



School counselor leadership: A theoretical and empirical review

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ABSTRACT

Entering the 21st century, the leadership role of teachers is in the spotlight in primary to secondary education. Similarly, the leadership of school counselors began to be voiced. Changes in the orientation of guidance and counseling resulted in a shift in the role of the school counselor as one of the implementers in guidance and counseling management. School counselors exercise a leadership role in developing and organizing guidance and counseling programs. This study aims to describe and how the leadership of school counselors theoretically and empirically. The analysis method uses a literature review with four stages: identification, screening, suitability, and inclusion. The primary data sources are obtained from academic reference books and previous research on teacher leadership, guidance and counseling over the past five years that have been published in reputable journals in the Scopus database. The results showed that school counselor leadership in the last five years carried several themes, such as testing the effectiveness of leadership training interventions, the relationship of leadership with personality attributes, the design of leadership training frameworks, the relationship of counseling leadership with professional counselor identity, and school counselor leadership in the context of ethnicity. The results of this study are expected to provide a broader picture of future research opportunities on the topic of school counselor leadership.



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INTRODUCTION

Traced from its history, guidance and counseling schools in America have been more than 100 years old (ASCA, 2012). Guidance and counseling in schools began under the name of vocational guidance in the early 1900s, and were still carried out by administrative staff and teachers. While in Indonesia, guidance and counseling began to be discussed in 1962, but have only been inaugurated since the enactment of the 1975 curriculum. The history of BK in schools explains why and how the guidance and counseling position and service model developed (Gysbers, 2014). A comprehensive model of guidance and counseling emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in response to dissatisfaction with earlier service models that focused on crisis and remedial management (Myrick, 2011). Transformative school counselors are moving from traditional individual remediation models to proactive counseling that places more emphasis on skills development than personal problem-solving (Stone & Dahir, 2016).

Along with the progress of the times and the development of science and technology, guidance and counseling have changed and developed. Changes in orientation in guidance and counseling from time to time have resulted in a change in the role of school counselors as implementers of guidance and counseling services. In traditional guidance and counseling, school counselors play a role in counseling, consultation, and collaboration (3C). Whereas in transformative guidance and counseling, school counselors play a role not only in the 3Cs but also in leadership, social justice support, teamwork, resource management, data use, and change agents (Stone & Dahir, 2016). As we move into the 21st century, teachers have become more aware of their position as PreK–12 education leaders. Today's educational practices require the participation of increasingly varied teachers in leadership to continue efforts for continuous improvement and progress of schools (Good, 2008). In the first decade of the 21st century, efforts to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive guidance and counseling programs continue to be intensified and expanded (Gysbers, 2014). The role of school counselors as leaders began to be voiced. School counselors play a leadership role in developing and organizing guidance and counseling programs (Stone & Dahir, 2016). This is an effective way to expand essential guidance and counseling services into programs that involve all school personnel to optimize each student's ability to acquire the skills needed to succeed in the 21st century.

The issue of teacher leadership, guidance and counseling are inseparable from the issue of teacher leadership. Historically, the evolution in thinking about teacher leadership has been described by Silva, Gimbert, and Nolan (Good, 2008) in three waves. In the first wave, the core of teacher leadership was teachers taking positions in formal leadership, such as department chairs, field committee members, or trade union representatives, positions that mainly focused on improving the efficiency of school management. The second wave focused on teacher leadership as instructional leaders and created positions that utilized teachers' instructional knowledge. In the third wave, teacher leadership focuses on leadership efforts in creating and sustaining collaborative cultures of learning in schools and on improving instructional practices. All teachers are seen as potential leaders who can share professional development and continuing school responsibilities, regardless of whether they hold a formal designation as a leader (Good, 2008). Much research has been done on teacher leadership in education management in general, but little research has been done on school counselor leadership as it relates to professional counseling. This article aims to describe what and how the leadership of school counselors is, as well as how school counselor leadership is developed, based on theoretical and empirical reviews based on the results of previous research over the last five years. In addition, is the leadership of school counselors in line with educational leadership?

METHOD

The study uses the literature review method. The literature analysis was conducted on the primary reference in the form of books and articles (in English) from reputable journals that reviewed the leadership of school counselors over the past five years. A systematic review provides a research synthesis of existing studies on a problem, identifying opportunities for future research (Hu et al., 2021). This study follows the Standard Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-

Analyses Protocols (PRISMA-P) when conducting a systematic literature review (Mielgo-Conde et al., 2021) with four stages, namely identification, screening, suitability, and inclusion as described below.

