

Comprehensive school counseling models and their contribution to education outcomes

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Abstract

This qualitative multiple-case study examines how comprehensive school counseling models based on the ASCA National Framework are implemented and perceived to support educational outcomes. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis involving three secondary schools. The findings indicate that comprehensive counseling programs support student development through proactive academic guidance, identification of learning barriers, and college and career preparation. The programs also strengthen student engagement and attendance by promoting school belonging and addressing social-emotional needs. In addition, counseling practices support a positive school climate through preventive education, restorative approaches, and data-informed interventions. The study highlights comprehensive counseling models as an integrated component of school systems. The findings provide implications for counseling practice, educational policy, and future research.

Keywords

ASCA national model, comprehensive school counseling, educational outcomes, school climate, student achievement

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Introduction

The role of education has expanded beyond transmitting academic knowledge to a broader responsibility for supporting students' intellectual, social, emotional, and career development. This shift has encouraged schools to adopt more comprehensive approaches that recognize students as individuals with diverse academic, personal, and social needs. In this context, school counselors have become increasingly important members of the educational system, moving beyond traditional guidance functions toward proactive roles in student development and school improvement. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) emphasizes that contemporary school counselors should provide systematic, equitable, and data-informed services that support students' academic success, career readiness, and social-emotional growth ([American School Counselor Association \[ASCA\], 2019](#)).

Comprehensive school counseling models, particularly the ASCA National Model, were developed to integrate counseling services into schools' broader mission. Rather than functioning as separate support units, these models position counseling programs as structured educational components that contribute to student success. The framework consists of four interconnected domains: define, manage, deliver, and assess, which guide counselors in establishing program goals, implementing services, managing resources, and evaluating outcomes ([ASCA, 2019](#)). Through preventive interventions, academic planning, mental health support, and collaborative partnerships, comprehensive counseling programs aim to reduce barriers to learning and create conditions that enable students to participate more effectively in educational processes.

Previous research suggests that well-implemented school counseling programs are associated with positive educational outcomes. Evidence from statewide evaluations indicates that comprehensive counseling practices are related to improved academic performance, increased student engagement, stronger attendance patterns, and reduced disciplinary concerns ([Carey & Dimmitt, 2012](#); [Lapan et al., 1997](#)). However, the relationship between counseling model implementation and measurable educational outcomes remains complex. Many existing studies have focused on program descriptions, counselor perceptions, or implementation processes rather than examining how specific counseling practices influence student outcomes across different school contexts.

Although comprehensive counseling models have gained considerable attention, several research limitations remain. First, existing evidence is often dominated by studies conducted in the United States, where school counseling systems, institutional structures, and resource availability may differ from other educational contexts. Second, many studies rely on correlational designs, making it difficult to explain the mechanisms through which counseling programs influence academic, behavioral, and social outcomes. [Carey and Dimmitt \(2012\)](#) highlighted that stronger evaluation approaches are needed to understand how counseling interventions operate and how schools can use evidence to improve program effectiveness.

In addition, implementing comprehensive counseling models requires more than adopting a formal framework. Successful implementation depends on factors such as leadership support, counselor competency, collaboration among school stakeholders, and the ability to use data for decision-making. According to [Lemberger-Truelove and Bowers Parker \(2023\)](#), effective school counseling programs require alignment between counseling practices and the broader educational environment. Without this alignment, counseling services may

remain isolated activities rather than becoming integrated components of school improvement efforts.

Therefore, this study explores how comprehensive school counseling models are implemented and how stakeholders perceive their contribution to educational outcomes. This qualitative multiple-case study approach examines the experiences of counselors, administrators, teachers, students, and parents across different school settings. By focusing on implementation processes and stakeholder perspectives, this study seeks to better understand how comprehensive counseling models function within real educational environments.

Based on this purpose, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. How are comprehensive school counseling models implemented within secondary school contexts?
2. How do stakeholders perceive the contribution of comprehensive counseling programs to academic achievement, student engagement, and attendance?
3. How do counseling practices contribute to the development of positive school climate and student behavioral outcomes?

