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AN INVESTIGATION OF SCHOOL COUNSELING ROLES, PRACTICES,
CHALLENGES, AND DEMANDS IN BARBADOS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS IN BARBADOS

A Dissertation in
Counselor Education and Supervision and Comparative and International Education

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines school counseling programs in Barbados with a focus on the roles, practices, challenges, and demands of school counselors in Barbados. The study also seeks to identify factors that influence school counseling, by testing the 11 themes derived from Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015). The 11 factors are “1) cultural factors, 2) national needs, 3) larger societal movements, 4) models of school counseling, 5) laws and educational policy, 6) characteristics of the public education system, 7) the counseling profession, 8) research and evaluation, 9) related professions, 10) community organizations or NGO coalitions, and 11) local stakeholder perceptions” (Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015). In the 30 years since the inception of counseling in Barbados’ secondary schools, the roles, practices, challenges and demands of school counselors have expanded, and limited documentation exists to capture the work of the school counselors. This study uses an ethnographic approach to explore these aspects of school counseling, following five school counselors at four public secondary schools across the island. The study challenges the Western-centric paradigm and centers around the experiences of counselors in a small state. The study examines the literature in other small states and in the African Diaspora to situate Barbadian school counseling in an international context. The study uses an ecological framework of school counseling to gain an understanding of the work that counselors are engaged in.

The findings are discussed as themes that emerged from the data, and the data are analyzed comparatively, using a thematic analysis. The three overarching themes that emerged regarding the roles, practices, challenges and demands are the 3R’s (Roles, Responsibilities and Requirements); Problematizing the Policies, Politics and Culture; and School Family Community
Contexts. The factors that influence school counseling in Barbados mostly align with the 11 factors identified by Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) except that one additional factor emerged as well as a slight adjustment to one factor as a different way to discuss the theme on relationships between counselors and stakeholders. This study has implications for practice, policy, and training for Barbados and other small states as they develop and implement counseling programs within schools. This study can be used to support professional advocacy for promoting and informing the role of the counselor, and form the basis for developing an international model for school counseling in small states and the African Diaspora.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

School counseling in Barbados is in its infancy stages and appears to be following a similar trajectory to that of other Western cultures (Maynard, 2014; Schmidt, 2008). This study investigates school counseling programs and the role of school counselors in Barbados, a phenomenon which is not well-documented. The aim is to understand the established program in practice, and how roles, practices, components, and themes vary across the island. Barbadian schools operate under an educational model largely influenced by the British model and a need exists for understanding the role of school counselors. Clarity in their role can assist with the necessary expansion and provision of equitable services to alleviate some of the challenges Barbadian youth face (MOE, 2015). The study was comparative in nature, with five school counselors from comparable school sites selected for the individual cases. The lack of documentation on school counselor practices, roles, and explanation of various aspects of the school counselor position may be problematic for the Barbadian people; without understanding of practices and roles the counselors cannot potentially operate in a more cohesive and comprehensive manner that best serves their students and school community. The inclusion of documentation, particularly research and evaluation, can assist with operationalizing the role of counselors and improving the reach of the national counseling program across the schools. The void in the literature presents a need for more research on current and future practices and a clearly defined description and model for appropriate practices so that counseling in schools across the island have a sense of central structure. This study is foundational in uncovering the work of school counselors in Barbados, because no one has studied this phenomenon thus far.
Over the course of 30 years since school counseling’s formal inception, limited information exists on school counselors’ work and contribution to Barbadian schools and communities.

School counselors are equipped with a unique skillset that can address students’ and families’ needs (McMahon, Mason, Daluga-Guenther, & Ruiz, 2014). School counselors may face some unique challenges which may stem from the structure of the school system (Welch, 2014). The practices, challenges and demands that Barbadian school counselors face may be specific to the student and family needs in this country. Research is needed to analyze the counseling services Barbadian students are receiving and possibly improve interactions between counselors and Barbadian youth. In small states, such as Barbados, limited resources and access to services may serve as a challenge for school counselors providing services to students and families. With the Barbadian school counseling program still in its early stages, there may be opportunities for growth and development of a program specific to the culture and the needs of students in Barbados, which in turn may assist school counselors by improving and increasing the amount of services school counselors are able to provide.

To gain an understanding of current school counseling roles and practices in Barbados, we must consider some factors that contribute to the implementation and functioning school counseling programs in many countries. This study will build on the 11 factors already identified by Martin, Lauterbach, and Carey (2015) with hopes of expanding the list to include the specific considerations for Barbados. Martin, Lauterbach, and Carey (2015) reviewed 48 articles on school counseling in the international context and some countries are small states and/or African Diasporic countries. These factors were used to understand what influences school counseling in the international context, with an emphasis on small states and African countries with similar
historical context to Barbados. I will use this section to review each of the 11 factors and how Barbadian school counselors can possibly be impacted. They found 11 factors which are as follows: “1) cultural factors, 2) national needs, 3) larger societal movements, 4) models of school counseling, 5) laws and educational policy, 6) characteristics of the public education system, 7) the counseling profession, 8) research and evaluation, 9) related professions, 10) community organizations or NGO coalitions, and 11) local stakeholder perceptions” (Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015). It is difficult to compare these factors cross-culturally because the authors of previous research used various methodologies, or focused on specific factors, as opposed to others (Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015). Therefore, these factors were used to contextually frame the role of the school counselors in Barbados and to examine contributing factors to their current and future role. While I ground the study in a review of how these factors shape school counseling internationally, I do not conduct a cross-cultural investigation of school counseling roles and practices because of the lack of consistency in school counseling practices in different countries. The current study of school counseling in Barbados may uncover additional factors or may vary from what has been supported thus far.

As the profession expands, the need for a national model of school counseling may become a priority because of the importance of culturally responsive practices for addressing student needs. Students in Barbados have their own set of unique needs. No clearly defined model exists that fully explains and outlines the role of the school counselor in this setting. Because of this, they need school counselors that have a very specific, culturally appropriate set of tools and techniques that help to alleviate their problems. For centuries, the people of Barbados have successfully responded to social pressures and have developed coping skills
which allow them to function, and it is imperative that the positive aspects of the work the school counselors are doing are incorporated in the current study.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role and practices of school counselors in Barbados, to identify the key components of school counseling in Barbados and to compare school counselors and school counseling programs in Barbados. A lack of documentation and limited research surrounding school counseling in Barbados prevent school counselors and counselor educators from truly learning about the role of the school counselor and using their services to assist students, families, and the communities they exist in. The study, qualitative in nature, is considered an exploratory study, used to determine what is taking place in Barbados. The study’s findings provide valuable information to Barbadian school counselors and counselor educators, to Ministry of Education officials, principals, and major Barbadian stakeholders and should help aid in the development of a model specific to Barbados. It also provides a foundation from which to conduct further research on school counseling in Barbados and the other Caribbean islands. The purpose is to get a clear understanding of similarities and differences of actual practices in Barbados and the services school counselors currently provide for students and families on the island. The study provides insight about what school counselors are doing; offers counselors an opportunity for self-assessment, and identifies growth opportunities as well as opportunities for training and support.

**Research Questions**

The research questions will focus on school counselors’ roles and practices in Barbados. The research questions are as follows:
(1) How do school counselors in Barbados define and describe their roles, practices, challenges, and demands of their position?

(2) What factors influence school counseling in Barbados?

Significance of the Study

This research will help school counselors and counselor educators in Barbados gain an understanding of the current roles and practices of Barbadian school counselors, issues that influence their practices, and what policies and actions are needed to move school counseling in Barbados forward. Because this research is the first study to capture the comprehensive view of school counseling in Barbados, it may have implications for schools in Barbados as well as in other small states, and in African Diaspora countries. The research has implications for education policy, as the findings may help Barbadian policy-makers reform policy regarding school counseling in Barbados.

The Barbadian Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MOE) has launched the Education for All (EFA) initiative, as part of the UNESCO evaluation of educational programs (MOE, 2015), which directly relates to the role and practices of Barbadian school counselors. Many of the goals they have outlined and hope to continue to improve are about making education more equitable and equal for all students. The school counselors would be effective in this process because of their unique skillset (Aydin, Bryan, & Duys, 2012). The findings may lead to or provide a foundation for further evaluation of services and further development in the role and practices of the school counseling profession in Barbados. Fully understanding the breadth of services school counselors provide is crucial in knowing how they are successfully handling student needs and developing programs that adequately influence
positive student outcomes. Another significance would be to assist school counselors in advocating for changes that would improve their services while also facilitating the areas they are succeeding in and emphasizing the strengths and benefits of school counseling. The impact of the study provides implications for the school counseling field. This study would be foundational in contextualizing school counseling in the Caribbean and assist with the expansion of the field. This study will essentially help counselor educators and practitioners improve the services they provide. A broader significance of the study relates to challenging the current Eurocentric understanding of school counseling. The United States (U.S.) is often considered the “gold standard” for counseling practices which is an irrational comparison to such countries and nation states like Barbados, and automatically creates a deficit view of the work Barbadian school counselors are doing. The U.S. would also benefit from understanding how counselors operate in a different country and possibly adopt some of their practices to address the changing demographics of the U.S.

Definitions

In this section are terms that were used throughout the study, interchangeably due to the research available. Specific to the people of Barbados, they were referred to as Barbadian or Bajan which is a more colloquial term. School counselors in Barbados are referred to as guidance counsellors, so when referencing school counselors in Barbados, both school counselor and guidance counsellor were used interchangeably.

African Diaspora. The African Diaspora refers to the experience people with African descent that live in various countries throughout the world. The story of African people is one of resilience when faced with adversity. Many Western countries and African countries have a
history of exploiting Black people across the diaspora. Such exploitation includes colonialism, and the Atlantic Slave Trade which continues to impact African countries, African Americans, and Caribbean people with African descent. The experience of enduring pain and the struggle, is one that is common to Black people that live in these different places, due to the history and forced migration.

**Bajan Dialect.** Barbadians are heavily influenced by the British culture and refer to their speech colloquially as the “Queen’s English,” which means British Standard English. With the remnants of African languages and speech patterns still in the Black people that live there, they identify as speaking Bajan Dialect. Some words in the dialect are different than what is used in the standard British English. The dialect is mostly English, infused with phrases and terms and speech patterns of African languages.

**Barbados.** The island of Barbados is located in the southern Caribbean Sea. The island meets both the Caribbean Sea on the West Coast and the Atlantic Ocean on the East Coast. Barbados is 166 square miles. To travel the length of the island it would take about 45 minutes. The country is predominantly comprised of African Descendants (92.4%), European (2.7%).

**Block culture.** Similar to gangs in the U.S. and other parts of the world, block culture is the neighborhood street the youth are choosing to hang on. The streets are referred to as “blocks” and drug activity usually occurs in these spaces but the people in these spaces provide a family and network for the youth, which they may feel like they are missing (Stuart, 2018)

**Brain drain.** The brain drain is defined as the loss of skilled workers in the Caribbean due to migration to Western countries. Across the Caribbean the citizens are moving abroad. The brain drain includes the cross migration across the Caribbean as well, in which citizens migrate
to different Caribbean countries. The challenge with cross migration across the Caribbean is that the countries are not receiving skilled workers that can assist with economic development.

**BSSEE.** Barbados Secondary Schools’ Entrance Examination (BSSEE) is the exam that primary school children take to determine which school they will be eligible to be placed in for secondary school. The exam is often referred to as the Common Entrance Exam or the 11 Plus Exam. This exam plays a major role in the academic experiences of students, given that Barbados has a colloquial ranking school system. This exam determines if the student is eligible to attend an older secondary school which typically has higher academic achievement or a newer secondary school which does not perform as well academically. Over 3,300 students took the exam this year (Rollock, 2019)

**Caribbean.** When referring to the population and sample, the group was called Caribbean or West Indian because the area is referred to as such. The people are referred to as living in the Caribbean or West Indies (W.I.). When European settlers landed in the Caribbean, they called the area the West Indies because initially, they were in search of spices in India.

**CARICOM.** The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) consists of 15 members states and five affiliate countries in the Caribbean (CARICOM, 2019b). This organization seeks to focus on four pillars including “economic integration, foreign policy coordination, human and social development, and security” (CARICOM, 2019b). Regarding education, their goal is “Building awareness and commitment regional integration, the CARICOM agenda (purpose, organization, opportunities and benefits of the Community) and a Community for all” (CARICOM, 2019a).

**Classism.** This term refers to the unequal distribution of economic resources in a society. The focus on access to opportunities lends itself to the prejudice and discrimination people
experience due to not having these same opportunities. The discrimination is based on the emphasis on class within the society.

**CXC.** The Caribbean Examinations Council has a host of certificates and diplomas that students can take the examinations for. The countries in the Caribbean, 16 of which utilize the CXC s, and Barbados is one of those countries. These exams are considered qualifications that can be used for students to gain access to jobs and college entry based on their scores on the CXC s certificates and diplomas. The scores are used as a standardization for comparing student achievement across the Caribbean (CXC, 2019).

**Elitism.** This term refers to emphasis on values that depict having access to resources and experiences as it relates to class, wealth, and socioeconomic status. Barbados has been criticized for being an elitist society which shows up in various components of their culture, including education and access to opportunities (Barbados Today, October 29, 2016; Beckles, 1990). The elite value system stems from the British, who controlled the island until 1966 when Barbados was granted independence.

**Forms.** Each year level in secondary school is called a form. In the U.S. context the forms are referred to as the grade.

**Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children.** This organization partners with countries to end corporal punishment. They try to establish these relationships with governments, review the human rights treaty and support national campaigns (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, June 12, 2019).

**Guidance counsellor.** The term guidance counsellors and school counsellor are used interchangeably. Guidance counsellor is the term still used in Barbados and other countries but
the term is outdated in the literature, with the field embracing the term “school counselor”. The role of the guidance counselor is expanding and not limited to solely guidance services.

**HFLE.** Health and Family Life Education is a life skills curriculum used in various countries across the Caribbean. The culturally relevant curriculum was developed by representatives from various islands in the Caribbean, including representatives from Barbados. the curriculum is used in primary and secondary schools. In secondary schools, the counselors are responsible for teaching a maximum of ten HFLE classes per week and they are responsible for sharing the curriculum with HFLE teachers assigned to teaching the course due to their free class periods throughout the day.

**Ministry of Education.** The Ministry of Education (MOE) which is also referred to as the Ministry. With each change of government power, the full name of the Ministry changes to incorporate the important areas identified by the sitting Minister. The MOE is equivalent to Department of Education in the U.S.

**Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development.** The OECD is the international organization that focuses on improving well-being through policy changes (OECD, 2019).

**Pastoral care.** Care for someone’s socio-emotional state. This form of care is seen in Barbados and stems from the British influence on their education system. Pastoral care is the general care for the students’ social and emotional well-being.

**Primary education.** Formal education for youth ages 6-11 is considered primary education. In Barbados specifically primary school consists of ages 4-11 years old and then
students complete the BSSEE and move on to secondary school. Across the island there are 74 public primary schools and several private primary schools.

**Secondary education.** In Barbados, students enter secondary school at the age of 11, after sitting for the BSSEE exam. Students can complete secondary school at 16 years old, after finishing fifth form. Depending on the school, student may be able to attend upper fifth form which is repeating a second year in fifth form, or they can move on to sixth form. The older secondary schools in Barbados offer sixth form. The years spent in sixth form or upper fifth allows students to take CXC’s and A-levels to prepare them for the workforce or to attend university. These couple of years help students prepare of their tertiary options because

**Small states.** Small states are countries with populations of less than five million. Small states are located all over the world and may be islands as well, such as Barbados and Malta. The study partially focuses on school-based counseling in small states. These countries are often on the receiving end of resources because of their size and economical power in comparison to some of the larger world powers.

**Tertiary education.** Often referred to as postsecondary education, tertiary education is the formal education that occurs after students successfully complete secondary school. Students can begin tertiary education at the age of 16, once they finish secondary school. Students may attend universities, college, or vocational and technical schooling to learn a trade.

**UNICEF.** This organization was initially named the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and is now called the United Nations Children’s Fund. This organization was founded in 1946 with hopes of providing resources to mothers and children impacted by World War II. The organization has since expanded to focus on preserving the
rights of children including access to education, healthcare, assisting in crisis, sustaining supplies and logistics, and evaluation (UNICEF, June 11, 2019).

**University of the West Indies (UWI).** The university system across the Caribbean is referred to as UWI, was founded in 1948 (UWI, June 12, 2019). This higher education system is one of two regional higher education systems in the world. In the Eastern Caribbean, UWI is oldest and largest higher education system. UWI has four campuses, two of which are located in Barbados. UWI Cave Hill and UWI Open Campus are both located in St. Michael, Barbados. The master’s level School Counseling program is located on the Cave Hill campus. Open Campus offers 42 site locations with the flexibility of virtual and residential courses.

**Vocational guidance.** This focus is on career preparation. Vocational guidance is the collection of activities that help students plan and prepare for their future careers by focusing on skill development.

**Summary**

This foundational study explores the role, practices, challenges and demands of school counselors in Barbados because there has been no study done on the work that school counselors do, this study informs and advocates for the need to expand the counseling role in Barbados. The following chapter presents the conceptual framework for the study, using the small states literature and factors that influence school counseling in the international setting to situate the work of counselors in Barbados. The third chapter describes the methods the researcher used to conduct the study. The ethnographic approach explores the culture of school counseling programs and is explained in detail, as well as the process for data analysis. The fourth chapter explains the findings of the study, utilizing a six-phase thematic analysis, and comparatively
discussing the cases. The final chapter discusses the findings and provide recommendations for practitioners, counselor educators and the field of international education.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature on school counseling in Barbados and other international contexts and provides a context for the Barbadian school counseling program. The chapter starts with an overview of the Barbadian education system and some of the current issues that students are facing. The purpose of including information on student issues is because school counselors provide services to students and families and their work is directly related to the needs of the students across the island. Caribbean parents believe that school officials will provide adequate care for their children, so they may not be as involved in the school system (Mitchell & Bryan, 2007; Morrison & Bryan, 2014). The chapter then moves into the conceptual frame of school counseling roles, practices, challenges and demands in other small states and the African Diaspora, followed by a discussion of 11 factors that influence countries as they develop school-based counseling programs.

Barbados Culture

Barbados is located in the Caribbean region, just south of St. Lucia and close to South America. The island is 166 square miles and it takes about 45 minutes to travel the length of the island. The Barbadian population is comprised of mostly African descendants, who account for 92.4% of the population, white Europeans descendants are 2.7%, 3.1% mixed, 1.3% East Indian, and 0.2% other (CIA, 2018). Originally, Barbados was home to the Caribs and other native groups; the Caribs was the group that survived until the Spanish invaded in 1492 (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993). The island was then colonized by the British, and under their control for 339 years, receiving independence in 1966 (Tsang, Fryer, & Arevalo, 2002). The slave trade was very active on the island and slavery was the main source of labor. Throughout the years
Barbados has boasted a well-educated labor class who were afforded the opportunity of education (Tsang, Fryer, & Arevalo, 2002). This well-educated labor class still exists in Barbados, with these individuals having greater access to resources. In the past, the country’s economy was heavily controlled by the sugar crops, but now has transitioned to an economy supported more by tourism, data processing, and other service sectors (Tsang, Fryer, & Arevalo, 2002).

Barbados operates as a collectivist society (Hofstede, 2001; Mitchell & Bryan, 2007), an example of which is seen in childrearing. Parents are not limited to the biological parents, but also include extended family members, such as the grandparents, and other adult family members that play a role in rearing the child (Mitchell & Bryan, 2007). Barbados is highly influenced by the United States (U.S.) and Canada. Many of the news reports reference the current American president and U.S. politics, as opposed to commentary on the Barbadian prime minister. Even with the previous local government’s term just ending, a lot of news is still coverage on the American government and events in the U.S. In a search on the Barbados Nation News (March, 2018) website, "Donald Trump" yielded 728 news articles. In conversation with Barbadians, they frequently asked the researcher about the current American administration and about her experiences under the Obama administration.

British terms are interspersed in Barbadian language with people speaking British English, often referred to colloquially as “the Queen’s English” meaning very proper and British, without the Bajan Dialect and/or accent. The British influence is seen in the structure of government, with Barbados having a Parliamentary system and various Ministries or departments of the larger government system. The ministries’ names change depending on the
administration in power and what they value. An example is the Ministry of Education, which was previously the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, and is currently called the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training (Loop News, May 26, 2018). The name depends on what the administration deems important for the citizens at that specific time (M. Grant, personal communication, Spring 2018).

**Influence of religion and Christianity.**

Christianity is the most practiced religion across the island and the region (Mitchell & Bryan, 2007; Punnett, Dick-Forde, & Robinson, 2006). In the school system in particular, Christianity and spirituality are integral components of the curriculum (Barbados Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development, 2007). The students take Religious Studies as a course, they have morning prayers and devotion, and Christian values are mentioned to students in the classroom and in conversation. Christian values are viewed as the ideal values and morals that individuals should align with in order to live right. Much of the structure of Christianity is built on ideals of faith and love. Student issues are often discussed with a Christian lens. An example would be the varied discussion and views on sexuality and sexual health with students being encouraged to maintain their purity.

**Education in Barbados**

The Barbadian society is deeply rooted in Eurocentric values seen throughout the structure of Barbados. Barbados was colonized by the British for 339 years and the island obtained independence in 1966 (CIA, The World Fact Book, 2012). The current educational system is built largely on the previous British system that was in place while the island was colonized (McPhee, 1985). The colonial system was based on the institution of slavery and the
use of enslaved Africans, who worked for free on sugar plantations. Much of the island’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the 17th and 18th centuries were from the free labor of slaves on those crops. The economic system was heavily influenced by classism and a clear power imbalance between the European colonizers and the African descendants. Once slavery concluded, the colonial system and its policies were still upheld, including the British values, because enslaved Africans were not awarded land or property. Therefore, the Europeans maintained their pre-emancipation wealth because of the limited access the former enslaved Africans had to wealth and resources (Beckles, 1990; Gopaul-McNicol, 1993; Tsang, Fryer, & Arevalo, 2002). The British laws also infiltrated the schools and common practices in education, religion, organization of the economy as examples (Tsang, Fryer, & Arevalo, 2002).

As mentioned by Mayers (2014), the government has been committed to education, providing a free elementary and secondary education for everyone. Barbadians have historically had a high adult literacy rate of 99.6% (UNESCO, 2018; Maynard, 2014). Students are required to attend school from the age of 4 to 16 years old in Barbados (MOE, 2015). Students in primary school range from 4-11 years old, and students in secondary school ages range from 11-18 years old.

**Ranking of schools.** As an example of prevailing colonial practices, the school system has maintained similar structures and utilize rankings patterned on the British education system, including the informal ranking of schools based on achievement and academic performance. The schools have maintained a similar structure, in terms of being classified and informally ranked by achievement and academic performance with some schools ranked as higher performing and others as lower performing. Colloquially and informally, Barbadians know the structure
regarding the informal ranking of the schools (Mayers, 2014). This ranking ultimately determines which school students attend and how the schools are viewed by the larger Barbadian society. The higher performing schools are sometimes referred to as the “older” secondary schools. These schools have been in existence since the 1800s and previously served the predominantly white upper-class (Tsang, Fryer, & Arevalo, 2002). By the time of Barbadian independence in 1966, there was a difference in the quality of education at the secondary schools (Tsang, Fryer, & Arevalo, 2002). Throughout Barbados, people colloquially know that in the past to get into the older secondary schools, prospective students had to be interviewed. Some questions alluded to class, with an example being “do you have running water at home?” (M. Grant, personal communication, October 22, 2017). The students that attended the older schools were considered “bright” and the same characterization holds true today. The schools that do not perform as well academically are called the “newer” secondary schools.

Within Barbados and the Caribbean region, the school system has been critiqued for operating from an elitist perspective in which primary school students are sent to secondary schools based on their scores on national exams (Mounsey, 2016). One of the national exams is the Barbados Secondary School Entrance Examination (BSSEE), which is also known as the Common Entrance Exam, and also known as the “11 Plus Exam” which is taken at the end of primary school to determine which secondary school you would be eligible to gain admissions into. Students who receive a high grade on the exam typically attend one of the older secondary schools, whereas the students that do not perform well often end up at newer secondary schools. Regarding the BSSEE, there is an ongoing local discussion with individuals with higher levels of education wishing to keep the exam, but with modifications (UNICEF, 2009). A critique of this
request is that the individuals with higher educational attainment probably attended the “higher performing” secondary schools and have benefited from the current structure gaining more access to resources and better jobs, based on the long-standing structure of the education system.

**National examinations.** When students are in their last year of primary school, they take the Common Entrance Exam to get into a secondary school (Mayers, 2014; Maynard, 2014; Tsang, Fryer, & Arevalo, 2002). How they perform on the exam determines which schools they are eligible to seek admissions into. Once students are in their secondary schools, they do have the option to transfer schools, but they must apply to schools that match their academic performance (M. Grant, personal communication, October 20, 2017). Children whose families can afford tutoring or “lessons” as it often referred to, have a better chance of performing well on the exam and obtaining admission to “higher performing” schools. The higher performing schools have more students from more affluent backgrounds and more access to financial resources.

Students can graduate from secondary school in fifth form at 16 years old, but some students remain in school and choose to attend sixth form or complete two years of fifth form, so they can take additional exams and be more academically prepared for university, college and other post-secondary options. Students that opt to graduate from fifth form and not continue through secondary school, can choose to start university immediately, attend the local community college, work, or take on an apprenticeship (M. Grant, personal communication, October 22, 2017).

The exams given in Barbados, are given in various countries in the Caribbean. The students take the CXC s in fifth form, which are subject specific (CXC, 2018). At the end of
fourth form if they qualify, they can sit for the exams in a few subjects. In the schools that offer sixth form, the students can take the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) each year for their two years in sixth form (Mayers, 2014). All of these exams are used as qualifications for various jobs and entrance to tertiary schools. When the students apply to universities and programs outside of the Caribbean, the universities use these scores as an equivalent to their national exams/qualifications to see where the students qualify and grant them entry to their schools. Certain jobs require multiple subjects and a minimum score on the exams to be qualified.

**Education, classism and meritocracy.**

In a country such as Barbados in which the population mostly consists of Black Barbadians, institutionalized oppression is covert. Barbadians believe in meritocracy and operate with the belief that education is the ultimate equalizer in balancing inequality. They believe that if given the opportunity to get an education, students should be able to achieve academically which will translate into their experience in the workforce. What is not openly articulated is that the amount of social capital that families are able to provide their children plays a significant role in the child’s ability to pass exams and perform well enough to gain access to more resources and opportunities. Social capital is defined as “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups” (OECD, 2001). Class is defined as “A “class” is an economic group within which an individual belongs, and the individual perceives material (i.e., types of belongings, neighborhood) and nonmaterial (i.e., educational level) boundaries. The individual may observe other “classes” which are perceived to be, in subjective hierarchy, higher, lower, and at the same place (i.e., lateral) as the
individual's own class. Class mobility is possible, but only through the comprehension of the other class's norms, values, and culture; that is, each class is perceived to have its own culture, and the further away the social class group is from the current position, the more dissonant or unfamiliar the culture is to the individual. Consequently, classism is an employed behavior and attitude, and an expected consequence as the individual attempts to navigate within and between classes. (p. 14)” (Liu, 2003). Classism plays a major role in the resources families and children are afforded (Barbados Today, September 30, 2017; Ward, May 31, 2010). Speech patterns are also clear indicators of the level of education someone may have, as well as their ability to code-switch, which is “switching between two different language, either within a sentence or between sentences” (Fought, 2006). In certain settings, when interacting with Barbadians, I often heard “Can I speak to you in Bajan” or “the Queen’s English,” which is standard British English. When interacting with students, some adults would inform students of the need to speak “proper English” instead of the Bajan dialect. In corporate offices and in tourism, I often encountered individuals that would speak standard English, almost with a British Caribbean accent, and further away from the Bajan dialect. Individuals that were able to code-switch would be in formal positions but the more hidden roles or administrative and supportive roles had individuals that openly spoke Bajan Dialect.

Grammar schools was once the term for secondary schools across the island. Across the Caribbean, the grammar schools which were similar to the British format of schooling, transitioned to a secondary school format, similar to the United States of America (McPhee, 1985). The schools are not formally ranked, but colloquially ranked based on academic performance and everyone knows the order. While engaging with Barbadians, they often openly
share their pride and enthusiasm about attending the top performing schools or having a child or family member attend the schools. The students at the higher performing schools are mostly from higher SES backgrounds, children of diplomats and expats, and more affluent upbringing. These families can afford tutoring and additional resources to assist their students with preparation for the BSSEE. The students take this exam for placement in a public secondary school. Depending on their scores and the proximity to the school they will be placed in one of the 21 public schools. Few students from low SES backgrounds are afforded the opportunity to attend the higher performing secondary schools because of limited access to resources. The students from under-resourced backgrounds are usually extremely intelligent and/or they were able to receive tutoring afterschool from teachers or their families were able to pay for tutoring services (M. Grant, personal communication, Spring 2018). On the island, tutoring services are referred to as lessons (Mayers, 2014).

The secondary schools have several distinctions which indicate which type of school they are. The schools are often informally categorized as “older” and “newer” secondary schools. Older secondary schools are typically high performing and high academically achieving schools and were established years ago (Mayers, 2014). Older secondary schools are preferred by students and families because in order to get into those school they have to perform well on the Barbados Secondary School Entrance Exam (BSSEE) (Mayers, 2014). Many of the students that attend the schools comes from more affluent backgrounds and have more access to resources such as additional lessons, in order to perform well on the exam. An example of the types of students that attend the older schools would be the prime ministers of Barbados; of the eight prime ministers, five of them attended Harrison College which is the oldest and highest
academically performing public secondary school on the island and the other three, including the current prime minister, The Honorable Mia Mottley, attended Queens College, another top performing older secondary school. The older secondary schools typically have Sixth Form, which is the equivalent of 11th and 12th grade in the U.S. and students are aged 16 years and older. This extension of secondary school allows the students to take additional exams and be more prepared to start at a college or university. Newer secondary schools are schools established in the 20th century (Mayers, 2014). The newer schools typically do not perform as well academically. The students also have more options in terms of practical work experiences and job attachments that help them prepare to enter technical fields or go straight into the world of work.

**Issues impacting students and schools in Barbados.**

Barbados has many concerning issues they continue to deal with. In the age of millennials, students are exposed to more content such as Western culture and drug culture that continues to shape their experience (Barbados Today, April 16, 2019). Previously, students did not have as much access to computers and the internet, with social media and other platforms at their fingertips. There has been an increase in the number of students experiencing depression, tardiness, truancy, violent behaviors, and teen pregnancy (Maynard, 2014).

Barbados’ educational system has several issues pertinent to their school counselors. According to the MOE (2015) Education for All Report, Barbados is applauded for having very high basic literacy rates of 99% and ranked fourth worldwide; however, there is still a low percentage of students accessing tertiary education, although increasing (MOE, 2015; UNESCO, 2018; Maynard, 2014). The percentage of tertiary level education has significantly increased
because the government pays for primary through tertiary education, including funding for textbooks, and they spend more on tertiary education (World Bank, 2013). The brain drain is the migration of Caribbean natives to other countries, particularly to the US, Canada and England (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993; Maynard, 2014; Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012). The “brain drain” is partially the root of the issue, with many individuals still moving to the U.S. and the inter-regional migration to other countries in the Caribbean (Crossley, Bray, Packer, Colin, Martin, Atchoaréna, & Bainton, June 2009). The island loses many skilled workers while many individuals without formal education remain on the island (World Bank, 2013). The “brain drain” has been occurring since the 1960s, around the time of Barbados’ independence (Ministry of Labor, 2008; Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012). As of 1997, the total number of natives migrating is much lower (829 persons in 1997) than in previous years, with the height of migration being in the late 1980s (1,745 persons in 1990) (Ministry of Labor, 2008; Thomas-Hope, 2003). Approximately a third of the labor force has migrated from Barbados to the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Member Countries from 1965-2000 (Docquier, & Marfouk, 2005; United States Census, 2000). About 60% of the total number of migrants from Barbados moved to the U.S. from 1965-2000 (United States Census, 2000).

Barbadians have other pertinent issues related to the educational experience as well. UNICEF (2009) captures the issues in an executive summary document for Barbados. Barbados is one of the 196 countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (UNICEF, 2009) and some of their practices misalign with the Convention. These practices include administrators still legally able to punish students with lashes. In the school system, corporal
punishment is no longer an issue, but for 75% of Barbadian families, it is still supported in the household. Corporal punishment is supported typically by Barbadians who are older with less education, and less supported by those that are younger and with tertiary or post-secondary educational attainment (UNICEF, 2009). In Barbados, overall support for corporal punishment has decreased from 80% in 2004 to 75% in 2009 (UNICEF, 2009). Corporal punishment and physically reprimanding children are most prevalent among children of color in colonial nations, and low-income families and rooted in colonialism as a vestige of slavery (Ember, & Ember, 2005; Gershoff, & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). Although the numbers of parents that spank their children are decreasing, some still believe in physical punishment for children (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2012). A necessary critique is that scholars write about and discuss corporal punishment solely from a Western perspective in which U.S. and British researchers and organizations prescribe what is appropriate for developing countries and provide a deficit view of marginalized families and children, particularly groups of color and families with low SES (Morrison, Smith, Bryan, & Steele, 2016).

