, and consulting categories, significant differences according to years of teaching experience were found between the perceptions of those with 16 and more years of teaching experience compared to those with less experience, as shown in Tables 5.56 to 5.58.

Table 5.56 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Counselling Category, by Years of Teaching Experience of Counsellors.

Mean	Experience	None	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 and above
4.4734	None					0.003*
4.3203	1 – 5					
4.5086	6 – 10					0.006*
4.3966	11 - 15					0.026*
4.0125	16 and above	0.003*		0.006*	0.026*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.57 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Category, by Years of Teaching Experience of Counsellors.

Mean	Experience	None	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 and above
3.9078	None					0.003*
3.6510	1 – 5					
3.9943	6 – 10					0.002*
3.8506	11 - 15					0.015*
3.3722	16 and above	0.003*		0.002*	0.015*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.58 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Consulting Category, by Years of Teaching Experience of Counsellors.

Mean	Experience	None	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 and above
4.1766	None					0.005*
3.8844	1 – 5					
4.1655	6 – 10					0.013*
4.1241	11 - 15					0.023*
3.7133	16 and above	0.005*		0.013*	0.023*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

It is interesting that no significant different were found in the perceptions of the actual roles between those with 1-5 years of experience and those with 16 or more years of experience. However, counsellors with less teaching experience perceived themselves as involved in theses above functions more often than did counsellors with long teaching experience (see Tables 5.56 to 5.58).

5.5.1.6 Differences in Counsellors' Perceptions Based on Their Years of Counselling Experience:

Table 5.59 revealed that there were no statistical significance differences according to counselling experience in their perceptions of their ideal role in relation to all categories.

On the other hand, it is clear that there were significant differences depending on length of counselling experience in their perceptions regarding their actual role in relation to the counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance, consulting and programme management and development categories.

Table 5.59 Difference by Years of Counselling Experience in the Perceptions of Counsellors Regarding their Actual and Ideal Role in Relation to Each Category (n=156)

Categories	Actual Role				Ideal Role			
	MS		F Value	Sig	MS		F Value	Sig
	B.G	W.G			B.G	W.G		
Counselling	1.037	9.384	2.698	0.033*	0.169	0.146	1.159	0.331
Developmental, educational and career guidance	1.429	0.485	2.949	0.022*	0.425	0.188	2.254	0.066
Consulting	1.556	0.423	3.678	0.007*	0.213	0.148	1.444	0.222
Evaluation and assessment	0.511	0.301	1.699	0.153	0.322	0.200	1.605	0.176
Programme management and development	1.142	0.403	2.832	0.027*	0.143	0.220	0.651	0.627
Personal and professional development	0.635	0.527	1.204	0.311	0.098	0.225	0.437	0.782

B.G= Between Groups. W.G= Within Groups. * The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

The LSD test was performed, and yielded the following results show in Tables 5.60 to 5.63.

Table 5.60 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Counselling Category, by Years of Counselling Experience.

Mean	Experience	1 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 9	10 – 12	13 or More
4.3104	1 – 3					0.032*
4.5282	4 – 6				0.037*	
4.2381	7 – 9					0.040*
3.9000	10 – 12		0.037*			0.021*
4.5865	13 or More	0.032*		0.040*	0.021*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

There were significant differences by counselling experience in the perceptions of counsellors regarding their actual role in relation to the counselling category. The LSD test indicated that the counsellors with 13 or more years of experience in counselling had different perceptions from those with 1-3 and 7-12 years experience, but not those with 4-6 years experience. There is also a difference in perceptions between those who have 4 to 6 years of experience and those who have 10 to 12 years of experience in counselling, as shown in Table 5.60, counselling functions was performed by experienced counsellors more often than by less experienced counsellors.

Table 5.61 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Category, by Years of Counselling Experience.

Mean	Experience	1 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 9	10 – 12	13 or More
3.7000	1 – 3					0.024*
3.9785	4 – 6			0.018*		
3.5079	7 – 9		0.018*			0.007*
3.5333	10 – 12					
4.0256	13 or More	0.024*		0.007*		

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

From the LSD tests as shown in Table 5.61, there were significant differences by counselling experience in the perceptions of counsellors regarding their actual role in relation to the developmental, educational and career guidance category. The counsellors who had 13 and more years of experience in counselling had different perceptions from the groups who had 1 to 3 and 7 to 9 years of experience. Also, the counsellors who had 4 to 6 years of experience had different perceptions from those with 7 to 9 years of experience in counselling. It appeared that experienced counsellors were involved in these tasks more often.

Table 5.62 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Consulting Category, by Years of Counselling Experience.

Mean	Experience	1 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 9	10 – 12	13 or More
3.9533	1 – 3					0.008*
4.1613	4 – 6			0.020*		
3.7286	7 – 9		0.020*			0.001*
3.7800	10 – 12					
4.3154	13 or More	0.008*			0.001*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The LSD tests also revealed that there were significant differences by counselling experience in the perceptions of counsellors regarding their actual role in relation to the consulting category. The counsellors who had 13 and more years of experience had different perceptions from those with 1 to 3 and 10 to 12 years of experience. Also, the counsellors who had 4 to 6 years of experience had different perceptions from those group with 7 to 9 years of experience. Counsellors with long counselling experience believed that they were more involved in consulting tasks more often compared with those with less experience in counselling (see Table 5.62).

Table 5.63 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Programme Management and Development Category, by Years of Counselling Experience.

Mean	Experience	1 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 9	10 – 12	13 or More
4.0139	1 – 3		0.039*			0.011*
4.3065	4 – 6	0.039*				
3.9762	7 – 9					0.031*
3.8333	10 – 12					
4.3504	13 or More	0.011*		0.031*		

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

From the above, according to Table 5.63, there were significant differences by counselling experience in the perceptions of counsellors regarding their actual role in relation to the programme management and development category. The counsellors who had 13 and more years of experience in counselling had different perceptions from those with 1 to 3 and 7 to 9 years of experience. Also, the counsellors who had 1 to 3 years of experience had different perceptions from those who had 4 to 6 years of experience. In general, these activities were performed by experienced counsellors more often than by less experienced counsellors.

5.5.1.7 Differences in Counsellors' Perceptions Based On Whether Counsellors Attended a Training Programme or Not:

Table 5.64, displays the t-test results regarding counsellors' perceptions of their ideal role in relation to each category according to whether or not they had attended a training programme. No significant differences were found in any of the categories.

Table 5.64 Differences in Perceptions Between Counsellors who Have Received Training Programmes in Counselling and Those who Have Not, Regarding Ideal Role in Relation to Each Category (n= 180)

Categories	Attended		Not Attended		T-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Counselling	4.688	0.396	4.662	0.324	0.640
Developmental, educational and career guidance	4.413	0.427	4.385	0.465	0.702
Consulting	4.491	0.387	4.512	0.375	0.735
Evaluation and assessment	4.290	0.470	4.331	0.415	0.562
Programme management and development	4.475	0.477	4.454	0.410	0.761
Personal and professional development	4.180	0.463	4.047	0.529	0.107

Attended (n=122) not attended (n=58). *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

However, the t-test results shown in Table 5.65 revealed that there were significant differences in perceptions regarding their actual role in relation to the counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance, and programme management and development categories. All these functions were perceived as being done significantly more often by trained counsellors compared to non-trained counsellors

Table 5.65 Differences in Perceptions Between Counsellors who Have Received Training Programme in Counselling and Those Who Have Not, Regarding Actual Role in Relation to Each Category (n=180)

Categories	Attended		Not Attended		T-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Counselling	4.476	0.554	4.157	0.789	0.007*
Developmental, educational and career guidance	3.884	0.650	3.583	0.866	0.022*
Consulting	4.091	0.590	3.902	0.854	0.133
Evaluation and assessment	4.115	0.471	3.966	0.690	0.142
Programme management and development	4.220	0.584	3.937	0.788	0.017*
Personal and professional development	3.396	0.669	3.181	0.870	0.102

Attended (n=122) not attended (n=58). *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

5.5.1.8 Differences in Counsellors' Perceptions Based on Training Programme Duration:

The data on training programme duration were readjusted into two groups of less than one month, and more than one month. No significant differences between the groups were found among counsellors' perceptions regarding their actual and ideal role (see Tables 5.66 and 5.67).

Table 5.66 Differences by Training Programme Duration in the Perceptions of Counsellors Regarding their Actual Role in Relation to Each Category (n=122)

Categories	Less than a Month		More than a Month		T-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Counselling	4.481	0.544	4.399	0.633	0.549
Developmental, educational and career guidance	3.891	0.669	3.881	0.631	0.951
Consulting	4.086	0.597	4.124	0.610	0.793
Evaluation and assessment	4.127	0.476	4.019	0.477	0.353
Programme management and development	4.233	0.551	4.135	0.752	0.495
Personal and professional development	3.392	0.662	3.405	0.756	0.937

Table 5.67 Differences by Training Programme Duration in the Perceptions of Counsellors Regarding their Ideal Role in Relation to Each Category (n=122)

Categories	Less than a Month		More than a Month		T-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Counselling	4.692	0.398	4.649	0.421	0.661
Developmental, educational and career guidance	4.424	0.426	4.381	0.451	0.680
Consulting	4.496	0.392	4.495	0.398	0.997
Evaluation and assessment	4.278	0.494	4.352	0.384	0.519
Programme management and development	4.494	0.464	4.389	0.559	0.369
Personal and professional development	4.206	0.452	4.155	0.497	0.650

5.5.1.9 Interim Summary:

It was found that counsellors with different ages, areas of specialization, training, teaching experience, counselling experience and school sizes did not differ significantly in their perceptions of the ideal importance of various counselling functions. On the other hand, ages, counselling and teaching experience, areas of specialization, training and school size were all determining factors when considering the actual performance of counsellors' functions. Significant differences were found in their perceptions of their own actual role in relation to all categories and many of the activities within them, especially in the counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance, consulting and programme management and development areas. However, only a few differences in perceptions of performance were found between counsellors with different school sizes and teaching experiences. These results suggest that ages, areas of specialization, training and counselling experience are the most important factors that should be taken into consideration.

5.5.2 Principals' Sample:

As in the previous subsection, a paired samples t-test was used to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences among principals' perceptions regarding the actual performance and ideal role of counsellors in relation to each category, and then according to their age, length of experience as principals, and numbers of students in schools. In order to find out whether there were any significant differences among principals' perceptions in terms of their demographic information, the ANOVA test was then used. When the values of the test statistics were found to be significant,

an LSD test, as before, was used to determine which groups differed. The level of statistical significance was always set at 0.05.

5.5.2.1 Differences in Principals' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Intermediate School Counsellor:

A paired samples t-test was used to determine whether there were any differences between the principals' perceptions of the actual role and the ideal role of the intermediate school counsellor. As can be seen from Table 5.68, the results of the t-test for differences between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal role in relation for the six categories revealed significant differences in every category. Furthermore, the mean of all categories were higher for the ideal role. On the other hand, the standard deviations for all categories in the ideal role were smaller than those for the actual role, which indicates that there was greater homogeneity in the principals' perceptions regarding the ideal role of the counsellor.

Table 5.68 Comparison of Principals' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of Counsellor (n = 126)

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		T-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Counselling	4.105	0.641	4.633	0.357	0.000*
Developmental, educational and career guidance	3.517	0.774	4.427	0.424	0.000*
Consulting	3.931	0.696	4.547	0.380	0.000*
Evaluation and assessment	3.913	0.577	4.394	0.425	0.000*
Programme management and development	3.980	0.707	4.526	0.423	0.000*
Personal and professional development	3.357	0.766	4.321	0.460	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

A) Counselling:

Table 5.69 shows that principals differed significantly in their perceptions of the importance and actual performance of the counselling functions. Their perceptions of the counsellors' actual role did not match the high level of importance principals placed on these functions.

Table 5.69 Comparison of Principals' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Counselling Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Address the developmental needs of students.	4.13	0.75	4.72	0.53	0.000*
Help students with problems of academic achievement	4.40	0.76	4.80	0.44	0.000*
Assist students in making appropriate decisions	3.75	0.87	4.44	0.61	0.000*
Meet with students to discuss academic concerns	4.17	0.88	4.51	0.60	0.000*
Assist students to cope with and resolve their problems	4.17	0.85	4.67	0.55	0.000*
Assist students to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests.	3.76	0.99	4.54	0.57	0.000*
Help students adjust to the school environment	4.27	0.81	4.71	0.55	0.000*
Counsel parents on their children's problems.	4.18	0.88	4.68	0.50	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

B) Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance:

The paired t-tests revealed that the principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal roles of all counselling tasks in the developmental, educational and career guidance category differed significantly. Principals' perceptions were that the actual performance of all these tasks was lower than the important placed on them (see Table 5.70).

Table 5.70 Comparison of Principals' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Counsellor's Functions in the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Collate information and provide workshop for students to help them develop academic skills.	3.16	1.02	4.36	0.66	0.000*
Conduct special educational programmes to deal with specific problems (truancy, smoking…).	3.50	1.08	4.43	0.63	0.000*
Work with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems.	4.10	0.88	4.70	0.53	0.000*
Collate information and provide workshops for students to help them develop social skills.	3.25	1.05	4.32	0.69	0.000*
Provide students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school.	3.37	1.20	4.24	0.71	0.000*
Conduct special programmes for gifted and talented students.	3.74	1.10	4.52	0.63	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

C) Consulting:

The results in Table 5.71 indicate that there are significant differences between principals' perceptions of the ideal and actual role of counsellors in all consulting tasks. Principals perceived that counsellors in their school did not perform consulting functions to a degree consistent with the importance they placed on them.

Table 5.71 Comparison of Principals' Perceptions on the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Consulting Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Establish and maintain a "Guidance and Counselling Committee" in school.	4.36	0.87	4.57	0.65	0.003*
Assist teachers in recognizing individual differences between students.	4.03	0.90	4.61	0.55	0.000*
Consult with parents about the needs or concerns of students.	4.05	0.89	4.56	0.61	0.000*
Refer students with special needs to appropriate agencies.	3.45	1.32	4.52	0.70	0.000*
Consult with principal and teachers about the development of guidance and counselling goals and activities	4.07	1.03	4.58	0.60	0.000*
Consult with principals about the needs or concerns of students	4.12	0.94	4.61	0.57	0.000*
Follow up students referred to other agencies.	3.33	1.28	4.25	0.73	0.000*
Consult with teachers about the needs or concerns of students	4.00	0.99	4.56	0.57	0.000*
Consult with teachers about students' motivation and students' behaviour	3.94	0.98	4.63	0.53	0.000*
Provide teachers with information about students' needs and concurrent issues	3.97	0.94	4.56	0.56	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

D) Evaluation and Assessment:

As shown in Table 5.72 the paired t-tests again revealed that there were significant differences between perceptions of the actual and ideal roles of counsellors in all evaluation and assessment tasks. It appears from the results that the level of the importance attached to these activities was higher than the perceptions of their frequency

of performance, except for the task of performing administrative tasks and clerical duties. The level of perceived importance of this task was lower than perceived actual performance.

Table 5.72 Comparison of Principals' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Evaluation and Assessment Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Monitor the achievement level of students.	4.46	0.73	4.73	0.54	0.000*
Use inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.	2.33	1.16	3.74	0.92	0.000*
Identify students with special educational and personal needs	4.20	0.93	4.63	0.61	0.000*
Work to discover gifted and talented students.	4.04	0.96	4.63	0.55	0.000*
Perform administrative tasks and clerical duties (paperwork, records, scheduling…).	4.53	0.82	4.23	0.91	0.001*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

E) Programme Management and Development:

The paired t-tests show that the perceptions of principals differed significantly for the importance and performance of all the programme management and development tasks. Principals' perception of counsellors' involvement with these tasks was lower than the importance placed on them (see Table 6.73).

Table 5.73 Comparison of Principals' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Programme Management and Development Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Keep students informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	3.81	0.94	4.42	0.62	0.000*
Develop objectives for the guidance and counselling programme.	3.60	1.10	4.48	0.67	0.000*
Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with school staff	4.34	0.85	4.66	0.57	0.000*
Plan activities to achieve the objective of the guidance and counselling	4.30	0.87	4.69	0.53	0.000*
Keep parents informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	3.75	1.05	4.38	0.69	0.000*
Inform principal and teachers about the guidance and counselling programme.	4.09	0.89	4.52	0.58	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

F) Personal and Professional Development:

Table 5.74 again displays significant differences between principals' perceptions of the ideal and actual role for all personal and professional development tasks. Their perceptions of the actual role of counsellors did not match the high level of importance principals placed on these roles.

Table 5.74 Comparison of Principals' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Personal and Professional Development Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Engage in continuous personal and professional development.	4.00	0.89	4.56	0.60	0.000*
Conduct research related to students' needs and problems.	2.90	1.11	4.23	0.75	0.000*
Conduct research related to the guidance and counselling programme.	2.83	1.16	4.13	0.70	0.000*
Evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme.	3.70	0.97	4.37	0.66	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

G) Interim Summary:

Significant differences were found between principals' perceptions of the actual performance and importance of all of the counsellor's functions. Principals did not see counsellors' performance of their roles as matching their ideal level of importance. Such perceptions can be expected to have a negative influence on communication and co-operation between principals and counsellors.

5.5.2.2 Difference in Principals' Perceptions based on their Age:

In order to find out whether there were any significant differences among principals' perceptions in terms of their age, the ANOVA test was used. As shown in Table 5.75, the results revealed that there were no significant differences by age among principals' perceptions regarding the actual and ideal role of the counsellor.

Table 5.75 Differences by Age in the Perceptions of Principals Regarding the Actual and Ideal Role of the Counsellor in Relation to Each Category (n= 116)

Categories	Actual Role				Ideal Role			
	MS		F Value	Sig	MS		F Value	Sig
	B G	W G			B G	W G		
Counselling	0.720	0.403	1.788	0.136	0.122	0.135	0.903	0.465
Developmental, educational and career guidance	1.417	0.589	2.405	0.054	0.052	0.191	0.274	0.895
Consulting	0.747	0.467	1.601	0.179	0.242	0.149	1.627	0.173
Evaluation and assessment	0.372	0.338	1.101	0.360	0.076	0.188	0.406	0.804
Programme management and development	1.122	0.474	2.365	0.057	0.286	0.186	1.445	0.224
Personal and professional development	0.568	0.613	0.972	0.451	0.087	0.219	0.396	0.811

B G= Between Groups. W G= Within Groups. *The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

5.5.2.3 Difference in Principals' Perceptions Based on Their Years of Experience:

From Table 5.76, the results of the ANOVA revealed that there were no significant differences by years of experience among principals' perceptions regarding the actual and ideal role of the counsellors in relation to all the categories.

Table 5.76 Differences by Years of Experience in the Perceptions of Principals Regarding the Actual and Ideal Role of the Counsellor in Relation to Each Category (n=117)

Categories	Actual Role				Ideal Role			
	MS		F Value	Sig	MS		F Value	Sig
	B G	W G			B G	W G		
Counselling	0.239	0.425	0.563	0.690	0.057	0.124	0.461	0.764
Developmental, educational and career guidance	0.410	0.621	0.659	0.621	0.052	0.181	0.286	0.887
Consulting	0.268	0.508	0.528	0.715	0.077	0.152	0.506	0.732
Evaluation and assessment	0.189	0.339	0.559	0.693	0.201	0.176	1.140	0.341
Programme management and development	0.216	0.528	0.409	0.802	0.105	0.179	0.585	0.674
Personal and professional development	0.304	0.626	0.486	0.746	0.319	0.207	1.536	0.197

B G= Between Groups. W G= Within Groups. *The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

5.5.2.4 Difference in Principals' Perceptions Based on Their School Size:

As can be seen in Table 5.77, there were also no significant differences according to number of students in their schools among principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal role of the counsellors in relation to any of the categories.

Table 5.77 Differences by School Size in the Perceptions of Principals Regarding the Actual and Ideal Role of the Counsellor in Relation to Each Category (n= 122)

Categories	Actual Role				Ideal Role			
	MS		F Value	Sig	MS		F Value	Sig
	B G	W G			B G	W G		
Counselling	0.268	0.422	0.636	0.638	0.017	0.133	0.128	0.972
Developmental, educational and career guidance	0.202	0.620	0.325	0.860	0.098	0.184	0.532	0.713
Consulting	0.450	0.492	0.915	0.458	0.111	0.147	0.756	0.556
Evaluation and assessment	0.122	0.341	0.359	0.837	0.081	0.182	0.442	0.778
Programme management and development	0.259	0.506	0.513	0.726	0.111	0.184	0.604	0.661
Personal and professional development	0.371	0.603	0.614	0.653	0.085	0.215	0.398	0.810

B G= Between Groups. W G= Within Groups. *The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

It should be noted that, generally, since there exist a significant differences in the principals' perception between the actual and ideal roles of the school counsellor in relation to all the six categories, such significant differences did not appear according the selected demographic information. This may be due to the effect of missing demographic data from principals who declined or forgot to include it.

5.5.3 Teachers' Sample:

The paired samples t-test was then used to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences among teachers' perceptions regarding the actual and ideal role of counsellors in relation to each category, firstly overall and then according to their age, length of experience as teachers, and number of students in schools. The ANOVA test was used to determine whether there were any significant differences among teachers' perceptions by reference to their background details. In the same way, when the test statistic values were found to be significant, an LSD test was used to determine which groups differed. In all cases the level of statistical significance was again set at 0.05 level.

5.5.3.1 Difference in Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Intermediate School Counsellor:

To determine whether there were any differences between the teachers' perceptions of the actual and ideal role of the intermediate school counsellor, a paired samples t-test was used.

The results of the tests showed that there were statistically significant differences among teachers' perceptions between the actual and the ideal roles of the counsellors in all the six categories. Furthermore, the means of all categories were higher for the ideal role. A gain as with other respondents, the standard deviations of all categories in the ideal role were lower than those in the actual role, which means that there was greater homogeneity in the teachers' perceptions of the ideal role of the counsellor (see Table 5.78).

Table 5.78 Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Counsellor (n= 237)

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		T-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Counselling	3.918	0.739	4.512	0.371	0.000*
Developmental, educational and career guidance	3.315	0.877	4.340	0.449	0.000*
Consulting	3.692	0.750	4.414	0.384	0.000*
Evaluation and assessment	3.869	0.694	4.270	0.480	0.000*
Programme management and development	3.767	0.802	4.317	0.477	0.000*
Personal and professional development	3.251	0.838	4.106	0.532	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

A) Counselling:

From Table 5.79 significant differences were found between teachers' perceptions of the ideal and actual performance of all counselling activities. Counsellors were viewed by teachers as not being involved in these functions with a frequency consistent with the importance placed on them.

Table 5.79 Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Counselling Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Address the developmental needs of students.	3.92	0.87	4.59	0.60	0.000*
Help students with problems of academic achievement	4.19	0.93	4.71	0.52	0.000*
Assist students in making appropriate decisions	3.49	1.04	4.33	0.63	0.000*
Meet with students to discuss academic concerns	4.06	1.05	4.48	0.67	0.000*
Assist students to cope with and resolve their problems	4.05	0.93	4.54	0.63	0.000*
Assist students to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests.	3.57	1.09	4.38	0.70	0.000*
Help students adjust to the school environment	4.03	0.93	4.43	0.72	0.000*
Counsel parents on their children's problems.	4.03	1.07	4.63	0.57	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

B) Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance:

The paired t-tests showed that there were significant differences between teachers' perceptions of the importance and actual performance of all functions in the developmental, educational and career guidance category. The levels of perceived importance of these tasks were higher than the perceived of actual performance (see Table 5.80).

Table 5.80 Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Collate information and provide workshop for students to help them develop academic skills.	3.06	1.25	4.23	0.76	0.000*
Conduct special educational programmes to deal with specific problems (truancy, smoking…).	3.44	1.23	4.39	0.72	0.000*
Work with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems.	3.81	1.00	4.60	0.59	0.000*
Collate information and provide workshops for students to help them develop social skills.	2.97	1.21	4.16	0.77	0.000*
Provide students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school.	3.05	1.26	4.21	0.78	0.000*
Conduct special programmes for gifted and talented students.	3.57	1.15	4.45	0.67	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

C) Consulting:

As for previous categories, and similar to the principals' and counsellors' perceptions, teachers agreed that counsellors did not perform the consulting functions to a level consistent with the importance attached to them. Based on the paired t-test results, significant differences were found between teachers' perceptions of the ideal importance and performance of the consulting functions (see Table 5.81).

Table 5.81 Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Consulting Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Establish and maintain a "Guidance and Counselling Committee" in school.	3.96	1.07	4.40	0.71	0.000*
Assist teachers in recognizing individual differences between students.	3.78	1.01	4.49	0.69	0.000*
Consult with parents about the needs or concerns of students.	3.90	1.03	4.57	0.60	0.000*
Refer students with special needs to appropriate agencies.	3.21	1.32	4.42	0.72	0.000*
Consult with principal and teachers about the development of guidance and counselling goals and activities	3.76	1.10	4.35	0.70	0.000*
Consult with principals about the needs or concerns of students	3.99	1.01	4.43	0.68	0.000*
Follow up students referred to other agencies.	3.06	1.32	4.06	0.89	0.000*
Consult with teachers about the needs or concerns of students	3.82	1.06	4.57	0.60	0.000*
Consult with teachers about students' motivation and students' behaviour	3.73	1.10	4.36	0.73	0.000*
Provide teachers with information about students' needs and concurrent issues	3.70	1.11	4.48	0.70	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

D) Evaluation and Assessment:

Based on teachers' perceptions, the paired t-test results showed that there were significant differences between the actual and ideal roles of counsellors for all tasks in the evaluation and assessment category. From Table 5.82 their perceptions of actual performance were significantly lower than the ideal role perceptions, except for the task of performing administrative tasks and clerical duties. This task was thought to be less important than the actual performance level perceived.

Table 5.82 Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Evaluation and Assessment Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Monitor the achievement level of students.	4.21	0.88	4.54	0.65	0.000*
Use inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.	2.48	1.18	3.54	0.96	0.000*
Identify students with special educational and personal needs	4.15	1.03	4.61	0.61	0.000*
Work to discover gifted and talented students.	4.03	1.01	4.57	0.60	0.000*
Perform administrative tasks and clerical duties (paperwork, records, scheduling…).	4.47	0.95	4.10	1.05	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

E) Programme Management and Development:

Table 5.83 clearly shows that teachers differed significantly in their perceptions of the ideal and actual role in terms of the programme management and development tasks. The perceptions of actual performance were significantly lower than the perceptions of the ideal importance of these functions.

Table 5.83 Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Programme Management and Development Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Keep students informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	3.50	1.18	4.19	0.78	0.000*
Develop objectives for the guidance and counselling programme.	3.38	1.07	4.24	0.73	0.000*
Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with school staff	4.19	0.97	4.62	0.61	0.000*
Plan activities to achieve the objective of the guidance and counselling	3.90	1.17	4.27	0.75	0.000*
Keep parents informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	3.69	1.11	4.27	0.72	0.000*
Inform principal and teachers about the guidance and counselling programme.	3.94	1.04	4.32	0.69	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

F) Personal and Professional Development:

From Table 5.84, the paired t-test results show that there were again significant differences between teachers' perceptions of the ideal and actual role of personal and professional development functions in counselling. In addition, teachers perceived that counsellors did not perform these functions to a level consistent with the importance attached to them.

Table 5.84 Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions on the Actual and Ideal Role of the Functions in the Personal and Professional Development Area

Categories	Actual Role		Ideal Role		t-Test Sig
	Mean	S. D	Mean	S. D	
Engage in continuous personal and professional development.	3.83	0.98	4.44	0.64	0.000*
Conduct research related to students' needs and problems.	2.98	1.23	4.07	0.80	0.000*
Conduct research related to the guidance and counselling programme.	2.77	1.20	3.86	0.85	0.000*
Evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme.	3.43	1.02	4.04	0.76	0.000*

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

G) Interim Summary:

Teachers believed that counsellors do not perform their functions to the perceived level of ideal importance, which means that they are not getting what they want from the counselling programme. This might affect their co-operation in the programme and create doubts about its efficiency.

5.5.3.2 Difference in Teachers' Perceptions Based on Their Age:

The ANOVA test revealed that there were a statistically significant differences by age in teachers' views of the ideal role to be played by counsellors in relation to the counselling and developmental, educational and career guidance functions. Other than that no significant differences were found (see Table 5.85).

Table 5.85 Differences by Age in the Perceptions of Teachers Regarding the Actual and Ideal Role of the Counsellor in Relation to Each Category (n=220)

Categories	Actual Role				Ideal Role			
	MS		F Value	Sig	MS		F Value	Sig
	B.G	W.G			B.G	W.G		
Counselling	0.325	0.566	0.576	0.682	0.313	0.128	2.457	0.047*
Developmental, educational and career guidance	0.352	0.791	0.445	0.776	0.653	0.190	3.441	0.009*
Consulting	0.383	0.581	0.658	0.622	0.093	0.142	0.656	0.623
Evaluation and assessment	0.199	0.495	0.403	0.807	0.316	0.215	1.466	0.214
Programme management and development	0.646	0.662	0.977	0.421	0.229	0.216	1.063	0.376
Personal and professional development	0.960	0.706	1.360	0.249	0.190	0.285	0.667	0.616

B G= Between Groups. W G= Within Groups. *The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

The LSD analysis indicated that there were a significant differences in relation to the counselling category between the perceptions of teachers in the 35-40 years age group and both those in the 23-28 and 29-34 age groups (see Table 5.86). Teachers belonging to the age group 35-40 perceived counselling functions to be more important than did the other groups.

Table 5.86 LSD Test for the Ideal Role of Counsellors in Relation to Counselling, by Age of Teachers

Mean	Age	23 – 28	29 – 34	35 – 40	41 – 46	47 and above
4.306	23 – 28			0.004*		
4.290	29 – 34			0.050*		
4.452	35 – 40	0.004*	0.050*			
4.263	41 – 46					
3.963	47 and above					

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

In addition, differences were detected in relation to the developmental, educational and career guidance tasks between the group aged 47 and above and those in

the 23-40 years age groups. Teachers in the 35-40 age group attached more importance to developmental, educational and career guidance activities compared with other groups (see Table 5.87).

Table 5.87 LSD Test for the Ideal Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Category, by Age of Teachers

Mean	Age	23 – 28	29 – 34	35 – 40	41 – 46	47 and above
4.306	23 – 28					0.033*
4.290	29 – 34					0.036*
4.452	35 – 40					0.002*
4.263	41 – 46					
3.963	47 and above	0.033*	0.036*	0.002*		

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

5.5.3.3 Differences in Teachers' Perceptions Based on Years of Experience:

From Table 5.88, the results of the ANOVA test showed that there were no significant differences by years of experience among teachers' perceptions regarding the actual and ideal roles of the counsellor.

Table 5.88 Differences by Years of Experience in the Perceptions of Teachers Regarding the Actual and Ideal Role of the Counsellor in Relation to Each Category (n = 229)

Categories	Actual Role				Ideal Role			
	MS		F Value	Sig	MS		F Value	Sig
	B.G	W.G			B.G	W.G		
Counselling	0.321	0.559	0.574	0.682	0.276	0.126	2.187	0.071
Developmental, educational and career guidance	0.424	0.787	0.539	0.707	0.132	0.199	0.664	0.617
Consulting	0.498	0.574	0.868	0.484	0.127	0.139	0.911	0.458
Evaluation and assessment	0.248	0.492	0.505	0.732	0.058	0.218	0.264	0.901
Programme management and development	0.197	0.662	0.297	0.879	0.161	0.217	0.742	0.564
Personal and professional development	0.117	0.725	0.181	0.958	0.236	0.282	0.838	0.502

B.G= Between Groups. W.G= Within Groups. * The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

5.5.3.4 Difference in Teachers' Perceptions Based on Their School Size:

Table 5.89 reveals that there were statistically significant differences by school size in teachers' perceptions regarding the counsellor's ideal role in relation to counselling tasks, developmental, educational and career guidance functions, and the programme management and development category.

On the other hand, it is also clear that there were significant differences by school size among teachers' perceptions regarding the actual role of the counsellors in relation to programme management and development and personal and professional development.