1. Identification. At this identification stage, 22 articles were found that met the criteria. Several steps were taken to identify relevant literature on guidance and counseling teacher leadership, namely:
 - a. Determine the source of the database for data collection, namely from the Scopus database;
 - b. Determine the limits of articles searched, with criteria namely articles published during the last five years (2018-2023) in the Scopus database accessed in December 2022; in psychology and social sciences; document type of journal article; and speak English
 - c. Use the search keyword, which is "School Counselor Leadership".
2. Screening. The next step is filtering by deleting duplicated publications (n = 0). No repeated articles were found at this stage, so 22 articles entered the next stage.
3. Suitability. At this stage, check the article's suitability with the topic/theme studied, namely the topic of teacher leadership, guidance and counseling. Abstracts of 22 papers were read to find relevant articles, and no papers were eliminated at this stage.
4. Inclusion. At this stage, a review of the article's content is carried out. Articles that are outside the context of school counseling are exclusion articles that are excluded from the analysis process (n = 3). Based on the previous three stages, 19 articles were obtained that will be analyzed in this study

Next, the article is thoroughly reviewed to extract and summarize the necessary information in the paper. Extraction is carried out using criteria for the type of sample, method, and research context used. The analysis results are presented in tables and narratives, adjusted to the requirements examined from these articles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A Theoretical Review of School Counselor Leadership

Concept of School Counselor Leadership

School counselor leadership is one of four themes promoted by the ASCA National Model in its framework, in addition to advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change (ASCA, 2012, 2019). Because other essential skills such as advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change assume a certain leadership level, leadership can be considered the foundation of other essential skills (Mason & McMahan, 2009). Leadership is an essential skill for school counselors when developing and managing a comprehensive guidance and counseling program (Mason & McMahan, 2009). Implementing comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs aligned with the ASCA National Model requires school counselors to understand and utilize leadership skills (ASCA, 2012). School counselors can implement mentorship and counseling programs that address all students' academic, career, and social/emotional needs through leadership practices (Mason, 2010). While various leadership models exist for the education system, the ASCA® National Model (2012) refers to Bolman and Deal's research (2008). This model is called the transformative leadership model, which identifies four types of leadership: structural, human resources, political, and symbolic.

Structural leadership refers to the efforts to develop the organization, which involves creating and implementing a comprehensive school counseling program for school counselors. According to Dollarhide (2003), School counselors should establish the foundation of the school counseling program through mastery of the various tools envisaged in the ASCA® National Model (2012), including the development of program beliefs, vision, mission, and multiple tools for collecting and analyzing data. In this type of leadership, school counselors need to pay attention to building an effective structure for the school by helping to clarify school goals and lines of authority and focusing on tasks, facts, and logic rather than personality and emotions (Alsmadi & Mahasneh, 2011).

Human resource (HR) leadership is about empowering and inspiring others. School counselors embody HR leadership in conveying the hope that all students can achieve high achievement by removing barriers to student success, including raising peer awareness about

respecting students' differences. In HR leadership, school counselors empower, support, advocate, and inspire all school personnel to support student achievement and development. This leadership also focuses on using listening and communication skills to increase people's participation and sharing of appropriate information and involve parents in decision-making through trust and professionalism (Alsmadi & Mahasneh, 2011; Dollarhide, 2003).

Political leadership involves the use of interpersonal and organizational power. School counselors demonstrate political leadership in managing BK programs and building relationships with stakeholders and administrators. In political leadership, school counselors play a role in school power and authority, accessing and exercising formal and informal powers (Alsmadi & Mahasneh, 2011). School counselors work directly to overcome barriers and build support structures that benefit student achievement. School counselors will typically utilize persuasion, collaboration, and negotiation skills to achieve that. Symbolic leadership refers to a commitment to change and development. School counselors demonstrate this commitment to developing BK programs that meet the needs of students and the community, periodically evaluating and revising BK programs, and demonstrating high integrity. In symbolic leadership, school counselors inspire and support other personnel to achieve, discover and communicate vision through modelling and selective use of messages, impressions, and symbols to focus on what is essential and should be valued in the school (Dollarhide, 2003).