The current educational system has been criticized for being an elitist education system in which some students benefit more than others (Maynard, 2014). The educational system comprises some institutional practices, which are still maintained since colonial times. Marginalized groups on the island such as students from low income families attend more of the newer secondary schools, and families from other Caribbean countries, and religious minorities such as Muslims, and not as many of them are in older secondary schools which tend to perform better academically (United States Department of State, 2011). The people in positions of power have benefitted from this structure, and in many cases have historically had access to resources
and therefore, exposed to more opportunities. School counselors can play a key role in providing parent education through for parents on alternative ways to parent and support for students who face various issues including those receiving corporal punishment.

Different types of schooling present several concerns for the Ministry of Education. Barbados has government run schools, along with private schools (MOE, 2019a). In total, Barbados has five private primary schools and five private secondary schools (Barbados.org, March 7, 2019). Across the island, the government provides free public education from primary up to tertiary for their citizens. At the tertiary level, students pay a small tuition fee for their postsecondary programs (Barbados.org, March 7, 2019). The majority of people surveyed in a survey on the general population of Barbados feel as though a school needs to be created for students with special needs, and they should not be included in the general education schools (UNICEF, 2009). UNICEF also found that the majority of respondents believe that there should be a separate school for deviant children. No clear definition of deviant was given, but with such findings, it is necessary to consider Barbadians’ views of children with special needs and what services are currently being provided for them, due to the culture of isolation and exclusion (portrayed by researchers), that children with special needs experience on the island (Cumberbatch, 2016).

The island is currently faced with more and more pressing issues regarding drugs and violence in schools and the community. With the influence of American culture on the society and guns becoming more easily available, there has been an increase in drug use and school violence (Barbados Today, March 22, 2017). The issue with “block” culture, is similar to gang activity in other countries especially the North American influence (Bailey, 2016). With block
culture, youth are drawn to the “block” or local neighborhood streets, in which they hang out on the “block”, often times there is drug activity as well (Stuart, 2018). The youth and young people involved in block culture are then impacted academically, if they choose to not attend school. The Minister of Youth, Culture and Sport mentioned ““I really think we have to get those blocks working. I will be going around Barbados to ensure that the blocks don’t just remain a block culture where people believe that they sit down and do absolutely nothing, but that there are businesses on the block” (Stuart, 2018).

**School Counseling in Barbados**

This section provides an overview of school counseling in Barbados. In the counseling literature about countries that are now implementing counseling such as Brazil, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Nigeria, and South Korea, scholars have published some “Past, Present, Future” articles capture the extent to which the country has developed their counseling program and the future direction (Hutz-Midgett & Hutz, 2012; Lee & Yang; 2008; Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley; 2012; Okech & Kimemia, 2012; Okocha & Alika, 2012; Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012). Employing a similar structure used in these articles, this chapter addresses the history of school counseling, current trends, and the direction of the counseling programs in the international context. This section expands on the history of school counseling in Barbados, the roles and responsibilities of their guidance counsellors and the HFLE program which is a significant component of their role. The overview then leads into the literature on small states and African countries, to help set the framework from which Barbados is situated.
History of school counseling in Barbados.

School counseling was first introduced to Barbados in the 1980s. They use the term guidance counsellor to refer to their school counselors (Maynard, 2014). In the schools currently they may be referred to as the guidance counsellor and/or the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) teacher because in the majority of the schools they are still expected to provide the HFLE curriculum for the assigned HFLE teachers and teach the HFLE class as well. Historically, school counsellors were formally introduced in public secondary schools in 1989. Maynard (2014) states that in the early 1980s, the principals found themselves facing increasing challenges in the schools, and proposed the need for guidance counsellors. In 1987, the original group of school counselors drafted the document “Guidelines for Implementing Guidance and Counselling in Senior and Secondary Schools” which is still in use today (Maynard, 2014; MOE, 1987). This document provides an outline of the role of guidance counsellors and the ethical code that they should adhere to. Since the 1980s the document has not been updated, although the role of the counselor has expanded throughout the years. In 1996, UNICEF in collaboration with CARICOM introduced HFLE into the Eastern Caribbean schools, and school counselors were instructed to teach HFLE or to train a team of teachers to assist with teaching HFLE (UNICEF 2009; UNICEF, 2002; Maynard, 2014). UNICEF worked with country contributors from each country to help create the life skills curriculum and the Barbados contributors were Margaret Grant who was an HFLE teacher and Patricia Warner who was the HFLE Coordinator (UNICEF, 2009). The Barbados MOE (2019) states that HFLE focuses on “health and well-being, eating and fitness, interpersonal relationships, sexuality and management of the environment.” Maynard (2014) describes that there is a lack of organization and support around
the social-emotional, career and academic issues that students present, yet, such issues are increasing in the schools.

Every secondary school has at least one guidance counsellor. Of the 21 schools, 19 schools have one guidance counsellor and two schools have two counsellors. The MOE has begun to utilize acting guidance counsellors in a few of the “newer” secondary schools (P. Warner, personal communication, October 21, 2017). There are 23 school counselors, with one counselor at each school and only two schools with two counselors on record (Maynard, 2014). Acting school counselors have been placed in some of the schools informally to help address increasing issues in the schools such as socioemotional issues, violence, and other delinquent behaviors (Maynard, 2014; P. Warner, personal communication, October 21, 2017). The employees fulfilling these acting positions are often teachers with Guidance and Counseling certificates or some form of counseling, social work or psychological training, who assist the official school counselor at the school. Out of the four schools with this additional support, two of the schools officially have two counselors and two schools have a male staff with a counseling or social work background acting in the second guidance counselor capacity (P. Warner, personal communication, October 21, 2017).

**Roles and responsibilities of school counselors in Barbados.**

The counselor takes on several roles in the school and the community. The roles include counseling students, assessing needs, program planning, liaising with outside agencies, and working with teachers and administration (MOE, 1987). Particularly in the Caribbean, the community is primarily where individuals seek resources, so school counselors should be at the forefront facilitating partnerships with the community (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993). For example,
people seek assistance from the church for food or clothing donations or local businesses that can provide services to students and families. Developing a school counseling system with extensive focus on partnering with the community may serve as the beginning of a comprehensive model for some developing Caribbean countries. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) model may be applicable to Caribbean cultures as well although this still needs to be explored.

Counselors in the Caribbean borrow from the ASCA model because they attend the ASCA national conferences and in the past have received training in or from U.S. counselor education programs. This Western influence on Barbadian school counseling programs also exists because school counselors frequently go overseas to receive training and return to their home country to practice. School counseling in Barbados currently has a primarily academic/vocational focus.

In Barbados, a long-standing document exists from the Ministry of Education, which outlines the requirements and duties for a guidance counsellor. The document was drafted in 1987 by Thelma Payne, the first Education Office for Guidance Counselor at the Ministry of Education in collaboration with a team of teachers who had advocated for the introduction of guidance counsellors into Barbados schools. The dated document provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities for guidance counsellors, as well as their ethical code. The duties were as follows:

a) “Develop positive attitudes consistent with societal values;
b) Set personal self-improvement goals and work towards improving their self-image;
c) Practice and use problem solving and decision-making skills for coping with everyday situations as they might occur at home, at home, at school or in the community;
d) Set plans which are flexible and suited to their needs, interest and abilities;

e) Acquire skills, knowledge and attributes for their career vocational development and exploration of career alternatives;

f) Apply skills in gathering information, seeking a job, and using resources in the community appropriately and wisely.”

In a job post for guidance counsellors in Barbados, which was authorized by the Ministry in August 2013, the duties evolved as follows:

“to be responsible to the Headteacher for planning and implementing the guidance programme in the schools including

a) counselling with students in matters of personal/social, educational and career concerns;

b) assessing the personal characteristics of students in areas of aptitude, interests, goals, abilities and values;

c) co-ordinating and conducting guidance instruction in light of the occupational and educational needs, problems and concerns of students;

d) assisting students with the selection of subject options relevant to pursuing requirements for further education and employment;

e) assisting students in utilizing their aptitudes and abilities for the purpose of identifying their occupational skills and selecting or choosing an occupation or setting career goals;
f) contacting and visiting parents or guardians and homes of students to consult with parents or guardians on students’ learning or other difficulties;

g) referring students for further assistance to appropriate social agencies in the community;

h) working with other members of staff in planning and conducting guidance programmes for students and consulting with them on matters relating to students’ problems and other difficulties;

i) liaising with places of employment for the purpose of exploring occupations, on-the-job experience, and on-the-site visits and tours, and placement;

j) collecting and disseminating up-to-date information on the current trends in employment, and requirements for entry to tertiary level institutions;

k) participating in the on-going evaluation of the Guidance Programme”


The 2013 post or document on the roles and responsibilities is viewed as outdated and many of the counselors and current principals have not seen the document. This lack of awareness and communication of the expectations for school counselors further contributes to the role confusion occurring in Barbadian schools because the counselors are responsible for tasks that their administrators assign them and do not have a current document that provides clear direction to help them self-advocate for the profession in schools. The Public Service Qualifications (2016) now states that guidance counselors are required to have the following:

"(a) A degree in Guidance and Counselling; or (b) A degree and a certificate or a diploma in
Guidance or Counselling." Previously, they were only required to have a bachelor's degree or "first degree," a term used to refer to a bachelor’s degree, or a certification in Guidance and Counseling. Counselors are expected to teach the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) curriculum. With HFLE being such a huge part of their role, at one point they were required to have HFLE training, but this practice has not been sustained. Principals assign HFLE teachers, based on their availability and their free-time during the day, to help deliver the HFLE curriculum.

School counseling in Barbados began in 1988 with a group of trained secondary school teachers (Maynard, 2014). The counselors delivered the Family Life Education (FLE) program, now called the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) program, which is used throughout several countries in the Caribbean. School counselors focused on personal/social, career and academic issues (Maynard, 2014). In the original document (MOE, 1987) that outlines the responsibilities of the guidance counsellor, the document mentions the counsellor’s responsibilities in their work with students, teachers, parents, administrators and the community. What is important to note is the relationship with parents and families seems to be one sided, with counselors giving information to parents, but not creating opportunities for parents to engage in the school community (MOE, 1987). The counselors were instructed to refer students to outside agencies and resources, and that was the extent of the description of their work in the community (MOE, 1987). Since 1987 when the guidelines for guidance counselors was created, counselors are now doing more comprehensive work with students, families and the community, but these changes are not reflected in their job description or guidelines in the original document from 1987, or current documents.
**HFLE.**

The Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) program was crafted by scholars in the Caribbean with the intention of providing culturally appropriate life skills for students integrating local knowledge in the curriculum. In Barbados, and other countries that have experienced colonization, there is a tendency to seek information and resources from larger countries, an example being the comparison to the U.S. school counseling model although the U.S. serves a much different population. The benefit of the HFLE program is that the content was designed by local educators in the Caribbean and their views of how to address local needs is valued and given a platform. A counselor and representative from the Ministry of Education in Barbados were a part of the process in developing the context. In other cases, the preference given to “outsider scholars,” as opposed to Caribbean scholars is problematic for Barbados and other previously colonized countries because often the outsider motive is to push an agenda that may not be best suited to the culture of such societies. Freire (1970) indicates that value should be placed on the local knowledge because people can help themselves, as they live in such close proximity to the issues at hand and are familiar with the culture and the problems.

HFLE was created by UNICEF and CARICOM in order to provide a comprehensive program for Caribbean students on various health and life skills. The curriculum is generally the same across the Caribbean islands, but some islands only use specific components of the overall program. Guidance counsellors are expected to use the curriculum in their HFLE classes and provide the curriculum and sometimes detailed lesson plans to assigned HFLE teachers. In most schools, the counselors oversee the HFLE department, or HFLE is housed in the General Studies department, along with Religious Studies. In schools where the counselor does not facilitate the
HFLE lessons, they still assist or supervise the HFLE teachers in delivering the curriculum (P. Warner, personal communication, October 21, 2017).

HFLE is comprised of several units regarding helping students develop life skills. The curriculum is extensive and there is content for primary and secondary schools. The content includes worksheets for sexual health, physical wellness, self and interpersonal relationships, and wellbeing (MOE, 2019b). The manual provides rubrics, lesson plans and worksheets for each form (grade) and there is content for forms 1-3, which is the equivalent of middle school in the U.S. context (MOE, 2019b; UNICEF, 2009).

**Conceptual Framework**

**Small States and African Diaspora Nations as a Frame of Reference**

The conceptual framework explores the literature on school counseling programs and school counselors’ role across a number of countries. These countries, used to inform what is occurring in school counseling internationally, comprise small states and some formerly colonized countries on the African Diaspora. Small states are defined as countries having “a small population, limited human capital, and a confined land area” (World Bank, 2019). Small states are categorized as countries with populations under five million. Barbados is considered a small state as it has a population of just over a quarter million. These countries are more prone to be greatly impacted by labor market changes due to their limited number of skilled workers (World Bank, 2019). Skilled workers often migrate, leaving their home country to find job opportunities elsewhere; this brain drain of skilled workers impacts the home country (World Bank, 2019). Many of these countries rely on tourism, fisheries, and goods and services being exported as some of their main sources of economic revenue (World Bank, 2019). They are
vulnerable due to sudden weather-related disasters and limited export partnerships (World Bank, 2019). Small states are usually in remote areas, much further away from the larger markets, making their exports less competitive. An example would be the landlocked African states that do not have any access to the sea (World Bank, 2019).

In the Caribbean, a skilled workforce exists in some islands, which assists them as service providers in Information Technology, while in some small states connectivity is a challenge (World Bank, 2019). About 54% of the 52 countries in the Commonwealth have populations under two million, thus, they are small states (Crossley, Bray, Packer, Colin, Martin, Atchoaréna, & Bainton, June 2009). Barbados has approximately 292,000 people living on the island (CIA, 2017). Barbados is also a member of the Commonwealth, and a member of the United Nations (Crossley, Bray, Packer, Colin, Martin, Atchoaréna, & Bainton, June 2009). Barbados has a high income of $11,456 per capita with a high Human Development Index (HDI) ranging from 0.800 and above. The HDI encompasses the locale of the country and their capabilities which includes three areas: the knowledge of the people and the expected years of schooling, followed by the life expectancy at birth and lastly, the economic component of the standard of living (UNDP, May 21, 2019). Barbados is joined by The Bahamas, Brunei Darussalam, Cyrus, Malta and Trinidad and Tobago in this category (Crossley, Bray, Packer, Colin, Martin, Atchoaréna, & Bainton, June 2009). Of the 28 countries in the Commonwealth, 20 of the countries are island states, and Barbados is considered an island state.

Despite being a small island state, Barbados does not operate in isolation. The country is part of the larger Caribbean system. Small states have made some advancements in educating their citizens, with increasing gender equality in the number of males and females attending
lower level, primary and secondary schooling and more females are receiving higher levels of tertiary schooling (World Bank, 2019). This gender distribution in education also exists in Barbados, with 99% of females and 93% of males enrolled in secondary school in 2017; at the tertiary level, 91% of the females and 40% of males are enrolled in postsecondary institutions (UNESCO, 2018; World Bank, May 21, 2019). In Barbados, students take the Caribbean Examinations Council exams or CXC exams in secondary school (CXC, 2018) or upon graduation to demonstrate skill development in subject areas related to the world of work and future careers (MOE, 2017). Barbados is also home to two of the University of the West Indies (UWI) campuses that exist on several islands in the Caribbean., which are UWI Cave Hill and UWI Open Campus. The country also benefits from partnerships with larger countries and local NGOs. By combining resources, more opportunities are created for students and families.

Similar to other small states, Barbados mostly imports information and is not maximizing profits from exporting goods, services and knowledge, (Crossley, 2008; Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015).

Small nation states are used to frame the literature on counseling practices in Barbados because this country is a small state and may have similar experiences with implementing its school-based counseling program. The small states used for reference include Belize, Botswana, Bhutan, and Malta (Martin, Carey, & Lauterbach, 2015). One state, Belize is in the same region as Barbados. Additionally, I consider the experience of countries with larger African descendant populations that experienced colonization from Great Britain. The countries are Nigeria, Kenya, Botswana, Haiti, Jamaica, and Belize. Both Jamaica and Haiti are in the Caribbean region, but Haiti is a French-speaking country. Of the countries discussed, several of them have mandatory
school counseling programs; these countries include Botswana, Malta, and Nigeria (Harris, 2017). Harris (2017) also mentioned the Bahamas, St. Kitts, and Trinidad and Tobago, as Caribbean countries that mandate school-based counseling.

Four of the countries that Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) reviewed are considered small states. These countries are Belize, Botswana, Bhutan, and Malta, with Belize the only other small state discussed that is in the same region as Barbados. Due to the size of these islands and regional similarities, there may be room for exchange of information and cross-cultural comparisons regarding school counseling practices. Similar to Barbados, Malta was under British rule and gained independence from Britain in 1964, around the same time as Barbados (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2017). Botswana, another small state was given independence from Britain in 1966 (Coker & Majuta, 2015). These countries have been empowered by the gain of political independence (Coker & Majuta, 2015).

School counseling literature about countries from the African Diaspora is reviewed with the expectation that their experiences and challenges may be somewhat similar to Barbados because of their similar exposure to colonialism and its lasting effects on these countries. These countries (i.e., Nigeria, Kenya, Botswana, Bhutan, Malta, Belize, Haiti, Jamaica), are located in mainland Africa or within the Caribbean region. The Caribbean islands, which are considered small island developing states (SIDS), are still heavily populated with African descendants because of the Atlantic Slave Trade, in which thousands of Africans were inhumanely forced to migrate to the Americas (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993; Tsang, Fryer, & Arevalo, 2002). Although these countries (e.g., Jamaica, Haiti, Nigeria, and Kenya) are much larger than Barbados, they are following similar trajectories in implementing counseling within the schools. The larger
countries, Nigeria and Kenya, face similar counseling challenges as Barbados (Okocha & Alika, 2012; Okech & Kimemia, 2012).

This investigation of the role and practices of school counselors and their challenges and demands in these small states and African Diaspora countries situates Barbados within a larger system. I stay away from direct comparisons to the United States system in a discussion of the literature in an attempt to decenter the U.S. in the discussion because the comparison is not appropriate based on the locale and context of Barbados. The disparity would be too great because of the differences in context, the population and culture, the access to resources, and world power or influence. The comparison to the U.S. would be deficit based and not in favor of Barbados, which is a smaller country that has managed to overcome colonialism.

I discuss the role of school counselors in countries with school counseling programs operating in a similar stage of program development and targeted population. Martin, Lauterbach, and Carey (2015) discuss eleven factors that impact the implementation of school counseling programs in various countries. This literature review extends that line of research to include and fully explore the cultural factors as they relate to school counseling in Barbados and the roles, practices, challenges, and demands of school counselors in Barbados. Greater insight and in-depth understanding of school counseling in Barbados can be provided within the context of shared experiences, challenges and demands in the African Diaspora and small states. The findings and recommendations of the current study may have implications for other small states. This current study provides nuance for small states and policies related to school counseling, which often get overlooked in the broader discussion on education in small states.
Barbados relies heavily on tourism and imports most of its goods and services (CIA, 2017). Categorizing Barbados as a small state, and building on Crossley's (2008) suggestion, school counselors in small states such as Barbados can provide insight on the roles and practices of counselors in larger countries. Crossley and Sprague (2012) mentioned that small states can provide further insight and strategies for larger countries for informing educational practices and procedures. The strategies would be related to policies, ways of operating effectively with limited resources, and working cooperatively to educate the people residing in their country. This narrative concerning small states informing larger nations is much different than the typical narrative as smaller states are usually on the receiving end in the world of economics, tourism and importing goods. This study uses this paradigm, that is, of smaller states informing larger nations, as a counter narrative that gives voice to the experiences of school counselors in Barbados in hope of shaping future counseling and international education literature on school counseling in a small state.

**School Counseling in Small States and the African Diaspora**

In this section, I discuss the literature on school counseling including school counselors’ roles, practices, and challenges in small states and the African Diaspora. In the literature various issues come up such as defining the roles and practices of counselors, along with some of their challenges and demands. Other factors such as culture, policies, counselor caseload, the role of professional associations, the stigma in counseling, and holistic and traditional practices in various countries are addressed, as they relate to work that counselors are doing in these settings. Some similarities and differences exist across the countries, but what is essential is to understand
how Barbados fits within this larger context. This section provides the foundation for analyzing the roles, practices, challenges and demands in Barbados which are discussed in further chapters.

**Roles and practices of school counseling.**

Numerous countries are now implementing school counseling or some form of counseling in their schools (Admundson, Niles and Hohensil, 2015; Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015; Smith-Augustine, 2012). With school counseling still in the infancy stage in many of these countries, it is necessary to define the school counselor’s role and unique skill set, and ability to function as leaders in the schools. Many of the tasks and requirements for school counselors in the following countries depict the importance of their role: Bhutan, Malta, Belize, Botswana, Nigeria, Kenya, Haiti, Jamaica, and Barbados. The description of the practices in each country listed may give insight into the role of school counselors in Barbados and the future of the position. Below some of the issues related to school counselors’ roles and practices are discussed.

**Inconsistent definition of school counseling role.**

The U.S. has benefited from counselors for over 100 years and the first counselors focused on vocational counseling slowing introducing more comprehensive counseling programs into their schools due to the issues they had to address. Countries like Botswana, Nigeria, Malta, and Barbados are taking the same route as in the U.S (Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017; Maynard, 2014; Okocha & Alika, 2012; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010; Sultana, 1998). Role confusion often exists for school counselors; this is problematic and hinders the advancement of the field. Overall, there is a lack of understanding of the role of counselors by teachers, administration, and stakeholders who seek to utilize counselors within schools. They do
not understand the counselor’s role and where the counselor fits within the school, or the full capacity of counselor’s skills. For example, in Botswana, counselors are not given respect or attention from the administrators and staff in the schools, which leads to limited training and support for counselors (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). Some of the issues that can arise as a result are territorial issues between professionals because people do not know the exact role of the counselor (Admundson, Niles, & Hohensil, 2015; Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017).

In regards to the definition of counseling and of the school counselor’s role, some countries focus school counseling on career guidance while others focus more on socio-emotional counseling with students. Further, in countries like Kenya, school counselors are viewed as disciplinarians (Wambu & Fisher, 2015). This lack of consistency in role definition across countries creates problems for school counselors and impacts their work. This lack of role definition means that counselors are bombarded with additional duties, many of which are unrelated to their role and they do not have a policy or job description to support their role expectations.

Teacher-counselor role. In Belize, the lack of a formal description outlined by the government allows for teachers to fill the role of counselor, and they take on additional teacher duties and no standard framework for school counseling exists (Smith-Augustine, 2012). Belize refers to the older ASCA model from 2005 to inform their practices, but they also take on responsibilities pertaining to teaching, nursing, social welfare services, and fundraising activities (Smith-Augustine, 2012). The teacher identity is seen in several countries such as Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Malta because when counseling was initiated in these countries, teachers took
on counseling responsibilities in addition to their teacher role (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016; Maynard, 2014; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). In these countries, the government sent a select group of teachers to receive guidance and counseling training. Even if the “teacher-counselors” in Botswana did receive training, it was very limited and they did not receive any release time or additional compensation (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010).

Time constraints present a challenge for counselors in Bhutan and other countries where some teachers in schools having some counseling training and act as teacher/counselors. This teacher/counselor role presents two issues: these individuals’ time is split between teaching and being a counselor so they are limited in the amount of counseling work they can accomplish as they also have to fulfill their teaching duties; and the lack of full training in counseling limits the depth and scope of school counselors’ work in Bhutan (Guth, Lorelle, Hinkle & Remley, 2015).

**Career guidance.** Many countries such as Nigeria, Barbados, Jamaica, Malta, Botswana, and Bhutan, are following a similar path of development to Western school counseling (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2017; Maynard, 2014). For example, in Barbados, the counselor plays a major role in academic and vocational guidance, which is similar to the guidance and career focus in Malta and Nigeria (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2017; Maynard, 2014). Similarly, in Botswana, Malta, and Nigeria, the school counseling role focuses on career guidance, (Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017; Maynard, 2014; Okacha & Alika, 2012; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010; Sultana, 1998). In Botswana, counseling began with career guidance in the 1960s and in the 1990s the University of Botswana created the Careers and Counseling Centre. While there is a focus on career counseling, in the rural areas of Botswana psychiatric nurses are more likely to provide mental health services, and
paraprofessionals and teacher-counselors …as well in the school system. More professional counselors are stepping in to provide these services in more recent years (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). In Malta, they have a process of informal and formal career guidance (Sultana, 1998). Okocha and Alika (2012) describe the counseling role in Nigeria as “…professional assistance that is provided by counselors to help clients integrate their abilities, attitudes, and needs, thereby assisting them in making effective and realistic decisions that will foster their development as fully functioning individual” and “initially people spoke to students about their future careers because students “ignorant about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment…” (p.363).

School counseling in Belize and Kenya have also focused on career guidance. In Belize, they were working to develop a career counseling program in middle schools by using a holistic approach (Coogan, 2016). In Kenya, counseling focused on career guidance initially to prepare people for the workforce that was previously occupied by the colonists, but then the role of the school counselor expanded to include the youth and the need for counseling services increased (Okech & Kimemia, 2015). Admundson, Niles and Hohensil (2015) mentioned that because of industrial development, the central focus has been on establishing vocational counseling in some countries while other countries see the need for school counseling as the impetus.

Counselors are responsible for helping students process their next steps and career options. Countries such as Haiti and Nigeria only having school-based counseling in their secondary schools similar to Barbados, and the focus has been on career preparation (Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017; Legha, & Solages, 2015; Okocha & Alika, 2012). This focus stems from the U.S. influence on counseling, since many countries are following the same

**Personal-social counseling.** Despite the focus on career guidance in some countries, counselors are typically responsible for the personal/social wellbeing of their students. In countries like Barbados and Nigeria, the impetus for school counselors was to help students with personal/social issues related to larger societal issues such as curbing delinquent behaviors and violence in the schools and the community (Admundson, Niles, & Hohenshil, 2015; Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2016; Maynard, 2014; Okocha & Alika, 2012). These issues continue to be a major concern of school counselors in Barbados.

In Botswana and Kenya, these countries have been dealing with an HIV/AIDS pandemic and counselors are needed to help students handle the emotional byproduct of family members or they themselves being diagnosed (Bodika, Lekone, Loeto, Alwano, Zulu, Kim, Macha, & Voetsch, 2016; Coker & Majuta, 2015; Okech & Kimemia, 2015; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). The personal/social issues attached to depression, anxiety, and sadness that comes from being diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, are handled in the counseling setting in Botswana (Coker & Majuta, 2015; Stockton, Paul, Keith Morran, Yebei, Chang, & Voils-Levenda, 2012). Although, Haiti is dealing with an HIV/AIDS crisis, they tend to focus on sex education and sexual health as opposed to mental health services (Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012). One critique regarding Haiti is that documentation is limited so while mental health services may be provided, the provision of services nor reason for service are not documented (Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012). One analysis is that the lack of documentation stemmed from the
lack of formal guidelines and descriptions for mental health initiatives and providers until after the earthquake of 2010.

**Other roles and responsibilities.** School counselors’ roles extend to the families and communities they provide services for. For example, counselors in Belize and Nigeria (Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah; Smith-Augustine, 2012) are considered to be in charge of crisis management similar to Kenya (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Wambu & Fisher, 2015). School counselors often assist with providing access to resources for students and families (Guth, Lorelle, Hinkle & Remley, 2015). In other countries like Kenya, school counselors are viewed as disciplinarians (Wambu & Fisher, 2015).

**Counseling with a holistic view of child.** Many countries are beginning to offer more holistic services to students and families. In Bhutan, Guth, Lorelle, Hinkle and Remley (2015) noted that there is a need for a holistic approach to counseling across the country. They see the need for traditional and religious practices to be included in counseling. The people of Bhutan mostly practice Buddhism, which consists of natural healing practices but their laws require them to wear traditional dress, which directly relates to the need for culturally appropriate practices in Bhutan (Guth, Lorelle, Hinkle & Remley, 2015). In Kenya, the counselor takes on a disciplinarian role and do not use holistic practices which is recommended (Wambu & Fisher, 2015).

**Role of professional associations.**

Counseling professional associations play a major role in galvanizing growth and expansion for counseling initiatives across various small states and African diaspora countries. The professional associations provide opportunities for professional development, research,
partnerships, and advocacy and policy shifts for the field of counseling. As counseling has continued to grow, many of these countries have created counseling associations. In Botswana, their association provides a platform for counselors to discuss the needs across the country and their membership includes various stakeholders such as representatives from the university counseling program, the Ministry of Education, local psychologists and social workers, non-profits, and businesses interested in counseling (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). In Nigeria, the Counseling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) was established in 1976; they have a professional journal and they also promote professional development opportunities for their counselors (Okocha & Alika, 2012). In Belize, the forming of the Belize Association of School Counselors in 2009 and the Belize Association of Catholic School Counsellors, were the beginning steps to creating professional standards and evaluating the effectiveness of school counselors across the country (Smith-Augustine, 2012). In Haiti, they created a national initiative on mental health for the first time after the 2010 earthquake that devastated the country. Since then they created the Haitian Association of Psychology/ L’Association Haïtienne de Psychologie (AHPsy) in 2012 (Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012). AHPsy held a conference and are continuing to develop professional development workshops and trainings on mental health for their members across the island. Their organization consists of mental health professionals across the island and university representatives from schools in the U.S. and Europe (AHPsy, 2018; Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012). In Barbados, the Barbados Association of Guidance Counsellors (BAGC) was formed prior to 2003. The association was responsible for operationalizing the profession in Barbados (Maynard, 2014). The association began to help counselors fully identify as guidance counsellors and move away from the teacher
identity. BAGC advocates for the profession and provides training and education for its members (Maynard, 2014). Currently, the association organizes the annual Barbados Career Showcase which exposes secondary students to the world of work (Madden, 2019).

**Challenges and demands of school counseling.**

*Influence of external policies of larger countries.* Some of the challenges to the development of education in small states are due to the size of the country and their dependence on larger global economies and policies. Indeed, national needs may be put on hold for global needs dictated by countries that control funding opportunities (Crossley, 2008; Crossley & Sprague, 2012). Larger funding sources such as NGOs, World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and other organizations often have a global funding agenda related to education tying the funding they provide to these countries with policies about particular issues. An example of larger global conversations that influence policies for small states is the focus on increasing access to early childhood education. For example, in New Guinea, because of this focus, global policies proposed were related to increasing early childhood education, but lacked emphasis on the local national needs (Crossley, 2010). While citing King (2007), Crossley (2010) mentioned the need to do critical research and assessment to further develop local national policies and agenda in small states.

Crossley and Sprague (2012) emphasized that these islands do not operate in isolation especially with the increasing role of technology and posited that small states of the Commonwealth should collaborate due to similar positions on education. An example of the importance of the role of technology is the increase in distance learning programs at the tertiary level which leads to increases in access to tertiary education in small states (Crossley & Sprague,
2012). Some of the specific educational challenges in small states are not addressed because these countries are overlooked in the international education arena (Crossley, Bray, Packer, & Sprague, 2011). Such challenges include the use of Western dominated research and quantitative methods that may be irrelevant to small states. Indeed, Crossley, et al. (2009) posited

“The global economic crisis which commenced at the end of 2008 has hit at least some small states disproportionately hard, especially the states which rely heavily on banking and tourism. Trade liberalization has been a mixed blessing for many small states, and in some locations the issues of migration and brain drain have become even more prominent than they were before. Climate change also brings major challenges, especially for island states vulnerable to sea-level rise and intensified hurricanes” (Crossley, 2010; Crossley, et al., 2009, p. 3-4).

Since many ideas are imported, local concerns are not always acknowledged (Crossley, Bray, Packer, & Sprague, 2011; Crossley, 2008). One example of a local issue not being addressed is in St. Lucia, an island in the Caribbean region close to Barbados, is that funding was given to primary education, but they needed additional support for postsecondary education (Crossley, 2008).

**Stigma in counseling.** Counseling is not the first response to healing in many countries (Admundson, Niles, & Hohenshil, 2015; Coker & Majuta, 2015; Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012). Particularly in small states and African Diasporic countries, the stigma of counseling still exists (Reid & Dixon, 2001). In Botswana and Haiti, people typically utilize alternative healing practices such as speaking with family members or spiritual leaders (Amanze, 2002; Admundson, Niles, & Hohenshil, 2015; Coker & Majuta, 2015; Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, &
Caribbean people often keep family and personal business private, such that they do not discuss personal issues with strangers but utilize self-help and the extended family (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993; Mitchell & Bryan, 2007).