Table 5.89 Differences by School Size in the Perceptions of Teachers Regarding the Actual and Ideal Role of the Counsellor in Relation to Each Category (n = 220)

Categories	Actual Role				Ideal Role			
	MS		F Value	Sig	MS		F Value	Sig
	B G	W G			B G	W G		
Counselling	1.216	0.536	2.270	0.063	0.439	0.129	3.399	0.010*
Developmental, educational and career guidance	0.993	0.785	1.265	0.285	0.642	0.194	3.310	0.012*
Consulting	1.257	0.552	2.278	0.062	0.305	0.136	2.238	0.066
Evaluation and assessment	0.785	0.482	1.629	0.168	0.267	0.218	1.222	0.302
Programme management and development	1.625	0.618	2.674	0.033*	0.765	0.204	3.752	0.006*
Personal and professional development	2.001	0.693	2.889	0.023*	0.468	0.282	1.658	0.161

B.G= Between Groups. W.G= Within Groups. * The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

From the follow-up LSD analysis of the ideal role of counsellors for the counselling tasks, Table 5.90 shows significant differences between teachers in schools with 1-150 students and all other school size except those of 451-600 students.

Table 5.90 LSD Test for the Ideal Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Counselling Category, by School Size

Mean	Number of Students	1 – 150	151 – 300	301 – 450	451 – 600	601 and More
4.3311	1 – 150		0.001*	0.001*		0.025*
4.5742	151 – 300	0.001*				
4.5758	301 – 450	0.001*				
4.4677	451 – 600					
4.5273	601 and More	0.025*				

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Furthermore, as shown in Table 5.91, significant differences of perceptions among teachers were found in relation to the developmental, educational and career guidance category between those in schools of 1-150 students and those with 151-300 and 301-450 students. Also, significant differences of perceptions were found in relation to the same category between teachers in schools of 151-300 students and those of 451- 600 students.

Table 5.91 LSD Test for the Ideal Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Category, by School Size

Mean	Number of Students	1 – 150	151 – 300	301 – 450	451 – 600	601 and More
4.1577	1 – 150		0.001*	0.024*		
4.4605	151 – 300	0.001*			0.015*	
4.3661	301 – 450	0.024*				
4.2204	451 – 600					
4.3540	601 and More					

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Finally, significant differences of perception were found in relation to the programme management and development category between teachers in schools of 1-150 students and those of all other school sizes (see Table 5.92).

Table 5.92 LSD Test for the Ideal Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Programme Management and Development Category, by School Size

Mean	Number of Students	1 – 150	151 – 300	301 – 450	451 – 600	601 and More
4.0721	1 – 150		0.001*	0.000*	0.038*	0.012*
4.3898	151 – 300	0.001*				
4.4071	301 – 450	0.000*				
4.3011	451 – 600	0.038*				
4.3490	601 and More	0.012*				

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

In terms of the counsellor's actual role, according to Table 5.93, significant differences of perceptions were found in relation to the programme management and development category between teachers in schools of 301-450 students and those in schools of 1-150 and 151 – 300 students.

Table 5.93 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Programme Management and Development Category, by School Size

Mean	Number of Students	1 – 150	151 – 300	301 – 450	451 – 600	601 and More
3.6306	1 – 150			0.013*		
3.6215	151 – 300			0.004*		
4.0410	301 – 450	0.013*	0.004*			
3.7419	451 – 600					
3.7188	601 and More					

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

The LSD analysis further revealed significant differences in relation to the personal and professional development category between the perceptions of teachers in schools of 301-450 students and those in schools of 151-300 and 451-600 students (see Table 5.94).

Table 5.94 LSD Test for the Actual Role of Counsellors in Relation to the Personal and Professional Development Category, by School Size

Mean	Number of Students	1 – 150	151 – 300	301 – 450	451 – 600	601 and More
3.2095	1 – 150					
3.0805	151 – 300			0.003*		
3.5410	301 – 450		0.003*		0.010*	
3.0645	451 – 600			0.010*		
3.2266	601 and More					

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

5.5.3.5 Interim Summary:

It was found that length of teaching experience, did not significantly affect teachers' perceptions regarding the actual and ideal roles of the counsellor in relation to all categories. Furthermore, teachers' perceptions were only slightly influenced by age. Age only significantly affected teachers' perceptions regarding the ideal roles of counsellors in relation to some counselling and developmental, educational and career guidance activities.

On the other hand, school size did make a difference to their perceptions of both the actual and ideal roles of the school counsellors. These included the teachers' perceptions of the counsellors' ideal roles in relation to counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance and programme management and development. Teachers

worked at medium size schools with 151-450 students population tended to view theses tasks to be more important compared with the other group.

Furthermore, differences in their perceptions of the counsellors' actual role were found in relation to programme management and development and personal and professional development functions. Again teachers belong to medium size schools with 151-450 students population tended to view programme management and development and personal and professional development functions to be done more frequently.

5.6 Differences in Perceptions Among Counsellors, Principals, and Teachers Regarding the Counsellor's Ideal Role:

Comparison of counsellors', principals', and teachers' perceptions of the ideal role of counsellors showed clearly that were statistically significant differences between them in relation to some categories and functions, namely counselling, consulting, programme management and development, and personal and professional development functions. The ANOVA results are provided in Table 5.95.

Table 5.95 Comparison of Counsellors', Principals', and Teachers' Perceptions of the Counsellor's Ideal Role (n = 543)

Categories	MS		F Value	Sig
	B.G	W.G		
Counselling	1.563	0.139	11.272	0.000*
Developmental, educational and career guidance	0.436	0.196	2.221	0.110
Consulting	0.854	0.149	5.751	0.003*
Evaluation and assessment	0.628	0.212	2.960	0.053
Programme management and development	2.210	0.211	10.454	0.000*
Personal and professional development	1.955	0.255	7.659	0.001*

B G= Between Groups. W G= Within Groups. * The variance is significant at the 0.05 level.

5.6.1 Counselling:

From Table 5.96 the results of LSD test of the three groups perceptions of the ideal role of counsellors in relation to the counselling category indicated that there were significant differences between the perceptions of principals (mean 4.633), counsellors (mean 4.680), and teachers (mean 4.512). Counsellors assigned higher importance to these functions than school staff did.

Table 5.96 LSD Test of the Counsellor's Ideal Role in Relation to the Counselling Category in the Perceptions of Counsellors, Principals and Teachers

Mean	Groups	Teachers	Principals	Counsellors
4.512	Teachers		0.003*	0.000*
4.633	Principals	0.003*		
4.680	Counsellors	0.000*		

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.97 below shows the ANOVA results for differences of perceptions between counsellors, principals and teachers in relation to functions classified under the counselling category.

Table 5.97 Comparison of Counsellors' Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Ideal Role of the Counsellor With Regarding Counselling Functions (n = 543)

Categories	Mean and Standard Deviation**			F-test Sig.
	Counsellors	Principals	Teachers	
Address the developmental needs of students	4.67 (0.577)	4.72 (0.531)	4.59 (0.601)	0.112
Help students with problems of academic achievement	4.80 (0.477)	4.80 (0.439)	4.71 (0.516)	0.094
Assist students in making appropriate decisions	4.33 (0.625)	4.06 (1.001)	(3.75) (0.873)	0.001*
Meet with students to discuss academic concerns	4.51 (0.603)	4.68 (0.564)	4.48 (0.674)	0.003*
Assist students to cope with and resolve their problems	4.72 (0.570)	4.67 (0.551)	4.54 (0.627)	0.006*
Assist students to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests.	4.62 (0.591)	4.54 (0.575)	4.38 (0.701)	0.001*
Help students adjust to the school environment	4.67 (0.587)	4.71 (0.552)	4.43 (0.719)	0.000*
Counsel parents on their children's problems.	4.71 (.564)	4.68 (0.500)	4.63 (0.571)	0.347

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Standard deviation value is in brackets.

According to the LSD test, differences exist between the perceptions of teacher and those of both counsellors and principals regarding meeting with students to discuss academic concerns, assisting students in making appropriate decisions and helping students adjust to the school environment. Counsellors and principals viewed these functions as more important than did teachers. On the other hand, differences also exist between the perceptions of counsellors and those of both teachers and principals regarding assisting students to cope with and resolve their problems and assisting students to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests. Counsellors attached higher importance than school staff to these tasks.

5.6.2 Consulting:

Table 5.98 shows the results of the LSD tests for perceptions of the ideal role of the counsellor in relation to the consulting category. There were significant differences

between the perceptions of teachers and principals, and between those of teacher and counsellors. Principals viewed these functions as more important than did counsellors and teachers.

Table 5.98 LSD Test of the Counsellor's Ideal Role in Relation to the Consulting Category in the Perceptions of Counsellors, Principals and Teachers

Mean	Groups	Teachers	Principals	Counsellors
4.414	Teachers		0.002*	0.017*
4.547	Principals	0.002*		
4.505	Counsellors	0.017*		

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.99 indicates the ANOVA results for differences in perception between counsellors, principals and teachers in relation to functions classified under the consulting category.

Table 5.99 Comparison of Counsellors' Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Ideal Role of the Counsellor With Regard to the Consulting Functions (n = 543)

Categories	Mean and Standard Deviation**			F-test Sig.
	Counsellors	Principals	Teachers	
Establish and maintain a "Guidance and Counselling Committee" in school.	4.43 (0.693)	4.57 (0.650)	4.40 (0.710)	0.072
Assist teachers in recognizing individual differences between students.	4.60 (0.594)	4.61 (0.551)	4.49 (0.687)	0.105
Consult with parents about the needs or concerns of students.	4.62 (0.580)	4.56 (0.614)	4.57 (0.604)	0.538
Refer students with special needs to appropriate agencies.	4.47 (0.787)	4.52 (0.701)	4.42 (0.724)	0.416
Consult with principal and teachers about the development of guidance and counselling goals and activities	4.59 (0.675)	4.58 (0.598)	4.35 (0.696)	0.000*
Consult with principals about the needs or concerns of students	4.58 (0.615)	4.61 (0.565)	4.43 (0.683)	0.014*
Follow up students referred to other agencies.	4.22 (0.841)	4.25 (0.726)	4.06 (0.893)	0.063
Consult with teachers about the needs or concerns of students	4.62 (0.627)	4.56 (0.573)	4.57 (0.604)	0.581
Consult with teachers about students' motivation and students' behaviour	4.42 (0.709)	4.63 (0.531)	4.36 (0.733)	0.001*
Provide teachers with information about students' needs and concurrent issues	4.49 (0.647)	4.56 (0.559)	4.48 (0.699)	0.501

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Standard Deviation value is in brackets.

According to the LSD test, differences exists between the perceptions of teachers and those of both counsellors and principals regarding consulting with principals and teachers about the development of guidance and counselling goals and activities and consulting with principals about the needs or concerns of students. Counsellors and principals viewed these functions as more important than did teachers. Differences also exist between perceptions of principals and those of both teachers and counsellors regarding consulting with teachers about students' motivation and behaviour. Surprisingly, principals viewed this task as more important than did counsellors and teachers.

5.6.3 Programme Management and Development:

Significant differences were found between the perceptions of counsellors and teachers, and between the perceptions of principals and teachers with regard to the ideal role of the counsellor in relation to programme management and development (see Table 5.100). Again principals assigned higher importance than counsellors and teachers to these functions.

Table 5.100 LSD Test of the Counsellor's Ideal Role in Relation to the Programme Management and Development Category in the Perceptions of Counsellors, Principals and Teachers

Mean	Groups	Teachers	Principals	Counsellors
4.317	Teachers		0.000*	0.001*
4.527	Principals	0.000*		
4.472	Counsellors	0.001*		

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.101 shows the results of difference of perceptions between counsellors, principals and teachers in relation to functions classified under the programme management and development category.

Table 5.101 Comparison of Counsellors' Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Ideal Role of the Counsellor With Regard to the Programme Management and Development Functions (n = 543)

Categories	Mean and Standard Deviation**			F-test Sig.
	Counsellors	Principals	Teachers	
Keep students informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	4.31 (0.799)	4.42 (0.624)	4.19 (0.781)	0.016*
Develop objectives for the guidance and counselling programme.	4.39 (0.688)	4.48 (0.666)	4.24 (0.727)	0.004*
Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with school staff	4.74 (0.519)	4.66 (0.568)	4.62 (0.610)	0.087
Plan activities to achieve the objective of the guidance and counselling	4.56 (0.654)	4.69 (0.529)	4.27 (0.751)	0.000*
Keep parents informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	4.32 (0.736)	4.38 (0.691)	4.27 (0.720)	0.344
Inform principal and teachers about the guidance and counselling programme.	4.52 (0.655)	4.52 (0.576)	4.32 (0.688)	0.002

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Standard deviation value is in brackets.

According to the LSD tests, differences exist between the perceptions of principals and those of teachers and counsellors regarding keeping students informed of the guidance and counselling programme. Principals placed significantly more importance on this role, compared to counsellors and teachers. Differences also exist between the teachers' perceptions and those of both counsellors and principals regarding developing objectives for the guidance and counselling programme and planning activities to achieve the objectives of guidance and counselling. Teachers perceived this role to be less important than counsellors and principals.

5.6.4 Personal and Professional Development:

Table 5.102 shows the results of the LSD tests on the ideal role of the counsellor in relation to personal and professional development in the perceptions of counsellors,

principals and teachers. Significant differences were found between the perceptions of principals and teachers, and also between the perceptions of principals and counsellors. Principals perceived these activities as more important than did counsellors and teachers.

Table 5.102 LSD Test of the Counsellor's Ideal Role in Relation to the Personal and Professional Development Category in the Perceptions of Counsellors, Principals and Teachers

Mean	Groups	Teachers	Principals	Counsellors
4.106	Teachers		0.000*	
4.321	Principals	0.000*		0.005*
4.156	Counsellors		0.005*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.103 shows differences in perceptions between counsellors, principals and teachers in relation to functions classified under the personal and professional development category**.**

Table 5.103 Comparison of Counsellors' Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Ideal Role of the Counsellor With Regard to the Personal and Professional Development Functions (n = 543)

Categories	Mean and Standard Deviation**			F-test Sig.
	Counsellors	Principals	Teachers	
Engage in continuous personal and professional development.	4.58 (.598)	4.56 (.600)	4.44 (.639)	0.054
Conduct research related to students' needs and problems.	4.03 (.794)	4.23 (.750)	4.07 (.797)	0.073
Conduct research related to the guidance and counselling programme.	3.78 (.911)	4.13 (.704)	3.86 (.853)	0.002*
Evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme.	4.23 (.702)	4.37 (.665)	4.04 (.758)	0.000*

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Standard Deviation value is in brackets.

According to the LSD test, difference were found between the perceptions of teachers and those of both counsellors and principals regarding evaluating the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme. Counsellors and principals viewed this task as more important than did teachers. On the other hand, differences also exist between the perceptions of principals and those of both teachers and counsellors regarding conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme. Principals placed significantly more importance on this task, compared to counsellors and teachers.

5.6.5 Interim Summary:

There are various discrepancies between counsellors and staff (principals and teachers) in terms of the perceived importance of the counsellor's functions. The counsellors assigned higher importance to many tasks than did other staff, especially those in the counselling category. The results indicate significant differences in the perceptions of counsellors, principals and teachers on substantial parts of the counsellor's activities. Principals and teachers concentrated more on the importance of educational aspects, while counsellors ascribed equal importance to tasks related to counselling, educational issues and students' personal well-being and development.

Theses differences may reflect a general lack of understanding of the counsellor's professional role. The reason for this might be a lack of clear definitions of the counsellor's role and inadequate information about its importance. This could lead to conflicting expectations of a counsellor's functions. Because of this, counsellors may find themselves in a state of confusion regarding which tasks should be considered of high priority.

5.7 Differences in Perceptions Among Counsellors, Principals, and Teachers Regarding the Counsellor's Actual Role:

This subsection examines the differences in perception found between counsellors, principals and teachers in relation to each category of the actual role of school counsellors.

The ANOVA results indicate that there were significant differences amongst the counsellors', principals' and teachers' in their perceptions of the counsellor's actual performance in relation to all of the categories except personal and professional development, as shown in Table 5.104.

Table 5.104 Comparison of Counsellors' Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual Role of the Counsellor (n = 543)

Categories	MS		F Value	Sig
	B G	W G		
Counselling	10.224	0.479	21.365	0.000*
Developmental, educational and career guidance	11.084	0.666	16.655	0.000*
Consulting	6.366	0.516	12.340	0.000*
Evaluation and assessment	1.912	0.394	4.850	0.008*
Programme management and development	6.773	0.545	12.433	0.000*
Personal and professional development	0.552	0.630	0.877	0.417

B G= Between Groups. W G= Within Groups. *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

5.7.1 Counselling:

Table 5.105 presents the results of the LSD tests of the three groups' perceptions of the actual role of counsellors in relation to the counselling category. Significant differences were found between the perceptions of principals, counsellors and teachers. More counsellors than staff considered they performed theses functions.

Table 5.105 LSD Tests of the Counsellor's Actual Role in Relation to the Counselling Category in the Perception of Counsellors, Principals and Teachers

Mean	Groups	Teachers	Principals	Counsellors
3.918	Teachers		0.015*	0.000*
4.105	Principal	0.015*		0.001*
4.365	Counsellors	0.000*	0.001*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.106 shows the test results for differences of perception between counsellors, principals and teachers in relation to functions classified under the counselling category.

Table 5.106 Comparison of Counsellors' Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual Role of the Counsellor Regarding the Counselling Category (n = 543)

Categories	Mean and Standard Deviation**			F-test Sig.
	Counsellors	Principals	Teachers	
Address the developmental needs of students.	4.24 (0.823)	4.13 (0.748)	3.92 (0.867)	0.000*
Help students with problems of academic achievement	4.56 (0.734)	4.40 (0.760)	4.19 (0.928)	0.000*
Assist students in making appropriate decisions	4.06 (1.001)	3.75 (0.873)	3.49 (1.044)	0.000*
Meet with students to discuss academic concerns	4.54 (0.787)	4.17 (0.877)	4.06 (1.054)	0.000*
Assist students to cope with and resolve their problems	4.42 (0.865)	4.17 (0.849)	4.05 (0.926)	0.000*
Assist students to understand themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests.	4.24 (0.937)	3.76 (0.991)	3.57 (1.093)	0.000*
Help students adjust to the school environment	4.57 (0.772)	4.27 (0.814)	4.03 (0.934)	0.000*
Counsel parents on their children's problems.	4.40 (0.850)	4.18 (0.880)	4.03 (1.069)	0.001*

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Standard deviation value is in brackets.

According to the LSD test results, differences exist between the perceptions of teachers and those of both counsellors and principals regarding addressing the developmental needs of students, and helping students with problems of academic achievement , and adjusting to the school environment. Teachers perceived these functions to be performed significantly less often than did counsellors and principals. Differences also exist between the

perceptions of counsellors and those of both teachers and principals regarding meeting with students to discuss academic concerns, assisting them to cope with and resolve their problems, assisting them in making appropriate decisions and understanding themselves, their abilities, aptitudes and interests. Counsellors saw themselves as more often involved in these tasks than did staff. Finally, differences also exist between perceptions of counsellors and those of teachers regarding counselling parents on their children's problems. More counsellors than teachers saw themselves involved with this function.

5.7.2 Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance:

The results in Table 5.107 show that there were significant differences in the follow up LSD test for the three groups' perceptions of the actual role of the counsellor in relation to the developmental, educational and career guidance category. Counsellors significantly viewed themselves as performing theses tasks more often than did school staff.

Table 5.107 LSD Test of the Counsellor's Actual Role in Relation to the Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Category in the Perceptions of Counsellors, Principals and Teachers

Mean	Groups	Teachers	Principals	Counsellors
3.315	Teachers		0.025*	0.000*
3.517	Principals	0.025*		0.006*
3.781	Counsellors	0.000*	0.006*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.108 shows differences of perceptions between counsellors, principals and teachers in relation to functions classified under the developmental, educational and career guidance category.

Table 5.108 Comparison of Counsellors', Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual Role of the Counsellor Regarding Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance Category (n = 543)

Categories	Mean and Standard Deviation**			F-test Sig.
	Counsellors	Principals	Teachers	
Collate information and provide workshop for students to help them develop academic skills.	3.48 (1.016)	3.16 (1.023)	3.06 (1.249)	0.001*
Conduct special educational programmes to deal with specific problems (truancy, smoking…).	3.93 (1.003)	3.50 (1.079)	3.44 (1.229)	0.000*
Work with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems.	4.18 (.900)	4.10 (.880)	3.81 (1.002)	0.000*
Collate information and provide workshops for students to help them develop social skills.	3.46 (1.100)	3.25 (1.048)	2.97 (1.214)	0.000*
Provide students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school.	3.67 (1.168)	3.37 (1.204)	3.05 (1.261)	0.000*
Conduct special programmes for gifted and talented students.	3.97 (1.049)	3.74 (1.104)	3.57 (1.154)	0.001*

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Standard deviation value is in brackets.

According to the LSD test, differences exist between the perceptions of teachers and those perceptions of both counsellors and principals regarding working with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems and collating information and providing workshops for students to help them develop social skills. Teachers perceived these tasks to be performed significantly less often than did principals and counsellors. On the other hand, differences also exist between the perceptions of counsellors and those of both teachers and principals regarding collating information and providing workshops for students to help them develop academic skills, providing them with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school and conducting special educational programmes to deal with specific problems. More counsellors than staff considered they performed these activities. Finally, differences

exist between the perceptions of counsellors and those of teachers regarding conducting special programmes for gifted and talented students. Counsellors saw themselves as more often involved in this task than did teachers.

5.7.3 Consulting:

Significant differences concerning consulting were found between the perceptions of counsellors and teachers, and between those of principals and teachers, and between teachers and counsellors (see Table 5.109). More counsellors viewed themselves as performing these functions.

Table 5.109 LSD Test of the Counsellor's Actual Role in Relation to the Consulting Category in the Perceptions of Counsellors, Principals and Teachers

Mean	Groups	Teachers	Principals	Counsellors
3.692	Teachers		0.003*	0.000*
3.931	Principals	0.003*		
4.033	Counsellors	0.000*		

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.110 shows the ANOVA results for the differences in perceptions between counsellors, principals and teachers in relation to functions classified under the consulting category.

Table 5.110 Comparison of Counsellors' Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual Role of the Counsellor Regarding Consulting Category (n = 543)

Categories	Mean and Standard Deviation**			F-test Sig.
	Counsellors	Principals	Teachers	
Establish and maintain a "Guidance and Counselling Committee" in school.	4.14 (0.967)	4.36 (0.871)	3.96 (1.073)	0.001*
Assist teachers in recognizing individual differences between students.	4.19 (0.885)	4.03 (0.903)	3.78 (1.013)	0.000*
Consult with parents about the needs or concerns of students.	4.23 (0.879)	4.05 (0.893)	3.90 (1.027)	0.002*
Refer students with special needs to appropriate agencies.	3.43 (1.374)	3.45 (1.324)	3.21 (1.319)	0.136
Consult with principal and teachers about the development of guidance and counselling goals and activities	4.24 (1.048)	4.07 (1.029)	3.76 (1.099)	0.000*
Consult with principals about the needs or concerns of students	4.29 (0.936)	4.12 (0.943)	3.99 (1.008)	0.009*
Follow up students referred to other agencies.	3.34 (1.367)	3.33 (1.276)	3.06 (1.325)	0.060
Consult with teachers about the needs or concerns of students	4.25 (0.890)	4.00 (0.988)	3.82 (1.064)	0.000*
Consult with teachers about students' motivation and students' behaviour	4.11 (0.951)	3.94 (0.978)	3.73 (1.101)	0.001*
Provide teachers with information about students' needs and concurrent issues	4.10 (0.879)	3.97 (0.938)	3.70 (1.109)	0.000*

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Standard deviation value is in brackets.

According to the LSD test, differences exist between the perceptions of teachers and those of both counsellors and principals regarding assisting teachers in recognizing individual differences between students, consulting with principal and teachers about the development of guidance and counselling goals and activities and providing teachers with information about students' needs and concurrent issues. Teachers perceived these functions to be performed significantly less often than did counsellors and principals. Differences also exist between the perceptions of counsellors and those of teachers

regarding consulting with parents, teachers and principals about the needs or concerns of students and consulting with teachers about students' motivation and students' behaviour. More counsellors perceived them to be performed, compared to the perceptions of teachers. Finally, further differences exist between the perceptions of principals and those of teachers regarding establishing and maintaining a guidance and counselling committee in the school, which principals viewed as more performed than did teachers.

5.7.4 Evaluation and Assessment:

Looking at Table 5.111, the results of the LSD tests for the perceptions of the actual role of the counsellor in relation to evaluation and assessment show that there were significant differences between counsellors and teachers, and between counsellors and principals. More counsellors viewed themselves as performing these functions.

Table 5.111 LSD Test of the Counsellor's Actual Role in Relation to the Evaluation and Assessment Category in the Perceptions of Counsellors, Principals and Teachers

Mean	Groups	Teachers	Principals	Counsellors
3.869	Teachers			0.002*
3.913	Principals			0.046*
4.059	Counsellors	0.002*	0.046*	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.112 shows the results of difference of perceptions between counsellors, principals and teachers in relation to functions classified under the evaluation and assessment category.

Table 5.112 Comparison of Counsellors' Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual Role of the Counsellor Regarding Evaluation and Assessment Category (n = 543)

Categories	Mean and Standard Deviation**			F-test Sig.
	Counsellors	Principals	Teachers	
Monitor the achievement level of students.	4.71 (0.703)	4.46 (0.734)	4.21 (0.877)	0.000*
Use inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.	2.30 (1.048)	2.33 (1.159)	2.48 (1.185)	0.278
Identify students with special educational and personal needs	4.33 (1.019)	4.20 (0.930)	4.15 (1.034)	0.181
Work to discover gifted and talented students.	4.47 (0.821)	4.04 (0.958)	4.03 (1.012)	0.000*
Perform administrative tasks and clerical duties (paperwork, records, scheduling…).	4.57 (0.792)	4.53 (0.817)	4.47 (0.950)	0.538

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Standard Deviation value is between brackets.

According to the LSD test, differences exist between the perceptions of teachers and those of both counsellors and principals regarding monitoring the achievement level of students. Principals and counsellors perceived this task as more performed compared to the perceptions of teachers. Also, a difference exist between the perceptions of counsellors and those of both teachers and principals regarding working to discover gifted and talented students. Counsellors saw themselves as more often involved in this task than did staff.

5.7.5 Programme Management and Development:

The LSD test results, as shown in Table 5.113, indicate that there were significant differences between the perceptions of principals and teachers, and between teachers and consolers regarding the actual role of the counsellor in relation to the programme management and development category. Counsellors viewed themselves as performing these functions more often than did staff.

Table 5.113 LSD Test of the Counsellor's Actual Role in Relation to the Programme Management and Development Category in the Perceptions of Counsellors, Principals and Teachers

Mean	Groups	Teachers	Principals	Counsellors
3.767	Teachers		0.009*	0.000*
3.980	Principals	0.009*		
4.126	Counsellors	0.000*		

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.114 shows the results for differences of perceptions between counsellors, principals and teachers in relation to functions classified under the programme management and development category.

Table 5.114 Comparison of Counsellors', Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Actual Role of the Counsellors Regarding Programme Management and Development Functions (n = 543)

Categories	Mean and Standard Deviation**			F-test Sig.
	Counsellors	Principals	Teachers	
Keep students informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	3.98 (0.983)	3.81 (0.944)	3.50 (1.185)	0.000*
Develop objectives for the guidance and counselling programme.	3.75 (0.950)	3.60 (1.097)	3.38 (1.066)	0.029*
Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with school staff	4.66 (0.801)	4.34 (0.850)	4.19 (0.970)	0.001*
Plan activities to achieve the objective of the guidance and counselling	4.39 (0.868)	4.30 (0.870)	3.90 (1.171)	0.000*
Keep parents informed of the guidance and counselling programme.	4.16 (0.950)	3.75 (1.050)	3.69 (1.114)	0.001*
Inform principal and teachers about the guidance and counselling programme.	4.25 (0.933)	4.09 (0.895)	3.94 (1.044)	0.006*

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Standard Deviation value is in brackets.

According to the LSD test results, differences exist between the perceptions of teachers and those of counsellors and principals regarding keeping students and parents informed of the guidance and counselling programme and planning activities to achieve

the objectives of guidance and counselling. Teachers perceived these activities to be performed less often than did counsellors and principals. Differences also exist between the perceptions of counsellors and those of teachers regarding developing objectives for the guidance and counselling programme, establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with school staff, and informing principals and teachers about the guidance and counselling programme. Counsellors saw themselves as more often involved in this functions than did teachers.

5.7.6 Interim Summary:

Regarding counsellors' performance, it is a cause for concern that all the participant groups perceived the activities they considered important as not as often performed.

As noted earlier, staff attached more importance to activities related to educational, psychological and behavioural issues, and thought that counsellors were most often involved in activities related to educational and administrative work. Thus, most of the functions that staff perceived to be more often performed were related to educational and clerical jobs rather than counselling activities.

Similarly, most of the functions that counsellors perceived themselves as involved with were related to educational guidance and clerical duties. However, although educational-related activities and personal counselling activities were both rated highly as important/very important, counsellors appeared to think that personal counselling was more important but saw their time as being taken up by with non-counselling activities.

5.8 Conclusions:

This Chapter has presented the data obtained from the questionnaire survey. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to describe and compare the groups' responses. Throughout this chapter, different statistical tests were used to determine significant differences between the perceptions of principals', teachers' and counsellor' regarding the actual and ideal roles of the school counsellor. More broadly, the following statistical analysis techniques were used:

- Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire.
- Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to describe and compare the distribution of the groups' responses.
- Paired t-tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences between each group's perceptions of the actual and ideal role of counsellor.
- A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine statistically significant differences in the perceptions among the groups regarding the actual and ideal role of the school counsellor in relation to each of the six categories.
- When applying ANOVA, if a significant difference between means was found, a least square difference (LSD) post-hoc test was used to identify which groups differed.

It can be seen from the questionnaire findings that many variations exist amongst the three groups in their perceptions of both the actual and the ideal roles of the school counsellor. In particular, although the three groups appeared to agree on certain issues related to the counsellor's role, they often perceived that role differently and attached different levels of importance to the tasks involved.

Although the reliability of the questionnaire was measured to ensure the validity of the results and to explore issues covered in the questionnaire in more depth, a series of interviews were subsequently carried out with principals, counsellors and teachers. The findings of these interviews are discussed in the next chapter.

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Chapter six

Interview Findings

6.1 Introduction

This is the second of two chapters presenting the fieldwork findings. The previous chapter presented the data obtained from questionnaire results. This chapter reports the findings from the interviews conducted with school counsellors, principals and teachers at various intermediate schools in Saudi Arabia, which provided complementary data to those collected from questionnaire samples. The specific purpose was to provide more information about the current intermediate school counsellor's role and the guidance and counselling programme in intermediate schools in the Kingdom. The participants were ten counsellors, eight principals and twelve teachers. (The interview schedule is set out full in Appendix B).

The interview findings are presented in nine sections. The first explores the perceptions of counsellors, principals and teachers of the kind of the duties counsellors perform most of the time. In the second section, their perceptions of the necessary duties of the school counsellors are listed, and in the third section their perceptions regarding unnecessary duties undertaken by school counsellors. This is followed in the fourth section by the perceptions of principals and teachers of duties neglected by school counsellors. Section five concerns the support extended to counsellors by school staff and parents. Another issue highlighted by counsellors is their perceptions of duties unrelated to counselling that they perform, which is explained in section six. In the seventh section, difficulties that counsellors face are reported. The issue of counsellors' attention to student bodies and concerns is discussed in section eight. Finally, a number of

suggestions for the improvement of guidance and counselling services in Saudi Arabia are reported.

6.2 Duties Counsellors Performed:

Question 1: "What duties dose the counsellor perform most of the time?"

6.2.1 Counsellors' Responses

Solving problems related to troublemakers was a function identified by the majority of counsellors (7) as part of their duties. In fact, trouble in class was reported as the main reason for referring students to counsellors. One counsellor revealed that: "When students cause trouble in the class, teachers send them to me. In this situation my responsibility is to sort these problems out".

Another counsellor who revealed that counsellors are trouble shooters echoed the same concern: "Teachers think that the counsellor is the first person in school who should deal with students' behavioural problems. In fact, some of them send the student directly to the counsellor without taking any action to resolve the problem themselves".

