

SCHOOL COUNSELOR SUPPORT OF STUDENTS WITH REFUGEE STATUS

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITY AND PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL STUDIES

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

WITH A MAJOR IN SCHOOL COUNSELING

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2010

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Dr. Sheri Bauman for inspiring me to write, and for her encouragement and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	8
LIST OF TABLES.....	9
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	10
GLOSSARY.....	11
ABSTRACT.....	12
I. THE PROBLEM.....	13
Statement of the Problem.....	14
Assumptions.....	15
General Research Questions.....	15
Significance of the Study.....	16
Limitations of Research.....	17
Definitions and Terms.....	17
Summary.....	18
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	19
Refugee Status.....	19

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

1951 Geneva Convention.....	21
1975 Refugee Act.....	22
Refugee Admission and Resettlement in the United States.....	22
Regional Quotas of Refugees.....	23
Role of the School Counselor.....	24
Addressing the Standards.....	25
Counseling and Culture.....	26
Issues Specific to Students with Refugee Status in U.S. Schools.....	27
Scope of Investigation.....	29
Summary.....	29
III. METHODOLOGY.....	30
Participants.....	30
Measure.....	30
Procedure.....	30
Data Collection.....	31
Statistical Treatment.....	31
Limitations of Research.....	32

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

IV. RESULTS.....	33
Descriptive Data.....	33
School Counselors' Experiences and Knowledge of Students with Refugee Status.....	35
Quantitative Analyses.....	41
Qualitative Analyses.....	44
Summary of Results.....	47
V. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	49
Limitations of Research.....	51
Implications for Future Research.....	52
Implications for Practice.....	52
VI. CONCLUSION.....	54
APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL.....	55
APPENDIX B MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANTS.....	56
APPENDIX C. IRB AMENDMENT APPROVAL.....	57
APPENDIX D. SURVEY INVITATION.....	58
APPENDIX E. SURVEY DISCLOSURE & INFORMED CONSENT.....	59
APPENDIX F. SURVEY.....	60

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

REFERENCES.....	64
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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Symptoms of Problems Displayed by Refugee Students.....	39
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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	School Counselors' Perceptions of Preparedness to Work with Students with Refugee Status.....	33
Table 2	Demographic Characteristics of Participants.....	34
Table 3	Respondent Experiences and Knowledge of Students with Refugee Status.....	36
Table 4	Problems Students with Refugee Status Have in School.....	38
Table 5	Counselors' Perceptions of Training Needs and Attitudes Related to Students with Refugee Status.....	40
Table 6	Experience Counseling Students with Refugee Status and Preparedness.....	42
Table 7	Counselor Preparedness and Need for Training.....	43
Table 8	Counselor Strategies to Help Acculturate Students with Refugee Status.....	45

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASCA	American School Counselor Association
BRYCS	Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services
CACREP	Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
TUSD	Tucson Unified School District
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees
VOLAG	Voluntary Agencies

GLOSSARY

refugee A term that refers to the legal status granted to a person who is outside of their home country, admitted into the United States from a country of first asylum, and who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of nationality, due to persecution, or due to a well founded fear of persecution, based on race, religion, nationality, social group membership, or political opinion (AZRAC.org; 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees).

school counselor An individual who has a master's degree or more advanced degree, who has completed a graduate program in guidance and counseling from an accredited institution. Additionally, a school counselor must meet the requirements articulated by the state of Arizona Department of Education in order to hold credentialing as a school guidance counselor (American School Counseling Association, 2006-2008).

ABSTRACT

The problem investigated in this exploratory research is that, with the increasing numbers of students with refugee status enrolled in Arizona's schools, there is no information about the preparation school counselors receive in serving populations specific to students who have refugee status. No hypotheses are proposed in this study. Instead, research questions inquire about how school counselors in Arizona perceive the educational experiences and opportunities of refugee youth, the counseling relationship of students with refugee status and school counselors, and school counselors' attitudes toward working with refugee youth in school counseling programs. The results of this study provide insight into the perception of school counselors in Arizona and their need for additional skills or training to work with refugee youth at their schools.

Keywords: refugee, school counselor, school counseling, counselor

I. THE PROBLEM

In 1951, the Geneva Convention defined the term *refugee* as it is known today. *Refugee* refers to the legal status granted to a person who is outside of his/her home country and who is unable or unwilling to return due to persecution, or due to a well-founded fear based on race, religion, nationality, social group membership, or political opinion (AZRAC.org; 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees).

The changing demographics of the United States are mirrored in Arizona's educational system. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), at least half of the 22.3 million refugees and displaced persons worldwide are children (UNHCR, 2001-2009; McBrien, 2005). Overall admission levels of refugees into the United States are reflected in Arizona's longstanding history with refugees. Arizona has admitted over 52,000 refugees since 1975 (azrac.org). In recent years, however, the numbers of racial and ethnic groups in Arizona have increased dramatically. For instance, of an estimated 48,217 individuals with refugee status admitted into the entire United States in 2007 (Jeffreys, 2008), nearly 2,414 refugees were accepted in the state of Arizona (Arizona Department of Economic Security Refugee Resettlement Program). These refugees represent over 50 countries and over 40 languages (azrac.org). In 2008, 3,295 refugees resettled in Arizona (Arizona Department of Economic Security, Refugee Resettlement Program). FY 2009 records show a total of 630 refugees who have been resettled in Arizona, and the numbers continue to climb (Arizona Department of Economic Security, Refugee Resettlement Program, 2009). Many refugee youth who are 21 and under enroll in U.S. school systems (Mimi Ahmed , 2009; McBrien, 2005; Jones, 1998). Data presented at the 2009 Arizona Refugee Advancement Coalition Conference by the Tucson Unified School District Advisory Council charted the growing numbers of students with refugee status (Bullock, 2009). The historical perspective illustrates years 2002 through 2009. Forty-seven refugee youth were enrolled in Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) for the academic year of 2002-2003, representing 16 countries and 14 languages. The

2008-2009 school years revealed an extraordinary increase to 765 refugee youth enrolled in TUSD, representing 52 countries and 42 languages.

Statement of the Problem

This research addresses the need for more information regarding school counselor preparation in serving populations specific to students who have refugee status. Master's degree programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), and most programs that are not CACREP accredited but follow CACREP guidelines (Bauman, 2010), include at least one course in multicultural counseling. However, the needs of refugee students may not be a topic that is either covered or included. There is no existing information on the preparation of school counselor's work with this population, or on what their perceived training needs are for serving populations of students who have refugee status. Essential preparation and training in the areas of crisis counseling, multicultural awareness, and multicultural experience may be necessary for developing effective counseling skills in order to work effectively with students who have refugee status.

Although refugees arrive in a new country with expectations of a more fulfilling life, their aspirations are sometimes diminished due to inadequate social and cultural capital available to refugees (Castles & Miller, 2009) and insufficient knowledge of how to navigate various support systems (Stewart, et al, 2008). Stewart; et al. (2008) describe the challenges refugees face that rely on support systems, which include language, school, employment, navigation of systems, disrupted family dynamics, inadequate childcare, immigration status (lack of immigration status and residential permanence represent barriers to education), expectations of the resettlement country, and discrimination. For refugee children and adolescents entering the United States' educational system, this also means learning school policies, rules, norms and the unique school culture that may vastly differ from what they have known (Birman, 2002).

Assumptions

There are a few assumptions underlying this study. The first assumption is that the school counselors surveyed in the state of Arizona are a representative sample of school counselors in Arizona. The second assumption is that the data reported by the school counselors in the survey are relatively free of error and that school counselors answered the survey questions honestly.

General Research Questions

This exploratory study does not propose hypotheses, but instead, investigates how well school counselors are prepared to provide school counseling services, specific to the refugee youth population in Arizona education systems. Because there is no prior research on this topic, the following research questions are generated:

1. How much experience do school counselors in Arizona have working with students with refugee status?
2. How would Arizona school counselors define the term 'refugee' in their own words?
3. How many students with refugee status are enrolled in the schools where participants are employed as school counselors?
4. How many students with refugee status have Arizona school counselors met with to provide individual academic planning, individual counseling, or group counseling services?
5. What are the various problems that Arizona school counselors notice most among the refugee youth enrolled in their schools, and what is the perceived severity of those problems?
6. How well do Arizona school counselors believe they are prepared to work with refugee youth and the cultures of refugee youth who enroll at their schools?

7. To what degree do Arizona school counselors believe students with refugee status should be provided with more specialized services through the school, and work with staff who is especially trained to work with the refugee youth population?

