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PUPIL TEACHER AND COUNSELLOR PERCEPTIONS OF THE  
SCHOOL COUNSELLOR - IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING  
SERVICES AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

by

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Abstract

Research has suggested that the identity of the school counsellor is inevitably determined by what they do or are perceived to do, rather than by what they would like to do or ought to do.

Thus the perception held by students, counsellors and teachers are of paramount importance in attempting to define the role and function of the counsellors.

This study attempts, by a descriptive approach to determine what their perceptions are, and in addition to determine what effect, if any, the administration of a school can have on the perception held by the counsellor of that school.

A questionnaire was distributed to a randomly selected sample (N=223) of students from a secondary school within the ACT, whose total population was 750. The results were shown in their raw score form, percentage form and in years and sex.

The same method was used to ascertain the perceptions held by staff and administration of this school, and results were shown in raw score and percentage form. Similarly counsellors' perception of their role and function were obtained, although counsellors themselves were able to comment upon the design of the questionnaire before the final format was given to them.

The results tend to show that counsellors within the ACT system were similar to those in the USA, in that their identity was determined by what they were perceived to do.

The second part of the study used a causal - comparative approach to determine the effect of school administration on counsellors. The results of this showed that this body can potentially exert an extremely powerful influence upon the role and function of counsellors.

The implications of the study for the ACT system are great. If the counsellors are to be used to their maximum, greater support must be given to them, and teachers at all levels should undergo some training to aid them in understanding and thus utilizing the counsellors to their fullest potential.

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