What is more, monitoring and controlling students' behaviour while they are in the schoolyard was another activity some counsellors were required to perform. In protest, one counsellor said: "If I am required to discipline students and monitor their behaviour during the break twice a day, how can I be expected to carry out more important activities".

Another counsellor commented that: "Monitoring students and dealing with trouble-makers takes most of my time. In fact, some cases need more than half an hour to

resolve. If you add the amount of time administrative duties take, you can imagine the amount of pressure to which I am subjected".

Apart from this, the majority of counsellors interviewed (9) indicated that they were involved in administrative tasks and clerical duties. This included activities such as paperwork, record keeping, scheduling, registration and reports. One counsellor stated that, "The large quantity of paperwork and administration required from me by the principal and the Ministry of Education takes most of my time". Similarly, Hutchinson et al (1986) found that scheduling, testing, record keeping and non-counselling activities required more counsellor time and attention than the counsellors themselves believed was warranted.

Because of this, counsellors do not seem to enjoy carrying out these bureaucratic duties at the expense of more important tasks. A counsellor voiced her dismay at this, stating that: "We have enough to do in our school. I sometimes find it is necessary for me to do some administrative work, although I am not really convinced about it. I feel that it is not part of my job, but I do it to avoid any further clash with the principal". In agreement with this view, another counsellor claimed that: "I am not keen on what I am doing. The principal keeps asking me to do her own work such as administration. I am attempting to maintain a good relationship with her".

Counsellors also indicated that they have to complete different types of forms and records and write down reports on all the counselling services they perform. This was seen as a waste of time. In fact, all of the respondents pointed out that they did not have enough time for this paperwork, and that some of them had to spend up to 40% of their time writing. This affected their practical work. One counsellor stated that "this

paperwork is very demanding and there is insufficient time to do it during the limited school hours. Therefore, the only option is to do it as homework".

Other counsellors complained that their work was completely overshadowed by administrative tasks, which meant that their performance as counsellors was affected in a negative manner. One counsellor cautioned: "If the counsellor has to write down everything she has done, her work with students will be affected". This means that working with students, which is the most important aspect in the counselling service, is often neglected.

One in three counsellors cited dealing with tardy students and students who tended to skip lessons as an activity they had to carry out on a daily basis. On this point, one counsellor commented: "Every morning I have to write down the names of absent students as well as the names of those who arrive late. Then I discuss the matter with each student and in some cases involve the parents". Other counsellors echoed the same view and stated that such activities were not compatible with their duties as counsellors. One counsellor said: "I think that by performing these duties, we will jeopardize our relationship with students. I don't think this is our job".

The majority of the counsellors interviewed (7) were also responsible for identifying low achieving students. Counsellors mentioned that they had to check achievement levels to identify the problem and help students to improve their educational achievement. In the words of one counsellor: "Part of my work is to help and enhance the academic achievement of those who fail to meet the set standards". Another counsellor admitted: "I try my best to serve students who face serious problems and difficulties in

their study. I wish I could provide help to all those who need it. But unfortunately, time does not allow it".

Some counsellors pointed out that they arrange special programmes or classes for low achieving students who encounter difficulties in certain subjects. Elaborating on this point, one counsellor said: "In our school, we attend to the weaker students by holding special classes in different subjects. Our aim is to improve the academic skills of those students so that they can reach higher levels of achievement. These classes are free of charge and are held during school hours".

Additionally, four counsellors stated that they were involved in personal counselling, though not at a satisfactory level. They argued that they understood the importance of this area. However, due to their limited time and experience in counselling, it remained difficult for them to implement this function. One counsellor believed that: "Psychological problems require someone with sufficient knowledge and experience in order to help students resolve such problems".

Two counsellors indicated that they encountered some difficulties as regards conducting case studies and interpreting their results. One of the respondents stated that they could do nothing about psychological problems, and the student involved would most likely be referred to a specialist. Another counsellor admitted that she was not the right person to provide professional counselling and added that all she could do was to offer advice.

In general, nearly half of the interviewed counsellors admitted that their knowledge about counselling was lacking. According to them, this was mainly due to the fact that they had little background knowledge and training in psychology and other

relevant issues. For example, one of them expressed this idea clearly and revealed that: "It is not easy to carry out this function; I have little background in personal counselling. This function needs professional knowledge and training". She further stated that case studies require someone who is knowledgeable about the subject, who knows what to do, who is able to interpret the results, and is capable of finding the right solution. Another counsellor commented on the physical and emotional changes of adolescence and stated that: "This stage is characterised by physiological and behavioural changes that require special care and attention, and an understanding of their effect on the students".

What is more, fortunately, one counsellor made reference to preventive counselling and stated that: "Twice a year, we hold special programmes to enlighten students about the dangers of smoking. This is because we suffer a lot from this problem. Our school is located in a poor area where this kind of problem is widespread among both girls and boys ".

6.2.2 Principals' Responses:

In answer to the first question, the majority of principals (7) thought that counsellors were expected to deal with problematic, undisciplined and tardy students and handle behavioural problems. They added that counsellors have to look at disciplinary cases, but are not responsible for meting out punishment. Only one principal refuted counsellors' claims that they were there in schools to solve problems in classes: "Punishment is not the counsellors' responsibility; this is our job as administrators".

Five of the interviewed principals agreed that they assigned their counsellors some administrative tasks and clerical duties. In their opinion, records and clerical duties

were the only means through which counsellors could be evaluated. One principal admitted that the only measure for assessing a counsellor's performance was the amount of paperwork she had accomplished: "If I want to assess the counsellor's work, I have to look through her records".

On the other hand, half of the principals took a more moderate line and reported that not all paperwork was necessary, and that it should be limited only to important records. One principal suggested that: "When counsellors waste time preparing unnecessary records, they will not be able to perform their important duties." In agreement with this view, another principal noted that: "In my experience, counsellors take too much care and waste too much time organizing their records."

One principal then made the following assertion: "I think that some counsellors have no experience in counselling services. Because of this, they pay much attention to formalities in order to conceal their failures and lack of knowledge". In other words, as she further stated, the reason for some counsellors paying too much attention to clerical duties was that they did not know much about counselling and that the only thing they could do was paperwork. A similar view was expressed by Schmidt (1984) who stated that counsellors who perhaps have been ill-prepared in their work might become quite comfortable with activities that focus on paperwork rather than students.

Six of the principals agreed that counsellors were involved in identifying low achieving students. This included the development of educational skills and the enhancement of academic performance.

6.2.3 Teachers' Responses:

The majority of teachers (10) pointed out that counsellors in their schools were involved in dealing with students who tended to skip their lessons, and those who arrived late at school. According to them, it was the counsellor's responsibility to attend to those students and identify the causes of their problems. However, it appears that these two activities take most of the counsellor's time. Showing some sympathy towards the counsellor, one teacher stated: "This morning, I noticed that our counsellor had to deal with twelve students who arrived late in addition to an equal number of students who did not attend school the day before".

Apart from this, teachers also noted that counsellors deal with all behavioural problems. One teacher said she was stunned to learn that behavioural problems and discipline were the counsellor's responsibility. According to her: "In my school, the counsellor handles every single problem related to discipline or misconduct". On the other hand, six teachers raised the issue of behavioural problems and suggested that it was the principal's responsibility to deal with disruptive students. One said she was amazed to find that students who make trouble in class return after seeing the counsellor rather than the school principal who was supposed to be the head of the school and the person responsible for settling class disputes when these go beyond the control of the teacher: "I often send trouble-makers to see the principal, and then I discover that it was the counsellor had dealt with their cases".

All teachers agreed that counsellors in their schools were assigned many administrative tasks and much paperwork. They believed that counselling services were established to help students in many ways, not to concentrate only on paperwork. Making

reference to the counsellors in her school, one teacher stated: “If you asked me about our counsellor, I would say she does a lot of paperwork with little concern for our students’ problems.” Another teacher was more sarcastic. In her words: “I think every school needs two counsellors, one to work with the students and the other to prepare the records”.

In the same way, this problem of involvement of counsellors in clerical work was acknowledged by one of the interviewees who blamed counsellors themselves, saying that: “I think that if there is any problem it would be from a counsellor herself who has been appointed to the wrong job. Other counsellors are sometimes busy with paperwork, administrative activities or other school duties instead of tackling problems”. Expressing her concerns over the lost effort and tine. One teacher stated that: “Counsellors are wasting their time on clerical duties, which makes me worried about the future of school counselling as a whole”.

All teachers indicated that counsellors devoted attention to identifying low achieving students, and declared that counsellors monitored the achievement of students and helped those with low levels of achievement. One teacher stated that: “Every month I provide the counsellor with a list of students who have difficulty in my subject”. In general, all teachers agreed that it was the counsellor’s job to attend to low achieving students and to try to do something about the causes of their learning problems.

6.2.4 Interim Summary:

Activities counsellors were performing most of their time dealing with discipline and behavioural problems, dealing with absenteeism and tardy students, involvement in administrative tasks and clerical duties, such as paperwork, record keeping, scheduling,

registering students and preparing reports, involvement in personal counselling and identifying low achieving students.

6.3 Important Duties of the School Counsellor:

Question 2 : "What duties do you think the school counsellor should perform?"

6.3.1 Counsellors' Responses:

All counsellors (10) believed that the most important duty they should perform is to help students to deal with their personal and family problems. One counsellor's view was that: changes in society were the main factor in causing problems within the family and society, and she pointed out that these cause confusion, rebellion and feelings of alienation among adolescents, saying that: "I think that changing life style and involvement in a materialistic life are creating many problems. Teenagers are questioning everything. They believe they are grown-ups and therefore do not need interference from their parents. They do not want to accept adult culture and traditional society. Today, they feel under pressure and a lot of stress".

Some counsellors stressed this issue and stated that, if problems were not solved, this would affect the students' behaviour and achievement levels. One interviewee summed up her concerns in the following statement: "Counsellors are supposed to help students in all personal problems. Unless problems are solved, students' behaviour and level of achievement will suffer".

Furthermore, most counsellors interviewed (7) said that discussing students' problems and needs with the principal, teachers and parents is an issue that deserves more

attention, They explained that this is a highly important matter on which they should concentrate, especially when students suffer from family or personal problems. In this respect, one counsellor suggested that: “Some problems are easily solved after a discussion with teachers and parents”. This concern was also raised by another counsellor who said that: “The needs of students require a continuous dialogue with school staff and parents. This will help the counsellor to develop useful plans for students and find solutions to their problems”.

Moreover, half of the counsellors (6) indicated that introducing the guidance and counselling programme to students is very important. They confirmed that a focus on this matter would increase students’ awareness of the services available. Students can then benefit from such programmes and decide what counselling services they might need. Nevertheless, interestingly, one counsellor stated that students in some schools did not benefit from the services available simply because they did not know that they existed. A second counsellor further mentioned that: “Some students do not understand the role of the counsellor because they do not know what services are available to them”.

Counsellors’ own responsibility in promoting their services among students and their family was expressed by a third counsellor in the following words: “it is necessary to build good relationships and strong connections with the families and their children and to explain the function of these services, which would help in creating a positive attitude. I believe that these methods are very good in creating awareness among people, who finally will become more aware of the importance of the role of the school counsellor” .

In the same vein, counsellors also agreed that low achievers required a special attention. One counsellor stated that: “Most low achieving students I dealt with suffered from personal problems that needed time and attention”. In the opinion of the majority (9) of those interviewed, giving more attention to low achieving students would improve their performance levels. However, they all agreed that monitoring low achieving students requires time they cannot afford.

Apart from this, half of the counsellors (5) emphasized the importance of helping students adjust to the school environment, as this would prevent possible academic and psychological problems. One counsellor suggested that this was particularly important when changes occurred in the student’s environment, such as transferring from one school or stage to another.

Preventive counselling was also seen by four of the counsellors as a duty they should perform. In their opinion, holding special guidance programmes to address issues such as smoking and drugs was of great importance, as it would enable students to make sensible decisions and choices.

Just over than half of the counsellors (6) thought that students’ motivation was another area that deserved serious consideration. In their opinion, teachers should work with them to achieve this purpose, and that parental support, which is almost non-existent, is also needed.

6.3.2 Principals' Responses:

Principals stated a number of views concerning the activities counsellors should carry out. All of them (8) agreed on the importance of helping students, especially low achievers, to improve their study skills and academic achievement. One principal commented that: "student's academic achievement should be at the centre of the counsellor's attention".

Five of the principals stated that counsellors should be involved in students' personal and family problems. In their opinion, the counsellor is the right person to understand and deal with such problems. Summing up the views of these principals, one principal commented that: "Unless we address the personal concerns and problems of the student and create a healthy environment, we can not expect her to improve academically, no matter what we do".

Three principals believed that unsatisfactory relationships made children unable to confide in their parents, saying for example that: "It is very difficult for some children to get psychological help from their family. Some families do not know how to deal with their children in the new situation facing them today. I think this difficulty in dealing with new changes leads to breakdown in the relations between the family and children such as not telling their parents about their feelings and they keep things to themselves. This situation would increase their children's problems while they are trying to keep everything private".

Apart from this, interestingly, the majority of principals interviewed placed great emphasis on crisis counselling. However, four principals chose to elaborate on this point and admitted that counsellors need the support of teachers, principals and parents. One

stated that: “Without discussing the student’s needs and problems, and without exchanging views about the cause of any dysfunction, we should not expect to find viable answers or a solution”. In line with this, one principal added that: “When all parties involved show a genuine concern, the student can feel it, her motivation will be enhanced and performance improved”.

Three principals mentioned that counsellors should inform students about guidance and counselling services and organize preventive counselling programmes to deal with specific problems such as truancy and smoking. Nevertheless one principal argued that preventive counselling, on its own, is not sufficient or effective. In her view: “Why do we have to wait for the problem to crop up? Why do we not remember the Arabic proverb, prevention is the best medicine?” In the same vein, one principal argued that: “If students do not know what counselling programmes are available to them, I think the counsellor should quit her job”. Another principals protested: “How is it possible for the students to appreciate and understand the counsellor’s role if she does not know what the counsellor and counselling are there for and about?”

6.3.3 Teachers’ Responses:

The majority of teachers (9) stated that improving students’ study skills and helping them with problems of academic achievement were of paramount importance. However, although they thought that counsellors were trying their best to achieve this goal, more effort was still needed. One teacher commented that: “To be honest, student achievement and related problems are the main concern of all teachers. Students should be advised to increase their effort”. Within this context, five teachers thought that

improving students' motivation is vital for academic success. One stated that: "I believe that improvement of student motivation will improve academic achievement and study skills".

Four teachers were more precise in their responses. In their judgment, helping students with personal or family problems matters most. One teacher said: "In my view, the counsellor's duty is to help students in a number of ways. In particular, if personal and family problems are not sorted out, students' behaviour and academic achievement may suffer".

On the issue of cooperation and consultation, half of the teachers (6) emphasized the need for counsellors to be involved in discussing the students' needs and problems with the principal, teachers and parents. They pointed that the counsellor should pay more attention to this function. One teacher blamed the counsellors for not doing their job properly: "From time to time, our counsellor asks me to send some students from my class to her office, but she never tells me why".

The importance of introducing the guidance and counselling programme to students was emphasized by only one teacher. As she argued: 'Counsellors should make sure that all students are informed about the counselling services available to them and conduct counselling sessions related to behavioural problems'.

6.3.4 Interim Summary:

Interviewees thought that the counsellor should perform duties such as helping students to solve their personal and family problems, helping students with problems of academic achievement, paying attention to students' motivation, discussing the students'

needs and problems with the principal, teachers and parents, informing students about the guidance and counselling programme, conducting special programmes to deal with specific problems such as truancy, smoking, drugs and helping students adjust to the school environment.

6.4 Unimportant Duties Undertaken by the School Counsellor:

Question 3: "What duties do you think a school counsellor should not perform?"

6.4.1 Counsellors' Responses:

All of the counsellors interviewed stressed the importance of engaging counsellors in schools in counselling functions rather than administrative and clerical work, which would help in shaping positive attitudes towards these services. They needed to become more involved professionally, rather than spending time doing clerical work.

They emphasized that the role of the counsellor is to assist students to understand themselves and resolve their problems. One counsellor protested that she was not assigned the right duties and said that: "If I am to waste most of my time on paperwork, I do not know how I can provide students with counselling services". The same view was echoed by another counsellor who mentioned that: "I think I should be called a clerk, not a counsellor". These remarks are consistent with the findings of Al-Ahmady (1983), Saleh (1994), and Al-Goaib (1986), that there is too heavy a load of other tasks unrelated to the counselling job.

However, the majority of counsellors (8) stated that they should not be dealing with tardy students or absenteeism. They reported that this type of work is the

responsibility of the principal and her deputy. One counsellor blamed some principals, in that: “They think that the counsellor is there to do anything related to school. Counselling is the last thing they expect her to do”.

On the other hand, two participants criticized counsellors who accepted involvement in that type of non-counselling school work. They felt that such involvement would confirm a negative or confused image of counselling services in schools.

According to four counsellors, their principals usually asked them to do substitute teaching. In their opinion, this took up much of their time, especially when two or more teachers were absent. One counsellor claimed that: “It often happens that I teach three classes in one day. This makes it difficult for me to perform other duties”.

Also, three counsellors mentioned that disciplining students should not be at the heart of their duties. They pointed out that such work may affect their relationship with students. One counsellor said that: “I think if the counsellor punished the students, they would hate her and hate counselling altogether”.

6.4.2 Principals’ Responses:

Principals responses regarding what counsellors should not perform were limited to a few functions. Some of these were only mentioned by a small number of principals. However, five principals stated that counsellors’ paperwork should be reduced. They noted that counsellors should not waste their time preparing records. One principal made the following admission: “The amount of paperwork determines how counsellors are evaluated. I think we should find other means”.

The second duty counsellors should not perform, as pointed out by half of the principals (4), was disciplining students and managing their behaviour. They emphasized that such work may impact negatively on the relationship between students and counsellors. One principal stated that: "I've noticed that some students avoid talking to the counsellor because she acts as a disciplinarian. Counselling is not disciplining".

6.4.3 Teachers' Responses:

The majority of teachers (9) indicated that counsellors should be given less administrative work and clerical duties. Without doing this, it would be impossible for them to act as counsellors. One teacher made the following statement: "In fact, it is hard for counsellors, as they have extensive responsibilities and massive clerical duties. I do not know how they manage". Another teacher objected to administrative tasks, saying that: "Counsellors who are involved with administration or cover teaching become less competent to deal with students' needs, which are obviously basic to the role of counsellors". Another teacher blamed some counsellors themselves in that they: "are sometimes busy with paperwork, administrative activities or other school duties instead of tackling problems". As she further stated, "this sometimes happens in order to maintain a good relationship with the principals".

Six teachers stated that counsellors should not deal with absenteeism and tardy students. They emphasized that this is the responsibility of the principal and her deputy. They also noted that counsellors should not discipline students. One counsellor objected to administering punishment and said: "I believe that punishing and disciplining students is not counselling. The counsellor should not be requested to do this sort of Job".

6.4.4 Interim Summary:

According to the interviewees, the counsellor should not performing administrative tasks and clerical duties, such as paperwork, records, scheduling, student registration and reports, dealing with absent and tardy students, substituting for absent teachers and disciplining students.

6.5 Duties Neglected by School Counsellors:

Question 4 : addressed to principals and teachers "What are the duties your school counsellor does not perform?"

6.5.1 Principals' Responses:

Half of the principals (4) noted that counsellors do not perform personal counselling and felt that counsellors might not have the relevant skills. One emphasized the importance of the counsellor's experience and knowledge in personal counselling by saying that: "The available counsellors, or, to be fairer, many of them, cannot properly deal with some problems such as psychological ones. They do not have enough background in counselling. I think this is an important area. There are limitations in applying counselling practice, experience, and training". In agreement with this view, another principal thought that: "I think some counsellors do not provide students with this service because of their limited background knowledge in counselling".

Three principals mentioned that the lack of a strong relationship between parents and counsellors in their schools was a serious problem. They highlighted the importance

of parental support and insisted that counsellors should do more to strengthen relationships with parents. On this point, one principal made the following statement: "The link between our school and students' families is very weak. Our counsellor does not pay this matter any attention". Two principals stated that counsellors do not attempt to discipline students and control their behaviour. One principal commented: "I think that disciplining students and controlling their behaviour is the counsellor's responsibility".

6.5.2 Teachers' Responses:

The majority of teachers (8) thought that their counsellors paid no attention to personal counselling. According to them, the reason for this is that counsellors lack professional knowledge and training. One teacher emphasized the importance of the counsellors' experience and knowledge by saying that: "These services should include suitable modern methods, approaches, skills and techniques to resolve the problems of students. There is still a need to improve the quality of counselling services. I wish that these services existed in our schools with more techniques used. The counsellors themselves who are going to use these new techniques must be qualified counsellors". One teacher saw the lack of supervision and professional consultation for the counsellor as a further limitation when dealing with difficult cases.

Half of the teachers (6) noted that some counsellors do not appreciate the importance of the home-school relationship. They argued that an effective relationship between parents and the school would influence the students' achievement in a positive manner. One teacher suggested that: "Counsellors should build a good relationship with

parents and parents should help counsellors as well. Once this happens, students will benefit".

Four teachers complained that counsellors do not do enough to deal with the students' behavioural problems. On teacher commented that: "Counsellors are supposed to focus on students' behavioural problems. If they do not do this, then I think we do not need them". Two teachers mentioned that counsellors should be involved in substitute teaching. According to them, when counsellors attend classrooms, they can identify students' needs and problems. One of them argued that there should be regular contact between students and counsellors: "I think the counsellor should attend classes regularly, even when teachers are not absent. This will enable her to know more about the students and enable the students to know her". In contrast, another teacher thought problems were created by counsellors being involved in doing academic work and teaching jobs, as this could contribute to misguided perceptions towards counselling services. She argued that: "We should encourage people to understand the fundamental role that the counsellor can perform and she must be freed from teaching work. We should emphasise this point".

6.5.3 Interim Summary:

Teachers and principals complained that their counsellors did not conduct personal counselling, attempt to establish stronger home-school relationships, pay attention to students' behavioural problems, discipline students and do substitute teaching.

6.6 Support from School Staff and Parents:

Question 5 : addressed only to counsellors "Do you feel that the school staff and parents support you?"

When asked if they felt that they were supported by principals, teachers, parents and students, the counsellors had both positive and negative comments. For example, one respondent was very satisfied with the support extended to her by the principals because she understood the role of the counsellor in the school, and the importance of that role.

In fact, the majority of counsellors (7) believed that their principals supported them. Some added that such support enabled them to offer counselling services to students. On the other hand, three respondents agreed that they did not get adequate support from their principals due to a lack of recognition of the role of the counsellor in the school and the importance of that role. One of them stated that, "Some members of the school management are cooperative, while others are not. For example some of the managers tend to entrust the counsellor with some jobs, such as teaching and administrative work which will distract her from her original job as a student helper. The only explanation for this situation is that the school management is not fully aware of the exact role that should be played by the counsellor in the school". In general, it seems that those counsellors were not happy with the quality of support they received. However, one of them mentioned the significance of support to counsellors and stated: "If the principal supported the counsellor, she would be helping students, and at the same time encouraging the counsellor to provide better counselling services".

Some counsellors indicated that support from teachers was adequate, but others suggested that it varied and depended on how teachers perceived the counsellor's role.

One counsellor made the following statement: “It is hard to say that all teachers support me. But I believe that support comes only from those who know what my role is”. Nonetheless, as one counsellor stated: “Some teachers still seemed to be uncooperative. They believed that the role of the counsellor was irrelevant and useless, and that the counsellor should be given teaching duties ”.

Another respondent confirmed that the school counsellors would not be able to do their jobs properly without the cooperation and support of the school management and the teachers. She further drew attention to the inappropriate use made of the service by some teachers who did not understand its real purpose, saying that: “Teachers should learn at least the basic skills to deal with some of their students’ problems. They have to teach their students that counselling is a place where you can find help, and the importance of counselling for them. Teachers need to stop sending students to us to solve small problems such as doing homework”.

Support and co-operation by parents was generally not forthcoming. Most of the respondents indicated that they only experienced minimal support and co-operation from the parents of students who achieved excellent grades. Other parents offered negligible levels of support and co-operation. This was attributed to a lack of awareness on the part of parents about the counsellor’s role in the school and its importance. Half of the counsellors (6) pointed out that some parents do not even visit school to follow their children’s progress. Interestingly, one counsellor described what happens when parents come to school: “Some parents do not know me, and I do not know them either. When they come to the school they go straight to the principal’s office”.

Another factor related to this issue, as most counsellors believed, is the lack of trust in outside professionals, because of doubts about confidentiality. This concern was raised by one counsellor, who said that: "I believe that some parents are afraid to send their children to a counsellor because they do not think she will keep information confidential regarding their children's problems. They think that if they tell the counsellor anything, she will break their trust and disclose the information to people it doesn't concern. Indeed, there is no co-operation between the parents and counsellors". This finding is consistent with the argument proposed by Abo-Abah (1996) regarding the lack of confidence of Saudi people in the credibility of counsellors. Additionally, Al-Goaib (1986) found that in about 30% of cases of school social workers' dealings with students confidentiality was not maintained.

6.7 Duties Unrelated to Counselling that Counsellors Perform:

Question: (6), addressed only to counsellors: "Do you perform any work not related to your role?"

6.7.1 Counsellors' Responses:

All of the respondents thought that some of the activities they were usually asked to perform were not related to their work. For example, four counsellors reported that they usually acted as proctors when exams were held at the end of the school term. According to one counsellor: "Sometimes, I have the feeling that students think that I do not trust them. This is because I am usually asked to watch them".

Nearly half of the counsellors indicated that their principals asked them to do various administrative tasks not related to counselling. They argued that headmasters assigned to them duties which had little to do with the supposed role of school counsellors or the needs of students. They thought that their principals did not understand their roles as counsellors.

However, an example of the unclear status of counsellors, as three of them stated, was the fact that head teachers tended to use them as cover teachers when other teachers were absent. This as they further mentioned, reinforces the idea that counselling is nothing special and that counsellors have no particular job or status.

Although they generally felt a need to reject involvement in administrative work and to articulate to principals their rationale for that rejection, some of the respondents indicated that they agreed to do such work in order to maintain good relationships with the principals. As they further explained, refused to obey the principal's orders may result in problems. According to one counsellor: "My previous principal asked me to do some work but I refusal because it was not related to my job. As a result I was transferred to another school".

6.8 Difficulties the counsellors face:

Question 7: addressed to counsellors "What kind of difficulties do you face in your work?"

6.8.1 Counsellors' Responses:

Concerning the difficulties and problems that faced counsellors and hindered them from doing their work, the main complaint expressed by all respondents (10) was

the large quantity of paperwork required by the Ministry of Education. For instance, as the majority of counsellors (9) stated, counsellors are required to complete several records, including comprehensive records for each student as well as a record of all counselling services performed by the counsellor. There are records for daily actions such as problems facing students, absentees, truancy, individual cases, high achievers, underachievers, and so on. In addition, counsellors are required to write reports of all counselling work conducted.

All of the counsellors, however, argued that this wide range of clerical work with students' records and other administrative tasks might reinforce misperceptions of counselling services. They also thought that the Ministry of Education should find a solution to this problem. One counsellor stated that: "I would say that paperwork occupies too much of my time. As a result some major duties are neglected". They further pointed out that they did not have enough time for this paperwork, and that some of them had to spend up to 40% of their time writing. According to one counsellor: "In fact, paperwork takes up to 40% of our time and the rest is left to other activities".

A further problem mentioned was the lack of co-operation from parents. It was evident that all the counsellors suffered from this problem. One counsellor believed that parents did not understand her role: "The problem lies in the lack of understanding of the counsellor's role on the part of the parents. This could be because parents are preoccupied with their own business". Another counsellor, commenting that the lack of awareness of counselling and the role of school counsellors was a result of the closed tradition of some Saudi families. She commented that: "A major obstacle that would face establishing counselling services in Saudi schools is lack of awareness among some parents. They are

not convinced that counselling is important due to their limited knowledge and they do not trust outside help. In particular, older parents who are very conservative and highly traditional do not believe there is any benefit from this kind of service to cope with problems. They think that it is their responsibility to supervise their children. There is a lack of recognition and understanding of the role of the counsellors."

Although another counsellor was in agreement with the above counsellor that older parents tended to reject the idea of seeking help from a counsellor, she indicated that young people were also reluctant to seek help from a counsellor due to their parents' influence: "From my experience as a counsellor in this school, although the students are familiar with counselling and know about it in school, I note that some of them are not willing to come to seek help from me. I think that they are influenced by their parents who do not support them in seeking help from me. Mostly, their parents ask them not to discuss their personal problems with the counsellor. … I think that parents do not understand the importance of the counselling role as a method to help their children to overcome the problems that are facing them."

In general, it seems that, because respondents believed that parents were an important link in the chain of counselling work, they usually exerted great effort in communicating with parents. Nevertheless, minimal support might come even from parents of talented students.

What is more, four counsellors also pointed that the huge number of students they are requested to serve would mean a high work-load. They assumed that, in some instances and due to the limited school hours, each counsellor could be responsible for more than 450 students. In effect, counsellors limited their counselling work to a few

students, and neglected others who could be in dire need of counselling. One counsellor confessed that: “It is difficult, if not impossible to provide all counselling services to more than 450 students”. A similar view was expressed by a second counsellor who stated that: “There is a lack of time to deal with students’ needs. This is because I have 600 students and it is difficult to provide effective counselling and guidance services for them. This makes it very difficult to play an effective role in the school.”

Furthermore, two counsellors complained that students were often referred to them by teachers for unacceptable reasons such as forgetting to do their homework or not having pens or pencils. Both counsellors thought that: “Some teachers do not understand the counsellor’s role. They even expect the counsellor to do the job on their behalf ”.

Moreover, all counsellors complained that sufficient training courses were not available. They emphasized that this was a serious problem, especially in that many unqualified counsellors need training. One counsellor protested that only the privileged few can benefit from training by saying: “There is a course (diploma) conducted specifically for counsellors at the universities every year. But only a few counsellors are nominated for training”. Another expanded on desirable professional attributes and particularly highlighted the need for training: “We need a person who believes in the importance of counselling with sufficient background and not just for receiving good wages. Saudi girls and families face many problems and they need special care and somebody who understands their needs, and those would be understood by skilled counsellors … I mean someone who is qualified. This, I think, should be based on her educational, social, and psychological background and training. I think that preparing counsellors and increasing their ability and competency through well-designed

counsellor-training programmes is very important to ensure their competence". This concern was raised by another counsellor by saying: "I am not satisfied with the current courses. Many meetings and conferences are needed to improve these courses and programmes. There is a need to concentrate on the skills and proficiency of counsellors rather than knowledge about counselling. Counsellors must be very experienced."

These views contrast with those of another interviewee who disagreed with the above statements in certain respects. She considered existing counselling training to be reasonably good, although the service is under pressure and needs developing: "I do not like exaggeration and I want to be realistic. The current curriculum of counselling is good, the Ministry keeps improving it. The current situation is not bad. I am satisfied with the counselling programmes and training courses being implemented. I think that if there is any problem it would be from a counsellor herself who has been appointed in the wrong place."

Additionally, all respondents agreed that confidentiality was absolutely important, even though it appears to be almost impossible to achieve in these schools, given the inadequate opportunity for the counsellor to discuss student problems with them in private. In fact, no rooms are specially allocated for this purpose, and any problems are therefore effectively discussed in public. It is also clear that some counsellors were torn between maintaining confidentiality and answering the demands of principals and teachers who felt they had a right to know what was bothering particular students.

Finally, all of the respondents stated that one of their main complaints was that they did not have their own direct telephone lines. It was very difficult for them to contact

parents since the school's telephones were always busy. They added that parents also complained of this problem since they could not contact the counsellors.

6.8.2 Interim Summary:

Difficulties counsellors encountered in their work included some problems such as lack of training, extensive administrative tasks and clerical duties, such as paperwork, records, scheduling, registration and reports, lack of cooperation from parents, large numbers of students in schools, teachers referring students to the counsellor for no good reason (such as for not doing homework or not having a pencil), respondents did not have their own direct telephone lines and lack of space available to discuss student problems in private.

6.9 Counsellors' Attention to the Student Body:

Question 8 : addressed to counsellors "Do you feel that you have enough time to provide services to all students in the school?"