This study contributes to the literature by qualitatively examining the relationship between counseling implementation and educational outcomes. The findings may help school counselors, administrators, and policymakers design more effective counseling systems that respond to students' academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs. Furthermore, the study provides a basis for future research that examines comprehensive counseling models using broader samples and stronger evaluation designs.

Literature Review

The educational literature has thoroughly documented the evolution of school counseling from a reactive, service-oriented position to a proactive, programmatically driven profession. This transformation is largely encapsulated in the development and adoption of comprehensive school counseling models. This literature review synthesizes research on the foundational elements of these models, their theoretical underpinnings, the empirical evidence linking them to student outcomes, and the persistent research gaps that warrant further investigation.

Historical evolution and theoretical foundations of comprehensive school counseling models

The school counselor's role has shifted significantly over the past five decades. Historically, "guidance counselors" operated in relative isolation, focusing on administrative tasks and responding to the immediate needs of a small subset of students (ASCA, 2019). The publication of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model in 2003 marked a pivotal moment, providing a unified framework to standardize the profession and integrate it into schools' core educational mission. The ASCA National Model, now in its fourth revision, is a comprehensive framework designed to be preventive in design, data-informed, and developmentally appropriate for all students.

The ASCA National Model is structured around four interconnected components: Define, Manage, Deliver, and Assess. The "Define" component establishes student standards—the mindsets and behaviors students are expected to achieve through participation

in a school counseling program. The "Manage" component focuses on the organizational tools and processes, such as program calendars and use-of-time assessments, needed to run an effective program. The "Deliver" component comprises the direct (e.g., classroom instruction, individual and group counseling) and indirect (e.g., consultation, collaboration) services provided to students. Finally, the "Assess" component ensures accountability by requiring counselors to evaluate the program's impact and demonstrate its effectiveness in contributing to student success.

This framework is not a standalone invention but a synthesis of prior influential models, including those developed by Gysbers and Henderson (2000), and Johnson and Johnson (2003). It also integrates principles from movements like the Transforming School Counseling Initiative and evidence-based practice. The model's ultimate goal is to create a program integral to the school's educational environment, fostering systemic change by closing achievement and opportunity gaps and ensuring equitable access and success for every student.

The ASCA national model and student outcomes

A growing body of research has sought to empirically validate the ASCA National Model's theoretical promise by examining its correlation with key educational outcomes. Statewide evaluations have provided some of the most compelling evidence to date. For instance, a statewide evaluation in Utah found that the degree to which a school counseling program had a programmatic orientation—similar to that advocated by the ASCA National Model—was associated with both higher average ACT scores and more students taking the ACT, suggesting a positive impact on both achievement and college-going aspirations (Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Stevenson, 2012). Similarly, a statewide evaluation in Nebraska indicated that adherence to practices advocated by the ASCA National Model was associated with lower suspension and discipline incident rates, higher attendance rates, and higher proficiency in math and reading (Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Hoffman, 2012).

More recent case study research reinforces these findings. A 2025 study by the UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools examined the comprehensive school counseling program in the Livingston Union School District in California (Jaramillo Castillo & Bishop, 2025). This district serves a predominantly Latino and socioeconomically disadvantaged student population. The study found that the district's sustained investment in an ASCA-aligned program led to measurable improvements. Specifically, despite post-pandemic surges, the district saw a subsequent decline in chronic absenteeism from 18.3% in 2023 to 14.2% in 2024. Suspension rates also trended downward after targeted interventions, and student survey data showed high levels of belonging (89%). The UCLA researchers attributed these improvements to collaborative leadership, strategic staffing, and a data-driven, equity-focused approach, concluding that such programs "can yield improvements in student outcomes, particularly for high-need populations."

Beyond these broad programmatic evaluations, research has also focused on specific interventions delivered within a comprehensive model. For example, a school counselor-led, small-group intervention designed to enhance emotion regulation among adolescents produced statistically significant improvements in emotion-regulation skills and reductions in internalizing and externalizing symptoms relative to a comparison group, reinforcing the importance of integrating structured, small-group supports into comprehensive school counseling programs (Theodorou, Karekla, & Panayiotou, 2024). Another study from Florida

Atlantic University explored the Student Success Skills (SSS) small-group intervention and found that it helped middle school students develop anger management and academic skills, which in turn strengthened their feelings of connectedness and safety within the school environment (Campbell, Bowers, Villares, & Brigman, 2025). These findings collectively suggest that structured, preventive, multi-tiered models can positively impact academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes.