Counseling is not the first option for healing in many small states and African Diaspora countries because many cultures ascribe to spiritual or religious healing practices. Local healing practices and the stigma associated with receiving mental health services impact school counseling services (Myers, & Speight, 2010; Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012). Local practices may lead students and parents to not perceive school counseling as the first line of help, when compared to religious officials or pastoral care whose help is often sought first (Admundson, Niles, Hohenshil, 2015; Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). Help seeking behaviors are related to the local healing practices and who people feel comfortable asking for help. Another challenge that may add to the stigma is that Western practices and training often do not fully meet the needs of local people and may be culturally inappropriate (Admundson, Niles, Hohenshil, 2015; Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2017; Guth, Lorelle, Scott Hinkle & Remley, 2015; Wambu & Fisher, 2015).

The counseling field overall has a stigma attached to it because of the medical model. Those receiving counseling services are stereotypically assumed to have an illness. Viewing counseling from the medical model provides a barrier to the expansion of counseling services and prevents individuals from seeking services (Farina, Allen, & Saul, 1968; Lancet, 2009; Walmsley & McCormack, 2016). This stigma has caused a domino effect, particularly for marginalized groups to be further marginalized. Marginalized groups are more susceptible to the stigma associated with counseling because these groups have not historically sought services or they
lack the means to seek services (Knifton, Gervais, Newbigging, Mirza, Quinn, Wilson, & Hunkins-Hutchison, 2010; Magen & Chen, 1988). This stigma is especially the case for school counseling services because of the possibility of damaging self-image, and the social and psychological changes that can occur (Magen & Chen, 1988). Farina, Allen, and Saul (1968) support the notion that the stigma attached to counseling services can separate the individual from their natural support system, thus further complicating the matter and affecting the individual’s choice to seek help from a school counselor.

In islands like Trinidad and Tobago, according to Burke (1979), more developed counseling services and programs exist. In other parts of the Caribbean, counseling is limited, and this is due to the developing view of mental health services (Burke, 1979). The stigma in the counseling process is similar to the stigma associated with research on marginalized groups. Historically, Black people and other marginalized groups have been harmed in the name of research, a recent example being the Tuskegee study in the U.S. (Jones, 1981). African descendants were enslaved, mistreated and oppressed by the colonial leadership of the British rule in the past. Counseling, a Western concept, has historically been received with much resistance in Black and Brown communities due to their past oppressive interactions with Western cultures.

Given that counseling is a Western practice, racism is present throughout the counseling experiences and interactions of African Diasporic people and Western societies. Chakraborty (2008) posits that Caribbean patients in London, England (Western country) with psychosis have a different path than their white-British counterparts because of racism and a mismatch of labeling the severity of their issues. The institutional racism and mislabeling of patients add to
the stigma that may cause the Caribbean community not to seek counseling as a source of support. Another underlying matter is that Eurocentric approaches to counseling and diagnoses may not be culturally relevant or appropriate for those of Caribbean descent, thus adding to the stigma and further discouraging participation in mental health services (Chakraborty, 2008; Schreiber, Stern, & Wilson, 2000; Youssef, Bachew, Bodie, Leach, Morris, & Sherma, 2014). The culture The cultural difference in approaching personal issues calls for culturally specific practices to assist people across the African Diaspora (Bell, Williamson, & Chien, 2008).

In Botswana the stigma against counseling still exists (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). In Haiti, children with parents that have HIV/AIDS experience disparities due to discrimination and stigma (Legha & Solages, 2015). Similarly, in Botswana, a HIV/AIDS epidemic exists and there is still a stigma surrounding the disease in rural areas. Admundson, Niles, and Hohensil (2015) address the issue in rural and remote locations, suggesting that people in these areas are more inclined to seek faith based or indigenous sources of support. This practice creates an opportunity for counselors to collaborate with these faith healers.

In Bhutan, and similarly in Botswana, the stigma around counseling and mental health diagnoses stems from the traditional belief that mental health issues are a manifestation of witchcraft and evil spirits. The majority of their diagnoses are related to substance abuse, alcoholism, anxiety and depression (Guth, Lorelle, Hinkle & Remley, 2015; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). In Botswana, where people believe that mental health issues stem from evil deeds, mental health services are provided by families and traditional healers (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). Even if clients are receiving counseling services, they may also simultaneously seek help from traditional healers (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). In
Bhutan, an overwhelming majority of the country, about 99%, seek religious help for mental and physical health related issues (Guth, Lorelle, Hinkle & Remley, 2015). In Barbados, where counselors have received some but not extensive grief and loss training, there is still a stigma around counseling (Reid & Dixon, 2001). The majority of Barbadians identify as Christians and are more likely to include a Christian perspective on grief and loss as opposed to including other religious practices or seeking services (Reid & Dixon, 2001).

Dearth of counseling-related documentation and data across the Diaspora.

Documentation and research and evaluation of school counseling are necessary to better understand methods of implementing school counseling programs in Barbados and other Caribbean countries and how to advocate for transformation in Caribbean school counseling programs. However, limited data has been collected on school counseling practices in the Caribbean. With counseling still in the beginning stages of implementation, the field is not typically considered a hard science that requires explicit evaluation. Further, the field may not be as valued and therefore, may not be explored or documented in the same capacity as other issues in education like achievement and curriculum. Maynard (2014) indicates that in Barbados there has been a lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of the guidance and counseling program because no evaluation measures exist to document the work of counselors. As a result of this lack of documentation or evaluation, there is a gap in knowledge about the current school counseling practices and their effectiveness. Much of the local knowledge is lost and not empirically accounted for because of the absence of research and records (Maynard, 2014).

The limited data collection about counseling programs may be due to the lack of counselor representation at the ministry level and of trained individuals to perform data
collection and evaluation of practices. Certainly, in Barbados, the lack of documentation may also stem from a shortage of professionals in the field and limited formal training for counselors until more recently. The lack of documentation and dearth of information limits culturally responsive theories and practices for school counselors working with Caribbean youth (Morrison & Bryan, 2014). Documentation and data collected could be used to advocate for students and additional counselors given the need for counselors in Barbados (Okech & Kimemia, 2015; Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012; Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012; Zyromski & Mariani; 2016). In Jamaica, a lack of documentation and data on counseling exists as well. They believe that working to destigmatize mental health is one strategy to… which in turn may create opportunities to document information about counseling services (Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012). Palmer, et.al. (2012) also suggest the need for understanding the help seeking behaviors of Jamaicans, so that can inform how counselors engage with those that need help (Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012). The Department of Education in the United Kingdom (2015) suggests that in order to move forward with destigmatizing school counseling practices there needs to be open and honest conversations around mental health, as well as the normalization of counseling and psychological interventions which is supported in the recommendations for counseling in the Caribbean (Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012; Smith-Augustine, 2012). These sentiments are echoed in the Caribbean and other countries, like Bhutan and Haiti, which are in the process of incorporating counseling practices (Admundson, Niles, & Hohenshil, 2015; Guth, Lorelle, Scott Hinkle & Remley, 2015; Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012; Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012). Botswana reported a lack of documentation as well (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). Across African countries like
Botswana, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, the dearth of literature and documentation about counseling services is consistent (Okech & Kimenia, 2012; Okocha & Alika; 2012; Richards, Zivave, Govere, Mphande, & Dupwa, 2012; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusuman, 2010).

**Western training and cultural challenges**

Counseling is changing because of the effects of globalization (Admundson, Niles, Hohenshil, 2015; Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015; Smith-Augustine, 2012). Botswana, Jamaica, and Nigeria are developing school counseling programs and initiatives, and recognize counseling as a form of the healing process (Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017; Okocha & Alika, 2012; Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012; Stockton, Nitza, Ntinda, & Ncube, 2016). Many counselors in small states and African Diaspora countries are trained in Western countries, specifically in the U.S., Canada, England, or Australia (Admundson, Niles, & Hohenshil, 2015). These counselors tend to go to the Western countries for training and then practice in their home countries (Admundson, Niles, & Hohenshil, 2015).

In some counties, counselors were trained by the National Board of Certified Counselors-International (NBCC-I) while some of the counselors received their training in Australia (Guth, Lorelle, Hinkle & Remley, 2015). NBCC-I provided information to various countries on the ASCA model and the International Model for School Counseling Programs (Fezler & Brown, 2011). For example, countries like Bhutan and Jamaica have received certification through the National Board of Certified Counselors-International (NBCC-I), a U.S. based organization that promotes certification and training for counselors. This certification translates to a set of governing rules or regulations regarding culturally responsive counseling practices within the country (Guth, Lorelle, Scott Hinkle & Remley, 2015; Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012).
In Bhutan, one of their initial counselors contacted NBCC to begin implementing counseling in Bhutan (Guth, Lorelle, Scott Hinkle & Remley, 2015). Other associations such as the American Counseling Association, Chi Sigma Iota which is the American counseling honor society, and additional nonprofit organizations have done outreached and worked with different countries as well (Admundson, Niles, Hohenshil, 2015).

In most countries, school-based counselors received training in Western schools of thought or counseling theories (Lorelle, & Guth, 2013). Countries such as Bhutan, Botswana, Kenya, Jamaica, Malta and Nigeria, look to the United States and other Western countries for training and development of counseling, specifically school counseling (Admundson, Niles, & Hohenshil, 2015; Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016; Guth, Lorelle, Scott Hinkle & Remley, 2015; Okech & Kimemia, 2015; Okocha, & Alika, 2012; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010; Stockton, Nitza, Ntinda, & Ncube, 2016). For example, many counselors in Barbados were trained in the US, Canada, England or Australia. In Barbados, the first group of school counselors were trained by counselor educators at Western Carolina University in mental health in 1988 (J. Bryan, personal communication, May 24, 2019; Maynard, 2014). In most countries, the school-based counselors mostly received training in Western schools of thought or counseling theories (Lorelle, & Guth, 2013).

Many small states and African Diaspora countries look to Western countries for training because these countries have controlled much of the discussion on counseling, which has been in existence for over 100 years. Indeed, many countries that are considered “developing” and different from Western culture often find the need to compare themselves to the dominant culture to attain status or recognition for their work and/or growth. Western countries are often viewed
as more developed with greater access to resources and better training programs than small states and countries that have had to reckon with its history of colonialism. Counseling is a Western practice and no different. In which countries that are under-resourced and developing counseling programs reference the United States’ school counseling program approach in order to develop theirs. These countries borrow components of the ASCA model, and also the British, Canadian, French, and Australian school-based counseling models (Admundson, Niles, & Hohenshil, 2015; Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016). This comparison is problematic because the U.S. and other Western social, economic, and historical contexts are much different than the countries that are trying to implement western models of school counseling. Other cultural factors such as the population, religious practices, beliefs about seeking help, views of mental health, political climate, and historical context, present themselves and make it difficult to replicate the U.S. model or Western models of school counseling without local contexts and implications being considered.

Some small states and African Diaspora countries that are implementing school counseling are still in the process of developing counselor training programs at the tertiary level to train future counselors. In Nigeria, some universities have Guidance and Counseling programs to encourage people to enter the field of counseling (Okocha & Alika, 2012). In Botswana, the counselors have limited preservice training available for guidance counselors because the counseling program is delivered by teacher-counselors. The teacher-counselor takes on additional duties to fulfill the role of counselor (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). In many countries, the need for services has increased more rapidly than did the process for training people entering the field (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). None of the universities in
Belize have a training program for their counselors, but in the past, they partnered with the University of North Florida and offered a Master’s degree in Educational Leadership with an emphasis in Counseling. Currently, Belize is partnering with UWI and offering an online program, and residential courses for introductory child and adolescent counseling (Smith-Augustine, 2012).

In Barbados, one of their universities, UWI Cave Hill campus, offers a Master’s degree in School Counselling, which is structured for students to attend part-time (UWI, 2019). The program began in 2017 with a small cohort of three students. The program is a two-year program and includes courses on school counseling and professional knowledge, group counseling, career guidance, research methods, two semesters of practicum, and a research project (UWI, 2019).

**Other challenges.**

*Large student-counselor caseloads.* Large student-counselor ratio is a typical issue for counselors in the school setting. In many countries, school counselors refer to the ASCA National Model (2012) as a point of reference. ASCA suggests a counselor student ratio of 1:250. However, many countries cannot accomplish this recommended caseload. Nigeria has a caseload of about 1:1000 (Okocha & Alika, 2012). Nigeria’s rationale for allowing such caseloads is because of the comparison to the US, in which there is a recommended ratio of 1:250 but many schools do not have the resources for additional counselors (Okocha & Alika, 2012). In Belizean secondary schools, the counselor to student ratio ranges from 1:250 to 1:600 whereas at the primary school level, the ratio ranges from 1:1000 to 1:17,000, with schools unlikely to have daily access to a counselor (Smith-Augustine & Wagner, 2012). In Belize it was discussed that they have caseloads of 1:1600 (Smith-Augustine, & Wagner, 2012).
In Barbados, the average student enrollment is 924 with the majority of the schools having one counselor, except for the two schools with two official counselors and two schools with a counselor and a teacher acting in an unofficial counselor role (MOE, 2019). Malta’s state colleges have about 3000 students with one principal counselor and two trainee counselors (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2017). Currently, in their middle and high schools there is about one guidance teacher for every 200 students which depends on the school’s profile Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016; Sultana, 1998). In their private primary schools and churches, they recruit their own counselors (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016; Sultana, 1998).

Need for counselors at the primary school level. School based counseling exists solely in secondary schools in many of the selected countries. School counseling has not yet expanded to primary schools. The central foci of school counseling programs are usually career readiness, and career guidance but not necessarily on issues related to childhood. In countries like Botswana, Nigeria and Malta they expressed a need for additional counselors in primary schools as a preventive measure to take care of some of the presenting issues stemming from experiences in early childhood and primary school (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016; Okocha & Alika, 2012; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). Nigeria currently does not have any counselors in their primary schools (Okocha & Alika, 2012). One country, Belize, has a few counselors in the primary schools and their time is spent between several schools (Smith-Augustine, 2012). In Malta, guidance teachers belong to the secondary schools, but go into the primary schools although they are not stationed there (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016). They enter the primary schools in Malta to “utilize their helping skills as assigned by their
principal counsellor in each college” (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016). Smith-Augustine (2012) documented personal communication with Elliot and Sheppard and they state “Only two of the six districts (Belize and Cayo) have primary school counselors to serve their urban and rural regions. In 2007, the Methodist Diocese appointed two school counselors to assume responsibilities for the four Methodist primary schools in Belize City. Similarly, the Anglican Diocese appointed one counselor to serve their two primary schools in Belize City. Additionally, the Ministry of Education appointed one counselor to cover all 64 primary schools in the Cayo District. This equates to a school counselor-to-student ratio of approximately 1:1,000 (Elliot, M., personal communication, June 2, 2011) for Belize City and 1:17,000 for the Cayo District (Sheppard, A., personal communication, June 24, 2011)” In Kenya, the counselors are placed in high schools and some primary schools, and a challenge for them is that counselors have not received extensive training but rather a few professional development workshops (Wambu & Fisher, 2015).

This conceptual framework section provided an overview of the history and trends across the school counseling field in small states and the African Diaspora. The literature has demonstrated that there are some similarities in the impetus for school counseling and the current roles, practices and challenges of school counselors across small states and the African Diaspora. The conceptual literature allows for a deeper understanding of the small states and African Diaspora contexts and situates Barbados within the larger international discussion. The discussion on school counseling practices indicates that counseling has been implemented to tackle some of the larger societal issues and is reactionary in nature. Such issues that act as impetus for counseling have included the HIV epidemic, delinquent behaviors presenting in
schools and communities, and preparing students with career guidance for entering the work force. As counseling is implemented and becomes more acceptable, some of the trends include the development of local national counseling associations that work toward developing their own local school counseling standards. These professional associations have been influential in moving the field of counseling forward in the prospective countries and providing opportunities for training and policy development. Each of the countries have begun to develop or consider developing their own postsecondary programs to train counselors at the local universities or colleges, with examples of the implementation of certificate programs, and bachelor, master and doctoral degrees in counseling across countries. Often times, prior to the development of their own postsecondary programs, counselors are typically trained in Western countries. Much of the experiences in the small states and across the Diaspora relate to the trends presenting themselves in Barbados and can further add to the discussion and understanding of current practices and future directions of school counseling.

**Eleven Factors that Influence School Counseling Development**

Martin, Carey, and Lauterbach (2015) conducted a study that reviewed the research on international school-based counseling, which yielded over 50 articles published in English. Their article focused on the factors that influence the development of school-based counseling. The factors that emerged from the thematic analysis applied to the majority of the countries that were written about, which were Belize, Bhutan, Botswana, Ghana, Jamaica, Malta, Singapore, and Venezuela to name a few (Martin, Lauterbach, & Carey, 2015). The themes that emerged in the article were taken from the comprehensive analysis of the individual country’s manuscripts. Each theme is not representative of every manuscript but the themes were commonly found
amongst most of the manuscripts. This section focuses on the 11 factors that were identified, which are discussed at length below, in relation to how these factors apply to understanding school counseling program development internationally. These 11 factors were used to assist with understanding the codes and themes found in the data of the current study. These factors are presented, in addition to the literature on school-based counseling in the international context, to provide a more comprehensive or alternative understanding of school counseling in Barbados. Some aspects of the factors apply to the Barbadian context but others just provide an alternative lens of the broader conversation on what influences school counselors globally.

1) Cultural factors. This factor includes aspects of the country’s cultural influence on counseling services and how services are rendered. The cultural factors included the effective of counseling practices with examples being traditions, religion, values, and helping practices (Martin, Carey & Lauterbach, 2015). The culture shapes the lens of how the counselors can render services, including with whom, when, and why services are rendered. Culture impacts the student issues that counselors are dealing with. Martin, Carey & Lauterbach (2015) describe the codes associated with this theme as the cultural factors that influenced help seeking behaviors, beliefs, traditions, practices, helping practices, and religion and spirituality.

2) National needs. The national needs relate to the governmental support for school-based counseling and the impact on how school counseling is taken on. Some examples of the issues reflect national concerns in the workforce, marginalization, prospective career choice (Martin, Carey & Lauterbach, 2015). Depending on the current issues in the country this can determine the work that school counselors are expected to engage in. the direction of school counseling programs can change based on the focus on the nation.
3) **Larger societal movements.** The larger movements were related to the educational shifts or cultural shifts in the country. Shifts in the underpinnings of the society such as social or political account for societal movements as well (Martin, Carey & Lauterbach, 2015). Depending on the international issues being discussed, the allocation of funding will ultimately be determined. This theme is different than the previous themes because it speaks to philosophical shifts and political changes in the larger society (Admundson, Niles, & Hohenshil, 2015; Guth, Lorelle, Scott Hinkle, & Remley, 2015; Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). Often when a new government takes over power and leadership, they come with mindsets and ideologies that may impact how schools and children are viewed which influence the type of services. School reform is often the term used to describe the shift in ideology of schools and students.

4) **Models of school counseling.** The models used in the country may be borrowed from another country’s model. The country under review may have begun to establish their own model, and they may have counseling practices particular to their culture (Martin, Carey & Lauterbach, 2015). Many countries have borrowed from Western practices (Admundson, Niles, Hohenshil, 2015; Okech, & Kimemia, 2015; Stockton, Nitza, and Bhusumane, 2010). They often use components of the American model or the British model of school counseling (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016; Stockton, Nitza, Ntinda, & Ncube, 2016). The issue with adapting another culture’s practices is that the adaptation needs to be culturally appropriate. Some countries run into issues with this practice because of the incompatibility of the approaches used, which are not the first choice in healing practices (Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012; Seloilwe, & Thupayagale-Tshweneagae, 2007; Stockton, Nitza, Ntinda, & Ncube, 2016). This
theme relates the mention of the model being used or adapted, if there is a culturally appropriate model, and the standards and practices that the counselors abide by (Martin, Carey, & Lauterbach, 2015).

5) **Laws and educational policy.** This factor relates to the part of the government and policies that directly impact school counseling. The policies can come directly from the department or subdivision responsible for the school counseling programs. Maintaining the programs and practices, including the forms, materials, curriculum, procedures and protocols are all component of the law and education policy (Martin, Carey & Lauterbach, 2015). The government’s role in the development of school counseling programs is important because the policies dictate how counselors can operate and has implications for their practices. If there were suggested practices and the reason for wanting to implement a school-based counseling program, and the approval of training programs and preparation for counselors, all of which strongly impact the role of the counselor (Martin, Carey, & Lauterbach, 2015).

6) **Characteristics of the public education system.** The characteristics of the education system can impact counseling within schools. The characteristics can include aspects of the system that correspond to families, students, and other stakeholders in the students’ matriculation through the public-school system in the country. Some examples are tracking, relationship between parents and school staff, expected numbers of individuals in each role at the school, the control of the government in decision making (Martin, Carey & Lauterbach, 2015). The expectations of counselors and perspectives of teachers, administrators and families impact the counseling programs. The level of collaboration and expectation of partnering with families, or how much they expect school leaders to be involved in student’s personal life can affect the
counseling practices. While other stakeholders play a role, another aspect of public education is how they track students or help students prepare for entering the world of work, access to resources and the structure of the educational system are important components of this theme as well (Martin, Carey, & Lauterbach, 2015). These components impact the delivery of services (Martin, Carey, & Lauterbach, 2015).

7) **The counseling profession.** Counseling across the country can impact counseling within the schools. The availability of counseling training at each level, at the university and professional associations related to counseling can ultimately determine how school counseling develops within the country (Martin, Carey & Lauterbach, 2015). The larger movement of counseling in the country impacts the school-based counseling programs. This theme included which strategies the country had in place to sustain counseling, opportunities for training, specification of standards, including ethics, and professional associations. If the country has a professional association, what is the role of the association? The theme includes the exploration of connection between the association and actual practitioners, supervision, maintaining the professional identity and opportunities for continued education.

8) **Research and evaluation.** Research that has occurred or is currently happening can influence school counseling. This factor includes research and evaluation related to counseling practices, procedures, training, and role differentiation (Martin, Carey & Lauterbach, 2015). This theme included the mention of evaluations of counseling practices, counseling models, and training practices. The use of data was an issue for most countries, in which they indicate the need to include more evaluation of practices, training, and procedures (Martin, Carey, & Lauterbach, 2015). The need to collect and analyze more data on school-based counseling is
because of the immediate relationship to public policy. The evidence-based practices, procedures and training will essentially influence public policy. Having the quantified information readily available will allow those that write policy to directly see the impact of counseling practices and ways for them to expand and improve services.

9) **Related professions.** The helping professions have a variety of positions that are related to school counselors. The components of this factor include issues related to the outlook of the position, the perspective of the counseling profession, compared to the others, and how this program differs from other programs (Martin, Carey & Lauterbach, 2015). An example of a related profession would be the relationship between teachers and counselors that influence the work of the counselor. Sometimes the relationships are estranged or problematic and may cause some challenges for counselors. This theme included the delineation between counseling and other helping professions, and to what extent they differed or provided similar services. Though this theme mostly related to teachers, there were some boundary concerns with other helping professions (Martin, Carey, & Lauterbach, 2015).

10) **Community organizations or NGO coalitions.** Non-governmental organizations and community organizations influence school counseling. This relationship can be due to established partnerships between the agency or organization and the school counseling program. Other components include funding, advocacy, and reviewing the resources pertinent to the development of school counseling in the given country (Martin, Carey & Lauterbach, 2015). Some countries had established partnerships with NGOs or community organizations that conducted research, provided funding for training and development, and resources for best practices (Martin, Carey, & Lauterbach, 2015).
11) Local stakeholder perceptions. The views and perceptions of local stakeholders determine the development of the school counseling program. This factor pertains to their perspectives on the role of the counselor, and the function of the position. The views can vary depending on the stakeholder, their interaction with the counselor and of the program (Martin, Carey & Lauterbach, 2015). Included in the discussion of this theme is how the counselors perceived their work with students and families, as well as their interactions with other stakeholders. The perceptions of the stakeholders, students included, influenced the work of the counselor and an understanding of the priorities of receiving services. The stakeholders include teachers, administrators, parents and families, and community members. Factors that influence the work school counselors are engaged in stem from the contextual or ecological setting of Barbadian school counseling programs. Thus, there is a need to consider the ecological framing in understanding the work of Barbadian counselors. An ecological framework allows for an in-depth analytical tool of the interaction between the individual and the systems they are functioning in (Greenleaf & Williams, 2009; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; McMahon, 2014).

Ecological Model for School Counselors

Ecological models have been applied to different counseling specialties, including school counseling (ASCA, 2012; Greenleaf & Williams, 2009). This framework provides foundational information on how to conceptualize clients and their interactions with their environments. The ecological model suggests that the individual operates with different components of the ecological system, and these interactions influence their experiences (Brookmeyer, Fanti, & Henrich, 2006; Furman & Gruenewald, 2004; Greenleaf & Williams, 2009; Williams & Greenleaf, 2012). School counselors operate within a larger system and an ecological systems
framework helps to understand external factors that influence the counselors. An ecological model provides an understanding of the individual, schools and communities, and the socio-political context and how school counselors interact within these systems (Greenleaf & Williams, 2009). This framework also acknowledges the socio-historical context in which Barbadian school counselors are positioned.

A number of assumptions and core values of the concept inform this study. The assumptions are “schools are ecosystems,” “schools consist of interconnected subsystems and suprasystems,” “diversity… is necessary and adaptive,” “meaning is both constructed and experienced within schools,” “schools use feedback to identify and address emerging issues,” and “healthy schools are sustainable” (McMahon, Mason, Daluga-Guenther, & Ruiz, 2014). These assumptions emerge from the ecological approach to school counseling which is grounded in field theory (Lewin, 1951), Social Ecological Model of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and Capra’s (1996) deep ecology philosophy (McMahon, Mason, Daluga-Guenther, & Ruiz, 2014). McMahon, Mason, Daluga-Guenther, and Ruiz (2014) use a case to explore the ecological framework. The case focuses on a school counselor in America and works to understand the role of this school counselor as he works within the ecosystem, working with students, families, and the community. The structure can be used to conceptualize Barbadian school counselors as well because of the nature of their work with students, families, and the communities.

The current study should facilitate an understanding of the Barbadian school counselors’ roles and practices, which are subject to interactions with the environment, as indicated in the ecological approach to school counseling. Because of this natural engagement with different
components of the ecosystem, the social justice-advocacy framing, forges a connection with the ecological model. Barbados’ goals include providing equitable schooling for students; the researcher argues that school counselors serve a role in providing equitable schooling. Working towards equitable services implies that all students do not start with the same resources, and the country is working to ensure that all of the students’ needs are met (MOE, 2015). This study may help to inform how counselors are contributing toward MOE’s goal. The ecological framework ultimately calls counselors to social action (Greenleaf & Williams, 2009). Specifically, in Barbados, this study should increase understanding of social action in the counselors’ context.

Conclusion

The information presented in this chapter provides the conceptual framework for the study. Situating Barbados within the small states creates an opportunity to explore each factor that influences school counseling in similar contexts. It is possible that the roles, practices, challenges and demands of school counselors internationally may also influence what is happening in Barbados in school counseling. By understanding the broader context of school counseling practices, we may see that Barbados presents similar practices and challenges as other small states and African Diaspora countries. Yet, some of the experiences of the counselors are unique to the Barbadian context. The discussion of each factor, such as the larger economies’ influence on smaller states, and some of the local contextual issues, both from the political and sociocultural realms, help to explain the nature of the local practices and provide insight for future direction. Many countries that have or are now implementing school counseling tend to follow a similar trajectory, as demonstrated in this chapter, and this narrative is explored further as Barbadian counselors share the nuances of their daily experiences. The perceptions of
stakeholders, political climate, along with access to resources, and partnerships with NGOs or additional opportunities may all impact the role of the counselors. Some of the challenges that surface in Barbados may potentially be compared to countries with similar contexts and experiences, as a means to provide more effective practices and address the needs of the local community.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the methodology that guided the study and outlines the specific information regarding the process. The study featured current guidance counselors in public secondary schools in Barbados at four different schools. The guiding research questions are as follows: (1) How do school counselors in Barbados define and describe their roles, practices, challenges, and demands of their position? (2) What factors influence school counseling in Barbados?

The following sections outline and provide an explanation for the methodology employed. The justification for the methods used is described in detail, and the theory that guided the data collection and data analysis of the study. From the following section the reader will be informed of ecological and social justice advocacy as the research design, then I move into the data collection process, followed by the data analysis methods and data management. I then discuss researcher reflexivity and lastly provide information on how I worked to establish trustworthiness and credibility throughout the course of the study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role and practices of school counselors in Barbados, to identify the key components of school counseling in Barbados and to compare school counselors and school counseling programs in Barbados. A lack of documentation and limited research surrounding school counseling in Barbados prevent school counselors and counselor educators from truly learning about the role of the school counselor and using their services to assist students, families, and the communities they exist in. The study is considered an exploratory study, a study used to determine what is taking place in Barbados. The study
should provide valuable information to Barbadian school counselors and counselor educators, to principals and major Barbadian stakeholders and should help aid in the development of a model specific to Barbados. It also may provide a foundation from which to conduct further research on school counseling in Barbados and the other Caribbean islands. The purpose is to get a clear understanding of similarities and differences of actual practices in Barbados and the services school counselors currently provide for students and families on the island. The study will consider what the school counseling field can grow into; what it is they are doing; offer an opportunity for self-assessment, identify growth opportunities; at the college level, training and support.

**Research Design**

The research approach is defined as an ethnography of school counselors in Barbados. The study is considered ethnographic because the researcher lived and worked in the environment to gain an insider perspective of the culture of school counseling practices. The counselors’ beliefs of what guides the practices are at the core of the study and culture is embedded throughout the study (Galman, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study is descriptive in nature and the goal is to gain an understanding of what roles and practices are occurring across the country, with implications for policy and career growth and development for school counselors in this region. I identify the study as ethnographic because of my focus on the four locations, representative of the comparative school counseling work that happens across the island. Due to time constraints and the financial cost of collecting data, the study takes on a mini-ethnography model, with constraints due to time and space in the form of case studies (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017; Fusch, 2013). An ethnography can take years to complete, but a mini-
ethnography can last weeks, months, or up to a year (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017; Fusch, 2013). This study occurred over the course of 8.5 months, in which the researcher navigated the Barbados school counseling phenomena as an observer-participant in the role of a counseling intern. The study was inductive in nature, so information will provide insight into practices and policies regarding counseling within the Barbadian schools. The study provides insight to the informants’ perspectives and make meaning of what their attitudes are of their roles and practices in school counseling (Creswell, 2014). Knowledge was gained through the interviews but also through researcher field notes, and observations by interacting with the school counselors at their individual sites. The epistemology of the study is based on the researcher's social constructivist beliefs which influence the understanding of how the study is situated within a social setting (Creswell, 2014), in which the researcher recognizes that the interactions between the informants and with the researcher are meaningful in understanding the role of the counselor and also the interactions of the informants with other individuals and their environment (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study will provide qualitative descriptions and some explanation for the current practices. The descriptions were of the counselors’ attitudes of their roles and practices within the larger ecological system.

Counselors impact the individual students, families and communities they provide services for. The ecological frame helps us to understand their various roles and the need for school-based counseling. The social justice and ecological framework of school counseling will guide the analysis and conceptualization of the data, and the overall methodology of the study. The social justice and ecological framework of understanding school counseling will guide the analysis and conceptualization of the data, and the overall methodology of the study. The model
acknowledges the need for counselors to work with and on the behalf of the individuals they provide services for, to understand the sociocultural impact on student wellness (Greenleaf & Williams, 2009). The ecological frame allows the counselor and researcher to understand the student within the environment, and a paradigm for understanding their problems (Greenleaf & Williams, 2009; Williams & Greenleaf, 2012). The ecological frame was combined with social justice and advocacy to frame questions, and analysis, and researcher positionality. This frame allows the researcher to understand how social injustices impact students’ needs and how the counselor can work to alleviate such injustice within their role (Williams & Greenleaf, 2012).

The researcher obtained approval from the Barbados MOE for a counseling internship at one of the secondary schools. She completed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process at her institution, and any review through the participating schools and the MOE. Informants were asked to complete informed consent forms.

**Cases**

The informants are current guidance counsellors in the public secondary schools in Barbados. There were five informants that worked at four different schools. The counselors were all gendered female for the sake of preserving confidence. Their pseudonyms are Chele, Nik, Sebrina, Sham, and Syl. The school sites ranged in urbanicity, ranging from both rural and urban settings. Urbanicity was determined by the Urban Development Commission (personal communication, April, 2019) which stated that urban areas are around Speightstown, St. Peters, and Bridgetown, St. Michael. All other settings outside of these two urban areas are considered rural. The schools ranged in size and academic performance, from lower percentile to the upper
percentile of academic performance. The schools were either newer or older secondary schools. The pseudonyms for the schools are District Secondary, Bronx Secondary, London Secondary, and Maryland Secondary. Their student populations ranged in sizes from under 1,000 to over 1,000. The counselors’ experiences range in years in the field and degree options, but all the informants have master’s degrees. Two of the informants consistently have graduate level interns.