6.9.1 Counsellors' Responses:

The lack of sufficient specialist counsellors was perceived as a factor that might hinder the establishment of counselling services in schools .As one counsellor explained: " Some of the counsellors have to carry out counselling and teaching tasks at the same time. This problem is further compounded by the fact that most schools with a large number of students have only one counsellor to deal with an increasing caseload. Again, as a result of the heavy workload, six counsellors stated that because of the high number

of students and excessive duties and responsibilities, they were able to focus only on talented and low achieving students. This meant that most students missed out on counselling services. One counsellor described her personal experience as follows: "Given that I am responsible for nearly 500 students, and at the same time required to perform unnecessary administrative duties, it becomes impossible for me to serve all students". Another counsellor commented that: "It is possible to provide services to 150 or 200 students. Not 600!". Conversely, two counsellors reported that they served all students, because of the low student populations they had to deal with. One of them stated that: "We have a reasonable number of students in our school (170). So, the services reach them all".

6.10 Suggestions for the Improvement of Guidance and counselling services:

Question 9 : "Do you have any suggestions to improve guidance and counselling services?"

6.10.1 Counsellors' Suggestions:

Counsellors offered various suggestions for improving counselling services:

1. Just over than half of them (6) mentioned that guidance and counselling programme policy should be more clearly defined by the Ministry of Education.
2. The majority of counsellors (7) also considered the importance of ongoing personal and professional development for counsellors to develop their knowledge and professional skills. As one of them suggested: ''Counsellors should have a

wide knowledge not only of professional issues but also of many aspects of life. They should read books and journals, attend conferences, belong to professional organizations, and keep up to date with new developments in the field". Apart from this, another counsellor suggested that: ''Counsellors should contact other counsellors to share experience and ideas to benefit from one another's expertise".

3. Some counsellors raised the need to consider the needs and culture of Saudi students, saying for example, that: ''We should take what is appropriate from the West and reject what is not because of the cultural differences between us and the West. It is very important to benefit from the strategies used in counselling in other countries".
4. Nine counsellors emphasized the importance of training programmes. They confirmed that these programmes must be organized in order to improve abilities and skills. They also insisted that training programmes would enable them to provide students with better counselling services. Particularly, however, eight counsellors stressed the importance of providing counsellors with training in psychology. There was strong support for improving counsellors' skills in dealing with various problems such as a wide range of emotional, behavioural, educational, psychological and social problems.

    In this respect, three counsellors drew attention to the difficulty of putting counselling theory into practice, partly because of a lack of focus on practical application during counselling training. One counsellor said that: "They should focus on practice rather than theory. I think there is no emphasis, as yet, on putting knowledge into practice"

5. Half of the counsellors (5) emphasized that counsellors must be qualified in order to improve the quality of counselling services as a whole. They suggested that the Ministry of Education should reconsider the whole process of appointing counsellors. Unqualified counsellors should not be appointed, as this would affect the standard of counselling and be detrimental to its effectiveness in schools. One counsellor blamed untrained teachers with minimal counselling expertise, in that: ‘‘if a student is maladjusted, an untrained counsellor will not be able to decide whether the student’s problems are due to weak intellectual abilities or to psychological factors, as a trained counsellor would, and so will be less able to decide on appropriate action”.
6. All counsellors indicated that administrative tasks and clerical duties must be reduced. They claimed that this would help them provide students with better counselling services. As one counsellor stated, “The counsellor should not give the headmaster and other personnel the chance to assign to her additional work which is not related to counselling. She should do this by being very diligent in her work and making it clear to others”.
7. Four counsellors mentioned that the number of school counsellors should be increased, especially in schools with high student populations. Or at least a reasonable number of students should be assigned to each counsellor, so that she can provide the appropriate counselling services to students who really need them.
8. Six counsellors stated that school staff and parents should give real support to counsellors. For this purpose, interviewees called for a public education campaign to raise awareness of the nature and value of counselling. One argued that: “There

is a lack of awareness regarding the counselling services. So, there is a need to educate the public about these services through the media, which can be used to generate greater public awareness of what school counselling services could offer. Television has responsibilities towards society to improve our people's cognitive levels, knowledge and awareness".

9. Some counsellors raised the need for consider the needs and cultures of the Saudi students by saying that :

   ''We should take what is appropriate from the West and reject what is not because of the cultural differences between us and the West. It is very important to benefit from the strategies used in counselling in other countries"

6.10.2 Principals' Suggestions:

Principals made the following suggestions to improve counselling services in their schools:

1. Five principals mentioned that the Ministry of Education should define the role of school counsellors and the policy on guidance and counselling programmes.
2. Three principals stated that paperwork should be reduced.
3. Seven principals emphasized that counsellors required training programmes to develop their counselling skills.
4. Four principals mentioned that counsellors should be qualified.
5. Two principals stated that schools should employ more than one counsellor.

6.10.3 Teachers' Suggestions:

A number of suggestions were made by teachers to improve counselling services in their schools:

1. Seven teachers mentioned the need for training programmes for counsellors in order to develop and improve their performance.
2. Eight teachers stated that the Ministry of Education should identify the guidance and counselling programme policy.
3. Five teachers stated that counsellors must be qualified.
4. Six teachers noted that administrative tasks and paperwork should be reduced.

6.11 Conclusion:

This chapter has presented the data obtained from the interviews. As with the questionnaire results, the three groups often viewed the counsellor's role from different angles. At times, they agreed that certain duties were the responsibility of the counsellor, but still disagreed as to how to implement such duties, when and why. At other times, some thought that specific activities were alien to counselling, some argued that these same activities were of secondary importance, and others insisted that they constituted an essential part of the profession. In general, it does appear, however, that the three groups have failed to give a clear picture of the counsellor's role.

In the next chapter, the findings of the questionnaire and the interviews are compared and analyzed. The actual and the ideal roles of the counsellor as well as the participants' perceptions of those roles are discussed, and the sources and causes of any

confusion will be investigated. Such an undertaking should enable us to identify the problems and suggest the proper solutions.

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Chapter Seven

Discussion of the Results

7.1 Introduction:

The previous two chapters have presented the results from the questionnaire survey and interview schedule. The present chapter provides an interpretation and discussion of the results obtained from the empirical study. Towards this end, perceptions of the three participating groups of counsellors, principals and teachers are examined separately to cover the six areas under investigation, namely counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance, consultation, evaluation and assessment, programme management and development, and personal and professional development. The fifth section considers responses to the research questions and discuses a number of factors that have had a negative impact on counsellors' performance. The discussion concludes with a section on suggestions from participants concerning improvement to the counselling services.

7.2 The Actual and Ideal Role of the School Counsellor as Perceived by Counsellors:

It is clear from the questionnaire and interview findings that the counsellors were involved in most of the activities considered in their school counselling programmes, even though the level of involvement was often inconsistent with the level of importance attached to them. That is to say, there were various discrepancies between the actual and ideal role of the school counsellor as perceived by the counsellors themselves. This

finding is consistent with the conclusions of Al-Ahmady (1983) and Al-Ghamdi (1999) in Saudi Arabia; and Morse and Russell (1988), Tennyson et al (1989), Carter (1993), Burnham and Jackson (2000), Perusse et al (2004), Foster et al (2005), Scarborough, (2005), Dollarhide and Lemberger (2006), Rale and Adams (2007), Hardy (2008), Kolodinsky et al (2009), and Leuwerke et al (2009) in the US.

However, the reasons behind those discrepancies may be that counsellors cannot meet all the demands placed on them due to lack of time or the necessary skills. For example, on the one hand, school counsellors have their time taken up with administrative and disciplinary concerns. On the other hand, counselling positions are given to individuals who lack specialist training and qualifications, as was evident in the profile of counsellors in this study.

It is true that the Ministry of Education still permits those qualified in other subjects to practice as counsellors. Given this situation, one can forgive counsellors for being unclear about their roles, and therefore, for the unclear status of counsellors in schools in Saudi Arabia. To put it simply, school counsellors have not been able to concretely provide a clear definition of what they should be doing to their jobs (Hardy, 2008). Although role ambiguity was mentioned by only two counsellors during the interviews, the results from the whole study provide evidence that it is a widespread problem.

A further explanation of the discrepancies and role ambiguity may be that the counsellors have modified their role in practice in accordance with the expectations of others such as principals, teachers and parents (Perusse et al., 2004). Presently, many school counsellors deem themselves helpless as they struggle between crisis intervention,

administrative directives, non-counselling duties, and their desire to help every child succeed (Chandler et al., 2008; Dahir et al., 2009). It seems that, in Saudi Arabia, others that the counsellor works with, such as principals and teachers, had different expectations of what counsellors should do. Part of the role ambiguity for counsellors, according to the interview findings, is related to the way counsellors relate to principals. Counsellors' involvement in activities such as administration or discipline, their concentration on paperwork and their failure to clarify and communicate their role to others seemed to cause a great difficulty in practice.

7.2.1 Counselling:

Although counsellors saw themselves as involved in all the duties mentioned, the level of involvement varied from one activity to the other. An examination of the counsellors' perceptions of their performance of counselling activities (see Table 5.16 and section 6.2.1), indicates that counselling on educational and behavioural issues were the activities reported as being most frequently performed. This includes meeting with students to discuss academic concerns, helping them with problems of academic achievement, monitoring and controlling their behaviour and helping them adjust to the school environment. The extensive involvement with such educational and behavioural aspect of counselling can be interpreted as an attempt by counsellors to meet the expectations of principals and teachers, who this study has shown gave these areas aspect high levels of priority. They expected counsellors to be more involved in these areas. Additionally, it seems that educational and behavioural problems on the whole are more

amenable to solution and in a shorter time than personal problems, and also may require fewer skills on the part of the counsellor.

As a result, counsellors perceived themselves as less involved in counselling on personal and career issues, such as in assisting students to make appropriate decisions, or understand themselves, and addressing their developmental needs (see Table 5.16). Since many counsellors in this study were unqualified, it seems that their lack of professional knowledge and skills made it difficult for them to deal with such issues. This finding is consistent with the results obtained from the interview data, where only a small number of counsellors mentioned that they were involved in personal counselling duties. Even when they did perform such duties, it was reported that they concentrated on low achieving students, with little attention being given to students with psychological or personal problems (see section 6.2.1). One respondent stated that, given her experience as a teacher and social worker, she had no problem in dealing with the student's academic matters. But, nonetheless, things became more complicated when it came to psychological problems as counsellors spent more time on other services unrelated to counselling and devoted less time to counselling.

Another explanation for the failure of counsellors to conduct sufficient or effective personal counselling, as suggested by one interviewee, was that the counsellors did not have the skills and abilities to apply case study techniques in their work because specialists in psychological counselling were rare. For another respondent, this related to the failures of the universities, which were unable to accommodate various developments within society. In addition, the teacher training colleges had not developed diploma programmes for those who worked as counsellors. Furthermore, the participants reveals

that those counsellors who held diplomas in counselling did not have enough knowledge about the application of counselling theory, because the universities gave more attention to academic knowledge instead of concentrating on practical and training aspects.

However, in the face of extensive caseloads and a multitude of counselling and non-counselling responsibilities, school counsellors face colossal demands from the academic and psychosocial needs of their student population (Burnham and Jackson, 2000). School counsellors are the professionals typically charged with addressing the psychosocial needs of students and families (Schmidt, 2003; Dotson-Blake et al., 2009). This is understandable when it is considered that, although counsellors in this study attached great important to all activities in the counselling area, it would appear from the results that they perceived counselling functions related to educational, psychological and personal issues as most important. This reflects their awareness of students' needs of this service and their recognition that counsellors should be close to students and most of their time should be spent with students.

On the whole, the counsellors in this study criticized the overly theoretical focus of the training that currently exists. Training, they believe, should be extensive, practical, well planned and given to all counsellors. Thus, fortunately, counsellors themselves are aware of gaps in their knowledge and skills, and acknowledge the need for further professional development. This is especially true of those counsellors with no background or little training in counselling.

Similarly, Howell et al (2008) supported the idea that school counsellors are dedicated to their profession and deeply motivated to provide high-quality services. Research has recognized school counsellors' need for professional development to renew

or attain the skills needed to serve students, especially those with severe emotional difficulties (Sears, 1993), as well as to protect themselves from charges of malpractice (Rhyne-Winkler and Wooten, 1996). Sears and Granello (2002) consider professional development "essential to developing professional identity as well as improving the knowledge and skills of practicing professionals". School counsellors have an obligation to be in charge of their own growth and development (Howell et al., 2008).

This study also indicates that, whereas the counselling service should address the needs of all students (Sink, 2002), it is here tailored to serve the needs of only the minority. These results seem to contradict previous research that has shown that effective counsellors are concerned with the overall wellbeing of all students on a campus, without neglecting to the specific needs of those students that require intensive services or students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Sears and Granello ,2002).

Furthermore, it does appear that attention is paid only to individual counselling and that other important forms, such as group counselling (Myrick and Dixon, 1985) are neglected. This result is consistent with previous conclusions. For example, Hutchinson et al (1986) claimed that counsellors had less time for group counselling than they believed they should. Although individual counselling is the most effective type of intervention, providing the greatest gain in the shortest amount of time, other interventions are needed to provide higher levels of productivity if the aim is to provide the greatest gain for the greatest number of clients (Tien, 2007). More broadly, working with students in small groups is a viable way to assist students who are not achieving to their potential and who may be experiencing emotional or behavioural problems (Shectman et al., 1996; Steen et al., 2007). Additionally, there are two important

implications that result from group counselling intervention. The first is the importance of collecting data and using external measures to inform the development and delivery of school counselling programmes. The second is the value of linking academic objectives with personal and social objectives (Steen and Kaffenberger, 2007).

Adolescence is often described as a period of ongoing physical, emotional, cognitive and physiological changes in student contribute to great complexity in developing an identity or sense of self (Field et al., 2006). Particularly, however, there is a considerable body of research indicating that the process of self-objectification results in negative psychological outcomes for girls (Lindberg et al., 2007; Mckinley, 1999) Accordingly, the unique characteristics of early adolescents must be considered in developing school counselling programmes designed to meet their needs (Hughey and Akos, 2005). In other words, group interventions are appropriate for addressing challenges related to identity issues, individuality, and managing the expectations of others (Yalom, 1995).

Unfortunately, the interview data revealed that other approaches and methods are only used on a very limited scale. More broadly, individual counselling was limited only to very special personal problems facing students. This form of practice violates the basic counselling principle which states that an effective counselling programme is a combination of preventive and intervention counselling (Baker, 1996; Clemens, 2007).

Stone and Dahir (2006) asserted that: “The purpose of the counselling program in a school setting is to impart specific skills and facilitate learning opportunities in a proactive and preventive manner to help all students achieve school success through academic, career, and personal social development experiences”. School counselling’s

renewed focus on prevention and advocacy has resulted in an overall shift away from addressing individual student problems or crises toward providing prevention services that help to protect all students from developing problems that interfere with learning and growth opportunities (House and Martin, 1998; Lee, 2001; Walsh et al., 2007). It is possible that the proactive nature of these programmes actually decreases the need for crisis responses from practicing school counsellors. To put it simply, if school counsellors address potential concerns in a proactive manner before they become problems, it may lead to better students' academic achievement in school (Rayle and Adams, 2007).

From the above, it is clear that young people with longstanding behaviour issues are not as easily helped as at the preventative stage, and pupils who are referred later on may find it too difficult to engage in the counselling process (Dorset County Council, 2004). This result is in line with the findings of Al-Ahmady (1983), and Al-Ghamdi (1999) in Saudi Arabia. School counsellors are therefore poised to take the lead in designing and implementing holistic approaches that strengthen protective factors in adolescent girls. Specifically, school counsellors need a prevention approach that identifies protective factors at the individual, family, peer, and school level, as well as teaching girls how to challenge broader socio cultural influences (Choate,2007).

7.2.2 Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance:

The study has revealed that all activities in the area of developmental, educational and career guidance were seen as important or very important by the counsellors. However, the paired t-test results showed that the counsellors' perceptions of levels of

actual and ideal performance differed significantly. Their perception was that performance was lower than the importance placed on these functions. This is clear, for example, from the fact that almost all counsellors (91%) attached great importance to the task of working with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems, yet, in practice, the interview data indicate that this activity was not accorded the attention it deserved (see section 6.2.1).

Yet subtle factors, such as shifts in student–teacher relationships or peer relationships, can easily influence adolescents' perceptions of their schools. These changes in perceptions of the school climate, in turn, are likely to have various psychological and behavioural implications (Way et al., 2007). Empirical research examining the association between students' perceptions of teacher support, peer support, student autonomy, and clarity and consistency in school rules on psychological or behavioural adjustment, suggests that these factors are all strongly associated with one another (Brand et al., 2003; Way et al., 2007; Roeser et al., 1998).

The interviewees, however, did give sufficient consideration to the significance of adolescence. This stage, as they stressed, is characterised by physiological and behavioural changes that require special care and attention, and an understanding of their effect on the students. The respondents' views were in line with numerous research documenting the biological, cognitive, and psychological changes that occur (Choate, 2007).

They do also believe that the unique characteristics of early adolescents must be considered in developing school counselling programmes designed to meet their needs. During the interviewees (see section 6.3.1), counsellors also attached importance to this

duty, and their views coincide with those of Al-Dossary (1981) who suggested that sometimes young people face problems because of the lack of assistance, information, and advice in their period of growth and development. On the whole, the counsellors are suggesting that, in the ideal world, they would provide psychological assistance in appropriate ways. But in reality, although most of them had undertaken short training programmes, they criticised them as being too theoretical. Counsellors who had trained several years ago may not feel comfortable performing this task. On top of this, there were many untrained counsellors; about one-third of the counsellors surveyed had no training at all.

The task of collating information and providing workshops for students to help them develop academic and other skills were activities that received the lowest frequency rating and were accorded least importance (see Table 5.17). It would appear from these results that counsellors provide this essential service at only a modest level, either because they lacked training in the educational aspects of counselling, or simply because they thought that direct involvement in teaching and learning was the responsibility of teachers. This is incompatible with the notion that the effectiveness of counsellors is increasingly judged by the degree to which they contribute to student learning (Scheel and Gonzalez, 2007).

In fact, the primary goal of school counselling programmes is to "promote and enhance student learning" (Campbell and Dahir, 1997; Hughey and Akos, 2005). Ethically minded school counsellors have moved off the educational sidelines and now play a more pivotal role in helping teachers promote student academic success (Sink, 2008; Webb and Brigman, 2006; Dahir and Stone, 2003). School counsellors may work

collaboratively with teachers when developing, organizing, and presenting developmental classroom lessons (Goodnough et al., 2007; Myrick, 2002; Schmidt, 2008; Thompson, 2002). A collaborative approach may be most effective because it increases the probability that teachers will follow through and reinforce skill development on an ongoing basis in the classroom (Bringman and Lee, 2008).

In short, there is now sufficient evidence to suggest that school counsellors help other educators promote academic-educational outcomes on four levels: the school, classroom, small group, and one-to-one (Sink, 2008). Accordingly, in order for developmental counselling programmes to be effective, counsellors should also be concentrated with developing academic skills. Skills pertaining to educational achievement, planning for the future, improving self-esteem, among others, should also be considered, as stated by (Sears and Coy, 1991).

The present results also show that counsellors were actually involved in collating information and providing workshops for students to help them develop social skills, though not at an acceptable level. However, the low involvement of counsellors in this task was not surprising, given similar findings in the literature. For example, Foster et al (2005), Rayle and Adams (2007) found that, while students' educational needs were being met, work activities which focused on the career and personal/social development domains were not performed as frequently by counsellors.

It would be reasonable to argue that counsellors may not provide this essential service to an acceptable level because they think that direct involvement in this type of counselling was the responsibility of the family. This is no doubt a cultural phenomenon

in that one of the main responsibilities of the older generation is to ensure that younger individuals abide by the social norms.

Lipsky (1959) claimed that "all social relations in Saudi Arabia are indirectly if not directly tied to family considerations and that the family is the fundamental and essential repository of any individual's identity". Nonetheless, Saudi young people, in particular, are suffering a difficult transition between the conservative and the modern ways of life. Today, the generation gap between the young and old and changes in values have created social, emotional and psychological problems.

For instance, Abu-Rasain (1998) found that 26% of students surveyed reported a high level of loneliness which had a positive correlation with depression, state anxiety and trait anxiety. In the same way, Al-Bahadel (2004) refers to a survey of 500 female students at high school and university in Riyadh which found that 383 of them (aged 16-25) claimed to suffer from shyness. Of these 75% attributed their shyness to the style of upbringing in the family-for example too strict punishment, being scolded loudly, being criticised in front of strangers and generally being discouraged from having an opinion. Demenhory and Abd-Allateef (1990) further expressed the view that Saudi people have become careless about each others' personal feelings, and perceived people in general as unwilling to co-operate with each other.

Thus, as social problems and educational trends change, school counsellors must be able to change their focus to assist students and families in dealing with these issues and concerns (Mclean, 2006). Counsellors are not only concerned with the academic plight of students, but also their individual experiences, future aspirations and social and emotional health. In other words, before academic learning can take place, students must

be emotionally and psychologically ready, able to self-motivate, willing to take responsibility, and able to see the value and meaning of education (Paone and Lepkowski, 2007). One goal of this type of counselling is to assist the student in examining personal issues in order to foster positive, constructive relationships with others. The activities of school counsellors also extend to fostering prosocial competencies in students (such as in social skills groups and friendship groups). This emphasis on encouraging student competencies is consistent with the recommendation that counsellors act as developmental advocates (Galassi and Akos, 2004; Walsh et al., 2007). While Chesler (2001) asserted that: "girls are social beings who need to belong", Gilligan (1982), Gilligan (2003) and Gilligan et al (1990) has discussed the important role that girls' friendships play in navigating the hardships of adolescence, developing a sense of identity and emerging from this life stage psychologically intact. It is, therefore, interesting to confirm girls' fear of isolation and the threat of being separated from peer connection and support (Field et al., 2006).

Researchers, however, have demonstrated that adolescents who believe their friendships to be positive or supportive are more likely to have increased perceived social acceptance, stronger self worth, and decreased perceived social stress than those with more negatively perceived friendships (Berndt et al., 1990; Frankel, 1990; Field et al., 2006). Unfortunately, those skills may be lacking or even deteriorating among young people (Goleman, 1995) and such a lack of emotional skill can directly interfere with student academic learning. Indeed, a number of studies have found an association between limited social and emotional development among students and poor academic performance (Aviles et al., 2006; Paone and Lepkowski, 2007). In other words, there is

an indirect relationship between academic achievement and counsellors' efforts to facilitate students' personal-social development as well as positive learning environments (Sink and Spencer, 2007). School counsellors, for example, can help others understand the connection between safety and achievement and the types of interventions needed to help students develop the personal and social capabilities necessary to maintain a secure learning environment (Paone and Lepkowski, 2007). By contrast, a failure to cover important aspects of this stage of the adolescent school student's life could lead to the aggravation of psychological and social problems, which some of the counsellors in this study failed to address.

Discrepancies between ideal and actual roles were also found among other counselling functions. For instance, on the issue of educational opportunities after the intermediate stage, it is surprising that although career guidance is highlighted in the Ministry's statement of counselling programme objectives (Ministry of Education, 1999), perceptions were that the actual performance of this task did not match the high level of ideal importance placed on it. During the interviews counsellors reported that they only provided students with information about the secondary schools stage. To put it simply, counselling in this area is usually emphasized in the secondary stage, and is given less attention in other stages.

This finding contradicts the notion that students as young as 11 years old should be ready to seriously consider their future career plans (Tien, 2007). For these students, it seems to be particularly important to make the connection between school and the world of work, to develop interpersonal relationships and to increase occupational knowledge (Tien, 2007). The changing nature of work (Feller, 2003) and fundamental shifts in global

information technology (Friedman, 2006; Moore, 2006) are creating increasingly salient career development needs (Wood and Moore, 2008).

Thus, scholars have argued that career development should not be a by-product of other school subjects but rather a major mission of schooling (Gysbers et al., 2003; Herr et al., 2004; Lapan, 2004). As Wood and Kaszubowski (2008) point out, interventions aimed toward increasing career planning and career expectations at the beginning of the school year were associated with greater student engagement at the end of the year.

However, there may be various explanations for the modest performance of counsellors in this study in providing sufficient or effective educational and career guidance. It may possibly be because most students prefer to continue their secondary school education. Alternatively, it seems that girls within Saudi schools are in considerable need of vocational guidance, if we consider that many work opportunities are available to young Saudis women. This is particularly so since the government Seventh Development Plan wants 95 per cent of jobs in the Kingdom to be filled done by Saudis, reducing the hitherto heavy reliance on foreign workers.

Consequently, a career guidance programme can help girls in schools to develop their skills, attitudes and knowledge to enable them to make a successful transition from school to work. They need to know about the world of work in order to guide and help them to recognise their own abilities, aptitudes and interest and to develop realistic vocational aspirations. One primary objective of academic and lifelong learning is to choose and prepare for a career that enhances personal wellbeing and contributes to the betterment of society (Wood and Kaszubowski, 2008).

7.2.3 Consultation:

Counsellors saw themselves involved in all consultation duties. Nevertheless, there were a discrepancies among the levels of involvement in the different consultation activities, as seen in Table 5.18. The most frequently performed activities reported by counsellors which may did not required professional skills were consulting with parents, principals and teachers about the needs or concerns of students. By contrast, counsellors admitted that referral is not an activity they perform properly. Some counsellors reported that they rarely referred students with special needs to the relevant agencies and some of them said they rarely followed up referred students.

This is incompatible with what the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia (2002) has determined regarding referring students with special needs, for example, to the relevant agencies. This should be one of the main duties of counsellors, and yet some counsellors thought that it was not their responsibility. One of them commented that, "Discovering students with special needs is not easy for me as I have had no relevant training and it needs scientific and psychological assessment". This supports Al-Danish's (2003) view that some counsellors do not fully understand their role and duties. The responses here revealed that the performance of this role does not match its perceived importance. This was confirmed by the majority of principals and teachers. In general, when the perceptions of the actual and ideal roles of the counsellor are compared, the conclusion is clear that the activity of referral is not executed in the way it should be. Counsellors would want to do this properly, but it appears that they cannot attain the ideal.

One logical explanation is that coordination and cooperation between schools and the relevant agencies is lacking. In fact there is no professional relationship between schools and outside agencies. The only link that schools have is with school health units, which mainly provide physical health services. Al-Ghamdi (1999) further refers to the difficulties for parents and students of understanding and accepting referral, especially to psychological services, and this could be related to their attitudes to psychological services generally. However, it is argued that due to such attitudes and in the absence of cooperation between schools and outside agencies, it would be difficult to refer students to the right people (Cole, 1981). Lack of practical training and experience are also considered to be reasons for the low performance.

Nonetheless, competent counsellors are aware of their professional limitations and scope of practice, and make appropriate referrals when confronted with issues beyond their training and experience (Levy and Plucker, 2007). In the ideal situation, counsellors consult with parents or guardians, teachers, other educators, and community agencies regarding strategies to help students and families. School counsellors serve as student advocates (Baker et al., 2009).

In general, however, a considerable involvement was reported by counsellors in all consultation' duties. This effort on the part of counsellors should help to gain the co-operation of school staff and establish professional relationships. This, fortunately, should strengthen the counselling programme and be considered as a rationale for extending the benefits of the services.

Counsellors perceived all the activities related to consultation as either important or very important. The highest rating was given to the task of consulting with parents about the needs or concerns of students. For the counsellors, working with parents is very fruitful. On the one hand, parents can help counsellors by providing information about students that may facilitate their work. On the other hand, parents benefit greatly from communicating with counsellors. It was thought that a positive, and co-operative relationship between counsellors and parents benefits the students, and that consulting with parents is a key element of meeting the social and emotional needs of all children. According to Oliver et al (2007), counsellors and parents should develop a successful partnership in order to enable students to achieve their goals.

In contrast, the task of following up students referred to other agencies received the lowest ratings. Surprisingly, some counsellors during the interviews reported that they ought to minimize their efforts in following up cases of referred students. Put differently, these counsellors seemed to be suggesting that once a student was referred to a particular agency, she became the responsibility of that agency, not the school or the school counsellor. This may explain some counsellors being little inclined to understand this task. These findings suggest a need for a collaborative model for helping students with academic, emotional, and behavioural problems, which includes key figures in their lives (including teachers, administrators, parents, counsellors, family members, and community members), and which would be the most effective way to help these students (Adams and Juhnke, 2001; Baker and Gerler, 2004). In order for this to become a reality, school

counsellors would need more extensive training in consultation, with a strong emphasis on the collaborative process (Bemak, 2002; Mclean, 2006).

7.2.4 Evaluation and Assessment:

Counsellors gave high priority to all evaluation and assessment activities except for the task of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics (see Table 5.19). The fact that this activity was ranked lowest in the perceived hierarchy of priorities would suggest that counsellors do not reflect on the past to understand the present or the present to predict the future. In other words, it appears that they fail to fully appreciate the value of such reasoning and planning. In this, it does appear that they agree with the principals and teachers who also gave the lowest ideal rating to this activity as well.

This was not surprising given similar findings in recent studies. For example, according to Studer et al (2006), "counsellors are encouraged to collect data regarding the effectiveness of their school counselling programs. This is often a difficult process as there are very few 'off-the-shelf' instruments that assess outcomes relevant to school counselling programs" As a result, currently there are very few instruments that practitioners or researchers can use that specifically address school counsellors' duties and responsibilities (Whiston and Aricak, 2008).

These findings highlight the need for school counsellors to clearly demonstrate their impact on students' education. Counsellors must be able to effectively show the results of their work with students in concrete and measurable ways, illustrating to others why having a school counselling programme is critical to

student success (Curry and Lambie, 2007). School counsellors at all grade levels require valid and reliable instruments to measure the efficacy of their work with students, caregivers, and other relevant school constituents. For instance, research-based tools are required to effectively assess changes in student behaviour and the accomplishment of counselling and programme outcomes (Lapan et al., 1997a; Thompson et al., 2003; Studer et al., 2006; Sink and Spencer, 2007).

Looking at the perceptions of the performance of evaluation and assessment functions, the questionnaire and interview findings indicate that there were two activities in this area that counsellors saw themselves as performing more frequently. These were monitoring the achievement levels of student and performing administrative and clerical duties, and especially working on students' comprehensive records. However, one issue asserted by several interviewees during the interview was the need for counselling to be seen as a specialized role performed by qualified professionals whose time is not taken up with other duties. They often complained about the excessive amount of paperwork and administrative duties, indicating that such work occupied much of the time that should be provided to students (see 6.4.2). This accords with the findings of many relevant studies, such as Burnham and Jackson (2000), Perusse et al (2004), Scarborough (2005), Dollarhide and Lemberger (2006), Chata and Loesch (2007), Chandler et al (2008), Hardy (2008) and Dahir et al (2009).

It is worth mentioning here that counsellors within Saudi schools are required to complete several kinds of records, including writing down all counselling services they perform, and that the Ministry of Education evaluates their work mainly through

these records (see chapter two for more details, 2.10). Therefore, even if no benefit is perceived from maintaining and keeping these records, all counsellors in this study reported that they were involved with this task. This is not surprising, bearing in mind that counsellors are mainly evaluated on such administrative tasks. Counsellors may take much care and time organizing these records, and thus neglect their fieldwork with students, which is the most important aspect of the counselling services. As a result, in the current situation, there may be insufficient time for counsellors to be involved in counselling duties (Al-Zahrani, 1990).

This problem of the involvement of counsellors in clerical work was acknowledged by one of the interviewees, who said: "I think that if there is any problem it would be from a counsellor herself who has been appointed in the wrong job, other counsellors are sometimes busy with paperwork, administrative activities or other school's duties instead of tackling problems". As Schmidt (1984) stated, counsellors who have perhaps been ill-prepared for their work might feel quite comfortable with activities that focus on paper rather than students. In fact, this can be applied to Saudi school counsellors simply because most of them lack professional training and are attempting to conceal their failures, as stated by two of the principals interviewed (see 6.2.2).

As a result, this lack of professional identity has led to a misunderstanding of school counselling as an integral aspect of the educational environment (Lambie and Williamson, 2004). Instead of focusing on students' needs and problems, counsellors have become assistant principals and attendance officers, as stated by Schmidt (1999), Green and Keys (2001), Perusse et al (2004), Scarborough (2005), Mclean (2006),

Dollarhide and Lembergers (2006), Chata and Loesch (2007), Rayle and Adams (2007), Hardy (2008), Howell et al (2008), Leuwerke et al (2009) and Dahir et al (2009) among many others.