Significance of the Study

This research is of significance to the domain of school counseling, and establishes a knowledge base that did not currently exist in this field. The aim of this study is to reveal an area of school counseling where the absence of literature, or inadequate information, does not currently capture the issues that exist. School counselors are often the first point of contact available to help students with refugee status. The role of the school counselor as cultural informant in a school's complex system is essential to the academic, social, and emotional health of any student, and can greatly influence the post-migration experiences and the acculturation of refugee youth (Birman, 2002; Portman, 2009). School is an optimal setting to work with refugee youth due to the natural opportunity for facilitating student groups, where counseling can be offered, where a substantial number of students can be reached quickly, and where efficient intervention can be used with children exposed to disparate levels of trauma (Birman, 2002). A specific and purposeful focus on school counselors meeting the immediate needs of refugee youth is imperative to assist youth in coping with not only the refugee experience, but with the anxiety of "fitting in" to a new peer group, culture and school culture, and an unfamiliar lifestyle.

Other resettlement hardships for refugee children enrolled in U.S. school systems involve issues of mobility, such as moving to a new resettlement country from their native country or country of asylum (Birman, 2002), transportation and transportation systems, adjustments to a new economy, accessing co-ethnic social capital (Allen, 2009), navigating the various societal systems that are in place, transitioning from school to school, and undergoing degrees of mental health issues and acculturative stress. Social support and successful acculturation are related to post-migration and resettlement, and may also be especially important to positive adaptation for refugee children (Birman & Tran, 2008).

Limitations of Research

Those who participated in this study are school counselors from the state of Arizona, which may limit the ability to generalize data and findings to the entire school counseling profession. The survey asked school counselors to respond based upon their experiences and opinions, and it is unknown whether school counselors would respond similarly in real-life situations. One survey item asking for school counselors to define the term refugee in their own words might eliminate some succeeding responses if the definition is incorrect. Responses regarding the knowledge and experience with those incorrectly perceived as refugee students would then be inconsequential.

This survey was conducted via the internet, which impacted the response rate due to various technical availability and difficulties. The questionnaire required basic computer skills in order to participate in this study. Therefore, some school counselors may have chosen not to participate due to limited computer proficiency, or inability to access the survey.

Definitions and Terms

Refugee is a term that refers to the legal status granted to a person who is outside of their home country, admitted into the United States from a country of first asylum, and who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of nationality, due to persecution, or due to a well founded fear of persecution, based on race, religion, nationality, social group membership, or political opinion (AZRAC.org; 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees).

A *school counselor* is an individual who has a master's degree or more advanced degree, who has completed a graduate program in guidance and counseling from an accredited institution. Additionally, a school counselor must meet the requirements articulated by the state of Arizona Department of Education in order to hold credentialing as a school guidance counselor (American School Counselor Association, 2006-2008).

Summary

This study does not include a hypothesis, but instead explores how well school counselors are prepared to provide school counseling services to this population and explores the need of school counselors to study and employ multicultural counseling competencies that specifically address immigration issues, poverty, racism, stereotyping, and powerlessness that may impact the school counseling connection with refugee youth. The significance of this study is addressed, along with the assumptions that this research is based on. Limitations are also described. Pertinent definitions relating to the term *refugee* are included for clarity. The following chapter is a review of relevant literature essential to this topic.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The preparation school counselors receive for serving students with refugee status must be investigated because increasing numbers of students with refugee status are enrolled in U.S. school systems. The role of the school counselor is to serve all students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development and career development (American School Counselor Association, 2006-2010). The extent of psychosocial and academic problems experienced by refugee youth may be overwhelming for school counselors and may exceed the academic, personal, social and professional repertoire that school counselors have received in training, and for which their counselor education programs have prepared them. The traumatic nature of the refugee experience and the difficult circumstances they encounter in U.S. public education are often difficult to comprehend, especially in this largely under-researched area.

In this chapter, I will review the literature that has been identified as relevant to this topic. These areas to be reviewed include refugee history in the United States, legal steps that encompass the refugee experience, the distinction of terms often used synonymously with 'refugee', school counseling programs where refugee youth are enrolled, and the accepted standards and services provided to students with refugee status by school counselors. Finally, literature existing on professional school counseling and counselor education, as they relate to providing school counseling services to students with refugee status, will be examined.

Refugee Status

The United States determines refugee status through a series of procedures to ascertain a person's status in accordance with the domestic legal system. In casual usage, the term *refugee* is often confused with other terms that have related meanings, such as *immigrant*, *asylum-seeker*, *asylee*, *internally displaced person*, and *environmental refugee*. Although there are many similarities in some of these terms, there are vast legal differences. The following section clarifies these terms.

The pervasive tendency for many people is to group refugees and immigrants together (Hamilton & Moore, 2004; Segal & Mayadas, 2005). A refugee is a person who is outside the limits of his/her home country and has a well-founded fear of persecution in the home country due to religion, nationality, ethnicity, political opinion or membership of a social group (AZRACweb.org, 2009). The receiving country grants refugee status. Article 31 of the 1951 Refugee Convention prohibits states from penalizing a refugee for illegal entry when the purpose of their entry is to claim asylum (Student Action for Refugees; About Refugees, 2009). In contrast, an immigrant has citizenship in one country, and enters a different country with the intention of setting up permanent residence, while legally obtaining the proper visa and clearance to enter the new country. A person seeking asylum, who has escaped from his or her home country can apply for refugee status in another country, and is defined as an asylum seeker (Refugee Council Online Glossary, 2009).

U.S. law views and treats refugees and immigrants very differently. Immigrants are often attracted to the United States with the idea of a better livelihood and a better future. They arrive on their own accord, and may bring some possessions with them from their former home. Immigration, sometimes without consent of the destination country, may mean a dangerous and traumatic journey to the new country, similar to the refugee experience. However, refugees do not leave their homeland due to a desire to move to a better land, but are pushed out of their homeland. War and civil conflict have typically been the main cause of refugee migration and displacement.

An 'asylum-seeker' is a person who flees persecution, or who is in danger of persecution, and escapes their country of nationality, to seek safety and protection in the United States, and must apply for asylum in order to stay in the United States (AZRAC.org; 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees). An asylee is one whose application for asylum has been formally settled by the United States Department of Justice, and it has been determined that he or she unable to return to their country of origin due to persecution, or the fear of persecution, based on the person's race, nationality, religion, political opinion, or membership in a social group. Both refugees and asylees fall under this

category. But according to U.S. immigration laws, a refugee status application is completed outside of the applicant's home country, but not within the U.S., as opposed to an asylee, who can apply while inside of the United States' borders.

An internally displaced person, or IDP, shares the defining characteristics of a refugee, with the exception of being inside the borders of their home country, which prevents them from being protected by international refugee law. This means that despite persecution, etc., the person has relocated within the home country, from one community or region to another. Lastly, environmental refugees are those individuals who flee their country or are displaced within their country, because of environmental disasters or dangerous, human-made ecological change. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol to the convention, there is no legal status for those who have evacuated from their home country due to environmental change.

1951 Geneva Convention

In 1951, the Geneva Convention defined the term 'refugee' as it is known today. 'Refugee' is a term that refers to the legal status granted to a person who is outside of their country of nationality, and who is unable or unwilling to return due to persecution, or due to a well founded fear of persecution, based on race, religion, nationality, social group membership, or political opinion (AZRAC.org; 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees). War and ethnic, tribal, and religious violence are the main causes of refugees' flight from their home countries (USA for UNHCR, 2009). The meeting of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland was instrumental in codifying the policy for assisting those fleeing persecution from their homelands, and providing protection to refugees. The 1951 Geneva Convention clarified the obligations of states and the treatment given to refugees, including social rights and specific criteria for people, such as war criminals, who do not qualify for refugee status (USA for UNHCR, 2009). The 1967 Protocol to the 1951 Geneva Convention broadened the scope of refugee

flight to include all individuals with refugee status around the world, rather than only limited to the European refugees of WWII, as initially stated in the Convention (USA for UNHCR, 2009).

1975 Refugee Act

The end of the Vietnam War left thousands of Vietnamese searching for safety in the United States. In 1975, President Ford signed the Indochina Migration and Refugee Act, admitting Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian refugees to the U.S. Subsequently, the Refugee Act of 1980 and the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980 (Haines, 1996), passed by President Carter, instituted systems to assist the increasing number of refugees from Vietnam, and other countries of the world. The Refugee Act of 1980 adopted the United Nation's definition of the term refugee, and standardized procedures for the resettlement of refugees into the United States.