School counselors become active drivers in schools in this transformational leadership perspective, seeking to influence the behavior of school personnel to create a safe and effective learning environment for students (Wingfield et al., 2010). Transformational leadership in BK emphasizes communicating the vision, facilitating common goals, and increasing the commitment of school personnel in terms of student achievement, equity, self-esteem enhancement, and lifelong learning competencies (Alsmadi & Mahasneh, 2011). Table 1 shows examples of activities in the ASCA National Model that promote effective leadership as presented through the perspective of four leadership contexts in school counseling leadership activities (Dollarhide, 2003).

Table 1. School Counselor Leadership Activities in Four Transformative Leadership Contexts

Leadership Contexts	Leadership Activities Applied in School Counseling
Structural	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building the foundation of an effective school counseling program 2. Achieve mastery of counseling techniques and education 3. Designing strategies for developing school counseling programs 4. Implement an effective school counseling program
Human Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trusting others 2. Communicate that trust 3. Visible and accessible 4. Empowering others
Politics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the distribution of power at the school and official levels 2. Build relationships with key stakeholders (e.g., parents, administrators, teachers, and school committees) 3. Using persuasion and negotiation
Symbolics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using symbols and metaphors to attract attention 2. Framing experiences in meaningful ways 3. Finding communication and communicating vision 4. Maintain relationships with communities such as students, parents, and peers 5. Be a good model to inspire others 6. Leading by setting an example

Leadership requires a complex blend of interpersonal prowess, creativity, technical expertise, and the ability to anticipate emerging trends relevant to the organization-led (Herr et al.,

2006). One implication of such a perspective is that leadership is not passive but active; Leaders are not aloof and distant, but engage with people and organizational dynamics, and leaders, among other roles, are sensitive to the need to demonstrate organizational accountability. Professional school counselors appointed administrator, director, or executor of counseling programs will be advised to be familiar with various existing planning models, such as strategic planning, action planning, program planning, and system thinking (Herr et al., 2006).

School counselors are expected to know the qualities, principles, skills, and effective leadership styles to improve the learning environment of students at school (Chang et al., 2012). School counselors are expected to design, implement, manage, and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program, which requires excellent knowledge and proficiency in leadership and advocacy. Similarly, in teacher leadership, leadership expectations are embedded in the scope of the teacher's work, not as an additional task (Good, 2008). Teachers share leadership responsibility with the principal to shape and enact the school's vision and mission to advance teaching rather than just being communicators or coordinators. These three waves of teacher leadership, discussed in the introduction, reflect an evolution in how teachers participate in school leadership and learning. Significant contextual influences include increased educational accountability, a progressive conception of leadership, and a movement to transform schools into professional learning communities (Good, 2008).

School Counselor Leadership Capacity Building

Various efforts are made to develop leadership capacity in general. Adair (2005) Summing up, there are seven main principles in cultivating leadership: training, selection, leader position as a mentor, the opportunity to lead, education for leadership, leadership development strategy, and becoming a strategic leader. Qualitative findings from the research of Meany-Walen et al. (2013) demonstrate that leadership qualities and aptitudes can begin as innate abilities and interests before becoming a counseling student going on to progress and develop through mentoring, teaching, and experience throughout the individual's training and career. School counselor preparation programs can embed training, opportunities, mentoring, and leadership culture into their programs to encourage future professional school counselors to assume leadership roles.

Efforts to prepare school counselors to become school leaders have not been translated into their school duties (Mason & McMahan, 2009). Indeed, more research must be done to gain insight into school counselors becoming leaders. At the same time, school counselor education programs may also want to evaluate efforts in preparing graduates to become school leaders. To instill, refine, and maintain leadership skills, school counselors must participate in professional conferences, on-site training, collaborative projects with counseling education faculty as interns or investigative researchers, and continuing education courses and seminars (Wingfield et al., 2010). Bemak (Alsmadi & Mahasneh, 2011) states that developing school counselors' leadership requires increasing their knowledge and skills to help transform them into adopting a new vision of their role. They must have multi-relationship relationships with other personnel and organizations to help reduce achievement gaps and address students' emotional, social, and psychological needs. School counselors should work closely with principals and provide them with relevant data and challenges. Also, they must collaborate effectively with teachers to address problems and help meet students' academic and personal needs. School counselors should also build relationships with any external organizations that contribute to helping students.