From the above, it is likely that the expectations of school counsellors may be based on the perceptions of what school administrators think are appropriate roles (Perusse et al., 2004). In addition, confusion seems to remain among school counsellors as to which roles and functions are appropriate for them (Perusse et al., 2004). Ultimately, principals often foist administrative duties on to counsellors when they become overwhelmed (Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994; Zalaquett, 2005), giving counsellors responsibilities that are inconsistent with their training (Mcglothlin and Miller, 2008; Leuwerke et al., 2009). The findings are also consistent with Chata and Loesch (2007) conclusion that some principals use their position to require school counsellors to perform inappropriate tasks.

However, in order for school counsellors to not feel that they are being pulled in many different directions, "counsellors can define their role better by recognizing they cannot do their work alone and need to collaborate with other stakeholders" (Sears and Granello, 2002). Counsellors and principals would be well served by improving their relationship, and one of the first steps is to inform principals about the roles and responsibilities that counsellors are trained for and prepared to perform (Leuwerke et al., 2009). More specifically, counsellors are encouraged to develop routine, regular communication with principals using multiple resources to better inform them about their appropriate roles and activities (Zalaquett, 2005; Leuwerke et al., 2009). When school counsellors build relationships through informed school

counselling practice, school administrators may support the counsellors preferred activities (Hardy, 2008)

Professional school counsellors will continue to be the strongest advocates for their profession and for the academic, social, and career development needs of students (Gysbers and Henderson, 2006; Leuwerke et al., 2009). To put it simply, expectations of excellent school counselling services will continue to remain high. School counsellors must therefore take the lead to promote the profession by educating students, parents, school personnel, and the community about appropriate counselling roles (Beesley and Frey, 2005). Hardy (2008) recommends that when school counsellors are asked to perform non-guidance activities, it is essential for them to show the impact non-guidance activities have on the school counsellor professional functions and area of specialization.

This is also an exciting time in the practice of school counselling, in the training of school counsellors-to-be, and in the profession's movement to specifically define and advocate the specialized work activities of the school counsellor today and how students are different because of what they do (Rayle and Adams, 2007). Fitch et al (2001) suggested that school counsellors should be trained to collaborate with principals, to be assertive, and to acknowledge the administrative support of good school counselling programmes. Hopefully, counsellors-in-training will enter the profession better equipped to answer the needs of administration and as creators of and contributors to positive school climates (Fitch et al., 2001). They will possess a common language and value system with administrators that does not include inappropriate administrative tasks (such as scheduling, testing, and discipline) but

that highlights the special counselling skills that administrators value (Dollarhide et al., 2007).

However, the reality is that there is a lack of training courses conducted for counsellors in Saudi schools. This is a serious problem; especially given that unqualified counsellors need training courses in counselling in order to develop their careers. As previously mentioned, only one of the counsellors interviewed had a postgraduate counselling qualification. Moreover, only very short training courses are available for counsellors in Saudi Arabia. In addition to being very short, very few benefits were perceived from training courses based on lectures with no open discussions. As a result, these courses did not fulfil the counsellors' requirements.

Thus, it does appear that such problems reflect a deficiency on the part of the Ministry of Education in providing training courses that properly qualify counsellors in counselling. The Ministry of Education should organise sufficient specialised courses in this regard in order for counsellors to become qualified. Since the Ministry of Education appoints unqualified counsellors, it should provide them with the necessary training. Otherwise, how could the Ministry expect positive results? Furthermore, the Ministry of Education must find a solution to the problem relating to student records, for example by requiring fewer records to be kept or finding alternative ways of evaluating the work of counsellors.

7.2.5 Programme Management and Development:

All the activities pertaining to the programme management and development functions were rated as important or very important by counsellors. They also

accorded priority to the task of establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with school staff (see Table 5.20). In spite of this, some counsellors indicated during the interviews that they did not have enough time for this sort of activity. As one of them stated, "Monitoring students and dealing with trouble-makers takes most of my time. In fact, some cases need more than half an hour to resolve. If you add the amount of time administrative duties take, you can imagine the amount of pressure to which I am subjected". This is in line with the views stated by some principals. One of them said that, "In my school, the counsellors do not held regular meetings with school staff, especially teachers, so the benefit of these meetings is less than expected". She added that this may be because both parties are very busy with other work and some teachers do not appreciate the importance of such meetings.

The questionnaire findings indicate that most counsellors saw themselves as involved in almost all programme management and development activities, However, counsellors perceived themselves as less frequently performing the task of developing objectives for the guidance and counselling programme. It seems that training and cooperation (as discussed in section 6.8.1) are both lacking. As such, we should not expect counsellors to have the sufficient knowledge that would enable them to develop counselling programme objectives. Even when the trained minority plan activities to attain the goals of the counselling programme in their schools, implementing those activities becomes difficult as a result of a lack of time and cooperation. Similarly, in recent studies, school counsellors surveyed on the perceptions of school counselling standards indicated a low professional interest

towards programme development, implementation and evaluation (Holcomb-Mccoy et al., 2002; Hardy, 2008).

On the other hand, school counselling is a profession that will continue to change in the future. As the profession continues to transform, counsellor education programmes must also change in order to support new ideas and the changing responsibilities of school counsellors (Mclean, 2006). More broadly, the school counselling profession has recently experienced fundamental changes, including a heightened focus on the importance of collaboration (Dotson-Blake et al., 2009). A collaborative approach, in which school counsellors collaborate with teachers, administrators, and their constituents in order to implement a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate counselling and guidance curriculum, is considered integral to professional school counselling (Sink and Macdonald, 1998; Gysbers, 2001; Bemak, 2002; Rayle and Adams, 2007).

This vision would also involved school counsellors serving as a guide for students, teachers, parents, and administrators, rather than someone who is seen as an expert who has all of the answers. In order for this vision to become a reality, school counsellors would need more extensive consultation training, a strong emphasis on the collaborative process, and the skills to serve as guides and facilitators of process rather than content experts (Bemak, 2002; Mclean, 2006).

Sink (2002) also encouraged school counsellors to remain focused on developing and updating the skills needed to serve all students, exploring innovations in educational and counselling theory and practice, advocating for themselves and their programmes, collaborating with one another, other school personnel, and with

community agencies and programmes, measuring student and programme accomplishments and needs, creating a sense of community in their schools, and demonstrating a high degree of professionalism. These are skills necessary for school counsellors to develop and maintain effective school counselling programmes (Mclean, 2006).

Another issue that should be considered here, although not raised directly by participants, is the need for a theoretical framework for counselling based on the Arab culture. These respondents have confirmed that if counselling services are to be introduced, achieve acceptance, and be effective in treatment, it is very important to consider the beliefs and cultures of the Saudi students. Segal (1993) noted that although with globalization, theories and methods may be transferred across nations, this must be done cautiously, with care given to an understanding of the impact of the values, politics and economic conditions of each country.

Therefore, any development of counselling services in Saudi Arabia must respect the Saudi culture. Additionally, school counsellors must be sensitive to the diverse needs and abilities of students, and should consider the unique needs of their school when designing their school counselling program, the components of the program, and the application of standards-based evaluative measures (Curry and Lambie, 2007).

Keeping students informed about the guidance and counselling programme was another task with little involvement on the part of this study's respondents. These results seem to contradict recent studies revealing that students who participate in school counselling programmes earn higher grades, are involved in fewer classroom disruptions, and show improved peer behaviour (Lapan et al.,

1997b; Lapan, 2001; Brigman and Campbell, 2003; Sink and Stroh, 2003; Sink, 2005; Lapan et al., 2007; Dahir et al., 2009).

Therefore, students need to be knowledgeable regarding the various resources available to them in school. Sometimes students may be reluctant to seek help from school counsellors for various reasons. This problem is further compounded by the fact that most schools with a large number of students have only one counsellor to deal with an increasing caseload. For example, up to half of the counsellors interviewed assumed that, in some instances and due to the limited school hours, each counsellor could be responsible for more than 300 students. In effect, counsellors limited their counselling work to a few students, and neglected others who could be in dire need of counselling.

This is consistent with Al-Shinawi (1990) conclusion that too many students are assigned to one counsellor, which means they are overloaded and cannot give each case the attention it needs. It also appears that their varied roles and responsibilities can make it difficult for counsellors to identify all their clients, let alone define their clients' needs (Howell et al., 2008). Instead, school counsellors should be responsible for designing programmes that do not just meet the needs of individual students within their schools, but also reach all students (Campbell and Dahir, 1997; Adams et al., 2007). Accordingly, the Ministry of Education should increase the number of counsellors in schools with large number of students, or at least assign a reasonable number of students to each counsellor so that she can provide the appropriate counselling services to students who really need them.

Inaccurate perceptions and lack of knowledge about the role of a school counsellor may also contribute to student reluctance to utilize counselling programmes within the school (Ragsdale, 1987; Sears, 1993; Murray, 1995; Coogan and Delucia-Waack, 2007). Consequently, school counsellors need to become proactive professional advocates, clarifying and promoting the school counselling services they provide. This often means making others aware of what they do, and how the school counselling programme impacts the lives of students (Curry and Lambie, 2007). Others reported barriers such as being in an old building with insufficient space. Some counsellors mentioned difficulties with the location of the counselling room, which may be uncomfortable and with no privacy for students seeking help.

In general, counsellors accorded priority to the task of informing principals and teachers about the counselling programme, who they believed should be informed about the counselling programme even before parents. The interviews also suggests that counsellors do not attach so much importance to informing parents, particularly about the counselling programme. This view indicates that the counsellors may not place much faith in parents' judgments. It also points to low levels of cooperation between the school and home (see sections 6.5.1 and 6.8.1).

This finding is consistent with those of Bryan (2005), who observed that there is frequently an underlying lack of trust among schools, families, and communities when there is little integration of the three. As a result, the policies and procedures of schools often give little attention to the values and perspectives of family members

that would help create occasions for families and schools to clarify how the families can and want to be involved (Trusty et al., 2008).

The counsellor, however, may not be to blame for the shortcomings in performing this role, as she is not given the full opportunity to carry it out. One counsellor said that "many parents do not come to school unless their children have behavioural problems and they are summoned by the school administration to attend. Indeed, most parents are busy and have no time to attend meetings in the school, but this does not help the counsellor to perform her duties".

Most of the respondents in this study indicated that they only experienced minimal support and co-operation from the parents of students who achieved excellent grades. Other parents offered negligible levels of support and co-operation. This was also attributed to lack of awareness on the part of parents about the counsellor's role in the school and its importance. For one respondent, the reason for this "stems from the fact that, as a conservative society, the Saudi people look at school counselling as a social stigma, they believe that the work of the school interferes with issues of confidentiality, putting family privacy at risk".

At the same time, some counsellors cited the lack of physical facilities, for example the lack of direct telephone lines for school counsellors, as another problem that made the situation worse.

In spite of this, one counsellor commented that "Parents should be aware of the importance and objectives of counselling and guidance in order to appreciate the role of the counsellor and thus give her more support and help in order to fulfil all her expected duties". Consequently, because parents are continual resources for their

children, helping parents support their children is likely to be one of the most productive roles for all school counsellors (Trusty et al., 2008). In other words, a school-only focus is inadequate for solving the problems facing contemporary children (Gherke, 1998, Dotson-Blake et al., 2009). The positive impacts of family-school-community partnerships are noted in the literature and there has been a strong call to the profession of school counselling to focus more strongly on developing and maintaining these partnerships (Dotson-Blake et al., 2009). This is supported by Hornby et al (2003), who indicated that informing parents about the objectives of counselling programmes can help parents to deal with all the students' needs in a successful way.

Presently, however, the school counselling profession continues to struggle to effectively engage minority families in family-school-community collaborative partnerships (Holcomb-Mccoy, 2007). Families and school professionals struggle to interact with each other in large part because these two groups have few opportunities to truly engage in meaningful opportunities to learn from each other (Moles, 1993; Dotson-Blake et al., 2009). Nevertheless, the professional school counsellor must be willing to go beyond the boundaries of the school to encourage the active participation of parents and community members in schools (Musheno and Talbert, 2002; Hipolito-Delgado and Lee, 2007). School counsellors must work to create a school culture that values the contributions of parents, family members and the overall community (Raffaele and Knoff, 1999). The unique position of school counsellors allows them to serve as liaisons between administrators, teachers, and community members to create this environment (Stone, 1995).

It is worth mentioning here that, while it is important to engage students and families in the school counselling programme, it is also necessary to gain the support of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel (Curry and Lambie, 2007) School counsellors, in many instances, consult with parents or guardians, school personnel, and other identified parties when developing plans and strategies for promoting student development (Steen and Kaffenberger, 2007).

7.2.6 Personal and Professional Development:

Researchers have commented on the need for school counsellors to have systematic opportunities available for ongoing professional development (Howell et al., 2008). Through targeted professional development, school counsellors will gain the confidence needed to reaffirm their beliefs, reassess their priorities, and transform their practices and thus build higher levels of capacity to implement comprehensive school counselling programmes (Splete and Grisdale, 1992; Howell et al., 2008; Dahir et al., 2009).

Carey and Dimmitt (2005) have stressed that "the role of school counsellors and the nature of school counselling programs are changing in ways that require school counsellors to develop different skill sets in order to be effective". School counsellors are expected to skilfully respond to a variety of tasks and fill a number of roles. They are expected to be advocates for students and for their institutions as they engage in individual and small-group counselling, large-group guidance, consultation with staff and agencies, and coordination of services within and outside the school setting (Howell et al., 2008).

Fortunately, in this investigation, the counsellors who responded to the questionnaire and a similar proportion of those interviewed clearly considered the importance of ongoing personal and professional development for them to develop their knowledge and professional skills. The great majority of them wished they could engage in continuous personal and professional development activities.

It is worth nothing, however, that although counsellors attached importance to research related to students, they were of the view that research related to the counselling and guidance programme was less important. However, given the fact that both forms of research are interrelated, it is difficult to understand how counsellors can succeed at conducting student-related research without similarly assessing and evaluating the counselling programme.

Curry and Lambie (2007) and Whiston (2002) identifies the present as a critical time for leaders in school counselling to support research providing hard data to support claims that counsellors do make a difference. Other researchers have also called for more research to support school counselling efficacy and accountability (Fairchild, 1994; Otwell and Mullis, 1997; Prout and Prout, 1998; Whiston, 2002; Fazio-Griffith and Curry, 2008). These reviews also emphasize the need for empirical research related to student performance (Webb et al., 2005). Despite such calls, the results of the current study and other research (such as Schmidt et al., 1999; Bauman et al., 2002) suggest that empirical investigation has not been a priority in the profession of school counselling in recent decades.

However, the results of the current research show that conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme and related to students' needs and

problems are two areas in which counsellors consistently saw themselves performing less. And whereas nearly three-quarters of the counsellors stated that they actually engaged in personal and professional development programmes, only two-thirds noted that they always evaluated their existing counselling schedules (see Table 5.21).

Failure to conduct research in the field of school counselling may have various causes. One is that counsellors have little experience or have received insufficient training in evaluation research. Here nearly 74% indicated that they had attended training courses of less than one month duration, usually held in the schools or in the Directorate of Education, and the rest received no training at all (see Tables 5.7 and 5.8). Therefore, as Al-Ghamdi (1999) found, school counsellors may believe that they do not have the knowledge and skills required to conduct such research. The connection between research and school counselling accountability is not apparent to many school counsellors.

Whiston (2002) argued that more research concerning the effects of school counselling programmes is needed, but she contended that a major impediment to conducting both research and evaluation studies in school counselling is the lack of sound outcome assessments. This statement applies to the situation in Saudi schools, simply because assessment skills and the knowledge of counsellors are lacking in important respects (see section 2.11).

From the above, it could be argued that, although the study shows that counsellors do appreciate the importance of these tasks, they still find it difficult to attain their goals. In brief, in the present situation of school counselling in Saudi Arabia, it can be

concluded that not much is being done to update counsellors' knowledge and training or to enable them to acquire new competencies. Yet these are the two main components of any successful personal and professional development programme, as argued by (Wilkins, 1997).

Sutton and Page (1994) found that school counsellors must also contend with many financial and temporal barriers. Although some professional development opportunities are provided through conferences, seminars, and learning institutes, counsellors usually attend at their own expense and in their own personal time. Educational institutions rarely and unevenly provide the financial and clinical supervision that many school counsellors need (Howell et al., 2008).

7.3 The Actual and Ideal Role of the School Counsellor As Perceived by Principals:

Principals in this investigation demonstrated positive views of the importance of counsellors' work in their schools. All tasks were perceived as important or very important. The most important tasks were related to academic issues. However, principals tended to perceive the task of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics as a less important task than others.

On the other hand, principals believed that counsellors in their schools carried out a wide range of activities. The level of counsellors' involvement was perceived to be highest in the functions related to educational issues. They saw their counsellors involved in almost all of those duties, but despite this they perceived that performance did not match the high level of importance they placed on them. Using

inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics, conducting research related to students' needs and problems and the guidance and counselling programme were tasks which principals saw their counsellors as involved in less than other activities. In general, the findings from this study demonstrate that, for the school counsellor and the counselling programme to be successful, it is crucial that counsellors have a positive and supportive relationship with principals. The development of this relationship requires that principals and school counsellors have a shared understanding of the appropriate roles and activities that the counsellor should perform (Leuwerke et al., 2009).

7.3.1 Counselling:

Principals believed that all counselling activities are important or very important and focused most attention on duties related to academic achievement, addressing the developmental needs of students and helping students adjust to the school environment (see Table 5.22). In addition, the interview data reveal that some principals also stressed the importance of counselling functions related to the personal problems of students. This represents a realization on their part that the counselling function is the cornerstone of the school counselling programme as argued by many professionals in the field. This is evident in the interviews in this study when principals stated that counsellors who do not conduct counselling sessions were not needed (see sections 6.2.2 and 6.3.2). Summing up the views of these principals, one commented that: "Unless we address the personal concerns and problems of the student and create a healthy environment, we do not expect her to improve academically, no matter what we do". As Webber and Mascari (2007)

state, “Not to be confused with advising, or guidance or therapy, counselling is the most significant component of the school counselling programme, and the one by which the counsellor’s professional identity often is established”

However, both questionnaire and interview findings indicated that counselling students on issues related to academic achievement was seen by almost all (99%) principals as the most important counselling function. This finding is justified in the sense that the educational achievement is in the forefront of the students’ and parents’ thinking. As a matter of fact, when parents visit the school, it is more likely that their visit is related to academic matters.

It is important to acknowledge that both principals and school counsellors, in this study, shared a common interest in supporting student achievement. Nevertheless, methods of doing this vary based on different perspectives, causing conflicts of role understanding and task definition for school administrators (Hardy, 2008). While it is expected that both professions value the successful education of children, each profession focuses on different ways to accomplish this goal as a manifestation of the profession’s values (Shoffner and Williamson, 2000). Kaplan (1995) elaborated on these differences, stating that counsellors encourage a positive classroom climate while principals work to establish a safe and orderly learning environment. Counsellors look at the causes and issues that lead to negative behaviour; principals look at the effects. Principals may view counsellors’ attempts to assist students as enabling, instead of teaching personal responsibility.

Principals in this investigation demonstrated fairly progressive views of school counselling interventions that focus on the development needs of students, They

appeared to believe that counselling could play a crucial role in the development of young people by helping them negotiate difficulties which could then lead to gains in students' academic achievement and improved classroom behaviour. These findings explain why a high rating was also given to other tasks, such as addressing the developmental needs of students and discussing issues with parents and teachers. Most principals asserted that this role is very important as it helps parents and teachers to be aware of the developmental needs of girls at this critical age.

However, it appears from the results that the level of importance attached to these activities was higher than actual performance levels. One counsellor admitted that " There are shortcomings in performing this role but we are not to be blamed for them as it needs specialists in psychology who have studied these matters". Thus, it would appear that the lack of practical training and experience are considered to be reasons for the low performance. One principals said that, "Many counsellors do not have enough experience to understand the developmental needs of this age, thus they cannot provide an effective service". Another principal suggested that "Counsellors should be given lectures and training by specialists in psychology in order to enable them to fulfil this role".

Discrepancies were also found among other functions. For example, on the issue of counselling parents on their children's problems, principals believed that counsellors did not perform this function as often as it perceived level of importance merited. This suggests that principals were not satisfied with their counsellors' performance in this area, and only 77% of principals thought that the task was often or always implemented by their counsellors.

However, it is important remember that in their responses to the interviews questions, the majority of counsellors complained that cooperation between themselves and the parents was lacking and that parental support was minimal and restricted mainly to parents of talented students (see section 6.8.1). Also, counsellors reported lack co-operation from parents who did not follow their children's progress at school and did not respond to counsellors' invitations.

These findings suggest that responsibility shared between the two parties. Counsellors do not give the relationship with home enough attention and some families may be unaware of the importance of communication with school. Principals, however, tend to blame the counsellors, saying that they should take the lead in developing and implementing these partnerships. School counsellors are well positioned to serve as liaisons, leaders, and participants in school-family-community partnership efforts (Stone, 1995). Similarly, Dotson-Blake et al (2009) have called for a redefinition in the role and responsibilities of school counsellors to end professional isolation and increase involvement with families and the larger community.

However, during the interviews, some principals raised the questions of why school counsellors do not make more of an effort to raise awareness of the purposes of counselling. They went even further and insisted that counsellors should be the focal point of raising awareness and of educating people as to the value of counselling and its effectiveness in changing the behaviour of youngsters. Consequently, counsellors must provide counselling services and find a way to communicate their services to parents and other people in society to convince them that they have a role in helping to solve children's problems. In general, the principals emphasized that school counsellors should

create and maintain systemic connections, collaborating with parents and colleagues to positively shape the school and community.

What is more, it is surprising to note that, although only 62% of the counsellors were thought to often or always assist students in making appropriate decisions (see Table 5.22), principals still thought that, in comparison to other activities, this activity should receive the least attention, suggesting that they expected counselling to be directive. If anything, this would suggest that some principals underestimate the importance of certain essential aspects of the counselling process. Although many principals do seem to understand the role of the school counsellor, there is still some evidence of confusion in the literature (Beale, 1995; Beale and Mccay, 2001; Dollarhide et al., 2007). More broadly, although school counsellors may expect principals in general to have favourable views of their roles and functions, they must be cognizant that there is considerable diversity among those opinions, and therefore they must consider each principal's perspectives on an individual basis (Chata and Loesch, 2007) .

7.3.2 Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance:

The interview and questionnaire data clearly suggest that principals recognize the importance of activities related to developmental, educational and career guidance, perceiving all duties in this area as either important or very important. In fact, principals appeared to take psychological disorders, behavioural problems, and violations of social and cultural norms very seriously. They appeared to believe that if there is not a 'person-environment fit' or the school is not perceived by the students as supporting their need for relatedness, autonomy and consistency, their psychological and behavioural health will

be at risk (Connell and Wellborn, 1991; Eccles et al., 1993; Way et al., 2007). Such difficult changes may lead early adolescents to perceive their school environments as increasingly more negative over time regardless of the actual schools they attend (Way et al., 2007). For instance, there is an association between being a victim of school violence and having poorer academic performance (Beale, 2001; Paone and Lepkowski, 2007). However, in promoting a healthy and positive school climate, the school counsellors help to establish goals and standards that foster an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for difference. Proactive efforts to improve the school climate allow school counsellors to serve all of the students, not just those identified as at risk (Walsh et al., 2007).

Hence, principals, in this study unanimously agreed that counsellors should take measures to protect students against what is culturally viewed as unacceptable, psychological imbalance, and shameful behavioural problems that deviate from the norm. As such, it is not surprising that the principals were indirectly urging their counsellors to work with students in order to prevent psychological and behavioural problems, and to conduct educational programmes to deal with specific problems such as smoking, as indicated during the interviews. This may also explain why the majority (97%) of principals thought that working with students in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems was the most important activity that should receive the counsellors' attention.

In contrast, principals regarded the task of providing students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school as a less important task. Again, this finding confirms what has been said earlier. Counselling in this area usually emphasizes the secondary stage, and gives less attention to other stages. This may be

because parents are reluctant to allow their children think about employment at this early age. Studies in Saudi Arabia, furthermore, show that the choice of the subject of study at high school is influenced, in the majority of cases, by external factors, mainly family and friends (Al-Ghamdi,1999). It is a feature of the culture of Arab countries that career preferences and choices are influenced by family (Soliman,1986). This view may explain why the task of providing students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate level received low rankings from the responses groups in terms of both the ideal and actual roles of counsellors.

This completely contradicts the view of one counsellor who regarded vocational and educational guidance as a crucial function. She held the view that students' career and vocational counselling is one of the most important functions in the counselling profession. She believed that schools must offer all kinds of help to students in this stage in order to provide them with complete information about the educational opportunities available for them after intermediate school. In this respect, it is important, to note that students who perceive school activities as personally relevant to their futures a generally more academically motivated. Researchers have provided evidence that autonomous learning may be fostered through school counselling interventions that help students discover strengths and interests, and help them to form goals and aspire to personally rewarding futures (Leondari et al., 1998; Scheel and Gonzalez, 2007; Wood and Kaszubowski, 2008). It seems obvious that investigating the association between career development and academic achievement in younger students would also advance the field of school counselling. For this reason, career development continues to be an integral

component of school counselling programmes (Wood and Kaszubowski, 2008; Wood and Moore, 2008).

In the present climate of increased accountability for student achievement, such research has the potential to protect the school counselling profession and ensure that students receive career development assistance as part of their educational programme (Wood and Kaszubowski, 2008). However, the information compiled by the school counsellor should be presented to the principal, teachers and other members of the community in such a way as to illustrate the value of the school counselling programme (Stone and Dahir, 2004; Dollarhide et al., 2007).

In terms of actual performance, however, the picture is slightly disappointing. It appears from the results that the level of importance attached to these activities was again higher than the perceptions of the level of performance. For example, although the tasks of collating information, providing workshops for students to help them develop academic and social skills, and providing students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school were perceived as part of counsellors' activities, they were performed with the lowest reported frequency.

Yet, again, as mentioned at the beginning of this discussion, counsellors have not deliberately chosen to ignore this activity, or other activities for that matter. Rather, it is that they lack training, background knowledge and support. It may also be that they have modified their role in practice in accordance with the expectations of others such as principals. In fact, such factors would, undoubtedly affect their motivation.

In the ideal situation, however, school counsellors would perform a critical function within schools, as they work to coordinate activities that complement the

curriculum and strive to ensure the overall functioning of the school and the well-being of those who study there on a daily basis (Adams et al., 2007). Accordingly, counsellors are being asked to be increasingly accountable for their work with students. This increased accountability involves a shift from only studying what counsellors do to examining outcomes demonstrating how students are different as a result of what counsellors do (Wong, 2002; Isaacs, 2003; Webb et al., 2005).

These findings highlight the need for school counsellors in Saudi Arabia to clearly demonstrate their impact on students' education. Rather than relying on a positive relationship with the principal, school counsellors must document their value as a resource to the entire school community. For example, a school counsellor working with academically challenged students can track the successes of these students as a result of their experiences with the school counsellor and frame those successes in systemic terms: higher graduation rates, greater connection to the school, and an improved school climate (Dollarhide et al., 2007).

Knowing that principals value the evidence of systems work in the school can prepare counsellors-in-training for both engaging in systemic work and documenting such work. It is through activities with, and documenting the effects on, all systemic partners (students, parents, colleagues in the schools, and colleagues in the community (Dollarhide and Saginak, 2002) that counsellors demonstrate their abilities to lead, build collaborative relationships, advocate, and bring about systemic change (Dollarhide et al., 2007). Systemic change calls for attitudes and beliefs that promote ongoing and continuous reflecting, rethinking, and restructuring (Saginak and Dollarhide, 2006). Fortunately, the principals in this investigation demonstrated that they

desired school counsellors who are communicative, systemic in their work, and student-focused (Dollarhide et al., 2007).

The principals, in this study, had other priorities. It would seem that most (94%) were supportive of conducting special programmes for gifted and talented students. This is not to suggest that principals were not satisfied with their counsellors' performance in this area. Rather, 84% thought that the task was often or always implemented by their counsellors. However, this result could be misleading, since a majority of counsellors (especially those not trained as school counsellors) have no formal training in working with the gifted (Ford and Harris, 1995; Levy and Plucker, 2007).

In spite of this, both principals and counsellors appeared to believe that being talented entails a number of personal sacrifices. For example, gifted individuals often report being lonely and socially isolated from their peers, especially if they see themselves as being different from them (Robinson, 1996). Differentiation, however, becomes particularly complex for girls as they desire to achieve autonomy while also maintaining strong connections with others (Jordan, 2003; Choate and Curry, 2009). As a professionally trained counsellor, one does not necessarily need to develop a unique counselling style in working with gifted and talented clients, but rather use their awareness and knowledge of giftedness and related issues to better inform their practical strategies (Steen and Kaffenberger, 2007).

7.3.3 Consultation:

All counsellors' activities in this area were perceived by principals to be important or very important. However, the majority of principals (98%) believed that it is

the counsellors responsibility to consult with teachers about student motivation and behaviour. To an extent, they are here suggesting that the counsellor is the right person to provide teachers with advice on this issue. Recent studies, however, have revealed that some teachers may seek consultation when they feel stress related to a student's behaviour or patterns of disruptive or inappropriate behaviour in their classroom (Clemens, 2007). Specifically, emotionally charged student behaviours that are social (such as impulsivity, anxiety, hostility, and aggressiveness) rather than academic in nature are the "most significant and universal of teaching stressors" (Greene et al., 1997; Clemens, 2007).

Because of this, principals in this study appreciated the role of motivation even more than did counsellors and teachers. They were of the view that, in contrast to past decades, today's school counsellors additionally are expected to manage their resources in order to motivate students to meet the expectations of higher academic standards, and to close any achievement, opportunity, and information gaps to ensure success for all students (Dahir and Stone, 2007; Dahir et al., 2009). The educational psychology literature indicates that, for children to be academically successful at school, counsellors and teachers must be allied to help students: arouse their motivation to achieve; reach their academic potential; maximize their academic self efficacy; and develop and maintain supportive peer relationships (Stroh and Sink, 2002; John-Steiner and Mahn, 2003; Pintrich, 2003; Schunk and Zimmerman, 2003; Sink, 2008).

To put it simply, as the demands for and expectations of school counselling programmes increase, it is obvious that counsellors alone cannot bear the burden of providing counselling services. Since the goal of guidance and counselling is to enhance

students' personal, social, vocational, and academic achievement, teachers must be utilized as an integral part of the guidance process (Bringman and Lee, 2008).

The principals also believed that it is the counsellor's duty to consult with them about the needs or concerns of students and to assist teachers to recognise individual differences between students. In a sense, principals appeared to link these activities to academic achievement. Furthermore, they were suggesting that the counselling service is the responsibility of counsellors, principals and teachers together. In other words, they agreed with the view that the issue of support and co-operation from teachers and principals is crucial. They noted that counsellors, as specialists in the schools, use their expertise to collaborate with teachers and administrators to promote student development and progress (Hughey and Akos, 2005).

In describing the nature of collaboration, Allen (1994) proposed that collaboration is the process whereby two individuals or groups work together for a common goal, a mutual benefit, or a desired outcome. Trust, respect, openness, active listening, clear communication, and risk taking are fundamental requirements for collaborative efforts. Hence, in order for collaboration to happen, participants must share and agree on a common vision. The motivation for a common mission may be the need to identify or solve a problem, to focus on the issues, or to achieve consensus. Initiating and maintaining collaborative efforts is therefore an appropriate role of the school counsellor in educational reform (Lawson , 2003). That is to say, as professionals continue to reform and redefine the school counselling profession, counsellors are collaborating with more individuals within their schools and communities than ever before (Dixon et al., 2007). This requires a specialised

counsellor with training in developmental theory, human behaviour and interaction skills (Sheldon and Morgan, 1984; Myrick, 1987);

Hardy (2008) described the importance of school counsellors as integral members of the learning community in achieving student academic success. Thus, their role is to continuously find ways for people to bring what they know to the environment and to find ways to stimulate the new learner; otherwise fragmentation can occur.