Refugee Admission and Resettlement in the United States

Refugee admissions occur entirely at the federal level (Nawyn, 2006). The US Department of Homeland Security is responsible for determining who is eligible for refugee status and who meets the requirements for admission from each region of the world into the United States (AZRAC.org, 2006). However, the process of resettlement occurs at the local level by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including voluntary agencies (volags), mutual assistance associations (MAAs), or support agencies (Nawyn, 2006). These entities can assist refugees in studying for the U.S. citizenship exam, help them with the English language, and are responsible for their occupational placement. The Federal Refugee Resettlement Program was a provision incorporated into the Refugee Act to promote self-sufficiency in refugee resettlement and to help refugees achieve economic independence without the assistance of public welfare (Administration for Children and Families, 2009). Refugee Resettlement Agencies assist newly arrived refugees who are admitted into the United States, and help them settle into local communities. Refugee Council USA (2004-2010) identifies 10 volags that assist refugees in resettlement, including Church World Service, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Iowa Department of Human Services, International Rescue Committee,

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services, and World Relief (Korlon, 2004-2010).

Volags are typically held accountable for resettling refugees admitted into the U.S., and receiving refugees into communities that have jobs and low income housing. The federal government provides funding to refugees who are eligible for welfare and public assistance for the first several days in the United States through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (Nawyn, 2006). Responsibility for those refugees approved for admission to the United States is distributed among resettlement agencies.

Refugees are given a three-year, interest-free travel loan which they are expected to begin to repay through the resettlement agency after six months of residency within the United States. "In Federal Fiscal Year 2008, 24% of all refugees resettled by the United States were school-aged children between the ages of 5 and 18 years" (Digital Division, Inc., 2010, p. Schools). Refugee youth who are 21 years of age or younger are eligible to enroll in school, although many do not and instead choose to find employment to help support their families.

Regional Quotas of Refugees

The President of the United States, in conjunction with the United States Congress, determines the number of refugees permitted each year from each of the five geographic regions, in addition to an unallocated reserve for additional cases that exceed regional quotas (Jeffreys, 2008). The five regions are Africa, East Asia, Europe/Central Asia, Latin America/Caribbean, and Near East/South Asia (Jeffreys, 2008). The next step in refugee processing is acquiring documentation stating refugee classification. The final step is being allowed access in the United States with refugee status.

Role of the School Counselor

The appeal to schools to provide education to all students includes those who have mental health needs (Lockhart & Keys, 1998). The increasing number of students with refugee status in Arizona school systems that are in need of mental health services places schools and school counselors in the critical position of providing levels of counseling for which they may not be prepared. In a poll conducted by

Lockhart and Keys (1998) on school counselors from 15 public schools in Frederick County, MD “indicated that they were working with students diagnosed by clinicians as having fetal alcohol syndrome, fragile X, crack baby syndrome, autism, traumatic brain injury, depression, anxiety disorder, oppositional disorder, dissociative disorder, psychosis, conduct disorder, and being developmentally delayed” (Lockhart & Keys, 1998, p.3-4). As schools take action to meet the academic, career, and personal/social needs of these students, consideration must be given to whether the services currently offered by school counselors are adequate for this task, especially in working with the refugee population.

The Education Trust Initiative in 1996 organized focus groups to hear from school counselors and counselor educators, among others invested in student counseling services provided by schools, to identify problems and possible solutions for school counseling programs and counselor education programs (Alexander, Kruczek, Zigelbaum, & Ramirez, 2003). This study set forth a “new vision” (p.29) that focused the school counseling program and counselor educator programs on moving from a concentration on mental health services, the zeitgeist of current counseling services, to a concentration on academic achievement.

Explicitly defined, educational achievement is the “preparation of all students for academic success through directed, academically focused activities designed to define, nurture, and accomplish academic goals” (p. 29), mental health is defined as meeting the personal and social functioning of students (Alexander, Kruczek, Zigelbaum, & Ramirez, 2003). Research conducted by Alexander, et al., found that school counselors expressed concerns about the increasing level of emotional and behavioral issues of students they served (2003). Still, the Education Trust Initiatives are constructs within the counseling profession, which promote advocating for minority and disadvantaged students in order to close the increasing achievement gap within the educational setting (Alexander, Kruczek, Zigelbaum, & Ramirez, 2003).

To meet the unique individual needs of all students, the ASCA National Model supports four pillars in its framework, which includes Responsive Services (2005) to meet the immediate and future needs of all students. Student life, school climate and culture are among the areas that school counselors can help students cope and work to resolve problems and concerns. (2005). Subsequently, the implications of addressing these needs of refugee youth may indicate an obligation for counselor education programs to address cultural differences in delivery of services to refugee youth. The role of the school counselor includes addressing the personal/social needs of their students. Refugees are prone to psychological problems more than other populations (Pedersen, 2002), and have significant mental health needs (Ellis, 2008). However, the elements of mental health counseling are beyond the scope of this project, and will remain a topic for further research.

Addressing the Standards

The American Counseling Association endorsed the Association of Multicultural Counseling Development's competencies in 1992, accompanied by the American Psychological Association's corresponding document, entitled "Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists" (APA, 2003; Cartwright, 2008). Cartwright names a number of multicultural competency-based inventories that measure counselors' multicultural competencies (2008). To illustrate the learning and growth of multicultural training, Vereen (2008) described studies that indicate that there is little opportunity to work with a diverse client population in internships and practicum, and that CACREP standards (2001) do not obligate training counselors to work with multicultural populations (CACREP, 2001; Vereen 2008). Vereen also illustrates that CACREP standards point student counselors in training in the direction of clientele who represent their community (Vereen, 2008). However, the communities surrounding counselor trainees may not include diverse cultures and may only exhibit members of a certain race.

Currently, CACREP accredited graduate programs in school counseling offer at least one course concentrating on multicultural issues (CACREP, 2001). Even so, Vereen found minimal research on how

multicultural coursework influences multicultural counseling competencies for counselor trainees (2008). Instructional strategies must be connected to life experiences related to multiculturalism to strengthen and reinforce multicultural counseling and "awareness, knowledge, and experiences that lead to skill development" (Vereen, 2008, p. 228).

ASCA Ethical Standards for school counselors also call attention to diversity (E.2). Similarly, the Preamble of the ACA's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (1995) presents its view of cultural diversity in counseling as "Association members recognize diversity in our society and embraces a cross cultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential and uniqueness of each individual" (ACA Code of Ethics, p.3). In addition, Section A points to the counselor's respect of diversity, and directs counselors to not "condone or engage in discrimination based on age, color, culture, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or socioeconomic status" (p. 2).

Counseling and Culture

Cartwright (2008) suggested that the multicultural counseling (Cartwright, Daniels, & Zhang, 2008, p. 318) that has gained prodigious notoriety within the counseling profession. To enrich counselor education and training, more attention has been given to multicultural counseling and the development of multicultural counseling competencies (Vereen, 2008). Sue and Sue (2008) reported that all cultural groups and societies develop culture-specific ways of dealing with human problems. For instance, particular attitudes in working with refugee youth indicate issues of cultural encapsulation (Pedersen, Carlson & Crethar, 2008) and xenophobia (Bemak, 2003; Rutter & Jones, 1998) that hinder the student-counselor relationship. Bauman emphasizes that there are vast differences in cultural beliefs and practices among global cultures, and discourages counselors from making assumptions based on an individual's culture alone (2008). Students with refugee status, as a group, represent a multitude of cultures, even those from the same general location. Some differences exist in intergenerational conflicts (e.g. gender roles), social class and caste systems, which may present a problem when placed together in a

group. Furthermore, as Pedersen asserts, counselors must be mindful of different cultural identities, rather than adopt a uni-dimensional perspective (Pedersen, 2002).

Issues Specific to Students with Refugee Status in U.S. Schools

School is an extremely important environment for refugee children, especially because it is the setting where they encounter American culture, and transition into American society (Birman, 2002). However, there are limited material and resources specifically concerned with counseling students with the status of refugee in K-12 schools in the United States. Post-migration experiences, such as resettlement, and the loss of cultural and social support, insufficient income, and health problems, add to the personal/social stressors that refugees encounter, of which most school counselors may be unaware. Rutter and Jones (1998) acknowledge that refugee youth often enter an under-resourced educational system due to political and social factors that considerably affects the receiving societies. Tremendously impacting refugee children enrolled in U.S. education systems are instability factors and an uncertain future, such as living in temporary housing and attending in schools that may be underperforming or have a reputation as being unpopular (Rutter & Jones, 1998, p.5). Moreover, determining what might be helpful for a student with refugee status as opposed to any other group can pose a very difficult task for school counselors who have a small timeframe in which to meet with students (Century, Leavey, & Payne, 2007).