**Role of the Researcher**

In conducting qualitative research, I situated myself as an instrument and as an analytic tool. The format of the interviews was semi-structured to allow for some control regarding the scope of the study, and an idea of what information I wanted to access regarding the school counselor role. As an outsider, I planned and developed rapport with the counselors and visited their schools, prior to visiting the schools and during my visit. Prior to visiting the schools, I attended various meetings and programs with my internship supervisor and was introduced to counselors. During this time, I informally introduced them to my study. I also attended the official BAGC meeting, in which the majority of the current guidance counsellors were present, and formally presented the information on my study and answered questions from the counselors. When I visited the schools, I prepared classroom guidance lessons about a topic that school counselors needed help facilitating, an example being post-secondary preparation and other topics they generate. I did not want to hypothesize their needs, and I understood that the need for assistance with addressing a specific subject may transcend across this particular age group in this country, or a microscale, being a need within the school. My school counseling background was helpful in this role because I have worked with high school students before, and
students from this region that have migrated to the U.S. My familiarity with the Barbadian population allowed me to purposefully give myself the space to understand the needs of school counselors at their specific site and I worked with them to address the issue. The OECS (2009) has already outlined issues impacting students in this region so I gathered specific information from the counselor, administrators, and students, to understand the counseling programmatic needs and see how I can best work with the counselor to provide support services in the school and the community.

Observations and researcher field notes are important components of the role of the qualitative researcher. My observations at the schools led to additional questions and I had the option of checking with the informants if I have questions. My goal was to become a part of the “school counseling team” within the schools and to work alongside the school counselor, as opposed to an “expert” role, more of a colleague and additional counseling support. I achieved this by interning at one of the schools for a semester and becoming a part of the school community. I assisted the school counselor and observed her interactions with the students, families, administration, and the community while fostering my own relationship with the individuals I provided services for, including students, family, and community partners. The secondary schools in Barbados each have one school counselor except for two schools that each have two counselors. My goal was to assist the counselors with their tasks, taking on a participant observer role, and observe while also supporting the counselors in the schools I conducted the research in. In the school settings, there are numerous interactions between the school counselor and other individuals, including students, staff, teachers, principals, parents, and people from the community. I sought to gain more information from them, as well as the
school counselor, in terms of what these interactions mean for their role and practice within the school. These interactions were included in the observations and provide information about the cultural aspects of the counseling process that I cannot access from other points of reference. The interactions and counselor and stakeholders’ perspectives when provided were documented in my observations. Culture is critical to the ways in which school counselors practice on the island. I sensed some skepticism in having an “outsider” come in to conduct research in the schools. The history of officials and “outsiders” coming to the island to conduct research and to abuse power contributes to distrust of outside researchers by Barbadian officials and people.

**Researcher Bias**

I identify as African American, born and raised in the Bronx, New York. I am originally from a working and middle-class area of the northern Bronx. I attended New York City Public Schools for kindergarten through 12th grade. My daycare and pre-kindergarten school used an Afrocentric pedagogy to facilitate early childhood learning experiences. My personal educational experiences have contributed to my positive views of school and the role of the counselor which may present a favorable bias toward the counselors. The area I grew up in was comprised of predominantly West Indian families, both United States’ citizens and recent immigrant families. I attended a competitive high school in El Barrio, the Spanish Harlem section of New York City. I was typically in the higher performing classes throughout my schooling, with access to summer enrichment programs that targeted improving standardized testing ability, mathematics, science and English, and study abroad.

In my professional career, I worked as a school counselor and counseling intern in K-12 District of Columbia Public Schools and a public charter school. The schools were in various
neighborhoods throughout the District, including very low socioeconomic areas with majority African American families and another neighborhood with more diverse (i.e., by race, SES, LGBTQ community, parent education levels), affluent families. These experiences have contributed to my knowledge base and desire to expand services for marginalized populations. Specifically, I would like to work to make sure communities with large populations of people of color are given equitable services, so they are able to compete in the global economy and able to contribute to society. I intend to advocate for the role of school counselors in assisting students in these communities, both domestically and abroad. Regarding groups that experience social injustices, I would like to ultimately become an advocate and ally, standing beside them as they articulate their needs and eventually get the equitable support they deserve. The questions asked during the interviews and my observations were impacted because of my experiences with marginalized groups and wanting to understand how these groups were serviced in Barbados’ education system.

My family has been a huge contributing factor to the individual that I am, and they are the source of my supportive network. My family operates from a collectivist perspective, with roots in Pensacola, Florida, and Barbados, West Indies. The phrase “it takes a village to raise a child” reigns true in my upbringing, in which my immediate family was extremely involved in providing me with opportunities and nurturing the importance of education and caring for others. I grew up in a household, in which the television was constantly on the news channel, and racial matters in the U.S. context, as well as systemic issues in the country, were openly discussed.

My experiences as an African American woman help me to navigate the world with a clear understanding of how my race and gender play an active role in how I perceive the world
and how I am perceived by the world. My race and gender are the most-salient components of my identity. As a researcher, I presume that individuals will first perceive me as African American, and not necessarily someone with Caribbean or Southern American heritage. In the Caribbean, I was referred to as a “Yankee,” or having “Bajan roots,” and ultimately, an outsider because of my mannerisms and my sociocultural experiences growing up in New York City in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Regarding my Caribbean heritage, my family from the West Indies has shared countless stories about their experiences growing up in Barbados. Due to my ties to the West Indies, I felt it necessary to explore the various ways in which school counseling is developing in other countries. When speaking with my family regarding services that were provided, they mentioned the transformation that the school system in Barbados has undergone, as well as in other countries such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. I am interested in this population, specifically Barbados and the English-Speaking Caribbean, and I will use myself as the instrument in data collection for the research. After several conversations with Dr. Julia Bryan (J. Bryan, personal communication, Spring 2015), I understand that some of the islands in the Caribbean that are developing strategic counseling services for students. I want to tend to the needs of the counselors and truly gain an understanding of the work the counselors are doing because this experience has not been thoroughly researched by counseling scholars and I believe in the tools that counselors use to assist clients. I also believe that it is necessary for scholars to take a supportive approach to working with Caribbean people because of their unique experience with colonialism. I did not intend to be the expert, but rather a student learning from the counselors about what is best for them. As a researcher, I continuously worked to navigate how
my upbringing and American experience ultimately determine how I view Barbadian school counselors and challenge myself and my perspective. When introduced to people in Barbados they immediately asked about my ties to the island, and they responded positively and welcomed me in the different settings. Once I mentioned that my grandmother was born and raised in St. Michael, Barbados, the people smiled and often said “welcome home” or responded to me understanding Bajan dialect.

Some student services are provided by members of the community, but not specifically counseling, rather such as career development opportunities and tutoring. Because of my strong belief in partnerships I looked closely at how counselors utilized partnerships to facilitate their role. I strongly believe in the formation of partnerships between schools and communities to foster better outcomes for students and provide extensive resources for them despite socioeconomic status and other barriers that affect student outcomes. I saw the counselors as partners in my research and understood how this study could be used to really capture their work from their lens, just retold and shaped within a broader context. I understood the need to work with the counselors and to forge bonds and relationships with the stakeholders involved in the education of youth in the Caribbean.

I have biases that I am consciously unaware of that may have contributed to the collection of data. My understanding of the Barbadian culture from my personal lens, as an extended member of the culture, may be biased in my approach to collecting data. Because of my counseling background, I may have exhibited an overly positive or negative perception of an issue. For example, I viewed inequity in schools as a major issue and one that counselors should be at the forefront of challenging. This bias can also be attributed to being raised in a Western
society with a more Westernized viewpoint of counseling and expected services because of my experience as a student and faculty in K-12 education in the United States public school system. My experiences in U.S. post-secondary institutions also have contributed to my perspectives; especially as I attended two predominately white institutions (PWI’s) as well as a historically black institution (HBCU) in the U.S. My experiences with matriculating through the U.S. education system as an African American woman have contributed to my research interests and social justice and advocacy perspective.

I value school counseling and the counseling field, in general, and the push for social justice and advocacy in U.S. school counseling to be the main component in the work that counselors provide. This focus caused me to examine the inequity in schools, how resources were allocated, which groups were being served adequately, and see this study as a tool in advocating for Barbadian counselors. Initially, in the 1990s the conversation centered around multiculturalism and has since moved in the direction of social justice and advocacy. Social justice is considered the fifth force in counseling (Ratts, 2009; Ratts, D’Andrea, & Arredondo, 2004), whereas multiculturalism is the fourth (Pedersen, 1991). This shift is imperative because not only do counselors consider the cultural background of clients, counselors are now expected to also advocate with and on the behalf of their clients. Counselors are equipped with the skill set to take action, whether at the individual (micro), or systemic (macro) level. The new competencies combine the previous Multicultural Counseling Competencies (MCC) and the American Counseling Association Advocacy Competency Domains (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2002) to form the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) which include awareness, knowledge, skills, action, and understanding the privilege and
marginalized identities of both the counselor and client (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015). The American School Counseling Association National Model suggests that social justice and advocacy are a major part of the role of the school counselor and should be included in their comprehensive programs (ASCA, 2012). Other factors may influence the work that school counselors are engaged in and these may stem from the contextual ecological setting of Barbadian school counseling programs. The shift from social justice to ecological framing in understanding the work of counselors allows for an in-depth analytical tool of the interaction between the individual and the systems they are functioning in (Greenleaf & Williams, 2009).

My values which are shaped by my experiences play a role in conceptualizing, conducting, and interpreting the research and information. To ensure that the research is rigorous and valid I chose to explain my beliefs and values (Morrow, 2007). I believe that school counseling services are necessary for any culture because of the implications for positive student outcomes. This perspective may differ from the natives’ values of what services and student support systems should be available. Another value of mine is that all people should be given equitable services regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender or any other means of oppression. When I see problems pertaining to power, privilege and oppression, I want nothing more than to advocate for the individuals who lack services and resources. This may not be a shared value for the policies and educational system in the Caribbean, with such disparities present, limiting or preventing access to resources. Additionally, this is not a universal value because of the stigma attached to counseling in W. I. and the pressing matters that may be at the forefront of their concerns.
Participants

The informants were selected from the current population of school counselors in Barbados secondary schools. The country has 23 school counselors across the island. Until recently, school counselors were only in the secondary schools in Barbados, but Barbados just introduced a primary school counselor in one school (Maynard, 2014). Twenty-one of the secondary schools are co-educational, also, there are two single-sexed schools, one school for girls, and one school for boys (MOE, 2016). Two schools have two school counselors (Maynard, 2014). At three additional schools, there is a second individual unofficially acting in the role of a counselor (P. Warner, personal communication, October 21, 2017).

The researcher used a convenience sample and chose school counselors based on the schools that she was able to gain access to. The participants were five guidance counselors at four schools and I initially recruited three additional schools (3-4 additional school counselors) to account for low response/participation rate. The number of schools selected were determined by which school counselors that were willing to participate, even though I was able to foster working relationships with many of counselors, their willingness to participate ultimately determined which school sites were selected. The counselors that declined had personal health issues or intense issues at their schools and unable to take an additional person in their professional space.

Participant Recruitment

The main researcher, along with written support from her doctoral advisor (co-investigator), applied for an internship through the Barbados MOE. She was granted approval to intern at one of the secondary schools in Barbados, with intentions of asking for permission to
eventually collect data. After completing the semester long internship, the researcher applied for permission to conduct the study and was granted approval from the Chief Education Officer (Appendix A). During the internship opportunity, the researcher met with school counselors in their offices to discuss the potential plans for the study and to scout which cases would be ideal for capturing the nuanced experiences of school counselors in Barbados. The researcher was also able to answer any questions about the study and see if counselors would be interested in participating. During the fall semester, the researcher attended the BAGC annual meeting, in which 14 guidance counselors attended, and she was able to provide information to the counselors about the study. Once the researcher was granted access to conduct the study, she sent the official recruitment letter (Appendix C) to the individual sites to the counselors and their school principals. The researcher included the letter of approval from the Chief Education Officer (Appendix A), and the official informed consent (Appendix D). The researcher met with the counselors and principals to discuss the purpose of the study before the counselors signed the informed consent. These meetings allowed principals to become familiar with the researcher walking on their school grounds and interacting with the students and staff, just as a counseling intern would interact with staff and students. It is protocol for guidance counselors to report directly to their principals (MOE, 1987).

**Participant criteria**

The inclusion criterion included current school counselors in Barbados public secondary schools. Their official title is guidance counsellor, and people with this position are listed as substantive employees or acting in the role. Someone acting in the role of guidance counselor typically has a substantive position as a teacher or another position within the schools. They act
in the position until they are referred for the substantive job posting of a guidance counselor. The exclusion criteria consisted of: (1) all Barbadian school counseling interns, (2) Barbadian students, (3) Barbadian administrators and other individuals who do not meet the inclusion criteria.

**Interviews**

Qualitative interviews are a signature component in ethnographies and case studies (Spradley, 1979). The format of the interviews were multiple interviews over the course of time with the same five interviewees. The interviews ranged from 20 minutes to one hour and 30 minutes in length. The interviews were semi structured with a typed prompt that the primary researcher referred to throughout the interviews. The informants were given the subjects of the interviews prior to the meeting but not the specific interview questions. The interviews focused on three main areas including Roles & Practices, Challenges & Demands, and Policies that Impact Roles.

The interview questions are descriptive types of questions and are listed in Appendix E. The researcher used grand tour questions, questions through details, and experience questions to gain an understanding of how the counselors made meaning of their positions. The grand tour questions were used to explore a typical day or typical experience for the counselors, such as

“Describe a typical day for you at your school; Tell me about your role in the school; Tell me about your role with the community.”

Grand tour questions provide insight into space, time, and events familiar to the informant (Spradley, 1979). Probing questions were used to create a space for informants to share in their
ordinary terms and for the researcher to get a cultural meaning and understanding (Spradley, 1979). Probing questions typically began with “what” or “how,” such as

- How would your experiences as a counselor be different if you were at another school;
- How is school counseling in Barbados changing?
- Is school counseling changing to suit the local needs?
- What racial and ethnic challenges exist in Barbados?
- How does this impact school counseling and your work?

Experience questions were used to understand the atypical experiences, and may be difficult to answer such as,

- “What are your assigned roles, and other responsibilities;
- What are the main responsibilities of your position;
- Can you describe your experiences as a guidance counselor?”

The example questions were used to get more details and descriptive information by way of unique stories, such as “What are the challenges/issues in your school (e.g., system/government, student related, curriculum, family engagement)?

**Observations**

The researcher conducted daily observations at the individual schools and these observations are considered persistent observations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Persistent observations consisted of consecutive observations at each school site at varying times throughout the data collection phase. Persistent observations were used to provide depth in the data and see the informants in different settings, at various times, and engaging in different interactions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The observations were focused and supported by interview
collection, to enhance the study and deepen the understanding of the informants' experiences (Werner and Schoepfle, 1987, as cited in Angrosino & dePerez, 2000).

During the time of data collection, the researcher acted as a participant observer and worked alongside the school counselors, as a counseling intern. The researcher paid close attention to the physical space, drew pictures and took photos of the informants' counseling offices and the different school grounds. The setting over time was documented, and where people were positioned, along with activities and points of interest (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). In this role, the researcher worked with students and families. She was introduced to the administrators and other teachers at the schools. The researcher was able to attend parent conferences, participate in counseling sessions, and participate in the classroom guidance lessons at each of the schools. In some instances, the researcher co-taught or facilitated the classroom guidance lessons, using the HFLE curriculum. In some classes the researcher sat with students and assisted them with the activities and posed questions related to the lesson.

The researcher took copious field notes on how the counselor engaged with the students, the lesson being presented, some of the reactions from the students, the number of students present, and if administrators or teachers entered the class. The students and staff became familiar with the researcher. Staff would bring students in to the counseling suite and felt comfortable leaving the student with the researcher or talking openly about incidents that arose throughout the day. They understood that the researcher would operate just as the counselor with a deep concern for confidentiality and refraining from sharing information with a third party unless legally warranted. During the observations the researcher took field notes and memos throughout the day and after the observation. Some of the counselors had master’s level
counseling interns from UWI Cave Hill, and the interns were in the Counseling Psychology or Social Work programs at the university. Each counselor utilized their intern in various ways, but their presence was unique to each case. By having an intern on multiple days, this was the counselor’s way of addressing the need for additional support in their counseling program. The researcher used a small notebook to write down observations, and included the location, number of the counselor she shadowed, time of the actions, and information pertinent to describing the incidents and events that occurred throughout the day that the counselor was involved in. She also used memos to ask questions and seek clarity in the meaning of what she observed.

**Data Analysis**

The data were descriptive in nature and an interpretation of current school counseling roles and practices, challenges and demands in the Barbadian context. A combined general thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2009) was used to gain insight on the school counseling culture within the community; and relational aspects of the school counselor role. The cases provided in-depth descriptions of current roles and practices (Creswell, 2016). Stake (1995) mentions “There is no particular moment when data analysis begins. Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations. The analysis essentially means taking something apart. We take our impressions, our observations, apart” (p. 71). The interpretation of the data consisted of the description of the experience of the school counselors as they experience the phenomena of counseling within Barbados.

The goal was to understand a nuanced experience of Barbadian school counseling, including patterns and differences. Said (2003) describes this practice as making the strange familiar and making the familiar strange. The analysis occurred during the transcription process
as well when transcribing the interviews and researcher field notes. The researcher coded the data looking for patterns. The researcher identified general themes, in an inductive process. There was a continuous analysis which aims to make the strange familiar and make the familiar strange, an analysis that will render patterns. Because there were multiple cases, there were some comparison to make meaning of the phenomena (Stake, 1995).

**Transcription and Coding**

Interviews were recorded on both the computer and a portable voice recorder. Audio files were then transcribed verbatim onto Microsoft Office Word through a secured transcription service. The researcher then replayed the recordings to compare to the completed transcripts to verify the accuracy of the transcription. Transcripts were edited to remove all identifying information. Informants were given pseudonyms, and schools were given pseudonyms as well. The schools were addressed and referenced to by the region they are located in. to continue the data analysis process the researcher used the six phases of thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which included staying close to the data by doing the following: (1) taking time to know the data well, (2) identifying codes, (3) finding themes, (4) reviewing the themes, (5) labeling the themes and (6) creating the report. Below, the process of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phases of thematic analysis are described.

**Phase 1: Taking time to know the data well**

First, an online transcription service professionally transcribed the interviews, as mentioned above. Due to the accents of the informants, the researcher had to edit each transcript and add words or correct the words in the original transcripts. During this process, the researcher read and listened to the transcripts in full and took notes while listening to the recordings, staying
close to the data and learning the data. The researcher wrote down feelings, emotions, and codes that came up during the initial review. After the transcripts were edited, the process then moved to reading through the transcripts in full again and writing down the codes that emerged. The codes were then grouped together into different themes or categories. The transcripts were then entered into the data management software. NVivo was used for data management, including the further development of creating additional codes, categories, and themes. The primary investigator, along with another member of the research team read through the interviews and coded the data by hand, using highlighters to color code quotes of interest. The two researchers read through the same interviews to compare initial codes. In some instances, the researchers read different interviews and spoke about the codes afterwards, and compared to previous interviews that were already coded. The codes were then transcribed to post-it notes and categorized by repeating ideas and similar ideas. As the researchers read coded more interviews, the new codes were added to the themes that were beginning to form.

**Phase 2: Identifying codes**

The first line of coding included descriptor and taxonomic coding. This process for creating codes was used because they directly allow for themes to be created, in preparation for a thematic analysis (Saldana, 2009). The taxonomic or domain coding are particularly used in ethnographic studies that relate to cross cultural research, and within or across cases displays (Saldana, 2009). Open coding was used to identify the themes found throughout the transcripts. I used codes that emerged from the data which was helpful in creating categories and themes. Ultimately, the codes will align with the 11 factors identified by Martin, Lauterbach, and Carey (2015). A codebook was crafted to ensure continuity, consistency, and coherence in interpreting
the data (Creswell, 2014). Tesch (1990) outlines eight steps in the coding process. The initial codebook included 48 themes, the codes, and quotes that matched, as they were discussed in the three different foci interviews (Roles, Challenges, and Policies). Other themes emerged that did not fit with the three topics of the interviews, but was mentioned in the interviews and presented areas where the data diverged and could be important points of interest for the researcher. Other subjects came up, but were unrelated to the larger themes; however, they were topics worth noting in the discussion. Some of these subjects were race, history, location of the office, and a call to the profession.

**Phase 3: Finding themes**

I referred to the researcher field notes, memos and jot down notes on the sides of the transcripts to gain a sense of the whole study. I reviewed several transcripts and then clustered the information into different themes. New themes emerged, and some themes collapsed into one theme. I continually found descriptive information that can provide a more in-depth understanding of the role of the counselor, as well as clarity on the subject. I continued to speak with the research team and discuss the definitions of the themes, and subthemes were identified. The subthemes were combinations of codes that collapsed or created new subthemes.

**Phase 4: Reviewing the themes**

I used a thematic map and charts to portray the themes that emerged during the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The visual helps tell the overarching story of the data in Figure 1 (Initial Themes and Sub-Themes). By reviewing the themes, the researcher saw what emerged and what was not clarified from the data. The thematic map indicated how the themes and subthemes overlapped to answer the overarching research questions. This version of the thematic map is the
initial version. I then recoded the data to compare and find more concise themes identified in the data. The current themes collapsed into more specific groups and gave a clearer conceptualization of the data (see Figure 1 in Chapter 4).

**Phase 5: Labeling the themes**

Deciding on the final themes and their subthemes allowed for the full story of the data to be revealed. This phase truly honors clarifying the themes and subthemes. Finding the essence of the theme is important, not just rephrasing the themes. There needs to be consistence within the themes and coherence (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Referring back to the thematic map to make sure the themes and subthemes are fine tuned. If more work is necessary, the themes may need to be analyzed some more. The additional analysis would be rooted in the literature and how the roles, practices, challenges and demands are discussed in other articles. A constant comparison to the data will need to be included. The phase should promote working titles of the themes and subthemes and should be clear to the reader.

**Phase 6: Creating the report**

To produce the report, the themes had to be clear and thoroughly explained and supported by the data. The themes related back to the research questions. The goal of this phase is to tell the full, detailed story of the data, in a logical and coherent way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Quotes were included that capture the essence of the themes and does not complicate the data and the story. The data was descriptive and analytic, providing an argument that answers the overarching research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest asking the following questions toward the end of the process:

"(1) what does this theme mean?"
(2) what are the assumptions underpinning it?
(3) what are the implications of this theme?
(4) what conditions are likely to have given rise to it?
(5) what is the overall story the different themes reveal about the topic?"

These questions help to interpret and apply the findings of the study. By understanding the themes and the full story of the data, the researchers can share realistic implications of the study and potential research directions.

**Trustworthiness**

In this study, there are several ways I worked to address issues regarding the internal validity of the study. There may be some issues pertaining to selection, with informants not being selected at random. The sampling technique used to choose guidance counselors is considered a snowballing purposive sample. However, each counselor's experience varies and provides a variety of perspectives, in hopes of limiting researcher bias regarding themes and findings. The Hawthorne effect may be at play as well, with school counselors providing desirable answers because they were chosen, and not wanting to negatively impact their careers, schools, and/or communities (Payne & Payne, 2004). Other concerns may be related to triangulation, the role of the researcher, and collection of data such as researcher field notes, reflection, and coding (Creswell, 2014; Stake, 1995). Some set criterion was used to improve the validity of the study (Creswell, 2014). I establish the bias that I bring to conducting and interpreting the study which is clearly outlined in the Position of the Researcher section. I spent a semester working in the counseling office at one of the secondary schools in Barbados so that I can have a clear understanding of the role of the counselor. I also met with different parties
including the Senior Education Officer at the MOE and listened to perspectives of teachers, students, administrators, and community stakeholders about their view of the guidance counselors’ work in the schools. Creswell (2014) suggests prolonged time in the given setting will assist with having a more defined and comprehensive understanding of the narratives of the informants. The information gained allowed me to authentically retell the story of informants from their point of view and lessen my subjectivity.

**Peer debriefing.** Peer debriefing is another strategy that helped me navigate the process of analyzing the data (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Working with a peer debriefer increases validity because as the researcher I gained an understanding outside of my limited perspective. Frequent conversations with my doctoral advisor who is a Barbadian native, who worked as a school counselor in Barbados, and has a strong school counselor identity, assisted me in understanding the data in more depth. We had frequent conversations at every stage of the research including data collection and data analysis. I also had conversations with a local Barbadian professional in the human resources field, who was able to read and comment on my field notes, provide feedback and make sense of the data.

**External validity.** Some threats to external validity include the *generalizability* of the study. The sample used for the school counselors may not be unrepresentative of the school counseling practices in Barbados. The study may not be generalizable to other countries in the region, due to population size differences, and local challenges, and systems, unlike Barbados. Overall, the countries in the region have similar histories, with colonization, and receiving independence during the same time frame, and are still in the early stages of implementing counseling within the schools. In qualitative research, *generalizability* is not often the purpose of
Completing quality research is important, and in this case, as supported by Creswell (2014) and Yin (2009), case studies can be generalized to a larger group, meaning old cases can be applicable to the experiences of the new accounts (Creswell, 2014). Other threats to external validity are artificiality if given examples, the school counselors cannot identify with the examples and their responses may be influenced by the hypothetical scenarios given by the researcher. To limit the error, purposive convenience sampling was used, alongside thick descriptions to account for transferability (Creswell, 2014). Transferability is Creswell (2014) suggests “rich, thick descriptions” and I included multiple perspectives to get a more in-depth understanding of the foci in the study.

**Triangulation**

By triangulating the data, this process helps to establish credibility in the data and trustworthiness (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1989). The use of different types of data limits researcher bias and allows for more in-depth information. This study utilized triangulation of sources, four different school settings and five counselors with varying expertise, age range, degrees, and school climate/culture, observations, interviews and document analysis to triangulate the data. The researcher looked at where the data diverge because this process is important in strengthening the understanding of the data (Denzin, 1978; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1999). The data is gendered in a particular way because four of the counselors are females and one counselor is male. All of the counselors were given feminine pseudonyms to protect the identity of the male counselor due to the fact that there are only two male counselors in the schools. Analysts triangulation was included, because a research team analyzed the data and compared their codes for the same data source (Denzin, 1978; Lincoln & Guba, 1985;
Patton, 1999). The research team comprised of other doctoral level school counseling professionals, a current school counselor and a current school counselor educator. Both individuals were born and raised in Barbados and have experience with school counseling and the Barbadian education system. This familiarity allowed them to assist with asking questions about the data, coding, and finding the themes that emerged from the data.

**Member checking.**

Once the themes were established, the researcher shared the information with the informants in person, although one informant was unavailable. They were able to clarify interpretations and include additional information that the researcher may have missed. This exchange was audio recorded and reviewed after the meetings and included in the interpretations of Chapter 4. This process is utilized for validity and making sure their meanings align with the themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Cho and Trent (2006) argue that the member check can be used to promote change and action, and also to see if the analysis captured the informants’ perspective accurately. In this case, the member check allowed for the discussion on recommendations and next steps for counselors to advocate for their role, using this study to support their views, and exposing the nuances of the counseling roles and challenges which may not have been brought to the forefront in the past.

**Conclusion**

This chapter thoroughly explains the methods employed during this study and ties the research questions to the process the researcher engaged in to collect and analyze the data. The focus was on the qualitative methodology used throughout the study and how the researcher
applied the ethnographic methods to study the culture of the roles, practices, challenges and demands of Barbadian school counseling programs. This chapter discusses the thematic analysis and the ways in which the comparative analysis that helps to provide an in-depth explanation to answer the two research questions of this study. The next chapter will serve as the findings from the analysis and defines the themes that have been identified in the data.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter focuses on the findings that answer the overarching research questions. The questions are as follows:

(1) How do school counselors in Barbados define and describe their roles, practices, challenges, and demands of their position?

(2) What factors influence school counseling in Barbados?

The findings will be discussed using the methodology outlined in the previous chapter. The data analysis described to code the data and create the themes are implemented in this chapter as well. Three themes were identified, and each theme has several subthemes that will be addressed. The themes are connected and answer both overarching research questions which tells the complete story of the study’s findings in relation to the research questions. Chapter 5 will include the interpretation and discussion of the findings, but this chapter solely provides the description of the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data and the quotes that are attached to the themes.

The process of developing the themes began with the initial coding. The study yielded 48 initial codes. Because of the researcher's immersion in the literature, the codes were naturally informed by previous work although that was not the intent. The researcher began with open coding, but some of the codes related to previous research on the development of school counseling in the international realm, especially to the 11 factors identified by Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015). The intent of referring to the 11 factors was to see if similar themes applied to the Barbadian context and if there were additional themes or more impactful ways of discussing school counseling in Barbados. Since school counseling in the
international context follows similar trends, it was anticipated that similar language may be used by the counselors in Barbados. Some of the codes combined to form one code or create a new code. The subthemes then developed and larger themes were then formed. In Table 1, titled Themes, Categories, and Selected Codes Emerging from the Data, the process if outlined how the select initial codes became the larger categories and themes.
### Table 1

**Themes, Categories, and Selected Codes Emerging from the Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Description of Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1: Roles, Responsibilities and Requirements (3 R's)</strong></td>
<td>Culturally Relevant School Curriculum</td>
<td>Main role and practice (HFLE)</td>
<td>Curriculum; no longer teaching HFLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles, Responsibilities and Requirements</td>
<td>additional roles and practices</td>
<td>Counseling (personal, individual, career, group, peer, grief and bereavement)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories</td>
<td></td>
<td>theories used (CBT, solution focused, Holland's, background &quot;history tells a story&quot;, psychoanalytic, psychodynamic, systems, psychosocial)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest and principles</td>
<td></td>
<td>personal (desire to make a difference, desire to help, desire to make a positive difference, firm, fair, strong, don't back down, to help be of service)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>skills and competencies</td>
<td></td>
<td>students (study habits, looking at life skills, secondary school is a continuation of primary school, the journey continues), time management, disciplined, goal setting, balance social life and academic life, interpersonal skills, calls for knowledge, right attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td></td>
<td>the updated qualification for guidance counsellor or &quot;related field&quot;; if we're not supposed to have teacher training then why are we under the Teachers Order?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Theme 2: Problematizing Policies, Politics and Culture

Policies that Impact the Position | government roles and influence | would like clearly defined roles, would like clarified roles, they have a position title but the role is tied to teacher, great disparity in roles and want more uniformity in roles, varies, aware of MOE guidelines from the 1987 book but they are outdated, some gray areas, haven't heard anything on the role and responsibility policy that was being spearheaded by the MOE, how counselors are perceived need to be upped, don't have a department, what are we heading?, no budget, operating on a limb, one counselor "cannot work" and "is not working", person on the ground, number of responsibilities, day to day basis, governed by policies like teachers, by Teachers Establishment Order (policies on getting to work, leaving work, holiday times, same as counselors)

| Challenges Faced Due to Societal Shifts | resource challenges | material resources (printer- need a printer); budget (different budgets); didn't have a private phoneline; problems with internet

| protocols and standards | self-harming and suicide protocol, must send the child to the A & E; suicide protocol challenge - the child is out of school for indefinite amount of time (backlog of work) so it needs tweaking

| training for counselors and counselor needs | Need for additional support, counselor for every year group

| school counseling culture | don't take business outside of the house; once in a while students will say "I don't need counseling"; just "accept what they say or just try to talk with them otherwise"; accessing services easier

| Barbados culture | "why do I have to pay you to tell you my business?"; Christian commitment

### Theme 3: School Family Community Contexts

Work with Key Stakeholders | parents | facilitator, key stakeholders, key to change in parents, broker, advocate, educator, parent cooperation, home visits

School Across the Island | teachers | professional development, personal counseling, liaise with teachers

| administration | Principal-counselor relationship; counselor left out of decision; communication with administration
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>other counselors</td>
<td>principal style (micromanager, macromanager, inform him, &quot;kind of like principal's secretary&quot;, &quot;it allows me to do my job&quot;, &quot;where he is setting the tone and you just follow&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agencies and the community</td>
<td>referrals and liaise with outside agencies (juvenile liaison scheme, Edna Nicholls, government industrial schools, child guidance clinic, psychiatric assessment unit, polyclinic, businesses, companies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older vs newer schools</td>
<td>behaviors (don't focus on behavior, parents embarrassed by bad behavior, 1 or 2 disrespectful)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>academic ability (focus on academic, career development, college prep and counseling, job shadowing, cognitive abilities, university applications)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>behaviors (behavioral challenges, low self-esteem, fighting, anger, display raw behavior, behavior problems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>academic ability (students' low academic profile, cognitive abilities, students who lack intelligence, below average intelligence, applications for BCC, skills training, menial jobs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student issues</td>
<td>behavioral (aggressive, challenging behavior, conflict, fighting, violence), mental (emotionally deficient/instability, suicide)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thematic maps were created to help the researcher see how the themes answered the questions, and how some of the sub-themes combined as well. The thematic maps were created by moving through the iterative process of coding and reanalyzing, and tracks this process. The initial coding emerged from the data, and then was reanalyzed to the synthesize the code and develop the themes. These larger categories were then deduced to overarching themes and subthemes. The themes and subthemes are defined and explained below without any interpretation. It is important to understand the active role of the researcher in identifying the codes, that to some extent interpretation is included in the process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Ethnographic observations are included in the description of the themes, to show the triangulation of the data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher reduced the initial codes to six themes with 23 sub-themes as in Figure 2 below. The researcher further analyzed and reviewed the codes through an iterative process. Then these initial themes were reduced to three themes with 19 subthemes as in Figure 2. Three themes emerged from the data (a) the 3R’s: Roles, Responsibilities and Requirements, (b) Problematizing the Politics, Policies and Culture, and (c) School-Family-Community Contexts. There were several subthemes identified under each theme as well. The final version of the thematic map is depicted below in Figure 2.