Empirical Review of School Counselor Leadership

In a comprehensive review of research on teacher leadership, York-Barr and Duke (Good, 2008) define teacher leadership as the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices to enhance student learning and achievement. Based on this analysis, study on school counselor leadership over the past five years carries several themes, such as testing the effectiveness of leadership training interventions (Carandang et al., 2019; Geiger & Oehrtman, 2020; Kneale et al., 2018; LeBlanc & Borders, 2021), the relationship of leadership to personality attributes (Harrichand et al., 2021; Lopez-Perry, 2020; Mullen et al., 2017; Mullen, et al., 2019), leadership

training framework design (Geesa et al., 2020), counseling leadership's relationship with the counselor's professional identity (Peters & Vereen, 2020), and leadership in the context of ethnicity (Lopez-Perry, 2020; Yulizar & Fajriani, 2022).

Based on the type of research conducted, most research on school counselor leadership uses a quantitative approach (Carandang et al., 2019; Geesa et al., 2020; Harrichand et al., 2021; LeBlanc & Borders, 2021; Lopez-Perry, 2020; Mullen et al., 2017; Mullen et al., 2019; Young & Bryan, 2018; Yulizar & Fajriani, 2022), qualitative approach with case studies (Geiger & Oehrtman, 2020; Mayes et al., 2018; Strear et al., 2018), grounded theory (Hays et al., 2021), Phenomenological Studies (Peters & Vereen, 2020), and literature review methods (Kozachuk & Conley, 2021; Prasath et al., 2021; Yildiz, 2021). Also content analysis (Wahesh et al., 2018). Most research on school counselor leadership is addressed to school counselors (Geesa et al., 2020; Kneale et al., 2018; Mayes et al., 2018; Mullen et al., 2017; Mullen et al., 2019; Strear et al., 2018; Young & Bryan, 2018), counselor educator (Harrichand et al., 2021; Hays et al., 2021; Kozachuk & Conley, 2021; Lopez-Perry, 2020), students of the counseling study program are good at the undergraduate level (LeBlanc & Borders, 2021; Yulizar & Fajriani, 2022), graduate level (Mullen, Limberg, et al., 2019), or doctoral level (Harrichand et al., 2021; Kozachuk & Conley, 2021), and volunteer peer counselors (Carandang et al., 2019). Some studies examine the collaboration between school counselors and principals (Geesa et al., 2020; Mayes et al., 2018).

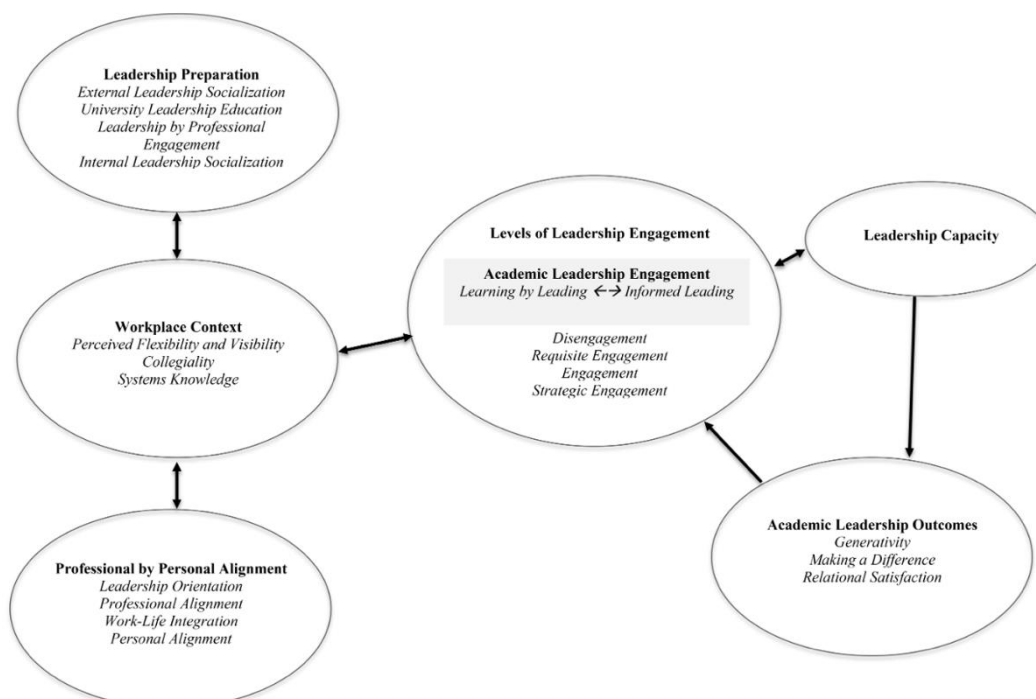


Figure 1. Academic Leadership Attachment Model

Hays et al. (2021) develop a theoretical model (figure 1) that reflects academic leadership development among counselor educators. The core category for this theoretical model is academic leadership engagement through learning by leading and informed leading. Core categories are informed by leadership preparation (causal condition), professional by personal alignment (intervening condition), and workplace context (context). In addition, there are four levels of leadership engagement (action strategies that include disengagement, requisite engagement, engagement, and strategic engagement) that produce a variety of academic leadership outcomes (consequences, i.e., generativity, change-making, and relational satisfaction); capacity Leadership serves as a condition of intervention or product between academic leadership involvement.