With respect to migration, situations experienced by refugee children and non-refugee children are comparable in many respects. Shared feelings are sadness, loss, and the hardships of adjusting to a new environment (Birman, 2002). However, specific to refugee children, pre-migration trauma may include the time of evacuation or escape, the actual flight, until the arrival at their next destination or refugee camp (Pedersen, 2002). Those in refugee camps, however, still live in extremely stressful conditions. One study conducted psychological needs assessment of refugees settled in two camps after the coalition occupation of Iraq in 2003 (Salem-Pickartz, 2007). The need for psychological assessment

was recognized when support staff could not offer the care that was necessary for refugees to cope with the despair of an uncertain future and dangerous living conditions (Salem-Pickartz, 2007).

Among the characteristics associated with the refugee camps were high stress levels due to limited resources for survival, fear of an uncertain future, concerns for family members left behind, and frustration due to a sense of helplessness (Salem-Pickartz, 2007). Ehntholt and Yule (2006) report on the prevalence of PTSD and its link to earlier war trauma and resettlement strain. As trauma and violence are heavily linked to the refugee experience, Bauman (2008) also stresses the trademark of trauma, which is “its ability to overwhelm our adaptive capacities” (p. 203).

A more in-depth study of refugee groups showed increasing incidents of domestic and street violence among refugee children in numerous refugee camps, parents who felt unable to properly care for their children and men who felt especially helpless because they were unable to provide for their families. Furthermore, many struggled with "depression, social withdrawal, self-neglect, self-harming behaviors, and suffered from nightmares and flashbacks from previous traumatic experiences" (Salem-Pickartz, 2007, p. 232-243). Even after resettlement, the gap that develops between refugee children and those who have parents builds because of the rate of change, both culturally and experientially. Refugee children adapt much faster to American culture (Birman, 2002, p. 21). Because the children are changing at such a fast rate, they surpass their parents culturally, especially in understanding the English language. Many refugee youth help translate for their parents for the schools. Birman refers to these children as “culture brokers”, where role reversal of parents and children takes place, which can lead children not to respect their parents or accept their supervision (2002). Developing family issues may be reflected in the school.

No studies to date have examined the preparation that school counselors receive relative to serving students who have refugee status. This study will fill a gap in the literature that will serve as an essential factor in the design of preparatory curricula and material for school counselor trainees and counselor educators to support students with refugee status in U.S. schools, and possibly how to help involve the family in the home-school relationship. This study will examine the deficiencies that are

present in contexts of working with refugee youth and the sparseness of literature that exists for school counselors to accommodate the needs of refugee youth through school counseling programs.

Scope of Investigation

A number of elements that are vital to understanding the experience of refugee youth, but outside the scope of this study include issues surrounding migration (Birman, 2002), trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and related mental health symptoms, bullying, sociopolitical factors, language, and the use of interpreters.

Summary

Chapter 2 illustrated terminologies commonly confused with *refugee*. A review of refugee history and the obligations of the United States as the receiving country attempted to provide background about the refugee experience. Obligations of the school counseling program where refugee youth are enrolled were discussed, specifically in the realms of services provided concentrating on mental health and academic achievement. This chapter also reflected on the particular challenges presented by refugees and issues specific to refugee youth, and incorporated the educational adaptation of refugee youth into U.S. school systems. Finally, a summarization of relevant literature was included, that relates to providing school counseling services to students with refugee status.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research questions were generated to gather information on school counselor preparedness to work with refugee youth enrolled in Arizona K-12 schools. No specific hypotheses were developed for this study. The following is an account of the processes and procedures used in this research inquiry.

Participants

Participants for this study were 73 certified school counselors (53 females and 20 males), who were currently employed in the state of Arizona and three certified school counselors (3 females) who were not currently employed as counselors in Arizona for a total of 76 participants. Counselors took the online survey between September 11, 2009 and October 8, 2009.

Measure

An online survey was created to assess counselor experience, knowledge, beliefs and training needs related to students with refugee status. A panel of experts comprised of the researcher's thesis committee reviewed the survey and determined it to be valid for measuring this construct. The 19-item survey is included in Appendix A. The online version of the survey was created via Survey Monkey.

Procedure

The State of Arizona Education Coordinator of School Counselors forwarded a message (see Appendix) and link to the survey in emails to school counselors in the state of Arizona currently on file at the Arizona Department of Education, who voluntarily took the survey online. This is a purposive sampling procedure, which is characterized by the use of judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by including presumably typical groups in the sample (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The grounded theory framework was used to analyze qualitative data, where participant responses to open-ended items were coded by identifying key words and determining themes, and combined into more general categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). One item asked respondents to provide a definition for the term *refugee*. Responses were coded as correct or incorrect. To be considered correct, there were two components that must be apparent: concept of escape, and resettlement outside of the country of origin.

Thematic coding was also applied with an item identifying strategies used by participants when working with this population.

Data Collection

By focusing on school counselor perspectives, the sampling strategy was intended to generate beliefs that address the complexities and dynamics of school counselors working with refugee youth enrolled in Arizona schools. The survey was administered online, where data were collected electronically and exported to Excel. The Excel file was then imported into SPSS 17.0 for Windows (2006) for analysis.

Statistical Treatment

Several measures were conducted to analyze the data in this study, including a t-test for independent samples, a one-way ANOVA, and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. For the aforementioned inferential statistical procedures, survey item #13, “I am well-prepared as a school counselor to provide school counseling services to students with the status of refugee”, seemed to best capture the construct of school counselor preparation for working with refugees enrolled as K-12 students. Responses from survey item #13 were coded and used as the dependent variable.

Limitations of Research

The greatest limitation in this study is survey item #5, which asks participants to define the term refugee using their own words. Nine survey items, out of 19 survey items, relied on participant definitions. Because the vast majority of participants were unable to supply the correct definitions, their responses to other items may have been based on this inaccurate definition, attributing perceptions and/or characteristics on individuals who are not refugees. Thus, responses to remaining items may be biased.

This study was limited to school counselors who had access to a computer and internet. Since all of the counselors who completed the survey were in the state of Arizona, the results may not be generalized to school counselors who work in other states. However, inferences could be made about

refugee youth enrolled in K-12 schools on the basis of this sample. The survey was also limited in that it did not obtain the race and/or ethnicities of the counselors.

Summary

This chapter briefly explains the methodology used in this study. Because of the absence of research on this topic, research questions were designed to gain a more in-depth understanding of the role school counselors play in providing counseling services to refugee students. No hypotheses were formed. This investigation probed school counselors' perception of preparedness to work with refugee youth enrolled in K-12 schools in Arizona. Data were collected from 76 school counselors in the state of Arizona using the following questions:

1. How much experience do school counselors in Arizona have working with students with refugee status?
2. How would Arizona school counselors define the term 'refugee' in their own words?
3. How many students with refugee status are enrolled in the schools where participants are employed as school counselors?
4. How many students with refugee status have Arizona school counselors met with to provide individual academic planning, individual counseling, or group counseling services?
5. What are the various problems that Arizona school counselors notice most among the refugee youth enrolled in their schools, and what is the perceived severity of those problems?
6. How well do Arizona school counselors believe they are prepared to work with refugee youth and the cultures of refugee youth who enroll at their schools?
7. To what degree do Arizona school counselors believe students with refugee status should be provided with more specialized services through the school, and work with staff who is especially trained to work with the refugee youth population?

IV. RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the results of the data analysis. Descriptive data is discussed first, followed by the findings from the inferential statistical analysis. General analysis techniques are used to analyze qualitative data, such as open coding and conceptual generalization from the grounded theory tradition (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Descriptive Data

A self-rating of school counselor preparation to provide services to the refugee student population reported that they agreed, or mildly agreed to the statement, “I am well-prepared as a school counselor to provide school counseling services to students with the status of refugee”. Responses were coded from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The mean indicates that school counselors’ agree or mildly agree that they are well prepared to work with students with refugee status, as exhibited in the Table 1.