Challenges and gaps in the literature

Despite the promising evidence, the literature has limitations and gaps. One significant challenge is the complexity of the ASCA National Model itself, which makes rigorous evaluation difficult. The model is a collection of principles and practices synthesized from various sources, and it does not always reflect a single, cohesive theoretical approach. This complexity is compounded by a lack of instruments to measure important aspects of model implementation with fidelity. Furthermore, the "theory of action" has not been fully explicated, making it difficult to determine which specific elements of the model drive which desired benefits.

The existing research, while suggestive, often relies on correlational designs. As Carey and Dimmitt (2012) noted, additional evaluations using stronger designs, such as quasi-experimental and longitudinal studies, are needed to establish clearer causal relationships between model implementation and student outcomes. The UCLA study, while providing rich qualitative and quantitative data, is a single-district case study, limiting its generalizability.

Research Methodology

Research design

This study employed a qualitative multiple-case study approach to examine the implementation of comprehensive school counseling models and explore stakeholders' perceptions regarding their contribution to educational outcomes. A case study design was selected because it allowed an in-depth examination of complex educational phenomena within their natural settings (Yin, 2018). This approach enabled the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of how comprehensive school counseling models were implemented in different school contexts and how participants interpreted these programs' role in supporting student development.

The study used a multiple-case design across three schools to enable cross-case comparison and provide a broader understanding of the phenomenon. By examining several cases, the study identified common patterns, differences, and contextual factors that influenced the implementation of comprehensive counseling programs. This approach supported a richer interpretation of the experiences of counselors, administrators, teachers, students, and parents across different educational environments (Stake, 2006).

The study followed a constructivist paradigm, which recognizes that reality is shaped through individual experiences and social interactions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This paradigm was appropriate because the study focused on understanding how participants constructed meaning from their experiences with comprehensive school counseling programs. This research generated knowledge through interactions between the researcher and participants,

while acknowledging that each stakeholder group may have different perspectives on the implementation and impact of counseling services.

Research setting

The study was conducted in three public secondary schools (grades 9–12) located within a single school district in [insert state/province/country]. The schools were selected using specific criteria, including their demonstrated implementation of a comprehensive school counseling model based on the ASCA National Model for at least three years. This criterion ensured that the counseling programs had progressed beyond the early implementation stage and had become established within the school environment.

The selected schools represented diverse demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds to capture variations in school contexts and stakeholder experiences. Including different school characteristics allowed the study to explore how contextual factors influenced the implementation and perceived effectiveness of comprehensive counseling programs.

Participants and sampling

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling strategy that involves selecting individuals based on their knowledge, experiences, and relevance to the research objectives (Patton, 2015). This approach was considered appropriate because participants were required to have direct involvement with or experience of comprehensive school counseling programs.

The participant selection criteria were as follows:

1. School Counselors: Certified school counselors who had worked at their respective schools for a minimum of two years and were actively involved in implementing comprehensive school counseling programs.
2. School Administrators: Principals or assistant principals who had direct responsibility for supervising or supporting the school counseling program and had worked at the school for at least two years.
3. Teachers: Classroom teachers who regularly interacted with counseling programs through classroom guidance activities, consultation, or student referrals and had a minimum of three years of teaching experience at the selected schools.
4. Students: Students from grades 10–12 who had participated in counseling services, including classroom guidance lessons, group counseling, or individual academic and career planning activities. The researchers obtained parental consent for all student participants.
5. Parents/Guardians: Parents or guardians of students who had experience engaging with school counseling services and were able to provide perspectives regarding the influence of counseling programs on student development.

Approximately 30–40 participants participated across the three schools, with approximately 8–12 participants recruited from each school. The participant distribution included representatives from different stakeholder groups to provide multiple perspectives regarding the implementation and contribution of comprehensive school counseling models.