The study of Geesa et al. (2020) discovers the importance of collaboration between principals and school counselors to support the holistic development (academic, social, and

emotional) of grade 12 students, with the unique and diverse roles of principals and school counselors, respectively. The results of her research present a practical training framework for collaboration for pre-service and in-service school counselors and principal training programs, which can serve as a model for other programs to meet the social, emotional, academic, and career needs and college readiness of grade 12. The framework includes six elements: 1) adequate pre-service preparation; 2) sustainable partnerships; 3) stakeholder collaboration; 4) current practitioner support; 5) development of model sites; and 6) continuous research and professional learning. Each framework element presents examples of collaboration between the principal's and the school counselor's preparation program.

Related to implementing the ASCA National Model, it was found that the *self-efficacy* of school counselor leadership significantly predicted leadership performance based on the ASCA National Model (Mullen et al., 2019). School counselors who are respondents with more leadership experience have higher leadership *self-efficacy*. In addition, leadership *self-efficacy* was positively correlated with school counselors' emotional intelligence (Mullen et al., 2017).

In addition, a collaborative approach is also used by building stronger relationships with all education *stakeholders*, including principals, teachers, parents, and community members, to encourage positive academic, social-emotional, and career development for all students (Mayes et al., 2018). In all those efforts, school counselors use data to document their impact on student achievement and show others what school counselors can do to contribute to student achievement. In other words, it is related to the accountability of school counselors and public trust in the performance of guidance and counseling. Table 2 provides a summary of the studies reviewed in this study.

Table 2. Summary of Analyzed Articles

No	Author and Year	Context/Theme	Research Results
1	Yulizar & Fajriani, 2022	Differences in Leadership Intelligence Based on ethnic background	There is no significant difference in the leadership intelligence of guidance and counseling students from ethnic backgrounds (Aceh, Gayo, and Kluet).
2.	Hays et al., 2021	Theoretical leadership engagement educator counselor	Twenty counselor educators with academic leadership experience explain several factors and strategies for educational leaders' engagement, development, and retention (Figure 1).
3	LeBlanc & Borders, 2021	Exploration of the effectiveness of an 11-week leadership training intervention in an introductory school counseling course.	College students reported a higher frequency of school counseling leadership practices and a greater sense of self-efficacy at the end of the intervention. Leadership training provides the foundational knowledge to understand school counseling leadership and its relationship to future practices by guidance and counseling students.
4	Kozachuk & Conley, 2021	Application of Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) in supervising counselor education.	Counselor educators using leadership theory-based supervision styles such as the Development Oriented Situational Supervision Model (DOSS) can help doctoral students and Counselors in Training (CIT) to observe and develop leadership skills to ensure proper team management.
5	Prasath et al., 2021	Counselors as organizational leaders: Exploring the Alignments	The counseling profession is based on a philosophy of servant leadership. Expanding this philosophy can be one way for counselors to provide adequate care. The authors identify