Regarding the actual performance of these functions, the principals believed that counsellors were involved in all consultation activities, but, despite this, they perceived that performance did not match the high level of importance they placed on the activities. However, establishing and maintaining a guidance and counselling committee in schools appeared to be the most frequently performed activity which the majority of principals said counsellors often or always did.

In contrast, the questionnaire results show that only 47% of the counsellors often or always followed up students referred to other agencies. However, although all of the principals perceived this task as less important compared with other functions in this area, they believed that their counsellors should exert more effort in referring students with special needs to appropriate agencies. Yet, given the fact that both these forms of activities are interrelated, it is difficult to understand how counsellors can succeed at referring students with special needs to appropriate agencies without relating that to the following up of students so referred.

7.3.4 Evaluation and Assessment:

Based on data from the questionnaire, important starting point is that great emphasis is placed on assessing the educational needs of students, especially those who are talented, have special educational needs or need their achievement levels to be monitored.

As regards practice, principals mentioned that counsellors appear to have sidelined the activity of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs. At the same time, the principals indicated that this activity was regarded as the least important activity in their perceptions of the counsellor's ideal role. It appears that principals fail to fully appreciate the value of reasoning and planning. In this, it does appear that they agree with the counsellors and teachers, who also sidelined this activity according to the questionnaire and interview data.

Most of the principals (91%) perceived counsellors in their school as heavily involved with administrative tasks and paperwork. This included, as indicated during the interviews, activities such as working on student records, dealing with registration, scheduling, collecting reports on student achievement, organising conferences with parents, administering student discipline, and so on.

Although some principals believed that too much bureaucracy was probably involved, which distracts counsellors from their main job, others, however, still insisted that such duties constituted an important part of the counsellor's job (see sections 6.4.1 and 6.5.1). During the interview some of them stated that they tended to entrust counsellors with administrative and clerical jobs. Some counsellors also complained that they were asked to perform administrative tasks at school

because some principals thought that it was part of the counsellors' role to participate in school administration.

The only explanation for this situation is that some school principals are not fully aware of the exact role that should be played by the counsellor in the school, as Leuwerke et al (2009) indicated. Within this context, it is easy to see why "principals frequently assign school counsellors non-counselling duties that detract from a comprehensive program of counselling services in school settings" (Barret and Schmidt, 1986; Dollarhide et al., 2007).

This finding is consistent with Zalaquett (2005) conclusion that principals acknowledge the positive contributions made by counsellors but frequently interpret the counsellor's role as that of an administrative assistant or helper/advocate of children. Ultimately, school counselling programmes have been viewed as supporting programmes instead of being integral components of the learning organization (Lambie and Williamson, 2004; Mcglothlin and Miller, 2008; Hardy, 2008; Leuwerke et al., 2009).

Accordingly, it has been suggested that school counsellor functioning may be compromised by administrators who lack knowledge and understanding about what they are trained to do (Fitch et al., 2001; Borders, 2002; Beesley and Frey, 2005). Without doubt, this will have a negative impact on counselling work in the school. This is especially true since the principals is the main decision maker in the school.

However, in this study counsellors complained during the interviews about the large quantity of paperwork required by the Ministry of Education and, subsequently, by the principals of their schools. In fact, counsellors are required to

write down records of all counselling services they perform. According to the Ministry of Education (1995), this is the only way the counsellors can be evaluated. A good example of this is the statement made by a principal in which she suggested that the only method for assessing counsellors was to look through their files and records (see section 6.2.2).

Undoubtedly, however, keeping students safe is a critical priority for school principals and the Ministry of Education. Nonetheless, to do so requires time and resources committed to the personal and social development of students, which can be difficult when school counsellors face more testing and paperwork requirements (Dollarhide and Lemberger, 2006). Therefore, because counsellors in Saudi schools spend so much time in organising these records, they neglect work with students in some important aspect of counselling which should be the most important part of their work.

As a result, it is little wonder that many school counsellors report job dissatisfaction if they are called upon to fulfil roles and functions they believe are not professionally appropriate. Conversely, when professional school counsellors feel adequately supported and are assigned appropriate duties, they report increased career satisfaction and commitment (Baggerly and Osborn, 2006). As Sears and Coy (1991) stated, “School counsellors appear to be reluctant or unable to convince principals that they should perform the duties for which they have been trained”.

Hence, the Ministry of Education itself must find a solution to this problem, for example by requiring fewer records or finding alternative ways of evaluating the work of counsellors. In the same way, counsellors should not give principals and

other personnel the chance to assign to them additional tasks which are not related to counselling. They should do this by being very diligent in their work and making this clear to others. In other words, because there has been such a push for accountability among professional educators in recent years, it has become more important than ever that school counsellors are able to articulate what their role is (Dahir, 2000; Gysbers, 2001; Adams et al, 2007). Thus, counsellors are not powerless in influencing the perception of principal's on school counselling. On the contrary, establishing a positive relationship with the principal is the most powerful tool at the counsellor's disposal (Dollarhide et al., 2007).

The findings from this study demonstrate that counsellors and principals must seek to develop and maintain a positive and trusting relationship built on open dialogue (Stone and Clark, 2001). It seems obvious that the effectiveness of the coordinated efforts of the counsellor and principal is a decisive factor for school reform (Kaplan, 1995; Leuwerke et al., 2009). Zalaquett (2005) summarized the importance of principals in the selection, retention, and definition of school counsellors, describing the roles of principals and school counsellors as "natural partners who should complement one another in the task of serving students and form a partnership based on knowledge, trust, and positive regard for what each professional does".

Research specifically examining the principal-counsellor relationship has identified a number of factors that encourage a positive, supportive relationship (Leuwerke et al., 2009). In this respect, Dollarhide et al (2007) found that principals value counsellors who are able to solve problems, advocate on behalf of students,

and can effect change in the school. Additionally, counsellors' actions that highlight their impact on student outcomes engender positive reactions from principals (Leuwerke et al., 2009).

In contrast, when school administrators can not connect counselling programmes with improved achievement, counsellors are viewed as extras rather than necessities (Mclean, 2006). Accordingly, professional school counsellors find their jobs difficult when there is a lack of support from the principal (Morgan, 1990; Leuwerke et al., 2009). Therefore, it is imperative that counsellors build good working relations with their principals in order to receive the necessary support and co-operation, and in order to succeed in their work; which will lead in turn to success more generally. The challenge for school counsellors, given the administrative power differentials between the two professions, is to understand, appreciate, and frame these differences in ways that enlighten principals and enable them to become proponents of school counselling programmes, no matter what the educational level (Murray, 1995; Dollarhide et al., 2007).

However, the counsellor should not impose her work on the principal. Counsellors are able to determine their positions in schools through dedicated work and positive results. By working with diligence, positive results may be achieved, and the respect and appreciation of all staff for counselling can be obtained. What results from this shift is that school counsellors empower themselves to create the scope of their influence when they demonstrate the positive effects of their relationships within the school and when they demonstrate competence, trustworthiness, and collaborative respect (Dollarhide et al., 2007).

7.3.5 Programme Management and Development:

Despite the fact that the school counsellor is one of few professionals in a school trained to initiate, create, and manage comprehensive programmes or services that enhance the "whole child" (Cobia and Henderson, 2003; Wood and Moore, 2008), the principals in this study indicated that the task of developing objectives for the guidance and counselling programme is only practised at modest levels. Furthermore, they viewed this task as not performed as much as other programme management and development activities. This is in line with the views of counsellors and teachers, who perceived that this task was performed less (see Tables 5.20, 5.26 and 5.32). This finding may not be particularly surprisingly in that many previous studies have reported a low professional interest towards programme development, implementation and evaluation (Holcomb-Mccoy et al., 2002; Hardy, 2008). These results are also not surprising, given the fact that training and skills in conducting research related to guidance and counselling and evaluating the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme are lacking among counsellors in Saudi schools (see section 2.11). As such, we can not expect counsellors to have sufficient knowledge that would enable them to develop counselling programme objectives, and to plan activities to achieve the objective of the programme. Reference to these points has been made earlier in the discussion.

In ideal situations, however, school counsellors would be running programmes that are: comprehensive in scope, preventative in design, developmental in nature, integral to the total educational programme, conducted in collaboration with stakeholders, monitoring student progress, driven by data, and continually

evaluated and improved (Rayle and Adams, 2007). Based on the present results, the skills of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and consultation may deserve more attention in preparation programmes, so that they are taught in ways that highlight their value to administrators. Then counsellors-in-training will enter the profession better equipped to answer the needs of administration and as creators and contributors of a positive school climate (Fitch et al., 2001; Dollarhide et al., 2007).

All counselling activities in this area were perceived by the majority of principals to be important or very important. Surprisingly, however, the task of keeping parents informed of the guidance and counselling programme was accorded least importance (see Table 5.26). In other words, they give priority to themselves and teachers, inviting their counsellors to exert less effort when it comes to informing parents about the programmes. The logical explanation is that, before anybody else, some principals themselves want to be involved with parents. This is a good reminder of the complaint one counsellor made during interview that parents go directly to the principal's office when they visit the school (see section 6.6).

Even more, the interview data clearly indicates that principals and teachers are more adequately informed about the counselling and guidance programme than the students and their parents. This indicates centralized administration and lack of cooperation with parents, were the counsellor appears to liaise mainly with principal and teachers. As a result some parents are not consulted on issues of vital importance to their children.

These results seem to contradict past research that has shown that students can benefit from developmental programmes and adopt more positive attitudes,

especially when parents are consulted, involved and informed (Sheldon and Morgan, 1984). Counsellors have the unique combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively lead and advocate for productive environments within schools and for partnerships among schools, families, and communities (Trusty et al., 2008). School counsellors, in many instances, consult with parents or guardians, school personnel, and other identified parties when developing plans and strategies for promoting student development (Steen and Kaffenberger, 2007).

The findings from this study, however, demonstrate that school counsellor functioning may be compromised by administrators who lack knowledge and understanding about what they are trained to do (Fitch et al., 2001; Borders, 2002; Beesley and Frey, 2005). Overall, principals appear to be confused as to how the counselling programme should be managed (Ancheta, 1983). Therefore, school counsellors have a duty to educate administrators about the school counsellors' role ambiguity and to promote the school counsellors' preferred activities within the school community (Ross and Herrington, 2006).

With regard to the task of planning activities to achieve the objectives of guidance and counselling. Most principals reported that this task was considered to be either important or very important. They believed that it is the responsibility of the counsellor to design an annual plan for counselling and guidance to be implemented throughout the school year. This was confirmed by one counsellor who said that, "Before the beginning of every school year, I have a meeting with my colleagues to design the annual plan in the light of the instructions from the Ministry of Education. Then we offer it to the principal to discuss it with her and approve it". However,

some interviewees asserted that this did not always happen. One principal stated that, "The counsellors in my school offer me a repeat of the previous plan without any improvement, so I approve it without any discussion. This may be because some counsellors lack sufficient experience and knowledge of their profession". One teacher supported this view, saying that "Some counsellors do not have the skills needed for good planning because of weaknesses in qualifications and training'.

7.3.6 Personal and Professional Development:

With the increased emphasis in the school counselling profession on contributing to student learning, the challenge arises to demonstrate the efficacy of school counselling in positively influencing academic performance through personal/social and career counselling (Scheel and Gonzalez, 2007). Accompanying this transition are calls for data-based evidence of the effects that school counsellors have on student outcomes due to the relatively limited outcome research on school counselling practices (see for example, Bauman et al., 2002; Whiston, 2002; Mcgannon et al., 2005; Falco et al., 2008; Whiston and Aricak, 2008).

Fairchild (1994), Otwell and Mullis (1997), Whiston (2002), Curry and Lambie (2007) and Hardy (2008) have called for this type of efficacy research in school counselling, to establish a relationship between school counselling and academic success that conforms to the increasing call for data-driven school counselling programmes. Unfortunately, empirical investigations supporting the contention that school counsellors can enhance the academic performance of students are challenging to undertake (Scheel and Gonzalez, 2007).

Similarly, according to principals who participated in the present survey, two important research activities are almost totally ignored by their counsellors: that concerning student needs, and the counselling and guidance programme (see Table 5.27). One principal said that "The counsellors in my school do not carry out any research because they may not have enough skills to do this". On the other hand, one counsellor admitted that she did not "have enough time to carry out such research". Another counsellor indicated that there is no encouragement from the Ministry of Education to carry out research. Consequently, there has been little empirical research to support the efficacy of counsellors in Saudi schools.

The questionnaire data shows that, according to the principals, counsellors' performance of personal and professional development activities did not match the high level of importance placed on these. However, the results from the present study shows that counsellors themselves clearly admit the need to improve their professional knowledge (see Table 5.21). They themselves are aware of gaps in their knowledge and skills, and acknowledge the need for further professional development; especially those counsellors with no background or little training in counselling. However, if they cannot conduct research and take the initiative themselves, as mentioned earlier, one fails to see how they can improve their skills and abilities unless they are given formal training and guidance, as suggested by principals (see section 6.10.2). Principals are of the view that personal and professional development is an important aspect of school counselling services. It would help counsellors to organize their duties in order to achieve the objectives of the programme, and to enable them to improve their skills and performance.

In their literature review, Splete and Grisdale (1992) noted that professional development activities are often directed at teachers and administrators, and that school counsellors are rarely the primary audience. Furthermore, much of the professional development provided to school counsellors is taught by administrators or teachers on subjects that may not be relevant to a counsellor's primary responsibility. This concurs with the findings of Al-Ghamdi (1999) in Saudi Arabia. However, even in the absence of formal support, counsellors should find the methods and means to develop their skills and abilities.

One such method proposed by the Ministry of Education (1999) is to conduct research with supervisors and other colleagues. But there is also a shortage of qualified supervisors (see section 2.11). Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education still permits those qualified in other subjects to practice as counsellors. As a matter of policy there is an 'open door' for teachers of other subjects to nominate themselves as counsellors, with special privileges given to graduates of sociology and Arabic studies. For example, a graduate of sociology may be allowed to teach psychology in schools, while a psychology graduate must stick to his or her own subject. Similarly, a graduate in Arabic studies may be allowed to act as a counsellor, and even to become a head of department of counselling and guidance or psychology. Thus, such problems reflect deficiencies on the part of the Ministry of Education in providing training courses to qualify in counselling. Since the Ministry of Education appoints unqualified counsellors, it should provide them with the necessary training if it expects positive results. Clearly, in order for counselling programmes to be effective, counsellors' skills should be improved (Sears and Granello, 2002; Wilkins, 1997).

7.4 The Actual and Ideal Role of the School Counsellor as Perceived by Teachers:

It appears from the analysis of the questionnaire and interview data that the majority of teachers were supportive of the counsellor's functions. Teachers saw the counselling role predominantly as providing a service to support the academic aims of the school and to prevent psychological and behavioural problems of students. This was shown particularly in their priorities in the counselling and development and educational and career guidance categories. Teachers also ascribed higher importance to counsellors interacting with them and parents, rather than with principals and outside agencies. However, they attached less importance to functions connected with assisting students in making appropriate decisions, collating information and providing workshop for students to help them develop social skills, following up students referred to other agencies, performing administrative tasks and clerical duties and conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme. Moreover, the task of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics received the lowest rating of importance.

Although the teachers showed considerable involvement with counsellors in their professional functions, they were perceived by teachers to be particularly heavily involved in discipline and spending much of their time on administrative tasks and paperwork.

7.4.1 Counselling:

Teachers gave high priority to all activities in the counselling area. The activity that ranked highest on their scale of priorities was helping students with problems of academic achievement (Table 5.28). This is not surprising, given the fact that teachers seek assistance mainly in educational matters for the good reason that students' academic achievement is one of the main methods by which they are themselves evaluated. However the questionnaire data indicate that the level of the importance attached to this task was higher than their perceptions of the frequency of its performance.

Generally, the questionnaire and interview results clearly suggest that the teachers' perceptions of the counsellor's roles are clear in relation to some aspect of counselling area. They appeared to believe that school counsellors play a major role in providing support and services to students and families, dealing specifically with social problems.

It seems obvious that when disruption occurs in the family, children are more likely to exhibit, for example, academic and behavioural problems that lead teachers to refer them for services. Changes in family structure are often also accompanied by changes in school performance (Baruth and Burggraf, 1984; Mccombs and Forehand, 1989; Vosler and Proctor, 1991; Neighbors et al., 1992; Amato, 1993; Elder and Russell, 1996; Simons, 1996; Adams et al., 2007).

This may also explain why the task of counselling parents on their children's problems was also ascribed a high level of importance. Counsellors' involvement in this task, however, was perceived to be lower than the importance placed on it. This can be only interpreted within the context of the poor school-home relationship (see sections

6.5.1 and 6.5.2). Counsellors emphasised during interviews that the lack of co- operation from parents seems to be a chronic problem. It would appear from this that the root of the problem might be the parents' lack of a clear view or understanding of the counsellor's role. Nonetheless, because teachers believed that parents were an important link in the chain of teaching work, they usually exerted great effort in communicating with parents. Thus, it is not surprising that the teachers in this investigation sought assistance from counsellors to build strong relationships between them and the parents of students.

In general, teachers did appear to appreciate the role of the skilled counsellor. Some of them supported the indirect relationship between academic achievement and counsellors' efforts to facilitate students' personal-social development as well as positive learning environments (Sink and Spencer, 2007). This would, hopefully result in an acceptable level of cooperation between the counsellor and the teacher, and consequently on better counselling services (Wiggins et al., 1990; Schmidt, 1999).

However, some interviewees asserted that this did not always happen. While counsellors themselves in this study reported considerable involvement in consulting activities and establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships, they also reported a lack of support from some teachers. For example, one of the counsellors admitted that "Our role may still be unclear to some teachers, especially newly graduated teachers who may not understand the importance of the relationship between them and the counsellors". The reasons for this lack of co-operation were illustrated by the interviewees. One of the principals, for example, said that, "In my school, the counsellors do not held regular meetings with teachers, so the benefit of these meetings is less than expected". She added that this may be because both parties are very busy with essential

work and some teachers do not appreciate the importance of such meetings. One teacher's view supported this, when she said: "I think that these meetings waste our time and the counsellors just repeat information. If I want any information or to discuss a problem, I can meet the counsellor individually".

Thus, it is evident that there is a lack of co-operation between teachers and counsellors, and some of them do not appreciate the advantages of co-operation. The results of the current study thus seem to contradict research that has shown that the success of school counsellors in meeting student developmental goals rests significantly upon their ability to collaborate with teachers (Colbert and Bouknight, 2005). These findings suggest a need for an effective relationship between the counsellor and the other teachers at school.

It is essential that counsellors and teachers establish and maintain collaborative relationships with each other to help students be the best they can be in their educational achievement as well as in their citizenship and character development (Clark and Amatea, 2004). In order to carry out all their duties effectively, counsellors must establish good working relationships with teachers. It was asserted by most researchers that the teaching and learning process is successful as long as there is a good relationship between the counsellors and the teachers. The responsibility, however, is shared between the two parties. Some teachers may be unaware of the importance of communication with school counsellors and some counsellors do not give the relationship with teachers enough time and attention.

In fact, there is very little in the professional literature about the perceptions or contributions of teachers toward influencing the counselling programmes in their

schools. Although teachers share the same deep commitment to student success, they are frequently overlooked as valuable resources when guidance programme changes are planned and implemented, despite the fact that they are in a unique position to provide insight and meaningful feedback to school counsellors as to how to maximize counselling service provision (Wilgus and Shilly, 1988; Bringman and Lee, 2008).

Yet teachers' expectations and knowledge of counselling can have great impact on students, parents and administrators and therefore on counselling programmes (Valine et al., 1982). Research has demonstrated the value of closer teacher-counsellor partnerships, when the two groups collaborate to foster children's educational development and achievement (for example, Otwell and Mullis, 1997; Paisley and Hayes, 2003; Stringer et al., 2003; Amatea et al., 2004; Beesley, 2004; Margolis et al., 2004; Sink, 2008).

Undoubtedly, other important members of the school community should benefit as well. Caregivers/parents will appreciate seeing teachers and school counsellors working closely together to support their children's academic success. Counselling and teaching professionals who shoulder the heavy academic load together should find the task far less burdensome by developing and implementing partnership (Sink, 2008). Therefore, counsellors must also work to create a school culture that values the contributions of parents, family members, and the overall community (Raffaele and Knoff, 1999).

7.4.2 Developmental, Educational and Career Guidance:

Teachers gave high priority to all functions in the developmental, educational and career guidance area. Regarding actual performance, although only 36% of the counsellors were perceived to often or always collate information and provide workshops for students to help them develop social skills (see Table 5.29), teachers still thought that, in comparison to other activities, this activity should receive less attention. This result is consistent with those reported by many principals and counsellors themselves, who did not place much emphasis on this activity (see Tables 5.17and 5.23).

This completely contradicts the view of one teacher interviewed who regarded this task as one of the most important functions in the counselling profession. She believed that schools must offer all kinds of help to students at this stage and to help them develop social skills. As she stated, "Participating in enhancing positive social skills among students should be done through educational and social counselling services. She further said that "Counsellors should inform the students about positive and negative behaviour and social skills and provide rewards for students who can improve". School counsellors in general have a constructive influence on school behaviours associated with improved academic achievement, including, for example, decreased test anxiety (Cheek et al., 2002) and enhanced social skills (Boutwell and Myrick, 1992; Sink and Spencer, 2007; Sink, 2008)

It is surprising to note that, although one would expect collating information and providing workshops to assist students in developing their academic skills as activities to be perceived as high priorities by teachers, the findings point to the

contrary (Table 5.29). To understand why, it should be remembered that if counsellors are to conduct this activity, teachers will be required to prepare and write formal reports. This simply does not fit within the teaching culture to which they are exposed. Furthermore, if we remember their heavy work load, it would be unrealistic to expect them to accept additional duties. Apart from this, social change has brought particular problems and strains for Saudi women workers. On the one hand, they now have greater educational and employment opportunities than ever before, but on the other hand, they are still bound by their traditional responsibilities for home and children. This creates a variety of pressures. Added to this, given her lack of skills and short experience as a counsellor, herself, the present writer would argue that teachers do not expect the counsellor to have the knowledge that would entitle her to perform such an activity. One counsellor admitted that "This kind of service requires academic experience and at the same time, there are not enough well prepared workshops in my school".

Despite low expectations and insufficient cooperation between some teachers and counsellors in this matter, results from the current study and other research (Brown et al., 2004; Sugai et al., 2000) show that counsellors can play a vital role in assisting teachers to make better use of assessment data, in terms of both large scale standardized testing and at the classroom-level (such as, functional behaviour analysis), in order to identify instructional weaknesses and individual student learning problems (Sink, 2008). With these changes, school counsellors have been asked to "use data gathered on student performance to develop their school counselling programs and to help teachers customize educational practices to meet

students' individual needs" (Sclafani, 2005). According to Vail (2005) "counsellors are encouraged to collect data on the effectiveness of their overall program, rather than documenting random lessons and the number of children they see".

Thus, there has been a recent shift in emphasis in the perception of the school counsellor as an educational leader, student advocate, and social change agent (House and Martin, 1998; Clark and Stone, 2000; Stone and Clark, 2001). Myrick (2003) a leader in the field of school counselling, recently addressed this concern by reemphasizing the need for school counsellors to show how they are part of the educational process and how they contribute to helping students learn more effectively. This leadership role entails increased collaborative interventions with those people who are significant in the lives of students (Cooper and Sheffield, 1994; Clark and Amatea, 2004).

However, when it comes to work with students in order to prevent psychological and behavioural problems, the attitudes of teachers are somewhat different. In other word, teachers are suggesting that young people in Saudi Arabia encounter many problems which reflect stresses in the wider society. Social and personal adjustment needs must be considered in guiding young people. As mentioned before, changes in moral codes and social norms produce anxiety and frustration among young people who are at a critical phase of growth and development. The search for self identity is further complicated by the increasing conflicts in value between generations, and between parents and their children in particular. Since generation gaps threaten the stability and continuity of the family structure, the understanding of problems of young people is essential (Al-Bahadel,

2004). Hence, increasing recognition of the impact of non-academic barriers to learning has important implications for the role of school counsellors (Walsh et al., 2007). To put it simply, school counsellors play a major role in providing support and services to students and families dealing with social problems (Mclean, 2006).

Therefore, as teachers in this study appeared to believe, there is an urgent need to provide these young people with a wide range of psychological services such as professional counselling within schools, in order to help them to deal with stress that has been brought about by shifts in social patterns and demands. Providing individual and group counselling and skills training are as important as providing classes and degrees in order to protect the youth of society from the dangers of such problems.

Again, fortunately, this reflects good understanding about the counsellor's role and responsibilities on the part of the teachers, as they appeared to believe that good counselling and education recognize and build strengths rather than focus on problem reduction and correction (Beesley, 2004; Galassi and Akos, 2004). In the same way, the present findings raise serious questions about counsellors' training and their counselling background when we realize that, in practice, there are many shortcomings in performance as stated by most interviewees.

There are various possible explanations for conducting insufficient or ineffective preventative psychological counselling. It may be that counsellors have little experience in this side of counselling or little background knowledge in psychology, as admitted by one of the teachers who referred to the lack of the counsellors' skill in designing and implementing preventive programmes. As a result,

they may find it difficult to deal with psychological or personal problems, since the prevention of such problems requires specialized knowledge and good experience of counselling. On the other hand, Howell et al (2008) noted increasing levels of emotional and personal problems in student populations, which places a greater demand on counsellors to be skilled in the most current preventive techniques and remedial services for students with such issues and few external support systems.

One counsellor added that "Some teachers do not co-operate with us in providing such programmes as they think that this is only the role of the counsellor". As she further stated, the teacher is in good position, as she can perform this role in the classroom. However, because teachers spend their time in direct contact with students, they will often be the first to notice academic and social/emotional concerns that can affect student performance (Clark and Amatea, 2004). Accordingly, the findings from this study suggest that collaboration with teachers is essential to provide the best services for students with regard to their academic, career development, and social/emotional needs (Bemak, 2000).

Another counsellor referred the poor performance to the lack of financial support, since executing these programmes costs a lot of money and counselling programmes do not have a special budget at school. In general, however, for all activities in this area, teachers thought that counsellors' involvement with these tasks was lower than the importance placed on them.

7.4.3 Consultation:

The majority of teachers perceived all consulting activities to be important or very important. The overall impression from the data is that there were high expectations and sufficient understanding among teachers about the counsellor's role in this area, who linked this activity to academic achievement. The task of consulting teachers and parents about the needs or concerns of students, however, obtained the highest ranking of importance. Nevertheless, the teachers interviewed appear to accord more priority to themselves in this aspect of consultation.

Obviously, because teachers in today's schools are often facing a population of students whose personal and social problems create barriers to academic success (Bemak, 2000; Clark and Amatea, 2004), some of them may seek consultation when they feel stress related to patterns of disruptive or inappropriate student behaviour in their classroom (Clemens, 2007). It is possible that teachers believe that, through consultation with them, school counsellors can target the individual who is most likely in a position to effect change in the classroom environment. If a teacher implements changes that make the classroom system function more effectively, then the frequency or intensity of some student behaviours may decrease (Marzano and Marzano, 2003; Clemens, 2007).

The reality, however, is that teaching can be a lonely and isolating profession (Schlichte et al., 2005), and it is likely that some teachers feel stress but do not ask directly for help (Clemens, 2007). Little research has been conducted on teachers' perceptions of counsellors' roles and contributions and their expectations of school guidance and counselling programmes. Administrators and counsellors tend to have a

more holistic view of the school and its organization, whereas teachers tend to focus on their classrooms and individual students (Clark and Amatea, 2004).

These characteristics of stress among teachers are among the factors that might guide school counsellors, within Saudi schools, toward considering encouraging teachers to communicate their needs more and exert more effort in this activity as a basis for a consultation with teachers. In fact, such communication can help counsellors-in-training see the whole picture of a school as an organization rather than only involving themselves with individual student issues (Clark and Amatea, 2004). Much of the professional school counselling literature suggests that the educational leadership role of school counsellors includes collaboration with a variety of school-community stakeholders (Dixon et al., 2007). More specifically, a major role of the school counsellor has been that of teacher consultation to help students achieve in school (Gysbers and Henderson, 2000; Myrick, 2003).

Collaborative consultation, however, only occurs when consultants and consultees engage in a process of trying to identify possible solutions to problems that consultees are experiencing (Baker et al., 2009). Dixon et al (2007) further summarized the necessary components for successful collaboration among educational professionals, including activities most school counsellors practise daily: connecting, communicating, cooperating, coordinating, community building, and contracting.

However, in practice, interview data in this study indicate that these activities were not accorded the attention they deserved (see Table 5.30). The interview data indicate that some counsellors were torn between maintaining confidentiality and answering the demands of principals and teachers, who felt they had a right to know

what was bothering particular students. The issue of confidentiality constitutes the basis for the mutual trust between a counsellor and students. Nonetheless, the counsellors interviewed mentioned that the principles of confidentiality may sometimes be compromised given the lack of space available to discuss student problems in private. This effectively means that the counselling process takes place in public. One counsellor stated that "some of the teachers seems to be curious to the extent that they want to know about the student's problems, and in many cases they try to interview the student in order to know what is happening with them". Another counsellor admitted that she had "no option but to cooperate with the school management and provide them with the information about the students. This will subsequently violate the confidentiality and the privacy of the student or students involved".

Thus, results from the current study have found that counsellors' protection of client confidentiality and privacy is essential if students are to have confidence in counselling, highlighting the importance of trust in the client-counsellor relationship. Hence, counsellors should maintain a high standard of confidentiality which is a fundamental demand of the profession. Although this is generally true, some exceptions may be made in order to protect others from risk. Similarly, the young person is free to talk to anyone about their counselling sessions if they wish, but should not be directly questioned by school staff, and the counsellor will not pass on any detailed accounts of sessions but may communicate periodically with school pastoral staff about general progress, with the child's permission. For the young person to feel supported between counselling sessions, they may also wish a trusted

member of staff to know they are receiving counselling (Hampshire County Council, 2006).

Compared with the grater importance given to other tasks in this category, a low level of importance was attached to the task of following up students referred to other agencies. Again, what has been said about the attitudes of principals and counsellors and their perceptions of the ideal role in relation to this duty, can also be applied to teachers. For example, the interview and questionnaire data clearly show that all groups pay little attention to this matter. More surprising is the fact that the teachers were in agreement with the other groups on the lower performance of the counsellor's task of following up students referred to other agencies (see Tables 5.18, 5.24, and 5.30). Counsellors' involvement in this task was perceived by large number of teachers as something that rarely or never happened.

By contrast, collaborative practice not only broadens the range of accessible services so that students' needs are met with appropriate support, it also engages community resources critical to addressing issues that reflect larger community concerns (Walsh et al., 2007). In ideal situations, a collaborative model for helping students with academic, emotional, and behavioural problems should include key figures in their lives (including teachers, administrators, parents, counsellors, family members, and community members), in order to help these students effectively (Rosenblatt, 1996; Vanden Berg and Grealish, 1996; Eber et al., 1997; Handron et al., 1998; Adams and Juhnke, 2001; Baker and Gerler, 2004; Clemens, 2007; Adams et al., 2007).

Of course, consultation is not an appropriate response to all teachers' referrals or requests for individual counselling (Clemens, 2007). Therefore, sometimes, it may be necessary to liaise with or refer the young person to another agency for further help. But this should only happen with the young person's express permission and subject to child protection and mental health concerns. In addition, the counsellor will make it clear to the young person that they may need to breach confidentiality in order to tell someone and seek help. This may happen when the young person or any other person is at risk of significant harm (Hampshire County Council, 2006).

7.4.4 Evaluation and Assessment:

Examination of perceptions of evaluation and assessment functions reveals that the vast majority of the teachers perceived all these tasks as important or very important. Priority was given to identifying students with special educational and personal needs, which almost all of the teachers perceived as being important or very important (see Table 5.31). The gains that can be made from such assistance, as counsellors in the interviews mentioned, were that rather than spending time in handling difficult cases, teachers can pass them to the counsellor. Furthermore, they will be praised for any improvement in the students' education level.

The school counsellor, as Ganie (1997) said, plays an important role in identifying special needs students and high and low achievers in order that they can be educated appropriately and their educational achievement followed up. In relation to this, Lines (2002) suggested that the student counsellor refers students with serious problems to specialised agencies.