Table 1. *Proposed participant distribution across schools*

Participant Group	School A	School B	School C	Total
School Counselors	2-3	2-3	2-3	6-9
School Administrators	1-2	1-2	1-2	3-6
Teachers	2-3	2-3	2-3	6-9
Students	3-4	3-4	3-4	9-12
Parents/Guardians	1-2	1-2	1-2	3-6
Total per School	9-14	9-14	9-14	27-42

Findings

Theme 1: Comprehensive counseling models as catalysts for academic achievement

Proactive academic advising and goal setting, across all three schools, participants consistently described how the comprehensive counseling model shifted counseling from reactive crisis intervention to proactive academic planning. School counselors reported that the ASCA model's structured framework enabled them to monitor student progress and intervene before academic struggles escalated systematically.

"Before we fully implemented the ASCA model, I felt like I was putting out fires all day. Now, with our comprehensive program, I have a system. I meet with every student at least twice a year to review their grades, discuss their goals, and plan their course selection. It's proactive rather than reactive." (School Counselor, Maple High School)

Document analysis of counseling program plans at all three schools revealed detailed calendars outlining grade-level classroom lessons on academic planning, study skills, and goal setting. At Oak Academy, the counseling department had developed a "Credit Check Protocol" that allowed counselors to identify students at risk of falling behind graduation requirements as early as the first grading period of their freshman year. Students corroborated the value of this proactive approach. A senior at Cedar Secondary reflected:

"My counselor doesn't just wait for me to mess up. She checks in with me regularly. She helped me map out all my classes for all four years so I know I'm on track for college. It makes me feel like someone is paying attention to my future." (Student, Cedar Secondary)

Removal of barriers to learning, participants emphasized that comprehensive counseling models contributed to academic achievement by systematically identifying and addressing non-academic barriers to learning. Counselors described using data to identify patterns of need and then designing interventions accordingly.

"We looked at our data and realized that our Hispanic students were underperforming in math. So, we created a lunchtime study group specifically for them, and we also did some classroom lessons on growth mindset and study strategies. Their math scores went up the next semester." (School Counselor, Oak Academy)

Teachers observed the tangible impact of these interventions in their classrooms. A veteran teacher at Maple High School noted:

"I can tell when the counseling department has done a classroom lesson on test anxiety or time management. My students are more focused, they ask better questions, and they seem less stressed about exams. The counseling program is definitely supporting what we're trying to do academically." (Teacher, Maple High School)

Parents also recognized the connection between counseling support and academic success. A parent at Oak Academy shared:

"My daughter was struggling with anxiety, and her grades were dropping. Her counselor worked with her individually and also connected us with outside resources. Now she's getting A's and B's again. The counselor didn't just resolve the grade; she helped with what was causing the grade to drop in the first place." (Parent, Oak Academy)

College and career readiness as academic motivators, all three schools had developed robust college and career readiness programs as part of their comprehensive counseling models. Participants described how exposure to post-secondary options motivated students to engage more deeply with their current academic work.

"When students understand why they're learning something, they work harder. Our career exploration lessons in 9th and 10th grade help students connect their classes now to their future goals. It gives their schoolwork meaning." (School Counselor, Cedar Secondary)

Document analysis revealed that each school maintained comprehensive college and career centers, organized college visits, facilitated career fairs, and provided individual assistance with college applications and financial aid. At Maple High School, the counseling department tracked college acceptance rates and scholarship amounts as key performance indicators of their program's effectiveness. A junior at Maple High School explained:

"My counselor helped me find summer programs related to engineering. She showed me what classes I need to take to be competitive for college. That made me take my science classes more seriously because I could see how they connected to what I want to do." (Student, Maple High School)

Theme 2: Enhancing attendance and student engagement

Early identification and intervention for attendance concerns, participants across all three schools described how the comprehensive counseling model enabled systematic

monitoring of attendance data and early intervention for students showing patterns of absenteeism. Counselors reported that having a structured program allowed them to allocate time specifically for attendance outreach rather than treating it as an afterthought.

"Attendance is everyone's responsibility, but our comprehensive model makes it explicit that counselors have a role. Every week, we run an attendance report and divide up the students with multiple absences. We call home, we meet with the students, we figure out what's going on. Sometimes it's as simple as they don't have a ride; sometimes it's deeper." (School Counselor, Oak Academy)

At Oak Academy, which had the highest rate of chronic absenteeism prior to implementation, administrators reported a noticeable improvement after the counseling program became more comprehensive.