Below, the researcher presents the findings, first to research question one in which the three themes are described. The presentation of the three themes are follow by presenting the findings of research question two. The discussion on how the 11 factors from Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) is presented and the new factors that emerged in this study.
Research Question 1: How do school counselors in Barbados define and describe their roles, practices, challenges, and demands of their position?

The first research question examines the roles, practices, challenges and demands that were identified by the guidance counsellors. The themes that emerged from the interviews and observations are explored in this section. The themes consisted of three overarching themes and multiple subthemes. The counselors were able to identify the various components of their daily work and factors that impact the work that they engage in with students and families. Because of their unique role within schools they tend to work with various stakeholders and liaise with outside agencies and community organizations in order to provide the best services for students.
the policies at the school and government level impact their work, along with larger global discussions. To add, since Barbados is a small state, the island is often on the receiving end of knowledge transactions. By exploring their perspective and how they articulate their role, this research questions allows us to challenge the discourse, and learn from a small state like Barbados. The quotes used in the presentation of themes are lengthy and kept in the original words of the speaker even when Bajan dialect is used to preserve the cultural component of the study and illustrate the themes that arose (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006).

Figure 2. Final Thematic Map
Research Question 1: Roles, Practices, Challenges and Demands- Description of the Overarching Themes

Theme 1: Roles, Responsibilities, and Requirements (3R's)

This theme is comprised of the job description of guidance counselor, their daily tasks, skills and credentials that makes a person suitable for the counseling position. The subthemes are the Main Roles and Practices, Description of the Additional Roles, Theories, Skills and Competencies, Qualifications, and Interest and Principles. The 3R's were discussed often throughout the data collection process. The counselors focused on their current role, ways to improve the position, reasons for them entering the field, and qualifications and skills that would be beneficial for all counselors.

Main Role and Practice (HFLE). Roles and Practices regarding Health and Family Life Education program are the identified tasks and duties outlined by the Ministry, for counselors to implement in the schools. The counselors described their duties and discussed some roles as being main aspects of their position. Other aspects of the position were not daily tasks or as prevalent as the other duties. The major role for school counselors is tending to the HFLE program and curriculum. This task is time consuming and each counselor mentioned the HFLE program throughout interviews and observations. The HFLE program description, the important role it plays in the school counselors' day to day experience. HFLE, is a part of the counselor role but the counselors discussed the topic so much that it needed to emerge as a theme early on the data analysis process. The HFLE program is considered a major role by the counselors. Each counselor was attached to the HFLE program or responsible for teaching or delivering the curriculum to the HFLE teachers. At one school in Barbados counselors were not responsible for
teaching the HFLE classes and this year was the first year that they did not have to teach the curriculum. The important aspects of the HFLE program were the roles and practices attached, challenges that arose from implementing the program, suggestions for improving HFLE and the policies surrounding the program. In both the interviews and observations, HFLE was discussed often. The code HFLE was mentioned 132 times in the interview and 16 times in the observational data. Additional subthemes that were identified by all of the counselors in both interviews and ethnographic observations were Roles and Practices, Challenges Implementation and Moving Forward, and the Policies.

Counselors mentioned many of the challenges that come along with being in charge of the HFLE curriculum for the teachers that teach the class, along with them. The counselors also mentioned how the program is implemented and facilitated in their schools and ways to improve the program. Each school seems to implement the program differently, but some similarities exist. The principal typically assigns the teachers to teach HFLE and they change from year to year. The teachers are assigned based on availability and if they have a free period in their timetable. Although, in the past it was recommended that teachers have HFLE training, currently the teachers come from various disciplines. Within each school the HFLE program may be housed within the counseling department or general studies department but the counselor is responsible for supplying the curriculum regardless. If the counselor is timetabled to teach HFLE this presents a challenge. Trying to balance the various roles is difficult and is expressed as a form of role confusion because counselors need to handle crises as the incidents arise.

Or if you have the counselor timetabled, pull children at those times to do what the counselor wants to do, rather than teaching a class, because really and truly, when you're teaching a class like HFLE children see it first of all, not as an exam subject. It is a non-exam level subject. So, obviously for some children it is like a free subject. A no brainer.
And therefore, they think that their behavior can be as lax as whatever. And they may not respect the subject for what it is. So, you might find out as counselor, you’re in front of a whole class of 30-35 children. And obviously then our counselor skills have to be thrown through the window and your teaching skills have to come in place. So, to me it’s a conflict. Because how am I going to be shouting so that everybody can hear me. Obviously, you have to be sterner in the classroom. And then when the child comes to you now, you are so empathetic. (Syl)

Only one school does not use the guidance counselor as an HFLE teacher but the counselor is still responsible for making sure the other HFLE teachers receive the curriculum. This transition to not having HFLE timetabled is the first to happen in the country. While conversing with other counselors and informants, they were not aware of this school’s initiative to have the counselors act in a different capacity. The decision was made by the principal at the District Secondary School, to have the counselors not be timetabled for HFLE. The counselors are still responsible for making sure the teachers have the curriculum and they can observe the classes, but they are not responsible for the delivery. The counselors mentioned:

Another thing, one of the policies that came from the Ministry is that, as a school counselor, we are only expected to have ten, our timetable for ten maximum lessons, contact lessons. But then, that is a mandate from the Ministry here, just for this year, the principal have made a shape up, a real change in that policy, whereas we're not timetable for those ten lessons, but again, as I said, the focus is on the students themselves. (Chele)

As mentioned previously, in most instances the principal assigns the HFLE teachers based on teacher availability during the periods they need someone to facilitate a HFLE course. This distribution of courses creates a challenge for counselors because some of the faculty may not be interested in the HFLE curriculum or they may feel uncomfortable engaging in the topics. Nik and Syl reported issues with the persons delivering the HFLE curriculum. Some incidents have
occurred in which the HFLE teacher would not teach HFLE during the scheduled time and would resort to teaching their main subject.

One teacher that we sent off to get training but he's our religious education teacher and now, he has another post, he's a reverend and he now has another post...but then he goes into to teach HFLE he doesn't teach it, and she would say, he's teaching religious education. So we have to take him off of that program...No, he wouldn't teach HFLE at all. (Nik)

The current policies and recommendations from the counselors for what they hope to see in the HFLE program were included in the discussion on their main role. Due to the many challenges the counselors mention that hinder them from fulfilling their role, they discuss suggestions for what they would like to see in the HFLE program and policies moving forward. HFLE was mentioned 132 times in an all words query in NVivo, across all of the interview data corpus.

There was supposed to be a HFLE policy but I don't think that has been put in place as of yet. I don't think it has been developed. Some years back, we were looking at having a policy as it relates to the role and responsibility of the guidance counselor. We put together documents, sent them off to the ministry. We haven't heard anything since then. But we ... That was being spearheaded from the Ministry officials. (Syl)

The counselors are responsible for the HFLE curriculum but the principals typically schedule the timetables. The challenge is that the counselors are left to tend to the curriculum for the instructors and meet with them to plan and prepare for the classes.

And many times it is that their timetable is being filled up with HFLE classes. In some cases you might find people who may not be interested in the subject at all. People who have not been introduced to it. People who are not trained in it. But yet they have to deliver. I would like a policy that states that yes the guidance counselor if you are teaching HFLE you should be trained. Only trained people should teach HFLE. So that, there will be more people who are more passionate about it. And you will be sure that the content is being delivered and that the skills that are supposed to be developed, will be developed. Right now I have people who are just filling in... (Syl)
Regarding the HFLE policies for school counselors, some suggestions were made. Chele is not facilitating the HFLE lessons and described her experience. She expressed the updates to the policy that would be beneficial to counselors. Due to time constraints and so many additional duties, the times that counselors are timetabled can be used differently to accommodate the other direct and indirect services counselors can provide.

Right now, for what I am seeing, the contact lessons ... I think the contact lessons are, they take away, sometimes. Ten lessons, the maximum ten lessons that we teach in Health and Family Life Education. They take away from what we can do, basically, on the ground, with the students, in terms of individual counseling, group counseling, and so on. And so, I think that basically that should be left open. Because where I am sitting now, in terms of not having the contact lessons, or the timetable lessons, let me say. Timetable lessons, I can go to a class at will that is timetable for HFLE. And observe or participate or assess with those classes. So, I think that is one of the policies that should be changed. There's a flexibility to that as well. (Chele)

**Additional Roles and Practices.** Even though HFLE appears to be a main role of school counselors, additional roles and practices exist. These practices and roles are the duties and tasks assigned to counselors across the island. The duties and tasks are outlined by the Ministry and implemented within the schools. Many of the roles were liaising within the schools and with community agencies. The term “liaise” is used similar to collaboration or partnering with other stakeholders to facilitate services for students and families. Counselors also worked to plan the counseling program, in community outreach, case management and serving on teams and communities. This subtheme also includes the description of roles which are the adjectives counselors used to explain their roles in the school and the community. The counselors used particular words to describe how they perceive themselves in different roles.
The counselors used various descriptive words to define their roles. They used words like “never ending,” “overloaded,” “multifaceted,” “hands tied,” or “time constraints.” With the limited number of counselors and supporting staff, the role of the counselor is overwhelming, with all of the responsibilities outside of having to teach HFLE and supervise the HFLE program. Counselors are pulled in many directions because of their unique skill set and they are not able to tend to all of the issues that arise. Some counselors mentioned that if they are scheduled to teach an HFLE class, if an incident occurs, they may or may not be able to get to it because they must tend to the class. The other “roles” are extensive and the intensity and frequency of cases vary depending on the setting.

**Theories.** The counselors discussed culturally responsive practices and the theories they use with their students. Many of the techniques and theories are based on Western practice, and counselors have adapted counseling theories in their work with students. Creative techniques worked the students as opposed to just talk therapy. Chele elaborated on the technique she uses and creative ways she works with students. Chele described being more creative in her approach to working with students and this approach may be necessary for her specific population since she works with underresourced students and families.

They mesh in with each other. I may do a lot of, I do art. Get them to, I don't know if you know the projective test. You know the projective testing? I will let them do some, draw someone. Just a shape, a person. Ask them to draw a person. There's something called a house tree person projective test that helps you to give a view into what they're thinking about or what they want for the future and so on. So I'll use the house tree person one. They would draw a house, they would draw a tree, and they would draw a person...I was just telling you about this house, you know? And sometimes they give me stories. I live here, what's happening in their house, who's involved in their house, who lives in their house, whether they want a house like this, what type of house they want, what in terms of tree, if there's a tree, maybe a tree outside their home or a fruit that they liked, or something that they remember about a tree or something happened at a tree, maybe some abuse happened under this tree. Things comes out. And then the person, the person might
be them or might be a perpetrator or a person, might be somebody that they wish they could be. So that helps to bring things together. I find that I like to do things like that, that gets them to talk and I can easily find certain things about them. Also, I find that even drawing and so on, how they use color. Because sometimes they might use very dark colors and it tends to indicate that something not too happy, they might not be too happy and certain things are causing them to use the dark colors. Sometimes they use bright colors and be thinking in terms of happiness or subjects that cause them to be happy or that they're involved in that result in this happiness and so on. So maybe do that, maybe use plastic, play dough, right, they like to use that too. Use the play dough and they create certain things, shapes, and you can talk about the shapes and such...I may have some games, a table with a game, or maybe look at pictures or play a game. Just play a game, sometimes they let you play a game, just play cards. You know? Something to just get them to do things. Maybe that would be behavior, never know. (Chele)

Nik expressed the Western practices as they relate to the context of Barbados, in which the population mostly consists of African descendants. The observations and interactions that the researcher had with people in the community, resulted in a similar idea that Barbadian policies do not always align with the mindset of the people living in Barbados. the comparison is always made to the U.S. and Eurocentric views, and in this case, Eurocentric counseling practices.

They are more European, North American. Caribbean people is a different culture, a different mindset, although you can find some things overlapping because we are now becoming so Americanized, but I think you have to look at things that would apply to your own culture, rather than adopt wholesale wools from other people. The things like, there are some things that I notice have crept in. (Nik)

The theories used depended on the counselor’s understanding of school counseling and necessary services rendered. In one setting, Syl had an extensive commitment to assisting students with understanding their post-secondary options. Syl mentioned how she philosophizes the theories and practices for her school counseling program.

In career counseling, we use a lot of Holland’s theory. His is pretty straight forward. And easy to understand for the children. The other one, is the Roger’s and the solution focused. Because of the time, I think, the solution focused, the miracle questions, the chair. You know, we use those. I use those a lot. (Syl)
In some cases it was easy for the counselors to mention the theories. The counselors also discussed a more integrative approach to working with students, while Nik mentioned that she strays away from a certain theory.

I am not a Freudian. And some people believe in Freud. But everything with Freud is sexual in nature, and I'm not a Freudian. I just pull the ones that are applicable from different theorists, but I tend to avoid Freud because I don't think that everything ... (Nik)

**Skills and Competencies.** Skills and Competencies are the talents and set of tools counselors need to complete their work as guidance counselors. In Barbados, the Master’s level school counseling program was recently created at UWI, Cave Hill campus (UWI, 2018; D. Maynard, Fall 2017). The counselors that have been working as guidance counselors since its inception in 1988 received their training abroad, mostly in the U.S., or they may have a guidance counseling certificate. Many of the counselors have their master’s degrees in counseling, psychology, and a few with a social work background. The interns in the counseling departments at the schools come from the counseling psychology or social work master’s programs at UWI and now the school counseling master’s program. Based on the limited local training that counselors would have received in the past, the informants had many suggestions for the skillset counselors should have. The counselors suggested skills and competencies incoming counselors based on their expertise and experience in the field.

Well, working with children, there should be some type of training, or some qualification, which this is involved in actually having some practical experience with the children, within the setting, to help you to deal with them, as well. (Chele).
Qualifications. Qualifications are the trainings that counselors suggested that counselors should have before entering the field and experiences they should have as well. The training related to the level of education, internship and field experience. The qualifications were officially updated in the Public Service Qualifications (2016) in which guidance counselors are expected to have a degree in counseling or a related field. There was variation in the awareness of the qualification. Counselors suggested qualifications including:

A bachelor's degree. I think there was a new policy, in terms of the qualifications. I think we are supposed to have a first degree in counseling, behavioral science, guidance and counseling, in that area. I think we would say, was just a degree, and you had to have teacher training as well, before. I don't think that is a requirement, as well. So, you see, there is some disconnect. Because if you are not supposed to have a teacher training, then we should not be on the teacher's orders, right? (Chele).

There are no counselors mandated from the MOE in the primary schools. The counselors attached primary schools were assigned form the Sandy Lane Trust. The counselors discussed the skill set that primary school counselors should have, especially in relation to preparing students for secondary school. The suggestions for primary school counselors included:

Early intervention, early prevention, and excuse me, if they could only have counselors ... I know, because I was attached to a primary school before, and cases refer to them, they can intervene at an early moment, and have the problems resolved, or the parents learn how to cope so that when they move on to secondary school a lot of the problems would have been alleviated already. Students would know how to cope, handle conflict, resolve issues, deal with their anger, and have good study skills and know how to get along with people at a secondary level. (Sebrina)

Suggestions for primary schools were made as well, in terms of the counselors having the same qualifications. The counselors wanted to see incoming school counselors being able to engage in individual counseling, group, family therapy, approach to school work, homework, play therapy, some different training for person who work with younger students, personal therapy, person
centered; only 5 primary counselors, "cannot make a significant impact,... would be good if there were permanent counselors attached to each school", need for early intervention)

For example, in our primary schools, most of not all of our primary schools are community-based schools. Eventually when the exam is done to enter to the secondary school, then they’re going to have the separation. That is what happens. But everybody in the community goes to their community school. That's why most of the children in that class knew children from the Lodge or District Secondary or the other schools. (Chele)

**Interest and Principles.** Interest and Principles targets the reasons why counselors became interested in the position and their morals and values that guide their work. Personal and professional experiences contributed to the counselors choosing school counseling as a career. Due to the nature of the position in Barbados, counselors were initially teachers and many of them had prior teaching experience which helped shape their decision of becoming a counselor, which similar to the path that counselors in the international context take as well (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2017; Okocha & Alika, 2012).

To help. To be of service. To make a difference. To impact. To call or to help students to see that there is a better way, there is a different way, that they can achieve or they can do better, or they can be as well-equipped, well-qualified, well-prepared, as any other student from any other part of Barbados. That they're just as important and that they matter, and each one of them matter. Each one of them are important, each one of them is loved as well. So to just be available for them and present for them as well, is one of the reasons. (Chele)

Additionally, Sebrina shared her reason for becoming a counselor as well. She identified that a person’s core beliefs and values add to their wish to serve and help guide the next generation of students to ensure that they are given direction.

I like the helping profession. I myself, because of probably my upbringing in a very stringent, difficult position with a single parent, kind of had a feeling, a desire to make a positive contribution in the lives of others who may be experiencing similar situation, like deprivation, or welfare needs. To offer guidance, need guidance in terms of direction of
life, and to be able to make positive choices and decisions so that they will feel better about themselves, go in the right direction, and hopefully make a difference in the lives of others. (Sebrina)

**Theme 2: Problematizing the Policies, Politics and Culture.**

This theme focuses on the larger societal issues that influence the work of school counselors. The role of the Ministry of Education, along with the sociocultural aspects and larger movements contribute to how counselors navigate their various roles and demands. The Ministry of Education creates the policies that impact school counselors, and the policies, procedures and standards determine how counselors should proceed. By problematizing the policies and standards that are currently in place, the opportunity exists to understand counselor perceptions of the policies as they relate to their position. These policies also inform school policies that directly impact the role of the counselor and the services they provide. The problems related to the culture of Barbados and societal shifts and changes that impact guidance counselors are also included in this theme. Under this theme is the role of advocacy for more professional opportunities for counselors, especially as it relates to training, and ongoing professional development. Below I describe the six subthemes comprising this theme, which are (a) Government Roles and Influences, (b) Resource Challenges, and (c) Protocols and Standards, (d) Training for Counselors and Advocacy Needs, (e) School Counseling Culture, and (f) Barbados Culture.

*Government Roles and Influence.* This subtheme refers to a frequently recurring code that policies came from the Ministry of Education and are implemented in the schools. These policies also influence the individual school policies which dictate how counselors can deliver services. The issues addressed under this subtheme are counselors’ needs for someone in the
Ministry to be their advocate and to lobby for them because they do not have any representation at the national level in the Ministry of Education. When guidance counselors were initially placed in the schools in Barbados, the Ministry used to provide a great amount of training, but such training does not occur as often now. With the inception of school counselors in Barbados, the Ministry brought in counselor educators from the U.S. to train the guidance counselors in Barbados. Now, the need for ongoing training exists so counselors can remain up to date with best practices and standards and culturally appropriate practices to follow with/for their students.

Syl expressed this view when she said:

Training for counselors should also be ongoing, spearheaded from the Ministry of Education based on the research that is done on yearly or bi-yearly basis. Then that specific training should be in place for counselors automatically. I do not think that we should have to be bringing in people all the time to do certain things that we here as counselors if we only receive the training and keep us, like, current, keep us up to date. Keep us on the cutting edge so that we can face all of our problems and have the services that will be readily available to the students. Okay? Something else that I was going to mention... But for sure the training and re-training, refreshing sessions will be necessary because again you have new counselors who are coming in all the time. (Syl)

The need for ongoing training is prevalent especially due to the nature of the work that counselors do. Counselors process the social and emotional issues that students and families bring in and the work is sometimes overwhelming. This type of work can lead to burnout or fatigue (Thompson, Amatea, & Thompson, 2014). A new counselor or someone that is still developing their skills can quickly become overwhelmed as Chele described below. The key to combating burnout and compassion fatigue is ongoing support, supervision and training for counselors (Myers & Wee, 2013). As the times changes, experienced counselors will continue to need training as well. The field of counseling is growing so the overall need exists for counselors
to be proactive in seeking opportunities for professional development to advance the field in Barbados.

Working with them [students] individually as well as in group settings, whether it's individual counseling, group counseling, it gives me a sense of what each of them have to deal with personally and emotionally as well as within their home setting, and sometimes if it was not really for professional training and years of working with them, I think a job like this could become overwhelming and it can cause individuals, or it can cause someone who is not really prepared or has not been a professional experienced person, who is not a professionally experienced person, to just crumble. Burn out, as a result.

(Chele)

**Resource Challenges.** This subtheme captures the lack of materials and human capital that create resource challenges for school counselors. The counselor to student ratio in Barbados varies in each school, but in most public secondary schools across the island, there is only one counselor in the school. Examples of counselor caseloads include approximately 600 to 1200, but this number varies depending on the total student enrollment at the school each year. Counselors indicated that the caseload and intensity of the cases are increasing, as more students seek services. Counselors are not placed in the primary schools and because the Ministry has not yet implemented a mandate for counselors in the primary schools, secondary school counselors are left to work with untreated trauma and issues that students may have experienced while in primary school. Syl shared this view:

...everybody is aware, that school counselors are essential. They are pivotal actually, play a pivotal role in the life of the school. The services that we render are second to none, I would say. Now, but yet, whenever we ask for more counselors or we put our case out there, the first thing they say is, 'We don't have any money.' My take is that, if you have money, if you can find money to fix remedial problems, find some money to prevent the problems. Because putting the money into building students and their character and all that, it will be better spent in doing something preventative, because when we start at that preventative level, we're also impacting families and communities. When you have to do the remedial. You can't just fix that one problem. If it's occurring in the child. It’s the community impact, it’s the home impact and then you have that whole plethora of areas
that you have to fix. You are just going through the paces when you do it that way. When
we do it from the proactive measures, when you take proactive measures, then you find
that it is less costly. (Syl)

The counselors all emphasized a need for school counselors at the primary school level. Syl
discussed the positioning of when Barbados starts counseling services in the school. The
counselor believes that only providing counseling services to students in secondary schools is
problematic because so many issues arise for students in primary schools and there is a missed
opportunity for primary school students to begin to develop the skills and coping mechanisms
that will serve them well in secondary school. All the counselors expressed that by the time the
students enter secondary school, many of them have experienced some form of trauma. Chele
explains this idea below.

No, it has been mentioned before. It has been mentioned before and I think there is
usually a call for it. And we've been calling for, even as counselors, we've been calling
for it because ... you know, they start too late. Because by the time the children get to us,
at 11, 12, sometimes 13 years old, their character is formed already and it's a lot of work
to try to help repair or adjust, having to adjust behaviors and so on. We believe, and
we've spoken about it with our ministry of education and so on, in terms of getting
counselors in primary schools, getting that intervention from very early and I think the
social workers are trying to lobby too as well, in terms of being supportive and trying to
help from even the primary school and the within secondary school as well. There is a
general call for it. There's a general call for it. So, I guess we can respond, or they can
respond I guess they can respond. (Chele)

While I was completing observations at each setting, it became clear that many of the issues
students faced stemmed from incidents and experiences they had during primary school. This
observation is anecdotal because there was limited documentation on the specific cases and types
of issues addressed. This lack of information stemmed from a lack of time to document and from
protecting confidentiality regarding client issues. As Sebrina explained below, study habits, grief
and loss, sexual assault and other traumatic experiences sometimes occurred during primary school, yet, there were limited services available for primary students to process and develop effective skills and techniques to cope.

Early intervention, early prevention, and excuse me, if they could only have counselors ... I know, because I was attached to a primary school before, and cases refer to them, they can intervene at an early moment, and have the problems resolved, or the parents learn how to cope so that when they move on to secondary school a lot of the problems would have been alleviated already. Students would know how to cope, handle conflict, resolve issues, deal with their anger, and have good study skills and know how to get along with people at a secondary level. They come into the secondary level with all the problems having been developed from birth right through to the age 11. Trying to get them to minimize it alone is a problem, furthermore to eradicate it. It's like second nature by the time they reach 11-12. (Sebrina)

An additional need discussed by the counselors was uniformity. At each site, the counselors had a general understanding of their own workload, but no uniformity in terms of the logistics and provided resources. Sham shared that:

I would like that as, that there's more uniformity amongst the counseling profession based on what the Ministry of Education does for schools. You find that many schools, something as simple as the room that the counselor is in, or the room that the counselor has access to, or an outside office, I find that sometimes that the varying, going back to the culture of the school, varies so widely. You have persons in the same profession, but there's this great disparity. So for me I would like to see a more uniformity in terms of that. ... (Sham)

**Protocols and Standards.** Protocols and standards comprise legal and ethical issues that arise in counselors' work. In general, the counselors indicated that there are a few protocols and standards that the counselors must adhere to, but there is a need for formal localized ethical guidelines that govern their practice. The original document from 1987 that defined their position and roles needs to be updated and many counselors do not have access to this document. These mandates are initiated by the Ministry and implemented across the schools, with minor changes
to fit each school’s population. The Ministry introduced the Suicide and Self-Harming Protocol, which went into effect immediately once the documents were approved by the Ministry. Ministry officials met with the two groups, counselors and principals, separately, in order to get their perceptions and feedback on the Protocol so the document can be updated and put into practice. Syl discussed the process of reaching one such protocol:

...recently we've had the protocol for self-harming and suicide. Suicide protocol. And that one that came out probably last year. It was finalized. It was started way back in 2012 or something like that. And they put it out last year. We've been using that here because we've had a few cases of self-harming and were able to put it into effect where it states that if a child is self-harming or intent to harm somebody else. But it was mostly having to do with the self-harming. (Syl)

Barbados Association of Guidance Counsellors (BAGC) orchestrated a conference on self-harming for counselors, because across the island several incidents of suicide had been reported. As a result, students were then able to receive services, and this conference was basis for the call for the self-harming protocol.

And we had realized that many students were coming forward with this problem of self-harming and I did like a round-robin and realized that of all the schools, 15 people had responded and the counselors at that time had seen about 96 students from fifteen schools who had actually come forward and who were being worked with. Okay? And those were only reported cases. And it was from first to six form and boys as well as girls. And to us that was a big cry so we had a conference. Out of that the idea of having protocols in place came. Yeah? And then, about maybe last year or year before we were called to the Ministry and they had put it together and we were now really like, not really ratifying it, but just checking it through to make sure everything was in place and what not. So we had our input. They had call the sessions with maybe the principals as well, they had their input and anything that was needed to be changed was changed, et cetera. So now we have produced the final document. Yeah? So, I think that those of us who are in the field, if we are contacted and if we are included in the process then we can speak to the issue in a more practical way. Right? And hopefully a more emphatic way. (Syl)
Other standards include policies on reporting information to the principal and making referrals to outside agencies or other resources. Counselors are supposed to report directly to the principal when a situation occurs and once they make a report, in cases of child abuse, they are not required to follow up. The principal then reports to the Ministry and the Childcare Board. Once the referral is made to the Childcare Board, the counselor is not supposed to follow up with the student but often the Childcare Board and other agencies have long waiting lists of their own. With the long waiting period to receive the services the students are still attending the school, and under the care of the counselors at the school. Even if the counselor follows up, the services from the community resource are not expedited and they receive little information from the agency. The counselors are then placed in critical positions because they should not respond but the child may still need to be serviced. The need exists for increased communication between the counselors and outside agencies that they interact with, in order to form partnerships and work together to provide services for students.

Right, so in terms of the suicide, self-harming, you know, that protocol that has been put in place very immediately we must send the child to the A and E, Accident and Emergency. Notify the parents, and then it states that they're not to return to school until they have been checked by a professional. However, we find that because some children will be out of school for indefinite periods because of the backlog of work and therefore in some cases we've had to ease that part, right. Because it is too ... It needs to begin. It needs to begin in there because if we can't be assured that the child is being seen, and that work is going on and that they're no threat to self or others then we can't bring them back in. But for us to be until somebody comes back ... Some people are ... I mean, you can't always get appointments so easily. So therefore, I think it still needs some tweaking. (Syl)

*Training for Counselors and Counselor Needs.* When counseling was first initiated in Barbados, the government provided training to the counselors. Since then, new counselors have come on board and there is a need for ongoing training. With an increase of violence in the
schools and generational shifts, counselors should be provided ongoing training to further enhance their skills and stay abreast of best practices. The need exists for more attention to be given to counselors and at this time guidance counselors are calling for representation in the Ministry, and more exposure to best practices. When they discuss promoting their role to other stakeholders, and the Ministry, they use terms like "pushing," "defending," and "marketing," the position to get buy-in from other stakeholders. They see themselves as having to fight for their position when they speak to other stakeholders. Counselors promote and market their job to show teachers and other stakeholders the important role they play in the lives of the students and families they work with. This subtheme categorizes the general needs that counselors have, especially regarding the need for the field to be recognized. The guidance counselors are asking for role clarity, and for a clear definition of their role and duties. No uniformity in role definition exists and the role confusion shows in the varied ways that counselors operate within schools.

I think that training for counselors and more exposure to best practices from other countries. Not necessarily regional, but international. Funding to make that a reality. I know that every year in the U.S. and in Canada and in other countries, you have the conferences, the counselor conferences. And you have the [The ACA] ...Right, you have the state conferences and you have the nationwide conference. And I think that the idea of being able to be a participant in something like that to see best practices. Or maybe even to have a link with a school, a middle school overseas, being able to have that kind of twining. Again, something that would be government funded. I believe that there are opportunities ... I don't know if we are part of it ... But there are opportunities for professionals to go to the U.S. and for a few weeks have some kind of professional training. (Sham)

Regarding advocating for the position and the needs of the counselor, Sham identified a challenge with teachers. A few of the teachers operate outside of their training capacity to assist students, but sometimes the issues they address should be referred to counselors. If the teacher has a relationship with the student or their family, which may be possible because of the small
communal culture in Barbados, the teacher may overstep or take on more than her/his role calls for. The teacher’s perception of counselors may also play a role in how they understand the work of the counselor.

We still have the minority, as I mentioned before, who would believe that they're a counselor and they can do this and that and so on, but generally staff are, they buy-in to what we do and they are very willing to make the referrals as well. (Chele)

Counselors used specific terminology to describe how they advocate for their role. Advocacy was not a word that they used, but when school counseling is discussed internationally and in the U.S. context the term advocacy is used to describe promoting and explaining the need for school counselors (ASCA, 2012).

I try to promote my job as important or even more important than any other, because everybody will not know what you do it. When they market it, that's when they will get an idea as to its importance. That's one of the things that I'm constantly doing, pushing, marketing my work at staff meetings. I would say certain things so that people will understand how they can work with me, how the work is interconnected. Right? Okay. (Syl)

Teacher perceptions of school counselors impact their role. The role confusion they face is similar to the role confusion counselors in the U.S. faced in the 1970s, a time in which the field was being pushed in different directions (Erford, 2018). The role confusion is similar to other countries as well, that are still in the process of implementing school-based counseling (Admundson, Niles, & Hohensil, 2015; Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). Syl expresses that having role clarity from the Ministry of Education and representation will assist with moving the field forward.

Therefore, we, as counselors, we have to market ourselves, do some 30 seconds. Market ourselves. Many times we have to defend ourselves because people tend not to think that we are trained, apart from career counseling. Many people see us as career counselors
only. They don't recognize that we do, you know, the personal and the social and the education. The interns come in, they are overwhelmed at the type of cases, quality and quantity of cases that come to them. (Syl)

The principals assign roles and responsibilities to the counselors based on the mandates from the Ministry. Sometimes it is unclear if the mandate is coming from the Ministry or if the task is being handed out from the principal. The communication between the various parties is important but some challenges exist because the source of the directive is not always shared. Since counselors are accountable to their principals which was described by Sham and Syl, it is important that there is a protocol in place where representation at the Ministry level is granted to counselors as well, so they will have someone to support, monitor, and streamlined roles and responsibilities from the Ministry.