Table 1

School Counselors’ Perceptions of Preparedness to Work With Students With Refugee Status

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Preparedness	75				
		0	5	2.48	1.359
Valid N	75				

Seventy-six counselors took the survey, of whom 73.7% ($N = 56$) were females and 26.3% ($N = 20$) were males. Most participants (96.1%, $N = 73$) were currently employed as counselors in the state of Arizona and 3.9% ($N = 3$) indicated that they were not currently employed in Arizona. Counselor years of experience ranged from 2-34 years ($M = 10.08$, $SD = 6.98$). The median number of years was eight and the mode was six years of experience. Forty-two percent ($N = 32$) described their school communities as suburban; 32.9% ($N = 25$) worked in urban communities, and 25% ($N = 19$) worked in rural communities. Table 2 summarizes the demographic information.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	N	%
Gender		
Male	20	26.3%
Female	56	73.7%
Employment Status		
Employed	73	96.1%
Unemployed	3	3.9%
Years of Experience as School Counselor		
0-5	22	16.7%
6-10	31	23.6%
11-20	15	11.4%
21-40	8	6.1%

School Counselors' Experiences and Knowledge of Students with Refugee Status

Counselors were asked for their own definitions of the term *refugee*. Responses were determined to be correct if they met the following two criteria: 1) The concept of escape, and 2) The concept of resettlement outside of the country of origin. As indicated in Table 3, only 8% gave correct definitions for the term refugee.

Another survey item sought to elicit participants' knowledge of how many students with refugee status attended their schools, assuming that refugee students are being appropriately identified, based on the definition of the term refugee in this study. Thirty-six percent ($N = 27$) of counselors did not have any students with refugee status attending their schools; 44.7% ($N = 34$) had less than 10 refugees attending their schools, and 2.6% ($N = 2$) of counselors had more than 100 students with refugee status. The frequencies of counselor responses are provided in Table 3.

Table 3
Respondent Experiences and Knowledge of Students with Refugee Status

Definition	N	%
Correct	6	8.0%
Incorrect	71	92.0%
Extent to Which College Discussed		
Often	32	55.2%
Sometimes	17	29.3%
Almost Never	9	15.5%
Number Attending School		
None	27	35.5%
Less than 10	34	44.7%
20-50	10	13.2%
50-80	3	3.9%
More than 100	2	2.6%
Number of Students Counseled		
None	33	43.4%
Less than 10	33	43.4%
20-50	8	10.5%
More than 100	2	2.6%

High schools generally offer information about college preparedness or post-secondary education available to students. Responses in Table 3 indicate that over half of the school counselors who participated in the survey discuss college often (55.2 %, $N = 32$).

Because language is a major challenge in working with students with refugee status, respondents were asked how often an interpreter or translator accompanies refugee students who experience language barriers when they seek counseling. The majority of counselors (52.5%, $N = 32$) who responded to this question disclosed that interpreters or translators never accompany refugee students who experience language barriers when they seek counseling and/or guidance; whereas 45.9% ($N = 28$) of counselors acknowledged that refugee students are sometimes accompanied by interpreters; and 1.6% ($N = 1$) of counselors revealed that interpreters or translators are always provided when needed.

Respondents were also asked to rate the severity of problems that current refugee children and adolescents may have in school. Not unexpected, the majority of counselors (54%, $N = 34$) indicated that the lack of English language literacy was the most serious problem that refugee children and adolescents experienced in school, followed by the lack of coping skills necessary for learning (35.5%, $N = 22$), the lack of formal education or experience being a student (34.9%, $N = 22$), and truancy and/or reoccurring absences from class (34.4%, $N = 21$). Table 4 summarizes the responses.

Table 4

Problems Students with Refugee Status Have in School

	Not serious at all	Somewhat serious	Very serious	No response
Lack of interest in academics	19.7% (12)	52.5% (32)	27.9% (17)	15
Lack of formal education or experience being a student	15.9% (10)	49.2% (31)	34.9% (22)	13
Lack of motivation for academics and learning	18% (11)	55.7% (34)	26.2% (16)	15
Lack of English proficiency	12.7% (8)	33.3% (21)	54% (34)	13
Lack of coping skills necessary for learning	19.4% (12)	45.2% (28)	35.3% (22)	14
Truancy and/or reoccurring absences from class	32.8% (20)	32.8% (20)	34.4% (21)	15
Discipline issues	35.5% (22)	41.9% (26)	22.6% (14)	14

Participants in the survey indicated that the most salient social/emotional problems refugee students often displayed were symptoms of anxiety followed by symptoms of powerlessness or meaninglessness, symptoms of discrimination and/or prejudice, and symptoms of trauma, which were rated approximately equal. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

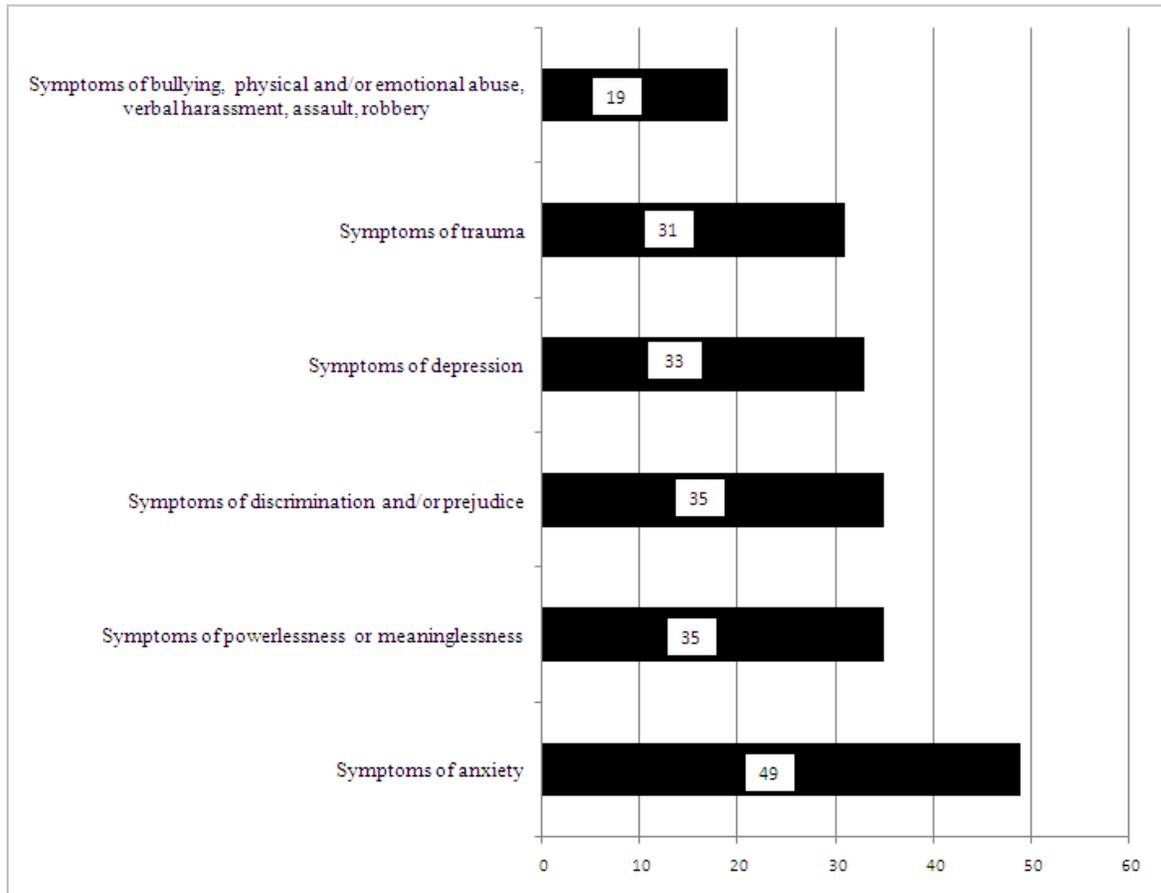


Figure 1. Symptoms of Problems Displayed by Students with Refugee Status

Questions regarding the preparedness of school counselors specific to working with refugee youth elicited various responses. The majority of school counselors (38%, $N = 27$) mildly agreed that they were well prepared as school counselors to provide counseling services to students with refugee status. School counselors were also asked to respond on their training needs. Table 5 illustrates these responses.