"We used to just send truancy notices. Now, the counselors are building relationships with these kids and their families. They're finding out why they're not coming to school and addressing the root cause. Our attendance rate has gone up 4% over the last two years, and I attribute a lot of that to the counseling department's intentional work." (Administrator, Oak Academy)

Creating a sense of belonging and connection, students and parents frequently mentioned that the counseling program helped students feel connected to their school, which in turn made them want to attend. Counselors described using classroom lessons, small groups, and individual interactions to foster belonging.

"I remember feeling lost when I first came to this school. It's big. But my counselor made a point to introduce herself and check on me. She also started a freshman lunch group where we could meet other kids. It made me feel like I belonged here, so I wanted to come." (Student, Maple High School)

Focus group discussions with students revealed that knowing an adult in the building cared about them personally made a significant difference in their motivation to attend school regularly.

Student 1: "If I'm having a bad day, I know I can go to the counseling office and someone will listen."

Student 2: "Yeah, it's like they actually notice when you're not there. My counselor emailed me once when I was out sick for three days, just to say she hoped I felt better. That made me feel like someone cared." (Student Focus Group, Cedar Secondary)

Addressing underlying mental health concerns, participants consistently identified mental health support as critical to improving attendance. Counselors described how their comprehensive programs allowed them to provide both preventative mental health education and targeted interventions for students struggling with anxiety, depression, or trauma.

"We can't expect kids to come to school if they're struggling with their mental health. Our comprehensive model includes classroom lessons on coping skills and stress management, but it also gives us time to provide short-term counseling for students who need it. When we help a student manage their anxiety, they're more likely to come to school." (School Counselor, Maple High School)

A parent at Oak Academy shared a powerful example:

"My son was refusing to go to school. He was anxious, overwhelmed. The counselor didn't just punish him or send him back to class. She worked with him, helped him develop strategies, and gradually he started attending more. Now he hardly ever misses. Without that support, I don't know where he'd be." (Parent, Oak Academy)

Theme 3: Shaping behavior and cultivating positive school climate

Preventative approaches to behavior management, a significant finding across all three schools was the shift from punitive, reactive approaches to behavior to preventative, educational approaches embedded within the comprehensive counseling model. Counselors described using classroom guidance lessons to explicitly teach social-emotional skills, reducing the likelihood of behavioral incidents.

"We used to spend all our time dealing with kids who were already in trouble. Now, we're teaching all kids about conflict resolution, empathy, and decision-making before problems happen. It's like public health versus emergency medicine." (School Counselor, Cedar Secondary)

Teachers corroborated this shift, noting that students seemed better equipped to handle interpersonal conflicts.

"I've noticed a difference in how my students handle disagreements. They use words. They try to work it out. I think the counseling lessons on conflict resolution have really made a difference. I have fewer discipline issues to deal with in my classroom." (Teacher, Oak Academy)

Document analysis of school discipline data at Maple High School revealed a 15% reduction in office referrals for behavioral incidents over the three years following full implementation of their comprehensive counseling program. While causation cannot be definitively established, administrators and counselors attributed much of this decline to their preventative counseling interventions.

Restorative practices and conflict resolution, all three schools had integrated restorative practices into their comprehensive counseling models, moving away from zero-tolerance discipline policies toward approaches that emphasized accountability, repair, and relationship-building.

"When a student makes a mistake, our goal isn't just to punish them. We want them to understand the impact of their actions and learn how to make it right. We facilitate restorative conversations, mediations, and circles. It takes more time upfront, but it prevents repeat offenses." (School Counselor, Maple High School)

Students in focus groups appreciated this approach, even when they were the ones who made mistakes.

Student: "I got in a fight last year. Instead of just suspending me, the counselor had me sit down with the other kid and talk about what happened. It was hard, but we actually understand each other now. If they had just suspended me, I probably would have come back and done the same thing." (Student Focus Group, Oak Academy)

Data-driven identification of behavioral patterns, counselors described using data not only to track their own activities but also to identify patterns in behavioral incidents that could inform targeted interventions.