...and we need to have someone in the Ministry of Education who will be there for us to be accountable to. Right now, we are accountable to our principal, but to me, that is just rhetoric. We need someone in the Ministry of Education who will be able to say, okay this is a chart that we have, the path that we have charted for counselors this year. Or over the next five years. But, we actually have to chart our own course. (Syl)

The counselors posit the need for a team approach to helping students, by stating the need for additional counselors, a social worker or counseling psychologist, a HFLE teacher, and a nurse in some cases. By using a team approach, counselors will be able to get a holistic view of the students and families they are servicing. The holistic approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the issues students may bring into the classroom so that appropriate resources can be allocated them and much faster.

So, that is one thing that I can look at, in terms of they're having two counselors within schools. And even as I think about two counselors in schools, I'm thinking about the support as well, in terms of having an extension of, or expansion of the support that is within the school, even to include a social worker, a psychologist, if possible, a nurse, all
right? So, to have a team that we can work with. That would be an ideal, to have a team. So, the social worker, the psychologist, the nurse, that would be ideal for us. (Chele).

Large caseloads are a common issue for school counselors internationally (Okocha & Alika, 2012). In the U.S. the recommended number of counselors to students is 1:250 student (ASCA, 2012). The counselors in Barbados spoke about the need for additional counselors within the schools to assist with the large caseloads especially as there is only one counselor at most schools, except for the two schools with two counselors. Syl and Sebrina discussed this issue below.

Oh yeah, the need for more than one counselor in the school...So having at least three counselors. If not three counselors, two counselors and a counseling psychologist. I think that if we have more of a team, we can even look at having it... I know it would be outlandish to say that we want a counselor per year group. But that would be the ideal thing if you can have a counselor per year group just so you have a year head, a senior teacher for a year group. That would make a lot of sense. Or, if it was a counselor for two-year groups. But to have a counselor for one school with six years in it, or five years in it. That is really asking too much. We are cheating the children because not every child who behaves badly needs a counselor. Not every child who behaves well, is free of problems. So, we need to have things in place, systems in place, where we can handle every child in the school. Every child in the school should pass through the guidance counselor's office for one thing or a next because there's a service there for every child. (Syl)

…and be able to work as a part of a team effort, to be able to liaise with institutions, and also to be able to be flexible. You should be apt to teach, because HFLE is one of the course load, is on the curriculum for the guidance counselor as well. They should have a knowledge of health and family life education, should not have a fear of teaching sexuality, or any reservation of teaching it. (Sebrina)

**School Counseling Culture.** The stigma surrounding mental health have influenced students’ decisions to seek help from the counselor. However, the dynamics are changing, and more students are accessing services. Counselors actively sought to maintain confidentiality so rumors about student incidents would not be reported and shared. The stigma still exists, but it is
lessening because counseling is becoming more destigmatized and accessible. Previously students were told by their families to keep their family business at home, but now less families are objecting to their children seeking out the counselor. The issues that students are presenting with bringing forth that impact the school community, are requiring a shift in the services counselors are providing. Counselors would like to see the services change with the shift in the culture as well.

Yes, school counseling is changing to suit the local needs. For example, when you have fights, gangs, negative activity, we have to change our strategy, our focus on trying to bring about better ethos in the school, itself. So counselors, instead of focusing on career guidance or something along that line, have to more focus on behavior and attitudinal challenges within the school system. Other schools that are with children who are much intelligent can focus on academic and focus on study skills and habit, can focus on a lot of other areas. Ours is very distracted and interrupted. For example, when you have fights, gangs, negative activity, we have to change our strategy. (Sebrina)

Barbados Culture. Barbados is known for being a collectivist society, in which people tend to have a genuine care and concern for their neighbors. The counselors expressed a shift in the culture, with more individualistic practices amongst the people. The need to maintain family business and not share family problems outside the home is still seen in the mindset, but there has been some change. Counselors have worked to establish rapport and trust between them and the students and their families, which has fostered an environment where the students feel more inclined to share personal information. Within the various communities, there have been some changes as well. In the low-income areas, there has been an increase in violence and gang activity which sometimes reveals itself in the issues students face. Counselors believe that the violence has stemmed from the influx of American influence. Depending on the community the students are exposed to can contribute to the way they interact with the schools and the amount
of resources they have access to. Also, the counselors believe that with embracing of American values are changing the way people engage with each other; where in the past they may have felt more inclined to help their neighbors, now there has been an increase in people being more reluctant to assist each other. This behavior is contradictory to the Christian values that are heavily included in Barbadian culture.

A key aspect of Barbadian community is their commitment to Christianity. Christian values are infused in the school system where students attend Prayers, Devotion, Religious Studies courses, and Christian values are discussed with students when they are disciplined or while exploring sexual health and behaviors. Understanding that Barbadians deem Christianity as extremely important in their culture is imperative take religiosity into consideration when developing a culturally appropriate school counseling program. There are a number of individuals that are from various religious backgrounds which is important to consider because solely Christian valued infused in the system will not be as inclusive as possible, and will not respond to the change in Barbadian society that exists. Chele discussed some of the families’ perspectives that impact their work.

They believe that whatever happens here, stays in here as a home, and hence when help could be given, it is not given in the way that it should be because the parents do not, or they feel as though, maybe they feel inadequate or they're not capable of ... or they want people to think that they're capable and they're managing their families well and so on, and that the children are happy and content and so on, when they're really not. (Chele)

Chele also explained where the familial privacy mindset came from. The role of colonialism is part of the reason she gave for this perspective.

Well, I don't know if you can go right back to slavery, in terms of, maybe I assume, because really when, in the times of slavery, the slaves really did not have an outlet, per se. Nobody would listen, the masters wouldn't listen to them, whether they wanted something done or they were against certain things happening to them and so on. There
was really nobody that would listen to them, so they just had to accept things and keep it, you know, emotionally keep it within themselves and so on, and deal with it in whatever way they can. Sometimes, they would do it in a violent way. Sometimes they'll maybe work harder at work or sing their music and such like and just calmly go about their lives and their business. (Chele)

**Theme 3: School Family Community Contexts.**

This theme comprises the collaborations that counselors engage in with the various stakeholders that impact their work with students and families. These interactions can further enhance or challenge the growth of the school counseling program. The subthemes represented the work the counselors engage in with each stakeholder, including Parents, Teachers, Administration, Other Counselors, Agencies and the Community. With each group, a description of their work was given along with the challenges that promote or hinder their goal of improving students' lives. Counselor and societal perceptions of schools vary across the island. The schools are not officially ranked in Barbados, but colloquially known as the "older" and "newer" secondary schools. The additional subthemes are Older vs Newer Schools, and Student Issues. The older secondary schools tend to have students that perform better academically on the Common Entrance Exam, which is the exam students take to determine placement in a secondary school and they usually receive high scores on the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) exams that provide certifications and diplomas upon exiting secondary school (CXC, 2018). Students that attend the newer secondary schools tend to have more academic challenges. Both types of schools are discussed very differently, not just amongst counselors but throughout the society. The school-family-community contexts vary across the island as well and change depending on the type of school. Some of the issues and challenges that students and families face are due to the type of school the student attends. By
contextualizing the school setting, this theme provides the space to uncover the similarities and differences across Barbados secondary schools based on how the school counselors understand the settings.

**Parents.** In a word frequency query on NVivo software, the word, "parents," (including stemmed variations), were used 283 times throughout the interviews. Counselors referred to their role with parents as brokers, facilitators, educator, advocates, and emphasized their value of parent cooperation. Counselors see parents as key stakeholders and use home visits to promote their work with families.

Parent cooperation encompasses the ways parents discipline their children, and parent expectations as well. Parent involvement is studied thoroughly in the school counseling literature in the U.S. context (Gonzalez, Borders, Hines, Villalba, & Henderson, 2013; Epstein, & Van Voorhis, 2010; Griffin, & Steen, 2010; Holcomb-McCoy, 2010; Walker, Shenker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2010), but in the Barbados context, parents navigate the school system differently. The counselors try to find innovative ways to stay in contact with parents because they would ultimately like to increase parent involvement. The concept of parent involvement should be further explored in the Barbados context. Parents are not typically invited into the school as partners, but mostly just on the receiving end of information, but not operating from their strengths and providing insight and contributing towards school culture. One of the challenges is the expectations that counselors have of parents which sees them in a deficit light and as though they are not promoting a positive change in their child. It is important to understand that parents and families have their own personal experiences with schools, which can contribute to how they wish to engage with school officials.
Challenge we face as guidance counselor at this school have a lot to do with lack of parental cooperation, in terms of parental expectation and parental cooperation when it comes to the discipline of students. When those parents don't show up, going to be upset when their child was sent home or they're just angry that the child is home for ten days on suspension. So we don't get that kind of cooperation that we would like. Some of them don't even come. They send the children along hoping the child will come back in, but the child it to wait at the gate until- We have some challenges. Sometimes we have teachers may not come to the classes on time, therefore the children are irritable and sometimes they may get in a fight. (Sebrina)

The PTA president, I work closely with her as well, in providing, sometimes they will ask me for ideas on some topics that are relevant to parents, and I will give them topics, or even suggest resources persons and so, and again, through the PTA, any notices that I think parents need to know about. I will send...We have an email system and WhatsApp system and everything. So, I think that we're in a good place. (Syl)

The school context changes parent interactions as well. Nik shared an interesting story about the demands from parents. Nik is at a more affluent school but the demand she shared was related to families from lower SES. The interaction between the parent and the counselor is described below by Nik as:

Some parents are very demanding and very difficult. (Nik)

Nik, is accustomed to a particular dynamic between parents and counselors. Nik mentioned that some families have expectations of receiving services but essentially lack the skills to access the services appropriately. The description of the conversation between the two individuals, parent and counselor, indicates that the parent may have struggled with appropriately asking for assistance. The miscommunication may stem for different learned communicative behavior because of the parent’s SES. Nik did not describe such incidents of miscommunication with the more affluent families. This story was interesting because in a school with students from mostly middle-class backgrounds, the problematic parent mentioned was one from a low SES
background. The ways in which some families may communicate their needs may not be as socially accepting because they may not have access to the cultural or social capital that can help leverage certain situations. In a society that has been critiqued for being elitist and classist, it is imperative that counselors are aware of how they may perpetuate the inequity that exists for students and families from low SES households and access to limited resources (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011).

But even when you try to help them, I think some of the parents think that you're supposed to support them and support the children. There was a young man here that we would give him food, and little stipends, and at Christmas I would do a little hamper, Christmas hamper to give them. And one year, I was unable to do it and the mother was like “so what happened to you last year?” She didn't even say thank you for coming, thank you. (Nik)

**Teachers.** Counselors highlighted some of the relational aspects of working with teachers that promote the profession and also provides challenges in their work with teachers. Counselors indicated that there are a few teachers that do not use proper boundaries. Teacher perceptions of counselors needs to be explored because their views can influence how they interact with the counselor and their willingness to consult or refer. Often times, as indicated in the observations, teachers would refer students to the counselors. Teachers even sought the counselor for some of their personal issues. There was one incident at one of the sites in which a teacher lost a loved one and stopped by the counseling suite to process. At another school, not one of the sites for this study, the researcher was able to provide crisis counseling to some of the staff at the school after they experienced multiple deaths of persons at the school. Other counselors, counseling interns and representatives from the Ministry were present as well and provided crisis counseling to students and staff alike. At all four sites, the researcher observed teachers referring students to
the counselor by stopping by the office, completing a referral form or speaking with the counselor in the corridors as they passed each other. These interactions with the teachers were always positive and collegial. The interactions also frequently caused the counselor to be delayed in getting to their destination but were meaningful and helped more students obtain resources and services. Few challenges exist with teachers, with teachers blurring roles to take on the role of counselor at times on issues that should be referred as reported by Chele below.

All right, so that is one of the major challenges. One of the other things I found in terms of ... that is management, the staff sometimes ... the children will talk to a form teacher, that they may be close with and so on, and about certain matters and matters sometimes that should really involve us as counselors and the form teachers will take it upon themselves, some of them, not the majority, will take it upon themselves to intervene, right? Do some intervention with parents and so on. Really they're not trained as counselors and so when it comes to our attention and then will try to get information from teachers of the other sides a minority then it is like, "Okay well he dealt with that", and so on. (Chele)

Some teachers can be demanding because they want you to do what they're supposed to do, and it's not possible because there's so much that you have to do as a counselor because there's nothing written down specifically in the education act to govern counselors, and they say any other teacher, which can be given to me by the principal, but the teachers do not ... Some of the teachers, not all, do not want to do the simple task of contacting parents within their form or even in their year group, and they expect me to do it and I deal with behavioral issues as well. (Nik)

Some teachers are late to class and students take that time to engage in behaviors like fighting or punishing children when they are unprepared for class when parents may be unable to provide the basic supports. Another issue was lack of teacher cooperation.

…lack of teacher cooperation. Some children fear being unfaired. Teacher tell them to write lines, go and write lines, without telling them what to write. Most of the kids they need to. There is a variety. (Sebrina)
Teacher cooperation is discussed differently across the types of schools, in which counselors have the support from the teachers, and teachers actively refer students to counselors. The teachers are mostly supportive of the counselors. The counselors share the dynamics of their relationships with the teachers.

We have good support staff. Besides the two counselors, we have other teachers who if we were to call ... In other words if we had a dire emergency in the school, we wouldn't be flooded with all of the students to deal with. We have at least two other teachers that we can call on to provide additional counseling. We don't have to call on them because we have not had a situation like that. (Sham)

In an analysis of what Syl mentioned, teachers know that if the student is having a discipline issue, they are to send the student to the deputy principal. In the statement below by Syl, the role of disciplinarian does not align with how the counselors perceive their role.

So, teachers will know, if it is not a disciplinary matter, refer that child to me. So, I have my referral forms. That they will have, and they will sign them up. Write them up. Bring them to me, and I will then see the child. That is my responsibility to make sure that this child is back on its feet. (Syl)

_Administration_. The relationship with the principal and the deputy principal impacted the work guidance counselors were able to engage in. Depending on the administration's view of counseling and its necessity, determined how counselors were able to facilitate their role. All of the counselors mentioned the relationship with the administrators, in particular, the principal and the deputy principal (assistant principal). This relationship is pertinent to their social interactions with other stakeholders and with the students. The amount of interactions and type of interactions differed across the settings. The counselors mostly engaged with the deputy principal and informed the principal of updates with major cases which were cases that required a case conference, referral to an agency, or altercations that occurred between the students.
Relationships with the principal included defining the responsibilities of the counselors, and whether or not they would be assigned to substitute classes or invigilate exams. The principals would provide the mandates or expectations for the counselors, including if counselors had to teach HFLE, supervise and support the HFLE teachers, the numbers of HFLE classes they would be assigned and how the HFLE teachers were assigned. The role confusion was prevalent in the tasks that principals and deputies considered counselors for.

The change of principal, because of the change of principal that is what has caused us now to be more informed of what is happening. (Chele)

Sometimes you don't have a good principal or a deputy principal who is understanding, then you definitely have to go to that class. But in my case, I would say that I don't have that problem, because here at this school, we have two teachers to a class, therefore, it is no problem. I would be able to stay with my students, and everybody will go with that other teacher. (Syl)

While completing an observation at Nik’s school the researcher observed several interactions between the counselor and the deputy principal. The deputy would visit her classes toward the end of the period to update her on actions she needed to take in a case or consult about a student. Nik interacted with the deputy principal more so than the principal on the observed days.

I had no difficulty with administration because I am part of administration and I get along well with the hierarchy, with the principal and the deputy principal. (Nik)

The referral system may facilitate some challenges for guidance counselors if the administrators are unclear about the role of the counselor in the school. Sometimes the principal may wait too late to invite the counselor unto a case in which there are severe repercussions. Student incidents may be handled and then towards the end of the discussion or when students are placed back in
the school after having been referred to receive institutionalized services. Counselors should be briefed and a part of the conversation from the very beginning so appropriate interventions are applied.

...where I was before, the then principal was rather, how do I put it, he was kind of like a one man show. He was more a macro manager. I'm hoping that this is a right term, in that he would do everything. And anything that he could not get done, then he would ask you to do it. This current administration, not this principal, but the deputy as well. He is more of a micromanager. So he is able to leave you within your role to do what you need to do, and just inform him. It is not where he is setting the tone and you follow. For example, an example of what I just said is there is a referral system for another institution, I know the other alternative institution that we spoke about that takes students for two weeks at a time. There's a referral system, whereby the school, meaning the counselor as well as the principal, work to completing the referral to be sent to that school. At my previous institution, I would just complete one section and sign. Now, I am expected to complete the entire form. And I understand why. Because I have to show that after I have done my own intervention, this is my recommendation for this referral. So it allows me to actually do my job. Whereas before you would feel like you were kind of the principal's secretary, just doing what he asked you to do. (Sham)

Sometimes there's a conflict what a deputy or principal wants verses what the guidance counselor thinks...The guidance counselor thinks this child would need additional help, or they may have a wrong view of the situation that I may have a better view of. I may not think that sending the child to Edna Nicholls, maybe I can deal with that situation, but they insist that the child be sent to the institution. (Sebrina)

Sham added that the principal or deputy instructs them to substitute a class. One other challenge is in terms of my timetable at school. Some days we have teachers who are absent. And I may be asked to substitute in a class. That becomes a problem for me, if during the day ... Say for example I am to substitute in period seven. Say by period five a major issue comes up. I now have to deal with that issue with enough time to still go and substitute. If I'm not required to deal with the issue immediately; so sometimes you may have a situation where you're called to sit with a class when really and truly, I'm not being effective. I'm not able to deal with a situation. Or I'm not able to do any paperwork that I need to do, and I can't do anything about that. (Sham)

**Agencies and the Community.** All of the counselors reported collaborations and liaising with agencies and the community. They mentioned several partnerships with local NGOs and
government agencies that work to provide services for students and families. These relationships impact the role of the counselor by promoting their impact but also creating some challenges.

The observations supported the information collected in the interview because the researcher was able to interface with some of the groups that came in to support students, as well as attend meetings in which students and families were referred to services from each school. The counselors worked to “liaise” with the various non-profit organizations, churches, psychologists and psychiatrists, and tertiary institutions.

Sometimes we have outside challenges where you have ... Corporate Barbados, in their quest to fulfill some kind of demand or mandate on their part ... They are sending ... They are sending ... Too many of them are sending information to the school requesting the students. So you have, especially in the first term, from September to December, you have so many invitations to so many different places. So many different conventions, so many different workshops. It's the same children, and sometimes you find that they ... If you do not prioritize again, in terms of the things that are important, and the workshops that you can attend, you will find yourself hither and there and yonder. It's just too much to deal with. Sometimes the red tape acts as a challenge. Now this is a big one. In our system... Yeah, the red tape of initially seeing a child to outside referral, external referrals. Our Ministry of Education has ... Does not have enough social services support staff. And by extension, other agencies that they may incorporate do not have enough support staff. So to adequately and effectively deal with the issues of a country, we have ... I'm not sure how many parishes, but we have 11 parishes so say 11 polyclinics at each polyclinic there is a ... And these are the government-run clinic ... There is a mental health officer attached. And this mental health officer ... but this mental health officer is only there one day a week. And usually half of the day. So if we want to ... If we have an emergency and the parent cannot afford it and most of the parents at this school cannot afford outside doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, in terms of funding. If we have to go to the public system, that red tape ... If you refer a student through student services, then they have to go and sit on a list. Unless it's an emergency where the child is suicidal, or anything along those lines. Those are definitely seen immediately. But do we need to wait until they become suicidal? Until we sense that there is a problem? Then, again going back to referrals, we have limited avenues for external referrals. (Sham)

Other Counselors. The guidance counsellors utilized each other as resources. They have the Barbados Association of Guidance Counsellors which acts as the governing body for
guidance counselors. The members of the association are the current school counselors in the secondary schools. Psychologists and social workers can also join, but interns are unable to become members. The dues paying members are all guidance counselors. They also have a WhatsApp group, an informal group chat for the counselors to stay abreast of what is occurring across the island. This digital space is used to share information, request help from counselors, and inform each other about the issues happening, pertaining to their work. The messages go straight to their phones, and they typically receive the messages instantly, depending on their WIFI access. I did not have access to the group but when I needed information about the study to be shared with all of the counselors, several members were able to share my messages with the entire group. This informal network helped counselors quickly access information like media clips, best practices, upcoming events for professional training and for students, getting assistance with grief and loss cases at schools, and supporting each other through crises at the schools. One example of how the counselors used the space was when an incident occurred at The Alexandra School, the counselor asked for support because a student and one of the co-directors of the Boys Scouts (cadet mentor) had died over the weekend, and the entire school would be in mourning at the beginning of the week (“Double whammy,” 2017; “Update: Police Investigate Drowning,” 2017). The counselors became aware of the need, along with the Ministry of Education. Two people from the MOE, 7-8 counseling interns from other secondary schools, and 5-6 guidance counselors showed up at the school to facilitate groups, individual counseling, and console members of staff as they mourned the loss of the two individuals. Prior to Monday morning, counselors were able to inform their principals and administration that they
would be out of the office, and/or send their interns to this northern school to assist in handling the crisis.

Not only we organize workshops, or attend workshops, but we also try to assist wherever possible at the Ministry of Education. If there's a death at a school, for example, we offer grief and bereavement counseling, to make sure that grief and bereavement counseling. We also engage in, whether it be student, teacher, or principal who would've died, we offer them at the schools, free of cost, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. (Sebrina)

**Older vs Newer Schools.** Students at the older secondary schools are seen as "bright" and are typically from middle to upper socioeconomic status and more affluent. Students that are from lower SES backgrounds are very smart and may have been afforded the opportunity to take lessons, which is common in the middle to upper SES groups. In the ethnographic observations there were clear differences in the student career goals and aspirations. The student needs varied, and the counselors at the older secondary schools spent more time on college preparation, and students spoke about going to universities overseas. The newer secondary schools were founded in the 1970s and initially community-based schools. The schools, once they began to accept the Common Entrance Exam scores, the newer schools began to receive students that were not performing well on the exam. Included in the ethnographic observations of the schools, there was a clear difference in the complexions of the students. At the older secondary schools, the students ranged, from Black Barbadians to European descent, and Asian students, and of varying hues. The students at the newer secondary schools were all of a darker complexion, and mostly Black Barbadians and several darker Indians. One of the counselors mentioned this differentiation as well.

The students basically here are of a low academic profile, that's a challenge. Being able to understand academic work, being able to do it, control their behavior, they have low self-
esteem and being able to control their low self-esteem, not to be involved in fights and that kind of thing. That's a challenge to us, trying to get the children don't like to go home and learn anything. They don’t like memorizing. Gone are the day where they just memorize and come back. We have a problem with spelling. We have a problem with reading because they are low academic profile. A lot of them might have gotten extremely low marks in the 11 plus common entrance exam or some of them under 20% so we have to try to get them back up certain speed that they can read before we can get anything out of them. (Sebrina)

The challenges at older secondary schools are different than those at newer schools. The parents advocate for their children and demand services for their children more so than parents at newer schools.

So, in comparison to the older secondary schools, I know they have situations where the parents ... the school is threatened with lawsuits and so on because their parents might come from upper socioeconomic background. So, sometimes, the teachers and staff and administration and the ministry are threatened with lawsuits. I can’t remember being threaten with anything here, at District Secondary. I don't know if that is good or bad, but I have never come across any situation with that happening here at this school. So, there, they would have those threats. (Chele)

Families and students engage with the education system differently based on their ideas of privilege. Some families may decide to withhold information from schools because they feel like someone from their background should not have a particular issue or challenge. This secrecy may limit the student’s access to resources and impact their help seeking behaviors.

In fact, I found that when it was happening at the older secondary schools, I was saying, "Well, I'm not seeing any of that." Children are not coming with these self-harming behaviors, but it started to trickle in, maybe about two years ago or so here, where I saw it. I'm not saying that there were not children that were doing it, but at least those that came and that came to my attention. So, that was one of the other things, right? You see more of that within the older secondary schools than with those in this school. And I'm not sure if it is because our students here, if something happens, they are very quick to want to use their face or use their hand or so on, whereas the students who are considered to be at the higher socioeconomic background who, they again might not want to disclose certain things or share certain things or they don't want people to know that this thing is
happening to us because we are supposed to be better than this, in terms of our behavior. So, that too is one of the challenges I see happening. (Chele)

One of the school counselors processed the difference in the complexions of the students. The remnants of colonialism are prevalent in the complexions of the people, with the lighter individuals being given more resources and opportunities and less opportunities for the darker complexions.

But we don't have ... I don't see it. I don't see it. As I said, maybe because everybody's really dark. Yeah, everybody's dark. Maybe it might be that. But years ago, we did have a few sprinkle in. Even when they went to school, there were about one or two Caucasian students here and ... like just here? They were just here? (Chele).

The Eurocentric ideologies rooted in privilege present an underlying issue within the school system. One counselor implicitly compared the experience at her school to the older secondary schools. Again, colorism is mentioned in terms of how student experiences are different based on their complexion. Depending on the individual’s complexion and proximity to whiteness changes their level of privilege. This excerpt also speaks to the interactions between the students based on colorism.

You wouldn't see it at this school for sure. Actually, on the flip side, there are few students at our school that are of a lighter complexion and there are biracial students. There's actually one that is certainly biracial. Could be Indian and Black or could be White and Black. Then we have some that are Indian, dark-skinned Indian, but they have the Indian hair. So at this school, those students are the students that are ... Even though they are in the minority, they are the ones that the boys gravitate towards, because they're different. I believe that if I were at another secondary school where there were more of a balance in terms of Blacks, Whites, Asians, you would have that racism, classism, more classism. Because you may even find some Blacks whose parents are wealthy, mixing more with those Whites or Asians. You know, what you would call the Oreos. Black with white on the inside. (Sham)
Sham followed up with information on another school setting that she previously worked at. The students at this school struggled academically and came from low SES backgrounds. The comments provided on students from low economic background may lead to further analysis of how are Barbadian school counselors processing wealth and access to resources.

...those students were the most challenged students in Barbados. They came from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, they were challenged academically in the again, taking the percentage range, they would have scored in the in our exam that you take, the entrance exam to come into secondary school. They would've scored between zero and 30%. Some of them did not take the exam because they were attending a school that would have just transferred them to that secondary school because of the makeup of that secondary school...That school, many students would go to that school and sometimes leave without having and always leave most of the time, 95% of the students who left that school, wouldn’t leave with any certification. They would just leave and go onto menial jobs. The type of student that went to that school was a tough student and a ... their chances of making something of themselves was very, very limited and low. But, there are always one or two that would defy all odds. There was this one student that was able to acquire a level one certification in amenities horticulture. (Sham)

**Student Issues.** Student Issues relate to the mental, emotional, behavioral and psychological issues students are dealing with across the schools. Students face many issues in the Barbadian society and some of the issues may be due to more global shifts, and other issues related to the local content of Barbados. The use of technology may add to the issues that students are presenting and may create pathways to approaching and tending to their identified needs. Technology is impacting students and changing the way they interface with conflicts and communication.

What I would add would be something relating to technology. And the whole idea of ... Oh gosh, I lost my ... There's a term ... Digital Natives. The whole idea of digital natives and how, as a digital native, students should still be able to communicate with each other face to face, versus the constant digital communication technology. I find that that is something that we have to teach our children to do. They are fast losing the ability to resolve conflict and communicate with each other and with adults. Because they are always head down in some piece of technology. And while that is good, while the access
to technology is good, the emphasis and the impact that it creates on them can be negative at times. I don't know ... I have never been able to observe a student of a higher academic level to see how they relate but what I can see from my culture here is that there is a fast-growing inability to simply communicate because the person is in front of you and not behind a screen. So that is the only thing I would add. The relevance and the place of technology in our lives today. Yes, it is good. I love technology. I'm there. However, when you go from one direction to the next, you need that balance. That is the only thing I would add. (Sham)

Students are also managing their aggression, gangs in the community, defensiveness and combativeness. The students bring in various issues and some of the issues are more frequent at specific schools, particularly the newer schools. The intensity and frequency of the cases varied at the schools.

Our children come from the different societies in Barbados and a lot of them are really societies where you have, communities where they will have violence, a lot of poor, from the lower socioeconomic background. A lot of children that are very poor and the issues that they face are multiple and compounded and as a result, we have so many to deal with. I remember one year, I decided that I was going to start to investigate and to interview all of my students from fourth year who were coming in. And I did not get through one form. There were like seven forms and each of the forms had about twenty/twenty five or whatever, maybe when I got to about the tenth or so I said, "I'm done with this. This will kill me. This will kill me." Because students that I did not think would have issues that would be really, really complex and so on, everybody seemed to have something to deal with. And I said, "No, no, no. I have to deal with these when they occur and come up to deal with them." Because there were too many and I think that is one of the major ... we have too many social problems, so many social problems. Whether it is drugs in their homes, in their community. There's a lot of abuse of different nature, different natures, neglect, the sexual, the physical, the emotional, the verbal, right, all of those are what we're dealing with. And as a result, it comes through in terms of they're not being able to settle, to sit down and read more academically and so on. That severely affects them and it affects what happens in the classes. (Chele)

Research Question 2: What factors influence school counseling in Barbados?

This research question explores the factors identified by Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015), These 11 factors were identified as influencing school counseling in countries, particularly as they relate to development and practices. This section will discuss how the factors
are applicable to school counseling in the Barbadian context and if additional factors emerged that influence school counseling practice in Barbados.

1) **Cultural factors**: Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) found that cultural factors such as local cultural views and aspects of culture, like religion, spirituality, healing practices and helping practices, helped to shape school counselor. In Barbados, the Barbadian culture plays a major role in the way school counseling services are facilitated across the island. The people of Barbados operate with a collectivist mindset valuing care and concern for their neighbors. Even though they look out for their neighbors, historically, the country has embraced the privacy mindset of not sharing family business. Sharing private information in school was frowned upon because families would turn inward to solve issues that arose, as opposed to seeking help in public spaces. This commitment to keeping secrets translates to the stigma in counseling. Students were hesitant to seek services because they understood the cultural norm of not sharing private information. Christianity is also a major component of their culture. Many of the counselors belong to the Christian faith and the religion is infused in the culture, and in the schools. The students take Religious Studies and they have morning devotion or prayers. This quote from Syl describes one such cultural factor: Students don't say "the counselor talking my business to somebody." (Syl)

Some of the codes under culture included: students weren't used to coming in and talking about their problems; student perceptions moved from "not about being mad" or "no stigma attached"; and "why do I have to pay you to tell you my business?"; "you are brothers and sisters"; and "we are your parents." Other codes included everyone know each other, confidence in counselor, trust, go to the counselors whom they trust, cultural impact on
counseling, things get around, reluctant in disclosing, reserved about telling their personal business, gets around easy in society, not going to any and everybody, Christian commitment, go to Prayers, prayers and devotion, respect, kindness, care, communal community, communal spirit, small community, everybody mesh, close knit society, Barbados is small, chat on a different level, 7-8 of the counselors are 7th Day Adventist, becoming Americanized, apply to your culture, people standing back, influence of American television.

2) **National needs**: The original theme was described as “needs associated with governmental or popular support for counseling in schools affecting how school-based counseling developed or was practiced in that country at the time the study was undertaken.” (Martin, Lauterbach & Carey, 2015). The Barbados government is currently focusing on some of the issues students are presenting in schools. Some of the national needs include concerns about school violence, HIV/AIDS, and sexuality. Government and school policymakers are concerned about the increased violence in schools and how “block culture” is impacting the students. The current Prime Minister, the Honourable Mia Mottley, has called for more counselors in the schools to address these issues. The current Minister of Education, Santia Bradshaw, has asked for a plan to address the violence in schools and would like school counselors to be a part of the process of developing strategies to counteract school violence. The researcher attended a private briefing that had media coverage, along with other counselors. The schools are also working to inform students about HIV/AIDS and sexual health. The counselors were invited to attend a briefing from the National HIV/AIDS Commission, in which the Commission shared an executive
summary on the state of HIV/AIDS in Barbados. The counselors are expected to work with the individuals that would be coming in to present to the various first form classes on HIV/AIDS prevention in all the secondary schools. Further, counselors have mentioned the need for increased services and support, both at the primary and secondary level. Many issues identified by students have occurred in primary school and yet, the students are working with school counselors to help develop coping skills to handle such problems and they begin secondary school with unresolved trauma. Sham explains some of the larger issues counselors are dealing with and what issues are increasing in the larger national needs area.