Table 5

Counselors' Perceptions of Training Needs and Attitudes Related to Refugee Students

	Strongly agree	Mildly Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	No Response
I am well prepared as a school counselor to provide school counseling services to refugee students.	19.7% (14)	38% (27)	9.9% (7)	25.4% (18)	7% (5)	5
Refugee students should be treated the same as any other student.	43.7% (31)	19.7% (14)	12.7% (9)	16.9% (12)	7% (5)	5
The school should provide extra services to students with the status of "refugee".	40.8% (29)	28.2% (20)	22.5% (16)	5.6% (4)	28% (2)	5
All school personnel should receive specialized training in working with students with the status of "refugee".	39.4% (28)	33.8% (24)	15.5% (11)	8.5% (6)	28% (2)	5
Counselors need to be familiar with the culture from which students come to work with them effectively.	49.3% (35)	36.6% (26)	8.5% (6)	5.6% (4)	0%	5

Quantitative Analyses

The dependent variable was level of preparedness in the analyses that follow. T-tests were used to investigate possible gender differences and differences by level of experience (eight years or less compared to nine years or more). No significant differences were detected. One-way ANOVAs were used to investigate differences by school community, numbers of refugees in the school, and numbers of refugees counseled by participants. No significant differences were found.

Correlations revealed that the more experience school counselors had in counseling students with refugee status, the more prepared school counselors felt, and the more they felt that additional training was needed. Correlations of school counselor experience, preparedness and training provided insight about school counselors' perceptions of their own preparedness to work with refugee students. The table below shows that there is a significant positive relationship with the number of refugee students at the school and the level of preparedness, and the correlation is stronger for the number of students counseled. As illustrated in Tables 6 and 7 below, the belief that more training is needed is significantly positively related to having counseled more refugee students. The more experiences school counselors have with refugee students who attend the school helps school counselors feel prepared, and also feel that they needed more training.

Table 6

Counselor Preparedness

		how many attend	preparedness	how many counseled
how many attend	r	1	.278*	.727**
	sig. (2-tailed)		0.019	0
	N	76	71	76
preparedness	r	0.278*	1	.429**
	sig. (2-tailed)	0.019		0
	N	71	71	71
how many counseled	r	0.727**	.429*	1
	sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	
	N	76	71	76

Note. *Significant at .05. **Significant at .01.

Table 7

Counselor Preparedness and Need for Training

			how many	
		how many attend	counseled	need training
how many				
attend	r	1	.727**	0.184
	sig. (2-tailed)		0	0.119
	N	76	76	73
preparedness	r	.727**	1	.337**
	sig. (2-tailed)	0		0.004
	N	76	76	73
how many				
counseled	r	0.184	.337**	1
	sig. (2-tailed)	0.119	0.004	
	N	73	73	73

Note. *Significant at .05. **Significant at .01.

Qualitative Analyses

A more in-depth survey item equipped with an open-ended comment field allowed participants to address the problems they believed to be the most serious, rather than rating them from an arranged list. Coding revealed again, that language problems were the most frequent of comments (9.4%, $N=17$). Interestingly though, the home-school connection rated a close second (7.2%, $N=13$).

An open-ended comment field provided participants the opportunity to list other problems they have observed amongst students with refugee status. Only ten respondents opted to comment. Those comments mentioned are: lack of interest in school, feelings of worthlessness, lack of social skills, problems assimilating into American culture, difficulty fitting in and being accepted. One respondent indicated that the refugee was the bully.

Responses to open-ended questions involved items requesting strategies that respondents use to assist refugee youth. Nine general categories were identified as academic support, counselor education, emotional support, family/community, groups, peer, practical, resources and strategies counselors used to work with students with refugee status. Table 8 lists and describes those common categories, and provides an exemplar comment.

Table 8

Counselor Strategies to Help Acculturate Students with Refugee Status

Category	Description	Example
Academic support	process of providing students with information and resources to overcome academic challenges and to help students learn	"Assign them to the appropriate courses"
Counselor education	Programs found in departments of education, psychology, or human services on college campuses. Courses are sometimes grouped into areas of human growth and development, social and cultural diversity, relationships, group work, career development, counseling techniques, assessment, research and program evaluation, and professional ethics and identity.	"inform teacher of country of origin and factors that may apply to learning"
Emotional support	ways to provide encouragement and compassion	"lots of smiles...worth a thousand words"
Family/Community Support	caregivers/parents; social group of common culture	"meet with family re: expectations"
Groups	collection of individuals who are related in some way	"group work so they can share with other(s) that (may) have similar

		experiences"
Peers	persons who have similar abilities, qualifications, age, background, and social status.	"Pair them with other students in a variety of way and different settings. Provide them with study buddies after school."
Practical support	sensible, every day activities	"familiarize them with layout of school"
Resources	sources of physical or emotional support	"...introduced to the adults in the community that they can go to for direction or help..."
Techniques	specific strategies used by school counselors while working with students with refugee status	"bibliotherapy"

Participants answered items questioning their preparedness to work with students with refugee status. Sixty-one percent ($N = 30$) of school counselors believed that they needed additional skills or training to work with students with refugee status, whereas 38.8% ($N = 19$) of counselors indicated that they did not need any additional training. Over half of the school counselors who responded “yes” to acquiring additional skills or training to work with refugee students indicated that they needed training with the refugee youth population through workshops, conferences, or other continuing education opportunities. School counselors ($N = 9$) also believed they needed more information about available resources for refugee students.

A comment field was included to allow for additional feedback not covered in the survey. Thirteen participants made comments. Two asserted that they had no experience with refugee students. On the other hand, a different issue commented on 47 different nationalities in one school, and the challenge of learning about so many cultures. One comment began “The ADE need to take a leadership role in defining refugee status and explaining how to work with refugees” and emphasized the need for all personnel to be involved, rather than just school counselors. Several comments related to educational practices. One participant remarked that he or she preferred English immersion, rather than ELL classes. Another stressed the importance of AIMS testing in the native language if students could not be exempt from testing. One certain school district in Arizona was commended by a participant for “equipping counselors with the right tools” for working with the refugee student population. Other respondents asserted the importance of community college in refugee education, and the value of ongoing cultural sensitivity training for school counselors, and perhaps all school personnel.

Summary of Results

This exploratory investigation revealed two important findings. First, very few school counselors knew the correct definition of the term refugee. Second, school counselors felt more prepared to work with refugee students when they had more experiences with them, and those participants who had

more experience with refugee student and believed themselves to be better prepared to work with that population were more likely to express the need for additional training.

It is clear that refugee youth face challenges with English language proficiency, which was perceived by the majority of school counselors, as the most serious problem they faced. It is not surprising then, to notice that counselors also recognized the lack of coping skills, the lack of formal education, and truancy as additional problems, which were rated approximately equal in importance. Strategies counselors used to help acculturate students with refugee status into school included assigning them to the appropriate courses, bibliotherapy, role-playing, music, dance, small group counseling sessions, and home visits. Almost overwhelmingly, school counselors believed that they needed additional skills or training in working with refugee youth through workshops, conferences, or other continuing education opportunities to work with students with refugee status. Counselors also believed they needed knowledge about available resources for refugee youth and their families.

V. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This exploratory study does not propose hypotheses, but instead, investigates how well school counselors are prepared to provide school counseling services, specific to the refugee youth population in Arizona education systems. The results of this study contribute to an area of research that formerly did not exist.

1. How much experience do school counselors in Arizona have working with students with refugee status?
2. How would Arizona school counselors define the term 'refugee' in their own words?
3. How many students with refugee status are enrolled in the schools where participants are employed as school counselors?
4. How many students with refugee status have Arizona school counselors met with to provide individual academic planning, individual counseling, or group counseling services?
5. What are the various problems that Arizona school counselors notice most among the refugee youth enrolled in their schools, and what is the perceived severity of those problems?
6. How well do Arizona school counselors believe they are prepared to work with refugee youth and the cultures of refugee youth who enroll at their schools?
7. To what degree do Arizona school counselors believe students with refugee status should be provided with more specialized services through the school, and work with staff who is especially trained to work with the refugee youth population?

Overall, two important findings were revealed by the data. The first is that very few school counselors understand what a refugee is. Secondly, results suggested that school counselors felt more prepared to work with refugee students when they had more experiences with them, and those participants

who had more experience with refugee student and believed themselves to be better prepared to work with that population were more likely to express the need for additional training.

Some school counselors work with a large number of students with refugee status, and others work with none. Generally, interaction between school counselors and refugee students are situational, where some schools are more impacted by refugee resettlement than others. Refugee resettlement is typically determined by vacancies in low-income housing, proximity to entry-level employment opportunities, and within range of other refugee communities. Therefore, refugee youth populations tend to concentrate in certain schools, while other schools remain untouched by the escalating number of refugee youth enrolling in U.S. school systems. School counselors may not be afforded the opportunity to work with refugee youth, because of location.

The presence of a large number of refugee youth in a school confronts the school community with new challenges, realities and values. Raising awareness of what it means to be a refugee in an American school is a very important aspect for school counselors who work with refugee students to consider.