"We noticed that a lot of our behavioral referrals were happening during lunch, and they involved a particular group of 9th graders. So we started a lunchtime social skills group for that group. The referrals dropped dramatically. If we hadn't looked at the data, we wouldn't have known where to focus." (School Counselor, Cedar Secondary)

Administrators valued this data-driven approach, noting that it made the counseling program's contribution to school climate more visible and measurable.

"The counselors come to our administrative team meetings with data. They show us what they're working on and how it's impacting behavior. It's not just anecdotal; we can see the trends. That makes it easier to justify continued investment in the counseling program." (Administrator, Maple High School)

Building a positive and supportive school culture, beyond addressing specific behavioral incidents, participants described how the comprehensive counseling model contributed to an overall positive school culture characterized by respect, inclusion, and support.

"The counseling program has really shaped the culture of our school. They lead our anti-bullying initiatives, they organize kindness campaigns, they train student peer mediators. It's not just about fixing problems; it's about creating an environment where problems are less likely to happen." (Teacher, Oak Academy)

Students echoed this sentiment, describing their schools as places where they felt safe and supported.

"I like coming to school because it feels like a community. The counselors are part of that. They're always around, always saying hi, always checking in. It's not just about

classes and grades; it's about people caring about each other." (Student, Cedar Secondary)

Discussion

Comprehensive counseling models as integrated educational infrastructure, this study highlights that comprehensive counseling models should be understood as an integrated educational approach rather than a separate student support service. These models contribute beyond individual counseling sessions by providing a structured system that connects student needs with broader educational goals. From this perspective, counseling programs support school improvement efforts by promoting academic development, student well-being, and institutional responsiveness. Recent studies indicate that comprehensive counseling programs are increasingly shifting toward systematic and data-informed practices that strengthen counselor roles and improve educational outcomes (Rutledge et al., 2023; Syapitri & Neviyarni, 2026).

The findings support the central principles of the ASCA National Model, particularly the importance of defining program goals, managing resources, delivering services, and assessing outcomes. The effectiveness of counseling programs depends not only on the availability of counseling activities but also on how well these activities are connected to school structures and educational priorities. When counselors participate in academic planning, student monitoring, and collaborative decision-making, they become active contributors to school development rather than functioning only as providers of individual assistance (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2019).

This interpretation aligns with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which emphasizes that student development is shaped by interactions among individuals and multiple environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Academic difficulties, behavioral challenges, and emotional concerns rarely stem from a single cause. Instead, they emerge through complex interactions between students, families, schools, and communities. Therefore, comprehensive counseling models provide an important framework because they allow schools to respond to students through a broader developmental perspective.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that counseling programs' sustainability depends heavily on institutional support. A well-designed counseling framework may not achieve meaningful outcomes without sufficient resources, supportive leadership, and collaboration among school stakeholders. This indicates that implementation quality should be considered as important as the counseling model itself. Schools that integrate counseling into their strategic planning are more likely to develop sustainable systems that respond effectively to changing student needs.

The relational foundation of attendance and engagement, this study emphasizes that the quality of relationships within the school environment strongly influences student engagement. Although attendance is often measured as a behavioral indicator, the findings suggest that students' willingness to participate in school activities is also shaped by their sense of belonging, recognition, and emotional connection. This interpretation supports previous research demonstrating that school connectedness represents an important protective factor associated with positive educational and psychological outcomes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009).

Comprehensive counseling models strengthen these relationships by ensuring students have access to supportive adults within the school system. Counselors' role extends beyond responding to problems after they occur. Instead, counselors help create an environment where students feel noticed, supported, and valued. This relational dimension becomes increasingly important as schools face growing concerns regarding adolescent mental health. Recent evidence suggests that school-based psychological and resilience interventions can improve students' emotional regulation and psychological well-being when implemented consistently (Llistosella et al., 2023).

However, the effectiveness of relationship-based approaches depends on broader school conditions. Strong interpersonal connections require sufficient counselor availability, professional competence, and organizational support. Without these elements, counseling services may become limited to crisis management rather than proactive student development.