...see counselors possibly being trained more to deal with aggression, violence, in a more forceful way. Whereas, yes, it was something that the principal, the deputy principal dealt with. I believe that counselors will ... Because there's a marriage between behavioral issues and psychological issues, I see that as something counselors will have to deal more with. (Sham)

The codes under this factor addressed the larger national issues that relate to school violence and other issues that lead to a need for more school counselors in schools and more training. Such codes included: need for additional support, counselor for every year group (form), documentation in the Education Act, and professional training. Other codes in this factor included: society has changed, "people afraid to come to you assistance", economy, society, stabbing each other, killing each other, violence, bystander effect, influence of American television, family, home visits perceived as dangerous, accompanied by police officer, or have the police do the visit, family problems, economy, welfare, latch key kids, looking after siblings, difficulties at home, adults needing counseling and put their issues on children, behavioral (aggressive, challenging behavior, conflict, fighting, violence), mental (emotionally deficient/instability, suicide).
3) **Larger societal movements**: Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) describe the third theme as the larger issues in education reform and the field of education. According to Martin, et al., (2015) many of the global initiatives which affect school counseling programs focus on funding preschool and primary education and enhancing the tertiary programs from student. When larger funding sources seek to assist small states, such as Barbados, the focus is not on the local issues but on the larger societal forces. Larger societal movements are the focus on gender issues in schools, ending corporal punishment, increasing access to tertiary education, and special education. The Caribbean has a strong university system, UWI, in which the students have low costs to attend school. In Barbados specifically there has been an increase in students attending tertiary school. Additionally, the push for better preschool and primary school accessibility has been addressed in Barbados. Now, the principal and the deputy principals are typically the only ones that give lashes to students. Chele explains the work she engages in with students are career planning and career preparation with a central focus on tertiary options for students.

But mainly as I said it is to work with the children and help the children with their problems and issues, and have a listening ear to the students as well. And also, give them, take them on tours, because just recently we went to the Samuel Jackman, well the Institute of Technology, yeah SJPI. The institution of technology. And they are writing applications or print applications for that institution, and that is the practical experience and so on that they will get. So they were able to go and see and view and observe what happens in that institution, so they will have had a tour first, and that would help them to make a decision as to which particular area or division they would want to apply for. We will also do tours in another institution, the Barbados Vocation Training Board, right, the Barbados Vocational Training Board. Also the Youth Service, and community college, they will get some opportunities to go there. And to plan career guidance programs, usually we have a career showcase every year, and I assist with planning that career showcase as well. We usually do a national one, and usually I'm on that committee. We do a national one, where we bringing it a little later this year. Usually by this month that's when we already have that taken care of, but we're thinking about having it a little later,
maybe October this year. So having a career showcase is something that we plan as well. (Chele)

Nik discussed one of the major issues such as corporal punishment and some of the heavily debated opinions on the matter.

I'm also on the school's positive behavioral management program as a counselor because it's the opinion of the ministry that we can get across the students without necessarily flogging. That we can use other positive behavioral issues like using behavioral change issues to get them to adhere. And like I said I was on the behaviors before but some of the things that you use in behaviorism can work. It just depends on you have to know the individual child. Sometimes the only thing that will wake up a child however is a flogging. And when they get a flogging sometimes they don't want another. And they do what they're supposed to do. So I am a proponent of tough love when it's needed. (Nik)

The codes focused on helping students with career planning (tertiary or postsecondary applications for BCC, Polytechnic, Vocational Training Board, UWI, overseas, college, taking students on tours, hotels), and academic ability.

4) Models of school counseling: The original theme was described as the school counseling models and the “adoption or development of a model” (Martin, Lauterbach & Carey, 2015). Many of the guidance counselors in Barbados were trained under the U.S. model of school counseling. The current school counseling master’s program at UWI Cave Hill teaches the ASCA model and the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics. The counselors’ practices have evolved since the inception of counseling in 1988. However, the current practices are not outlined and described anywhere, which leads to role confusion and lack of consistency in practices across the various schools. According to local school counselors, the need exists for a culturally relevant model to be developed to account for the model the counselors use. Although, they loosely refer to the U.S. model, some components are not applicable to the local
context and the U.S. model does not include the cultural aspects of Barbadian society such as the role of Christianity and religion in schools, the inclusion of HFLE, and the work they do with students, families, committees within the schools, and their role in the community. The help seeking behaviors of local students need to be considered in how counselors support and advocate for their students, especially some of their more vulnerable students. At risk students in Barbadian culture are students from low income backgrounds, immigrant students from other Caribbean countries that are living in Barbados, LGBTQIA youth, and religious minorities. In several interactions with the counselors they would ask the researcher about current practices in the U.S. to see if any of the practices would be applicable to Barbados, including the recommended caseload of 250 per counselor in the U.S. (ASCA, 2012).

The counselors referred to the U.S. model often and the codes related to attending conferences overseas like ASCA national conference. Other codes included the need to establish ethical and legal standards and develop a model of their own.

5) Laws and educational policy: Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) describes the fifth theme as the specific educational policy and laws that impact school counseling. The codes include the role of the government and funding for training and hiring counselors. Certain regulations, laws, and policies govern school counseling practices and dictate the work of school counselors and their daily practices. The Ministry of Education policy dictates that school counselors are responsible for teaching a maximum of 10 classes per week. Another policy relates to the referral process, in which counselors report to and consult with the principal at their schools in order to
make referrals. Additionally, no uniformity exists in the documents that counselors use in reporting or documenting their work, and sometimes included in case discussions and meetings with students and families in the aftermath and not a part of initial discussions, responses, and formal responses to incidents and cases. Nik expressed a school policy that she has to adhere to.

If they say that with the cell phones, that the children shouldn't have cell phones. But with the way that the climate is in society nowadays I think that some of our children especially those who catch the bus, will need to have a cell phone that they can contact their parents if there are any issues. But if the school says you're not supposed to have a cell phone then you're not supposed to have a cell phone. (Nik)

The codes include: referrals (referrals to the Childcare Board in cases of abuse, Juvenile Liaison Scheme in cases of anger management or conflict resolution, Edna Nicholls for behavior and attitudinal problems, PAREDOS for parenting, Probation Department, boys and girls government industrial schools), notify principal and the principal will notify the MOE and Childcare Board, mandates (cases of abuse, violence and aggression, self-harming behavior), liaise with remedial teachers; plan strategic remedial instruction in school where students are of low academic profile, procedure to notify parents so they can take responsibility of their children, they can take their child to QEH, A & E, C4 Child Clinic, Child Guidance Clinic, contact MOE, follow up, HFLE, timetable

6) Characteristics of the public education system: Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) describe this factor as the nuances of public education in the country. The structure of the Barbadian school system is one that is very complex. The counselors interact with the administrators, parents and community agencies. The interactions with the various stakeholders are mostly positive although counselors have mentioned that they are sometimes left out of the
initial meetings with students. Counselors also mentioned that teachers may overstep their role and try to assist students instead of referring students to the counselors. The education system is colloquially ranked according to academic performance; thus, schools are referred to as older or newer depending on when they were established and what scores students must inquire on the BSSEE to attend the school. Due to some systemic changes along the way the newer schools have students that have struggled with academic performance and now provide additional opportunities for students to gain practical experiences in trades. The older schools typically have higher academic performance and increased resources due to the historical wealth and capital poured into these schools. Overall, the schools work to prepare students for postsecondary options and the world of work. The BAGC hosts an annual Career Showcase and several other groups hosts similar events. The different organizations provide college and career fairs, and universities come to visit the individual schools as well. Additionally, there are job shadow opportunities for students, along with internships but not every student is able to take advantage of these opportunities. Sebrina discussed her role in career exploration with her students and this experience is shared by the other counselors because BAGC plans the National Career Showcase, along with regional or individual Career Showcase events.

…where we have to plan some educational, professional development for counselors, and also assist in the planning of National Career Showcase, and even this Northern Career Showcase, which is zonal more or less…(Sebrina)

The codes informing this factor included: Counseling (personal, individual, career, group, peer, grief and bereavement); implementing programs within the schools (speech day, career showcase); referrals and liaise with outside agencies (Juvenile Liaison Scheme, Edna Nicholls, government industrial schools, child guidance clinic, psychiatric assessment unit, polyclinic,
businesses, companies); providing services for families (food baskets); case management (student follow up, making and returning calls, calling agencies, mental plan or written plan).

7) The counseling profession: The original factor outlined by Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) states that the larger counseling profession provides implications for the development of school counseling in the local context of the country. The island first established counseling in the schools in 1988 and since then, the role of the counselor has expanded. With time, one of the local colleges, Erdiston Teachers’ Training College created a guidance and counselling certificate and a HFLE certificate. Now, UWI Cave Hill offers a master’s degree in School Counselling. The university also has a social work program and a counseling psychology program. Both social work and counseling psychology interns can receive supervision from guidance counselors. The Barbados Association for Guidance Counsellors works collaboratively with the Ministry of Education to tend to immediate issues that arise within the schools, but sometimes breakdown in communication occurs. The association, in conjunction with the Ministry, provides trainings for practitioners, but this practice is not ongoing and consistent. The collective BAGC organization is aware of the everyday issues that counselors face and they are able to organize and bring the support to the Ministry to advocate for the work of counselors. Chele discussed the new qualifications for the position and some of the challenges with what occurs in the field.

A bachelor's degree. I think there was a new policy, in terms of the qualifications. I think we are supposed to have a first degree in counseling, behavioral science, guidance and counseling, in that area. I think we would say, was just a degree, and you had to have teacher training as well, before. I don't think that is a requirement, as well… Well, working with children, there should be some type of training, or some qualification, which this is involved in actually having some practical experience with the children,
within the setting, to help you to deal with them, as well. Because a first degree in counseling, I don't think you actually do any practical sessions, or anything like that. I don't think there were any practical sessions. Work with the children. (Chele)

Codes related to this factor address the need for ongoing training and representation at the Ministry. The codes included: advocacy in the MOE (they should know what are counselor challenges and correct them, nobody in MOE to represent counselors, need an education officer, no support from MOE); remedial approaches rather than proactive, if there were counselors in primary schools, problems could be nipped right there; MOE provided a lot of training in the beginning but not ongoing); training for counselors and advocacy (more exposure to the best practices, areas that they might not have been trained in, attend international conferences like ACA); see advocacy as marketing and defending counseling position (I have to be pushing, pushing, promote my job, explain work as interconnected with staff); suggestions for qualifications (should have at least a certificate in guidance and counseling, too vague, certification, training must be essential/sanctioned, individual group, teaching HFLE, family therapy, counseling skills and theories, practical experience, trial period of 6 months to a year in an acting position, human resource management, help management, conflict resolution, nothing in the statue says must have master's, need a master's in counseling and guidance, or social work, not just a first degree in any subject, opportunity to do internship).

8) **Research and evaluation**: According to Martin, et al. there have been limited research and evaluation completed on school counseling practices and effectiveness. Similarly, in Barbados, the need for research and evaluation exists, but this gap in school counseling data exists because there is a lack of documentation of services and best practices. The counselors are inundated with
large caseloads which make it difficult to document daily practices and due to the sensitivity of the information they handle, make it difficult for them to play a role in the research and evaluation because it’s hard to quantify their work. Much of the work that counselors engage in is difficult to document because there may not be tangible quantitative changes in their clients but the need for both qualitative and quantitative research should be explored. Sebrina explains a component of their position that could benefit from being documented but is quite difficult to document and yet counselors are the ones responsible for dealing with the students.

There are some who don’t have money to pay for their books or school fees, in general. That too is a challenge because they are punished for what they don’t have. They don’t have a recorded. They don’t have a music book, not a PE book, not PE game clothes, so that is a challenge, they come to me. I have to explain that his parent really don’t have any money. It is difficult for them to see that. (Sebrina)

Syl provided an example of how research and evaluation would influence the school counseling program as well.

Training for counselors should also be ongoing, spearheaded from the Ministry of Education based on the research that is done on yearly or bi-yearly basis. Then that specific training should be in place for counselors automatically. (Syl)

The codes related to attending conferences, both regionally and internationally. The counselors expressed wanting to see what other counselors are doing to help inform their practice. There was some acknowledgement of them wanting to engage in research and evaluation of the school counseling programs.

9) **Relationships with Key Stakeholders**: This factor was initially named Related Professions by Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) and refers to the relationship that counselors share with
related professionals (i.e., professionals in the school and other professionals like psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists) and how these actions between the professions impact the development of school counseling. In this study, this factor is renamed Relationships with Key Stakeholders because of the emphasis on the work the counselors do with parents, teachers, and administrators. The counselors engage with teachers quite often, and take on the role of a teacher when they teach HFLE courses. The counselors are listed under the Public Service Teachers Order (BGIS, 2016) which adds to the misinterpretation of their role. Teachers often refer students to the counselor but in some instances, they overstep their role and try to assist students and families. The teachers typically step in to assist the student because of the relationship and rapport they have established with the student, and this rapport may also come from the small population size of Barbados. The teachers may know the students from the community and not just in the professional capacity of their role. Again, with no clear definition of what counselors are responsible for, these instances promote challenges for counselors in advocating for their position and promoting their responsibilities. The counselors identified the relationship with their administrators as vital to getting their work done because their tasks are assigned by the administrators within the school. The parents and families are extremely imperative in the development of school-based counseling and their support and cooperation assist in increasing positive student outcomes.

So the challenge is having to prioritize in terms of importance. From the parents. And then you have a challenge of not being able to communicate with them. Not being… not having to-to-date information with parents. Parents change their cell phone numbers so often. Or change land line providers so often. And forget to update the school, to inform the school. And that is very important. If something happens to the student, if something happens to a student, then you’re not able to contact parents. (Sham)
The codes are as follows: boundaries (teacher will intervene and take it upon themselves to do an intervention with parents, teachers trying to be counselors), teachers late to class, children fight, teacher punishing children who don't have supplies (when parent don't have money), lack of teacher cooperation ("some children fear being unfair", teacher tell them to write lines, don't tell them what to write), need for team approach, needs to be recognized, clearly defined roles by MOE and students understand they offer a range of services, to be treated like deputy, principal, lack of funding "they cannot hire", funding- need own printer, resources, access to WIFI, the room the counselor has access to, equal treatment, should be able to travel ... to some conferences to learn best practices,

10) Partnerships with Community, Government Organizations and Professionals: The original factor was labeled Community Organizations or NGO coalitions and the focus was on support and development of related resources from NGOs and organizations that helped school counseling (Martin, Lauterbach & Carey, 2015). Counselors in Barbados identified the relationships with stakeholder as crucial to their work. The partnerships they share with the stakeholders are imperative and the relationships are the key to the continuity of school counseling services. This factor had to be renamed because it goes beyond the stakeholders’ perspectives and refers to the connection that counselors have with the stakeholders. This theme needed to be renamed to fully describe the collaboration counselors engage in with partners to develop and promote the work of school-based counseling in Barbados. The school administration and counselors partner with various community organizations and NGOs to promote wellbeing in the schools. Sometimes, the counselors are responsible for these
partnerships or they work closely with the organizations to provide the services to students.

Sham discusses her role with a local NGO that provides services to her students:

They can talk about things that they would relate to. Drugs, alcohol, deviance, violence, stuff like that. That time is specifically for me. I am to liaise, in terms of the program, the out of school program that comes into our school, there's a non-profit organization called Supreme Counseling for Personal Development and I liaise with their persons to coordinate, assume the running of that program here on site because the way how it works is their personnel will come to the school when students are being ... are here for orientation. Parents sign them up for the program. Then based on how many students that they have, they create lists and the students have facilitated small groups… (Sham)

Counselors shared such examples of the organizations, some of which are found in the codes that follow: external partnerships (clinic, welfare, agencies, community health nurse, probation, psychiatrist, Child Care Board, PAREDOS, Edna Nichols, Juvenile Liaison Scheme, Here to Care Program, Breakfast program, mentorship, My Child and I program, UWI Open Campus World to Work program, Sunshine Optimist Club International); community outreach (ex. media calls, churches, foundations, NGOs); liaising (ex. non-profits, more with psychologists and psychiatrists, and tertiary institutions); challenges (invitations to students from many businesses "Corporate Barbados", brings a lot of administrative work, report to Childcare Board but they're overwhelmed too so it's impossible to not deal with the child once they report, "difficult situations", professional don't always respond to us or give detailed reports or feedback once the students return, lines of communication need to be clearer- agency perspective of counselors)

11) **Local stakeholder perceptions:** Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) described this factor as the views of current stakeholders impacting the development of school counseling in the particular country. The perceptions of local stakeholders in Barbados are extremely important for
the work of counselors. The counselors identified “liaising” more often in terms of their relationships with other stakeholders. They work closely with teachers, parents, administrators, other counselors and local community agencies and organizations. Each stakeholder group presents its own challenges, but they mostly collaborate and promote the work of counselors. The administrators’ perception of counselors ultimately determines the work the counselors are able to engage in because the principals and deputy principals are responsible for assigning the roles and responsibilities for counselors. Sham mentioned the style of her former principal, in which she described the demands that came down from the principal.

…micromanager, macromanager, inform him, "kind of like principal's secretary", "it allows me to do my job", "where he is setting the tone and you just follow" (Sham)

The codes that appeared under this factor were related to the perceptions of local stakeholders. The codes consisted of the Principal-counselor relationship; counselor left out of decision; communication with administration, principal style)

12) Local Curriculum: This factor is new and emerged from the data. The local curriculum was discussed so much throughout the interviews and the observations that it needed its own factor. The factor is titled local curriculum to cover the HFLE curriculum that is used in schools. HFLE has been used in Barbados and across the Caribbean. The counselors deem the facilitation of HFLE and managing the HFLE pseudo-department are huge components of their position. The counselors like the curriculum but some have stated feeling like it needs some updates to fit the current state of the island and the skills the students need to develop. The curriculum also includes cultural aspects such as religiosity because Barbados is heavily influenced by
Christianity and many of the counselors are Christians. The public secondary schools also include Religious Studies, Prayer and Devotion multiple times throughout the week.

I don't have a problem with the HFLE program. I adapt it to suit myself… 'Cause we look at sexuality, how sexuality in maleness or femaleness, and we look at adolescent development, I look at bullying. That's all part of the program… I would just adapt it if there are issues going on, I adapt it to suit my particular needs. Because my needs will not be the same as other schools. I adapt it to suit me and then, I can get through the program quicker because my kids are quick on the uptake. So I don't have to spend that greater length of time on certain issues because we look at the family. We look at human development. Human growth development. We look at self-esteem issues. When I deal with human development, I also look at puberty, adolescent development, and I talk to the first formers on a level that they can understand. When it gets to other students, we look at the second formers' performance. I will look at sexually transmitted diseases. I will look at... I talk about abstinence because some children become sexually active quite early. I don't talk about condom use. I talk about abstinence and avoiding STIs, and I talk about all those things, so I adapt to suit the needs of my particular school… I'm quite happy with what I'm... what's happening. And I can... There's a curriculum there that we use but... and there's some books that we have but we don't have a specific book per say to suit... So you have to take from here and you have to take from there. You adapt it to suit. You supplement what you're given and you take that information because we look at... I look at study skills as well. (Nik)

The codes included various aspects of the HFLE curriculum, including the qualifications in which counselor trainees should have knowledge of HFLE, no fear of teaching sexuality in HFLE, teach HFLE, timetabling, strengthen HFLE curriculum. The counselors expressed a need for a team approach and the codes included at least 2 additional guidance counselors and 1 social worker, and a psychologist as well, need for additional staff, need for a social worker (deal more with social emotional, behavioral), additional counselor; primary schools (1 counselor to 2 schools, depends on the number of students); to change the image, seen on the level of principal and deputy (currently seen more as middle managerial), strengthen HFLE curriculum, strengthen the perception and image (place of safety, refuge, protection), every child should pass through the counseling office, team approach (3 counselors; 2 counselors, and 1 social worker/ or
counseling psychologist, HFLE teacher); resource center, limitations, terms of service, what's expected, hours, more uniformity, input in terms of policy, influence policy/ guidelines, take away substitution,

**Conclusion**

This chapter began with the process the researcher used to analyze the findings of the study. The chapter explicitly states the themes, subthemes, and begins to retell the story of the counselors. The themes presented above include the 3R’s Roles, Responsibilities, and Requirements; Problematizing Policies, Politics and Culture; and understanding the School Family Community Context that influence the role of school counselors, and. The three themes show how counselors in Barbados perceive their roles, practices, challenges and demands, as well as the factors that influence school-based counseling on the island. The counselors spend a lot of time tending to the HFLE program, as well as career and personal/social issues that students bring in. While facilitating their role, external factors such as the government, level of training, and the culture impact their work. The key stakeholders such as parents, teachers, administrators, and outside agencies influence their work as well. Many factors promote the profession, but may also provide challenges for counselors. Chapter 5 discusses these components and ultimately show how the Barbadian context is similar and unique to other countries in similar positions. The following chapter covers the implications of the study and answers the research questions. Recommendations are given for Barbados, practitioners, counselor educators and international educators.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Chapter 5, the final chapter in this dissertation, covers the interpretation and implications of all the data collected and used in this study. The themes and subthemes that were identified in the previous chapter create opportunities for further analysis and implications. The study also leaves us with more questions. The analysis allows for a discussion of the themes and what they mean for practitioners, counselor educators, policy makers, and researchers in Barbados, other small states, African Diasporic countries, and even other cultures that are not centered as the "gold standard" in this study. The decentering of Western cultures allows us the opportunity to learn from a collectivist society that works to provide the best school-based counseling services they deem fit for their students at the time of this study and potential to compare to other island states.

The study is a first attempt to gain a comprehensive understanding of school counseling in a small state and specifically in Barbados, the study provides a methodological approach for researchers hoping to study school counseling roles, practices, challenges and demands in countries with maturing school counseling programs. The study employed a conceptual framework that focuses on school-based counseling in non-US international contexts, in both African Diaspora countries and small states. The qualitative analysis essentially promotes depth in understanding the nuances of school counseling in Barbados, especially since there are no studies on school counseling in this specific context (Crossley, 2008).
Limitations of the Study

Due to time constraints, the researcher included a member check with four of the informants. The researcher met with four of the informants and reviewed the findings but the fifth informant was unable although supportive of the work. Not being able to meet with one of the informants may serve as a limitation but the counselor was in constant communication with the researcher while she was on the island prior to collecting data and during the data collection process and the counselor has been extremely supportive of the study. Once the themes were established, the researcher would have liked to share the information with the informants. The one informant would have been able to clarify interpretations and include additional information that the researcher may have missed but with the four confirming and agreeing, providing additional feedback and other methods employed in this study, the four member checks ultimately strengthen the study. This process is utilized for credibility and making sure their meanings align with the themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher did not contact the informants if she had questions about their statements and was able to clarify the terms.

Some limitations existed within the study which need to be addressed. The study heavily relies on self-reporting of the counselors and ethnographic observations. The counselors may have decided to give more acceptable and desirable answers to questions due to the small community they live in and potential for identifiable information being shared. Another limitation is that the primary investigator’s biases may impact the interpretation of the data, in terms of what she deems important, which may have hindered her fully grasping the lens of the counselors. To assist with this limitation, the researcher utilized a research team that is familiar with the Caribbean school system, has Caribbean heritage, worked in Barbadian schools as a
teacher or counselor, or worked with other schools in the Caribbean. The researcher also utilized several data collection methods to ensure triangulation throughout study, and account for credibility and trustworthiness (Creswell, 2014). The researcher utilized a research team, multiple interviews with multiple informants, observations, and peer-debriefing as part of the data collection and analysis processes.

Nonetheless, the study makes a valuable contribution to the field of international counseling, specific to school-based counseling. This study has implications for the counselors, counselor educators, policy makers, and researchers. Below is the discussion of the major findings from the study for each of the research questions, followed by the implications for each group including Barbados counselors, the Ministry of Education, policy makers, counselor educators, and researchers.

**Discussion of the Major Findings**

The overarching themes and subthemes overlapped to answer the research questions. The themes that emerged from the data to answer the first research question are (a) “The 3R’s” Roles, Responsibilities, and Requirements, (b) Problematizing the Policies, Politics and Culture, and (c) School-Family-Community Contexts. The 3R’s focus on the immediate components of the counseling positions and how they see themselves and their expectations of their role. The second theme, Problematizing the Policies, Politics and Culture, refers to the larger societal issues and the role of the government in impacting school counselors and providing the guidelines and policies for practice. The third theme is School Family Community Contexts, which encompasses the stakeholders and how counselors interact with each group.
Research Question 1

How do school counselors in Barbados define and describe their roles, practices, challenges, and demands of their position?

The roles and practices of Barbadian school counselors were outlined in the study. The counselors identified their major role and additional roles that they engage in. The major role was coordinating and administering the HFLE program, and additional roles included providing individual and group counseling services to students, meetings with parents and administrators, serving on various committees and liaising with key stakeholders both within the schools and the community. Their major role is the facilitation of the HFLE program at their school sites as they are responsible for teaching up to ten HFLE classes and supervising the curriculum for the HFLE. While they appreciate the information provided in HFLE, they would like to engage with the content in a different manner and to update the information taught in the HFLE program to align with current times and issues. The additional roles that counselors engage in are individual and group counseling, collaborations with administrators, teachers and other stakeholders, and serving on committees. The identified roles seem to align more with how they identify and see their work. These findings are supported by Maynard’s (2014) article in which she captures the challenge that Barbadian counselors have with no clear role definition. Maynard (2014) states that counselors are typically perceived as crisis management at the last minute and are not used to their full capacity. The counselors should continue to process which roles they see as relevant to their role and components of their position they do not see counterproductive. This finding calls for a discussion on the need for a national model of school counseling developed by Barbadian school counselors to guide their work.
Counselors are somewhat limited in their roles because of role confusion, an issue is similar to what occurs in school counseling programs in other countries. In most of the countries, counselors do not feel that their roles are clearly defined. For example, in Belize, Botswana, and Nigeria, because counselors are not given a clear role description, this lack of clarification presents a challenge for them (Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017; Smith-Augustine, 2012; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010; Stockton, Nitza, Ntinda, & Ncube, 2016). Indeed, standardization of counseling would provide clarity in school counselors’ job description, but also in the various processes they engage in.

The number of students on Barbadian counselors’ caseloads vary and because there is no local school counseling model, no ideal student-counselor ratio has been established. Counselors expressed feeling overloaded and limited in meeting the needs of all their students. In other countries like Nigeria and Malta, large caseloads are an issue for the counselors as well (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016; Okocha & Aika, 2012; Sultana, 1998). In Malta, in some settings counselors have additional support such as trainee counselors and guidance teachers (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016; Sultana, 1998). In Barbados they have attempted to provide additional assistance with HFLE by offering HFLE training to teachers, but this attempt has not been maintained because teachers are assigned to teach HFLE depending on their availability, regardless of being trained in HFLE.

Just as in other cultures, the stigma against counseling is still prominent in the Barbadian culture (Admundson, Niles, & Hohenshil, 2015; Coker & Majuta, 2015; Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012). The notion that students should keep their personal and family business private and secret is still the majority mindset within the society. With parents and within the
Barbadian culture in general, although the stigma toward counseling has decreased and more students are open the counseling, the stigma is still present. Similar to Barbados, this stigma affects school counselors’ roles and practices in other countries. In Botswana, the recommendation was made to practice more integrative approaches to counseling and to include local healing practices along with counseling (Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). Counselors should be informed by examining the help seeking behaviors of Barbadian students, so that they can better address the students’ counseling needs thus lessening the stigma and better engaging with families. Similarly, in Bhutan and Nigeria, the recommendation is to include more holistic practices in counseling that align with their traditional ways of healing (Guth, Lorelle, Scott Hinkle & Remley, 2015; Wambu & Fisher, 2015).

The government plays a major role in the ways in which counselors function in the schools. The policies from the Ministry of Education (MOE) dictate the work of educators. There seems to be room for increased communication between counselors and MOE officials, especially around counselor responsibilities. Counselors expressed their need for greater representation at the Ministry level. This need for representation is similar to other countries like Botswana, Haiti, and Nigeria where the development of education policy around guidance and school counseling has demonstrated the need for counseling (Legha & Solages, 2015; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). In Belize, the counselors have representation at the Ministry in the “Counseling and Care Unit” with four full-time employees in the unit and they divided the responsibilities of supervising the individual schools based on regions across Belize (Coogan, 2016). In Nigeria, the association has advocated for counseling within their Ministry or Department of Education (Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017). Without representation
for counselors at the national, state, or district levels, there is little focus and concern for developing the counseling program. It is important to note that the counselors in Barbados were involved in the development of the suicide protocol, which demonstrates that if they were given the opportunity to provide insight on other policies, they would be willing to do so. The counselors desire that the MOE create an environment and culture that helps them feel more supported.

Counselors see themselves as having to advocate for their position in various spaces, whether it concerns getting resources from the principal, or reaching out to the community promoting their work. Indeed, counselors across the island struggle with gaining the same access to resources with some having more resources than others, especially as it relates to fundamental needs for the position. The location of the school counseling office or lack of an office, a confidential and private location, WiFi access, and printing services are all examples of what some of the counselors need, but often lack limited access to. Counselors have advocated for such needs individually, but not as a unit which may mean that they can benefit from the use of their collective power to affect change. The lack of resources is a challenge in Kenya and other countries as well (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Wambu & Fisher, 2015). In Barbados, educators have asked for additional resources to help students facing socio-emotional issues like grief and loss (Reid & Dixon, 2001).

Counselors are also needed in the primary schools, which was a recurring discussion in the international literature. Many of the issues that Barbadian students sought counseling for occurred while they were in primary school and the issues were not fully healed. In Belize, they have counselors in primary schools, but the caseloads are so large that counselors are not present
at all schools every day (Smith-Augustine & Wagner, 2012). In other countries like Botswana, Nigeria and Malta, they expressed the need for counselors at the primary level as well because of the same reason as Barbados (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016; Okocha & Alika, 2012; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). Malta leads by example and has a few guidance teachers in the primary setting but they are not fully trained, just given a few professional development workshops. Barbadian counselors expressed that counselors in the primary schools should assist students with the transition to secondary school, conflict resolution, study skills, developing positive coping skills and addressing the traumas they may have experienced in primary school. The training should include and perpetuate the ongoing development of skills and techniques to support the students at each stage in their academic careers.

The counselors had overall positive experiences liaising with their various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, administrators, community agencies and other counselors. Aside from the teachers occasionally acting in the role of the counselor as opposed to providing additional support with the consultation of the counselor, the teachers tend to refer students to the counselors. The process for referrals changes depending on the setting and a streamlining of the referral system would be beneficial to counselors, especially with standardizing the overall school counseling program. The teacher role confusion creates an issue for counselors because of the counselors’ own teacher identity as well. Territorial concerns between counselors and other helping professions have been raised in the literature (Admundson, Niles, & Hohensil, 2015). The territorial issues lie within the helping professions such as psychologists and counseling organizations (Admundson, Niles, & Hohensil, 2015). Although there have been no territorial issues between Barbadian counselors and teachers, the support from administrators, teachers, and
the Ministry can be increased especially regarding role clarification so counselors’ effectiveness can be maximized.

Currently, counselors see parents as integral to their work with students. They value parent cooperation, but parents are not often sought after for the strengths they can bring to the school environment. Similarly, in the American context, school-family-community partnerships have been strongly supported as a means of engaging parents, families, and community members to meet students’ needs (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Griffin & Steen, 2010; Henry, Bryan, & Zalaquett, 2017; Holcomb-McCoy, 2010). Mitchell and Bryan (2007) posit that Caribbean immigrant families can benefit from school counselors collaborating with them in many ways, for example, identifying cultural brokers, parent workshops, and faith-based partnerships. Barbadian counselors considered their roles with families as brokers, facilitating information, educating and advocating for families, and truly valued the parent cooperation. Counselors should consider their work with vulnerable families, especially it relates to under-resourced communities, and the clear divide in the groups that have privilege and access. Families from low income households and families that might have migrated other Caribbean countries may face additional challenges with navigating a system that values middle class ideals, and has been critiqued for elitist practices.

Counselors expressed how they viewed their relationships with administrators. The relationship they share with their administrators is extremely important. They engaged with their administrators often and consulted on cases. The counselors worked closely with the deputy principals although they report directly to the principal. Once the cases were more disciplinary in nature, the cases were handled by the administrators, but when the cases were behavioral, socio-
emotional, or academic focused, the counselors worked with the students. Students are dealing with increased mental health issues and locally there has been an increase in gang violence and “block culture.”

One issue that impedes upon their relationship are the administrators’ perceptions of counseling. At some sites, counselors may be assigned to substitute classes which removes them from acting in the counseling capacity. Another issue is the administrators may invite counselors into the conversation much later when key decisions have already been made on student cases. Again, the role clarification is necessary to solve some of these issues that can put counselors back into their role. It is important to clarify that the counselors have an understanding of what they deem counseling duties but these updates are not documented formally which puts them in positions that not be able to truly advocate for their role.

The counselors “liaise” with local agencies and NGOs to enhance the services for students and families. these collaborations work to increase the services are offered and meet the needs that the school may not be able to fully supply. One issue with these relationships is that even though counselors refer students, there is a disconnect with them receiving feedback and recommendations for moving forward with students and families, once the students return to school. Counselors have questioned if the lack of communication stems from the agencies’ perspectives on school counselor. One suggestion would be to formalize or mandate the types of information counselors should receive and develop a comprehensive protected database for documenting and sharing information that could further assist students and families.