Rutter and Jones (1998) referred to a piece written by Ron Baker:

Loss of what is obvious, tangible and external such as possessions, a home, work, role, status, life style, a language, loved members of the family or other close relationships; and loss that is less obvious, 'internal' and 'subjective' such as loss of trust in the self and others, loss of self esteem, self respect and personal identity (p. 109).

Does this mean, then, that preparation and training within this specific cultural group is not necessary for the vast majority of school counselors? The answer to this question is no. However, directing the attention of school counselor educators and school counselor trainees to the number of refugee students enrolled in schools in their surrounding area where internships are available could be helpful in understanding the population of students they might work with. School counseling interns who work with refugee students would benefit by accessing resources to help bridge cultures (e.g. BRYCS), to assist refugee youth in adapting to U.S. classrooms and schools. It is not necessary for school counseling

programs to require or promote courses that include how school counselors can provide counseling services specifically to refugee youth enrolled in U.S. school systems. Rather, the importance lies in being aware of the different demographic groups of schools and classrooms, and recognizing factors that might be involved in counseling a student with refugee status.

Tangible support that school counselors can offer to refugee students might include: a list of available resources that provide assistance to refugees can be included in an informational publication, such as a brochure, kept in the school counseling office; local busing and transportation maps and schedules; providing assistance in learning the layout of the school; scheduling at home visits, or consultative meetings with refugee youth and their families and/or caregivers to facilitate understanding of school rules and policies, especially those roles that are expected of them in the home-school connection. Additionally, these suggestions might give school counselors sensitive and appropriate ways to support refugee students, and help school counselors in facilitating the adjustment process of refugee youth into new school environments.

Limitations of Research

This study required access to a computer and internet access. Only school counselors in the state of Arizona were asked to participate in the study, and the results could be very different if this study were to be conducted in any other state. This is only a sample of school counselors who may or may not work with refugee youth in school counseling programs where they are, or have been, employed. The ethnicities, among other various personal data, were not collected, and therefore, is a limitation. The greatest limitation involves the inability of 92% of participants to correctly define the term refugee using their own words. Nine subsequent survey items, out of 19, relied on participant definitions. Because the vast majority of participants were unable to supply the correct definitions, their responses to other items may have been based on this inaccurate definition, attributing perceptions and/or characteristics on individuals who are not refugees. Thus, responses to remaining items may be biased.

Implications for Future Research

Qualitative research in this study was conducted to bring awareness to an under-developed area of research that allows for further inquiry and a more in-depth understanding of school counselor support of refugee students. More comprehensive analyses might involve case studies to clarify certain complications of school counselor training and preparation to work with refugee youth. Another example of a possible case study might include research about how expectations may differ academically, between the home and school of the student with refugee status. School counselors that try to help refugee children adapt to U.S. school systems must involve the parents or caregiver to support the relationships of all who are included in academic circumstances. Another important indication to notice is that school experience counseling students with refugee status was negatively correlated with preparedness. It appears that the perception school counselors may have is that they are prepared because they are “multiculturally sensitive,” or have taken a course on cultural diversity. However, the more contact school counselors have with refugee youth, the more they may begin to realize the extent to which special skills are needed.

Although students with refugee status are very much like any other student, special considerations may be observed when working with them in school counseling programs. Difficulties in school may be expressed as issues with school work, classrooms, or problems of motivation or attention in class (Birman, 2002). It is important that school counselors do not assume that they are responsible for alleviating the pain and struggle of refugee life. Rather, the school counselor can be aware that there may be more involved that the refugee youth has to share. Birman emphasized, that it is not important that the child’s experience is exposed, but that support and trust are rendered during the process (2002).

Implications for Practice

The implications of this study on the day-to-day work of school counselors will address school counselors’ work with students with refugee status, and the support of their education. In addressing educational support, acculturation and adaptation will also be recognized.

Offering online educational materials may be an option in furthering the practical experience of school counseling students and counselor education programs. Additionally, online experiential training does not require travel, and can be generally affordable. In lieu of time and financial constraints, a school counseling student who chooses to explore the refugee community within the school system can benefit through accessing online curricula, webcasts, self-paced courses for professional development, and an available list of resources provided by the school in which they are interning, can be extremely valuable resources interwoven throughout the student counseling experience.

This study may provide a starting point for identifying the key research areas that should be addressed concerning the school counselor and student with refugee status connection. Given the lack of research on this specific topic, there are a number of areas that would benefit from study. Since most previous research in collaboration has not addressed the structural conditions that lead to successful academic achievement or collaboration, it is important to understand the conditions, such as state legislative and policy structure that mandates state and local school counselor responsibility, which could result in effective school counseling programs. Competencies described by the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development could be useful for school counselors to prepare for working with refugee populations.

VI. CONCLUSION

Refugee youth have very different educational experiences before entering the U.S. school system. Different factors may disrupt or distract their educational experience, such as their family, or peers. This investigation will encourage school counselors to reflect on their cultural experiences and to share those experiences with those in the wider community of school counseling professionals, and to persist in learning about their profession and writing about their efforts.

The information covered by this investigation reinforces the need for school counselor educators to continue researching the aspects of working with cross-cultural and inter-cultural challenges and barriers that face school counselors when supporting refugee youth enrolled in school counseling programs across the United States. Understanding the consistent thoughts and actions of specific populations, such as students with refugee status, will encourage the learning of cultures, in order to understand cultural diversity and to produce a pattern for school counselors to be effective in their work with the different cultures in which they live.

APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL

 THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA.	Human Subjects Protection Program	1618 E. Helen St. P.O. Box 245137 Tucson, AZ 85724-5137 Tel: (520) 626-6721 http://www.irb.arizona.edu
HSPP Correspondence Form		
Date: 05/29/09 Investigator: Beth Shapiro, Graduate Student Advisor: Sheri Bauman, PhD Project No./Title: 09-0362-00 School Counselor Support of Students with Refugee Status		
IRB Committee Information		
<input type="checkbox"/> IRB1 – IRB0000291 <input type="checkbox"/> IRB2 – IRB00001751 <input type="checkbox"/> IRB3 – IRB00003012 <input type="checkbox"/> IRB4 – IRB00005448 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administrative Action FWA Number: FWA00004218	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Committee Review <input type="checkbox"/> Expedited Review <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitated Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administrative/Exempt Review – 05/29/09	
Nature of Submission		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Project <input type="checkbox"/> Amendment <input type="checkbox"/> Unanticipated Problem Involving Risks to Subjects or Others <input type="checkbox"/> Response to IRB Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Other (define):	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing Review <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol Deviation/Violation/Waiver <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliance <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	
Documents		Appr: Approved Ack: Acknowledged Rev: Reviewed
Reviewed Concurrently		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Review Form (dated 03/29/09)	Appr	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consenting Instruments: Subject Disclosure Form [version 5/29/09]	Appr	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VOTF	Appr	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recruitment materials: Email invitation	Appr	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surveys/Questionnaires: Online survey	Appr	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Site authorization Arizona Department of Education, State Guidance Counselors Supervisor	Ack	
Committee/Chair Determination		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved as submitted		
Additional Determination(s)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exempt Approval 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2): Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior. 		
		
<hr/> Elizabeth Boyd, Ph.D. Assistant Vice-President, Research Compliance & Policy Office of Responsible Conduct for Research		
cc: Departmental/College Review Committee EB:mm		
Arizona's First University – Since 1885		
Form version: 05/14/09		

APPENDIX B. MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANTS

APPROVED BY UNIVERSITY OF AZ IRB.
THIS STAMP MUST APPEAR ON ALL
DOCUMENTS USED TO CONSENT SUBJECTS.
DATE: 05/29/09

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to voluntarily participate in the above-titled research study. The purpose of the study is to collect baseline data about School Counselors' work with students with refugee status. You are eligible to participate because you are a School Counselor in the state of Arizona.

If you agree to participate, your participation will involve a survey about what you know about students with refugee students. The survey will take place online and will last approximately 10 minutes. You may choose not to answer some or all of the questions.

You may withdraw from the study at any time. There are no known risks from your participation and no direct benefit from your participation is expected. There is no cost to you except for your time and you will not be compensated for your participation.

Only the principal investigator and the supervisor will have access to the information that you provide. You may decide to not begin or to stop the study at any time. Your refusing to participate or your decision to discontinue your participation will have no effect on your involvement or status with the University of Arizona. Also any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you. This information could affect your willingness to continue your participation.