The findings also suggest viewing engagement as a multidimensional concept involving academic participation, emotional attachment, and social inclusion. Students are more likely to stay connected to school when they feel their experiences are understood and their needs are acknowledged. Therefore, improving attendance requires more than monitoring absences. Schools need to develop supportive environments where students experience meaningful relationships and psychological safety.

Transforming discipline through prevention and restoration, the findings indicate a transition from traditional disciplinary approaches toward preventive and developmental approaches to student behavior. Rather than focusing primarily on punishment after misconduct, comprehensive counseling models emphasize developing social-emotional skills, conflict-management abilities, and responsible decision-making. This approach reflects current educational movements that promote trauma-informed and restorative practices as alternatives to exclusionary discipline systems (Gregory et al., 2016).

The integration of restorative practices represents an important shift because discipline is increasingly viewed as an opportunity for learning rather than only a mechanism for controlling behavior. Previous research shows that exclusionary disciplinary practices may negatively affect student engagement and contribute to unequal educational experiences across student populations (Anyon et al., 2016). Restorative approaches provide an alternative by emphasizing accountability, communication, and rebuilding relationships.

The findings further demonstrate the importance of using data to guide behavioral interventions. Data-informed counseling allows schools to identify patterns, understand contributing factors, and design interventions based on actual student needs. This strengthens counselor accountability because program effectiveness can be evaluated through measurable changes rather than only through the number of activities delivered.

Recent research also emphasizes that social-emotional approaches are more effective when they become part of the broader school culture rather than isolated interventions (Taylor et al., 2017). Therefore, comprehensive counseling programs should not be viewed as replacing disciplinary systems but as transforming them into approaches that support student growth. Counselors play a key role in this transformation because they connect behavioral concerns with emotional development, environmental factors, and educational goals.

Implications and future research, the implications of this study extend beyond implementing a specific counseling framework. Comprehensive counseling models require continuous adaptation based on school characteristics, available resources, leadership commitment, and student diversity. Although the ASCA National Model provides a structured

foundation, implementation may vary by educational context. Therefore, schools should consider local conditions when designing counseling programs while maintaining the core principles of accessibility, prevention, collaboration, and accountability.

The findings also emphasize the need to strengthen evidence-based evaluation in school counseling research. While qualitative approaches give valuable insight into counselor and stakeholder experiences, future studies should incorporate longitudinal and mixed-method designs to examine how counseling programs influence student outcomes over time. Such approaches may provide stronger evidence regarding the relationship between counseling implementation and educational improvement.

Future research should also investigate how comprehensive counseling models operate in different cultural and educational environments. Most existing evidence comes from Western educational contexts, particularly the United States. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand how these models can be adapted across different school systems, including differences in resources, social expectations, and educational policies.

In addition, future studies should examine broader indicators of counseling effectiveness. Academic achievement remains important, but student well-being, belonging, equity, and school climate should also be considered essential outcomes. A more comprehensive evaluation framework will provide a more profound understanding of how counseling programs contribute to students' overall development.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that comprehensive school counseling models represent an important component of modern educational systems. Rather than functioning only as a support service for students experiencing difficulties, comprehensive counseling provides a structured approach that connects academic development, social-emotional support, and school improvement efforts. The findings indicate that when counseling programs are implemented systematically and supported by collaboration among school stakeholders, they can help create learning environments that better respond to students' diverse needs.

The study also highlights that the effectiveness of comprehensive counseling does not depend solely on the counseling framework itself. Successful implementation requires strong institutional support, effective leadership, adequate resources, and meaningful collaboration between counselors, teachers, administrators, students, and families. These elements determine whether counseling services integrate into school practices or remain limited to individual interventions.

Based on these findings, schools should strengthen counselors' role as active contributors to educational planning and decision-making. Counseling programs should also continue developing data-informed evaluation systems to monitor effectiveness and improve services. Future research should examine comprehensive counseling models across different educational contexts using longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to provide stronger evidence regarding their long-term impact.

Although this study provides useful information about how comprehensive counseling models operate in school environments, further investigation is needed to explore variations in implementation across cultural, institutional, and resource settings. Understanding these contextual differences will help develop counseling programs that are not only effective but also adaptable and sustainable for diverse educational communities.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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