Nonetheless, some interviewees indicated that there are some shortcomings in performance. One counsellor said that "I am not to be blamed for any lack of performance as I am the only counsellor at my school and although I appreciate the importance of this role, I have no time to deal with each student personally". Another counsellor said that, "There is not enough co-operation with the agencies concerned. When we refer cases to them, they do not always give us enough help". Another counsellor added that, "Some teachers do not co-operate with us in providing such programmes as they think that this is only the role of the counsellor". Because of this, it is not surprising that the counsellors' frequency of performing this role was not deemed commensurate with the importance placed on it (see Table 5.31).

What has been mentioned above is not to suggest that teachers have no other priorities. In fact they appear to accept the counsellor's assistance in other areas, especially in working to discover gifted and talented students which was also rated as important or very important. Again, this finding confirms that educational achievement and needs are usually emphasized. This may explain why the majority of teachers thought that monitoring the achievement levels of students was a more important task as well. Steen and Kaffenberger (2007) noted that most gifted people tend to 'hide' who they are, for the sake of fitting into their environment. Thus, group counselling provides a forum for discussion, in a safe and open atmosphere, where these clients can be themselves, and realize that they are not alone (Greenberg, 2003). Group counselling also provides a structure within which gifted clients can not only share experiences and impart information but also learn from others struggling with similar issues.

Unfortunately, in practice, group counselling methods received less attention from counsellors in this study. By contrast, in the ideal situation, group counselling should be an integral component of the school counselling programme" (Thompson, 2002; Steen et al., 2007). The interviewees gave many reasons for the weaknesses in the performance of this role. One possible explanation is that such a method requires a highly skilled and trained counsellor (Steen et al.,2007). Yet, as one teacher suggested, “Some counsellors may not have enough skill to control such meetings and manage them in an effective way, so the meetings have poor results”. The counsellors interviewed, however, gave other reasons too. One counsellor stated that, “Group meetings do not usually reach the needed goal. They can be useful when talking about general issues such as giving lectures about serious problems like smoking and drugs”. Another counsellor commented that, “One factor related to this issue is the lack of a room to serve as a recognized base for group counselling sessions and practices”. However, the current emphasis of counsellor education programmes on individual counselling skills needs to be expanded to incorporate a greater emphasis on group counselling, consultation, and collaboration with other school staff (Sink and Macdonald, 1998; Gysbers, 2001; Sink and Macdonald, 1998; Rayle and Adams, 2007).

Thus, by attending only to talented or low achieving students, those who fall between the two extremes are almost totally neglected. Put differently, although the counselling service is meant to be for all students, as stated in the objectives of the school counselling and guidance programme in Saudi Arabia (see section 2.9), the present findings suggest that this objective has not been achieved. It is essential

that school counsellors assist all students, not just the top or bottom few or students in trouble (Mclean, 2006). Nevertheless, teachers in this study appeared to believe that being with special needs or talented entails a number of educational and personal sacrifices and needs more attention from counsellors. They believed that school counsellors are in an ideal position to assist them and their parents with understanding the challenges involved.

Many researchers have found that counsellors spend too much time on administrative duties (Cole et al., 1980; Gibson, 1990; Baker, 1996; Perusse et al., 2004; Dollarhide and Lemberger, 2006; Chandler et al., 2008); and teachers have appeared to suggest that their counsellors' efforts concentrate on administrative tasks and paperwork. However, although these tasks are carried out by many counsellors and may take up a disproportionate amount of their time, such functions are not perceived by the majority of teachers in this study as being very important to the school counsellors' mission.

As stated earlier in the discussion, various possible explanations for the heavy administrative and clerical workload can be provided. One is the counsellors' failure to understand their role and define it. As a result, role ambiguity is present in school counselling to the extent that even professional school counsellors have different perceptions about it (Lambie and Williamson, 2004). Role ambiguity, however, can also occur when a person lacks information about their work role and there is a lack of clarity about the expectations and responsibilities of the job (Mclean, 2006).

Another factor which might contribute to the heavy administrative and clerical workload was the lack of understanding of school staff about the role of

counsellors. For example, most teachers in this study indicated that they were aware of the good job the school counsellors were doing in providing help to students. However, some teachers, as counsellors mentioned in interviews, still seemed to be uncooperative. Those teachers seemed to believe that the role of the counsellor should be extended to teaching duties.

However, everything that applies to the principals as mentioned previously, applies also to teachers. More broadly, when teachers see a diligent counsellor who exerts the utmost effort in counselling work, this will be reflected in the standards and behaviour of their students. Consequently, the teachers will be convinced of the importance of counselling work in the school.

Data from this study support the perceived importance of such collaborative relationships on both the part of teachers as well as pre-service counsellors. Counsellors-in-training can seek out the perspectives of teachers and open up dialogues about what each can offer the other to help students achieve at the optimal level. Such contact can also help pre-service counsellors see the value of programme organization and implementation as well as what teachers can offer to the guidance and counselling programme (Clark and Amatea, 2004).

In general, the findings from this study demonstrate that the influence of strong relationships with administrators and other members of the school community contradicts the old belief that there are fixed roles and expectations for school counsellors. Accordingly, counsellors should inform other staff in their schools about their work, its importance and value. It is still essential for school counsellors to continue to emphasize and explain their roles clearly to others to avoid becoming

involved in non-counselling tasks (Mclean, 2006). Likewise, school counsellors who implement appropriate duties more frequently are more satisfied and committed to their career, while those who implement inappropriate duties more frequently report increased dissatisfaction (Kolodinsky et al., 2009).

Another unpopular task, among all groups, is using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics. Teachers here were implicitly stating that counsellors are not qualified to use such inventories. They felt that counsellors were not able to deal with these measures, which makes it impossible for counsellors to fulfil this function. If anything, this would suggest that teachers agree with the counsellors and principals who sidelined this activity, as stated earlier in this discussion. Another possible explanation is that using inventories for assessment purposes entails engaging in research to a certain degree. But because the research culture is somewhat alien to the Saudi educational system, or is at best immature, counsellors, principals and teachers among others, have probably using and interpreting such inventories a big challenge.

7.4.5 Programme Management and Development:

Teachers who participated in the present study mentioned that their counsellors were involved less in developing the objectives of the counselling and guidance programmes (see Table 5.32). One teacher stated that "The counsellors in my school do not usually produce new counselling programmes at the beginning of the school year, but instead they offer the previous year's plans without any improvements or additions". But, contrary to what one might expect, teachers still feel that counsellors should not be

fully involved in such an activity. In other words, they are indicating that the counselling programmes with clear-cut objectives should be established and developed by a higher authority. This contradicts the view that counsellors should be fully involved in planning and developing the counselling programme (Cobia and Henderson, 2003; Wood and Moore, 2008).

As regards administering the counselling and guidance programme, teachers felt that the parents and students are not well informed about it. This is in agreement with what the majority of the interviewed participants stated (see section 6.5.2). Nonetheless, teachers believed that students should be the last party to be informed about the programme. This view only indicates that the teaching institution does not place much faith in the students and their judgment. Again, this is not surprising, and concurs with the widely accepted view that the head of the family carries the right to make decisions involving both outside affairs and activities within the family. The authority of the family extends to all aspects of the child's life, including choice of education and career and planning and executing activities (Soliman, 1986).

Yet, in reality, it is more difficult for girls than boys to challenge or influence the head's decisions, even in matters related to education. They are taught from a very early age that it is their duty to assist and defer to their parents and older siblings. Although young people always strive to be independent, in a traditional family structure this goal is difficult to accomplish (Soliman, 1986). There is therefore a conflict between striving towards independence and loyalty to the family. Traditional Saudi society is no exception insofar as social pressures limit the individual's freedom of choice and self-actualisation.

In the same way, the teachers in Saudi schools usually employ old-fashioned teaching methods that treat students as passive agents in the process of learning. Information and interaction flow is often in one direction only and knowledge is usually spoon-fed to students. All of these factors may cause problems with pupil self-confidence, which seems to be a most frequently cited type of problem. For example, Demenhory and Abd-Allateef (1990) found that youth in Saudi Arabia scored high on a measure of alienation. They expressed the view that people have become careless about each others' personal feelings, and perceived people in general as unwilling to co-operate with each other.

As a result, because of the belief that freedom to make decisions is restricted and options are limited among girls in Saudi Arabia, keeping students informed of the guidance and counselling programme becomes of secondary importance, which may again explains why teachers in this study accorded less importance to this function.

These results lead naturally to a discussion of the issue of confidentiality, which constitutes the basis for mutual trust between the counsellor and student. Although, as mentioned above, concerns were expressed regarding this issue during the interviews by some counsellors, teachers appear to be curious to the extent that they want to know about the student's problems, and in many cases try to interview the student in order to know what is happening with them. The logical explanation may be that, before anybody else, teachers themselves want to be involved with their students.

Within this context, Clifford-Poston (2000) posed the question: "can counselling in schools really be effective?" (p.32) given the importance within the process of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. She asked this question because, within a school, clients

may know each other well, be in the same class, be aware of others being collected for sessions, and see the counsellor around the school talking to other adults and children. Glosoff and Pate (2002) described this dilemma as a 'fundamental conflict' that school counsellors face. Isaacs and Stone (1999) further described confidentiality as "the most difficult ethical issue facing school counsellors".

Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties, even in the ideal situation school counsellors must decide between respecting the privacy and confidentiality of students while responding to the rights and concerns of others (Moyer and Sullivan, 2008). Confidentiality is essential to the counselling process to enable the young person to develop a trusting relationship with the counsellor. In addition, confidentiality allows the young person to open up and share feelings without fear of blame or reprisal (Hampshire County Council, 2006). Conversely, any attempt to remove the principle of confidentiality in counselling would quickly undermine the overall ethos of the school as a caring, educational community (Mccallion, 1998).

Another obstacle which could impede the counsellor's attempt to respect the privacy and confidentiality of students, is the problem of large numbers of students. This was a major problem asserted by interviewees during the course of the present study. This concern was expected, since existing counselling services suffer from an insufficient number of counsellors in schools. During interviews, counsellors confirmed this problems referring to the current situation in some schools which have to appoint teachers to work as counsellors. Indeed, this problem was reflected in the composition of the sample in the present study, where comparatively large numbers lacked appropriate training and qualifications.

From this it does appear that counsellors were not able to establish strong relationships with students, and subsequently failed to provide counselling services to all of them, even if they worked overtime. For instance, a school with 600 students and only two counsellors results in a workload of 300 students per counsellor. It is difficult to see how the counsellor could provide full counselling services for so many students within the limited time available in school hours. All of the counsellors interviewed said that time constraints were a major issue and impacted on the quality of services they could deliver. Undoubtedly, these circumstances directly affect counselling work, leading to significant deficiencies in providing counselling services to large numbers of students. Many students must be neglected and emphasis is almost always put on students with special problems, or those who either excel or are very poor in their academic results. As the counsellors indicated, average students tend to receive few or no counselling services.

In their responses to the questions of the questionnaire, however, teachers demonstrated that collaboration with counsellors is very important and that they needed the support of counsellors (see section 6.3.3). 95% of the teachers believed that levels of cooperation were too low, and they desired counsellors to maximise their efforts in establishing such relationships. This result is not surprising, since equality and respect are two of the cultural norms that are appreciated and observed by the vast majority of participants.

However, one way to help forge strong bonds among teachers and counsellors is to include teachers in the planning and implementing of the school counselling programme. For example, using data from teachers to plan a school and

district-level guidance and counselling programme would be a powerful way to involve teachers in the plan and as a support system to the program (Clark and Amatea, 2004).

Based on these results, counsellors in schools should be seen as part of a social system, dependent on support from teachers and sharing information to benefit pupils. Mcguiness (1998) stressed the role of the counsellor in relation to other school staff who are in regular contact with students. He pointed out the importance of their individual contributions and the need for good communication.

Among the factors that make this possible, Clark and Stone (2001) described the importance of school counsellors as integral members of the learning community in achieving student academic success (Hardy, 2008). By definition, learning organizations are "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Senge, 2006).

7.4.6 Personal and Professional Development:

Consistent with other professions within education, there have been calls for increased accountability within the field of school counselling (Erford, 2007; Stone and Dahir, 2007). Carey and Dimmitt (2005) recommend that school counsellors will need extensive professional development to work effectively. For example, the importance of continuing education and research has been widely recognized as a means for personal and professional development (Connor, 1994; Wilkins, 1997; Sears and Granello, 2002).

In spite of this, the findings from this study show that the majority of teachers doubted counsellors' ability to conduct research related to the counselling programme and student needs. They suggested that counsellors could not be good researchers simply because they, themselves, know that a research culture is almost non-existent.

In their review of school counselling outcome research, Whiston and Sexton (1998) concluded that school counsellors need to increase their interest in research activities to produce substantial empirical studies. In fact, most researchers note that studies in the field of school counselling are descriptive rather than experimental (Hardy, 2008; Whiston and Aricak, 2008). Therefore the literature finds the same results obtained from this study.

In their responses to the questionnaire and in interviews, the majority of the counsellors reported that they rarely conducted research related to the guidance and counselling programme. Furthermore, 67.78% of them had barely engaged in personal and professional development, as they had only undertaken short training programmes lasting for less than one month (see Tables 5.7 and 5.8). So, if counsellors fail to conduct research and are inadequately training to improve performance, how could they successfully develop school counselling programmes and meet current student needs?. Even if the programme existed, given their modest professional knowledge it is very unlikely that counsellors could develop it. Without doubt, the situation of a failure to conduct research in the field of school counselling must have a negative impact on the development of guidance and counselling services in Saudi Arabia schools. As a result, student motivation, achievement levels and attitudes would suffer (Conoley, 1981).

Gysbers and Henderson (2007) suggested the need to increase the evidence that school counsellors have a significant impact on students by increasing the amount of outcome research in school counselling. As debate continues over the role of the school counsellor (Campbell and Dahir, 1997; Carroll, 1996; Davis, 1999), an important part of determining the future role of school counsellors will be to establish a clearer understanding of how their services are currently used. More broadly, because counsellors will continue to provide critical support to students who face emotional and behavioural challenges in school (Rosenblatt, 1996; Vanden Berg and Grealish, 1996; Eber et al., 1997; Handron et al., 1998), further research into the use of counselling in schools is necessary to make informed decisions about its future (Adams et al., 2007).

Undoubtedly, examining past and current usage of school counselling services will allow school counsellors to understand how they have been previously and are currently meeting the needs represented in their schools and to make adjustments to school counselling programs (Adams et al., 2007).

What is more, as regards the professional skills that would enable the counsellor to evaluate counselling and guidance programmes, 78% of teachers who responded to the questionnaire and some of those interviewed indicated that such skills are lacking because they rarely see the counsellor engaged in evaluation activity. This view is consistent with those of the counsellors themselves, as well as the principals who indicated in their responses to the questionnaire and in interviews that improvements in this area, among others, are needed.

Subsequently, the majority of teachers (93%) do agree that counsellors need to engage in personal and professional development activities (see also section 6.10.3). The

results from the current study and other research (e.g., Erford, 2007; Stone and Dahir, 2007) suggest a need for high school counsellor professional development to include an emphasis on the broader vision of beliefs and priorities about the importance and impact of school counselling programmes.

One teacher considered that counselling practitioners should be subject to ongoing evaluation of their theoretical knowledge and practical skills, in order to identify training and development needs. It is also thought that regular group supervision could assist school counsellors in making connections with other professionals and managing the isolation that they experience in their primary work setting (Thomas, 2005; Linton and Deuschle, 2006; Peterson and Deuschle, 2006).

7.5 Responses to the Research Questions:

7.5.1 Counsellors' Responses:

7.5.1.1 Question One:

- What are the ideal and actual role of intermediate school counsellors as perceived by counsellors themselves?

Counsellors assigned great importance to all activities, except for using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics, which was given the lowest importance rating. However, they gave most attention to functions that related to students' educational and personal issues, as shown particularly in their priorities in the counselling and guidance and evaluation and assessment categories. They attached great importance to the tasks of helping students with problems of academic achievement, monitoring their achievement levels, assisting them to cope with and resolve their

problems, and working with them in an effort to prevent psychological and behavioural problems. Their perceptions further show their need for co-operative relationship with school staff and parents, shown specifically in the high importance attached to the tasks of establishing and maintain cooperative relationships with school staff in the programme management and development category, and counselling parents on their children's problems in the counselling category.

In their actual role, counsellors saw themselves as involved in almost all counselling programme activities. Counsellors, however, perceived less involvement in counselling functions related to personal issues, referral functions and activities related to developing objectives for the guidance and counselling programme. Lack of involvement was also perceived in personal and professional development tasks such as conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme. The use of inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics, however, was accorded the lowest rating in terms of performance.

In contrast, the level of counsellors' involvement was perceived to be highest in the functions related to educational issues, such as monitoring the achievement levels of students and meeting with them to discuss academic concerns. Also the level of counsellors' involvement was perceived to be highest in the functions related to clerical duties such as working on student comprehensive records. This finding is consistent with the conclusion of Bar and Khan (1992), Al-Ghamdi (1999), Al-Danish (2003), and Al-Rebdi (2004) in Saudi Arabia; and Glenn (1988), Partin (1993), Gysbers and Henderson (1994), Burnham and Jackson (2000) in the US.

On the one hand, the extensive involvement with educational issues can be interpreted as an attempt by counsellors to meet the expectations of principals and teachers. This study shows that they ascribed to this aspect a high level of importance and counsellors were expected to be more involved in this area. This is not surprising, since the whole educational system concentrates on academic achievement more than other aspects of students' lives. On the other hand, although there no benefit accrues in terms of counselling from maintaining and keeping student records, all counsellors reported that they were involved with this task. Similar results were obtained by Wiggins and Moody (1987) who reported that the majority of school counsellors they questioned were ready to accept duties not related to their job, such as clerical and administrative tasks.

7.5.1.2 Question two:

- Are there any differences between the ideal and actual role of intermediate school counsellors in their own perception?

Significant differences were found between counsellors' perceptions of their actual and ideal role in relation to all categories. The results show that there remains a discrepancy between what is advocated as best practice and what is actually performed in schools (Hardy, 2008). However, while performing administrative tasks and clerical duties was perceived by the great majority of counsellors as often or always performed, low levels of importance were attached to these tasks by counsellors. This accords with the findings of many relevant studies (such as Carter, 1993; Rayle and Adams, 2007; and Dahir et al.,2009). Thus, this can be considered as a negative factor that affects their performance (Barret and Schmidt, 1986; Dollarhide et al., 2007).

These discrepancies between the perceptions of the importance of the role and its actual performance may have various explanations. It may be that counsellors were unable to carry out all the activities that they perceived as important, because of the lack of time or the necessary skills or other difficulties. It is often stated by practising school counsellors that there is simply not enough time to accomplish everything they are asked to do (Sink and Yillik-Downer, 2001; Falconer, 2006; Morgan, 2006). It may also be that they carried out tasks in accordance with the expectations of others (Hardy, 2008). This would contribute to role conflict and ambiguity, and would affect perceptions of the effectiveness of counsellors, leading to a lack of co- operation from school staff and even students' unwillingness to seek help.

7.5.1.3 Question Three:

- Are there any differences among counsellors in their perceptions of their own role according to their age, teaching experience, area of specialization, training, years of experience and the number of students in their schools?

No significant differences were found in counsellors' perceptions of their own ideal role according to their age, teaching and counselling experience, area of specialization, training, and the number of students in their schools. However, significant differences in perceptions of their actual role were found in relation to all categories based on all these factors, as discussed in the next section.

7.6 Factors that have a Direct Impact on the Counsellor's Performance:

This section discussed the effect on the counsellor's performance of age, experience, training, area of specialization and school size.

7.6.1 Age:

Age differences among the participating counsellors were found to affect their perceptions of their performance in all areas. The questionnaire and interview data clearly shows that counsellors aged between 35-40 were more involved in all six categories more often than did the other group (see Tables 5.43 to 5.48). This may reflect the greater ability of middle aged counsellors to deal with the different issues facing students. The conclusion that can be obtained from this is that the number of years in the profession may improved performance. This result was expected, since the service is relatively new in the Saudi context and older counsellors, based on their experiences and preparation, consider these aspects more important than other aspects in students' lives.

7.6.2 Experience:

7.6.2.1 Counselling and Teaching Experience:

The Ministry of Education prefers to appoint counsellors with two years of teaching experience. However, in this study, counsellors' perception was little influenced by their years of teaching experience. The difference between counsellors of different years of teaching experience was only clear of the perceptions of the performance of some categories. A few differences in perceptions of the counsellors performance were found between counsellors who had long teaching experiences and those who had less

teaching experiences. Counsellors with less teaching experience perceived themselves as involved in counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance and consulting functions more often than did counsellors with long teaching experience (see Tables 5.56 to 5.58). It is interesting that no significant different were found in the perceptions of the actual roles between those with 1-5 years of experience and those with 16 or more years of experience. This clearly indicates that teaching experience have little to do with how counsellors perceives the performance of their role. Furthermore, as mentioned before, no differences were found in counsellors' perceptions of their own ideal role according to their teaching experience. This is further evidence that teaching experience may be unnecessary and this may contradicts the idea that teaching experience helps counsellors to establish and maintain good relationship with staff (Al-Ghamdi, 1999).

Although many school counsellors are not required to have a teaching certificate, they are expected to be aware of and responsive to educational issues. Nonetheless, this expectation is secondary to their primary responsibility of staying up to date with emerging counselling models and improved interventions within the profession (Howell et al., 2008). Thus, however long counsellors have spent teaching work, this would not help without the appropriate preparation and necessary professional skills in the area of counselling.

On the other hand, differences were found specifically among those who were experienced in the field of counselling, were the tasks in the counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance, consulting and programme management and development (see Tables 5.60 to 5.63). Experience is often assumed to play a key role in success at work. In this study, counsellors' experience and their number of years in

counselling did have a major influence on their performance. This could be because counsellors with long experience have received the necessary training or developed their counselling skills by appropriate preparation and using the necessary professional skills. However, we should remember that although, the majority of counsellors (73.77%) had received basic counselling training, the fact that this was of less than one month raises serious concerns about the adequacy of training and preparation for counsellors. This may explain why, in this study, counselling experience did not significantly affect perceptions regarding the performance of evaluation and assessment and personal and professional development tasks.

7.6.3 Training:

Significant differences in perceptions between counsellors were found between trained and non-trained counsellors in their perceptions of how often they performed counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance and programme management and development functions. Trained counsellors perceived themselves as carrying out most of these functions more often, whereas trained and untrained counsellors had similar views on their performance of those consulting, evaluation and assessment and personal and professional development activities in their schools. Again these results highlight the importance of counsellors being trained to perform their professional role (Hunh and Zimpfer, 1984). Although we know from this study that counsellors' experience in the field of counselling had a major influence on their performance, some of the necessary skills can not merely be gained over time. However, the information obtained about counsellors in this study suggests that training is still

somewhat neglected. In this respect, it should be stated that 90 of 122 of the trained counsellors had only undertaken training courses lasting up to four weeks (See Tables 5.7 and 5.8).

The inadequacy of the training programmes was such that basic skills needed to implement the programme were not inculcated. Although some counsellors had undertaken short training programmes, they criticised them as being too theoretical. Thus it is important that every counsellor must be given extensive training, and all training programmes need to be well planned (Sears and Granello, 2002). Counsellors' needs should be taken into consideration when formulating the training programme, and counsellors should be involved in planning them (Al-Ghamdi, 1999). This could make training more directly applicable to the school context.

7.6.4 Area of Specialization:

Area of specialization also has an effect on the perceptions of counsellors. It was found that those majoring in social work major were significantly more involved in developmental, educational and career guidance, consulting and personal and professional development tasks. This suggests that, for an effective programme, counselling functions must be assigned to qualified and trained counsellors. Properly qualified and trained people can be expected to do better in their position, because the knowledge they have will facilitate improvements in the quality of their job performance. It seems that there is still a lack of clear criteria for the selection of counsellors, and it would be worth considering how a person who has graduated in history, biology or geography, for example, can be considered as qualified to perform a counselling role.

Variations in terms of qualifications and skills often means that performance is shaped by the counsellor's own strengths and personal skills (Littrell and Peterson, 2001), leading to considerable diversity in the services offered.

7.6.5 School Size:

Statistical data indicate that schools with a large student population provide less counselling services than school with up to 300 students. This is consistent with the views presented by some counsellors during the interviews. Although it is true that data reveal an unacceptable level of performance by the majority of school counsellors, clear indications are that schools with large numbers of students suffer most. Similar findings were obtained by Al-Danish (2003) who found that some of the counsellors were non-specialists in the field of counselling and all suffered from the increases in the numbers of students. In this study, however, only a few differences in perceptions of performance were found between counsellors with different school sizes. A significant difference in perception between counsellors was found in personal and professional development, it is suggested that this difference is due to the large number of students at schools that counsellors work at them.

7.6.6 Principals' Responses:

7.6.6.1 Question Four:

- What are the ideal and actual functions of the intermediate school counsellor as perceived by the principals?

The study showed that principals attached great importance to most activities listed in the questionnaire, which suggests that they recognized the importance of counsellors' work in their schools. The questionnaire and interview data, however, revealed that the most important functions mentioned by principals were helping students with problems of academic achievement and monitoring their achievement levels. These results were expected, because of the emphasis by the Ministry of Education, principals and parents on academic achievement. Such a system does not take much account of individual needs, and success is measured in terms of passing examinations rather than a student's whole development. However, principals seem to appreciate counsellors and expect them to assist students in resolving personal problems and addressing developmental needs. At the same time, the interview data showed that some principals expect counsellors to be involved in administrative duties, deal with discipline problems and work with disruptive students. These findings are also consistent with Amatea and Clark's (2005) conclusion**,** and indicates that some principals are unclear about what counsellors should do. However, if they understand their role, counsellors should articulate to principals their rationale for refusing to perform administrative tasks or deal with discipline (Curry and Lambie, 2007). Counselling should involve providing guidance and counselling activities, and not administration. On the other hand, principals should understand that counsellors have a role in helping students who have persistent discipline problems (Rayle and Adams, 2007), but not for every problem and not during a discipline crisis. If students associate being sent to the counsellor with disruptive behaviour, they will interpret counselling as discipline (Remley and Albright, 1998)

Principals attached less importance to using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics, conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme and providing students with information about educational opportunities after intermediate school. Principals also generally attached low importance to counsellors interacting with outside agencies than with themselves, teachers and parents.

It was found that counsellors were perceived to be most frequently involved with educational issues, administrative and clerical work. Also, principals indicated that counsellors often neglected some activities or failed to perform them properly, such as using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics which was rarely performed.

7.6.6.2 Question Five:

- Are there any differences between the ideal and actual role of the intermediate school counsellor in the perception of principals ?

Significant differences were found in principals' perceptions of the ideal and actual role of the school counsellor in relation to all six categories investigated. Principals believed that counsellors did not carry out their duties in such a manner that would agree with their expectations, especially for the tasks of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics, and conducting research related to student needs and problems. These results imply that principals are not getting what they want from the programme. This might affect their co-operation in the programme and create doubts about its efficiency.

Although the interview findings from this study demonstrate that some principals still insisted that administrative tasks and paperwork constitute an important part of the counsellor's job, the majority of their questionnaire responses were in agreement with those of counsellors and teachers that excessive amounts of paperwork and administrative duties occupied too much of counsellors' time. This strengthens the conclusion that performing non-related counselling work is a negative factor affecting performance.

7.6.6.3 Question Six:

- Are there any differences in principals' perceptions of the counsellor's actual and ideal role according to age, experience and the number of students in their schools?

7.6.6.4 Age:

Despite some differences among their perceptions of the performance and importance of counselling functions, the overall results suggest that age, experience and school size, do not have significant influences on the perceptions of principals concerning the ideal and actual role of the school counsellors. However, 7.9% of principals forgot or declined to mention their age, and this relatively high proportion of missing data may have effected the reliability of the statistical analysis.

Although there were no significant differences among principals of different age in their perceptions regarding the performance of counsellor's functions, it would appear that older principals were more realistic in their perceptions. More broadly, from both the questionnaire and interview results, the older group of principals viewed counsellors as

more involved in all activities than did the younger group, and especially in counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance, consulting, and programme management and development.

7.6.6.5 Experience:

The questionnaire results also reveal that principals with longer service were more of the view that counsellors performed consultation and programme management and development functions. Again, this suggests that more experienced principals were more realistic in their perceptions. In addition, counsellors may approach such principals and offer assistance simply because of the age and respect factor highlighted previously. This may explain why counsellors more experience in counselling were found to do better than their colleagues in the areas of consultation and programme management and development. The only explanation for this result may that the younger group of principals are not fully aware of the exact role that should be played by the counsellors in their school, those principals may had insufficient experience with counsellors and the counselling programme in the school and might therefore be less knowledgeable regarding the issues investigated.

7.6.6.6 School Size:

No significant differences in principals' perceptions were found for any of the six categories according to school size. Logically, school size would be expected to affect the performance of counsellors, but perhaps not if other factors intervene, such as the number of counsellors in these schools and so on.

7.6.7 Teachers' Responses:

7.6.7.1 Question Seven:

- What are the ideal and actual functions of the intermediate school counsellor as perceived by teachers?

The majority of teachers perceived all counsellors' functions to be very important or important. However, they attached a higher level of importance to functions related to academic and behavioural concerns in the school, such as helping students with problems of academic achievement, identifying those with special educational and personal needs, and working to prevent psychological and behavioural problems. Moreover, they attached high levels of importance to the task of establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with them and parents, whereas conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme, and using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics were seen as the least important duties.

On the other hand, while teachers believed that counsellors were involved in many professional activities, they saw them as most often performing activities related to evaluation and assessment and performing administrative tasks and clerical duties, monitoring achievement levels and other activities related to educational issues such as helping students with problems of academic achievement. However, teachers did not acknowledge counsellors' involvement in the task of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics.

7.6.7.2 Question Eight:

- Are there any differences between the ideal and actual role of the intermediate school counsellor in the perception of teachers?

Significant differences were found between the actual and ideal role of the school counsellor in the perceptions of teachers in relation to all six categories where the perceptions of actual performance did not match the high level of importance placed on the counselling functions. However, the task of performing administrative tasks and clerical duties was seen by teachers as performed much more than the importance placed on it. Similar result were obtained by Remley and Albright (1998), who interviewed eleven teachers, they thought that counsellors were concentrating on administrative tasks at the expense of counselling duties.

These results indicate low levels of cooperation between teachers and counsellors, and such perceptions can be expected to have a negative influence on communication and co-operation between them. Nevertheless, research has demonstrated the value of closer teacher-counsellor partnerships as the two groups collaborate to foster children's educational development and achievement (for example, Paisley and Hayes, 2003; Stringer et al., 2003; Amatea et al., 2004; Stringer et al., 2003; Beesley, 2004; Margolis et al., 2004; Stringer et al., 2003; Whiston and Aricak, 2008).

7.6.7.3 Question Nine:

- Are there any differences in teachers' perceptions of the counsellor's actual and ideal role according to their age, years of experience and the number of students in their schools?

7.6.7.4 Age:

Despite few differences between teachers of different ages regarding the importance of various counselling functions, it can be suggested that older teachers may more be interested in tasks relevant to educational issues, while younger teachers focus more on personal and developmental functions. This might reflect an increasing awareness among the more recently appointed teachers of the importance of these functions. This awareness of new generations of teachers might bode well for prospects of reforming counselling programmes. It perhaps indicates changes in the training of young teachers and also reinforces the importance of informing teachers about the counselling programme through their preparation and training.

On the other hand, it was observed that younger teachers perceived counsellors in their schools to be more involved in counselling, consulting, evaluation and assessment and programme management and development functions than did the older group.

7.6.7.5 Experience:

The results of the ANOVA tests generally showed that length of experience did not significantly influence teachers' perceptions of the actual and ideal role of the counsellor.

However, although all teachers perceived that counsellors were greatly involved in all six categories of counselling functions, less experienced teachers tended to view the tasks to be conducted more frequently. The results imply that teachers' experience is not important if it does not enable teachers to understand the role of the school counsellor.

7.6.7.6 Question Ten:

- Are there any differences among counsellors, principals and teachers in their perceptions of the ideal functions of the intermediate school counsellor?