You can call the Principal Investigator to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research study. The Principal Investigator, Beth Shapiro can be called at (520)906-0465. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject you may call the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program office at (520) 626-6721. If you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research and cannot reach the Principal Investigator, or want to talk to someone other than the Investigator, you may call the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program office. (if out of state use the toll-free number 1-866-278-1455.) If you would like to contact the Human Subjects Protection Program via the web (this can be anonymous), please visit <http://www.irb.arizona.edu/contact/>.

By participating in the survey, you are giving permission for the investigator to use your information for research purposes.

Thank you,

Beth Shapiro
Department of Educational Psychology
The University of Arizona College of Education
P.O. Box 210069
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0069

APPENDIX C. IRB AMENDMENT APPROVAL

 THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA	Human Subjects Protection Program	1618 E. Helen St. P.O. Box 245137 Tucson, AZ 85724-5137 Tel: (520) 626-6721 http://www.irb.arizona.edu
HSPSP Correspondence Form		
Date: 10/01/09 Investigator: Beth Shapiro, Graduate Student Advisor: Sheri Bauman, PhD Project No./Title: 09-0362-00 School Counselor Support of Students with Refugee Status Current Period of Approval: 05/29/09 – no expiration Department: Edu Psychol		
IRB Committee Information		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administrative Action FWA Number: FWA00004218	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administrative/Exempt Review – 10/01/09	
Nature of Submission		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendment		
Documents Reviewed Concurrently		Appr: Approved Ack: Acknowledged Rev: Reviewed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request for Amendment Form – PI Initiated Changes (dated 09/22/09)		Appr
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recruitment Materials: Email reminder		Appr
Description of Modifications: <i>Protocol changes [add one email reminder to increase participation; email reminder [as noted above].</i>		
Committee/Chair Determination		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved as submitted effective 10/01/09		
Additional Determination(s)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable		
By signing this form, I attest that I do not have a conflict of interest with this project and do not need to recuse myself from review.		
<i>Elizabeth A. Boyd</i>	10/01/09	
Elizabeth A. Boyd, Ph.D. Date Assistant Vice-President, Research Compliance & Policy Office for the Responsible Conduct of Research		
EAB:mmm Cc: Departmental/College Review Committee		
Reminders: Continuing Review materials should be submitted 30–45 days prior to the expiration date to obtain project re-approval. • Projects may be concluded or withdrawn at any time using the forms available at www.irb.arizona.edu . • No changes to a project may be made prior to IRB approval except to eliminate apparent immediate hazard to subjects. • Original signed consent forms must be stored in the designated departmental location determined by the Department Head.		
Arizona's First University – Since 1885		Form version: 09/23/09

APPENDIX D. SURVEY INVITATION

Dear School Counselor,

You are being invited to voluntarily participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to collect baseline data about School Counselors' work with students with refugee status. You are eligible to participate because you are a School Counselor in Arizona.

If you agree to participate, your participation will involve a survey about what you know about students with refugee students. The survey will take place online and will last approximately 10 minutes. You may choose not to answer some or all of the questions. Please submit the survey by October 16th, 2009.

You may withdraw from the study at anytime. There are no known risks from your participation and no direct benefit from your participation is expected. There is no cost to you except for your time. You will not be compensated for your participation.

Only the principal investigator and the research study supervisor will have access to the information that you provide. Your refusing to participate or your decision to discontinue your participation will have no effect on your involvement or status with the University of Arizona. Also, any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you. This information could affect your willingness to continue your participation.

You can call the Principal Investigator to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research study. The Principal Investigator, Beth Shapiro, can be called at (520) 906-0465. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject you may call the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program office at (520) 626-6721. If you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research and cannot reach the Principal Investigator, or want to talk to someone other than the Investigator, you may call the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program office. If you would like to contact the Human Subjects Protection Program via the web (this can be anonymous), please visit <http://www.irb.arizona.edu/contact/>.

By participating in the survey, you are giving permission for the investigator to use your information for research purposes.

Thank you,

Beth Shapiro
Department of Educational Psychology
The University of Arizona College of Education
P.O. Box 210069
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0069

The link to the survey is:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=eRyLMFgwc5cO8som6cR15g_3d_3d

APPENDIX E. SURVEY DISCLOSURE & INFORMED CONSENT

School Counselor Support of Students with Refugee Status**1. Disclosure**

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to voluntarily participate in the School Counselor Support of Students with Refugee Status research study. The purpose of the study is to collect baseline data about School Counselors' work with students with refugee status. You are eligible to participate because you are a School Counselor in the state of Arizona. The survey will close on October 17th, 2009.

If you agree to participate, your participation will involve a survey about what you know about students with refugee status. The survey will take place online and will last approximately 10 minutes. You may choose not to answer some or all of the questions.

You may withdraw from the study at any time. There are no known risks from your participation and no direct benefit from your participation is expected. There is no cost to you except for your time and you will not be compensated for your participation.

Only the principal investigator and the supervisor will have access to the information that you provide. You may decide to begin or to stop the study at any time. Your refusing to participate or your decision to discontinue your participation will have no effect on your involvement or status with the University of Arizona. Also any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you. This information could affect your willingness to continue your participation.

You can call the Principal Investigator to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research study. The Principal Investigator, Beth Shapiro can be called at (520) 906-0465. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject you may call the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program office at (520) 626-6721. If you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research and cannot reach the Principal Investigator, or want to talk to someone other than the Investigator, you may call the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program office. (If out of state use the toll-free number 1-866-278-1455.) If you would like to contact the Human Subjects Protection Program via the web (this can be anonymous), please visit <http://www.irb.arizona.edu/contact/>.

By participating in the survey, you are giving permission for the investigator to use your information for research purposes.

Please submit your survey responses by October 16th, 2009.

Thank you,

Beth Shapiro
Department of Educational Psychology
The University of Arizona College of Education
P.O. Box 210069
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0069

APPENDIX F. SURVEY

School Counselor Support of Students with Refugee Status**2. Survey**

1. Are you male or female?

- Male
 Female

2. Are you currently employed as a School Counselor in the state of Arizona?

- Yes
 No

3. Approximately how many years of experience do you have as a School Counselor? Please answer in whole numbers only.

4. How would you describe your school community?

- Rural
 Suburban
 Urban

5. In your own words, briefly define the term "refugee."

6. Approximately how many students with the status of "refugee" attend your school?

- None
 Less than 10
 20-50
 50-80
 More than 100

APPENDIX F. SURVEY (continued)

School Counselor Support of Students with Refugee Status

7. Approximately how many students with the status of "refugee" have YOU met with to provide individual academic planning, individual counseling, or group counseling services?

- None
- Less than 10
- 20-50
- 50-80
- More than 100

8. When counseling refugee students about their future, to what extent do you discuss college?

- Often
- Sometimes
- Almost Never

9. If you answered Often or Sometimes to question 8: What do you discuss about college?

10. If you answered Almost Never to question 8: Why?

11. To the best of your knowledge, how often does a interpreter or translator accompany refugee students who experience language barriers when they seek counseling and/or guidance?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

APPENDIX F. SURVEY (continued)

School Counselor Support of Students with Refugee Status					
12. Listed below are problems that current refugee children and adolescents may have in school. In your opinion, how serious is each one for those in your school?					
	Very serious	Somewhat serious	Not serious at all		
Lack of interest in academics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Lack of formal education or experience being a student	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Lack of motivation for academics and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Lack of English language literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Lack of coping skills necessary for learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Truancy and/or reoccurring absences from class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Discipline issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
13. For the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement by marking the appropriate box.					
	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree
I am well-prepared as a school counselor to provide school counseling services to students with the status of "refugee".	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students with the status of "refugee" should be treated the same as any other student.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school should provide extra services for students with the status of "refugee".	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All school personnel should receive specialized training in working with students with the status of "refugee".	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counselors need to be familiar with the culture from which students come to work with them effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX F. SURVEY (continued)

School Counselor Support of Students with Refugee Status

14. In your opinion, what problems do students with the status of "refugee" most often display? Please select as many as apply.

- Symptoms of depression
- Symptoms of anxiety
- Symptoms of trauma
- Symptoms of bullying, physical and/or emotional abuse, verbal harassment, assault, robbery
- Symptoms of discrimination and/or prejudice
- Symptoms of powerlessness or meaninglessness
- None of these
- Other (please specify)

15. What do you consider to be the most serious challenges facing students with the status of "refugee" in your school?

16. What are strategies you use to help acculturate students with refugee status into school?

17. In your opinion, do you believe you need additional skills or training to work with students with refugee children and adolescents?

- Yes
- No

18. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, what training, skills, or resources would you recommend?

19. Please enter any additional comments below.

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