Counselors support each other which is integral to them moving the field forward. The counselors are members of the Barbados Association of Guidance Counsellors and other helping
professionals can join the organization as well. The counselors’ informal network on WhatsApp, the text messaging phone application, allows them to stay abreast of information related to their work and quickly organize to support each other. The informal network is helpful and speaks to the communal aspect of the Barbadian society. This network should be used to propel the field forward. In other countries like Belize, Botswana, Haiti, and Nigeria, the associations were integral in galvanizing policy and training for counselors (AHPsy, 2018; Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012; Okocha & Alika, 2012, Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). These organizations create opportunities for advocacy, evaluation, and generating research around school counseling and mental health more broadly (AHPsy, 2018; Nicolas, Jean-Jacques, & Wheatley, 2012; Okocha & Alika, 2012, Smith-Augustine, 2012).

There were many challenges and demands discussed throughout the themes. Some of the challenges aligned with the literature, whereas some were unique to Barbados. All three of the themes focused on understanding the challenges and demands. One of the major challenges presented in the themes were the large caseloads at every school. Counselors are typically operating by themselves, since only a few schools have two counselors. Counselors articulated the need for a team approach to providing services in which they would have additional counselors at each site, along with persons in related helping professions such as school psychologists, nurses, and social workers. This team approach directly relates to the need for increased services all around, including at the primary level. Student issues are changing and counselors must keep abreast of meeting their needs. The holistic approach and team-based approach to providing services to students and families directly aligns with the suggestions from counselors in other countries such as Belize, Bhutan, Botswana, Kenya, and Jamaica (Coogan,
The expectation is that a comprehensive school counseling program is needed to enhance service provision to students. A holistic approach should reflect the values of the society (Guth, Lorelle, Scott Hinkle & Remley, 2015). By having a collaborative approach to working with students, they are given more resources and will have more connections to adults on campus that care about their wellbeing. Murphey, Bandy, Schmitz, and Moore (2013) indicates that having at least one positive connection to a faculty on campus increases academic outcomes for students.

Counselors’ roles expand to community outreach, serving on other teams and committees within the schools and case management. All of these expectations are significant components of their work, but leave the counselors feeling overwhelmed, over loaded and inundated with work. They work to be creative in their approaches with students which takes time to develop, by truly getting to know the population they are servicing. This understanding would also allow Barbadian counselors to develop a culturally appropriate approach to tackling the issues the students are bringing in, since Western theories do not fully apply to this population of students.

**Research Question 2**

**What factors influence school counseling in Barbados?**

The findings from the second research question further expand on the factors identified by Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015). This study goes in-depth to provide the nuanced experiences of counselors in Barbados as it relates to the factors identified by Martin, Lauterbach and Carey. Many of the factors found in this study were consistent with the original article. Barbadian school counselors are influenced by the historical and current issues in Barbados, the
international context and the local needs. Other organizations and the roles counselors engage in with various stakeholders influence their work as well.

This study provides insight into understanding the multiple factors that impact the roles of counselors in the Barbadian school setting. The factors presented by Martin, Lauterbach, and Carey (2015) are comprehensive, but do not fully explain what is present for Barbados. One new theme emerged in addition to the original themes to the Barbadian context. The 11 factors outlined by Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) are 1) Cultural factors, 2) National needs, 3) larger societal movements, 4) models of school counseling, 5) laws and educational policy, 6) characteristics of the public education system, 7) the counseling profession, 8) research and evaluation, 9) related professions (renamed Relationships with Key Stakeholders), 10) Community organizations and NGOs (renamed Partnerships with Community, Government Organizations and Professionals), and 11) local stakeholder perceptions, and 12) local curriculum, a new theme that emerged from the data. The Barbadian content mostly aligns with the original factors that were outlined and coded by Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015). These 12 factors can serve as a point of reference for small states and African countries with the colonized experience. These factors help to provide a lens that deepen understanding of the development of school-based counseling across the school sites.

While the original factors that emerged from the Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015) study align with what was present in the Barbadian school counseling context, additional factors emerged or were reframed as they relate to the Barbadian context. These factors include the 12th factor, Local Curriculum (i.e., HFLE), and the reframing or expanding the 9th factor,
Relationships with Key Stakeholders, and the 10th factor, Partnerships with Community, Government Organizations and Professionals.

The guidance counselors engage in partnerships with various stakeholders and mentioned liaising with stakeholders, both within the school and the community. The 9th and 10th factors capture the depth and the extent to which partnerships, relationships and collaboration influence the role of school counselors but also present some challenges. These factors explain the collaborative, team-based roles necessary to foster successful counseling programs, including collaborating with parents and families, teachers, administrators, community, government organizations, and NGOs. These connections allow for counselors to expand the breadth of the services they provide and to alleviate the issues of large caseloads. Ultimately, these partnerships can foster positive student outcomes and with increased communication and understanding of the unique skill set of counselors, the various stakeholders can work cooperatively and collaboratively to strengthen the student experience and prepare them for the future. Also, with these relationships and interactions, the hope is that the inequities in education will be alleviated.

Barbados is in a unique situation, because as indicated in Martin, Lauterbach and Carey (2015), in some countries the governmental agencies may take on the role of developing school counseling, credentialing and training, yet in other places the associations along with the government may take on this role. Barbados is still in process of considering the role of BAGC and it seems like it would be beneficial to them in conjunction with the Ministry to utilize the strength of the collective in BAGC to advocate, promote and continue to develop school counseling on the island.
Implications

The implications described below are for Barbadian and other school counselors, counselor educators, policy makers, and researchers. The recommendations are based on the discussion of the findings of the study and how it compares to the literature on international school-based counseling. Much of the Barbadian practices and challenges are common for counselors but these recommendations provide insight on next steps and ways to grow the field of counseling.

Implications for Practice

Several recommendations emerged from the study’s findings. The recommendations include that advocacy for their role is important and ideally, they should advocate to all stakeholders. Counselors should focus on strengthening the association (BAGC) and collaborate on advocating. As an association, they can come together to develop and strengthen their school counseling programs within schools by developing their own national model of school counseling, and this model can be used as a tool to advocate for their role and clarify their work. They should present a united front as an association and ask for representation at the Ministry. Given their limitation with large caseloads, counselors should be strategic in partnerships to meet the needs of all their students and families.

The counseling role has expanded in Barbados and the original document from 1987 should be updated to include the comprehensive work that counselors are engaging in. With the update, counselors will be able to advocate for themselves and their position. The document should provide clarity on the role of the counselor in the Barbadian context. Many of issues that the counselors are currently experiencing is due to role confusion. Role confusion is not unique
to Barbados, but was seen in other countries as well such as Botswana, Nigeria and a host of other countries (Admundson, Niles, & Hohensil, 2015; Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). Counselors were initially teachers and then designated with several hours in the counseling role or then placed as counselors in schools in Barbados, Belize, Bhutan, and Botswana (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2016; Guth, Lorelle, Hinkle & Remley, 2015; Maynard, 2014; Stockton, Nitza, & Bhusumane, 2010). As the field mobilizes in these places, the counseling identity became the dominant role for these individuals, and policies began to shift to include the unique work of counselors, especially in Nigeria (Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017). Barbados is following this same trajectory, with the need for role clarity at the forefront of the discussion of their roles and challenges. The Prime Minister has called for seven additional counselors in the secondary schools, and a few social workers in the primary schools. In order to move the field forward in Barbados, the introduction of counselors in the primary school setting is extremely important and they should be trained specifically for this specific setting. Counselors should receive additional training and support on the trends that seem to be increasing in schools and communities.

There is a strength in collaboration with other school counselors. The counselors benefit from partnering with each other to be more efficient with their resources. Increased collaborations would assist the counselors with gaining access to additional resources for students and families and time to tend to other counseling duties. Also, the need exists for an equitable allocation of resources. The hope is that with these resources the counselors will be more efficient in their role.
The need exists to collect more data on services they provide to advocate for their role. Since the lack of documentation, including evaluation and research, has been noted, and is similar in other countries, one of the recommendations would be for counselors to document their practices to help develop a model for school counseling and identify their roles and practices. Data can be used to quantify the works they are doing and advocate for the need for additional support and resources. Another recommendation would be for counselors to be trained on data collection and using data to support the need for counseling within schools and demonstrate the breadth of their program. The American National model, ASCA, suggests using different types of data to answer the question how have students and families changed by the work of the counseling program (ASCA, 2012). Belize expressed the need for research and evaluation of school counseling services as well, to inform practice and improve access (Coogan, 2016). In Belize, their two counseling associations are the beginning of assessing and evaluating the school counseling on their island (Smith-Augustine, 2012). Some work with the MOE to develop a national model of school counseling would be beneficial. The shift from guidance counselor to school counselor is occurring which is a trend in school counseling. The counselors are operating more comprehensively and taking on additional tasks. In Barbados counselors are responsible for the facilitation of the HFLE program, supporting students academically, career, religious, socio-emotional, sometimes health issues, collaborating and liaising with stakeholders, referring students to community resources, serving on committees within the school, guidance lessons, and post-secondary preparation.

By developing the guidelines for school counselors there are opportunities to outline training, development, evaluation, and ethical procedures and standards. The documents should
standardize all of the processes that counselors will engage in, including the cultural elements that apply to how they would recommend responding to issues.

**Implications for Policy**

The study provides implications for the Ministry of Education as it relates to their work with counselors. The findings show that counselors need representation at the Ministry. This representation will be crucial in counseling progressing in schools because there will be someone to oversee and advocate for what is occurring across the island. With representation, the counselors will ultimately garner support at the national level, identify the gaps, and the need for ongoing training and content focus. The Ministry has several Senior Education Officers and an additional officer should be designated to school counselors solely. In other countries such as Nigeria, guidance has been included in national policy and written to show the expansion of the school counselors’ role (Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017). Once Nigeria switched from the inherited British system of education to the U.S. system, guidance was included in the National Policy on Education in 1981 and the article posits this policy which highlights the importance of guidance and counseling was due to the work of the career masters and mistresses in their post-primary schools (Aluede, Iyamu, Adubale, & Oramah, 2017).

In Barbados, since the role of the counselor has expanded, by including this position in the Ministry, counselors can work with the Ministry to update and inform policy for role clarification. The model for school counseling can be developed and both views can be considered for drafting this document. This process would require increased communication between the Ministry and counselors because just as the study shows, sometimes there is a breakdown in which party is responsible for which task. Having someone at the Ministry can assist
with advocating for the needs of counselors, especially when it comes to navigating the duties assigned by principals and counselors having equitable access to resources at each site. A task force should be developed to begin the process of drafting a national model for school counselors and prioritize counselors’ voices but also honor the needs of the Ministry, and target the larger national issues that are being presented in Barbados. The Ministry can also support counselors and other professions by developing a database so counselors and similar professions can exchange information and be provided updates on cases when they refer students to community and government resources. This component is imperative since counselors do not typically receive a follow up once they refer students out to resources but are expected to service the students upon re-entry to the schools without recommendations or updates on what is needed to further support the student and family. Since the issues are expanding and changing, with more students coming for counseling, as indicated in the interviews, the counselors should be provided ongoing training.

In previous years, when counseling was first rendered on the island, the Ministry provided the support for counselors to receive training and this practice should be consistent and a part of the continued support that counselors receive so they are operating with best practices guiding their work. In addition to the support, there is a clear need for more counselors in the secondary schools to lower the student-counselor ratio. The interviews and the observations both highlighted this need for additional counselors in the secondary school and expanding the role to include counselors in primary schools. Many of the issues that students are dealing with, first occurred in primary school but the students do not the support at the primary level and are left to develop these coping skills once they reach secondary school, if they choose to meet with the
counselor or if the issue surfaces. By having counselors at the primary school level, the students can begin to process the issues much earlier and develop the skills necessary for positive outcomes. Also, including a team approach and more holistic approach to supporting students and families was discussed by the counselors. School psychologists, social workers, and nurses are related helping professions that can support each other in providing comprehensive services to students and families within the schools.

Barbados can serve as a model for other small states in earlier stages of implementing school-based counseling programs. By developing a culturally relevant national model of school counseling, the policies will begin to inform school counseling practices and advocate for their role. At the Ministry level, there is a need for increased communication between counselors and Ministry officials. In the past, counselors and principals were asked to participate in focus groups to inform policies on suicide and self-harm protocols, which were held by the Ministry. This experience shows that if presented the opportunity, counselors will gladly provide insight and feedback on policies surrounding their position. Additionally, counselors are not written into the Education Act. The Education Act lists the formal job descriptions in education, yet counselors are not mentioned. The reason being is because counselors were initially teachers and they currently fall under the Public Service Teachers Order (BGIS, 2016). The Teachers Order lists the descriptions of teachers in which guidance counselors are listed under this document as being responsible for the guidance and counseling program in schools (BGIS, 2016). The Education Act should be updated to explicitly list counselors since their role is much different than teachers. Also, in the positions posted,
counselors should have a voice because they know exactly what role they play in the schools and they can provide the practical component necessary for advertising the position.

Another policy that should be implemented relates to the facilitation of HFLE. Counselors described the facilitation of HFLE as their main role. They often have to teach the classes themselves and many times they are responsible for providing the curriculum and overseeing the HFLE teachers. Counselors expressed the need for HFLE but would like for the curriculum to be updated. They expressed wanting to change the way they engage with the HFLE program in general.

Collaborations with other small states would be ideal, or with larger states that have NGOs to assist with providing additional resources and services. Barbadian counselors should develop an ethical standards document and include the need for professional development to implement evidence-based practices in the schools. Connecting with other countries with similar colonial experiences can also help shape and guide policies. Policy borrowing can occur amongst these countries, because the practices may be more realistic for their population.

Implications for Administrators. The study has provided implications for administrators in schools, such as the principal and the deputy/assistant principals. Administrators need to see the role clarified for counselors so they know what roles and responsibilities counselors are capable of doing. In some cases, since counselors do not have a clear role and are expected to teach HFLE courses, they are sometimes given additional duties such as invigilating, substituting classes, and placed in the role of a disciplinarian. With role clarity, principals and deputies can begin to minimize the additional roles they assign counselors. If counselors remain in the role of facilitating the HFLE department the principals can change
the requirements so that two teachers are assigned, and counselors can supervise as opposed to facilitating the courses, and they can have assigned time for case management and individual/group counseling or other supports for students. Communication between both the counselors and the administrators is extremely important and this practice was identified in the study. Both the interviews and observations indicated the importance of support from the administrators and constant communication so counselors are informed of cases early on and a part of the decision-making process. Some countries that have considered more punitive practices are not being proactive so by including counseling and local healing practices in the recommendations for cases can shift the outcomes of the students, to a more holistic one. In the same vein, the findings indicated that teachers would sometimes seek counselors for their personal issues as well. As administrators, it is imperative that schools begin to embrace policies that promote mental wellness, along with learning communities for the faculty and staff so they are supported and able to balance their work load. Principals should also consider the physical space the counselors use, whether the counselors have a private confidential space and access to administrative resources (ex. Phone, printer, WIFI password, laptop/computer). These items, although small, can really shift the amount of work that counselors would be able to do by increasing their productivity. The room location is important because in a culture like Barbados where privacy is valued, students and families should feel safe going to speak to the counselor and not targeted. Schools should begin to embrace mental wellness to lessen the stigma and normalize seeking out the counselor for support but this process starts with shifting the school culture and considering local help seeking behaviors.
Administrators and counselors should work to update policies that inform practice, including additional support for faculty and staff. During the observations the researcher observed teachers sometime seeking support from counselors for personal issues they were dealing with. Barbadian administrators and education policy-makers should begin to revisit their policies and increase the mental health and wellness support for their staff. By tending to the overall wellness of the staff, the staff may be better equipped with tending to student issues. Between burnout and secondary trauma, counselors and teachers can become overwhelmed by the workload and the types of issue students are presenting so it is best to be preventative. Another challenge with teachers is that they want counselors to tackle a task immediately or do something they are responsible for. The cooperation is extremely important and a few teachers across the various settings have their guidance and counselling certificate and can support the counselor in case of a crisis.

**Implications for the U.S. and Other International Organizations in Barbados.** The study yielded implications for school counselors in the U.S. Barbados has an overwhelmingly institutionalized British system that uses classism and meritocracy to education. In the U.S., the historical context of institutionalized racism and meritocracy lend itself to perpetuating discrimination within the system that exists. Barbadians do not discuss race in the same context as the U.S. because the country is predominately African descendants. Once we begin to look more in-depth at the impacts of slavery and how current generations are still impacted by colonialism, then the country can grow to have a system more in tune with the needs of the population. The same holds true for the U.S., in which the country needs to contend with its history and prevalent impacts on the lives of people of color and individuals from low SES
backgrounds. Policies must begin to address the wealth gap and decreasing the gap in access to education.

Barbadian school counselors work with students from low SES background and with limited resources. These counselors work to create environments where students can receive free services on school grounds or within the community. They understand the cultural concept of privacy and withholding information about needing help and assistance. In their offices or private places on their campuses, students are welcomed to get meals, and uniforms.

**Implications for Training**

This study produced results that have recommendations for counselor educators regarding moving the counseling field forward in Barbados. It appears from the findings that counselors would like ongoing training and to inform the curriculum for incoming counselors. Counselors need training on how to advocate for themselves and their work. By learning how to engage in advocacy and at various levels the counselors will hopefully move closer toward their ideal role. Counselors need to consult with counselors in other countries on how to develop their model. Countries like Bhutan and Jamaica sought the assistance of NBCC-International and in the past the initial Barbadian counselors received training from American counselor educators (Guth, Lorelle, Scott Hinkle & Remley, 2015; Maynard, 2014; Palmer, Palmer, & Payne-Borden, 2012)

Training for counseling students should include opportunities for classroom guidance, and internships. Local and international counselor educators should partner with the schools to have counselors share their needs and realistic experiences in the field, as well as current issues they handle with students, families and the MOE. Counselor educators are charged with preparing future counselors and it is imperative that they understand the localized perspective of
school counseling in Barbados. The continued partnership between universities and practitioners will result in informed decisions about policies regarding school counseling and how to move the field forward in Barbados. Using data driven practices which has been suggested in Belize (Coogan, 2016) can provide the additional information necessary to advocate for school counselors and more resources. The master’s program at UWI Cave Hill was newly incepted and there are now two cohorts of students in the program, and the program has expanded to St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Kitts and Nevis (D. Maynard, personal communication, September 20, 2018). Training the counselors on how to use data and partner with other stakeholders including teachers, administration and community resources to effectively reach more students, and additional training on school related issues that counselors face would be beneficial (Cauchi, Falzon, Micallef, & Sammut, 2017).

Future counselors should be provided the knowledge and skills to advocate for themselves and their students (ASCA, 2012). Ongoing training for practicing counselors should be contended as well. Local counselor educators and practitioners across the region can host research conferences geared towards showcasing the work of the counselors and regional research that is occurring and facilitates the work of counselors and possibly other helping professions. Previously, GCSCORED hosted a conference in 2015 that focused on school counseling in the Caribbean. By having the support of local programs and international programs, this event and similar conferences should continue to occur. During these larger conferences, counselors should be offered professional development opportunities related to contemporary issues they are facing in the field locally.
Crossley (2008) suggested that more qualitative research be used to understand education in small states. By conducting qualitative research, we will begin to understand and contextualize the individual experiences and impacts of larger international policies and how they influence small states. This information is confounded and overlooked in the international realm because of the limited knowledge on what is occurring in small states. With the findings from this study, Barbados’ education and specifically school counseling is nuanced and explained. This study provides insight for further research on the impacts of the school counseling program on students and families. This study also exposes the need for a comprehensive model of school counseling specific to Barbados and their needs. The guidance counsellors can partner with universities to engage in participatory research to inform policy around roles and practices.

**Implications for International Counselor Educators.** Small states such as Barbados have their own unique challenges. Information is spread quickly, and the people are very resourceful, even with limited access. Several themes emerged pertaining to the nature of Barbados being a small state. This study can serve as a model for assessing the overall factors that impact school counselors. Counselors can benefit from learning about the network Barbadian counselors have co-created for themselves and what they are doing to shape policy as it relates to the field.

**Implications for Future Research**

Future research should continue to expand upon this study. Replicating a study like this in other small states will create opportunities to further understand the experiences and practices of counselors in various settings. As Crossley (2008) suggests, larger states can learn from small states. By changing the paradigm, the broader school counseling community and learn about
working with diverse populations and preparing counselors to enter such spaces. Also, more qualitative studies in small states (Crossley, 2008) would assist in getting a more accurate perspective of school counseling, and ultimately impact the work they do with students, families and the community. Another question that comes from the data is the role that counselors play in alleviating the inequities in education. Do counselors in Barbados see themselves as key components to handling some of the larger national needs that impact students and families? With the presence of BAGC, the counselors should continue to process what role they want the association to play in research, ethical and legal standards, and the credential and licensure process for counselors.

**Conclusion**

I hope that this dissertation adds to the international school-based counseling literature and informs how educators view school counselors in their work with students and families. This study is very foundational for the people of Barbados and the research methods used to understand their work. The methodology is practical, and I hope that other counselor educators repeat the study in other countries to continue the cross-cultural conversations on international school counseling and international policies regarding school-based counseling, including sustainability, training and best practices. This study changes the narrative on where and how we come to understand best practices for a given country and population, contributing to the need for increased cultural competence and an induction of more holistic and comprehensive school counseling programs. With Western practices typically perceived at best practices, I challenge counselors and counselor educators to explore from within and compare to countries with similar cultural and historical experiences.
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Appendix A

Letter of Approval from Ministry of Education

January 12, 2018

Ms. Dominiqua M. Griffin, M. Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education & Supervision
Comparative & International Education (Dual Title)
Pennsylvania State University

Dear Madam

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated January 11, 2018 in which you are requesting permission to collect data and interview Guidance Counsellors from selected schools.

This letter serves to inform that the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation has given permission for you to go ahead with the case study.

You should contact the Principals of the selected Schools.

Yours faithfully

Karen Best (Mrs.)
Chief Education Officer
Appendix B

Letter to Ministry of Education Requesting Approval

January 11, 2018

The Chief Education Officer,
Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
Elsie Payne Complex, Constitution Road
St. Michael, Barbados, W.I.

Dear Mrs. Karen Best,

Firstly, thank you so much for allowing me to complete an internship at The St. Michael School. I was impressed with the passion and commitment of Ms. Margaret Grant, the principal and the teachers. The experience demonstrated the high quality of Barbadian public-school education and renewed my conviction in the importance of school counselling to the success of students.

Secondly, I am requesting permission to conduct my dissertation research with a focus on guidance counselling here in Barbados. My dissertation study is entitled “An investigation of school counseling roles, practices, challenges, and demands in Barbados: A comparative analysis of Barbados’ school counseling.” I believe that Barbados school counselors and the Barbados Ministry of Education may find the results useful as they will present current themes and perspectives about the roles and practices school counselors are implementing, and the challenges they are facing, as well as prospective solutions.

I already received IRB approval from my institution, The Pennsylvania State University, and I received grant funding from the Africana Research Center at my university which will partially fund my study. Both documents are attached. Please note that the participants’ identity were protected throughout the duration of the study and the sharing of findings. At any point if
participants do not wish to move forward with the study they can remove themselves from the study.

Data collection procedures will include interviews with school counsellors, observations in schools, field notes, memos, and document analysis. The cases will comprise four current school counsellors who each work in a public secondary school and I will choose from among the following schools: [redacted: school names are removed to protect the confidentiality of informants]. The interviews and observations, along with field notes, memos, and collected documents were transcribed and analyzed meticulously throughout the iterative data collection process. I plan to disseminate the results of this study with the Barbados Ministry of Education (MOE) and Barbadian school counselors. Further, I will also share results in Caribbean and U.S school counseling journals. Once again, in any communications or publications, the identity of school counselors and schools were protected.

Please feel free to contact me (dmg365@psu.edu) or my advisors, Dr. Julia Green Bryan (jub49@psu.edu) or Dr. Nicole Webster (nsw10@psu.edu). Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Dominiqua M. Griffin, M. Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education & Supervision
Comparative & International Education (Dual Title)
The Pennsylvania State University
Cell: (646)267-1246/ Local: (246)429-3567
Appendix C

Recruitment Letter

Dear Future Participant,

I hope this invitation finds you in the best of health. You received this invitation because you are a guidance counsellor in a Barbados public secondary school, and over the age of eighteen (18). My name is Dominiqua M. Griffin and I am currently a doctoral candidate at The Pennsylvania State University in the Counselor Education and Supervision program, with a Dual Title in Comparative and International Education. I am writing you in hopes that you would be a participant in my study entitled “An investigation of school counseling roles, practices, challenges, and demands in Barbados: A comparative analysis of Barbados’ school counseling”. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of the role, practices, demands and challenges of guidance counselors in Barbados. The study will potentially inform counselors, counselor educators and government policies regarding school counseling in Barbados.

If you are interested in participating in the study and/or if you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me (dmg365@psu.edu) or my advisors, Dr. Julia Green Bryan (jub49@psu.edu) or Dr. Nicole Webster (nsw10@psu.edu).

Please note at any point if you do not wish to move forward with the study you can remove yourself from the study. Thank you for your time and I look forward to working with you.

Best,

Dominiqua M. Griffin, M. Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education & Supervision
Comparative & International Education (Dual Title)
The Pennsylvania State University
Appendix D

Informed Consent

Title of the Study
An Investigation of School Counseling Roles, Practices, Challenges, and Demands in Barbados: A Comparative Analysis of Barbados’ School Counseling

Primary Investigator
Dominiqua Griffin (dmg365@psu.edu), 1(646)267-1246, dmg365@psu.edu

Faculty Advisors
Julia Bryan, Ph.D. (jub49@psu.edu) and Nicole Webster, Ph.D. (nsw10@psu.edu)

I. Purpose of this Research Project
The purpose of the study is to investigate the experiences and practices of school counselors in Barbados, West Indies. School counseling in Barbados is almost 30 years old and influenced by U.S. counseling models. Typically, the U.S. is the main comparison when it comes to counseling. I interrupt that paradigm to examine school counseling in Barbados using a within-comparative model. I aim to identify the major factors that has influenced the evolution of school counseling and compare the experiences and practices of school counselors across several Barbadian secondary schools. This study will provide an analytical framework that counselors and counselor educators in Barbados and other international contexts may use to develop, implement and evaluate school counseling models that better fit the needs and demands of students, families, and other stakeholders. The resulting model may also serve as a basis for future research on how school counselors and socio-cultural-political factors interplay to transform models from developed countries to fit their own needs. The results of this study were used for conference presentations, journal publications, informing counselors, counselor
educators, and educational policies. Guidance counsellors age 18 and older working in Barbados public secondary schools were invited to participate in this study. The study will take place throughout the Fall 2017 semester.

II. Procedures
This study will involve completing a series of 45 minute interviews, observations of you in your guidance counsellor role, and an analysis of any documents you decide to submit. Should you agree to participate, you were asked to choose the time and interview location of your choice. I wish to audio record the interviews.

III. Risks
There is minimal risk of participating in this study. If you do experience any risk or you are in need of immediate assistance as a result of completing this study, please call 211.

IV. Benefits
You may benefit from the conversation about your role as a guidance counsellor and how it relates to the larger community, and other small nation states. Once the study is complete, there may be implications for policies regarding school counseling and future training for counselors and counselors-in-training. This information is not shared to encourage your participation.

V.Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality
The information collected in this study is confidential and no identifying information were shared. Your name and contact information were private information and will not be shared with anyone without your consent. All participant data were coded and given pseudonyms and a number for data analysis. The researchers were the only individuals with access to the data and the Pennsylvania State University’s IRB may audit the study for your protection. Raw data were properly disposed and coded for transcription and analysis.

VI. Compensation
There were no opportunities for compensation for participating in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw
You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without consequences. You can omit any questions you do not feel comfortable answering without penalty or punishment. Should the investigator suggest
you no longer participate in the study there were no ramifications for this action.

VIII. Contacting the Researchers
If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the primary research investigator, or the faculty involved with the study, whom are identified at the beginning of this form (Dominiqua Griffin, Julia Bryan, and Nicole Webster).

Should this study cause any harm or if you have any questions please contact Pennsylvania State University’s Institutional Review Board at 814-865-1775 or orp@psu.edu.

IX. Subject's Consent
I have read the Informed Consent Form and conditions of this study. All of my questions have been answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

Signature   __________________________________

Printed Name   ______________________________

Date   ______________________________
Appendix E

Interview Questions

Interview Questions Session 1: Role of the School Counselor

Interview Questions

Non-descriptive info- Pseudonym and # to label your case. Describe the location of your school.
What’s the total number of students? Male? Female? Describe the school population you serve.

ROLES/ PRACTICES

1. Describe a typical day for you at your school.
2. What is your role as a guidance counsellor? Tell me more.
3. How long have you worked as a counselor in this position? Have you worked in any
   other school besides this one, and if so, how many years?
4. What are your assigned roles, and other responsibilities?
5. What are the main responsibilities of your position?
6. What are the reasons why you became a guidance counselor?
7. Can you describe your experiences as a guidance counselor?
8. What are some principles that guide your practice as a school counselor? how did you
   form these principles? PROBE.
9. What kinds of support and services do you provide to students that come asking for help?
   Do you ever initiate contact if they notice a student who might need their help? If so,
   how?
10. What do you do as a school counselor in your work with families?

11. If the families need to talk to someone about their child(ren) or other issues/problems, who would they talk to?

12. Tell me about your role in the school.

13. Tell me about your role with the community.

14. What counseling approach/theory do you use in counseling students?

15. How does the Barbados culture influence the counseling theory you have chosen to use?

**CHALLENGES AND DEMANDS**

16. What are the challenges you face as a guidance counsellor? Any challenges related to students? Families? School climate? Administration/ support system? PROBE

17. What are the challenges/issues in your school (ex. System/government, student related, curriculum, family engagement)?

18. How would your experiences as a counselor be different if you were at another school?

19. How is school counseling in Barbados changing? Is school counseling changing to suit the local needs?

20. What racial and ethnic challenges exist in Barbados? How does this impact school counseling and your work?

21. Private schools where white students attend...tell me more about that. I know that’s a tough topic. Tell me a little bit more. It seems taboo.
22. Describe the HFLE curriculum and how your dept./program uses it. What are some of the challenges? How does this impact your work with students? What changes would you make to the HFLE program/curriculum?

23. What are some challenges you foresee with the current position and practices of your role?

POLICIES THAT IMPACT ROLES

24. What policies from the ministry most influence your work? What school policies most influence or impact your work? Are they the same?

25. Are there any changes you would like to see? What changes would you like to see in policies regarding school counseling? PROBE.

26. What are the current requirements of becoming a counsellor? Based on what you know, what might be additional requirements for school counselors to have coming into the position?

27. If school counselors were introduced in all the primary schools, what would you want them to do when working with students?

28. If you could change the school counseling program in Barbados, what would you change?

29. If you could change your role what would you like that role to look like? What would you take away? What would you add?
PARTNERSHIPS

30. How do you define school-family-community partnerships?

31. What kinds of school-family-community partnerships are you currently involved in?

32. What role(s) do you play in these partnerships?

33. What factors (personal and school-related) encourage you to be involved in partnerships?

34. What obstacles (personal and school-related) hinder you from getting involved in school-family-community partnerships?

35. School-family-community partnerships are those relationships school counselors build with family members and community members to deliver services and programs to students. For example, [GIVE EXAMPLE OF SFC PARTNERSHIP]. What kinds of partnerships have you or the school built with family or community members to deliver services and programs to students?

36. Describe some of the partnership programs in your school?

37. How often do you involve parents when counseling a child? What are your relationships with parents like? How does the school see parents?
VITA

Dominiqua M. Griffin

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy in Counselor Education and Supervision with a Dual Title in Comparative and International Education, (2019)
Pennsylvania State University, University Park, P.A.

Master of Education in School Psychology and Counseling Services-School Counseling, 2013
Howard University, Washington D.C.

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, 2011
University at Buffalo, Buffalo, N.Y.

WORK EXPERIENCE

California State University, Fresno, Fresno, C.A. Fall 2018- Present
Tenure Track Assistant Professor of School Counseling

Pennsylvania State University, University Park, P.A. Fall 2014- Spring 2018

Graduate Assistant
Career Services, University Park, P.A. Spring 2015

Doctoral Counseling Intern
Cedar Clinic, University Park, P.A. Fall 2014

Doctoral Counseling Intern
Maya Angelou Learning Campus, Washington, D.C. Fall 2013-Spring 2014

Carrera Mental Health Specialist, Counseling Intern
College Board Upward Bound Program, Washington D.C. Summer 2012- Summer 2014

Mathematics Instructor, Tutor Counselor, Resident Advisor
District of Columbia Public Schools, Washington D.C. Fall 2011-Spring 2013

Counseling Intern, Instructional Aide

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, General Member and Gamma Iota Chapter Spring 2009- Present

Black Graduate Student Association, Political Action Committee Co-Chair, Member Fall 2014- 2018

Commission on Race/Ethnicity and Diversity, Affiliate Member Fall 2014- 2018

HONORS/ AWARDS

Honorable Mention Dissertation, American Association of Blacks in Higher Education, 2019

Bunton Waller Graduate Award, Pennsylvania State University, Fall 2014- 2018
Dr. Stephanie Danette Preston Service Award, Pennsylvania State University (2016)