Many significant differences were found among the counsellors' principals' and teachers' perceptions of the ideal role of the school counsellor in relation to counselling, consulting, programme management and development, and personal and professional development. Although there were some items on which the groups were in general agreement, there were also many differences in ratings for particular items or categories. However, it is interesting to note that the biggest disagreement were related to counselling functions, which counsellors assigned higher importance than did other staff.

More specifically, counsellors assigned higher importance to tasks in the counselling category than did principals who, in turn, perceived those tasks as more important than teachers did. On the other hand, principals assigned greater importance to consulting, programme management and development, and personal and professional development functions than did counsellors who, in turn, assigned them greater importance than teachers did. The result suggests that some teachers may not be fully aware of the objectives and benefits of the guidance and counselling programme (Adams et al., 2007). Although principals seemed to be more knowledgeable than teachers, they did not share the priorities of counsellors in some respects. It seems that these differences between principals and teachers may arise from principals and teachers perceiving the counsellor's role from their own perspectives. For example, principals were more in favour than teachers of conducting research related to the guidance and counselling programme.

There were, however, some issues on which the three groups were in agreement, particularly in the evaluation and assessment category. There was consensus on the lower importance of the counsellors' task of using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and characteristics. This would suggest that such an activity requires counsellors to be highly skilled in research, which is not the case. Principals, teachers and counsellors themselves may know that counsellor preparation programmes do not provide course work in evaluation research design. Therefore, all of the three groups may believe that counsellors do not have the knowledge and skills required to do research (Whiston and Aricak, 2008).

An agreement was also found between the three groups regarding the importance of educational-related activities. For example, in ranking the counselling task of helping students with problems of academic achievement as the most important function. In this study, school staff and counsellors viewed counselling as directly supporting and increasing students' learning and achievement. Similarly, Foster et al (2005) found that, while students' educational needs were being met, activities focusing on the career and personal/social development domains were not being performed as frequently by counsellors.

Despite these findings, the interview data revealed that counsellors, principals and teachers appeared to be aware of the impact students' social and personal concerns can have on educational achievement. They noted increasing levels of emotional and personal problems in student populations, which places a greater demand on counsellors to be skilled in the most current preventive techniques (Howell et al., 2008). However, the overall results reflect greater emphasis given to students' academic achievement. This is

understandable given that the whole educational system concentrates on academic achievement more than other aspects of students' lives.

Turning to programme management and development activities, it is encouraging to find that the groups agreed on the importance of establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with school staff and consultation with teachers, principals and parents about the needs and concerns of students. This suggests that a collaborative model for helping students, which includes key figures in their lives (including teachers, administrators, parents, counsellors, family members), is understood to be the most effective way to help these students (Baker et al., 2009). This is a hopeful sign for a better future for guidance and counselling programmes in Saudi Arabia. The goals of guidance and counselling programmes cannot be achieved without co-operation and sharing information and ideas between school staff and with parents.

7.6.7.7 Question Eleven:

- Are there any differences among counsellors, principals and teachers in their perceptions of the actual functions of the intermediate school counsellor?

Significant differences were found among the counsellors, principals, and teachers in their perceptions of the actual role of the school counsellor in relation to counselling, developmental, educational and career guidance, consulting, evaluation and assessment, and programme management and development. Counsellors thought they performed the activities in these categories more frequently than did principals and teachers. Also, counsellors were more often involved in these functions in the perceptions of principals compared to those of teachers. However, counsellors' involvement in personal and

professional development activities was perceived by most teachers and principals as something that was only sometimes performed. Interestingly, counsellors themselves agreed with this assessment.

Conversely, all the participant groups perceived a high level of involvement in functions related to academic matters and administrative tasks and clerical duties, particularly in their perceptions of performance of counselling and evaluation and assessment tasks.

The study indicated that, for most of the counsellor's functions, performance level were lower than the degree of importance placed on them. However, significant differences were found among counsellors, principals and teachers in their perceptions regarding the importance and performance of the counsellor's role, suggesting role conflict and role ambiguity. Part of the problem may be the high or conflicting expectations held by those that the counsellors work with, such as principals, and teachers (Whiston, 2002). According to the interview findings, counsellor involvement in activities such as administration or discipline, their concentration on paperwork, and their inability to clarify and communicate their role to others seemed to cause difficulty. In particular, involvement in extensive paperwork and administration duties, without doubt, led to conflicting feelings among counsellors themselves (Lambie, 2007). Some were not happy to be involved with such tasks, which they felt contradicted their role. In this study the scale of discrepancies between counsellors, principals and teachers regarding the importance and performance of the school counsellor's role were found to be as great as in the findings of Al-Rebdi's (2004), study in Saudi Arabia.

7.6.7.8 Question Twelve:

- What major difficulties do school counsellors experience?

The work conditions of the school counsellor are affected by several difficulties, including the following:

1- Lack of training courses attended by the school counsellors. This can be explained by the fact that insufficient attention has been given to the establishment of training courses, leading to a stalemate in practice, and poor access to new developments in the field of guidance and counselling. This confirms the importance of developing training courses to nurture basic skills among counsellors and to keep pace with developments in the field.

2- It does appear that lack of specialization in the field affects the level of knowledge and professional culture, and therefore the level of performance. This is then a substantial impediment to those who practised the profession of guidance and counselling in Saudi schools.

3- The huge numbers of students in schools. They felt that with only one counsellor in a school, they were unable to carry out all the tasks assigned to them. They further refer to the shortage of counsellors in schools, which is the most important obstacle facing counselling and guidance services for students. It also reflects the importance of meeting the needs of schools counsellors.

4- The main difficulty reported by all counselors was the excessive amount of paperwork required. This is not surprising, bearing in mind that counsellors are mainly evaluated on the basis of such paperwork. When assessing school counsellors, supervisors who have little or no training in counselling focus on the

paperwork and records. Thus, many counsellors may fail to implement programmes and develop the services, but simply fills out the records that supervisors require.

5- Lack of outreach programs that develop the relationship between the school and the family. This leads to the absence of follow-up and monitoring by the parents of students and limits their participation in solving the problems facing their children. This makes the task of the counsellor in guiding students difficult, and it is impossible to provide the necessary assistance or design appropriate mentoring programmes.

6- Low awareness among parents of their children's psychological, educational needs. Such ignorance makes the task of meeting these needs almost impossible, and this in turn leads to the emergence of many psychological problems and emotional disorders among children, making the task of counselling more difficult, both in the identification of such psychological, educational problems, or in providing the appropriate programmes and services. Worse, this situation can lead to the reluctance of students to use counselling services.

7.6.7.9 Interim Summary:

Many difficulties were reported by counsellors, of which the major ones were lack of training, excessive amounts of paperwork, lack of support and cooperation from parents, and large numbers of students. Counsellors pointed out that such difficulties have an effect on their work and may hinder their ability to deliver the necessary services.

Furthermore, they mentioned that, as a result of these difficulties, they are likely to focus only on some functions and ignore others.

7.7 Suggestions Made by Participants for the Improvement of Counselling Services:

Many suggestions were made by respondents for improvements in the counselling service:

1. The Ministry of Education should exercise care in appointing specialised counsellors who are qualified for counselling work in schools. Unqualified counsellors must not be involved in this work.
2. The Ministry of Education should place more importance on training and development. The goal should be to increase the efficiency of counsellors and develop their practice through good planning. In addition, too much emphasis should not be placed on theory. Practical field work activities should be promoted and reinforced.
3. It is essential that counsellors have regular supervision in order to maintain proper professional counselling standards and to monitor the quality of their work with clients within the school setting.
4. The number of counsellors should be increased in heavily-populated schools. A reasonable number of students for each counsellor should be set so that they can all be provided with counselling services.
5. The role of counsellors and counselling in general should be consolidated through various media to explain its importance in schools. Meetings, seminars and

lectures should be conducted of with the purpose of informing society about this work and its importance in achieving psychological and academic well-being among students.

6. Scientific research and surveys should be carried out that aim to develop this aspect of the educational process.

7.8 Conclusion:

The questionnaire and interview findings show that the three participating groups of counsellors, principals and teachers viewed the actual and the ideal roles of the school counsellor differently to some extent. School staff concentrated on the importance of educational and behavioural aspects, while counsellors were more interested in students' personal well being and development. Counsellors also prioritised educational issues but slightly less so than principals and teachers.

Regarding counsellors' performance, it is a cause for concern that all of the participant groups perceived the activities they considered important as not performed often enough. The overall results indicate that principals and teachers, for example, are not only dissatisfied with the role counsellors play, but they also differ in their perceptions of her ideal role in relation to some duties. This clearly suggests that, the counsellor's role remains unclear and ambiguous to the majority of the participants (Sears and Granello, 2002). More broadly, whereas all admit that counsellors are heavily involved in administrative duties, some principals insisted that clerical duties are essential for evaluating their counsellors. Some of them also argued that discipline and behavioural problems are the responsibility of the counsellor.

Nevertheless, the three groups agreed on a number of points, including lack of cooperation between the school and parents, the urgent need to train counsellors, and the importance of activities that aim at improving the academic achievement of students. The findings of the present study lead to the important conclusions that parental support is lacking, training is insufficient and often unavailable, and counsellors are absorbed in administrative and disciplinary duties.

However, would addressing these problems resolve the issue of role ambiguity? In answer to this question, it does appear that the problem is approached from the American perspective. In the concluding chapter, it will be argued that the role we attempt to impose on the Saudi school counsellor and the programmes we seek to implement are, themselves, deficient and unsuitable simply because they do not take the Saudi students' needs and their cultural background into consideration.

In general, it can be concluded that, in order to establish an effective school counselling programme, confusion about the role of school counsellors, both within the profession and across disciplines, must be clarified (Rayle and Adams, 2007).

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Chapter Eight

Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction:

This chapter reviews the present study and the findings of its fieldwork, with a view to drawing conclusions from the research. In particular, the purpose of the present chapter is to summarize the main findings, to argued that the role we attempt to impose on the Saudi school counsellor and the programmes we seek to implement are, themselves, deficient and unsuitable simply because they do not take the Saudi students' needs and their cultural background into consideration. Moreover, to evaluate the limitations of the study, and to propose suggestions for improving school counselling services in Saudi Arabia, as well as suggest some ideas for further study.

8.2 Summary and Conclusions:

The purpose of the present study was to examine the perceptions of counsellors, principals and teachers regarding the role of the school counsellor in Saudi Arabia. It has attempted to explore what differences or discrepancies, if any, exist between the role of counsellors actually play and the one they should ideally play. It also attempted to identify the problems which face counsellors during their work and may impede them from offering good services.

It is appropriate here to mention the importance of the present study. Firstly, it was deemed important because it could provide a view of current school counselling system in Saudi Arabia in general, and secondly, would shed light on the development of girl's counselling in Saudi Arabia in particular. Thirdly, as far as could be determined,

this study was the first to investigate the views of counsellors, principals and teachers and their perceptions of the actual and ideal role of the school counsellors in Saudi girls' schools.

Thus, the target population of this study consisted of three groups: counsellors, principals, and teachers in intermediate schools in Saudi Arabia. Due to the limited time allowed by the Saudi authorities for the completion of the field work (three months with the possibility of a one month extension), and the costs that would have been involved, it was not possible for the researcher to survey the whole of this population. Consequently, Jeddah province was chosen for sampling in the study (see Chapter Four).

Two instruments, a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, were used to gather the data from the three respondents groups. The findings of interviews with participants generally supported the quantitative results from the questionnaire. They also revealed other issues which were thought to be very important to improve the existing counselling services. These included raising awareness, student confidentiality, and counsellor training in particular. In order to ensure that the two instruments were suitable and relevant to the purpose of the study, both were piloted and their validity and reliability tested. Data for the study was collected between September 2007 and January 2008. A total of 180 counsellors, 126 principals and 237 teachers responded to the questionnaire. Also, 10 counsellors, 8 principals and 12 teachers were interviewed.

8.3 Main Findings of the Study:

A most impressive finding from this study is the widespread support expressed for guidance and counselling services. It was found that there is a growing awareness of the

necessity and importance of guidance and counselling programmes to meet the needs of students. Despite this, there were many discrepancies between the present reality of this service and expectations of it. It was found that qualifications, area of specialization, training, teaching and counselling experience, age and number of students in their school had little to do with how a counsellor perceives the importance of her role. On the other hand, some of these factors are determining factors when considering the performance of counselling functions.

Significant differences were found between the perceptions of the importance and performance of the counsellor's functions, and almost all functions were perceived as being performed less frequently than their perceived importance would warrant. Moreover, there were different perceptions among counsellors, principals, and teachers regarding the importance and performance of the counsellor's functions.

Nevertheless, the three groups agreed on a number of points, including the lack of cooperation between school and parents, the urgent need to train counsellors, and the importance of activities that aim at improving the academic achievements of students. In general, however, the results of the current research point to serious deficiencies in counsellors' performance. These pertain to three main areas: lack of clarity in the counsellor's role and subsequently excessive administrative and clerical duties; lack of professional training and knowledge; and lack of parental support and cooperation.

8.3.1 Lack of Clarity in the Counsellor's Role and Excessive Administrative, and Clerical Duties:

Although the role of school counsellors appears to have gained broad acceptance, this not to say that the guidance and counselling programme is without its critics. One of the issues most frequently raised by counsellors in their discussion of problems facing them during their work and potential obstacles to the establishment of such services was lack of clarity in the counsellor's role. This took various forms. For example, whereas all respondents admitted that counsellors were heavily involved in administrative duties, some principals insisted that clerical duties were essential for evaluating their counsellors. They also argued that discipline and behavioural problems were the responsibility of the counsellor. Thus, although counsellors were expected to show involvement in their professional role, they were perceived to be involved in disciplinary matters and spending much of their time in administrative tasks and paperwork.

In other words, although counsellors complained that they were assigned duties not related to their work as counsellors, they still wasted much of their time on administrative duties, paperwork and duties not related to counselling. The findings of this study clearly suggest that the role of the counsellor remains unclear and ambiguous for the majority of the participants. This can be seen in the high importance attached to the educational functions of the counselling programme. Therefore, there seemed to be a lack of understanding of the counsellor's functions.

That the role of the school counsellor in Saudi Arabia is unclear is evidenced by the results of this study. The differences between the perceived ideal and actual performed role, and the discrepancies in perceptions that existed among counsellors,

principals and teachers, suggest the presence of considerable role conflict and ambiguity. Part of the problem with perceptions of school counsellors may be the lack of clear documentation about what they do. Inadequate guidelines contribute to role confusion and lack of clarity about the field of school counselling. Although the Ministry of Education publishes material on the objectives and the activities of the school counsellor and the role of principals and teachers in the programme, this is inadequate. It is expressed in very general terms, making it very difficult to translate into practice. This leads to inadequate planning and may explain counsellors' vulnerability to heavy involvement in non-professional activities. Ultimately, counsellors still waste most of their time on administrative duties, concentrate on students' academic achievement, ignore essential services such as preventive, individual and group counselling, and provide services mainly to low achieving or talented students. However, clearer guidelines would help counsellors to develop a set of programme objectives and priorities within which to operate. It would also help them to stay on target and serve accountability, and to ensure that programmes do not change from one counsellor to another.

8.3.2 Lack of Professional Training and Knowledge:

Participants saw the shortage of appropriately skilled and qualified counsellors as a major obstacle facing counselling services in Saudi Arabia, and hindered counsellors from doing their work propriety. The professional status of school counsellors appears to be inadequate. In fact, the vast majority of counsellors in this study were insufficiently trained and unqualified. Out of the 122 counsellors who had some training, nearly

three-quarters indicated that they had attended training courses of less than one month, usually held in the schools or in the Directorate of Education. Apart from this, only one of the counsellors had a postgraduate qualification. In fact, diploma and masters courses are provided only to a few privileged candidates each year. In this study, however, differences were found in perceptions of the performance of most counselling functions between qualified and nonqualified counsellors and between those who were trained and those who were not.

Qualified and trained counsellors perceived themselves performing most functions more often, especially those tasks which needed more skills and knowledge such as counselling functions. This can be interpreted as indicating that untrained and non-qualified counsellors have inadequate knowledge about these functions and their use. They appear to be inadequately trained and qualified to provide the proper professional help, and ultimately they find it difficult to take the initiative and improve their professional knowledge and skills. These results highlight the importance of counsellors being qualified and trained to perform their professional role. On the whole, the issue of qualification and training should be given far more attention. Counsellors should be equipped with at least the basic qualities of a good counsellor. The study highlighted the important role of principals in determining the climate for the guidance and counselling services in their schools. Thus it is appropriate to encourage principals to develop the necessary knowledge about guidance and counselling. Training for teachers was also found to be essential. The study showed a lack of participation from some teachers in the programme. This calls for an effective exposition of the guidance and counselling

programme for teachers, especially during their pre-service training, because without proper training, they cannot be expected to make a useful contribution.

8.3.3 Lack of Parental Support and Cooperation:

Another problem identified in this study is inadequate contact with parents and cooperation between them and counsellors. To address this problem, we must understand and analyze its sources and causes. Otherwise, it will not be possible to build a bridge between schools and parents. However, apart from the parents of some talented students, other parents offered negligible support and co-operation. This, according to all respondents, indicates a lack of awareness on the part of parents of the counsellors' role in the school and its importance. On the whole, counsellors, principals and teachers complained that parental support was lacking, At the same time, no practical steps to address the problem were being taken. In fact, parents are not adequately informed about the counselling programmes or encouraged to visit schools. However, the responsibility for this is shared between the two parties. Some counsellors do not give the relationship with home enough attention, and some families may be unaware of the importance of communication with school. Nonetheless, a strong connection between families and schools is essential for building a positive environment for students. The best way to obtain these is through relationships with families. Building strong parent school relationships would mean that parents and schools communicated actively with each other. By getting involved in a relationship with the school, parents would show their children that they valued school and education. Counsellors should understand the

powerful connection between the students and their families and how these interactions influence school performance.

Overall, the findings of the present study lead to the important conclusions that parental support is lacking, training is insufficient, and counsellors are too absorbed in administrative and disciplinary duties.

8.4 Major Factor that has Contributed to Confusion and Ambiguity that Surrounds the Saudi Counsellor's Role:

The present study on perceptions of counsellors, teachers and principals of the role of the Saudi school counsellor indicated clearly that all groups have different and conflicting conceptions of what comprised an appropriate set of duties for the counsellors. Overall, the confusion that surrounds the Saudi counsellor's role, lack of parental support and training are probably part of the problems the counselling service in the Kingdom's schools face. The ambiguity and confusion that surround the role of the Saudi counsellor is a good reminder of the situation that has persisted in the United States since the initiation of counselling service in that country. Here, the parallel drawn between the two situations is not without a reason: it is that the Saudi school counselling and guidance service is influenced and guided by the American school of thought and counselling programmes and methods.

The role definition crisis in the United States, in particular, is often blamed on the trained American counsellors who have failed to formulate a clear-cut definition and impose it on or communicate it to the others (Dahir et al., 2009). Hence, it is believed that because the Saudi school counselling and guidance programme is a copy of the American

version, resolving the role definition issue in the United States may also provide the Saudi counsellor with answers and solutions to her or his problem. The danger in this assumption is that it does not acknowledge that methods of offering help and counselling vary from one country or setting to the other depending on the needs and cultural, economic and social environment of the individual.

To put it simply, in a pluralistic society like that of the united states, and given the technological advancement and social pressures and problems that are growing at an accelerating rate, counsellors are often required to adapt and reconsider their priorities to meet the changing needs. By the same token, changes in the Saudi society are taking place, and counsellors must respond to these changes in a constructive and positive manner (Al-Rebdi, 2000). But, this does necessarily mean that the students' counselling needs in both situations are the same, nor does it imply that the Saudi and American counsellors should play the same role. In other words, since the perspective of Islam is, in so many ways, different from that of western philosophies and religions, it may not be possible simply to transfer Western techniques of counselling in to the Islamic world (Al-Bahadel, 2004). For this reason, Bluhm (1983) in a similar Islamic context, Egypt, reported on the difficulty of importing the American counselling model into the education system, because its values were alien to the culture, where society is seen as having a right to guide its members.

To understand these points, the models, which have been developed in the west, can be seen as generally very individualistic in focus. This may not always be appropriate in non-Western cultures, which often de-emphasise individualism (Pedersen, 1985). For example, in Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, the culture is collectivist, and

individual identity is perceived in relation to the family or community (Hardiman and Midgley, 1982). The influence of the Islamic religion and the impact of Arabic culture are deeply rooted through the history of Saudi Arabia society and they shape its unique and conservative nature. In Saudi Arabia Islam plays an important role in the life, belief and values of people. These values create a situation where the individual is perceived as having personal moral responsibility, but society has a right and even a duty to guide her/him to socially and religiously acceptable choice.

Such a brief cultural overview of Saudi society makes it possible to provide a clearer picture of what goes on in Saudi schools. All teachers, principals, counsellors and students belong to the same culture and are influenced by the same beliefs. In fact, the behaviour of all those inside school, or for that matter outside it, is shaped by spiritual beliefs and cultural norms to the extent that students, teachers and counsellors are all preoccupied with activities related to those beliefs and norms rather than those activities related to school or personal problems.

Thus, for their part, counsellors who are expected to handle these problems are, themselves, not without problems. In this respect, several comments by some respondents in this study revealed a directive view of counselling, whereby the counsellor makes value-judgements and points to specific "correct" courses of action (Al-Bahadel, 2004). The directive tendency of some counsellors, however, may also be related to the particular culture of Saudi Arabia, where students are used to being told what to do by their parents or those in authority.

This result is to be expected, since Saudi society recognised to be a group-oriented one; people recognise themselves as extensions of their family and community

(Soliman, 1986). Therefore, counselling intervention is expected to help students to play the roles required of them by their family and wider society. In general, within the Islamic context, counselling may include different types of help, such as giving advice or direction. It may be that counselling in an Islamic society cannot be as non-directive and value-free as in the west since a counsellor will necessarily make interpretations. Moreover, the Saudi client her/himself often adopt a passive attitude towards the therapy or counselling process (Al-Bahadel, 2004).

This is contrary to the values of the person-centred approach which encourages self-actualisation and the fulfilment of personal goals (Moore, 2004). Consequently, person-centred techniques of counselling may not be understood and their use may be inappropriate in this culture (Al-Zahrani, 1990).

Other authors have suggested that the methods of rational-emotive therapy (now known as Rational-Emotive Behaviour Therapy) are appropriate in Saudi Arabia, as a method to teach the client effective self analysis so that after treatment, introspective analysis and correction of distortions of thinking can continue (Beck et al., 1988). This would be in the line with Islam's emphasis on reason, logic and the ability of individuals to work through their emotional problems through rational thought.

Behavioural methods (see Chapter three) might be acceptable and effective in a culture where "directive" approach expected from professionals in the helping services, who can be perceived as having a quasi-parental role (Al-Bahadel, 2004). Therefore, the behavioural model of counselling perhaps might be more applicable to non-Western settings such as those in the Middle East cultures and Saudi Arabian culture in particular.

Nonetheless, a combined or eclectic approach might work in Saudi culture. For

example, it can be argued that Rogers is a moral theorist and his notions involve an underlying spirituality which is religious in character (Rogers, 1980). Certainly, his analysis of life may be consonant with that of Islamic teachers. In addition, Islam believes that every mature Muslim is free to decide for himself (Al-Zahrani, 1990).

In view of the above considerations, there may be a need to adapt western theories for students' counselling, because some of the above mentioned theories in their original form are inconsistent with Saudi culture in general and especially as related to the Saudi people. Counselling programmes have been developed to service the needs of a particular group or members of the community, which is students in our case. To state the obvious, the needs of two different communities are not necessarily the same. This statement becomes even more valid if we consider the needs of two samples of students, one from a developing country with well defined and strict social conventions and norms, and another from a highly developed country where liberalism and individualism are appreciated. In itself, this means that no single counselling tradition should be seen as universal and ultimate means of salvation. In spite of this, the American model of school counselling was introduced in Saudi Arabia even without conducting any prior research on the cultural background of the Saudi students population and their needs. Thus, there are differences between the Saudi Arabia culture and western culture and these have important implications for practice.

Naturally, cultural differences, therefore, need to be considered in the selection of an appropriate counselling approach. Unless a realistic programme that taken the students' cultural background and their unique needs into consideration is formulated, confusion will persist and the role of the Saudi school counsellor will not be defined.

That is to say, unless the cultural realities and needs are observed, the issue of role ambiguity may never be resolved. Al-Bahadel (2004) reported that participants at a conference pertaining to the improvement of counselling in the Arab world called for a distinct theoretical framework of counselling based on the Arab culture. However it is worth mentioned that Islam respects human thinking and reasoning, and accept learning from other culture.

8.5 Limitations of the Study:

The limitation of the present study derive from its nature and purpose. It was confined to particular participants in public intermediate schools, and was subject to time constraints which prevented a large' scale study from being undertaken.

More broadly, the assessment of attitudes and perceptions in this study was limited to a sample of 543 participants working in public intermediate schools for girls in Saudi Arabia, run by the Saudi Ministry of Education. The counsellors, principals and teachers who constituted the sample were employed full time in the academic year 2007-2008. Further research should attempt to investigate the views of other groups, such as students and parents.

The data collected for this study was limited to schools in Jeddah province, which is one of thirteen provinces in Saudi Arabia. Because the education system in the Kingdom is unified and centrally controlled by the Ministry of Education, it would be reasonable to suggest that the study sample is representative of counsellors, principals and teachers in other parts of the country.

There were certain factors in the conduct of the study which limited the sample size. For example, although some participants indicated in their questionnaire responses that they were willing to be interviewed, they later changed their minds, for reasons unknown to the researcher. This reduced the number of participants from whom in-depth responses could be obtained, even though, as indicated in chapter four, every effort was made to encourage participation.

Another factor was related to problems of communication and liaison between the Saudi Arabia Cultural Bureau in the UK and the General Directorate of Education in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. This caused unnecessary delays in obtaining official permission to conduct the necessary field work in Saudi Arabia. This meant that part of the field work had to be conducted at a time when schools were busy preparing, conducting and supervising mid-term examinations. Respondents may not, therefore, have been free to respond to the questionnaire accurately, which subsequently also may have had an effect on the sample size and on the reliability of the statistical analysis.

8.6 Recommendations:

On the basis of the main findings and conclusions which have emerged from this study, it is useful to put forward some recommendation and suggestions which can be offered to bodies responsible for promoting effective counselling services. These would include the following:

8.6.1 Recommendations Related to Clarifying the Role of Counsellors:

The role of the school counsellor must be clearly defined and communicated to those involved in the counselling programme, including counsellors, principals, teachers,

students and parents. Towards this end, the Ministry of Education and teaching institutions should publicize the counsellor's role and counselling programmes through media channels as well as meetings, seminars and lectures. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education should provide guidelines on the role of counsellors, consolidate their position in schools, and give them the authority to defend the profession.

In order to help them focus their work on student needs and problems, the administrative tasks and paperwork that consume much of the counsellor's time need to be reduced. In this respect, counsellors need to understand their role, implement it efficiently, and refrain from performing activities not related to the profession.

Parental influence seems to be very influential in a child's decision to go to a counsellor. There is therefore a particular a need to invite parents to meetings and conferences to raise their awareness of counselling services and to inform them about importance of these services in helping their children and society as a whole. However, counsellors and school staff must also work together towards building stronger home-school relationships, encouraging parents to visit the school and participate in the education of their children.

8.6.2 Recommendations Related to Counsellor Training:

Only skilled and qualified counsellors can provide an efficient counselling service. This suggests that in-service training programmes should be provided and made more widely available for serving counsellors to ensure that they have the basic professional skills to enable them to be proficient in their work. These programmes should be increasingly regarded as continuous and coordinated, with in a carefully

planned policy. The Ministry of Education and counselling professionals, including university professors specializing in counselling, should work together in planning and implementing the curriculum for training programmes.

8.6.3 Recommendations Related to Programme Development:

The Ministry of Education should pay more attention to the importance of developing programmes take the student's needs into consideration. For example, any counselling programme should service the needs of all students and not concentrate only on talented or low achieving students. Apart from this, rather than concentrate on academic achievement, a counselling programme that takes students' personal and social needs in their changing environment should be considered. Additionally, rather than wait for problems to surface, preventive counselling should be given more attention. Also, instead of concentrating efforts only on individual counselling, group counselling should also be promoted and appreciated.

A culturally appropriate counselling model should be developed, based on the established norms of the society. It should acknowledge its religious ethos and social traditions. This does not mean rejection of advanced western techniques and facilities, but finding ways to incorporate them with the indigenous social and religious spirit. This, undoubtedly, would increase the acceptance of counselling in the eyes of the others, and would enhance the clarity of counsellors' role.

On the whole, unlike the current over-demanding programme, a revised programme with well-identified, realistic and achievable objectives is needed. To facilitate the development of appropriate programmes, an active research department

should be established within the Ministry of Education, selected from experts in the fields of counselling, psychology and sociology, to conduct regular research in the counselling field, which might help officials better understand student needs. This research department should be given the freedom, flexibility, and funds to conduct short-term and/or longitudinal studies which will help in the revision of counselling programmes. Most importantly, the results and of such research should be published so that interested parties would be encouraged to come forward with new ideas or techniques and be rewarded for doing so. In the same way, the Ministry of Education should provide opportunities for counsellors, in particular, to contribute to programme planning and development, by encouraging them to carry out scientific research and survey studies that aim to develop the role they play in the educational process. Towards this purpose, it would be necessary to provide counsellors with guidance, advice and incentives.

8.6.4 Recommendations Related to Counsellors' Professional Development:

Unless counsellors are aware of their duties and responsibilities, it is unrealistic to expect them to explain that role and communicate it to others. However, some counsellors, in this study, pointed to weaknesses in aspects of the existing counselling services which they attributed to the lack of knowledge of the counsellor's role. Their comments also suggested that counsellors' performance of their duties might be impeded by conflicts between their counselling and other roles. Therefore, counselling competence and confidence in their roles might be improved by continuing professional development. On the one hand, the Ministry of Education could establish a professional journal and association for counsellors to encourage them to keep up to date with new ideas and

developments in counselling services in order to refresh their knowledge. On the other hand, school counsellors should continue to develop their own skills and knowledge, they should keep in touch with other professionals in the field and participate in local and international conferences to discuss issues related to counselling, in particular, and counselling services in general. This should be conducted with the help of skilled supervisors and trained counsellors.

8.6.5 Recommendations Related to Professional Standards:

The present study revealed that a possible obstacle to the establishment of better counselling services in Saudi Arabia is a lack of trust in the profession. One reason for this is fears that confidentiality and privacy would be breached. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and (General Administration for Guidance and Counselling-GAGC. (1997) should develop ethical standards which clarify confidentiality issues and boundaries. There should be a very strict code of ethics to guide the practice of school counselling. This would further help to strengthen parental confidence in the counsellor's role and counselling in general.

Moreover, there were indications in this study that some problems of public acceptance of the counsellor's role and obstacles to the development of school counselling in Saudi Arabia may be related to low standards in the profession itself. In particular, a significant proportion of respondents in this study were unqualified. Therefore, the Ministry of Education should reconsider the whole process of appointing counsellors. Unqualified counsellors should not be appointed, as this will affect the standard of counselling, and be detrimental to its effectiveness in schools. A strong

recommendation is that schools should have specialized professionals who have acquired the appropriate education and practical experience and who will be able to co-operate with teachers in order that both may offer the appropriate services to pupils (Stamelos, 2002) .

Finally, in order for counselling services to reach all students, the Ministry of Education should increase the number of counsellors in heavily-populated schools.

8.7 Suggestions for Further Research:

This study has involved mainly exploratory and descriptive research aiming to identify the perceptions of the participants regarding the role of intermediate school counsellors in Saudi Arabia. Participants in this study were intermediate school counsellors, principals and teachers in Saudi schools. Therefore, further research is recommended to investigate how students and parents perceive the role of the school counsellor.

The present study is limited to Jeddah province, which is one of thirteen provinces in Saudi Arabia. For wider insight into perceptions regarding the role of school counsellors in Saudi Arabia, further studies should include all other regions in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in order to compile a nation-wide picture. This would enable the present findings to be more extensively validated. The results achieved would then better help researchers, decision-makers and planners to consider ways of improving counselling services in Saudi Arabia. Finally, because the intermediate school stage has been the focus of this study, it would be beneficial if other studies concentrated on

counselling at other schooling stages, particularly at the elementary stage as this that has also not been appropriately researched.

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