		of servant leadership and professional counseling	counseling competencies that support this dimension of servant leadership and serve as transferable skills in diverse organizational leadership roles.
6	Harrichand et al., 2021	Leadership and burnout: An analysis of counselor educators in CACREP accredited programs in the USA	Leadership scale, gender, faculty rank, and teaching load were significant predictors of burnout.
7	Yildiz, 2021	School Counselors' Leadership Role in Creating a Collaborative School Climate for Lingual Diverse Students	By employing a systemic approach that aims to generate greater understanding and awareness, school counselors have the power to play an essential role in transforming school systems, especially for students from diverse backgrounds.
8	Geiger & Oehrtman, 2020	The school leadership team is an opportunity for school counselors to demonstrate their capacity as school leaders	Establishing a school leadership team allows the school counseling program to implement interventions with a shared administrative vision and shared goals of teachers and staff. They are progressing in identified areas, such as decreased behavior associated with discipline direction, increased attendance, and improved grades.
9	Peters & Vereen, 2020	Counseling Leadership and professional counselor identity	There is still little information about how counseling leaders base leadership on the identity of professional counselors. There is a need for educators, leaders, and counselor associations to understand better the experience of counselor leaders who base leadership on the identity of professional counselors.
10	Lopez-Perry, 2020	Transformational leadership and the five big personality traits of the counselor educator.	Five personality traits are significant predictors. Transformational leaders are characterized by low scores on Neuroticism and high scores on Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience were the strongest predictors. The review found no differences in sex or race/ethnicity.
11	Geesa et al., 2020	Partnerships in educational leadership and school counseling: a framework for the preparation and collaborative support of principals and school counselors	A training framework for collaboration for pre-service and in-service school counselors and principal training programs is presented, which can serve as a model for other programs to meet the social, emotional, academic, and career needs and college readiness of 12th graders.
12	Mullen et al., 2019	Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Attributes of School Counselor Trainees	Emotional intelligence is positively correlated with leadership self-efficacy and self-leadership. Emotional intelligence is a relevant aspect of leadership training for graduate school counselors.

13	Mullen et al., 2019	Self-Efficacy School Counselor Leadership, Program Services, and Social Issues Advocacy	Respondents' leadership self-efficacy significantly predicted leadership implementation based on the ASCA National Model. Respondents with more previous leadership experience also had higher leadership self-efficacy.
14	Carandang et al., 2019	Leadership and Peer Counseling Program: Evaluate the effectiveness of the training program and explore its impact on peer counselor well-being after three months of program implementation	After training, peer counselors show significant improvement in knowledge and proficiency. After three months, peer counselors showed substantial improvements in subjective well-being and significant decreases in depressive symptoms. Senior volunteers in the Philippines can be trained to serve as peer counselors in their communities. This program improves competence and well-being.
15	Strear et al., 2018	Transformative School Counselor Leadership explore transformative leadership professional development opportunities designed for urban school counselors	Increase understanding of the beliefs and skills of school counselors about leadership and implementation of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. Several outcomes support school counselor leadership development and its implications for school counselors striving for educational equity.
16	Wahesh et al., 2018	Content Analysis of Chi Sigma Iota Chapter (CSI) on Efforts to Promote Counselor Leadership Development	The Accreditation Council for Counseling and Related Education Programs requires leadership development as part of counselor training; However, little is known about how leadership skills are acquired in counselor preparation. Leadership skill development was identified based on content analysis of data from 136 chapters of Chi Sigma Iota.
17	Young & Bryan, 2018	School Counselor Leadership Survey: Confirmatory factor analysis and Instrument Validation	A confirmatory factor analysis supports the use of a modified 5-factor model. The survey score shows good internal consistency and convergent validity on the ICLS instrument. There are leadership differences between school superintendents and counselors.
18	Kneale et al., 2018	Growing School Counseling Leaders Through Leadership Cohorts	This article presents a district group training approach that can improve the leadership capacity of pre-K–12 school counselors and school counseling supervisors
19	Mayes et al., 2018	School Counselor as a Leader in improving school quality	Like principals and teachers, school counselors use leadership skills to implement comprehensive, data-driven BK programs that align with ASCA's National Model.

Ultimately, the idea of teacher leadership is not new. However, in the context of the leadership of guidance and counseling teachers, there has not been much research on it, so this is an excellent opportunity to become a topic in future research. New ideas in teacher leadership are enhancing and recognizing teacher leadership and expanding teacher leadership roles for broader contributions in advancing schools (Good, 2008). In addition, from the results of this study, a new

understanding of leadership in the professionalism of guidance and counseling teachers was obtained, as how efforts to develop guidance and counseling teacher leadership.

CONCLUSION

Although leadership is an essential component of school counseling in the 21st century, leadership has not historically been associated with school counseling, and there is currently no perfect school counselor leadership profile (Mason & McMahon, 2009). Thus, there are still many opportunities for future research on the topic of school counselor leadership, for example, on how to implement school counselor leadership at the school level, up to higher levels, such as MGBK (*Musyawarah Guru Bimbingan dan Konseling*); also on strategies for development of school counselor leadership based on leadership values from certain cultures, considering that Indonesia has thousands of ethnic groups with different cultures. In addition, there is a need for a standardized instrument to evaluate the leadership of school counselors so that they can be input to improve the performance and accountability of school counselors in the context of guidance and counseling management in schools.

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